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Wolfe, Judy Louise

ANTI-PATRIARCHAL STRATEGIES IN THE MAJOR WORKS OF DJUNA BARNES

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ANTI-PATRIARCHAL STRATEGIES
IN THE MAJOR WORKS
OF DJUNA BARNES

by

JUDY WOLFE

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

ANTI-PATRIARCHAL STRATEGIES IN THE
MAJOR WORKS OF DJUNA BARNES

JUDY WOLFE

Djuna Barnes wrote when phallocentric assumptions constituted the unquestioned values of Western culture. Yet in Ryder, Nightwood, and The Antiphon, Barnes challenged and subverted the phallocentric values of the patriarchal society by deconstructing the binary oppositions fundamental to the patriarchy. Western thought is predicated upon binary oppositions in which a primary term is viewed as positive and a secondary term is viewed as negative. In her three major works, Ryder, Nightwood, and The Antiphon, Barnes presents several such sets of opposition, male/female, human/animal, heterosexual/homosexual, and life/death. Barnes inverts the binary oppositions so that the terms can no longer be viewed as positive or negative, but merely as different. Thus Barnes is anti-patriarchal in her deconstruction of these binary oppositions basic to Western culture.

In Ryder and in Nightwood, the most basic oppositions presented are human/animal and male/female. Unlike Western culture which valorizes human consciousness above animal consciousness, Barnes deconstructs this opposition
to assert that in giving up animal consciousness for human consciousness mankind has lost something of value. Deconstructing the opposition of male/female in Ryder, Barnes reveals the phallus as an instrument of oppression. In Nightwood, the major characters are homosexual, but their suffering clearly is not the result of their homosexuality. In its failure to condemn homosexuality, Nightwood is inherently anti-patriarchal, for in patriarchal Western culture heterosexuality is obligatory. The Antiphon, too, is anti-patriarchal and treats pairs of opposition deconstructively. At the center of The Antiphon is the story of an attempted paternal rape. Ironically, the values of the patriarchy are voiced by the mother in the play, who demonstrates that victims may adopt the point of view of the oppressor. Abused by father, mother, and brothers, the only daughter of the family is sacrificed as a scapegoat victim. Thus the final dichotomy that Barnes deconstructs is that of life/death, questioning our most basic presupposition that life is preferable to death, for death brings peace to life's tortured victims.
DEDICATION

In Loving Memory of

GEORGE R. WOLFE

1908-1983
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me as I worked and Mamma Cat jumping into my lap and nudging the pen from my hand, reminding me of life's priorities.
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CHAPTER I

WRITING IN A PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

Culture is male. . . . [T]he society we live in like all other historical societies, is a patriarchy. . . . Both men and women in our culture conceive the culture from a single point of view—the male.

(Russ 4)

What can one say of a writer who is at once a part of her culture, but who is also removed, isolated from the mainstream of culture by choice and by chance, one who exists on the margin of culture and to some extent is always on the outside looking in—observing, with a keen eye for detail, yet with a unique, personal, and private sense of reality—of how things are in the world, a view that in some ways corresponds to the world view of her contemporaries and other ways radically departs, losing itself in an almost unspeakable, uncommunicable, private vision of existence. Such a writer was D. J. Barnes, and just as temporal dis-
tance can make it possible for us to see the broad patterns of underlying ideology of another period, so marginality also provided for Barnes a distance from the dominate culture that enabled her to see what many of those immersed in the culture remained blind to.

Like dreams and myths, the literature of a period from which we are historically removed offers us a unique opportunity for insight into the then present unconscious human conflicts and beliefs. This is in no sense because we are more advanced or superior in our interpretive abilities than those of previous periods. Rather it is our distance that makes the difference, that enables us to see what those of the period could not see, just as distance may enable generations of the future to understand parts of our culture to which we must remain blind. Thus we are able to see the unconscious content—the hidden content—(even though paradoxically it may be on the surface)—that it was not possible for those who lived within the particular social period to have been conscious of. Yet it is also important to remember that, although it may be possible for us to see what they could not see, that what we see—the historical patterns that we map—are partially of our own making. We bring our own conscious and unconscious assumptions and preconceptions to any interpretation that we make; thus, any interpretation that we make is our own construction and should not be assumed to be rooted in any objective reality. Something that we choose to call objective reality may
exist, but it seems unlikely that it is possible for us to know anything but our time-bound, culture-bound experience of it. Just as it is impossible for an individual to know his or her own unconscious, so it is impossible for members of a social group to bring to light the unconscious assumptions that pervade all levels of action and experience, even in a cultural context those "higher" actions of art and literature.

The most revealing aspects of any culture are its unconscious and therefore unexamined assumptions. They are part of the total hegemony of any culture, a hegemony that goes beyond any conscious cultural ideology that it is possible to question and includes "... not only the conscious system of ideas and beliefs, but the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominate meanings and values" (Williams 109). Hegemony in this sense dictates "... our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. ... It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society. ..." (Williams 110). The lived hegemony, the sum of the conscious and unconscious values of a culture, form the basis for domination and power and the basis of submission within that group.

The more obvious the cultural belief, the less reason there is that it be consciously expressed, and it remains unexamined. The human mind seems to regard some beliefs as too obvious to be stated, but, which beliefs those are, differ from culture to culture. These are a culture's
underlying assumptions, the most basic of basic beliefs, so fundamental that they need not be consciously considered. One set of such underlying assumptions have been what we call today patriarchal beliefs, and we are conscious of them today only because they have begun to be challenged. Among the patriarchal assumptions are the beliefs that males are superior to females, and that logic (considered a male attribute) is superior to intuition (considered a female attribute).

Djuna Barnes wrote in a time when phallocentric values were little questioned both in our general culture and in the culture's literary criticism. Phallocentrism was the basis for contemporary hegemony, not only in Western culture, but universally. Although early feminists had challenged patriarchal power and early Marxism had promised to address the inequality of women, the women's movement in America had become focused on suffrage, and the bright promise of Marxism brought about little meaningful change in the lives of women. Within the patriarchy, women constituted a subordinated class. Daily, in a thousand subtle and not so subtle ways, the subordination of women was reinforced.

In Western literature and literary criticism, male critics treated the writings of women as they treated women's bodies, "... an intellectual measuring of breasts and hips" (Ellman 29). To say that a woman wrote as well as a man was usually intended as praise, yet to call a man's writing "feminine" was an ultimate insult. "The word
feminine alone, like a grimace, expresses displeasure . . ." (Ellman 37), especially when applied to literature. Instead, good writing was said to be virile. The male writer was the norm, and in most cases the female writer was relegated to a "subcategory status," reflecting "a double standard in literary criticism . . ." (Register 9), an extension of the double standard that governed male and female behavior in society at large.

By the 1960's, however, the women's movement had again focused conscious attention on phallocentric attitudes. Women's consciousnesses—and those of some men—had been raised. People began to recognize sexism as a mode of discrimination that was present in practices that had previously seemed innocuous. Sexism in literary criticism was given a name—phallic criticism—by the newly emerging feminist critics. Yet, during the first half of the twentieth century a misogynous attitude prevailed toward female writers, an attitude that differed little from that of Samuel Johnson who, when comparing the accomplishments of a woman to a dog's walking, marveled not that it was done well but that it was done at all. Yet, sexism in the literary tradition of the first half of the century was not perceived as malicious; rather, it was the norm, and, as such, expressed the unabashed and deeply engrained phallocentric assumptions of an androcentric culture.

Within the unexamined patriarchy, the interests of the dominant group (males) are viewed by the dominant and
submissive members alike as the true or natural interests of the culture as a whole. Viewing themselves through the eyes of the dominant group, the submissive members saw their own interests as unimportant, except in so far as they contributed to the interests of the dominant group. Assumptions about what was good or right or just or natural depended on what was in the best interest of the dominant group. Thus, within the patriarchy, women viewed themselves through the eyes of men, and its was the portrayal of the subordination of women as natural that perpetuated their status as secondary, marginal human beings, "the second sex."

As for the "third sex" or "the love that dare not speak its name," patriarchal societies are also homophobic, and prejudice was considered a proper response. Until recently, homosexuality was viewed not as an alternative lifestyle, but as an illness, a perversion, or a sin. Many in our culture still consider it so. Today, however, homosexuality is practiced more openly. Politicians are forced to consider the "gay" vote as a viable political force. Yet many homosexuals who practice their lifestyle openly still must fear for their jobs and other violations of their civil rights. Many others still live a closeted, double existence. In the first half of this century, homosexuality was practiced, but seldom openly. Even in Paris and Berlin, homosexuality was an underground lifestyle that coexisted with prostitution as part of what the dominant culture considered the seamy underside of modernist decadence. In England and America
the public opinion toward sexuality in literature (witness the now seemingly ridiculous obscenity trials) and certainly toward homosexuality was particularly straight-laced. In the case of a writer like Djuna Barnes, who dealt openly with sexuality in forms that many regarded as perverse, as well as with homosexuality, the deck of wide public acceptance seemed stacked. "Oscar Wilde did not write his homosexuality; he merely practiced it . . ." (Field 69). Barnes not only practiced it, but she also had the audacity to write about it openly. Yet, in her early work, like Gertrude Stein, Barnes used obscure language as a means of keeping those who did not know any better from knowing what she was writing about.

The first book by Djuna Barnes

... The Book of Repulsive Women, appeared as Number 20, Special Series, of the Chap Books in November 1915 . . .

There was nothing in the poems or drawings that tempted the censor who was clearly nodding, for there is no American book published in the first twenty years of the century that would have been more susceptible to censorship. . . . [T]here was certainly in all the English-speaking countries as late as 1915 an extraordinary reticence on sexual themes in literature. . . .
Barnes had boldly and deftly taken advantage of public inability to comprehend what such images might portray. . . . Like Queen Victoria when her advice was sought on the legal position of lesbians, the American censors evidently couldn't even imagine the offense.

(Field 67-69)

It would be easy to dismiss Barnes' lack of popular acceptance on the prudish, puritan values that characterized America in the first part of the century, yet to do so would be misleading. Although Barnes' work was widely reviewed and often received complimentary reviews, with the exceptions of T. S. Eliot, Joseph Frank, and Kenneth Burke, Barnes' work was seldom treated by major academic critics. Much of what has been written about Barnes' work has been the homage of other writers. Generally she was respected and admired, but like all American women writers, with the exception of Emily Dickinson, she never became part of the literary canon.

Despite his conservatism and Nightwood's treatment of controversial issues, T.S. Eliot came to admire the book, and it is largely on the merit of his high regard, expressed in the book's introduction, that Nightwood has continued to enjoy what popularity it has as a minor and little known classic. Eliot was involved in the publication of Barnes'
book and had to be concerned with the book's financial as well as artistic success.

T. S. Eliot was not enthusiastic at first. He did become so, though it must be kept in mind that this enthusiasm would have to be tempered by his acquired English reserve, and also his knowledge of the considerable boardroom fight he would have before him on the grounds of both the novel's subject and its commercial prospect. . . .

[T]here were fears voiced that the novel might be banned and thus produce a considerable loss.

(Field 212-213)

Nightwood was reviewed by Edwin Muir in The Listener and by Dylan Thomas in Light and Dark. The reviews were positive. Eliot's introduction was reprinted in The Criterion.

The Spectator (November 27, 1936) compared Nightwood with Virginia Woolf's work and said: '... it is clear that a writer of genuine importance has made herself known to us.' Reviewing in The New English Weekly (April 29, 1937), Desmond Hawkins
wrote: '--It conveys a more intensive concentration than any woman in this century has achieved.' (Field 212-214)

Yet these and many of the compliments that Barnes received carried an implied condescension to Barnes as a woman writer and revealed the assumption on the part of the reviewers, that the norm for the writer was male and that a female writer was an anomaly, reflecting the "double standard in literary criticism . . ." (Register 9), an extention of the double standard governing the expectations of inequality in the achievements of men and women in society at large. Innocently enough, Dylan Thomas called Nightwood "'. . . one of the three great prose books ever written by a woman'" (qtd. in Field 20), illustrating that, as Mary Ellman points out, "'. . . there must always be two literatures like two public toilets, one for men and one for women" (33).

Apart from Eliot's favorable introduction, the most important critical treatment of Nightwood was that of Joseph Frank. Frank's treatment of Barnes' work first appeared in 1945 in The Sewanee Review and was later reprinted as part of Frank's book, The Widening Gyre.

The thesis of The Widening Gyre centres on the concept of a spatial rather than simple and sequential narrative as something held in common by the great works of modernity. It
is a considerable virtue of Frank's work that it so easily and naturally places Barnes beside the accepted masters of Modernism, Eliot, Joyce, and Proust. According to Frank, *Nightwood* has been constructed on the same structural principle as *Ulysses* and *À la recherche du temps perdu*.

(Field 145)

Thus it is that the two most important critical treatments of *Nightwood* approach the work on its own merits and do not categorize it as a work by a woman.

Because of the entrenchment of the male literary establishment, the years between the publication of *Nightwood* and the publication of Barnes' last major work, *The Antiphon*, did nothing to mitigate the sexism inherent in the reviews. In 1958, James Burns Singer in his review in *The Times Literary Supplement* commented that

*The Antiphon*, because of its uncompromising bitterness and its equally uncompromising language, is even less likely than *Nightwood* to prove popular, but it is probable that there will always be one or two eccentrics who think that it gives its author the first place among women who have written verse in the
English Language

(182)

Thus is granted to Barnes the dubious honor bestowed by those of doubtful taste of being the best among the sub-category of women writers of English verse. The implication stands, that she was good--for a woman.

In our culture most living things are divided on the basis of gender. In some languages even non-living objects are gender designated by language, and patriarchal culture restricts the division of all things into two genders even if empirical evidence does not conform to such a neat duality. As Jacques Lacan says, we as human beings all must line up on one side or the other within our culture on the basis of gender. However, within the patriarchal culture the female is always regarded as secondary, as derivative from the norm, the standard, which is male.

Within the patriarchal context and even within the growing feminist context there is nothing unusual about the consideration of a woman writer as a woman writer. Yet, in the past, to view the woman author as a sub-category has been to relegate the woman writer to the outer fringes of the literary tradition or to omit her from the mainstream of the literary canon altogether. It is my intention to treat Djuna Barnes as a woman writer, for her gender as regarded by the society in which she lived formed the context for her writing. However, I propose to view Barnes, the female writer, as different, but not secondary or supplemental
to mainstream male culture, as equal and whole, rather than incomplete, deficient, or lacking in any respect.

Today feminist critics are challenging the exclusion of most women writers from the mainstream of the literary canon.

In challenging the adequacy of received critical opinion or the imputed excellence of established canons, feminist literary critics are essentially seeking to discover how aesthetic value is assigned in the first place, where it resides . . . , and, most importantly, what validity may really be claimed by our aesthetic 'judgments.' What ends do those judgments serve, the feminist asks; and what conceptions of the world or ideological stances do they (even if unwittingly) help to perpetuate?

(Kolodny 15)

Yet, if women have not been included in the mainstream of the tradition, one must remember that the tradition of any culture is "... a selective tradition: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a preshaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (Williams 115). The tradition is not inclusive, but exclusive and selective,
relegating to the margins, racially as well as sexually, those writers not within the white male mainstream. Thus non-white and non-male writers with few exceptions have been relegated to the margins and ignored, except as a subclass of writers. In order to understand more fully why women are automatically regarded as secondary, as a subclass, while the male is regarded as the norm against which the female is measured, one needs to examine the basis of the patriarchy and its power.

Sexual differences are non-hierarchal biological differences that exist in nature; the values we attach to biological differences as gender are the creation of culture. In language, gender is often associated with inanimate objects that have no biological sex or with living creatures, regardless of individual sex. La chat is la chat and le chien is le chien regardless of the sex of the individual cat or dog. As far as human beings are concerned, however, gender is determined according to the specifications of the particular culture and the individual becomes within the culture a semiotic unit. "Each new generation must learn and become its sexual destiny, each person must be encoded with its appropriate status within the system" (Rubin 183). "The individual, even prior to his or her birth, is always already subjected to the structure into which he or she is born" (Coward and Ellis 3).

Anthropology, and descriptions of kinship systems, do not explain the
mechanisms by which children are engraved with the conventions of sex and gender. Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, is a theory about the re-production of kinship.

(Rubin 183)

Psychoanalysis explains how gender is produced in the human subject—or, more accurately, how gender is supposed to be produced, for the theoretical model offers less than a comfortable fit for human reality. Those that do not conform to the theoretical model are judged by psychoanalytic theory to be neurotic and those who exhibit extremes of nonconformity to the theoretical model are said to be psychotic. Psychoanalysis, like linguistics, claims to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. Yet its very judgment that those who do not conform to its culturally derived definition of normal are considered to be abnormal (a judgmentally loaded word), labeled either neurotic or psychotic, indicates that, in the end, psychoanalysis is as prescriptive and ideology ridden as the most prescriptive English grammar. Psychoanalysis is a grammar of the psyche. Some constructions are correct; other constructions are incorrect, for despite what linguists say, all dialects are not ideologically equal.

Rosalind Coward and John Ellis in *Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject* and Gayle Rubin in "The Traffic in Women:"
Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" offer similar explanations of why non-hierarchical biological differences have in human culture resulted in hierarchical gender relations and the subjugation of women. Both begin by citing Lévi-Strauss' theory of the exchange of women.

Lévi-Strauss begins not from the established 'family unit,' but by positing the 'universal' incest taboo and resulting exchange of women. . . . Lévi-Strauss claims that women are exchanged between one family and another, creating bonds of mutual obligation and relation, instead of being kept by the brother for himself. He can find no society where this does not take place: there is always exchange of women by men. . . . It is an exchange (one woman for another) which takes place over generations, amongst a whole social group, and for small tribes it is the principal form in which the society is held together.

(Coward and Ellis 16)
Another important element in Lévi-Strauss is the division between Nature and Culture. Woman in human society upsets the Nature-Culture polarity.

Woman transgresses the division between Nature and Culture by her reproductive capacity: she is at once natural, because of reproductive capacities, and equally entirely cultural, speaking, thinking and acting as human.

(Coward and Ellis 19)

Gayle Rubin, too, cites Lévi-Strauss' *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, with its explanation of the exchange of women as the cornerstone of culture, as central to any explanation of sexuality as completing what it means to be female in contemporary culture. "The place to unravel the system of relationships by which women become the prey of men is in the overlapping works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Sigmund Freud" (Rubin 158). Lévi-Strauss' *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* expands the theory of Mass' *Essay on the Gift*. To Mass' theory of the exchange of gifts as the basis of social intercourse, Lévi-Strauss adds that marriage--the exchange of a woman--was "a most basic form of gift exchange" (Rubin 173).

It is a book in which kinship is explicitly conceived of as an imposition of cultural organization upon the
facts of biological procreation....
Since Lévi-Strauss sees the essence of kinship systems to lie in an exchange of women between men, he constructs an implicit theory of sex oppression.

(Rubin 170-171)

Basic to Lévi-Strauss' theory is the incest taboo, yet the incest taboo "... is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister, or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister, or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of the gift..." (qtd. in Rubin 173). Thus the relationship of marriage is not between a man and a woman, but rather a relationship between men or groups of men who make the exchange. "If women are the gifts, then it is men who are the exchange partners. ... [W]omen are in no position to realize the benefits of their own circulation" (Rubin 174). According to Lévi-Strauss, "... the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners..." (qtd. in Rubin 174). Men may exchange women, but women have no power over themselves. "The 'exchange of women'... places the oppression of women within social systems, rather than in biology" (Rubin 175). A society based on the exchange of women as ours still is (the father of the bride is still asked, "Who gives this woman?") is one in which men exercise rights over women that are not reciprocated and that women do not have in themselves. "In this sense, the exchange of women is a
profound perception of a system in which women do not have full rights to themselves" (Rubin 177). Rather than a division of labor based on biology, Rubin sees a division of labor based on sex as creating gender.

... the social organization of sex rests upon gender, obligatory heterosexuality, and the constraint of female sexuality... Gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes.

(Rubin 179)

The social invention of gender encourages the view of male and female as opposites rather than as similar beings with some differences. The viewing of male and female as polar oppositions is not a reflection of any "natural" opposition as it is made by the patriarchy to seem, but is an invention of culture.

Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires regression: in men, of whatever is the local version of 'feminine' traits; in women of the local definition of 'masculine' traits. The division of the sexes has the effect of repressing some of the personality
characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women.

(Rubin 180)

Not only does a hierarchical division of gender repress masculine traits in women and feminine traits in men, but, as a logical extension, leads to "the suppression of the homosexual component of human sexuality" (Rubin 179) throughout the society, but especially for women. "As long as men have rights in women which women do not have in themselves, it would be sensible to expect that homosexuality in women would be subject to more suppression than in men" (Rubin 183).

Within each social system the person is a semiotic unit, properly encoded as male or female, giver/receiver, or gift. Psychoanalysis offers an explanation of how the individual is appropriately encoded. The basis for the critique of psychoanalysis by feminists is that psychoanalysis has turned descriptive theory into prescriptive theory. For the woman in patriarchal culture, Freudian psychology is a guide to living with oppression. For women, fighting the oppression is discouraged by being labeled abnormal. "According to the Freudian orthodoxy, the attainment of 'normal' femininity extracts severe costs from women" (Rubin 184). Although the attainment of "normal" masculinity exacts a cost also, the male is compensated by the superior status conferred by the phallus. According to Jacques Lacan, "Freud's theory was about
language and the cultural meanings imposed upon anatomy" (Rubin 188). Neither kinship nor human sexuality are totally biological functions. Both are dependent on cultural conventions and in this sense are semiotic systems.

In Lacan's scheme, the Oedipal crisis occurs when a child learns of the sexual rules embedded in the terms for family and relations. The crisis begins when the child comprehends the system and his or her place in it; the crisis is resolved when the child accepts that place and accedes to it. Even if the child refuses its place, he or she cannot escape knowledge of it. . . . When the child leaves the Oedipal phase, its libido and gender identity have been organized in conformity with the rules of the culture which is domesticating it.

(Rubin 189)

The concept of castration is central to the Oedipal crisis, and the phallus, according to Lacan, becomes the symbolic "distinctive feature differentiating 'castrated' from 'noncastrated'" (Rubin 191). Yet Lacan "... makes a radical distinction between the penis and the 'phallus,' between the organ and information" (Rubin 190). The penis is an anatomical organ. "The phallus is a set of meanings
conferring upon the penis" (Rubin 190). The function of the penis is biological, but the function of the phallus is semiotic.

The presence or absence of the phallus carries the difference between two sexual statuses, 'man' and 'woman'. . . . Since these are not equal, the phallus also carries a meaning of the dominance of men over women. . . . Moreover, as long as men have rights in women which women do not have in themselves, the phallus also carries the meaning of the difference between 'exchanger' and 'exchanged'. . . . We still live in a 'phallic' culture.

(Rubin 191)

The woman is the medium through which the phallus is exchanged, passed from father to son.

The 'phallus' must pass through her, since the relationship of a male to every other male is defined through a woman. A man is linked to a son by a mother. . . . Every relationship between male kin is defined by the woman between them.

(Rubin 192)
As a result of the Oedipal crisis, both male and female children must abandon the mother as a love object. "She 'belongs' to the father (Rubin 193), so she is equally unavailable to either the boy or the girl, yet as they emerge from the Oedipal crisis male and female children find "that the two genders do not have the same sexual 'rights' or futures" (Rubin 193). In abandoning his Oedipal desire for his mother, the boy gains the right to the expectation of "a woman of his own."

In exchange for the boy's affirmation of his father's right to his mother, the father affirms the phallus in his son (does not castrate him). The boy exchanges his mother for the phallus, the symbolic token which can later be exchanged for a woman. . . . The social contract to which he has agreed will eventually recognize his own rights and provide him with a woman of his own.

(Rubin 193)

For the girl, however, there awaits an unpleasant discovery about her assigned gender.

For the boy, the taboo on incest is a taboo on certain women. For the girl, it is a taboo on all women. . . . The mother, and all women by extention, can only properly be loved by someone
'with a penis' (phallus). Since the girl has no 'phallus,' she has no 'right' to love her mother or another woman, since she is herself destined to some man. She does not have the symbolic token which can be exchanged for a woman.

(Rubin 193-194)

She is the gift; therefore she can never be the giver nor the recipient, and "she accedes to the place of a woman in the phallic exchange network" (Rubin 195). Not all girls sign the social contract, but those who do not are labeled abnormal by Freudian psychology. Thus while psychoanalysis claims to be merely descriptive, it backs up the patriarchal social contract by stigmatizing those who refuse to go along. For the "normal" woman, Freudian psychology provides a prescriptive guide to living with oppression. Enjoying oppression requires masochism, and masochism is central to Freudian psychology's claims about the feminine psyche. "The psychoanalytic theory of femininity is one that sees female development based largely on pain and humiliation. . . . (Rubin 197)

Uniting the theories of Freud and Lévi-Straus, Rubin concludes:

Kinship systems require a division of the sexes. The Oedipal phase divides the sexes. Kinship systems include sets of rules gov-
erning sexuality. The Oedipal crisis is the assimilation of these rules and taboos. Compulsory heterosexuality is the product of kinship. The Oedipal phase constitutes heterosexual desire. Kinship rests on a radical difference between the rights of men and women. The Oedipal complex confers male rights upon the boy, and forces the girl to accommodate herself to lesser rights.

(Rubin 198)

For feminists, the whole crux of the matter is the overvaluation of the phallus as the symbol of male rights over women. Devaluation of the phallus cannot take place until the rights of men over women are obliterated, at which point the phallus will be empty of value and will disappear into the penis as simply one among the distinctive features distinguishing men from women. There is no use fighting the symbol, when it is its content that is oppressive. The symbol is not the enemy--what the symbol stands for is. Women must come to control themselves and no longer allow themselves to be commodities of exchange.

French feminist Luce Irigaray states:

The trade that organizes patriarchal societies takes place exclusively among men. Women, signs, goods, currency, all pass from one man to another. . . .
Heterosexuality amounts to the assignment of roles in the economy: some are given the role of producing and exchanging subjects, while others are assigned the role of productive earth and goods.

(110)

"When the penis itself becomes simply a means of pleasure . . . the phallus loses its power" (Irigaray 108).

Goods can only enter into relations under the surveillance of their 'guardians.' It would be out of the question for them to go to the 'market' alone, to profit from their own value, to talk to each other, to desire each other without the control of the selling-buying-consuming subjects. And their relations must be relations of rivalry in the interests of tradesmen.

But what if the 'goods' refused to go to market? What if they maintained among themselves 'another' kind of trade?

(Irigaray 110)

According to Rubin, the current sex-gender system has outlived its usefulness. It is anachronistic. The organization of sex and gender once . . . organized society. Now,
it only organizes and reproduces itself. The kinds of relationships of sexuality established in the dim human past still dominate our sexual lives, our ideas about men and women. . . .

(Rubin 199)

But we are in a position now . . . to seize control of the means of sexuality, reproduction, and socialization, and to make conscious decisions to liberate human sexual life from the archaic relationships which deform it.

(Rubin 200)

According to Julia Kristeva, "... the very dichotomy man/woman as an opposition between two rival entities may be understood as belonging to metaphysics" ("Women's Time" 33). Helene Cixous continues in the same vein:

This opposition to woman cuts endlessly across all the oppositions of culture. It's the classic opposition, dualist and hierarchical. Man/Woman automatically means great/small, superior/inferior. . . . In fact, every theory of culture, every theory of society, the whole conglomeration of symbolic systems--every-
thing, that is, that's spoken, everything that's organized as discourse, art, religion, the family, language, everything that seized us, everything that acts on us--it is all ordered around hierarchical oppositions that come back to the man/woman opposition, an opposition that can only be sustained by means of a difference posed by cultural discourse as 'natural,' the difference between activity and passivity.

(44)

Cixous comments on the marginality of women, saying that "... for Freud/Lacan, woman is said to be 'outside the Symbolic': outside the Symbolic, that is outside language, the place of the Law, excluded from any possible relationship with culture and the cultural order" (45-46).

The Freudian view of sexual identity is based on patriarchal assumptions and implicitly assumes that the current organization of sexuality could not be otherwise, characterizing civilization as inherently patriarchal (Balbus 170). "The feminist theoretical task has been to historicize Freud's theory, i.e., to demonstrate that the conditions that produce a patriarchal form of the struggle for sexual recog-
nition are not universal or inevitable but, rather, historically contingent. . . " (Balbus 170). Thus, contrary to Freudian theory, the present patriarchal social organization is not the only human possibility.

If Freud's assumption of the universality of the oedipus complex enables him to illuminate the pervasiveness of patriarchy, it also forecloses him or anyone else who accepts this assumption from theorizing about the possibility of its eventual demise. Thus the assumption is necessarily inconsistent with the feminist project, and feminists have called it into question. . . . [T]hey have sought to determine the historical specificity of the oedipus complex in order to be able to account for why civilization has been patriarchal in the past but why it need not be so in the future.

If patriarchy reproduces itself through the internalization of the equation 'phallus = power,' then the claim that patriarchy is universal amounts to the assertion of the
universality of this equation. Freud never adequately defends this assertion; he never explains convincingly why the phallus assumes such a privileged position, why it everywhere signifies the presence of power, why in his words, 'for both sexes, only one kind of genital, namely the male, comes into account.' (Balbus 178)

The valorization of the phallus is ultimately a valorization of presence, and hence it seems natural that feminists may feel that they have found an ally in their battle against Freudian theory as prescriptive theory in Jacques Derrida.

According to Derrida, Western thought is based on a structure of hierarchical relationships. Western thought, says Derrida, has always been structured in terms of dichotomies or polarities: good vs. evil, being vs. nothingness, presence vs. absence, truth vs. error, identity vs. difference, mind vs. matter, man vs. woman, soul vs. body, life vs. death, nature vs. culture, speech vs. writing. These polar opposites do not, however, stand as independent and equal entities.
The second term in each pair is considered the negative, corrupt, undesirable version of the first. 
... Hence absence is the lack of presence, evil is the fall from good. 
... The two terms are not simply opposed in their meanings, but are arranged in a hierarchal order which gives the first term priority, in both the temporal and qualitative sense of the word. In general, what these hierarchal oppositions do is to privilege unity, identity, immediacy and temporal and spatial presentness over distance, difference, dissimulation and deferrment.

(Derrida, Dissemination, Trans. Introduction viii)

Western cultural thought structures do not operate on the basis of pure difference (differance) as in the difference implied in Saussure's statement that "in language there are only differences" but on the basis of positive-negative polarity that privileges the first of the polar pair over the second and defines the second as a negative or the negation of the positive term. Furthermore, in Western thought such privileging is seen as "natural," itself a privileging term—so "natural" it seems that one is not
conscious of doing it. The "natural" is linked with the "good" in the Western moral value structures. In a purely differential relation both terms are purely relational and known by their difference. But Western thought takes one term to be a positive term and the second term is defined only by its negative relation to the positive term. The negation or negative of a positive term "naturally" or "logically" will be a negative term. Such a logic "naturally" defines women according to Luce Irigaray as "Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un."

Derrida's attack on logocentricism and ethnocentrism in Western culture was followed by an attack that may prove to be of great importance for feminist critics, his attack on Western culture's phallogocentric bias. What is at the basis of phallocentrism is the binary opposition thought pattern, the exposure and critique of which is the cornerstone of Derrida's deconstructive stance. The mind set of binary opposition that organized experience into positive-negative hierarchical pairs is ethnocentric, logocentric, and phallocentric. It is also the mind set associated with the digital rather than the analog. The digital is associated with "rational" thought and the phallocentric valorizes the rational, binary opposition of the digital over the relational mind set of the analog. As Anthony Wilden explains, "Analog differences are differences in magnitude, frequence, distribution, pattern, organization. . . . Digital differences .
.. can be coded into distinctions and oppositions. . ."
(169). The digital is associated with reason and the
objective, either/or mind set, while the analog is
associated with emotion and the subjective, more or less,
relational differences (Wilden 192-195). Qualities
associated with the digital mind set are those valued
by patriarchal culture. Herefore, the male cultural
point of view has been the prevailing point of view in
Western culture.

For women the internalization of phallocentric values
has resulted in self-alienation. Woman is not only viewed
as "Other" by man, but by herself as well. The most subtle
tool of the patriarchy is language itself, for it programs
the values of the patriarchy into our minds. "Constituted
before we are born, linguistic and cultural systems impose
orders and structures upon us as we come into language"
(Leitch 12). Indeed, language limits what it is possible
to think, and the parameters of the patriarchy are programmed
into each individual consciousness with the acquisition of
language. This, according to the late French psychoanalyst
Jacques Lacan is precisely what happens when the child
acquires language and submits ultimately to The Name of the
Father. Like Derrida, Lacan was influenced greatly by
Saussure. Lacan combined Freud's Oedipal-castration theory
of childhood psychosexual development with Saussure's
linguistic theory. "We enter into a network of preexistent signifiers. . . . This network is the very condition of language" (Leitch 12). Yet for Lacan the phallus is "the signifier of signifiers'. . . . This transcendental signifier is therefore the signifier of all signifieds . . . ." (qtd. in Leitch 32). Lacan identifies "the name of the father" with "the figure of the law" (67). Lacan is concerned with the discourse of the subject, the object of which is the mother, defined as absence or lack. The essential absence, according to Lacan, is the phallus of the mother—more specifically, the phallus that the mother lacks. Although Lacan states that the phallus is not really the penis, he nonetheless asserts that in a conscious recognition of genital difference a child acknowledges what seems to be the absence of the genitals of the mother as opposed to the visible presence of the genitals of the father. Recognizing, as Lacan theorizes, the superiority of the phallus, the superiority of presence over absence, the child rejects the mother and identifies with the symbol of power, the phallus, the name of the father, on which social order and law are based. Freud's and Lacan's theory may work for an explanation of the psychosexual development of males, yet, as Anthony Wilden comments, "... what is entirely missing from the castration theory, is a critical understanding of the oppression of women it entails" (285).

For Lacan, the recognition of genital difference, together with the end of the stage of the mirror and language
acquisition, accounts for the child's passage into what Lacan terms "The Symbolic Order" characterized by the internalization of the linguistic capacity of signification. According to Lacan, the passage into the Symbolic is irreversible. Like paradise lost, one can never return to the pre-linguistic, pre-oedipal unity of infant consciousness. Yet Julia Kristeva does not view the pre-linguistic phase, which she calls the semiotic as simply anterior to Lacan's Symbolic Order. Kristeva posits "a dialectical relation which places the semiotic inside the symbolic as a condition of the symbolic. . .'" (qtd. in Feral 10). Thus the semiotic is not abandoned or left behind as one passes into the Symbolic, but remains a repressed core of the Symbolic. Kristeva acknowledges that women must enter the Symbolic in order to exist within the present social structure. Yet, according to Kristeva, the semiotic is not so fully repressed of the maternal body, by permitting it to reemerge . . ." (Feral 10).

Although technically or medically, gender is determined by presence, the presence of a vagina or the presence of a penis, in our culture the penis alone serves as the sign of gender by its presence or its lack. Within the patriarchy, the male is the norm and woman is marginally human, an object of exchange, fragmented into feminine functions defined by relations to males. Women and children are objects of exchange and production in patriarchal culture,
"the first property," Marx says, pointing out the "latent
slavery in the family" (52), but apparently the last also.
Socialist governments may come, but patriarchy remains,
and women remain objects of exchange; women cannot be par-
ticipants in any system so long as they remain as objects
to be circulated.

According to Isaac D. Balbus, "... contemporary
Marxists err in assuming that the material basis of the
patriarchy is to be found in capitalism, and that socialism
will therefore destroy patriarchy (78). Thus Marxist
tradition has failed to adequately explain the dynamics of
the patriarchy.

According to this tradition, the
domination of men over women is, at
bottom, a function of the mode of
production; the opposition or antagonism
between the sexes is rooted in the an-
tagonistic form within which human beings
perform their labor. Any effort to
demonstrate this proposition ... fails
because it presupposes the very sexual
opposition it purports to explain. The
Marxist tradition begs precisely that
question that must be answered by an
adequate theory of patriarchy: how and
why is sexual difference between men and
women transformed into a hierarchical
opposition in which men are in the dominant and women are in the subordinate position?

(Balbus 169)

Freudian theory, at least, answers the question that Marxism fails to address and offers an explanation of the dynamics of the patriarchy.

Whatever its limits, Freud's theory provides an account of precisely that reality that the Marxist approach fails to uncover, namely the process through which woman becomes the subordinate other of man. In the course of the struggle for sexual recognition, both the boy and the girl are obliged to interiorize the equation 'phallus = power' and to learn to draw the appropriate conclusion, i.e., that the sex that possesses the phallus has the power and the one that lacks it does not. Thus do men come to define women as inferior and women come to interiorize this definition.

(Balbus 177)

What is really basic to Freudian theory is that both boys and girls must give up the desire for the mother. What is problematic is what society offers in exchange.
To the boy it offers the promise of a woman. To the girl it offers the promise of a baby. Both are, in the eyes of the potential recipients, objects, not subjects. Yet what is more important is the difference in status offered the boy and the girl. The boy will never be made into an object—something that can be given to someone else; the girl will. The fact remains that the girl will be given something, but to get it she will have to become an object herself and be given to a man. The girl must give up any hope of autonomy. She will never be anything but an object, whereas it is the boy's destiny to become the supreme subject.

The power of men to define women as inferior is, from Derrida's point of view, an exercise in the metaphysical power of privileging presence over absence. The privileging of the phallus as the transcendental signifier is a hierarchical privileging of presence with its corollary assumption of absence as inferiority rather than difference. "The cornerstone of Lacan's theory is the bourgeois family and bourgeois intersexual power relations" (Ryan 106).

Lacan stops short at the presently existing definition of bourgeois family roles without seeing them as . . . produced in history and active in maintaining the power relations necessary for a determinate socio-economic system. That system requires
reversal, simply because the rationality of bourgeois sexual power relations which Lacan finds so appealing is itself a form of pathology.

(Ryan 107)

Michael Ryan describes the woman of Lacan's system as "a proletarian within phallocracy; she is defined by her lack of ownership. . . . By defining her condition as one of lack, the phallocrat reassures his own possession" (108). Lacan's description of the Symbolic Order makes the power structure of the family "... seem natural and, by implication, insurmountable" (Ryan 110). "The father's authority which results in the penis becoming the privileged signifier, is a symptom of a wider cultural phenomenon of domination" (Ryan 110). Thus Derrida opposes what he calls "'phallogocentrism,' the power of the white male and rationalism . . ." (Ryan 157). What Derrida proposed as an alternative is a relational, differential, contextual mode of thought (Ryan 154).

The male epistemological stance, which corresponds to the world it creates is objectivity: the ostensibly noninvolved stance, the view from a distance and from no particular perspective, apparently transparent to its reality. It does not comprehend its own perspectivity. . . .
The objectively knowable is object.
Woman through male eyes is sex
object, that by which man knows him-
self at once as a man and as subject.

(MacKinnon 537-538)

"To be man's other is to be his thing. . . . [T]he
problem of how the object can know herself as such is the
same as how the alienated can know its own alienation"
(MacKinnon 542). "Male power is real; it is just not what
it claims to be, namely, the only reality" (MacKinnon 542).
"Feminism has unmasked maleness as a form of power that is
both omnipotent and nonexistent, an unreal thing with very
real consequences" (MacKinnon 543).

Feminists who discuss the differences in the ways in
which boys and girls separate from their mothers--that is,
pass through the pre-oedipal and out of the Oedipal phase--
conclude that males differentiate by denying the maternal
leading to a world view quite like that described by Derrida
as phallogocentric.

This world view emphasizes difference
over sameness, boundaries over fluidity.
It conceives of polarity and opposition,
rather than mutuality and interdependence,
as vehicles of growth. . . . [I]t does
not tolerate the simultaneous experience
of contradictory impulses: ambivalence.
Finally, this world view does not grant
the other person the status of
another subject, but only that of an
object. . . . In these psychic
tendencies, the basic elements of
Western rationality take shape:
analysis of differentiation; duality
or polarity; and objectivity.

(Benjamin 149-149)

What all this means for the feminist critic is that new
modes of criticism, especially the basic values of Derrida's
deconstructive criticism, offer new ways of countering the
traditional Western male-dominated domain of literature and
literary criticism. One need not be a Derridean or a
deconstructionist to find value in Derrida's critique of
phallogocentrism and to use that critique in exposing the
basis of the subordination of women in patriarchal culture.
As pointed out by Annette Kolodny, male readers often have
difficulty with women writer's works because they are not
familiar with the experiences or the means of expression.
In semiotic terms, this means the understanding of female
codes, and according to Cesare Serge "... to be competent,
a reader must either share or at least be familiar with, 'in
addition to the code language . . . the codes of custom, of
society, and of conceptions of the world" (qtd. in Kolodny
13). "Males ignorant of women's values or conceptions of
the world will necessarily, thereby, be poor readers of
works that in any sense recapitulate their codes" (Kolodny 13). "Historically, the result has been the diminished status of women's products and their consequent absence from major canons" (Kolodny 14). Language, language use, and language interpretation are not "sexually neutral." There is a "crucial link between our gender and our interpretive, or reading strategies" (Kolodny 14). Essentially, according to Kilodny, the feminist approach to a text is one of pluralism, of using all that is available in critical strategies to help ask of a text questions which the feminist critic feels are necessary to ask. Exploring the worlds of women and the roles of women in those worlds has been a major task of feminist criticism. Works by women tell of a world from a feminine point of view, one to which many times men cannot relate and therefore dismiss as incomprehensible or irrelevant. Most often women's writings covertly or overtly expose the brutality and insensitivity of the patriarchy. Here, too, is a reason why men often find women's works impossible to understand. To many men, patriarchal values turned upside down seem reprehensible or so incomprehensible as to be unrecognizable. Other times women writers reject feminine roles for women characters, and, when women characters do not conform to proper stereotypes, they are viewed by male readers as unrealistic or incomprehensible.

For a woman within the patriarchy, writing involves the breaking of a taboo. It is the telling of that which
must not be told, the forbidden, and she often speaks indirectly in symbols and metaphors. For women, writing can be an interior communication to reach that part of the self that remains hidden. Writing is a means of self-discovery, yet writing is Promethean and entails risking the exposure of that part of the self that culture has taught does not exist or should not exist—the part that has power and can be forceful. For a woman to desire such power or to reveal such power is counter to the patriarchy's cultural message to and about women. The result is often a convoluted writing—a writing in which there is a double tension—to reveal and to conceal at once which enfolds upon itself.

For a writer like Djuna Barnes whose work is in one way or another the story of her life, the telling of the story is heavily invested. The closer she moves toward the core of her own truth, the more difficult it seems to confront it directly. Yet Barnes seems compelled to tell her story and that of her family throughout her works. As her biographer Andrew Field states, "Such a life. Dostosovsky and Faulkner even working together probably couldn't have invented it" (194). Having lived it, however, Barnes did not have to invent it, but told it over and over in different guises. Pulled in two directions at once—by the compulsion to tell (perhaps in order to make sense of it) and by the compulsion to obscure—the telling becomes oblique. She muddies the water, making it murky. Often
one must be quick to catch it, for her story flashes quickly and illusively like a subliminal message. The hidden "thereness" of something dimly perceived, the shadow, chiaroscuro, the fleeting epiphany--these are the essence of the writings of Djuna Barnes. Her waters run deep, and the reflection of the light off the surface only conceals what lies at the bottom of it all.

To tell and to conceal as one tells is human. In dreams, we tell, yet in such a way as to render much of the meaning unintelligible to the conscious self. In psycho-analysis there is the constant resistance to the telling of a "truth" too painful to face or which is beyond the ability of the consciousness to comprehend. Yet, for many, to look one's "truth" in the face by telling it is the only hope of exorcising the self of the past, and Djuna Barnes transforms such a telling into art.

Most readers and critics focus their attention on Barnes' treatment of homosexuality and classify her as a "lesbian" writer. Yet the tabooed subject of lesbian love, as important as it may be in Barnes' writing, may only distract from the more deeply buried treatment of an even more tabooed subject which haunted Barnes' life, that of attempted paternal incest.

In the first half of this century, paternal incest was not talked about. Although many of Freud's patients told him of such attempts and he at first believed them, later he changed his mind and chose to believe that they had
imagined such incidents as a form of wish fulfillment. To have the daughter desire the father as the son desired the mother fit perfectly with Freud's superimposition of the male oedipal theory of sexual development onto his female patients. Such desires, he theorized, would naturally give rise to such wishes and fantasies.

The patriarch of modern psychology stumbled across the incest secret in the early and formative years of his career. It was Freud's ambition to discover the cause of hysteria, the archetypal female neurosis of his time . . . . In 1896, with the publication of two works, The Aetiology of Hysteria and Studies of Hysteria, he announced that he had solved the mystery of female neurosis. At the origin of every case of hysteria, Freud asserted, was a childhood sexual trauma.

(Herman 9)

But Freud later rejected this theory.

Recognizing the implicit challenge to patriarchal values, Freud refused to identify fathers publically as sexual aggressors. . . . Scrupulously honest and courageous in other respects, Freud falsified his incest cases. . . .

(Herman 9)
In 1897 Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fliess that he had rejected the incest-seduction theory, although it meant admitting that his initial theory had been mistaken (Herman 10). At the moment that Freud turned his back on his female patients and denied the truth of their experience, he forfeited his ambition to understand the female neurosis. Freud went on to elaborate the dominant psychology of modern times. It is a psychology of men. The incestuous wishes of the male child, his hostile rivalry with his father, and the struggle to master these feelings and enter into the world of men became the central focus of psychoanalytic inquiry. . . . Since much of psychoanalytic theory originated in the refusal to validate a common and central female experience, it is not surprising that Freud and his followers were never able to develop a satisfactory psychology of women.

(Herman 10)

Since Freud's discovery and repudiation of paternal seduction, father-daughter incest has been rediscovered twice more in the present century, once by the famous Kinsey study and more recently by the feminist movement. Their attitudes vary sharply. The Kinsey study, voicing the attitude of the patriarchy, tended to minimize the
seriousness of paternal incest, blaming any harm done to
the child on "... prudish parents and teachers who caused
the child to become 'hysterical' ..." (Herman 16). The
third and final rediscovery of paternal incest has been in
recent years by the feminist movement. This time the focus
of the discovery and the conclusions are very different.
We are now hearing about incest from the point-of-view of
the victim—"... those who feel themselves burdened with
unspeakable secrets ..." (Herman 3). "Without an under-
standing of male supremacy and female oppression, it is
impossible to explain why the vast majority of incest
perpetrators ... are male, and why the majority of victims
... are female" (Herman 3).

Father-daughter incest is not only the type
of incest most frequently reported but also
represents a paradigm of female sexual
victimization. The relationship between
the father and daughter, adult male and
female child, is one of the most unequal
relationships imaginable. It is no
accident that incest occurs most often
precisely in the relationship where the
female is most powerless ... .

(Herman 4)

In 1908, at the age of sixteen, Djuna Barnes
apparently experienced such an attempted paternal rape.
This incident is described in several drafts of her works
but is most fully elaborated in a draft of her last play,
The Antiphon (Field 43). "It does not take much to understand why this tale of cold and stupid horror has always remained the story behind the story in Barnes' writing, either removed or disguised or only obliquely told" (Field 193-194). The episode is central to Barnes' writing and to Barnes' life, yet to focus totally on the attempted father-daughter incest would be to ignore influences and relationships that were also important to her life and her writing. Equally important as the massive betrayal of trust that characterized the father-daughter relationship was the betrayal of the mother-daughter relationship when her mother did nothing to prevent her rape by a surrogate of her father's choice. Both Ryder and The Antiphon recount the family drama, although from very different perspectives and in very different styles. 

It is only in Nightwood that the family drama is relegated to the background and Barnes' lesbian relationship with Thelma Wood occupies center stage.

Thus, based on her own experiences, Djuna Barnes exposes the brutality of the patriarchy and rejects the traditional roles of women as defined by the patriarchy. In her three major works, Ryder, Nightwood, and The Antiphon, she depicts women as being subjugated by traditional roles and she depicts women circumventing the power of the patriarchy by living out non-traditional roles. Her three major works depict women characters either crushed by, rejecting, or rising above and transcending traditional
roles of women. Women in Barnes' works are portrayed as victims or as characters that live on the margins of social order. Her victims and her marginal characters serve equally to expose the patriarchal social order that, until recently, we have taken for granted, but now recognize as a malignant, destructive force that can be overcome.
CHAPTER II

RYDER

Ryder is too intelligent, too entertaining, too well constructed to require apologists; all it requires is intelligent reading. (Scott 78)

Ryder has been called "a tragedy of women" (L.B. 282), but ultimately it is a tragedy of human folly. The title character, Wendell Ryder, is a super patriarch who seeks to go backward to an Adamic patriarchy where all life issued from a single father. Ryder's purpose is to populate the world with his offspring and create a new breed of "human" that will restore the time before human was separated from beast. His new race will be both human and beast and will reunite the human with its animal origins. Ryder is bawdy and ribald in its sexual levity, yet Wendell Ryder is a pitiful creature, for he does not recognize that his enterprise is doomed from the start and doomed finally by his clash with prevailing social values when Wendell is forced to choose between his wife and his mistress.

Wendell's purpose is the production of progeny, and his philosophy is polygamy, not in the sense of having many wives, but in the sense of scattering his seed as widely as
possible into as many wombs as possible. In every mating Wendell assumes success—that nine months hence his labor will bear fruit and that he can know and claim the fruit of the womb as his own, as the race of Ryder.

While on the surface Ryder is the story of a robust disseminator of seed among women, it is also an anti-patriarchal account of those women, their children, and the effect of Ryder's philosophy on their lives. In Ryder it is shown that women suffer both directly and indirectly as a result of their position within the patriarchy. The only ones who do not suffer, or those who suffer least, are shown to be independent women, usually women of marginal social status, who have removed themselves from a position vulnerable to the power of the patriarchy.

Published in 1928, Ryder is a novel, a long narrative of over 300 pages, broken into fifty short chapters. Most of the chapters progress in chronological order and serve to advance the narrative of the Ryder family. Yet other chapters represent digressions from the plot and deal with the themes of the novel or in some cases are used to establish character more clearly. Also there are epistolary chapters, all in the form of letters from Wendell Ryder's wife's sister, Ann, whom Amelia left in England when she went to live in America with Wendell and his mother, Sophia. Ann always asks in her letters for news from Amelia's family, but there are no letters from Amelia included, although Ann does refer at times to what Amelia
has written to her. The epistolary chapters and the digressive chapters are clearly imitations of earlier novelistic conventions—imitations of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollet. Not only does the style of writing in the novel rely on imitation of these writers and others, for example, Chaucer, Sterne, Rabelais, Joyce, and the King James Version of the Bible, but the structure of the book also parodies earlier forms (Scott 77; Kannenstine 39). Barnes herself commented about Ryder, "'I am writing the female Tom Jones'" (Field 127). Both Tom Jones and Ryder exhibit a rollicking attitude toward sexuality. Also there is the episodic quality of both, and both, at least on the surface, are high spirited and comic. As Fielding said in his dedication of Tom Jones, "... I have employed all the wit and humour of which I am master in the following history; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices" (Fielding xvii). It could be said that on one level Barnes has done likewise. Barnes also imitates Fielding with frequent direct address to the reader, in the explanatory titles of her chapters, and in the overall tone in cheek tone that pervades her work. Yet for Ryder there is no happy resolution. Ryder ends with Wendell backed into a corner from which there is no satisfactory exit.

Besides Fielding and the epistolary influence of Richardson, one finds in Ryder the stylistic influence of Chaucer. Most notable, "Chapter Ten: The Occupations of
Wendell," done in Chaucerian style is the tale of Wendell complete with mock medieval spelling, and sprinkled with medieval word usages which are footnoted. Ryder also parodies Biblical prose. In "Chapter One: Jesus Mundane," the narrator addresses the reader in a form that mixes the Sermon on the Mount with Job. Mostly in the form of the New Testament sermon, the style mimics that of Matthew 5,6, and 7 as well as the Gospel according to Mark. Yet the warnings of the inadequacies of human knowledge echo the book of Job.

In a sense, Ryder is autobiographical. Yet the character Julie, who is Djuna Barnes as a child, is a minor character, and Ryder is by no means the story of Julie. Still it is the story of Julie's family and the story, more or less, of Djuna Barnes' family, slightly skewed. Most of the characters have their parallels in historical fact. Names and characters are shifted, but the incidents, although fictionalized, have some basis in fact. The story is told with interruptions in chronological order, but the story of Ryder is the story of the Barnes family with all its eccentricities. Barnes' family and personal history, elaborated and rearranged, would occupy Barnes throughout her career. Ryder is but the first instance.

When Ryder first appeared, it was described in the reviews as a Rabelaisian romp through bawdy sexuality, a glorification of polygamy, a lusty story of wenching featuring its wide-ranging male hero, Wendell Ryder,
presumably a rider of women. Thus on the one hand Ryder appeared to glorify the sexual freedom of a lusty male, yet it is the story of the suffering of women caused by this man, and on a larger scale the story of the suffering of women in a general sense as a result of male privilege in a patriarchal society. It is an indictment of the inhumane privileges of patriarchy and it is an indictment personally of Wald Barnes, Djuna Barnes' father, on whom the character of Wendell Ryder is clearly based.

"Miss Barnes hated her father." "Djuna Barnes believed two things: that women are not good; but men are much worse" (Field 31). Andrew Field describes Djuna Barnes' father as carrying ". . . a damp sponge on his saddle to wipe himself after intercourse whenever the chance presented itself, as it evidently did at several stops in the region" (Field 181). The sponge on the saddle is mentioned in Ryder in chapter ten. As Barnes admitted,

'Yes, Ryder and Titus, they are my father. Where did the basic story come from? From my life. Every writer writes out of his life. Ryder is my father. And Titus. Ryder is a foolish man who wants to get rid of all the whores--doesn't believe there should be any--and has this perfectly ridiculous notion. Ryder is one of
those impossible people who are going
to save the world--how can anyone save
the world?' (Field 185)
There was one important difference
between reality and Ryder. Miss Barnes
told Scott, and that was simply that
the family left Cornwall-on-Hudson
because they ran out of the minimal
amount of money they needed rather than
that the local Puritans were out to
get her father for living in sin and
refusing to send his children to
school, though it was true that he was
under attack for both these things.
The critical event that dislodged the
unruly family was the death of Wald's
wealthy brother, Justin, in 1907, be-
cause they were, of course, living on
his estate. (Field 185)

A critique of the patriarchy, Ryder is primarily
anti-patriarchal in content, yet it is also deconstructive
of phallocentric values in that it presents a series of
binary oppositions in which the primary term valued by
the patriarchy is opposed by a traditionally devalued
secondary term. In Ryder the most basic binary opposition
is male/female, but other pairs of opposition include
religion/myth, man/animal, heterosexual/homosexual,
wife/mistress, truth/lie.

The novel opens with a "religious" chapter, "Jesus Mundane." In a parody of Biblical style, the narrator warns against grandiose schemes (such as Ryder's) and cautions, "Go not with fanatics. . . . Go thou, then, to lesser men. . . . Thy rendezvous is not with the Last Station, but with small comforts. . . (Barnes, Ryder 1). Ryder is reminded of his mortal limits and of the dichotomy of the image to which man has access and the ultimate reality which lies beyond the scope of human knowledge.

Reach not beyond the image. For these idols and these lambrequins and these fluted candles . . . and the altar, and the chancel, and the nave, and the aisles, are not for thee in spirit, but for thee only in the outward manifestation; nor are the Beasts for thee . . . nor for thee the bleeding heart. . . . Neither shalt thou have gossip with martyrs and saints and cherubim. . . . For some is the image, and for some the thing, and for others the Thing that even the Thing knows naught of; and for one only the meaning of That beyond That. (Barnes, Ryder 2)
The tone throughout the chapter is reminiscent of the book of Job, for the emphasis is on the smallness of individual man within the vastness of creation. Foreshadowed is Ryder's hubris in thinking that he could change creation and give rise to a new race of men.

Some things are not meant for human knowledge, among these "... why thy kine have an unknown regard from under their eyelids, or why the hawk flies among its feathers, and the fishes have a hard smile with their mouths, and go forward always" (Barnes, Ryder 3). Thus Ryder is warned not to go beyond the limits of human knowledge, and Ryder's later attempt to communicate with the animals and to reunite animal and human life, healing the rupture that occurred with the Fall of Man, would seem a violation of this admonition.

Ryder lives in a post-lapsarian universe, but as we will learn later at the end of the novel he does not realize that he is fallen. Mistaking himself for a second Adam, he believes that he can restore the world to its pre-lapsarian unity. Even Christ did not restore paradise lost on earth, but offered the promise of paradise regained in Heaven. Thus the hubris of Ryder looks beyond Christ. Ryder would be a new Adam and would regenerate the fallen world. What Ryder must accept at the end of the novel is his fallen state and the fact that he must live like other men.

Ending the series of admonitions, the narrator
instructs Ryder,

Go now, and lift up thy cries from
about me. . . . And speak not of Me,
for thou knowest not of what thou
speakest . . . thou knowest not where
thou beganst to ravel and where I
catched thee up on my needle. (Barnes,

*Ryder* 4)

The ways of God are closed to man. "These things are as
the back of thy head to thee. Thou hast not seen them"
(Barnes, *Ryder* 5). Man can behold images, but he cannot
understand creation, God, or even himself totally. There
always remains the blind spot of the self. Ryder is ad-
monished not to overstep the boundaries between mortal
and immortal, man and animal, finite and infinite. He is
exhorted to accept himself as he is and not to exceed his
limitations.

Yet in "Chapter Ten: The Occupations of Wendell" the
admonitions of chapter one are disregarded. In his
desire to populate the world with a new race of Ryders,
Wendell imagines having as many children as there are
pieces on a chess board or cards in a deck. If his wife
Amelia and his mistress Kate do not bear a sufficient
number, "'the night/ Is large with wenches. . . .'") (Barnes,

*Ryder* 69).

In this chapter *Ryder* addresses the opposition
between human and animal, and depicts Wendell's attempt
to overcome this opposition. Wendell treats his animals, his children, and his women alike. It is his wish "'That child and cattel fodder from one bin,/ For kine, he held, were kith, and infants kin'" (Barnes, Ryder 69). Just as Wendell pierces the ear lobes of his ladies "'That in their lobes might a jewel hang'" (Barnes, Ryder 71), likewise he pierces the noses of his cattle and hangs them with hoops to attract the bulls. The chapter ends with Wendell's attempt to establish communication between men and animals so that animals would no longer be slaughtered for food. For Wendell there is no difference between men and animals. Wendell questions why they should be regarded differently.

That animal and man be set apart?
I hear not muche difference in the heart
That beates soft and constant under hide
And this same hammer ticking in my side!

(Barnes, Ryder 77)

Wendell reasons that if the animals can be taught to speak, they will no longer be killed and eaten.

That nevermore your throat v-corve is none
For man be fright to pick the rack of bone
That to him spoken has...

(Barnes, Ryder 83)

When he ends his speech, the animals seem to understand and communicate not with words but with their eyes. Hisodalgus, his horse, lifts his feet to Wendell's
shoulders "And looked into his eyen deep and long" (Barnes, Ryder 84).

"Chapter Forty-six: Ryder--His Race" continues to address the question of man's relation to animals. The narrator ironically treats the eating of animals as an erotic sacrifice, for "of all carnivora man holds woman most dear" (Barnes, Ryder 270).

To see some sweet creature couched in splendour putting away sides of ox, fills him with pure ravishment . . . does she not eat, that through her office slaughter may be transfigures?

Has not some ox closed its great and downy eye, that she might fix an orb of disquietude upon her lover? Some fin, in dark water ceased to wave, that she, with beckoning hand, might take some gallant prisoner?

What rib could do that for itself which she has done? (Barnes, Ryder 270-271)

Recalling the admonitions of the first chapter and man's subordinate relationship to God, we are reminded that "All things whatsoever prey upon all things, and for man there is nothing that on him preys but God..." (Barnes, Ryder 271).

After his "conquest" of Lady Bridesleep, who, though
willing, is well past her prime, Wendell boasts: "'I, my love, am to be Father of All things. For this I was created. . . .'" (Barnes, Ryder 277). He describes to Lady Bridesleep, who he finds later to his disappointment will not bear his child because she is past the age of childbearing, what the new race of Ryders will be like.

"Now this is the Race that shall be Ryder—those who can sing like the lark, coo like the dove, moo like the cow, buzz like the bee. . . . Never before have all these sounds been common to the human, but I shall accomplish it; some shall have the milk-tooth, and some the canine. Some shall be prophets, some sophists, some scoundrels, some virgins . . . though never one bourgeois or like to other men as we now know them, but at the futile pitch of genius. For this I was created, and to this will I cleave. My children shall come forth, grow, rise, decline and fall in a manner hitherto unknown to man. . . . They shall be legend and folk-tale, and stories told at sundown. They shall follow the hounds, and herd with the beasts and know the way of birds and fish. They shall be flesched with all fleshes now alien to man
and unknown, and shall be by that flesh made so tender with wisdom that they shall know how the hoof strikes, the fin cleaves, the wing soars, the paw runs, the claw clings, and the web swims. No heart shall strike with a difference, for they shall have hearts within hearts; ox heart and robin heart." (Barnes, Ryder 277-279)

Thus it is Ryder's intent to heal the rift between human and animal existence, making his animals more human by teaching them speech and bringing out the animal nature in his children.

In other chapters, too, we find other characters metaphorically bridging the gap between animal and human. One such chapter is "Chapter Twenty: Amelia Dreams of the Ox of a Black Beauty" which recounts a post-partum dream of Amelia following the birth of one of her children. She dreams of a room with religious trappings, an image of Christ, a Bible, one tapestry with Friars and another with Adam and Eve. On a mahogany bed a woman lies sleeping, her hands crossed upon her breast. The ox, Black Beauty, enters the room, goes to the bed, and lies down beside the woman saying "'I am also'" (Barnes, Ryder 123).

And she unclasped her hands and cried aloud, and rose up beside him. And he
said, "Give me a place in your Saviour."
And his shadow was over the ceiling, mournful and splendid. And she said, "Go away and do not try to defile me, for I have time in which to think, but you must labour."

And the ox answered her, saying, "Give me a place in your God, or I go to acquaint him that I am, and he will damn himself in me, for there is need of that also."

And she rose up from beside him, her hair all about her, and went toward the candle and the crucifix, and could not go, and she turned and turned about in the chamber, taking things up and laying them down, and the Beast saw how it was with her.

And he let his feet down and went forth from the bed, and stood before the crucifix and knelt upon his knuckles. A slow downwards way a shadow moved on the ceiling, which was his head going inward and downward, and he spoke for her saying:

"Remember the woman." And he rose up and went out, down the long steps
of the chamber, walking softly and closely, and his shadow went with him, and his feet. (Barnes, Ryder 123-124)

The dream is mystical in its imagery and reminiscent of the religious tone of the first chapter. The linking of blackness with a beast of labor speaks of the racism of the time. Yet the ox, the beast of labor, is portrayed as beautiful and more humane than the woman, who in her fear of defilement cannot pray for him. His prayer echoes the New Testament prayers of Christ. Clearly in Amelia's dream the human/animal dichotomy is inverted. He is the Beast become human, kneeling and bowing his head in selfless prayer.

Also biblical in style is "Chapter Twenty-three: Wendell Tells the Mystery to Julie and Timothy" in which Wendell describes fetal development and tells the children of their own births.

And time passed and there were ears
... and time passed and gave it feet and hands ... and she was brought to great pain and to bed ... and was delivered of him, in the time of cries and blood, and that which was a bond was cut. ...

And its name was called Timothy.
And the second time these things
were upon the man and upon the 
woman, and she went apart again and 
continued to the ninth month, and 
was again brought to bed and emptied 
of that which was affrighted, and 
comforted, and which whimpered and 
which slept.

And its name was called Julie.

(Barnes, Ryder 131)

As part of its religious/mythical dichotomy, Ryder 
contains many prehistoric tales and creation myths. In 
her version of prehistoric times Amelia, however, em-
phasizes the beauty of creation prior to the existence of 
man who would be the despoiler of nature and a slayer or 
animals. According to Amelia's account the world was a 
better place prior to man. Nature and the animals were 
untouched by the dominion and violence man would intro-
duce into the world. The world was free, fecund, and 
peaceful without man.

"In the beginning was the jungle, 
with thick flowers and thick leaves, 
and the roots of things went down 
into a heavy tiger-pawed earth, and 
on the branches sat the puma, duke 
of the morning, and through blood-red 
lilies went the wild cat, and the 
slender-hoofed deer, and wild cows,
whose teats had never served man, and
the bellowings and the trumpetings and
the roarings and screechings, went
forth in one sound that was a band of
strength against the unknown quantity
that was, one day, to be the slayer.
There time rotted on the stem of night
and day, and the water ripened on the
branches of the ocean; there with
weight of unseen swift flying, making
terrible his feathers came the night-
bird through the thick groves, and
clove them as oil is cloven and records
not the break, and stood and pecked
and pecked softly and swiftly at the
earth that trembled under no footfall
of man and, pecking, went his way, with
little speckled feathers dwindling
into the dark." (Barnes, Ryder 146-147)

"Chapter Twenty-seven: The Beast Thingumbob" con-
tinues the theme of mythic prehistory, but from Wendell's
point of view in the form of a story he tells Timothy and
Julie. The Beast Thingumbob, a mythic combination of
opposites, is a beast with wings and paws, feathers and
fur, full of compassion and wrath who one day finds
himself in love with a creature known as "'the Cheerful'"
who is equally strange. "'Her feet were thinly hoofed,
and her hair was many coils, and her face was not yet and her breasts were ten'" (Barnes, Ryder 150). Fathered and mothered by the underworld, "'... she had no seam in her soul...'" (Barnes, Ryder 150). She extracts a promise from The Beast that he will bury her, for their mating and her bearing of ten sons will bring about her death.

'And so it was that Thingumbob rose up in the dawn and plucked his sons from her belly, and carried them to his nest, and there daylong and nightlong he sits above them, the smoke of his sorrow boiling above the trees, his eyelids shaking under, for he knows her gift to him was the useless gift of love' (Barnes, Ryder 153)

When Timothy asks what the story means, Wendell replies, "'much and little, like all wisdom'' (Barnes, Ryder 153).

Later Timothy echoes his father's view of animals when he says,

'The features of beauty have passed from man's face, but an animal, here and there, recalls them. All beasts have the holy look who have their eyes on either side, for they are apart and contrive not together, and the one sees not what is seen by the other and mix not their roots--the ox and the
goat, the lamb and the deer--'

(Barnes, Ryder 245)

Thus it is that the animals, not man, are holy. Man is
fallen, but the animals remain as God created them.

In "Chapter Forty-four: Fine Bitches All, and Molly
Dance," Molly, a breeder of dogs, tells Wendell her own
unique story of creation, mixing the biblical, the mythic,
and evolution.

"In the beginning, this was a great
world, so history tells us, and what
we can pick and glean, from the peelings
and pits left scattered about, of its
first days. Water was all over the
place, and not a strip of land to put
a train to, or a spot to build a
store on. Then one day came Jonah,
out of a whale's mouth . . . no sooner
had the whale put Jonah down (and he
was a sight, for he was the First Man,
all decked out in olive branches and
briars, and a crown of thorns, and his
underneath all scaled, for everything
was fish in that time) . . . down four
angels, each holding to a corner of
land about the size of an acre, came,
and unrolled the ends . . . . And it
was stuck full of grass and flowers
... and the trees... whistling, as they came through the air, and waving their branches for all to see, and the birds hanging on like grim death, all singing: 'Glory, Glory, hallelujah...'." (Barnes, Ryder 255)

Thus Molly mixes the story of biblical creation with the story of Jonah and the whale. Later, according to Molly, Jonah's scales turned to feathers, then fur, and finally skin, as Molly mixes her version of biblical creation with evolution. Next is created the human race when Jonah has a vision.

'And in his vision he saw a lake of crystal, and out of it coming a woman all dressed up in ribbons, and hee-hawing like an ass, which is the sirens' song. So Jonah waded out into the lake of crystal, and had a word with her, and before you would say nip and tuck, the place was swarming with the human race.' (Barnes, Ryder 256)

Molly whirls through the history of the world with "God tossing up the sun every minute, which was a day, and it falling back again, which was a night, because things moved swiftly, that the nations might get started"
(Barnes, Ryder 256). Then
'... down in the cornfield Cain
suddenly slew Abel, and no sooner had
murder been discovered, than Cain's
frontal bone split asunder, and
poetry began walking up and out of
the place, and everyone began to sing,
and the animals came down.' (Barnes,
Ryder 257)

Previously, the animals had been in the sky for lack of
land, and all the beasts, claimed Molly, moved in for-
mations like ducks in the sky.
"... but when they heard Jonah
reciting, they came down, and stood
about him, listening and wondering
mightily to hear such lovely matter,
and before you could believe the
evidence of your eyes, Jonah had
domesticated many of them, so that
the lion lay down with the lamb ... and Jonah was well pleased. But
there was one animal who did not come
down, and he was the Hound of Heaven
... and he ran a beaten path, his
nose to the stars, hunting down the
Star of the North, which was surnamed
'Knowledge of good and evil,' . . ."

(Barnes, Ryder 257-258)

According to Molly, the Hound of Heaven did not come down until Jonah discovered fire.

'Jonah struck the first match . . .
and down come the hound like a whirlwind, and snapped up the fire in his mouth . . . and Jonah put him in chains . . . and because he was caught by cunning and not by beauty, he has been man's slave ever since.' (Barnes, Ryder 258)

When Wendell asks if that is the end of it all, Molly replies that Britain ended it all.

'Up sprang John Bull, England on his right hand and Ireland on his left, and there's never been peace since. . . . It's why we have fish on Friday, in a blind effort to eat up the seat of the trouble, for you remember the whale was the fish that began it all.' (Barnes, Ryder 258-259)

When asked about Original Sin, Molly replies that it was man and not woman who caused it. "'It was an apple, surely, but man it was who snapped it up, scattering the seeds, and these he uses to this day to get his sons by'"
(Barnes, Ryder 259). Wendell accuses Molly of being all mixed up, but as Molly, a true pluralist, has explained earlier, "'I've one way in my head and you have another, and the world's the world for all that, and what you think is fine, and what I think is fine, and better suited to my purpose, so where's the harm?" (Barnes, Ryder 254).

Also mixing the religious with the mythic is Matthew O'Connor's account of the funeral mass following the death of his brother Felix.

"The candles took root and grew and rose toward the ceiling, and bloomed and wilted and died, and the ceiling grew and mounted and bloomed and wilted and died, and came down. And the stars came out on the great pillars of the candelabrum, and slid with them and dwindled and flickered and stood once more about the bier, the soft bodies of mourners in woolly clothing kneeling. And suddenly the lights poured and grew and rained down in the Dead March, Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam! The figures at the altar blurred, crossed, melted into each other; fornication of the mass, parted and bred Death's wailing child of wax, lying in a bowl of wine, mouth open for the gushing breast of
brief, pouring forth the Word in an
even belt of wrath. The sacred cow
swam in the shallow chancel, a garland
on his brow, lowing, In peace let him
rest! The church turned upside-down."
(Barnes, Ryder 177)

The mixing of religious, biblical, mystical, and
mythic imagery blurs the distinctions that the patriarchy
would impose upon them. Religion and myth are not treated
as binary oppositions with religion privileged over myth
or the biblical privileged over the mystical. Myth and
mysticism are mixed with traditional religious and
biblical imagery. The traditional difference in value is
erased as they are mingled. In Molly's account of
creation, the biblical is made mythical, in Matthew
O'Connor's account of the mass the traditional trappings
of the church are turned upside-down, and in Amelia's
dream the traditional religious symbols are mixed with a
mystical symbolism. Thus traditional religion has no
priority over the mythic in Ryder.

Likewise the traditional opposition between man and
animal is breached. Although the first chapter of Ryder
warns against man's attempt to delve into the mysteries
of animal life, Wendell's scheme moves in both directions,
to make his offspring more animal-like as he explains to
Lady Bridesleep and to make his animals more like humans
by teaching them to speak. Of course, Wendell fails in
both attempts. The animals seem to understand his speech, but they reply with silent looks, not words, and, although some of Ryder's children exhibit a unique bond with the beasts of the fields, they are in no way like the beast-human hybrids that Wendell predicts. Yet the novel, through Wendell's desires and failed efforts, brings into focus the traditional polar opposition between human and animal and presents it not as an opposition, but as difference.

Another opposition in Ryder is that of heterosexual/homosexual embodied in the tormented, gentle character of Dr. Matthew O'Connor. O'Connor is the doctor who assists at the deliveries of all the Ryder children. The women he attends are so impressed by his tenderness they consider it unfortunate that he does not have a wife of his own. Yet, when Amelia speaks to him of this, O'Connor bursts into tears and says, "'It's always been my wish . . . to be called Hesper, first star of the evening.' And with that he arose and went away" (Barnes, Ryder 156). Thus Amelia unwittingly discovers the doctor's transsexual desire, and subsequently, O'Connor is uncomfortable around the women to whom he had been such a consolation.

In "Chapter Thirty-two: The Soliloquy of Dr. Matthew O'Connor (Family Physician to the Ryders) on the Way to and From the Confessional of Father Lucas" we are given insight into the misery felt by O'Connor as a result of the conflict between his homosexual orientation and his deeply
felt Catholicism. He describes himself in his youth, '... when I first came down the aisles swinging my tin hips, see me, Matthew O'Connors, holding my satin robe about my backsides, tripping up to God like a good woman, and me only seventeen and taking on something scandalous for the way my sins were with me!' (Barnes, Ryder 172)

Yet when he confesses to Father Lucas, the double entendres of Father Lucas would lead one to believe that he is quite sympathetic to O'Connors problem and may be more empathetic than O'Connors realizes.

O'Connors confesses his sins to Father Lucas, whom he calls "a Moll of God," and there are sexual implications in Father Lucas' exhortations to O'Connors, "'Go, my daughter, he says, and love thy fellowman'" (Barnes, Ryder 173). "'Visit me often, he says, and I'll give you comfort and kind words and a little consolation that shall inch thee on thy way a bit ... '" (Barnes, Ryder 174). Never is there any condemnation of O'Connors or his actions. Father Lucas exhibits only compassion towards O'Connors misery and his inability to accept himself as he is.

O'Connors leaves Father Lucas, but soon returns with yet another confession in which the imagery of sex and religion are totally mixed.
"Yes, Father, and please you I've done it again, and this time it was with Fat Liz, him as keeps bar in a gophered boudoir cap . . . and saying his pater-nosters and crying his te deums in a roaring whisper through his nose, because the bridge of it is all gone and eaten away by the whacking snuffing of coke . . . . And night long there was his soul and mine tossing and tossing, until the great wave came and receded, and there was nothing for it but to beach upon our stranded shoals, says I, and both of us rolling our eyes and praying fast and thick and trying to scramble back into the Grace of God, out of sight and mind come twenty minutes, breathing like we had been pushing each other for all we were worth getting to absolution and control, please Father, Son and Holy Ghost, it was a terrible race! And us coming in neck and neck, looking for the score." (Barnes, Ryder 175)

Ending with another double entendre, O'Connor is advised by the priest to "'cling to the pillar of righteousness, and shut thy mouth against the flesh of thy brothers whirled
down the vortex of time..." (Barnes, Ryder 176).

The source of O'Connor's misery is his inability to accept himself as he is together with his belief that his desires and actions are sinful. Yet the patriarchy is very clear in its suppression of homosexuality, and so long as O'Connor accepts the patriarchy's view, he remains divided against himself.

The major opposition presented in Ryder, however, is that of male/female. Wendell is presented as the embodiment of the patriarchy in its most extreme form. His phallus is his primary attribute, the instrument by which he intends to accomplish his purpose of producing as many progeny as possible. His penis as Wendell describes it is a "...spherical, timbersome pipe of a single stop, the core of the codpiece. How many notes fly through a woman at its orchestration!" (Barnes, Ryder 216). For Wendell, women are the means of production. They are many and they are expendable. One woman is interchangeable with another, for their purpose so far as Wendell is concerned is to bear children, yet childbirth is often linked with death in Ryder, emphasizing the victimization of women by their function as the bearers of children.

We have already noted an association between birth and death in Wendell's tale of The Beast Thingumbob and the death of the Cheerful as she bears his ten sons. The first association of death with childbirth, however, occurs in chapter two when Wendell's grandmother dies giving birth to
her fourteenth child. The tone of the chapter is light and humorous in contrast to its darkly serious subject. The chapter flashes back to her wedding night when she fell asleep before her husband entered the bed. "And she awoke with a cry and said, 'Oh!'--and there we draw the curtain, until she said 'Oh!' again, in like manner, all in due time, near unto nine months, the one 'Oh!' being the mother to the other" (Barnes, Ryder 8). The years of childbearing have taken their toll on her. "Now with her fourteenth, madness crept upon her, for the bearing of fourteen is no small matter, and she called for her daughter, Sophia. . . ." (Barnes, Ryder 8). Realizing that she will not survive the birth and suspecting that Sophia (Wendell's mother) is pregnant, she asks her to nurse the baby after her death. Sophia does so and remembers her mother as she gives birth, beginning that which her mother had finished.

The second instance linking death with childbirth is "Chapter Thirteen: Midwives' Lament, or the Horrid Outcome of Wendell's First Infidelity." Only eleven lines of verse, it tells the story of an unnamed woman,

Who died as women die, unequally
Impaled upon a death that crawls within;
For men die otherwise, of man unsheathed
But women on a sword they scabbard to.
And so this girl, untimely to the point,
Pricked herself upon her son and passed
Like any Roman bleeding on the blade--.
(Barnes, Ryder 93)
The risk each mother takes is a risk unshared by men. Men may die killed by another man's unsheathed sword, but for the woman the baby is the sword she dies impaled upon, and she is at once its scabbard and its victim.

Another instance of maternal death as the result of pregnancy occurs in "Chapter Thirty-six: Amelia Tells a Bed-Time Story" which brings together several concerns of the novel, the motif of sisters, the doubling of women, and two women being pregnant by the same man at the same time. The two sisters of the story, Felice and Alix, are seventeen and eighteen. Impregnated by the same man who goes to bed with both of them at once (as Wendell does near the end of the novel with Amelia and Kate), they announce that they shall be mothers one minute apart, but when the predicted day arrives they die one minute apart.

Earlier in "Chapter Nineteen: Amelia and Kate Taken to Bed" we have been presented with two women in labor simultaneously, impregnated by the same man, Wendell, on the same night. In this chapter the emphasis is on the pain of childbirth, and Amelia warns Julie as her mother before her had warned her against copulation and its consequences. Amelia gives birth to a boy, cursing as ten-year-old Julie stands by, and Kate's baby, a girl, is born moments later. Kate's daughter, however, does not live and "Chapter Twenty-one: Wendell Dresses His Child" demonstrates the grief and tenderness of which Wendell is capable. Wendell dresses the dead child, carefully buttoning and fastening so that
nothing binds the child which is beyond feeling. When the child is dressed, complete with a lace bonnet,
... he walked with it from the fire on the hearth to the door. ... And the tears fell from his eyes continually, like a soft rain, for that it spoke not nor heard... for that it was born feet first, amid wailing and crying and great lamentation, from the midst of its mother. (Barnes, Ryder 127-128)

The next chapter is a song in the form of an English street ballad sung by Amelia. "The song relates to the theme of loss of a child after all the pain of delivery. This song, light and humorous, reflects Amelia's indifference to Kate's sorrow" (Scott 71). Yet it is to her own child that Amelia sings "Good night, my little boy, good night!" (Barnes, Ryder 130), unmindful of the parallel between the treatment of a child's death in the song and Kate's loss of her first born child.

Many of the women in Ryder, it may be noted, are presented in pairs. Most are sisters as in the story Amelia told of the sisters Alix and Felice as well as the most prominent sisters of the novel, Amelia and her sister Ann. Despite their rivalry, Amelia and Kate are a contrasting pair of women embodying the dichotomy of wife/mistress. Like Amelia, Kate has a musical background, but whereas Amelia's was classical, Kate's is more common. Kate had
"... played the street-organ for her mother, the buxom contralto from Cork..." (Barnes, Ryder 99). The force of her singing was such "... against her kidneys, so that she could not take her rightful place on the operatic stage, but must stand athwart the gutters, singing and ***** like a stupendous hound dog..." (Barnes, Ryder 99). We are told briefly of Kate's childhood career as an actress and of her unsuccessful marriage after running away from home. Like Amelia, she, too, left England for America and left a sister behind.

In real life the most notable of Wald Barnes' mistresses was an opera singer, Marguerite d'Alvarez. The resemblance between a publicity photo of d'Alvarez and the drawing of Kate Careless' mother in Ryder is very clear. In Ryder, however, it is her daughter, not the contralto herself, who is Wendell's mistress. Yet the physical description of Kate "(she weighed nigh three hundred pounds)" (Barnes, Ryder 182) is modeled on the real appearance of d'Alvarez, "a mountain of a woman" (Field 181). Barnes had "strong ambivalent feelings toward her mother for letting herself be a martyr in a menage-a-trois situation" (Field 179), and it is interesting to note that d'Alvarez's middle name was Amelia (Field 26).

While Kate is huge, Amelia is thin, but most important, Kate is the mistress, whereas Amelia is the wife. Yet "wife" proves to be an empty title so far as Ryder is concerned. Amelia has nothing to say about what happens
within her household. Kate is actually brought to the house by Sophia, who introduces her as her new daughter. Amelia, at that point the sole support of the family, comes home one evening to find Kate there. The house is a "log cabin in the hills of Storm-King . . . a single room with a loft and a ladder that let down for the climbing" (Barnes, Ryder 105). There were two beds each upstairs and downstairs, a stone table, four chairs, and pictures of Beethoven and Schumann. Sophia asks where Wendell is, and a booming voice is heard from the loft opening calling everyone's attention upward.

"That you may know your destiny!"
said Wendell, and they all looked up, Julie looked up, and Timothy looked up, and Sophia looked up, and Amelia looked up, and Kate looked up, and beheld Wendell standing as he was born, one foot on one side and the other foot on the other side of the trap door of the loft . . . and he leaned a little over, and laughed, and the eyes of Timothy came down, and the eyes of Julie came down, and the eyes of Sophia came down, and the eyes of Kate came down, but the eyes of Amelia did not come down.
"My God!" she said, and her eyes came down . . . and Kate sat down . . . laughing and crying, saying: "You have it very comfortable here."

(Barnes, Ryder 107)

Wendell's appearance naked straddling the loft opening is his way of telling Kate that he is her sexual destiny. Kate obviously does not object, and Amelia seems powerless in the matter. So long as Amelia and Kate remain under the same roof sharing Wendell, the atmosphere is one of tension and conflict. In "Chapter Thirty-three: Be She What She May," the tension erupts into open conflict when Kate's son Elisha assaults Amelia's youngest son Mannel. Kate defends her son despite his guilt in the matter and Wendell takes Kate's side, provoking Julie's fury which she vents on Kate.

Julie hurled herself from the house and, without word or warning, locked herself tooth, foot and nail on to the bounding front of the triumphant and mollified Kate, who swayed beneath the impact. Clinging there, all her hair about her, sobbing and digging into that mountainous flesh . . . crying loudly and wildly, for she was but fourteen, and full of youth and right, "You, and you and
you" to her father, as she set her teeth into that which he had brought to the house to torment her mother.

(Barnes, Ryder 182)

Amelia tries to stop the fight, but Wendell would not let her, for he was enjoying it.

So still cling, though her shoulders had come out of her gown, and her young breasts were mortally exposed, Julie fought on, saying over and over, nothing nor less than, "You, you, you!" to her father, for she looked not so much upon Kate as the disease as the manifestation of such emanating directly from her father. . . .

(Barnes, Ryder 182-183)

Finally, Kate sends Julie sprawling, Sophia arrives on the scene, and the battle is over. Elisha shocks them all by calling his mother a liar for defending him.

"Chapter Thirty-four: They Do Not Much Agree" is a mock heroic parody of a chivalric battle between Amelia and Kate. Both are still angry over the conflict of the previous chapter. Amelia resolves to leave, and rides off on Hisodalquis. She is confronted by Kate-Careless riding to catch up with her on one of the cows. They exchange insults. Amelia calls Kate "Pig's-bladder," and Kate calls Amelia "Goat-skin." Then they begin to fight, each
drawing blood. When Kate begins to cry, however, Amelia gallantly gives her a handkerchief, saying
'Take this, then, to your mind and mull it: the sole difference between the bastard, per se, and the child of wedlock is, that the wife may leave but the mistress cannot . . . it is the wife who may enter a house and the mistress who should stay out.'
(Barnes, Ryder 190)

Their feelings of hostility have passed and Amelia helps Kate into the saddle and they ride back on the two animals, "the one mooing and the other neighing, as they listed homewards under the trees" (Barnes, Ryder 191).

On the way home they discuss their problems sharing Wendell, and, although they are still at odds and Amelia resents Kate totally, they achieve for a moment a bond of sisterhood and Amelia agrees to speak to Wendell about his treatment of Kate. "The two women are reconciled and Amelia promises to use her influence to stop Wendell from filling Kate with spices in his attempt to turn her into 'Hot-Bottom'" (Scott 74). The truce is but temporary, however, and "Chapter Forty: Old Wife's Tale, or the Knit Codpieces" finds Amelia and Kate both pregnant by Wendell again, each sitting on either side of the fireplace, knitting not for their expected babies but codpieces for Wendell, one red and one blue. They talk
about the legitimacy of their claims upon Wendell and end brawling "... till blood flowed, and hair fell, and there were tears amid the equal anger" (Barnes, Ryder 228). Yet the dinner hour comes, and once again they stop their fighting, this time to prepare dinner for Wendell.

Thus are the days of Amelia and Kate punctuated by hostilities involving the validity of their respective claims on Wendell and the legitimacy of their children interrupted by the necessity of cooperation involved in running the household. They share Wendell, but they also share the household burdens and in doing so, despite the hostility and jealousy they feel for each other because of Wendell, they develop at least a tolerance for each other that daily cooperation necessitates.

As wife, Amelia's claim, under the laws of the patriarchy, is most justified, yet because it is Wendell's desire that his mistress Kate share the household, Amelia's claim, to which she refers continually throughout the novel, can be disregarded totally in favor of Wendell's whim. Despite the protection that the patriarchy would seem to offer women who are legitimate wives, in reality, no such protection exists, and the individual man is able to do what he will.

When the state does challenge Wendell as it does in chapter forty-seven, what they question is the fact that he is living with two women. Their concern is not the protection of the rights of the legitimate wife, but
rather the fact that Wendell has two women whereas under the law he had the right to only one. Wendell has exceeded his limit; that is their only concern. When the time comes to choose, it is up to Wendell which woman he will keep and which he will abandon. Being the legitimate wife is ultimately a worthless claim, for it is Amelia and his legitimate children by her that in the end he denies and sends away.

There is also a contrast in Ryder between wife and spinster in the difference in the lives of Amelia and her sister Ann whom she leaves behind in London when she comes to America with Wendell and Sophia. We meet Ann in "Chapter Nine: Tears, Idle Tears!" in which Ann and Amelia bid each other a tearful goodbye. Ann warns Amelia against Wendell with his ideas about polygamy, but she also doubts the fidelity of any man, even those who claim to love monogamy (Barnes, Ryder 55). Since Wendell and Sophia have no money, they will be using Amelia's money to go to America and support them there. Ann considers this a scandal and warns Amelia against a life of poverty with Wendell. Having just rejected her own suitor, Ann begs Amelia to do likewise and remain in London with her and their brother. Ann fears that she will never marry, and Amelia consoles Ann reminding her that she had ten offers of marriage before she was twenty. Yet Ann finds some fault in each suitor and at twenty-nine is still single. Amelia cautions her that one or two
faults will not make a man totally unsuitable, but Ann will not compromise her standards. She vows that she will never marry a man unless she can look up to him "... and as there are none such, into service it is" (Barnes, Ryder 64). Thus Ann chooses a life in service over a less than perfect marriage, whereas Amelia chooses a less than perfect marriage and hopes foolishly that she can change Wendell.

In the four epistolary chapters of Ryder we hear in Ann's letters about her life in service. Ann continues to be scandalized by news of Amelia's life in America, yet throughout their years of being apart the sisters remain connected through their letters.

In her first letter, Ann tells about the woman that she has last worked for who converted

'. . . from Catholic to Protestant overnight, for that she had bedded with dissension in the shape of a pair of heathen breeches, and I heard of the matter as she sat upon the commode. Now, imagine a new-blow Protestant sitting upon a sempiternal pot managing aught from her converted bottoms that would give pleasure or relief to those parts that had been Catholic all the days of their life!' (Barnes, Ryder 90)
Ann bemoans what the world is coming to. Heaven and hell are not what they once were, nor do those she encounters have "'proper fear and reverence for death, but they must add or take away from the manner and custom of going'" (Barnes, Ryder 91). "'Those bent on heaven and those bent on hell have got fearfully confused as to direction, so they do stumble into each other on the way, learning things not fitting to their separate goals'" (Barnes, Ryder 91-92). She ends the letter with an appeal to Amelia to tell her more of life in America and the exploits of Wendell.

Chapter twenty-five presents another letter from Ann that serves to contrast the lives of the two sisters, wife and paid companion in service, one in America and one in England. Ann has become increasingly fascinated by scandalous gossip and relates many juicy stories that she has heard or read about. According to Ann, it may be said that a bunion predicts rain, but here are sensitive to morals. "'I read much, for my bunion gives me pain; I can hardly set my foot to floor, and never has that bunion hurt exceeding but the news had risen in like measure to a fearful climax of impropriety'" (Barnes, Ryder 140).

She tells of her new "situation," this time as a companion to an elderly woman who is blind and halt. "'Nevertheless, once a week, regular as clockwork, my lady does drink a flagon of port, and becomes immediately most boisterous unruly (though week days she is as prim spoken
as you could wish..." (Barnes, Ryder 141). She must be physically restrained by all the household help to keep her from breaking the furniture while she laughs and talks wantonly. Ann feels she is safe from contamination from all that she hears, but she worries about the housemaid who is young and more impressionable. She fears that the present generation is the last "'... over which anyone will have control whatsoever'" (Barnes, Ryder 143). Thus she cautions Amelia to make her children obey "'... and kiss or box their ears, as the case may be!'" (Barnes, Ryder 143).

"Chapter Thirty-five: Amelia Hears from Her Sister in Regard to Timothy" is another of the epistolary chapters. It is a rambling letter of worries about Amelia's family but specifically about Timothy's having "'taken up with a half-wit, white-hair Polish Lena...'' (Barnes, Ryder 196). Wondering what the world has come to, she thinks it would be better if the world should stop "'... and all the creatures thereon stopped before they do so disgrace it, root and branch, that the Lord will have none of it whatever in another generation or more!'" (Barnes, Ryder 196). She assumes the girl to be pregnant and hopes the child will be a boy so that its mother's tendencies will not be in it. She expresses sorrow for Amelia, though "'it's the lass who pays...''" (Barnes, Ryder 197).

Mulling over the differences between men and women,
she concludes, "'This, now I do think on it, is the matter with the world, that a man's greatness do come right out bang upon us, a woman's is in her flesh and hidden. How can one expect the ways of men to go right when things are so mixed up?'" (Barnes, Ryder 198-199). She mentions Sophia's writing editorials for the Springfield Republican, which Zadel Barnes actually did, and accuses Sophia of burning the candle at both ends.

Again concerned with morality and the determination of right and wrong, she concluded that life "'... is so short that we have no time for anything but religion. And until it is different, that is all we should try to stick by, for it was built to fit the years a man lives, or I do not read by Bible right'" (Barnes, Ryder 199-200). As her letters indicate, Ann is becoming increasingly concerned with morality and religion over the years and as time passes the more pessimistic she becomes about the state of humanity and morality.

"Chapter Forty-two: Amelia Hears from Her Sister on the Misfortunes of Women" is the last letter from Ann who is having difficulty finding a suitable position. Times have changed and those who would hire her expect of her a variety of extra duties. The position of companion has become more like that of housemaid. One old lady requires "'... being read to in the tortures of the inquisition, that she may sleep of night'" (Barnes, Ryder 235).
"'Neither will she bed alone. . . . So bedded with, she must be, and many nights she does but strangle one with fears and agonies needing much reassurance. . . .'" (Barnes, Ryder 235). For Ann such duties are too much. She insists that no matter what she must have her own bed and her own room. She wonders why so many of their generation are beset with so many physical afflictions and vows that she will not lower herself to caring for the sick whose infirmities for the most part she blames on wantonness of their youth. She despairs for the times, "'. . . for I tell thee, sister, these times are not to be borne'" (Barnes, Ryder 238). She lives in poverty, and her poverty is such that her clothing is worn and she must be careful of every penny. She wonders about life in America and realizes that life in England and life in America are worlds apart.

In the different directions their lives have taken, Ann and Amelia are indeed worlds apart. Yet neither has had a satisfactory life. Wife or spinster, both suffer differently, yet both with great indignity. Whose suffering is greater is difficult to decide. Perhaps of the two Amelia has been the happier because her life though full of discord has been more stable. This stability, however, is seen to end and she will soon be faced with the prospect of being thrust out of her own home when Wendell is forced to decide between her and Kate.
Amelia and her sister Ann are both victims of the patriarchal system. Amelia is victimized by her marriage, and Ann is victimized by her lack of it. Once Amelia is married to Wendell, she must tolerate his behavior even when it becomes totally outrageous unless she is willing to forsake her marriage and seek a divorce. We see by the example of her sister Ann that the lot of an unmarried woman is not a pleasant one. In the end it is Wendell, not Amelia, who decides to end the marriage. As for Ann, we see depicted in her letters the victimization of the woman alone who does not live under the protection of a man. In the patriarchy women either belong to a man as a daughter or as a wife or they belong to no one and are free prey for all. In Ann's case, because she is not married, she is subjected to the misery of a life of service. Ann and Amelia represent opposite errors. Ann trusts no man and cannot marry one that does not meet her standards. Amelia, on the other hand, trusts Wendell too much, to the extent that she does not believe that he will practice the polygamy that he espouses and thinks that whatever his imperfections she can change him. Ann removes herself from the marketplace of marriage, but places herself in the equally distasteful marketplace of domestic service as a companion. Except that there is no sexual involvement in being a paid companion, in many ways being a paid companion bears a great similarity to marriage for a woman.
Another pair of contrasting women in Ryder are Moll and Eva, characters in a story told by Wendell in chapter forty-seven.

Molly was the good one, and Eva was the bad one... one was always going to and the other always coming from church... Well, it was Moll who was always seen coming from church, so people began to say, 'Which is the holier, she who is always going to, or she who is always coming from?'

Some of them had it that Eva was the better, for said they, it stands to reason that going to is more pleasant to the Lord than coming from. But said others, how can you tell where Moll goes, when she is coming from, or where Eva goes, when she is going to? Some maintained that, though it was true that Moll had been in devotion a moment before, as is necessary and preliminary to coming from, no one could say, once in the way of going from, where she was, or where he mind. Others said, that while Eva had never, to anyone's knowledge,
been seen on the inside of a church
during her whole life, and that some-
how, in her going to, she always went
further, still it was with a mind
turned toward, and not away from, the
holy sanctuary.

(Barnes, Ryder 186-187)

Divided on the question of whether going to is better
than coming from, the people consulted a great philosopher.
After three days of discussion, they took the philosopher
to the house where Moll and Eva lived and demanded that he
enter and solve the riddle. Finding his way through the
darkened house, he ascended the stairs. In a room dimly
lit with candles, he saw Moll and Eva upon a bed with a
baby between them. Amid candles and tiny statues of virgins
the "'. . . curtains to the bed were drawn back and
fastened with faded baby ribbon, and there was a smell in
the room of wax, and of oil, and of incense, and the bed
was full of pictures of saints and the bleeding heart. . . .''
(Barnes, Ryder 290).

'And now,' said Eva . . . 'tell the
people, who make a rubble in the town
. . . that they can go home to their
own ways of living, for the matter
is settled as to whether Moll is
the most righteous, or Eva, in that
Moll goes, and Eva comes from, for
the thing is reversed. Moll has gone to the Lord, and I have come from the Lord. . . . Moll is dead, and I'm a mother, and be damned to you and the rest!'

(Barnes, Ryder 290)

When Wendell finished, "... he so well liked his own story that it pained him greatly that it was a fabrication, and not in the way of its happening" (Barnes, Ryder 291). Thus we have introduced the polarity between truth and fiction.

What is most important in the story of Eva and Moll is the obsession of society to distinguish the good woman from the bad woman. Their concern with female purity launches them into the absurd question of whether the woman who is continually going to or the woman who is continually coming from devotion to the Lord is the purer. Purity itself is the object of their concern and it is purity that the patriarchy demands of women. The only proper function of women within the patriarchal system is reproduction within marriage, for what is essential to the patriarchy is that the father of every child be known and that the father as representative of the patriarchy be able to claim that which is his own.

Wendell violates the letter but not the spirit of the law. Although he fathers many children outside his marriage to Amelia, he does so as a polygamist and is
careful to claim paternity of all his offspring. For Wendell sex is secondary to paternity and it is for the purpose of producing offspring that he would bed as many women as possible. Yet, on three occasions Wendell is denied his desire for paternity. The first instance is with the sisters Louise in London. They reject Wendell's sexual proposal and point out that polygamy has advantages only for the man. They are amused by Wendell's sexual exploits but will not fall prey to his advances. Second, there is Molly Dance to whom Wendell proposes that she can know the father of her next child if she will allow him to be its sire. Molly enjoys Wendell sexually, but afterward reveals to him that the paternity of her child is still in doubt because Dan the policeman made the same suggestion two nights before and she accepted his proposal as well. When the child is born, Wendell is haunted by the fact that he cannot know for sure that it is his and inquires of Dr. O'Connor about its appearance hoping to learn that the child bears his features and can be counted as his own.

Lady Bridesleep, too, frustrates Wendell's desire for paternity. Like Molly, she enjoys Wendell sexually but it does not occur to Wendell that since she is past sixty she is well past the age of child bearing. "When he spoke of children, she forbore to laugh . . ." (Barnes, Ryder 273). "To Wendell there was no age to a willing woman,
the willingness spoke of fecundity" (Barnes, Ryder 273). The next morning after boasting of the race of Ryders that he claims his progeny will be, Wendell asks, "'What shall we call him'" to which the lady answers, "'Nothing and Never'. . . . 'He shall accomplish all the others leave undone. You need No Child also, my good man, all fathers have one'" (Barnes, Ryder 279).

Thus we have Molly Dance and Lady Bridesleep who are sexually free agents and who thereby escape the rule of the patriarchy. They receive pleasure from their sexuality and they depend economically on no man. They are self-supporting and do not need marriage as an economic arrangement. They are in full possession of their own sexuality and may give themselves freely or not as they wish. With them Wendell has scat-tered his seed in vain. In Molly's case the child's paternity remains questionable. In Lady Bridesleep's case there will be no child. They have circumvented the desire of the patriarchy for paternity.

Nowhere is the program of the patriarchy and the value that the patriarchy places on women more evident than in "Chapter Five: Rape and Repining" which was published prior to the publication of Ryder in transition (Kantenstine 37). A complicated chapter that parodies eighteenth-century prose style, it works on two levels at once--as a lusty "celebration of sexual activity" (Scott 66), coupled with harsh and dire warnings against
fornication. Its theme is that the fall into sexuality, whether passive or active, desired or not desired, is the way of all women. In short, willing or not, the girl will fall prey to sexuality and condemnation, for society is patriarchal and demands both the sacrifice of virginity and its price.

The setting of the chapter is Tittencote, Amelia's childhood home, but no characters are mentioned by name and the theme is universal. "A simple Rustic Maiden but Yesterday swung upon the Pasture Gate, with Knowledge nowhere, yet is now, to-day, no better than her Mother, and her Mother's Mother before her! Soiled! Despoiled!" (Barnes, Ryder 26). She is judged "... no better than Beasts of Earth!" (Barnes, Ryder 27). The narrator speaks of animal sexuality but adds: "Nay, but read me aright 'tis another Matter this! A Girl hath come to Mourning, in Spring again. ... call a Spade a Spade! 'Tis Ripe Time for it, when Unripe Woman falls to Ripening! ... come this time Nine Months. ... Damned she is, and set a-counting, her Days are numbered, and her Nights are timed" (Barnes, Ryder 27). "The Unlawful, Carnal Knowledge of a Woman (before she was teachable) has been gained, the Lad, in the full Legal sense (being but fourteen) incapable, but for all that, a Satisfaction and a Regret" (Barnes, Ryder 28).
"Girl, hast fornicated and become Wanton before thy Time?" (Barnes, Ryder 28). She is ruined, lost. "Slain you are of Slumber, and your Family mown down before that Sword of Sorrow. Thy Brother weeps amid his Diapers, and thy Father behind his Beard! No longer has thy Mother Pride . . . and you gone slipping down to Hell!" (Barnes, Ryder 28). Her ruination is the ruin of the entire family. The loss of maidenhead is family honor lost. "Great thing by Little are thus brought to Dust. . . . a Girl has brought the very Rafters and Pinnacles of her House about her Ears, her one Nocturnal Tear bringing down many in the Morning" (Barnes, Ryder 28-29).

The women of the village are portrayed as dogs, hunting down the hare, the fallen girl. "'Ear to the Ground, my Gossips! . . . Muzzles to Windward! . . . The Hare is running . . . Who is the most Infallible Pointer among you?" (Barnes, Ryder 29). They will make of her "an Example," and "She falls . . . and, like a Deer, turns face on, weeping for clemency. 'Now have at her!'" (Barnes, Ryder 30). The women bait and abuse her without mercy, and yet they abuse the system too—"'Tis a Pox and a Pity that a Woman's Wits may be scattered as Chaff, yet her Chastity well enough in one Place to bring her to Damnation!'" (Barnes, Ryder 30).

She is now worthless. In losing her virginity she has lost any value she once had. "'Thou art less than a
Farthing, and may be spent at one Ale House" (Barnes, Ryder 30). The animals, the ladies say, "'know something of it'" (Barnes, Ryder 31), yet they may judge her even more harshly. The eyes of the animals regard her. "'To the Myriad Pupil of the Fly, what can it but manifold your Grievance?'" (Barnes, Ryder 31). She is scolded roundly by the women, yet the irony is that she has done nothing that they have not also done. She has but joined their ranks.

The "Council of Women" begin to speak. "'Must we send our Girls to School that they may learn how to say "No!" with Fitting Intonation, both for Dish of Porridge and for Dish of Love?'" (Barnes, Ryder 32). For the patriarchy holds as just excuse for rape that "'There is a "No" with a "Yes" wrapped up in it ...'" (Barnes, Ryder 32). These women judge from the point of view of men. They imply that she desired the rape and consented. "'Has not Science proved that ... the Thread makes no Conquest of the Needle ...'" (Barnes, Ryder 32).

'You have but one Life, yet in one Night you have changed the Complexion of All Nights, thus pilfering from the Community, which has honoured you as True Coin, only to discover you Counterfeit, thereby changing a Known Sum into a Sum needing Recount.

(Barnes, Ryder 33)
It is no accident that the imagery of virginity is depicted in economic terms. In terms of the patriarchy a woman has but one hymen. After she loses it outside its legitimate expenditure in marriage, she is no longer True Coin with value intact, but counterfeit and worthless. Never is she or her virginity presented as belonging to the woman herself. Her virginity is not hers to do with as she would. The community is presented as a network of economic exchange.

'You have corrupted the Fabric of our Council by this one Brief Act!
Made Society an Unknown Quantity, and this we are not built to bear, for this a Man will fury all his Days, and none shall commerce with you, without first turning you over to see where the Die stamps Treason!'

(Barnes, Ryder 33)

She is accused of having stolen Time. . . . Time made stout by Good Wives stitching, and washing, baking, and praying. Firm with Household Duties well done, within the narrow excellence of Wedlock, paced to Monogamy, fortified with Temperance, made Durable with Patience. You have
bent Time with the Tooth of Lust,
torn the Hem of Righteousness, and
the Wind may enter and the Cyclone
follow!'

(Barnes, Ryder 33)

Marriage, the family, and household duties weave strong
the fabric of time, of generations within the tradition
of legally sanctioned patriarchal bond. One act of lust
prior to marriage rends the fabric of time and threatens
chaos.

The birth of a child resulting from the girl's
indiscretion is anticipated, perhaps "a Bastard Death"
(Barnes, Ryder 34) or one "made Fatherless by too fast
Fathering" (Barnes, Ryder 35), and the women begin to
speak in riddles about time turned backward.

Is this not turning the Just
Proportion of Generations backward?
Does he not ride before his Mother,
seeking his Mother? What Nation has
the Son first and the Mother second?
What Tree springs up before the Orchard
saying, "Orchard, Orchard, here is the
Tree!" What Infant gives Birth to
its Parent, what Child crawls out
of the Cradle, that its Mother may
have where to lay her Head?'

(Barnes, Ryder 35)
According to Andrew Field, the key to the last part of the riddle is incest and "the answer to that incestuous riddle is simply--it is the writer recreating her past" (Field 43).

'Who sets the Child backward upon
the Beast of Time? Who makes of his
Son no Kin but the Tomb, no Generation
but the Dead, nay, bequeaths him no
Dead and no Living, no Future and no
Past? He must move forward seeking,
and backward lamenting.

(Barnes, Ryder 35)

For Barnes time moves in both directions, and the movement of time backwards, as in a vortex, is an important theme that runs throughout Barnes' work.

The Council of Women calls for torture and banishment, a melting down with a Hot Iron to set her "back as Current Coin" (Barnes, Ryder 36). Torture will turn her "to Honest Flesh" (Barnes, Ryder 36). They end their comments with a curious commentary on the judgment of women.

Thus, to come to the very Pip and Core of Truth, through Good Woman's reasoning--though to that Faculty no Credence has been given by Philosopher or Scribe adown the very ageless ages--to make of a Point no Point at all on which to haggle, that indeed no
Wits be spent on you, no candle burned
to a Wick in Attics and Dens by Grizzled
Beard and Shiny Pate; throw Lots for
you between us, to determine to which
of us you shall fall; there trust to
that Pity which passeth Human Under-
standing--which God forbid we should
have hereabouts--and so make of you
what we will, now that you have
flinched what you would!

(Barnes, Ryder 36)

Too unimportant for the judgment of men, it is to
the judgment of women that she falls victim--"Good Woman's
reasoning" given no credence by philosophers or scribes
throughout the ages, for no male wits will be spent on the
question of woman. It is a matter for women to handle--the
punishment of the loss of virginity by the girls of the next
generation.

The leader ends, "'And I myself ask no Better Portion
than that you fall to me, for then should all Eyes behold
the Bone of Truth, the Marrow of Justice! For I'd have
all Destruction in you well destroyed before the Striking
of another Midnight Bell!'" (Barnes, Ryder 36). In any
society the best people to keep the underclass in place
are the members of the underclass whose privileges make
them feel they have a vested interest in the preservation
of the class structure. Thus it is with the matrons of Tittencote. They will deal with the girl themselves viciously, although the Truth and Justice they serve is ultimately that of the patriarchy.

The next chapter introduces Amelia and continues the theme of female sexuality within the patriarchy. Her mother tells her the story of her Aunt Nelly, "the canker in the family tree" (Barnes, Ryder 38) who became pregnant by a Duke, but the situation was saved by marrying her off to a member of the Royal Guards. Amelia is told by her mother that this is a family secret and a disgrace, adding, "'Never let a man touch you, never show anything, keep your legs in your own life, and when you grow to be a woman, keep that a secret even from yourself.' She shuddered. 'Never, never, have children. And God forgive me!'" (Barnes, Ryder 40). When Amelia questions what is to be forgiven, her mother answers, "'For making you mortal; if you live you will be a fool. It takes a strong woman to die before she has been a fool. No one has the imagination; I did not, you will not!'" (Barnes, Ryder 40). Thus we have the idea presented that sexuality is the way of all women and yet their undoing. A woman's sexuality within the patriarchy makes a fool of her. It is the source of her shame and her downfall.

Also important is the admonition not to have children--that if the mother has been a fool at least it
can stop with her daughter if she will not make the same mistake. Yet, short of an early death, this is seen as unlikely, and there is little that can be done to avoid passing mortality along to yet another generation of potential fools. The desire to stop the process of procreation, the idea that childbearing is a continuation of something evil and therefore to be avoided is an important theme that runs throughout Barnes' work.

The best-known advocates of childlessness were the Saturninians, who followed the teaching of the Gnostic Saturninus at the end of the first century after Christ. . . . For the Saturninians, man's link to the animals is more strongly felt than in any other time in Western thinking prior to Darwin. Because of its emphasis upon human bestiality and the need for mankind not to take the world seriously and to abstain from procreation, the thought of Djuna Barnes, is we wish to label it in any systematic way, would have to be called Saturninian Christian in character.

(Field 169-170)
At twenty-four, Amelia de Grief is in London with her sister Ann studying violin and voice. It is in London that Amelia meets Wendell and Sophia whose lodgings are next door. Amelia is immediately taken in by Sophia's invitation to call her "Mother" and becomes devoted to her. She gives Sophia what property she has and leaves the Conservatory of Music after only eight months of study. Amelia is enchanted by Sophia's stories of her past.

She learned that Sophia had met the King of Sweden and had by him been given a bloodstone ring, in the shape of a heart; she learned that Sophia's second marriage was with a renegade, a strapping Swede. . . . She learned that Aaron, the youngest of Sophia's three boys, had died in his sixth month; the other Gaybert, was a surgeon, and that Wendell . . . was . . . in her mind, an artist.

(Barnes, Ryder 43)

Sophia was acquainted with the Pre-Raphaelites and a great number of other interesting and famous people, and " . . . in a Swedish trunk with seven locks, and three bands of iron, lay many a note from the renowned, that would have caused a great lamenting and wailing among women who were wives" (Barnes, Ryder 43-44). Amelia learned also of
the conception of Sophia's first child by her Latin teacher who would become her first husband. As Sophia explained,

'. . . going for a Latin lesson, I returned a mother. . . . When I had a fancy to discover a transitive verb: "I lie--he lies--they lie--" thus,' she said, laughing heartily, 'was my youngest conceived. . . .'

(Barnes, Ryder 45)

The conception of Wendell, however, was quite another matter.

"Chapter Seven: Sophia Tells Wendell How He Was Conceived" relates the story of how Beethoven impregnated Sophia in a dream.

I was in the temple of music and saw one coming toward me in a long robe. . . . I knew him to be Beethoven. . . . [H]e came toward me, melted into me on my human side, and came out up my marvelous, without so much as a 'by your leave,' or 'if it please you, madame,' or a pass at the weather, and in nine months, by the Christian calendar, I was delivered of you.

(Barnes, Ryder 46-47)
Therefore, Wendell bears not the name of Sophia's husband, John Peel, but Sophia's own family name, Ryder, for according to Sophia, Wendell had no mortal father. By giving birth to a child with no mortal father, Sophia in her own way subverts the patriarchy.

Sophia is the matriarchal focus of Ryder. She stands alone, unequalled and unparalleled presiding over the novel and over the lives of the Ryder family. In London Sophia had presided over an eclectic salon that ranged from artists and political activists to royalty. Engravings and lithographs of women and men she admired covered her walls. These ranged from George Eliot, Elizabeth Stanton, and Beatrice Cenci to Savonarola, Dante, Browning, and Wilde (Barnes, Ryder 14). "Indeed Sophia's walls, like the telltale rings of the oak, gave up her conditions.... for she never removed, she covered over" (Barnes, Ryder 15).

There were also prints of scenes she abhored, of death, of murder, of torture, for she was fascinated also by the horrible. There were photographs of her second husband, Alex Alexson, who is modeled on Zadel Barnes' second husband, Axel Gustafson. Finally there were newspaper clippings of rape, murder, discovery, and notoriety. "At forty these pictures were an inch deep, at sixty a good two inches from the wall; the originals were, as she herself was, nothing erased but much submerged" (Barnes, Ryder 15). Sophia's walls are an emblem of her life, her
values and her experiences. They are recorded in an image that reminds one of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad.

In the end, living with Wendell and his family, she secretly wrote letters to the men from her past begging for money.

By not so much as the shadow of an ill-gotten ten-cent piece did the family guess, until long after her death . . . that she had lied and wept and played the sweet old woman to the partial undoing of every rich man in the country and one of the Presidents of the States.

(Barnes, Ryder 17)

Thus Sophia played the patriarchy's game, and, by cunning and careful maneuvering, she was victorious. Playing on the sympathy of wealthy men and extorting money for past sexual favors, she exploited the patriarchy as a system of exchange. Dressed as a beggar and playing the role of the impoverished mother she always wore beneath her beggar's clothes the finest linens. Thus she was able to project the air of poverty and elicit sympathy in order that she might capitalize on it. She payed the price of a temporary loss of dignity, yet perhaps there was a certain satisfaction to be gained induping the patriarchy. She pretended to be powerless in order to command pity.
Thus she exploited the patriarchy by using her sexuality on two levels—as a remembered seductress of the past and as the mother of a poverty-striken family.

Introduced along with the novel's characterization of Sophia is the effacement of the polar opposition of the truth/lie dichotomy. Sophia regarded the lie, like fiction, as a form of art. It is, however, her beloved granddaughter, Julie, the Barnes figure in the novel, who hurts her by rejecting her lies.

To Julie she turned her best love and . . . would take her up on her knee, lying to her of this and of this, calm in the wisdom that realism is no food for a child. She told of her youth, of the way it was with her as a girl, as it had not been, for when Julie should come to womanhood, the portrait would stand real enough in its true colours, and in those that she gave it, for Sophia knew, and suffered the knowledge with a brave heart, that someday when she was but dust, what she had been in truth would come upon Julie, and she said to herself, "What I tell her in lie will stand there too, and the truth the prettier
for it," and so it was.

For Sophia held it a mistaken idea that a lie discovered wipes out its purpose in the discovery. "Know the truth as she may," she said to herself, "the thing I've seemed will balance the account." And balance it it did, for in after life Julie held her grandmother's lies as the best of a capacious soul.

(Barnes, Ryder 18-19)

Yet at the time, Julie rejects any suspected lie, hurting Sophia deeply. "Sophia offering her heart for food, Julie spewed it out . . . and said 'I taste a lie!' And Sophia hearing, cried in agony, but Julie went apart" (Barnes, Ryder 19).

Wendell, too, lies both in the form of fiction for entertainment and to protect himself against the authorities who confront him with the fact of his polygamy and the unaccountable children. When the authorities appear at his door, Wendell claims Amelia for his wife and acknowledges the presence of his mother, but for Kate he invents a husband, Mr. Arthur, a traveling salesman, saying "' . . . he did the extra children, one trip apiece. He's a traveling salesman, sells water filters. Once every year, as regular as clockwork, he climbs over the gate . . . and
there meet Mrs. Arthur" (Barnes, Ryder 283). Later when the authorities fail to believe him, he tells Sophia as he struggles to find a solution to his dilemma, "'I have lied to the law, and the law does not believe me'" (Barnes, Ryder 317). Yet Sophia comforts him saying, "'Because you have lied beautifully. The people will accept anything but beauty. You must lie near the heart, and the heart of man is an insulting shape'" (Barnes, Ryder 317). The lie served Sophia well, but it will not be so with Wendell. In its current manifestation the patriarchy limits a man to legally reside with only one woman at a time. Wendell, by having his mistress Kate and her children reside as part of his household, has violated the current rule of the patriarchy. Thus, ironically by attempting to return to an Old Testament polygamous form of patriarchy, Wendell brings down the wrath of the current social order of the patriarchy down upon his head. As all men he is given freedom of choice as to which woman he will keep as his wife, but it is made manifestly clear to him that he may keep only one. The current social order of the patriarchy will allow him to possess only one female at a time and Wendell has clearly exceeded his limit.

Wendell's troubles begin in "Chapter Thirty: The Cat Come Out of the Well" which presents a turning point in the novel. Wendell is summoned by the school authorities to explain why he does not send his children to school.
For the first time Wendell's unorthodox lifestyle is challenged, and ultimately this leads to his downfall. A huge crowd gathers to hear Wendell defend his ways which for the moment he does successfully. He has educated his children himself, he claims. (Actually Zadel Barnes was responsible for the children's education.) "'They know both more, and less. I've taken my children round by the side path where truth lies rotting with the refuse, and they already look down upon you from a height'" (Barnes, Ryder 166). Ryder is undaunted by the confrontation, yet, for him, it is the beginning of the end. His way of life has been questioned publicly and more questions will be asked until he will be hounded into conformity and ruin.

As he talks with Sophia about his fate, he expresses his fear that the state, having caught wind of his activities will put an end to his way of life. Sophia cautions him to keep his ideas secret, but it is too late.

I have been tempered, cooked, made what I am by the various heats emanating from the body of woman. . . . the preliminary basting, the warmth of the mother breast . . . the first scorching of a sweet girl bottom . . . various and peculiar cokings incurred by the married state, but . . . I was never fully roasted,
frizzled, and come to a good crisp, until I knew the fair Kate . . . and now that I am done to a nice turn, who is to eat me? The authorities of the state . . ." They smell a well-done fowl, my aroma is ripe to the nose of justice, like a pack of hounds . . . they snarl down the road of my destiny.

(Barnes, Ryder 221)

Sophia knows that he is right, yet she assures him that she will stand between him and retribution. In the end it is with Sophia's help that Wendell will fall.

"Chapter Fifty: Whom Should He Disappoint Now?" concludes the novel with a question that is never answered, and "Ryder ends unresolved . . ." (Scott 76). Wendell has lived in a postlapsarian world as if he were an unfallen Adam. Now Sophia warns him that he must fall.

When Wendell asks how he is to fall, Sophia replies, "'If you fall alone,' she answered, 'you will be as the beast; and your women will not be shocked, but stricken slowly, and entirely; but if you fall with help--'" (Barnes, Ryder 318). Her implication is that she can help Wendell prepare for his fall and she begins by sorting out the various possibilities.
"How many children have you?"
"Eight," he said.
"How many shall you keep?"
"I do not know."
"By Amelia you have five, by Kate three,
you have your answer.
In the end you will have either three or
five."
"In the end," he said, "I shall have no
children. I have unfathered myself."
"That," she answered, "is what I want you
to see."

(Barnes, Ryder 316)

Wendell has spoken to Kate, and she has reacted
hysterically. Wendell has not spoken to Amelia, and, al-
though it is the middle of the night, Sophia tells him to
summon her. "'At night a woman will do anything for the
pitiful human creature. . . . It is an advantage. Do you
want to take it?'" (Barnes, Ryder 319). Wendell is eager
to call Amelia, but Sophia cautions him, "'It will be a
hard memory,' she said" (Barnes, Ryder 319).

When Amelia asks what Wendell wants of her, Wendell
replies abstractly, "'I am born . . . I am born and I must
die. . . . That is so of everyone, but I am born and I
must face everything and I must die, and I cannot'" (Barnes,
Ryder 321). Wendell asks Amelia to go away, and Amelia
responds to Wendell's sudden realization of his mortality
saying

"Ryder" . . . "I have thought of you as great oftener than anything else. When you have lain with me, after lying with her, what do you think kept me from coming up from under you? It is twenty-six years that I have lain under you, knowing everything, and have not judged and have not forgiven. I said, 'He has a great sickness that is unknown to other men.' I said, 'He is nature in its other shape.' I said, 'He is a deed that must be committed.' Why, then, did you not once shift your weight if you were, in the end, to be bloody mortal, that I might have known?" (Barnes, Ryder 321)

When Sophia assures Amelia that her brother will take care of her, Amelia agrees to go and leaves the room.

Well, however, leaves the house and wanders out into the night.

In the wide field where the night was all among the grass and about the animals, Wendell went, leaning far back and yet stumbling.
The black calf breathed against his side, and the dark cows breathed among themselves, and the horses . . . trembled, as they slept and lay.

And Wendell sat down among them and forbore to hide his face. Whom should he disappoint now?

"Hee-haw!" said the ass beside him, and he put his hand out and stroked the ass.

Whom should he disappoint now?

The horses whinnied . . . the kine were shaken with the bellows of their breath, and he touched their new horns. The little mice of the fields fled about him . . . and the night birds murmured above and he moved not, and the creeping things that he had not numbered or known, looked at him from a million eyes, and his eyes were there also, and the things in the trees made walking and running on the branches, and he spoke not.

Whom should he disappoint now?

And everything and its shape became clear in the dark, by tens and tens they ranged, and lifted
their lids and looked at him; in the air and in the trees and on the earth and from the earth, and regarded him long, and he forebore to hide his face. They seemed close ranged, and now they seemed far ranged, and they moved now near, now far, as a wave comes and goes, and they lifted their lids and regarded him, and spoke not in their many tongues, and they went a far way, and there was a little rest, and they came close, and there was none. Closing in about him nearer, swinging out wide and from him far, and came in near and near, and as a wave, closed over him, and he drowned, and arose while he yet might to.

And whom should he disappoint?

(Barnes, Ryder 322-323)

Thus, Ryder ends with its unanswered question. Wendell has already disappointed Kate and Amelia, and in the final scene it is implied that he has disappointed all creation, for the animals, too, were part of his grand, but now failed, scheme. There remain, too, the children, Amelia's five that will be cast out with their mother, and, finally, himself, for ultimately Wendell Ryder realizes that he is, in Amelia's words, "a bloody mortal."
He realizes that his grandiose unattainable dream was an illusion and a failure. He ends in the realization that he is only a man, not the origin of any new race or breed, no new Adam, but only a man who has been unable even to support his family and who has depended on women, his mother, Amelia, and Kate to keep the family together for as long as they have. His has been an elaborate fantasy that has led to disillusion and ruin. Thus, Wendell Ryder at the end of the novel is a fallen man, for he has recognized his own mortality. The Adamic Ryder has fallen, putting an end to his past illusions about himself and his existence. He must now live as other men for he has recognized the truth about himself.

Wendell Ryder has tried to do and be all that he was warned against in the opening chapter of Ryder. His attempt was a great one, and, thus, his failure is great also. He has attempted much and has attained nothing, bringing only disappointment to those about him and to himself as well.

James B. Scott, in the first comprehensive study of Barnes' work to be published, took Ryder at its face value as the tale of a robust and rebellious adventurer.

In substance Ryder defies the conventions of Western society by inviting readers to favorably regard its central character, despite its weaknesses, and
to look with distaste upon the organized, machinelike, prudish society which condemns him. The book argues, in effect, that, disjointed and peculiar as Ryder's life appears, it is closer to nature than more conventional lives; that such a life is more spontaneous, more joyous, and far more productive of beauty. (Scott 76)

Yet Scott's assertion that Ryder invites a favorable regard for Wendell Ryder takes into account only one of the two crosscurrents of the novel. While the book does invite sympathy for Wendell, it does not invite unqualified approval. Wendell is the cause of too much suffering and grief in the lives of too many for readers to view him or his ideas as a message that the novel endorses.

In his misguided efforts to redeem the fallen world, Wendell may gain our sympathy, but he hurts too many people in his selfish disregard for the feelings and welfare of others to gain the readers' approval. "Wendell, equated in his role of fecundator with all of nature, stands as the agent of woman's suffering" (Kannerstine 42). He is an agent of suffering in the lives of many women, but particularly in the lives of Amelia, Kate, and Julie, who identifies with and shares her mother's pain. It is interesting to note that Julie is the Barnes character in the novel and it is the fourteen-year-old Julie/Djuna who
grapples with her father's mistress, spitting at him all the while, "'You, you, you,'" unable to fully express in words the contempt she feels for the man—her father—who has brought another woman into her mother's home and has made them share their home with his mistress and illegitimate offspring. To Julie, who represents the other crosscurrent in the book, he is reprehensible in what he has done. To the reader, Wendell in his failure is at once sad and reprehensible.

In Ryder, Julie is presented in frequent conflict with Wendell, and there are many hints in Ryder of the attempted paternal rape that will become the central focus of Barnes' play The Antiphon. At the end of chapter twenty-four we have projected into the future of image of Julie at sixteen as she "... lies and looks up at Wendell..." (Barnes, Ryder 137). Sophia begs Wendell not to strike her. "'Keep her,' says Wendell, 'she is none of mine. Did I not hear her deriding me greatly?'" (Barnes, Ryder 138). In chapter thirty-nine also, Wendell expresses his disapproval of his daughter, saying "'... she has always been a hussy and a stubborn girl..." (Barnes, Ryder 223). It is Julie who sees Wendell as he is, a failed man who brings pain and suffering to those who are dependent on him.

Thus while on a superficial level Ryder depicts Wendell as an adventurer and a patriarchal hero, the novel is actually anti-patriarchal and matriarchally oriented
around Sophia and the other women of the novel. "Contrary to the way the narrative makes things seem, it is women upon whom the tragic burden of mortality rests and who must cope as they can" (Kamenstine 40). Although Wendell traverses the novel spreading his seed as an Adam who would father a new race, he is also described in androgynous terms (Barnes, Ryder 214). "As Wendell is so broadly made out to be the compound creature, the aspects of his duality ultimately become undifferentiated. There is strength in his weakness and vulnerability in his strength" (Kamenstine 41). In the final scene when Ryder is surrounded by the animals,

... we are aware simultaneously of his closeness to and distance from them... he is composite of animal and human, and from this comes his beauty along with his terror... the opaque eye of the beast makes a line that cannot be crossed. (Kamenstine 46).

He identifies with the animals and seeks to be one with all nature, yet his consciousness as a mortal has robbed him of the innocence they possess.

Ultimately, it is the women of Ryder to whom wisdom belongs, "... racked with the anguish of childbirth and ever aware of the pangs of mortality" (Kamenstine 42).
Yet it is Sophia who most "... fully incorporates the insight that is the hidden greatness of women" (Kannenstine 42). It is Sophia's view of the heart of man as an insulting shape that is the central vision of Ryder. This knowledge is the source of humility and realistic wisdom that Wendell Ryder lacks. Sophia knows the heart of man as it is, but Wendell dreams of the heart of man as he would shape it to be. Wendell aspires to greatness but achieves nothing. In the end Wendell must give up his illusions and face both human and social reality, for although society with its restrictions may be repressive, Ryder in his irresponsible nonconformity does great damage to the lives of others.

In style and in content, Barnes, mixes the comic and the tragic in Ryder. It is comic in style, but despite its superficial light-heartedness, it is tragic in content. Most evidently, it is an anti-patriarchal "tragedy of women," but ultimately it is the tragedy of Wendell Ryder and all those who would live out self-serving utopian fictions doomed to failure and destruction.
CHAPTER III

NIGHTWOOD

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

For what which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

(Ecclesiastes 3: 18-19)

I speak to them in parables because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not understand. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.

(Matthew 13: 13)

In Ryder, under the guise of a robust, ribald glorification of male sexuality, Barnes presented, instead, "a tragedy of women" (L.B.282), which revealed the violation and violence experienced by women as a result of
phallocentric values. In *Nightwood*, however, Barnes goes further to take a deconstructive stance against the conscious perception of reality and moral values espoused by Western Civilization. She exposes the dualisms that are at the heart of Western culture, in the process reversing the "natural" hierarchies of Western thought. In *Nightwood* her primary target of deconstruction is the privileging of human consciousness, and her purpose is to reverse and thereby disrupt the binary oppositions of consciousness/unconsciousness and human consciousness/animal consciousness as they are traditionally valued in Western culture. In doing so she anticipates the ideas of both Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan.

In *Ryder*, Barnes was concerned with the dichotomies of male/female, man/animal, culture/nature, heterosexual/homosexual, truth/lie, and myth/religion, but in *Nightwood* she continues these concerns and adds to them even more basic oppositions of day/night, light/dark, consciousness/unconsciousness, waking/sleeping, innocence/corruption, goodness/evil, false nobility/real nobility, child/doll, Protestant/Catholic, American/European, ascent/descent, and language/silence. The dominant dualism of *Nightwood*, however, is that of day and night. The world of day is the world of rational action and communication. The world of the night is the world of the unconscious, "... an unfathomable jungle of dark forces" (Williamson 59) which cannot be controlled.
Dell Hymes in one of the earlier critical articles on Nightwood in 1953 was among the first to notice Barnes' use of opposition. "In sum, then, we have these pairs in opposition: animal:human; anonymous:public; darkness: light; sleep:waking; night:day. In each case the first term is given a positive value" (Hymes 52). Hymes set up the pairs in accordance with the way that Barnes presents them in Nightwood. According to the traditional values of Western culture, the terms are reversed and Hymes is pointing to

... the reversal of the usual values in Nightwood (60). The reversal is on two levels. First, there is the negation of the common positive use of terms such as light, day, and waking. In Nightwood they are made agents of evil. Second, there is ambivalence. Throughout Nightwood draws upon the usual connotations of such terms as night, inversion and death to convey its sense of horror. Simultaneously, it tries to establish them as positive goods opposed to the other set. . . .

(Hymes 60)

Hymes accuses Barnes of dignification of traditionally negative values and of attempting to "win acceptance for homosexuality. . ." (50). "There is an attempt to dignify inversion by making it symbolic of human relationships in
general" (Hymes 50). The implication of Hymes' statement is that, like most people in the 1950's, he considered homosexuality to be wrong or sick.

As we have seen, the phallocentric society is also homophobic. Homosexuality, particularly homosexuality among women, is repressed. Thus we find that in another article from the fifties, Ricaredo Demetillo was virulent and totally unabashed in his condemnation of homosexuals, calling them "perverted" and labeling the love between Nora and Robin an "unnatural union . . . one of the supreme blasphemies, a blasphemy which, when committed by two women results in their degradation. . .. (178). Demetillo, in his shrill and strident condemnation, labels them "perverts"(180), "One would almost suspect," Demetillo concludes, "that the author is in search of redemption through flagellation, through self-immolation. . .." (185).

Kenneth Burke in his "Version, Con-, Per-, and In- Thoughts on Djuna Barnes's Novel Nightwood" although published in the far more liberal decade of the sixties, still conveyed a prejudiced and anti-homosexual bias. Even its title linking sexual inversion with sexual perversion is pejorative. Burke accuses Barnes of exploiting sex "more specifically still, homosex, particularly Lesbianism. . .." (242). Burke continues that ". . . one is advised to be on the lookout for an author's modes of 'dignification.' And, of course, they may often be paradoxical, in employing twists whereby the apparent corruption of a character
represents some higher value" (245). Burke makes the disclaimer that ". . . in this analysis we are considering the theme of sexual inversion without regard to specifically moral judgments" (253), but his essay offended Barnes so much that in the reprinted version she refused him permission to quote from Nightwood.

It is hardly surprising that these critics, writing within a society that regarded homosexuality as totally negative, a perversion, a sickness, a sin, and an abomination, would echo such attitudes. What is extraordinary is the insight of T. S. Eliot who wrote in his introduction to Nightwood in 1937 that ". . . the book is not a psychopathic study. The miseries that people suffer through their particular abnormalities of temperament are visible on the surface: the deeper design is that of the human misery and bondage which is universal" (Eliot xv). "To regard this group of people as a horrid sideshow of freaks is not only to miss the point, but to confirm our wills and harden our hearts in an inveterate sin of pride" (Eliot xvi). What was obvious to Eliot was that Nightwood is not a lesbian novel. It is instead a story about human misery which happens to involve two women who love each other and a transsexual male center of consciousness who ". . . becomes in effect and most indirectly the novel's narrator, telling the story . . . of universal misery. . . ." (Kainenstine 115-116) and who functions much as Tiresias functions in The Waste Land. Although most critics point
out Matthew O'Connor's parallel with Tiresias, James B. Scott adds that "Dr. O'Connor, who bears the double burden of character and chorus, is a center-of-consciousness character, much in the Jamesian usage" (109). The novel transcends any focus on homosexuality to achieve a universal theme, demonstrating "the failure of the characters, either heterosexual or homosexual, to surmount on any level their own walled-in sense of estrangement" (Scott 109).

Like Ryder, Nightwood is based on the experiences of Djuna Barnes and the people she knew. In Ryder the Barnes figure was the young girl, Julie; in Nightwood she is Nora Flood. Nora and Julie share similar backgrounds. They are both from rural New York state, and Dr. O'Connor, when he meets Nora, who is age thirty and at the opening of Nightwood, exclaims that he brought her into the world (as he did all the children of Ryder). Unlike the Barnes figure, Dr. O'Connor retains the same name in Nightwood as was used for him in Ryder, and although his connection with the Ryder/Barnes family in Ryder is purely fictional, Barnes' depiction of his life in Paris is close to the life of the person on whom O'Connor is based, Dan Mahoney. In both Ryder and Nightwood, O'Connor is depicted as being an Irish Catholic from San Francisco as was the real-life Dan Mahoney (Field 141). In both Nightwood and real life he was an unlicensed practitioner of gynecology, an illegal abortionist, and a transsexual (Field 141). While he speaks
in the same Irish rhythms in both novels, there are differences in Barnes' characterizations. The O'Connor of Ryder is a younger man, distressed by his sexual disposition and the apparent inconsistencies of his sexual preference and practices with his Catholic faith. In Nightwood he has become more resigned to his transsexual existence. Accordingly, his monologues in Nightwood are less hysterical, less mystical, and more philosophical than in Ryder.

Robin, the central figure in Nightwood, is Djuna Barnes' lover from the Paris years, American artist, Thelma Wood (the T. W. to whom Ryder is dedicated). Although one critic, Lynn DeVore in "The Backgrounds of Nightwood: Robin, Felix, and Nora," asserts that Robin is based on the Baroness Elsa von-Freytag Loringhoven, a close friend of Barnes', and that Felix is based on her lover Felix Paul Greve who once used the alias Baron Volkbein (81), he is probably more right about Felix than about Robin. Andrew Field, on the other hand, sees a connection between the Felix of Nightwood, whose father and son are both named Guido, and Guido Bruno who published Barnes' first book of poems in New York (66). Barnes never met Elsa's lover Felix; she knew him only through Elsa's writing. Thus it is likely that DeVore and Field are both partly right and that the Felix Volkbein of Nightwood is a composite of Felix Greve and Guido Bruno. Jenny Petherbridge is based on a single source and did play some part in the break-up of Barnes and Wood. Still living, she was
interviewed by Field for his biography, but he refers to her simply as "Jenny" (161-163).

It seems amazing that DeVore had no knowledge of the Barnes-Wood relationship and stated that Nora's homosexual involvement in the novel makes it difficult to see Barnes as Nora (88). Relying on Barnes' numerous affairs with men and her marriage to Courtenay Lemon, DeVore seemed to regard this as evidence that Barnes was "strictly heterosexual" despite her friendship with those of the lesbian group in Paris about whom she wrote in The Ladies Almanack. Yet, Barnes was no more totally homosexual than she was totally heterosexual. Even biographer Andrew Field agrees that Barnes was "basically heterosexual" (153). As Barnes herself put it, "'I'm not a lesbian. I just loved Thelma'" (qtd. in Field 37). One of the ironies surrounding Nightwood, however, is the fact that during the writing of the novel, a novel based on the story of her homosexual relationship with Thelma Wood, Djuna Barnes had to return to Paris for an abortion to be performed by Dan Mahoney, Nightwood's Dr. O'Connor (Field 140, 166).

The form as well as the content of Nightwood is antipatriarchal and deconstructive. In Nightwood, Barnes departs even more radically than she did in the stylistic parodies of Ryder from the form of the then-current phallogocentric mode of the realistic novel. The modern novel was shaped by the "Western cultural bias for mimetic art" (Messerli 27), or realism. Round characters were
preferred over flat characters, "modern effacement of the author" by the narrative voice was preferred over "authorial intrusion," and organic unity was preferred over pattern (Messerli 22, 30, 33, 50). Barnes' use of types "determined by heredity and environment," her "tableau-like presentation," and her tendency to intrude upon the narrative "to convey information to the reader that is more complex or reflective than character or scene are able to convey" (Messerli 96, 99, 71) placed her outside the phallocentric conventions of modern realism.

T. S. Eliot acknowledged Barnes' departure from "realistic" presentation as well as his contempt for the contemporary realistic novel in his introduction to Nightwood.

... most contemporary novels are not really 'written.' They obtain what reality they have largely from an accurate rendering of the noises that human beings currently make in their daily simple needs of communication; and what part of a novel is not composed of these noises consists of a prose which is no more alive than that of a competent newspaper writer or govern-ment official. A prose that is altogether alive demands something of the reader that the ordinary novel-reader is not prepared to give. To say that Nightwood will
appeal primarily to readers of poetry
does not mean that it is not a novel,
but that it is so good a novel that
only sensibilities trained on poetry
can wholly appreciate it. (Eliot xii)

Barnes is depicted by Eliot as having written a prose
work that demands of the reader a heightened sensibility
to language usually reserved for poetry. Not all critics,
however, approved of such a style or agreed with Eliot
about its quality. Leslie Fiedler in *Love and Death in
the American Novel* was unimpressed.

The dislocated lyricism, hallucinated
vision and oddly skewed language of
Miss Barnes's black little book were
introduced to the United States by
T. S. Eliot, with a rather unconvincing
assurance of their ultimately religious
import. In his preface, Eliot argues,
at any rate, that the homosexual
ambience of *Nightwood*, its ecstatic
evocations of disease and death reflect
a genuine concern with the problem of
evil and not just an obsession with
the properties of decadent gothicism.
Linguistically, *Nightwood* is too complex,
and thematically, too little concerned
with the experiences of America to
achieve . . . success . . .; it lives
now chiefly in the minds of a limited
number of admirers. . . . (490)
Perhaps Mr. Fiedler's comments say more about the
phallogocentric prejudices and provincial tastes of then-
contemporary American readers and critics than about
Nightwood.
As a surrealistic and poetic novel outside the
phallogocentric hegemony of realism, Nightwood demands a
more active intellectual and emotional participation on
the part of its readers than would a typical mid-twentieth
century realistic novel.
In Nightwood she eschews the language
of rationality . . . because it cannot
adequately portray her subjects, the
power of the night, of irrationality and
the unconscious; and the nature of love,
particularly love between women. To
evoke them, Barnes uses instead an in-
direct, associative style that depends
on reader intuition rather than on logic.
The style of Nightwood tries to avoid
naming too directly, and so concentrates
on not-naming, on using syntactic and
semantic structures that signal in-
direction. (Allen, "'Dressing the
Unknowable in the Garments of the Known":
The Style of Djuna Barnes' Nightwood"

107) The narrative line of the story is secondary to the clusters of images and metaphors that must be linked associatively and intuitively by the reader in order to discern the pattern of meaning in the story. "Nightwood uses surrealistic strategies... Like the shifting metaphors and complex associative leaps in surrealistic poetry, Nightwood consists of dramatic shifts in modes of discourse and prose style" (Vella 7).

For the surrealists night was a doorway to an uncharted territory. Preoccupied, if not obsessed, with dreams, the irrational, and the marvelous, the surrealists turned to night as the source of the free expression of the subconscious. (Vella 6)

It is such an uncharted territory into which Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor leads Nora Flood when she comes to him to learn of the night. As Dante, he will lead her through the subterranean world of the night, the world of the subconscious so that she may experience the night to learn of the irrational and to understand the motivations of her lover, Robin. As O'Connor tries to explain the night to Nora, the reader, too, is drawn into the world O'Connor depicts.

Even its metaphors, similes, its
episodes and scenes, depend for their effectiveness on irrational juxtaposition. The intent is to make the reader experience the irrationalities of the night in order to better understand the complacencies of the day. (Vella 7)

Joseph Frank called Barnes' juxtaposition of images and use of tableau in *Nightwood* "spatial form," a nonmimetic form which, according to Frank, characterized modernism, and which he found also in the works of Joyce and Proust. Drawing a parallel between literature and the visual arts, Frank stated:

... as in the work of Braque, the Fauves or the Cubists, the naturalistic principle has lost its dominance. We are asked only to accept the work of art as an autonomous structure giving us an individual vision of reality; and the question of the relation of this vision to an extra-artistic 'objective' world has ceased to have any fundamental importance. (28)

Thus *Nightwood* is compared with modern art as being non-representational. It attempts to communicate with its reader as a non-representational painting seeks to communicate with its viewer. There is a rupture between the use of language to create the mimetic illusion of
representational reality and the poetic language of Nightwood used to communicate or evoke, as does modern art, a private, non-representational vision.

The eight chapters of Nightwood are like searchlights, probing the darkness each from a different direction yet ultimately illuminating the same entanglement of the human spirit....

And these chapters are knit together, not by any progress in action--either narrative action, or as in a stream-of-consciousness novel, the flow of experience--but by the continual reference and cross reference of images and symbols that must be referred to each other spatially throughout the time-act of reading. (Frank 31-32)

Although Barnes had a fine eye for detail, the images presented in Nightwood "...the selection of detail...is governed not by the logic of verisimilitude but by the demands of...the symbolic significance of the characters..." (Frank 31). More important than a line of narrative action which dominates most realistic fiction is the pattern of images in Nightwood which Frank contends is "...a pattern arising from the spatial interweaving of images and phrases independently of any time-sequence of narrative action" (49). As
Louis Kannessine describes *Nightwood*, "... its construction is based upon a pattern of cross reference of image and symbol..." (105).

Walter Sutton in "The Literary Image and The Reader" objected to Frank's use of the term "spatial form" to describe the structure of *Nightwood* or any other literary work. Anticipating the basic thrust of current reader-response criticism and semiotics, Sutton insisted that the reader's response cannot be separated from the temporality of the reading process nor from the historical context of the reading. The interpretation of an image, he points out, citing Eliot's own description of how his interpretation of the work evolved, may change during the process of reading or upon subsequent readings (Sutton 114, 117).

"The image... does not derive its value solely from its context, but also from the way in which it and its context are perceived 'impurely,' by a historically-conditioned reader" (Sutton 114). Thus, he asserts, perhaps taking Frank's use of "spatial form" too literally, that...

... the form of the work--its manifest structure at any time--is not absolutely fixed in a spatial revelation or epiphany, but is organically flexible and adaptable, accommodating itself to every altered perspective in time. (Sutton 117)

"The fact that the form of *Nightwood* manifests itself differently to different readers at different times is a
tribute to the book's suggestiveness and complexity. . ." (Sutton 120). Sutton concludes that . . . Frank's basic concept of the image as a whole which is somehow apprehended in an instant of time . . . is inconsistent with the organic nature of the reading process, which involves the gradual and tentative apprehension of the form of a complex . . . phenomenon in a shifting time perspective. (123)

Although Barnes does use a freeze-frame technique (Allen, "Dressing" 110) to arrest her characters' movement at a significant moment or in a significant pose (one example is when Robin holds the infant Guido over her head as if she would dash him to the floor), it is the weaving of images, repetitions with slight variations (as later she will hold the doll that she has given Nora above her head, too, threatening to smash it to bits), the same gesture in different circumstances, and images intuitively associated which make Nightwood seem like a verbal tapestry, a mosaic, or collage "... which combines elements out of an instinct for inner truth rather than coherent order. . ." (Kannerstine 106). For example, there is Matthew O'Connor's surrealistic description of the night as "the Great Enigma."

Bowing down from the waist, the world over they go, that they may revolve
about the Great Enigma—as a relative about a cradle—and the Great Enigma can't be thought of unless you turn the head the other way, and come upon thinking with the eye that you fear, which is called the back of the head; it's the one we use when looking at the beloved in a dark place, and she is a long time coming from a great way. We swoon with the thickness of our own tongue when we say, 'I love you,' as in the eye of a child lost a long while will be found the contraction of that distance—a child going small in the claws of a beast, coming furiously up the furlongs of the iris. (Barnes, Nightwood 83)

Thus Barnes' prose has none of the logically-ordered clarity of realistic fiction. It is the inner reality that Barnes seeks to convey.

Barnes' prose is not a transparency through which the reader glimpses the real world but a thick tapestry. . . . Within this kind of prose style, then, there are compositional elements that are juxtaposed, dissimilar modes of discourse that are contrasted for effect. . . .
Nightwood does not have normal narrative continuity; it is, instead, a series of prose pieces juxtaposed, a mosaic of ornate passages that have much in common with surrealist poetry.

(Vella 8)

Structurally, Nightwood is composed of eight chapters. The first four chapters are each devoted to the development of a character. "Bow Down" is Felix's chapter and begins with his parents' family background. "La Somnambule" is the chapter that introduces Robin Vote, who is the central character of the book. This chapter takes her to the point when she walks out of her marriage to Felix, leaving him with their infant son, Guido. "Nightwatch" is devoted to Nora and her painful relationship with Robin. "The Squatter" introduces Jenny Petherbridge and shows Robin's movement from Nora to Jenny. No one chapter is devoted to Matthew O'Connor. He presides over the entire work and is present in every chapter except the last. (Conversely, Robin is present in every chapter except the first.) The fifth chapter, "Watchman, What of the Night?" contains Matthew's monologue on the night and is thematically central to the novel. The last three chapters are denouement. "Where the Tree Falls" gives the reader a last glimpse of Felix and an indication of his final outcome. In "Go Down, Matthew," there is a reversal of the "Watchman, What of the Night?" chapter. Here it is Nora who talks and Matthew,
who, although he still talks too, must listen and accept the failure of his words to "cure" Nora of her love for Robin. The last chapter, "The Possessed," reunites Nora and Robin and forms an enigmatic coda for the novel (Hirshman 123). Dell Hymes, however, sees in Nightwood a three part structure.

The long chapter, 'Watchman, What of the Night?' is the center of the book. In the part preceding it, the major characters are introduced; in the part following, their fates are described. Within the central part, there is a long discourse on the overriding night theme, and, when the doctor comes to a night that is the essence of night, it marks a turning point both for him and the book. (Hymes 44)

Yet he also notes a second pattern which cuts across the three part structure.

Cutting across it is a second pattern, the straight line of Robin's descent. First she is linked to Felix, who stands for the great aristocratic traditions; then Nora, who represents the Great American Past; next Jenny, of the nouveau riche. While with Jenny she goes below the adult with a child.
Finally abandoning speech and the human scale, she joins the level of the animal. In her descent Robin is something of an 'unmoved mover' to the others. She seeks none of the relationships. Felix, Nora, Jenny come to her, and for them she serves as object of a quest each had been waiting to complete. And in accord with her descent, each is brought down. (44)

Paradoxically, Robin's descent is an ascent. "This ambivalence between a normal and an inverted scale is at the core of the book" (Hymes 44-45).

Alan Williamson, describes the structure of Nightwood as the interweaving of two plots, one centering on Robin Vote and the other on Matthew O'Connor.

The structure of Nightwood rests on the contrapuntal relationship between two distinct plots. The first centers around Robin Vote's strange and rightly symbolic malady and its desructive effects on her and on the fragmented individuals for whom she exercises a magnetic attraction; the second traces the disintegration of Matthew O'Connor in the face of his inability to absolve
this group, and especially Nora, of
the exactions of their private dooms.
(Williamson 66)

The first chapter, "Bow Down," presents two essential
themes of Nightwood, the concept of bowing down, which was
initially the title for the entire book, as well as the
principal preoccupation of Guido and later his son Felix,
both of whom bow down to anything or anyone associated with
nobility or the institutions of Old Europe, and secondly the
concept of the beast within the human in the person of the
pope participating in the persecution of the Jews. Guido is
described as a "Jew of Italian descent" (Barnes, Nightwood
1), establishing early in the novel a play on the double
meaning of descent. Guido desires to escape his Jewishness
and attempts to do so by converting to Christianity and
marrying the Viennese Christian Hedvig, thereby insuring
that his descendants would not be Jewish, for according to
Jewish law one must be born of a Jewish mother in order to
be a Jew. For Guido, the shame of Jewishness is embodied in
a yellow and black linen handkerchief.

... he had been seen carrying ...
the exquisite handkerchief of yellow
and black linen that cried aloud of
the ordinance of 1468, issued by one
Pietro Barbo, demanding that, with a
rope about its neck, Guido's race
should run in the Corso for the amuse-
ment of the Christian populace, while
ladies of noble birth . . . cardinals
. . . and the Monsignori, applauded
. . . the very Pope himself shaken down
from his hold on heaven with the
laughter of a man who forgoes his angels
that he may recapture the beast. This
memory and the handkerchief that accom-
panied it had wrought in Guido . . . the
sum total of what is the Jew. (Barnes,
Nightwood 2)

To Guido, the Jew was the debased and humiliated victim who
had survived by succumbing to persecution and degradation.
Therefore, Guido seeks to hide his real background by in-
venting an alternative one and pretending to be a baron.

He had adopted the sign of the cross;
he had said that he was an Austrian of
an old, almost extinct line, producing,
to uphold his story, the most amazing
and inaccurate proofs: a coat of arms
that he had no right to and a list of
progenitors (including their Christian
names) who had never existed. When
Hedvig came upon his black and yellow
handkerchiefs he had said that they
were to remind him that one branch of
his family had bloomed in Rome. (Barnes,
Nightwood 3)
Thus in the opening pages of Nightwood are set up the polar oppositions of Christian/Jew, true nobility/pretended nobility, truth/lie, and human/beast. Later in "Bow Down" other oppositions such as day/night, Protestant/Catholic, and American/European will be introduced.

Hedvig, who is described in terms of masculine, military imagery, as "a Viennese woman of great strength and military beauty" (Barnes, Nightwood 1), suspects Guido's Jewishness, for she bears his son Felix "in spite of a well-founded suspicion as to the advisability of perpetuating that race which has the sanction of the Lord and the disapproval of the people..." (Barnes, Nightwood 1). Yet with reference to Guido's background and his title of baron, she had believed it as a soldier 'believes' a command. Something in her sensitory predicament--upon which she herself would have placed no value--had told her much better. Hedvig had become a Baroness without question. (Barnes, Nightwood 5)

Guido dies before the birth of Felix, and with him dies any certain knowledge of any Jewish background. Yet in describing Guido's death, Barnes exploits the oppositions of Christian and Jew. "When a Jew dies on a Christian bosom he dies impaled. Hedvig, in spite of her agony, wept upon an outcast. Her body at that moment became the barrier and Guido died against that wall, troubled and alone" (Barnes,
Nightwood 3). The use of the word "wall" is probably an ironic reference to the wall that Guido cannot lean against, the holy wall of the temple in Jerusalem known as the Wailing Wall. Also introduced is the word "impaled" which will become an important repeated image throughout the work.

Guido's life with Hedvig had been one of falsity and pretense; only his love for her had been true. "He had tried to be one with her, by adoring her, by imitating her goose-step stride. . . . Sensing something in him blasphemed and lonely, she had taken the blow as a Gentile must--by moving toward him in recoil" (Barnes, Nightwood 13). Here we have an oxymoronic image typical of Barnes. The two actions--moving forward in recoil--are opposites and cancel each other out. The result is stasis; the image is a tableau.

The house occupied by Guido and Hedvig reflects in its furnishings Guido's preoccupation with the past and nobility, "... a house that large, dark and imposing, became a fantastic museum of their encounter" (Barnes, Nightwood 5). Interiors and dwellings are important in Nightwood. They reflect the characters and values of the occupants, as well as their histories and their relationships. The style of the Volkbein house is ornate rococo. The dominant colors are gold and red, and the house is littered with fragments of statues from antiquity. "The great salon was of walnut. Over the fireplace hung impressive copies of the Medici shield and, beside them, the Austrian Bird" (Barnes, Nightwood 5). There were three pianos which Hedvig is
described as playing "... with the masterly stroke of a man, in the tempo of her blood, rapid and rising ... in the duelling manner." (Barnes, Nightwood 5). Completing the scene was a "... thick dragon's-blood pile of rugs from Madrid" (Barnes, Nightwood 5), and the blood imagery is continued in the description of the two desks that occupied the study made of "rich and bloody wood" (Barnes, Nightwood 5-6). Thus blood, in the sense of heritage or a pretense to heritage and vitality, is mingled with the purely visual imagery of the color of blood in the furnishings of the home. The multiple use of a single image is characteristic of Barnes' style in Nightwood.

In the middle of each desk was a design, claimed by Guido to be "the Volkbein field," featuring "a lion, a bear, a ram, and a dove, and in their midst a flaming torch" (Barnes, Nightwood 6). The pièce de résistance, however, of Guido's pretended nobility was a pair of "life-sized portraits of Guido's claim to father and mother" (Barnes, Nightwood 6). Actually portraits of actors, remarkably and by accident the portrait of the "father" resembles Guido. "Guido had found them in some forgotten and dusty corner and had purchased them when he had been sure that he would need an alibi for the blood" (Barnes, Nightwood 7).

Following the death of Guido, Hedvig bears her child, but after the birth "... with the gross splendor of a general saluting the flag, she named him Felix, thrust him from her and died" (Barnes, Nightwood 1). Thus as in Ryder,
death is linked with childbirth, but in the case of Hedvig's bearing a first child at age forty-five without modern medical technology, her death is no surprise.

Abruptly the narrative turns from Guido and Hedvig to reintroduce Felix, at age thirty, who has been reared by his maternal aunt, and, who "turned up in the world with these facts, the portraits and nothing more" (Barnes, Nightwood 7). What the facts may be remain ambiguous, for it would not have been possible for the aunt to know all that the narrator has told the reader. "His aunt . . . told him what she knew, and this had been her only knowledge of his past" (Barnes, Nightwood 7). Felix, then, is the Jew who is not a Jew. Born of a Christian mother, reared by a Christian aunt, as heir to the title of Baron Volkbein, there is no hint of Jewishness in his past, yet the narrator presents Felix as a type, the Wandering Jew. "What had formed Felix from the date of his birth to his coming to thirty was unknown to the world, for the step of the wandering Jew is in every son" (Barnes, Nightwood 7). Thus Felix becomes a sort of Everyman. Yet we have in Felix the paradoxical figure of the Jew who is not really a Jew and the figure of a baron who is not really a baron. He has no reason to suspect any Jewish background and no reason to doubt his right to the title of baron. He accepts the portraits as his ancestors without question, thus heightening the irony of the pretence when it ceases to be a known pretense and becomes for Felix all that he knows of reality. Guido, it would appear, had
accomplished his purpose. He had sired a son who is not Jewish and who believes himself to be a baron. Yet Felix who shares his father's veneration for nobility and the past does not fit into "society." Like Guido, he is obsessed with nobility, royalty, the aristocracy of "Old Europe."
"He felt that the great past might mend a little if he bowed low enough, if he succumbed and gave homage" (Barnes, Nightwood 9). Felix is constantly looking for the correct person or thing to pay homage to. Fascinated by old churches, castles, grave-yards, rare coins, rare books, tales of the past, Felix is always ". . . bowing, searching . . . for the correct thing to which to pay tribute; the right street, the right care. . . . In restaurants he bowed slightly to anyone who looked as if he might be 'someone' . . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 9).

Introducing the dichotomy of day/night into the novel, Felix is described as being dressed for neither but partly for both,

. . . as if expecting to participate in some great event, though there was no function in the world for which he could be said to be properly garbed; wishing to be correct at any moment, he was tailored in part for the evening and in part for the day. (Barnes, Nightwood, 8)

Dress here has a semiotic and a symbolic function. In
Europe in the 1920's more rigidly than today clothing functioned as a semiotic system. The statement made by Felix's mode of dress marks him as deviating from the grammar of appropriate dress by trying to combine day with night. As Matthew O'Connor will later explain to Nora, "the day and the night are related by their division" (Barnes, Nightwood 80). Yet it is Felix's error that he tries to erase this difference by combining the dress of both, making himself unsuited for either. Pathetically wrong and unable to fit into the society he seeks, Felix is concerned about always being right. As is evident in the failure of his attempt to bridge the semiotic differences of modes of dress, one cannot always be appropriate for every occasion at all times. It is simply the nature of difference. To attempt to always be right results in always being wrong.

An unsuspecting fraud, Felix finds himself more at home with circus people who also bear pretended titles.

Early in life Felix had insinuated himself into the pageantry of the circus and the theatre. In some way they linked his emotions to the higher and unattainable pageantry of kings and queens . . . . He became for a little while a part of their splendid and reeking falsification. (Barnes, Nightwood 10-11)
The people of this world, with desires utterly divergent from his own, had also seized on titles for a purpose. There was a Princess Nadja, a Baron von Tink, a Principessa Strasera y Strasero, a King Buffo and a Duchess of Broadback: gaudy, cheap cuts from the breast of life, immensely capable of that great disquiet called entertainment. They took titles merely to dazzle... knowing well that skill is never so amazing as when it seems inappropriate. Felix clung to his title to dazzle his own estrangement. It brought them together. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 11)

Barnes takes the opportunity to link the circus people with beasts, "... the men smelling weaker and the women stronger than their beasts" (*Nightwood* 11). Curiously the circus brings a feeling of peace to Felix that he had previously known in museums. His love for the circus is compared with "the love of the lion for its tamer... bringing the beast to heel, had somehow turned toward him a face like his own..." (Barnes, *Nightwood* 11). Thus, Felix, too, is linked with the beast. In the circus both beasts and humans are performers. There is an effacement of the traditional distinction between beast and human.
The central image in Nightwood is that of the circus . . . leveling of all distinctions. . . . History is an amusement; the circus is a version of history which cancels history out . . . to obliterate distinctions between men and beasts by getting them to perform each other's tricks, the ring itself contains all time at once—there is movement by no progression. (Pochoda 188)

Felix's closest circus friend, the Duchess of Broadback, otherwise known as Frau Mann, provides the occasion for Barnes' introduction of the image of the doll in Nightwood, an image that will take on kaleidoscopic shifts in meaning as the novel progresses. A trapeze artist, her body and even her costume are inseparable from her function as a performer.

Her legs had the specialized tension common to aerial workers; something of the bar was in her wrists. . . . She seemed to have a skin that was the pattern of her costume . . . the bulge in the groin where she took the bar. . . . The stuff of the tights was no longer a covering, it was herself; the span of the tightly stitched crotch was so much her own flesh that she was unsexed as a
doll. The needle that had made one the property of the child made the other the property of no man. (Barnes, Nightwood 12-13)

Viewed in this manner the parts of Frau Mann's name ironically cancel each other out as the dichotomy of woman/man; as unsexed as a doll, she is indeed the property of no man (Hirshman 113). The image of the doll will recur throughout Nightwood. Robin will give first Nora and then Jenny a doll and it will be the sight of the doll on Jenny's bed that will make Nora realize that Robin has become Jenny's lover. Talking to Matthew, Nora explains the significance of the doll.

'We give death to a child when we give it a doll--it's the effigy and the shroud; when a woman gives it to a woman, it is the life they cannot have, it is their child, sacred and profane. . . .' (Barnes, Nightwood 142)

Matthew identifies the doll specifically with homosexuality:

'The last doll given to age, is the girl who should have been a boy, and the boy who should have been a girl! The love of that last doll was fore-shadowed in that love of the first. The doll and the immature have something right about them, the doll
because it resembles but does not contain life, and the third sex because it contains life but resembles the doll!' (Barnes, *Nightwood* 148)

Robin destroys the doll that she gives Nora as the symbol of their child.

'Sometimes, if she got tight by evening, I would find her standing in the middle of the room in boy's clothes, rocking from foot to foot, holding the doll she had given us--"our child"--high above her head, as if she would cast it down, a look of fury on her face. And one time, about three in the morning when she came in, she was angry because for once I had not been there all the time, waiting. She picked up the doll and hurled it to the floor and put her foot on it, crunching her heel into it; and then, as I came crying behind her, she kicked it, its china head all in dust... '

(Barnes, *Nightwood* 147)

Between Barnes and Wood, too, there had been such a doll and such an incident. "The real child of the rue St.-Romain household was a doll" (Field 152). Barnes was able to put her turbulent years with Thelma in the past, "but she saved
the broken doll and kept it with her until she died" (Field 168).

Frau Mann is invited to a party given by Count Otonorio Altamonte and takes Felix along. It seems certain that Barnes intends the count to be associated with onanism both because of his name and because he abruptly tells his guests to leave as soon as he arrives, for as Matthew O'Connor explains, the count, who was accompanied by a young girl, "'suspected that he had come upon his last erection'" (Barnes, Nightwood 25). Thus the party is anticlimactic for Felix, but it is very significant for the reader, for through the narrator before the count arrives we have our first glimpse of Nora Flood, the only woman standing in a group of ten men, and Matthew O'Connor who commands the attention of the group with his loud voice and his stories. "The man was Dr. Matthew O'Connor, an Irishman from the Barbary Coast (Pacific Street, San Francisco), whose interest in gynaecology had driven him half around the world" (Barnes, Nightwood 14). A transsexual, his medical specialty is the study of the physiological system which he lacks. His specialty is his desired sex. In a reversal of the traditional Freudian/Lacanian concept of the woman as lacking a penis, O'Connor wants most what he lacks, a womb. As he tells Nora later, "'... in my heart is the wish for children and knitting. God, I never asked better than to boil some good man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months by the calendar'" (Barnes, Nightwood 91).
O'Connor's aphorisms and theories are a deconstructive litany of polar oppositions reversed: legend is opposed to history, Jews are opposed to Christians, common people to nobility, Catholics to Protestants. O'Connor places the traditionally devalued term first and deconstructively elevates it with an ironic twist. "'Legend is unexpurgated, but history . . . is deflowered. . . . The Jews are the only people who have sense enough to keep humor in the family; a Christian scatters it all over the world'" (Barnes, Nightwood 15). "'Vienna, exclaims the doctor, is the bed into which the common people climb, docile with toil, and out of which nobility fling themselves, ferocious with dignity. . . .'' (Barnes, Nightwood 17). O'Connor tells Felix with irony that will become evident later that a man desires "'One of two things: to find someone who is so stupid that he can lie to her, or to love someone so much that she can lie to him'" (Barnes, Nightwood 19). "The Catholic is the girl that you love so much that she can lie to you, and the Protestant is the girl that loves you so much that you can lie to her, and pretend a lot you do not feel'" (Barnes, Nightwood 20). For both Felix and Nora, Robin will be the Catholic girl, and for Robin, Nora will be the Protestant girl. For O'Connor the Catholic Church is the Catholic girl upon whose doctrines he temporarily sustains himself in his desire to believe.

Hearing Matthew's talk, Nora comes forward, introduces herself to Matthew and Felix and asks, "'Are you both really
saying what you mean, or are you just talking?" (Barnes, Nightwood 18). The question is significant both in terms of the immediate situation and for Barnes' concept of fiction as well. It introduces the oppositions of the truth (saying what you really mean), and the lie (just talking), or, on another level, the opposition between reality and fiction. Throughout Nightwood it will become apparent that O'Connor talks for reasons other than to convey what he "really means." O'Connor is a self-confessed liar, and "... once O'Connor establishes himself as a liar, all that he says becomes affected by it. ... Lying, then, becomes a part of Nightwood's scheme of inversion, whereby the degraded becomes the exalted" (Kannenstine 112). It is by means of such inversions that Nightwood treats polar oppositions deconstructively, elevating the traditionally devalued terms so that they are viewed as equal in value to the traditionally elevated terms.

Nightwood, then, is about the power that language exerts, whether truth or lie, in the lives of its characters. Ultimately Nightwood is about the failure of language as the novel ends significantly in silence.

There is great irony in bringing Felix, Matthew, and Nora together, so that they know each other before any of them meets Robin Vote, who will bind them together in the common concern of trying to fathom her. Robin is the absent center in this scene in which they initially meet. Robin, who will ask nothing of any of them, will ultimately be the
destruction of all of them because of the ways that they react to her. Prophetically, when O'Connor offers Felix a drink, Felix replies, "'I never drink'" but O'Connor responds, "'You will'" (Barnes, Nightwood 20). In Felix's final scene in the novel we see him drunk, escaping the life of pain that resulted from his marriage to Robin. To Felix, Robin will be his wife only for a brief time, but she will remain with him in their son Guido, who for Felix represents both the fulfillment and the disillusionment of his dreams. To Nora, Robin will be the love of her life, the lover whom she will ultimately drive away and who will take Nora's heart when she goes. To Matthew, Robin, in a Derridean sense, is a text, and Felix and Nora turn to Matthew asking him to interpret Robin for them. But Robin, the empty unrevealed center of Nightwood, defies interpretation. She is presented as and remains an enigma. The reader's attempt to fully interpret Robin proves as futile as that of the characters who seek to understand her.

The first chapter ends with Frau Mann and O'Connor going to a café. O'Connor comments, "'There's something missing about the Baron Felix—damned from the waist up, which reminds me of Mademoiselle Basquette, who was damned from the waist down, a girl without legs..."' (Barnes, Nightwood 26). Ending his pathetic tale of Mademoiselle Basquette's attempt at love, O'Connor observes, "'. . . if one gave birth to a heart on a plate, it would say "Love" and twitch like the lopped leg of a frog'" (Barnes,
Nightwood 26-27). Frau Mann and O'Connor exchange stories until Frau Mann dozes off and O'Connor revealing his dishonest, trickster side, leaves, telling the waiter, "'The lady will pay'" (Barnes, Nightwood 28).

"La Somnambule" introduces Robin and begins her interactions with the other characters. The chapter is focused on the human/beast dichotomies which Robin represents, but many other oppositions are presented as well. Through Robin the other characters are shaken from their complacent lives and ultimately destroyed. Yet the chapter does not open with Robin as all the other chapters that delineate a character open with a focus on that particular character. Robin can only be approached indirectly and Barnes' delaying of Robin's entrance to the novel and the method of her presentation of Robin illustrates the necessary for indirectness. The introduction of Robin also illustrates Barnes' use of the deconstructive trope of catachesis and the interaction of poetic figures of speech with the prose narrative.

In "La Somnambule" the action of the novel has moved from Berlin to Paris, to "the doctor's city" bounded by the Café de la Mairie du VIe where O'Connor spends much of his time talking and drinking, the Catholic church St. Sulpice which O'Connor frequents, bathing in the holy water as if he were a bird, and the rue Servandoni where O'Connor's room is located. It is while Felix "who turned up in Paris some weeks after the encounter in Berlin" (Barnes, Nightwood 30)
sits with O'connor at the café that "the chasseur of the Hotel Récamier" (Barnes, Nightwood 33)--the hotel that was the residence of Thelma Wood before she lives with Barnes--(Field 116) rushes to summon O'connor telling him that a young woman has fainted. Felix accompanies the doctor, and the reader, along with Felix, gets a first glimpse of Robin. In a manner totally different from the direct introductions of the other characters, for the introduction of Robin, Barnes evokes a presence, using surroundings, clothing, and her pose, rather than presenting Robin directly. "From the first moment we see Robin . . . we have a sense both of her mysterious silence and of the complex kind of language associated with her throughout Nightwood" (Allen, "Failures of Word, Uses of Silence" 2). Barnes begins her description, not with Robin, but with her surroundings.

On a bed, surrounded by a confusion of potted plants, exotic palms and cut flowers, faintly over-sung by the notes of unseen birds, which seemed to have been forgotten--left without the usual silencing cover, which, like cloaks on funeral urns, are cast over their cages at night by good housewives--half flung off the support of the cushions from which, in a moment of threatened consciousness she had turned her head, lay the young woman, heavy and dishevelled.
Her legs, in white flannel trousers, were spread as in a dance, the thick-lacquered pumps looking too lively for the arrested step. Her hands, long and beautiful, lay on either side of her face. (Barnes, Nightwood 34)

The initial description consists of three sentences. Long, inverted, and in the passive voice, the passage is "heavy with modifying phrases. . ." (Allen, "Failures" 2). The subject--the young woman--is delayed almost to the last. The setting is described using a metaphor related to the setting itself rather than to Robin (Allen, "Failures" 2). The entire passage with its inverted construction, relative clauses, passive voice verbs, "... together with the ... intransitive, low-activity main verb, 'lay,' repeated once, become syntax-as-metaphor to emphasize the physically passive posture of the woman on the bed" (Allen, "Dressing" 111).

The point is that she is not described directly here. Rather she is evoked; the reader must process clauses and phrases which refer to her surroundings and must read through metaphors which at first seem tangential. Robin remains largely undescribed. Barnes' evocation of her is sensuous as well as indirect. . . . The . . . embedded syntax compels the
reader to work at comprehending Robin's force of presence, but at the same time keeps her at one remove with its concentration of evocation rather than on direct character description. This language of evocation is associated with Robin throughout the novel and the reader's difficulty of getting some sense of her is parallel to the problems of Nora, Felix, and Matthew who are also unable to discover her essence.

(Allen, "Failures" 2-3)

The string of negative words—"unseen," "forgotten," "threatened," "dishevelled," "arrested"—all evoke ". . . a sense of negative presence or partial presence . . . appropriate to Robin who is perceived primarily by her absence" (Allen, "Dressing" 111).

But the description of Robin continues taking the reader more deeply into associative metaphor.

The perfume that her body exhaled was of the quality of that earth-flesh, fungi, which smells of captured dampness and yet is so dry, overcast with the odour of oil of amber, which is an inner malady of the sea, making her seem as if she had invaded a sleep incautious and entire. Her flesh was the texture of
plant life, and beneath it one sensed
a frame, broad, porous and sleep-worn,
as if sleep were a decay fishing her
beneath the visible surface. About her
head there was an effulgence as of
phosphorus glowing about the circumference
of a body of water—as if her life lay
through her in ungainly luminous
deteriorations—the troubling structure
of the born somnambule, who lives in two
worlds—meet of child and desperado.
(Barnes, Nightwood 34-35)

The passage moves from the tableau of the step as if
arrested in dance to the still-life metaphors of poetic
prose in which opposites are made to coexist. The "earth-
flesh, fungi" combines the smell of dampness with dry
texture. A second odour, "oil of amber . . . an inner
malady of the sea" links earth to water. The two images
of earth and water are again linked in the plant life
texture of her flesh and her "broad, porous, sleep-worn"
frame "as if sleep were a decay fishing her beneath the
surface." The dominant image, however, is that of decay
and deterioration, linked in opposition with glowing and
luminousness associated still with water. Connecting all
the images is the word, "sleep." A sleep-walker, she
lives suspended between day and night; "meet of child and
desperado," she literally combines innocence and lawlessness.
As we will be told by the narrator, "The woman who presents herself to the spectator as a 'picture' forever arranged is, for the contemplative mind, the chiefest danger" (Barnes, Nightwood 37), and therein lies the potential danger of Robin to Felix, for in the third and final paragraph of the introduction of Robin, she is described as being part of a painting.

Like a painting by the douanier Rousseau, she seemed to lie in a jungle trapped in a drawing room (in the apprehension of which the walls have made their escape), thrown in among the carnivorous flowers as their ration; the set, the property of an unseen dompteur, half lord, half promoter, over which one expects to hear the strains of an orchestra of woodwinds render a serenade which will popularize the wilderness. (Barnes, Nightwood 35)

This highly metaphorical final passage moves the reader further away from Robin and again focuses on surroundings in an even more surrealistic manner than did the first paragraph. The metaphors again are couched in terms of what is not, the "unseen dompteur," the expected, but non-existent music. Yet there is an interesting contrast between the first and third paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the images are those of nature domesticated,
although in disarray: "a confusion of potted plants, exotic palms and cut flowers," and the birds that sing are caged birds, forgotten and left uncovered. Thus the first and third paragraphs share plant and musical imagery, but the third paragraph presents a painting of undomesticated nature, the jungle domesticated by art, complete with carnivorous flowers as opposed to pot plants and cut flowers. Reminding the reader of the circus where animals are no longer wild but trained to perform, we are presented with the image of the "unseen dompteur," a tamer or trainer. Ending the paragraph and corresponding with the unseen birds which sing in the first paragraph is the expected but unheard music by orchestral wood-winds that would "popularize the wilderness." Throughout the passage there is the play between nature domesticated and nature which is normally wild being domesticated or tamed by art. Implicit, then, is the opposition between nature and art. But instead of placing nature first in this hierarchy, Barnes shows art prevailing over nature. In both paragraphs nature is secondary, in the first paragraph to culture or civilization in the form of domestication and in the third paragraph as tamed or controlled by art.

Although in Nightwood Barnes reverses traditional polar oppositions in a manner that is Derridean, in the most significant passages in Nightwood, Barnes' primary tool of expression is the device of metaphor which Derrida denounces in "White Mythology" as totally implicated in
Western metaphysics. In "White Mythology," Derrida is primarily concerned with the use of metaphor in philosophy which he condemns; ". . . Metaphor remains in all its essential features a classical element of philosophy, a metaphysical concept" (Derrida, "White Mythology" 18). Yet in "The Retrait of Metaphor" Derrida acknowledges the impossibility of speaking or writing without metaphor, for metaphor inhabits language (8), and in "White Mythology" Derrida quotes from Gaston Bachelard a statement that certainly applies to Barnes' use of metaphor in *Nightwood*:

\[\ldots\] metaphors summon one another and are more coordinated than sensations, so much so that a poetic mind is purely and simply a syntax of metaphors. Each poet should then be represented by a diagram which would indicate the meaning and symmetry of his metaphorical coordinations. \ldots One should not, however, see in this thesis a desire \ldots to impose a logic or a reality (which is the same thing) on the poet's creation. It is objectively, after the event, after the full flowering, that we wish to discover the realism and the inner logic of a poetic work. At times some truly diverse images \ldots will come together and fuse. \ldots The strangest mosaics of Surrealism will suddenly reveal
a continuity of meaning. . . .

(Quoted in Derrida, "White Mythology"
67-68)

Revealing the "inner logic" of Barnes' work is indeed the purpose of the present study, and an examination of Barnes' use of metaphor is perhaps the best means of doing so. In "White Mythology," Derrida at first condemns the use of metaphor.

Metaphor is able to display properties, to relate to each other the properties which have been abstracted from the essence of different things, to make them known on the basis of their resemblance without ever directly, fully, or properly stating the essence, without itself making visible the truth of itself.

(Derrida, "White Mythology" 50)

In "The Retrait of Metaphor," Derrida says ". . . a metaphor claims to procure access to the unknown and to the indeterminate by the detour of something recognizably familiar" (23). Metaphor is considered "a means of knowledge" based on resemblance (Derrida, "White Mythology" 38). But the resemblance is not identity and implies also an opposition. Thus, according to Derrida, "Metaphor is the moment of possible sense as a possibility of non-truth" (Derrida, "White Mythology" 42). Yet, there is a way of deploying metaphor ". . . in such a way, without limit, that the
borders of what is proper for it are torn from it; consequently the reassuring dichotomy between the metaphorical and the proper is exploded. . ." (Derrida, "White Mythology" 73-74). Such a figure of speech is called "catachresis," which, Derrida explains, is the "abuse of metaphor" (Derrida, "White Mythology" 35). Catachresis is further described as

. . . the use of a sign by violence, force, or abuse, with the imposition of a sign on a sense not yet having a proper sign in language. And so there is no substitution here, no transfer of proper signs, but an irruptive extension of a sign proper to one idea to a sense without a signifier. (Derrida, "White Mythology" 57)

Alan Singer in A Metaphorics of Fiction examines Barnes' use of catachresis and calls catachresis "the archetope of deconstruction" (41). In contrast to traditional metaphor, catachresis, insofar as it is not predicated on resemblance, depends more upon the immediate contextual exigencies of utterance than upon a privileged semantic category within which a finite repertoire of terms may be substituted interchangeably. (Singer 41)

The dominance of metaphor in Nightwood and Barnes' use of catachresis in particular disrupts the normal novelistic
"literal-figurative hierarchy" of fiction and adds to the novel's deconstructive quality (Singer 39). As for the opposition of truth to fiction,

... if metaphor successfully inaugurates new meanings rather than indexing the familiar lexical features of a discourse, then fiction no longer summons its significance out of an axiomatic opposition to fact, beside which it sits in restless subordination.

(Singer 43)

Singer describes Barnes' metaphors as atypical and asymmetrical in the relationship between tenor and vehicle. He finds the upset of the balance between vehicle and tenor to be the basis of Barnes' style, "a rhetoric founded upon a principle of discontinuity rather than on one of resemblance" (Singer 49).

Barnes's figurative language insists upon ceaselessly revising perspectives, substituting one identity among differences for another in an infinite calculus of emergent meaning. In Nightwood metaphor has to do with the act of predication or statement-making rather than the act of renaming that we identify with Aristotelian transference theories of metaphor. (Singer 48)
As Derrida points out in "White Mythology," "catachresis . . . transforms the functioning of language itself: 'it produces with the same materials, new rules of exchange, new meanings'" (Quoted in Singer 58). With the introduction of Robin Vote, which we have examined in detail, the plot's expository function "is supplanted with a practice of linguistic foregrounding" (Singer 57). In the traditional narrative the "referential level" is privileged over the "figural level" (Singer 60-61). But in Nightwood the figurative dominates and the narrative literal-figurative opposition of realistic fiction is deconstructively transposed; "... metaphor is the form-giving distortion of novelistic form in Nightwood. It marks the incursion of poetry into the domain of prose" (Singer 54). In Nightwood, ". . . the pronouncements of the narrator and the doctor almost always arrange themselves as pairs of literal-discursive and figural-extrapolative complements" (Singer 59). "What appears to be the logic of literal expression is nullified by a countercurrent of figurative detail" (Singer 60). "Each additional gesture of metaphoric elaboration has the effect of seemingly dispersing rather than integrating the elements of a coherent pattern" (Singer 61).

Paula K. Nelson also notes the skewed relationship between tenor and vehicle in Barnes' metaphors in Nightwood. Concrete vehicles (for example, in Matthew O'Connor's anecdotes) may be linked with abstract tenors that are vague or implied, leaving the reader puzzled and ". . . disturbed
by the obscurity that ironically comes out of concrete
detail" (Nelson 74). On the other hand when abstract
vehicles are linked to abstract tenors, the result is a
type of obscurity like that of a dream (Nelson 74). "The
dream is to 'real' experience as the stylization of
Nightwood is to 'real' experience" (Nelson 84). Violations
and ambiguities of syntax also add to the anti-narrative,
poetic metaphors both of Matthew and the intrusive narrative
voice (Nelson 88). Phrases from the middle paragraph intro-
ducing Robin, "as if sleep were a decay fishing her beneath
the visible surface" and "as if her life lay through her in
ungainly luminous deteriorations" (Barnes, Nightwood 34) are
two such examples.

A final technique for the poetic disruption of narra-
tive is Barnes' use of oxymoron or images of apparent
opposition.

It is stylistically appropriate and
consistent that Nightwood be thick with
oxymora. The form, concerned succinctly
with juxtaposing contraries, and the
statement of ideas contained in that form,
having largely to do with inverted
values . . . provide small structural
parallels for describing the distortions
of surrealism as they appear on other
levels in the book. (Nelson 90)
Nightwood is filled with oxymora, from Hedvig's moving toward Guido in recoil, an image of oxymoronic stasis, to the description of Robin's final communion with Nora's dog as both touching and obscene.

Carolyn Allen, in "'Dressing the Unknowable in Garments of the Known': The Style of Djuna Barnes' Nightwood," notes also that Barnes links words which are semantically opposites, such as "affirmation and despair" (Nightwood 48), "savage and refined" (Nightwood 50), "anticipation and regret" (Nightwood 60), "recoil and advance" (Nightwood 65), "love and anonymity" (Nightwood 55). Yet as Allen points out these "opposites are so bound up in each other that duality is impossible" (113). They are united rather than separated. The combination of the oppositional words with the word "and" nullifies the oppositional difference characteristic of the duality of binary opposition in Western thought. They are not mutually exclusive in an either/or sense; they are inclusive in the sense of both/and. One can give birth amid "cries of affirmation and despair" (Barnes, Nightwood 48), one can be at once "savage and refined" (Barnes, Nightwood 50), and one can experience the mingling of "anticipation and regret" (Barnes, Nightwood 60). The opposition is only one of appearance in language; human reality is often a mixture of contradictions.

According to Allen, "the principle mark of Barnes' style is the analogy, the terms of which are basically alike though superficially different. . . . The syntax is
complicated, heavily embedded and often appositional. . ." ("Dressing" 108). Although the images may be scattered throughout the novel,

. . . words and phrases are repeated,
sometimes with a shift in meaning, and
the reader must associate the words
with earlier occurrences of them in order
to see how Barnes depends on lexical sets
rather than on narrative or characterization
to convey her ideas. (Allen, "Dressing"
108)

Barnes' work is a montage of metaphoric "lexical sets,"
and David Lodge in The Modes of Modern Writing identifies
montage with the metaphoric. Lodge expands the contrast
between metaphor and metonym originally popularized by
Jakobson in Fundamentals of Language (90-96), in which
Jakobson identified metonym, development by contiguity,
with realism and metaphor, development by similarity, with
Romanticism as a literary movement and Symbolism (92).
Lodge points out that the form of metaphor "least disturbing
to syntagmatic continuity" and most compatible with realism
is the simile rather than the direct correspondence of pure
metaphor (105).

The greater the distance . . . between
tenor . . . and the vehicle of the
metaphor, the more powerful will be the
semantic effect of the metaphor, but
the greater, also, will be the disturbance to the relationship of continuity between items in the discourse and therefore to realistic illusion. (Lodge 112)

One can see, then, why the skewed relationship between tenor and vehicle in Barnes' repeated and metamorphosizing metaphors would have the dual effect of enhancing the poetic power of Barnes' writing while, at the same time, diluting any sense of "realistic illusion." The more bizarre the analogy, the more obscure the writing, claims Lodge (117), explaining, in a way, the obscurity of which Barnes has been accused.

"In fiction, metonymic writing offers a very obvious and readily intelligible kind of continuity based on spatio-temporal contiguities; the continuity of metaphorical writing is more difficult, but not impossible to identify" (Lodge 231). In Barnes' writing continuity is achieved through the use of metaphors that repeat or present related images; it is the way in which the images are related and transformed that weaves together a continuity based on intuitive association. Images that seem chaotic are linked by a principle of association similar to that of modern poetry (Kannerstine 96).

Instead of action, this book contains long passages of heavily metaphorical, stylized prose and immensely long
"unrealistic" conversations. Yet through the heightened intensity of its language . . . and through the adroit structuring of its disjunct elements, Nightwood leaves the reader with a coherent and powerful impression of spiritual agony. The unified quality of this impression results from certain stable and consistent elements among the portions that are juxtaposed.

(Spencer 42)

The more metaphoric Barnes' writing becomes in Nightwood the more mythic it becomes also. Following the initial description of Robin, O'Connor attempts to revive her, meanwhile taking advantage of her unconscious state to steal a 100 franc note from a nearby table and dabble in her perfume and cosmetics, revealing once again his trickster nature by his theft and alerting the reader to his transsexual nature with his use of her perfume and cosmetics. More and more the doctor will become recognizable as a Tiresias figure, serving as "both prophet and chorus" (Sutton 118).

Felix, who has been watching the doctor, looks into Robin's now-open eyes and we are given a long metaphorical description of Felix's reaction to her by the intrusive narrator who reveals more to the reader than is experienced by Felix.
She closed her eyes, and Felix, who had been looking into them intently because of their mysterious and shocking blue, found himself seeing them still faintly clear and timeless behind the lids—the long unqualified range in the iris of wild beasts who have not tamed the focus down to meet the human eye.

The woman who presents herself to the spectator as a 'picture' forever arranged is, for the contemplative mind, the chiefest danger. Sometimes one meets a woman who is beast turning human. Such a person's every movement will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience; a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory; an insupportable a joy as would be the vision of an eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear, stepping in the trepidation of flesh that will become myth; as the unicorn is neither man nor beast deprived, but human hunger pressing its breast to its prey.

Such a woman is the infected carrier of the past: before her the structure of our
head and jaws ache—we feel that we could eat her, she who is eaten death returning, for only then do we put our face close to the blood on the lips of our forefathers.

Something of this emotion came over Felix... (Barnes, Nightwood 37)

The last line indicates that Felix is not capable of experiencing all that the narrator wishes the reader to experience, and, therefore, the narrator must step between Felix, the observing consciousness, and the reader to explain the full richness and complexity that is Robin. This passage is the central passage in Nightwood. It is the controlling image of the text for it explains as directly as it is possible what is the attraction and appeal that Robin holds for all the characters that come in contact with her. The central image of the passage is that of the beast turning human which is the central thematic concern of Nightwood. The images of this passage reach out to connect associatively and intuitively with other manifestations of related images in passages throughout the book. For example, the image of the eyes—"the long unqualified range in the iris of wild beasts who have not tamed the focus down to meet the human eye"—calls up the previous jungle imagery of the picture Robin seemed to be a part of with its "unseen dompteur." This image is also connected to the image of the lioness in the circus who will stop and bow down before Robin and whose "eyes flowed in tears that never reached
the surface" (Barnes, Nightwood 54). Finally, there is the image of "the eye of a child lost a long while . . . the contraction of that distance--a child going small in the claws of a beast, coming furiously up the furlongs of the iris" (Barnes, Nightwood 83). All these images are implied and foreshadowed in the image of Robin's eyes.

Similarly, the images that depict Robin as posed or as part of a painting are related. "The woman who presents herself to the spectator as a 'picture' forever arranged" refers back to the previous description of Robin. "Like a painting by the douanier Rousseau, she seemed to lie in a jungle trapped in a drawing room. . . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 35). A still-life tableau, she is frozen in a moment in time, a danger for the contemplative mind whether Felix's, Nora's, or Matthew's. Each is contemplative in his or her own way, and each will be destroyed because of Robin.

"Sometimes one meets a woman who is beast turning human" (Barnes, Nightwood 37). This is the central sentence of Nightwood. The entire novel unfolds from this one sentence and folds back into it in the end as Robin abandons humanity and reverts to beast. Robin, of course, is the woman who is beast turning human. In her turn toward the human she will marry Felix, enter the Catholic Church, and bear a child. During her pregnancy she thinks of the Emperor Francis Joseph and of women in history and literature, Louise de la Valliere, Catherine of Russia, Madame de Maintenon, Catherine de Medici, Anna Karenina and Catherine
Heathcliff. Also, Felix finds her reading the Marquis de Sade's memoirs in which she had underlined the passage: *Et lui rendit pendant sa captivité les milles services qu'un amour devoue est seul capable de rendre*. . ." (Quoted in Barnes, *Nightwood* 47). To Robin, love is a form of captivity, and she is like a captive beast. Yet her exposure to history and literature marks her as human. After she leaves Felix, her repudiation of the lioness' bowing down to can also be seen as a rejection of animal existence in favor of the human (Davis 147), as she takes Nora's hand and they leave the circus. Her attempt at a relationship with Nora and even with Jenny can be seen as human behavior. Yet coexistent with her movement in the direction of the human is her retention of animal traits, primarily seen in her nocturnal wanderings and her total lack of discrimination in her sexuality. Robin embodies evolution and the opposition between nature and culture, reminding us how thin the veneer of civilization is.

She is emblematic of primordial experience, "a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 37). Unlike the primordial experience described by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*, the primordial experience described by Barnes is in terms of a metaphor of "insupportable joy."

Racial memory, which such images attempt to make concrete, takes us into the sphere of . . . where concepts of existence,
of experience, of reality have their own laws. The narrator attempts to invoke such experiences for the reader through vivid metaphors for that surreality. (Nelson 79)

As the vision of the eland which will be transformed into the unicorn, Robin is "flesh that will become myth" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 37). The unicorn, the creation of man's imagination, represents man's hunger for that which does not exist but can be made to exist only in the imagination. Barnes postulates a time before we became human, when man lacked human consciousness but in doing so lacked the division of consciousness that, in Lacan's terms, alienates us from ourselves. For Barnes, in this mythic time, consciousness was complete and undivided, very like the pre-oedipal stage described by Lacan and others in the life of the individual human being.

... Barnes identifies this ideally unified identity with the moment in evolution of the 'beast turning human' (37) when unconscious, passionate animal vitality took on rational consciousness. Man remembers and yearns for this moment through a kind of Jungian race memory. ... On the individual level, this 'eternal wedding' is identified with the half-forgotten period of early
childhood. . . . (Williamson 60-61)

Barnes views rational consciousness as a fall from the plenitude of undivided consciousness. Rational consciousness represents a loss rather than a gain. As Felix will say to O'Connor later as he tries to fathom Robin in an attempt to shore up the fragments of his life, "'The Baronin had an indefinable disorder, a sort of 'odour of memory,' like a person who has come from some place that we have forgotten and would give our life to recall'" (Barnes, Nightwood 118). One critic, Edward Gunn, identifies this place as the womb, and the experience as that of the child while "consciously undifferentiated from the mother" (548).

According to Jacques Lacan in Ecrits (1-7), at birth the child has no sense of self; he identifies with the world around. There is no sense of interior or exterior. It is in the child's passage through the preoedipal Stage of the Mirror--through the looking glass in an ironic sense--that the unity of the original sense of self is lost. According to Lacan's theory, each stage in human development involves loss (Silverman 150). One such loss is that of the potential of polymorphous libido in what Lacan calls "the 'pre-oedipal territorialization' of the subject's body" when "... the mouth, the anus, the penis and the vagina" become "designated as the appropriate sites of pleasure..." (Silverman 155), sites that are culturally determined.

More significant, however, is the loss that occurs between six and eighteen months of age which Lacan calls the Stage
of the Mirror in which the child upon seeing his reflection apprehends himself "as other" (Silverman 157). The Stage of the Mirror is a crisis of "alienation around which the Lacanian subject is organized, since to know oneself through an external image is to be defined through self-alienation" (Silverman 158). Thus the Stage of the Mirror divides the subject.

Ironically, the acquisition of language is the next loss experienced by the already divided subject, and it is the acquisition of language that places the subject within the confines of the Symbolic order, severing forever direct access to the Real. "Within the Lacanian argument the signifier is the mark of the subject's radical alienation from the real..." (Silverman 164). The subject, never really free, is born into the network of signification that pre-dates and postdates his existence (Lacan 68). "The subject mediated by language is irreremediably divided because it has been excluded from the symbolic chain at the very moment at which it becomes 'represented' in it" (LeMarie 129). Yet, until the splitting of the subject and the acquisition of language there is direct contact with the real. Lacan emphasized three points:

... that language isolates the subject from the real, confining it forever to the realm of signification. ... that the unconscious comes into existence at the moment of the subject's access to
language; finally he insists that the unconscious is organized around an irreducible signifier. . . ." (Silverman 166)

The state of pre-Oedipal unity is the "place that we have forgotten and would give our life to recall" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 118). According to Lacan, the loss of the pre-Oedipal unity is irreversible. Once the subject has been split and has become part of the chain of signification, there can be no return. But we seek to recover it in dreams, in myth, and in human desire. For Lacan, the satisfaction of desire is impossible because "desire is directed toward ideal representations which remain forever beyond the subject's reach" (Silverman 176). Our desires, according to this theory, do not originate with us. "The subject not only learns to desire within the symbolic order; it learns what to desire. . . . Its desires, like its identity, originate from the place of the Other" (Silverman 177-178). One's libidinal resources are co-opted by the culture; " . . . the subject supplies the raw materials, but is barred access to the site of production. . . . [T]he subject's desires are manufactured for it. The factory--the site of production--is the symbolic" (Silverman 178).

Barnes presents desire as "human hunger," cannibalistic, "pressing its breast to its prey" as do spiders and other insects which devour their mates, an image that presents the drives of hunger and sex collapsed into one. It is
"... the psychological structure of human desire that is Barnes's chosen theme in *Nightwood*" (Singer 49). Felix desires Robin because he wishes an heir. Nora desires Robin out of love and a wish to save her. Jenny desires Robin because Nora's love for Robin is the most intense that she knows and she wishes to appropriate that love. Each loves Robin or desires Robin selfishly, even Nora, whose love ultimately proves possessive and manipulative (Davis 101). Each in his or her own way tries to appropriate Robin to meet a personal end; each in some sense tries to devour Robin.

Emblematic of the primordial past as its "infected carrier," Robin is linked with the evolutionary past. She brings our faces "close to the blood on the lips of our forefathers" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 37).

The language of *Nightwood* requires the reader to make associations among suggestions that are scattered throughout the novel. Thus the description of Robin as an 'infected carrier' of a past that extends backward to the moment of the 'beast turning human' becomes meaningful as one of a number of references to the 'way back,' to beasts both actual and mythical and to the pre-verbal realm from which she comes. These evolutionary references are related
in turn to another set, again referring to prehistory but instead of beasts to 'the fossil of Robin, intaglio of her identity,' . . . 'the hieroglyphics of sleep and pain,' figures of design, and references to tracing.

Furthermore the sets themselves are not merely repeated patterns of images; they are groups of associations which have collective meaning within each group and from set to set. Thus to understand Robin, the reader must respond to the language of evocation associatively rather than analytically. Barnes makes individual tropes part of a series whose items may shift metaphoric shape without losing their relatedness to the whole lexical or semantic set, and whose meaning is not fully graspable without the reader's power of intuition. As a result, logical reconstruction must be suspended in favor of allowing collective sets to suggest rather than present meaning.

(Allen, "Dressing" 112-113)

Barnes' evocative style, which demands that the reader respond to widely scattered image clusters associatively, can be linked to what William A. Johnsen designates as
feminine sensibility in the modern novel. "For modern novelists, attitudes towards the fictional ordering of experience have been polarized into masculine and feminine" (Johnsen 29). Almost Derridean in his attitude, Johnson describes the polarization of consciousness into the binary opposition of masculine/feminine as instrumental in masculine oppression. Masculine sensibility, according to Johnsen, demands order and control, imposing shape and meaning upon experience. Feminine sensibility, on the other hand, tends to be more openly receptive to the flow of experience and tends to postpone the imposition of structure. Feminine sensibility seeks meaning, while masculine sensibility imposes meaning. Johnsen describes the masculine desire "to impose order everywhere" as a "totalitarian obsession" (30). Structuralists claim to uncover meaning by discovering underlying structures, yet as Johnsen points out, "man controls his experience by selectively perceiving it..." (30). We distinguish one color from another by ignoring that part of the light spectrum where the "two" colors blend, but feminine sensibility reflected in the works of women novelists focuses awareness on those areas where metaphorically one color blends into another. Opposing binary opposition, they see instead relationships (Johnsen 30-31). One is reminded of Anthony Wilden's explanation in System and Structure of digital and analog distinctions (154-194). Yet, as Wilden is quick to point out, although the feminine is associated
with analogical relationship and the masculine is associated with digital segmentation and the imposition of artificial boundaries upon the flow of the continuum of experience, such associations are culturally determined phenomena (296).

According to Johnsen, feminine sensibility is what man must give up in order to rule (31). Feminine sensibility becomes closely associated with that which the male gives up when he submits to the Name of the Father and the Law of the Patriarchy. Women, however, who can never attain full membership in the patriarchy, according to some theories, retain the possibility of a connection with the real (Silverman 187-188). Julia Kristeva refers to this as the "'semiotic chora'" (Desire in Language 231). Although women, too, must enter the symbolic, the woman retains the possibility of bringing the pre-Oedipal semiotic into the realm of the symbolic, "... which places the semiotic inside the symbolic as a condition of the symbolic while positing the symbolic as a condition of the semiotic and as founded on its repression" (Feral 10). Women

... subvert the symbolic, not from the exterior by trying to function outside it ... but from the interior by struggling against the repression of the maternal body, by permitting it to reemerge in order to break, to shatter all the structuring forms of law. ... (Feral 10)
The relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic is one of constant shattering and reconstruction. "It is the excess of the semiotic . . . which overflows and erodes the symbolic, infusing it with its renewing force" (Feral 10-11). Through the poetic novel of feminine sensibility men experience vicariously freedom from masculine totalization.

But any woman who attempts to express her feminine sensibility beyond its entertainment value for man seems doomed to self-destruction in a masculine world rules by the performance principle, unless she qualifies her feminine sensibility with the masculine tools of domination. (Johnsen 32)

In Western culture, despite the fact that men write poetry and women write novels, poetry is associated with the feminine and novels with the masculine. The poetic novel and the lyrical novel are pejorative terms that imply a contradiction of the virility attributed to the novel.

Djuna Barnes' Nightwood employs poetic intensity as a novelistic technique, as a visionary style, and a posture of vulnerability. From the opening chapter, 'Bow Down,' each character is deprived or denied the (masculine) power of imposing order on experience, until he surrenders himself up to experience. (Johnsen 32)
The characters in *Nightwood* desire a design that will divide undifferentiated experience into that which can be explained and they look to various means to provide that design. Like his father, Guido, Felix looks to nobility and the past for his design. In Robin he senses the past and thinks that through her he can create his design. As Felix will tell Matthew,

"'This quality of one sole condition, which was so much a part of the Baronin, was what drew me to her; a condition of being that she had not, at that time, even chosen, but a fluid sort of possession which gave me a feeling that I would not only be able to achieve immortality, but be free to chose my own kind.'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 112)

After first seeing Robin, when Felix returned to the café with Matthew, Matthew asked Felix whether he had considered marriage. Felix admitted that he had, for he desired "a son who would feel as he felt about the 'great past'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 38). He added that he would choose an American, for "'with an American anything can be done'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 39); reintroducing the American/European opposition. Felix's interest in Robin and his desire for an heir are extensions of his interest in the past and his love for "old Europe." Yet Robin is of the prehistoric past. In her is not the civilized past of
Europe but the blood lust of primal man's carnivorous past. Felix's failure to realize this difference will prove to be his undoing. To Felix the American seems the formless raw material out of which one may mold whatever one desires. Thus he takes Robin Vote to be his wife and tries to mold her into his Baronin, his means to an heir, for the phallus, the law, the Name of the Father must be passed through a woman from father to son, and this passing on of patriarchal tradition is Felix's desire.

O'Connor issues an ominous warning. "'The last muscle of aristocracy is madness' . . . 'the last child born to aristocracy is sometimes an idiot . . . we go up--but we come down'" (Barnes, Nightwood 40). Thus is continued the opposition of ascent/descent in the novel. In saying this O'Connor foreshadows the birth of Guido, not the son that Felix hoped for but the stunted, doomed child to whom he will be devoted and who will provide the pattern of his life, at once his completion and his undoing. Yet there is irony in O'Connor's prophecy; Felix is not really an aristocrat. His title is a fabrication, begun by his father in his desire to escape his Jewishness. Thus any pronouncements made by O'Connor about aristocracy really do not apply to Felix who is not the baron he thinks himself to be.

For Felix, however, Robin will be a means to an end, the means of production of an heir, Felix's link to the past and to the future. Ironically, Felix's heir, Guido, is the end of the line, a line that never really was. Thus,
ironically, Felix attains his end with Robin. She does produce an heir, an heir to nothing, who is physically unable to exist independently in the world, who will always require Felix's care, and who very likely will not outlive his father. With the death of Guido will come the end of the line that never really was.

Robin and Felix are married after a brief courtship. Later Felix will try to make sense out of his past and will ask O'Connor "... why did she marry me? It has placed me in the dark for the rest of my life" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 113). Yet at the time it was "... as if Robin's life held no volition for refusal" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 43). It is only at extreme moments when Robin feels her existence is threatened that she is able to assert herself in any act of refusal as she does when she leaves both Felix and Nora out of her instinct for self-preservation.

Felix attempts to interest Robin in his values by taking her to Vienna and talking to her of Charles the First and the Emperor Francis Joseph, only to find that she has fallen asleep as he talked. His efforts are as futile as were those of his father to imitate the military stride of his wife Hedvig, yet he continues

... wrecking himself and his peace of mind in an effort to acquaint her with the destiny for which he had chosen her—that she might bear sons who would recognize and honor the past. For
without such love, the past as he understood it, would die away from the world. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 45)

When Robin does not become pregnant, Felix asks, "Why is there no child?" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 45). Again Robin complies.

Robin prepared herself for her child with her only power; a stubborn cataleptic calm, conceiving herself pregnant before she was; and, strangely aware of some lost land in herself, she took to going out; wandering the countryside; to train travel, to other cities, alone and engrossed. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 45).

Pregnancy brings out the animal wanderlust in Robin which foreshadows her wandering in the final chapter, yet, in an apparent turn toward the human, Robin converts to Catholicism.

During her pregnancy we are given one of the rare looks into Robin's consciousness which shows her to be quite humanly literate but totally self-absorbed.

She tried to think of the consequences to which her son was to be born and dedicated. She thought of the Emperor Francis Joseph... She wandered to thoughts of women, women that she had
come to connect with women. Strangely enough these were women in history, Louise de la Valliere, Catherine of Russia, Madame de Maintenon, Catherine de Medici, and two women out of literature, Anna Karenina and Catherine Heathcliff. . . . She prayed and her prayer was monstrous because in it there was no margin left for damnation or forgiveness, for praise or blame—those who cannot conceive a bargain cannot be saved or blamed. She could not offer herself up; she only told of herself in a preoccupation that was its own predicament. (Barnes, Nightwood 47)

As O'Connor says of her later, "... she can't do anything in relation to anyone but herself" (Barnes, Nightwood 146). She is totally self-absorbed. Felix returns home to find Robin asleep with an open book, the Marquis de Sade's memoirs, in which she had underscored the previously quoted passage. That same night, she gives birth.

Amid loud and frantic cries of affirmation and despair Robin was delivered. Shuddering in the double pains of birth and fury, cursing like a sailor, she rose up on her elbow in her bloody gown, looking about her in the bed as if she had lost
something. . . . [S]he kept crying like a child who has walked into the commencement of a horror. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 48)

Giving birth is one of the instances of awakening in Robin's life, and, therefore, she experiences it as a loss. "A week out of bed she was lost, as if she had done something irreparable, as if this act had caught her attention for the first time" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 48). Robin has done something irreparable. She has given birth and cannot put life back as it was before. Guido is not normal, and Robin feels nothing except regret. One night Felix returns home to find her "... holding the child high in her hand as if she were about to dash it down but she brought it down gently" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 48). This is one of Barnes' use of freeze-frame technique—to freeze a character in a dramatic tableau pose (Allen, "Dressing" 110). Robin will repeat this gesture with the doll that she gives to Nora as their child and which she does in a fit of anger at Nora finally destroy.

After the birth Robin resumes her wanderings, frequent Parisian bars in a foreshadowing of her behavior with Nora. Felix follows Robin, as Nora will later, afraid that he will find her. Finally, Robin confronts Felix about Guido, saying that she never wanted him and that he should be kept a secret. Felix asks, "What shall we do?" and Robin replies, "I'll get out" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 49). With that she leaves Felix and the child, never to mention them
again. She disappears, but returns to Paris a few months later with Nora Flood, the young woman Felix had met at the party in Berlin.

"Nightwatch" is Nora's chapter and it parallels very closely the Barnes/Wood relationship. Nora's is the night watch, the nightly vigil she keeps waiting and hoping that the wandering Robin will find her way back home. "Sometimes, when Thelma had been drinking enough, she might go off with a fellow, but she was really hunting for other women. Barnes would be drawn after in a blind and desperate search for her" (Field 101).

"Nightwatch" addresses many of the basic dichotomies of Nightwood such as day/night, waking/sleeping, light/dark, ascent/descent, human/animal, American/European, and Protestant/Catholic. The chapter opens, however, as "Bow Down" did with background information about its character. Nora and her life in America are described, along with her house and property that had been in her family for two hundred years. The location is approximately that of the setting of Ryder, and Nora receives guests, holding a salon like that which Sophia/Zadel had in London.

It was the 'paupers' salon for poets, radicals, beggers, artists, and people in love; for Catholics, Protestants, Brahmins, dabblers in black magic and medicine; all could be seen sitting about her oak table before the huge
fire, Nora listening, her hand on her
hound, the firelight throwing her shadow
and his high against the wall. . . .
[S]he alone stood out. The equilibrium
of her nature, savage and refined, gave
her bridled skull a look of compassion.
She was broad and tall, and though her
skin was the skin of a child, there could
be seen coming, early in her life, the
design that was to be the weather-beaten
grain of her face, that wood in the work,
the tree coming forward in her, an un-
documented record of time. (Barnes,
Nightwood 50)

On Nora's property we are told is "a decaying chapel"
(Barnes, Nightwood 50) which will be the setting of the
final scene of the final chapter. Also foreshadowing the
final scene from the paragraph above is Nora's dog, the dog
with which Robin will end the novel. Just as the firelight
throws his still shadow against the wall in this passage,
candlelight will illumine his active movement with Robin
as he tries to avoid her but finally dashes from side to
side running with her. Much of the novel shares with this
passage an emphasis on the imagery of wood, both in the sense
of woods and trees and in the sense of objects made of wood
(Weisstein 6-7). The imagery of wood and woods runs through-
out the novel, from its title, which contains a pun on
Thelma Wood's name as well as the etymological origin of wood connected with madness (Kammenstine 125), to the walnut salon of Guido's house with its wooden desks and three pianos, to the "aisle of trees" setting for the mirage of the eternal wedding, to the circus chairs, wooden merry-go-round horses, and music boxes of Nora's Paris apartment with Robin, to the "tree of night" that Matthew will tell of, to the chapter entitled "Where the Tree Falls," to the coffin in Nora's dream of her grandmother, to the woods near Nora's house where Robin wanders in the final chapter, and finally to the wooden door of the decaying chapel that Nora throws herself against, knowing that she will find Robin inside.

The opening of the chapter further describes Nora and foreshadows her destruction in her relationship with Robin.

By temperament Nora was an early Christian; she believed the word. There is a gap in 'world pain' through which the singular falls continually and forever; a body falling in observable space, deprived of the privacy of disappearance; as if privacy, moving relentlessly away, by the very sustaining power of its withdrawal kept the body moving downward, but in one place, and perpetually
before the eye. Such a singular was Nora. There was some derangement in her equilibrium that kept her immune from her own descent. (Barnes, Nightwood 51)

Nora believes in the word, and much of Nightwood is about the belief in words. As Matthew will say, "'Yes, we who are full to the gorge with misery should look well around doubting everything seen, done, spoken, precisely because we have a word for it, and not its alchemy'" (Barnes, Nightwood 83). Later, he will say "'Life is not to be told. . . ."' (Barnes, Nightwood 129) and will accuse her of dressing "'the unknowable in the garments of the known'" (Barnes, Nightwood 136). In the end his words will fail to heal Nora's pain. But even before she meets Robin, Nora is presented as in descent, falling in the very Derridean passage above where presence and absence become interchangeable in an effacement of difference. There is movement, falling, descent, images of physical and theological motion as well as biological evolution, for in Barnes' world the biblical fall of man and the evolutionary ascent of man are ironically juxtaposed as simultaneous (Nelson 124). Yet there is stasis; the body falls "but in one place," and Nora does not realize that she is falling or descending all the while.

Continuing, Barnes foreshadows the effect that Robin will have on Nora.
Nora had the face of all people who love the people—a face that would become evil when she found out that to love without criticism is to be betrayed. Nora robbed herself for everyone; incapable of giving herself warning, she was continually turning about to find herself diminished. Wandering people the world over found her profitable in that she could be sold for a price forever, for she carried her betrayal money in her own pocket. (Barnes, Nightwood 51-52)

Christ and Judas at once, Nora betrays herself or allows herself to be betrayed over and over. Robin, however, will provide her ultimate betrayal, the betrayal that will cause her face to become evil, but, meanwhile, Nora is nonjudgmental.

To 'confess' to her was an act even more secret than the communication provided by a priest. There was no ignominy in her; she recorded without reproach or accusation, being shorn of self-reproach or self-accusation. This drew people to her and frightened them. . . . In court she would have been impossible; no one would have
been hanged, reproached or forgiven because no one would have been 'accused.' The world and its history were to Nora like a ship in a bottle; she herself was outside and unidentified, endlessly embroiled in a preoccupation without a problem.

Then she met Robin. (Barnes, Nightwood 53)

Nora is completely changed by her involvement with Robin. Before, a disengaged, aloof, nonjudgmental observer of life, after meeting Robin, she becomes involved in an "incestuous" love affair symbolized by the statue in the garden of their Paris apartment—"a tall granite woman bending forward with lifted head; one hand was held over the pelvic round as if to warn a child who goes incautiously" (Barnes, Nightwood 55). Robin, of course, is the incautious child, and Nora, in her concern for Robin, will become increasingly maternal, turning their love from a romantic to an incestuous union.

Nora and Robin meet at the Deckman circus in New York when, by chance, Nora sits next to Robin. Nora realizes that the animals are reacting strangely to Robin, coming closer and closer to her as they go round in the ring. A lioness stops opposite Robin and bows down to her with eyes flowing "in tears that never reached the surface" (Barnes, Nightwood 54). Rejecting identification with the animal
and in a turn toward the human (Davis 147), Robin "rose straight up. Nora took her hand. 'Let's get out of here!' the girl said, and still holding her hand Nora took her out" (Barnes, Nightwood 54).

From the beginning, Nora's relationship with Robin is an impossible mixture of romantic and maternal love, and "... although Barnes is narrating the development of a love affair, its most persistent image is that of a mother and child" (Davis 90). Nora takes Robin into her home, then travels with her to Munich, Vienna, Budapest, finally settling in Paris in an apartment of Robin's choice.

Robin told only a little of her life, but she kept repeating in one way or another her wish for a home, as if she were afraid she would be lost again, as if she were aware, without conscious knowledge, that she belonged to Nora, and that if Nora did not make it permanent by her own strength, she would forget. (Barnes, Nightwood 55)

Robin encourages Nora's possessiveness with her own childish possessiveness. As Nora later relates to Matthew, Robin would pretend to be occupied playing with her toys all the while watching Nora to see that she received no phone calls, visitors, or mail. "My life was hers" (Barnes, Nightwood 147). When Robin goes out, she expects Nora to sit at home waiting for her. It is when she comes in to
find that Nora had not been there all the time waiting that in anger she destroys the doll she had given Nora (Barnes, Nightwood 147).

Nora, maternal by her very nature, becomes involved with Robin in an attempt to "save" her, yet

... it is precisely the mother-child nature of the relationship with keeps Nora from saving Robin and Robin from being saved. As soon as Nora begins acting explicitly like a worried 'mother' the relationship and the characters are doomed. (Davis 90)

Matthew recognizes the maternal nature of Nora's love in both its negative and positive aspects. Seeing Nora searching the Paris streets for the wandering Robin, Matthew comments, "'Out looking for what she's afraid to find--Robin. There goes mother of mischief, running about, trying to get the world home"' (Barnes, Nightwood 61). Later, he tells Nora of the English girl who made bird nests so well that the birds preferred them to their own. Matthew's point is that Nora's maternal indulgence has "... crippled Robin so much that she is finally unable to survive as a human being" (Davis 101). Even Nora acknowledges the incestuous nature of their relationship calling Robin "my lover and my child. For Robin is incest too, that is one of her powers" (Barnes, Nightwood 156). Yet Matthew also tells Nora that she should have had "'a
thousand children and Robin . . . should have been all of them. . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 101).

At first, however, their relationship is idyllic, and, like the house of Felix's parents, their apartment is a "museum of their encounter" (Barnes, Nightwood 5, 56).

In the passage of their lives together every object in the garden, every item in the house, every word they spoke, attested to their mutual love, the combining of their humours. There were circus chairs, wooden horses brought from a ring of an old merry-go-round, venetian chandeliers . . . stage drops . . . cherubim . . . ecclesiastical hangings . . . a spinet . . . and a miscellaneous collection of music boxes . . . . (Barnes, Nightwood 55-56)

In both cases Barnes uses descriptions of interiors as metaphors for the relationships and desires of their occupants. Guido in his sham aristocracy filled his house with fragments of the past, symbols of power, opulent furnishings, and his "ancestral" portraits. Everything in the Volkbein house spoke of the past and a preoccupation with nobility in Guido's attempt to shore up his claim to a title. For Nora and Robin the dominant theme of the furnishings of their apartment seems to be fantasy with objects from the circus and the theatre. The religious articles
also represent the theatrical, but on a different plane. They had created their own private fantasy world, a refuge from reality.

But the idyllic time is soon over, and Nora is left alone while Robin wanders as she did during her marriage to Felix. Tormented by the reflection of Robin in the decor, Nora will not move anything for fear that Robin, like an animal, "might lose the scent of home" (Barnes, Nightwood 56). Nora tries to ignore Robin's behavior, but she is reminded in the songs that Robin sings around the house that she has another life that does not include her.

Yet sometimes, going about the house, in passing each other, they would fall into an agonized embrace, looking into each other's face, their two heads in their four hands, so strained together that the space that divided them seemed to be thrusting them apart. Sometimes in these moments of insurmountable grief Robin would make some movement, use a peculiar turn of phrase . . . innocent of the betrayal by which Nora was informed that Robin had come from a world to which she would return. (Barnes, Nightwood 57-58)

Unconsciously, in an image of maternity, Nora protects Robin.

In Nora's heart lay the fossil of Robin,
intaglio of her identity, and about it for its maintence ran Nora's blood. Thus the body of Robin could never be unloved, corrupt or put away. Robin was now beyond timely changes, except in the blood that animated her. (Barnes, Nightwood 56)

Robin is presented as a fetus in Nora's heart, nourished by Nora's blood as a fetus is nourished through the umbilical cord. This image underscores the mother-child relationship that Nora and Robin share. Also there is the reminder in the word "fossil" that Robin is prehistoric. Nora's chief concern is to protect Robin, and, even in her sleep, in her dreams she takes Robin's body "... down with her into it, as the groundthings take the corpse..." (Barnes, Nightwood 56). To her horror Nora comes to realize that only in death can she possess Robin (Barnes, Nightwood 58).

Unable to stand the sight of Robin in the bars at night, Nora keeps her "nightwatch," waiting alone in the apartment in tormented agony. Other nights she ranges from bar to bar hoping to find Robin. She experiences the absence of Robin as a missing part of herself. "As an amputated hand cannot be disowned ... so Robin was an amputation that Nora could not renounce" (Barnes, Nightwood 59). For Nora, the nights represent danger and degradation from which she wants save Robin. For Robin, conversely, the night represents gaiety, laughter, and pleasure (Scott
115). Given a rare glimpse into Robin's consciousness, the narrator describes how Robin balanced her two worlds.

Once out in the open Robin walked in a formless meditation. . . . Her meditations, during this walk, were a part of the pleasure she expected to find when the walk came to an end. It was this exact distance that kept the two ends of her life--Nora and the cafes--from forming a monster with two heads.

(Barnes, Nightwood 59)

When O'Connor sees Nora searching for Robin he implies that a Catholic view of sin and forgiveness might help Nora cope with Robin's behavior.

'There goes the dismantled--Love has fallen off her wall. A religious woman, he thought to himself, 'without the joy and safety of the Catholic faith . . . take that safety from a woman' . . . 'and love gets loose and into her rafters.'

(Barnes, Nightwood 60-61)

This is an example of one of Barnes' skewed metaphors. Love is compared to a bird and a picture that has fallen off a wall, a reminder of the bird imagery and the image of Robin as a picture arranged in her earlier introduction. Nora's consciousness is compared to a wall from which her love has fallen and to the rafters of a building where
birds being loose would indicate confusion.

Returning home, Nora experiences the agony of waiting, listening for the sounds of what might be Robin returning. Alternating between sleeping and waking, she experiences a recurring dream, one of the two dreams presented in *Nightwood*, both of which associate Robin with Nora/Djuna's grandmother the Sophia/Zadel figure of Ryder. The dream takes place in a house that Nora looks "down into" . . . "as if from a scaffold" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 62). Nora is looking down from the floor next to the top where a room that is supposed to belong to her grandmother is situated. Looking down, Nora sees Robin lying on the bottom floor among the other people below. "A disc of light . . . shed a faintly luminous glow upon the upturned still face of Robin, who had the smile of an 'only survivor,' a smile which fear had married to the bone" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 62). Again, through the imagery, we are reminded of the introduction of Robin where Robin is described as having a glow of phosphorus around her head (Barnes, *Nightwood* 34). The image of fear having married Robin's smile to the bone makes of the smile a grotesque mask. It evokes also the grin that we will see on Robin's face in the final scene of the novel. Yet, despite Nora's fears for her, Robin is depicted here as a survivor.

Nora hears her own voice calling her up to her grandmother's room, a room which seems forbidden, taboo, and the floor on which Robin still lies seems farther away,
"... as if Robin and she, in their extremity, were a pair of opera glasses turned to the wrong end, diminishing their painful love. ..." (Barnes, *Nightwood* 62). This image of the "diminishing of their painful love" foreshadows their estrangement and reflects Nora's sense that Robin is slipping away from her. Indeed at the very moment that Nora is dreaming, Robin is with Jenny Petherbridge, the woman for whom Robin will leave Nora.

The room that was supposed to have been her grandmother's does not seem like any room that had belonged to her, yet the room is filled with her presence. Also the room contains a portrait of "great uncle Llewellyn who died during the civil war" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 62), an inkwell, and a plume. All these point toward Sophia/Zadel. Zadel, Barnes' grandmother was a writer, and Barnes did have a great-uncle Llewellyn who served in the Civil War (Field 170).

Her grandmother appears, first "in a long gown of soft folds and chin laces" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 63) seeming bent with age.

With this figure of her grandmother who was not entirely her recalled grandmother went one of her childhood, when she had run into her at the corner of the house--the grandmother who, for some unknown reason, was dressed as a man ... her arms spread saying with a leer of love,
'My little sweetheart!'--her grandmother 'drawn upon' as a prehistoric ruin is drawn upon, symbolizing her life out of her life, and which now appeared to Nora as something being done to Robin, Robin disfigured and eternalized by the hieroglyphics of sleep and pain. (Barnes, Nightwood 63) 

Ironically, it is not the grandmotherly image who is "her recalled grandmother," but rather the seductive grandmother "dressed as a man, wearing a billycock and corked moustache, ridiculous and plump in tight trousers and red waistcoat. . . (Barnes, Nightwood 63) that is the grandmother from her childhood. Andrew Field implies in his biography that Zadel Barnes may have been inclined to lesbian affections (Field 173), and, if so, such an inclination easily could have been picked up by a childhood unconscious and transposed into the dream image of the grandmother. The word "prehistoric" seems to be the link of condensation between the grandmother and Robin, for Robin is associated with the prehistoric as "the infected carrier of the past" (Barnes, Nightwood 37). Now the grandmother is described as "'drawn upon' as a prehistoric ruin in drawn upon" (Barnes, Nightwood 63), and this is connected to the disfigurement of Robin. The grandmother is dressed as a man and Robin throughout Nightwood is described as being dressed like a boy or resembling a boy.
Later Nora will say of Robin that "she was like a relative found in another generation" (Barnes, Nightwood 157). Clearly, in the dream, love for the grandmother and love for Robin are linked. Non-sexual maternal love of the grandmother is perverted by the clothing and gesture into a sexual leer. In Nora and Robin's relationship there has been a similar confusion of sexual and maternal love. Theirs has become an incestuous affair in which Robin has become the boy-like child who plays with toys, and Nora has become the cautious, watchful maternal figure who wants to protect Robin even from herself. Robin is both "disfigured and eternalized" by Nora's dream, in "the hieroglyphics of sleep and pain" (Barnes, Nightwood 63).

"Nora's memories and dreams are the key to the subconscious forces which are driving her" (Williamson 70). The dream of the sexually ambivalent grandmother "... suggests that Nora's relationship with her grandmother established a primary pattern for her subsequent relationships" (Williamson 70).

Her capacity for love ... derives from her need for power, her need to possess and save a person who is in some way lost ... Her need for possession is the projection of a need for self-possession; the lost, irrational, inner-directed being whom she loves represents her own subconscious, the 'night' half
of herself of which she is oblivious. In the dream, then, the grandmother represents the role into which she tries to draw Robin. . . . Nora's very attempt to make Robin her protected and saved love-object dooms the relationship . . . since Robin is unable to respond to or accept Nora Flood's possessive, protective flood of love. (Williamson 70)

Nora awakes from the nightmare of sleep only to find herself in another waking nightmare. In the garden beside the statue, she sees "a double shadow" (Barnes, Nightwood 64). As her eyes meet Robin's, seeing in them fear, Nora realizes that there is another woman held in Robin's embrace.

Unable to turn her eyes away, incapable of speech, experiencing a sensation of evil, complete and dismembering, Nora fell to her knees, so that her eyes were not withdrawn by her volition, but dropped from their orbit by the falling of her body. Her chin on the sill she knelt, thinking "Now they will not hold together," feeling that if she turned away from what Robin was doing, the design would break and melt back into
Robin alone. She closed her eyes, and at that moment she knew an awful happiness. Robin, like something dormant, was protected, moved out of death's way by the successive arms of women; but as she closed her eyes, Nora said "Ah!" with the intolerable automatism of the last "Ah!" in a body struck at the moment of its final breath. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 64)

The images in this final passage of Nora's "Night-watch" matches the images in the introduction of Nora at the beginning of the chapter, the fall of the body, the eyes, and "a face that would be evil when she found out that to love without criticism is to be betrayed" Barnes, *Nightwood* 51). This moment in the garden is the moment of betrayal, and it is significant that this chapter as well as the next two end with different perspectives of this same incident.

Throughout their relationship Nora had blinded herself to Robin's infidelity. Even now she feels that if she turns away, the woman will disappear. Later, Felix will describe "a sort of dire happiness" in facing "the most fearful thing that could befall me. The unendurable is the beginning of the curve of joy" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 117). This is the source of Nora's "awfull happiness." She envisages Robin in an image that recalls Robin as a fossil
in her heart, "intaglio of her identity," as dormant and protected from the death in which she felt she could possess her. Yet what Nora experiences is like the moment of death. She knows that she has lost Robin, and, as she will later discover, she has lost her self as well.

"The Squatter" is the chapter devoted to Jenny Petherbridge, the other woman in the garden who usurps Nora's love for Robin. The chapter begins in the pattern of the previous chapters with a description of its subject, and the portrait of Jenny is one without mercy. She is presented as an ugly woman, widowed four times, who has nothing of her own, and, who, therefore, takes what belongs to others. She is described as bird-like: "She had a beaked head and the body, small, feeble and ferocious. . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 65). Then the narrator, characteristic of Barnes, mixes the opposing images of death and pregnancy.

She looked old, yet expectant of age: she seemed to be steaming of the vapours of someone else about to die; still she gave off an odour to the mind (for there are purely mental smells that have no reality) of a woman about to be accouchée. (Barnes, Nightwood 65)

Her life is filled "... with second-hand dealings. . . . Someone else's marriage ring was on her finger; the photograph taken of Robin for Nora sat upon the table" (Barnes, Nightwood 66). Even in love she could not have
her own, "... so she appropriated the most passionate love that she knew, Nora's for Robin. She was a 'squatter' by instinct" (Barnes, Nightwood 68). Jenny is a thief, "... a mirror image of Felix, the collector" (Weisstein 7).

Jenny knew about Nora immediately; to know Robin ten minutes was to know about Nora. Robin spoke of her in long, rambling, impassioned sentences. It had caught Jenny by the ear—and she listened, and both loves seemed to be one and her own. From that moment the catastrophe was inevitable. This was in nineteen hundred and twenty-seven. (Barnes, Nightwood 68)

For a year they met secretly. But on the night which ended by the statue in the garden, Jenny was at the opera and she asked Matthew O'Connor to introduce her to Robin, pretending that she did not already know her. Then she invited Matthew, Robin, and several others to her house. One woman, a believer in astrology and reincarnation, predicted that everyone in the room had many lives and would return except "... one person who had come to the end of her existence and would return no more. As she spoke she looked slyly at Robin..." (Barnes, Nightwood 70). According to the theory of reincarnation this would indicate that Robin had reached the end of the evolution of her soul, yet she has been presented as low on the evolutionary scale, as the
beast turning human. The fact that in the end she will reject human existence altogether and return to the level of the beasts seems to support the idea that for Barnes evolution moves in both directions and that the human direction is not superior to that of the beast.

All the while Robin had been talking to a little girl, Sylvia, who was staying with Jenny. At the statement about reincarnation Jenny became agitated and called for the group to take a ride in the carriages, the "open hacks" with coachmen available near the Bois in Paris (Barnes, Nightwood 71). Robin, who knows Jenny well, says, "Now she is in a panic, and we will have to do something" (Barnes, Nightwood 71). She predicts that Jenny will "dress up in something old" (Barnes, Nightwood 71). "And sure enough, at that moment, Jenny appeared in the doorway to the bedroom, got up in a hoop, a bonnet and a shawl, and stood looking at Robin who was paying no attention to her, deep in conversation with the child" (Barnes, Nightwood 71). All that Jenny does is done in an attempt to gain Robin's attention and distract her from others. Afraid that Robin will get into a carriage with an English girl, Jenny calls to Robin and she and the English girl get into the carriage that already contains Jenny, the child Sylvia, and O'Connor. As they make a tour of the Bois, Jenny watches in jealousy as Robin and the English girl whisper together. All the while O'Connor is talking to Jenny who is not listening. When Jenny sees Robin holding Sylvia's hand and stroking
her hair, she begins to cry and beat the cushions. Robin tells her to shut up, saying, "You talk all the time and you never know anything. It's such an awful weakness with you. Identifying yourself with God" (Barnes, Nightwood 76).

Then Jenny struck Robin, scratching and bearing in hysteria. . . . Slowly the blood began to run down Robin's cheeks, and as Jenny struck repeatedly Robin began to go forward . . . as if she had no will, sinking down in the small carriage, her knees on the floor, her head forward as her arm moved upward in a gesture of defence; and as she sank, Jenny also . . . leaned forward and over, so that . . . Robin's hands were covered by Jenny's slight and bending breast, caught between the bosom and the knees. And suddenly the child flung herself down on the seat, face outward, and said in a voice not suitable for a child because it was controlled with terror: "Let me go! Let me go!" (Barnes, Nightwood 76)

At that moment the carriage entered the rue de Cherche-Midi where Nora's apartment was. "Robin jumped before the carriage stopped, but Jenny was close behind her, following her as far as the garden" (Barnes, Nightwood 76). This moment in the garden is the same moment that
ended the previous chapter, for at this moment Nora sees Robin embracing Jenny in the garden. "It was not long after this that Nora and Robin separated; a little later Jenny and Robin sailed for America" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 77).

"Watchman, What of the Night?" belongs to Matthew O'Connor, and in it he presents his discourse on the night, taking the basic duality of day/night and inverting it for the benefit of Nora, the representative of daytime consciousness who comes to him "as her advisor and confessor/priest" (Allen, "Dressing" 108) to learn of the night and to understand the world of the night that Robin inhabits. Thus does the chapter deconstruct the polar opposition between day/night, waking/sleeping, and consciousness/unconsciousness. Yet the chapter deals with other oppositions as well, for example, good/evil, innocence/corruption, ascent/descent, truth/lie, heterosexual/homosexual and American/European. Once again these oppositions are treated deconstructively. The polarities are inverted so that the culturally devalued secondary term is viewed positively.

The title of the chapter comes from Isaiah 21:
"... The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear for me. ... Watchman, what of the night? ... The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night; if he will inquire, inquire ye. ..." (Quoted in Hymes 45). Nora has indeed come to inquire of O'Connor about the night, but first through Nora's eyes the reader is presented
with another interior that "speaks" of its occupant. She finds O'Connor in a tiny room piled high with medical books, medical instruments, and an odd assortment of women's clothing and cosmetics, "... a rusty pair of forceps, a broken scalpel ... a catheter, some twenty perfume bottles ... creams, rouges, powder boxes and puffs" (Barnes, Nightwood 78). There is an air about it like a brothel, "... yet this room was also muscular, a cross between a chambre à coucher and a boxer's training camp" (Barnes, Nightwood 79).

O'Connor's transsexuality was hinted at in his stealing a bit of Robin's perfume and cosmetics, but Nora finds him in bed decked out in a nightgown and a wig of golden ringlets.

He was heavily rouged and his lashes painted. It flashed into Nora's head: 'God, children know something they can't tell; they like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed!' But this thought, which was only the sensation of a thought, was of but a second's duration. ... Nora said ... Doctor, I have come to ask you to tell me everything you know about the night'. (Barnes, Nightwood 79)

The identification of the doctor with the tale of Red Riding Hood is linked with Nora's dream about her grandmother. In the fairy tale, being swallowed by the wolf, the grandmother is transformed. The wolf takes the place
of the grandmother just as in Nora's dream the grandmother was transformed by men's clothes into a seducer. Children enjoy experiencing the terror of the dark side, the fear of ravishment, as long as it is contained in a story and there is a woodsman who can slay the wolf, open his belly, and restore the beloved kindly grandmother.

Nora is certainly not the person O'Connor was expecting, but the night is his favorite topic and he opens his monologue by saying, "'Well, I, Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor, will tell you how the day and night are related by their division. . . . "Beware that dark door!'"" (Barnes, Nightwood 80). This is an apparent reference to the entrance to Hell described in the third canto of Dante's Inferno. The journey through the world of the night corresponds to Dante's journey through Hell but with one major difference. Dante's journey intends through the Purgatorio and ends successfully with his vision of God in the Paradiso. In Nightwood the purpose of the journey into the night is to help Nora endure her suffering, understand Robin, and, ultimately, to accept her loss. But the journey fails, for Nora cannot fully understand Robin, nor can her heart be exorcised of love. Nonetheless, O'Connor tries.

Ironically and purposefully, the novel's highly metaphoric and oblique style makes a crucial point; words do not work. For Matthew and Nora, talk, even elaborately
constructed talk, does not convince
or sustain. . . . Although conversations
about the world of the night are the
substantive center of the novel,
speakers have either collapsed into
chaos or fallen silent before the con-
clusion. (Allen, "Dressing" 108)

Heretofore, Nora, who represents consciousness, has
been unaware of the existence of the unconscious. O'Connor,
trying to explain the power of the unconscious, tells Nora
that identity and the will are eclipsed by the unconscious
in sleep.

Let a man lay himself down in the
Great Bed and his 'identity' is no
longer his own, his 'trust' is not
with him, and his 'willingness' is
turned over and is of another per-
mission. His distress is wild and
anonymous. He sleeps in a Town of
Darkness, member of a secret brother-
hood. He neither knows himself nor
his outriders; he berserks a fearful
dimension and dismounts, miraculously
in bed! (Barnes, Nightwood 81)

He speaks of how the night varies from nation to nation,
adding that "'French nights are those which all nations
seek the world over. . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 82). For the
French there is no conflict between day and night; the one gives rise to the other in an endless continuum. O'Connor refers to the night as "'the Great Enigma'" (Barnes, Nightwood 83) that can only be known indirectly, and as "'the Beast'" (Barnes, Nightwood 84). Americans, he complains, are too clean and wash away all traces of the night. Nora's questions are specific and focused on why Robin lived and behaved as she did. O'Connor does not provide direct answers, but rather presents metaphors for the night (Allen, "Dressing" 113-114). His metaphoric treatment of the night is as surreal as the narrator's introduction of Robin.

'We are but skin about a wind, with muscles clenched against mortality. We sleep in a long reproachful dust against ourselves. We are full to the gorge with with our own names for misery. Life, the pastures in which the night feeds and prunes the cud that nourished us to despair. Life, the permission to know death. We were created that the earth might be made sensible of her inhuman taste; and love that the body might be so dear that even the earth should roar with it.'

(Barnes, Nightwood 83)

Matthew and the narrator share a common metaphorical method in the novel, and, for that reason, the failure of Matthew's words to accomplish his purpose is significant.
There is no adequate way to speak directly about the night whose inhabitants have no conscious control over their actions or about Robin who wanders in the dark or about Nora's love which sends her in search of both Robin and of unknown parts of herself.

(Allen, "Dressing" 114)

But Nora finds no comfort in O'Connor's metaphors. Nora speaks personally about specific events, but Matthew speaks metaphorically in generalities or in parables. Matthew's lack of specificity "... is part of Barnes' sense that language cannot fully capture, especially directly, what she wishes to convey" (Allen, "Dressing" 114-115). In Nightwood "the failure of language" becomes a significant point as the novel itself struggles to overcome that same failure (Allen, "Dressing" 114).

O'Connor has many metaphors for the night, "'the tree of night,'" "'the hardest tree to mount'" (Barnes, Nightwood 83) "'an engine stalling itself upon your chest, halting its wheels against your heart. . . .'" (Barnes, Nightwood 84).

'Our bones ache only while the flesh is on them. . . . [I]n like manner the night is a skin pulled over the head of day that day may be in torment. We find no comfort until the night melts away; until the fury of the night rots out its
fire.' (Barnes, *Nightwood* 85)

Ignoring Nora's protests that she will never understand, O'Connor continues leading her into his explanation of the dream world wherein sleep, love, and death are connected.

Sleep, love, and death all belong to the night; and . . . each person has another identity during the night: one which constitutes a betrayal of waking values. . . . Implicit in the doctor's thesis is the necessity for recognizing that our identities are not what we think they are. (Scott 96)

According to Jacques Lacan, the *moi* is where the *je* is not (*Ecrits* 166). In sleep the conscious will is inoperative. Looking at one's lover asleep is frightening because in sleep the lover is subject to psychological forces and a dream life that cannot be shared.

When she sleeps, is she not moving her leg aside for an unknown garrison? Or in a moment . . . murdering us with an axe? . . . And what of our own sleep? We go to it no better--and betray her with the very virtue of our days. . . .

[N]o sooner has our head touched the pillow, and our eyes left the day, than
a host of merrymakers take and get.

(Barnes, Nightwood 88)

The unconscious which rules the night is completely amoral. The pleasure principle is totally liberated from the reality principle in dreams and in the world of the night (Williamson 59). The sleeper cannot be blamed for anything that happens in dreams. The sleeper in Matthew's monologue is a metaphor for Robin, "la somnambule." Robin is no more responsible for what she does than a sleeper is responsible for dreams. Yet the night world that Robin inhabits is frightening to Nora, who represents, according to the terms of Barnes' duality, daytime consciousness. Barnes implies that love and freedom are not reconcilable and that "... the pursuit of love is the common cause of human suffering" (Spencer 40). Returning to the bird imagery of previous metaphors, Matthew warns Nora of the consequences of loving Robin.

'The darkness is the closet in which your lover roosts her heart, and that night-fowl that caws against her spirit and yours dropping between you and her the awful estrangement of his bowels . . . . Night people do not bury their dead, but on the neck of you, their beloved and waking, sling the creature . . . . And where you go, it goes, the two of you, your living and her dead,
that will not die; to daylight, to life, to grief, until both are carrion. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 89)

O'Connor also warns Nora against searching the night for her beloved, "'... with the great blind searchlight of the heart'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 93)

Perplexed by the difficulty of his role as narrator of the night and the realm of the unconscious, O'Connor laments, "'is there no one who knows anything but myself? And must I, perchance, like careful writers, guard myself against the conclusions of my readers'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 94). Matthew, in the service that he performs for the other characters in the novel, becomes a second narrative voice in *Nightwood*. He provides narrative for the characters in the novel as the narrator of the novel provokes a narrative for the reader. Playing with the notion of fiction as lie, Barnes emphasizes that O'Connor is a liar when he says, "'I am my own charlatan'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 96). Winding his way to the particular night that Nora wants to hear about, the night that ends with Jenny and Robin in the garden, Matthew warns, "'I have a narrative, but you will be put to find it'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 97).

As the oracle of the night, Matthew describes the misery of those who like Nora spend the night watching "'in fear and anguish'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 94). Alien to the night, they have also lost the ability to live in
daytime consciousness. Like Nora, the nights for these lovers consist of walking the floor, waiting, and watching. Finally, recalling his role as Dante and the visit to the underworld motif, Matthew describes a form of degradation at the center of night's hell that is almost more than Nora can bear, that of the lesbian prostitute.

'Look for the girls also in the toilets at night, and you will find them kneeling in that great secret confessional crying between tongues, the great ex-communication:

"'May you be damned to hell! May you die standing upright! May you be damned upward! May this be damned, terrible and damned spot! May it wither into the grin of the dead, may this draw back, low riding mouth in an empty snarl of the groin!... I'm an angel on all fours, with a child's feet behind me, seeking my people that have never been made, going down face foremost, drinking the waters of the night at the water hole of the damned, and I go into the waters, up to my heart, the terrible waters! What do you know of me? May you pass from me damned girl! Damned and betraying!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 95)
The mixing of the religious imagery of the toilet as the confessional with a self-degrading form of lesbian sexuality provides a horrifying vision in which the girls are like priests who damn rather than bless those who come to them. The images of tongues, to "die standing upright," and "the low riding mouth in the empty snarl of the groin" all evoke the acts of cunnilingus, made degraded by the anonymity of the participants. The water, traditionally associated with healing, renewal, and redemption in this case is the water of the sewer, an image of literal and spiritual filth. Yet the girl who speaks remains untouched, "an angel on all fours, with a child's feet" (Barnes, Nightwood 95), reminding the reader of the earlier image of Robin as "meet of child and desperado" (Barnes, Nightwood 35).

Finally, Matthew comes to the night that ends in the garden with the betrayal of Nora. Ironically, Matthew feels guilty, thinking that it was he who introduced Robin to Jenny. He does not realize that they had been meeting secretly for a year. Matthew's view of Jenny does not differ from the narrator's. "She has a longing for other people's property, but the moment she possesses it the property loses some of its value, for the owner's estimate is its worth. Therefore it was she took your Robin" (Barnes, Nightwood 98).

Bringing up one of Barnes' favorite themes, that of time moving backward, O'Connor describes Jenny.
'... [S]he was born at the point of death, but, unfortunately, she will not age into youth—which is a grave mistake of nature. How more tidy had it been to have been born old and to have aged into a child, brought finally to the brink, not of the grave, but of the womb... And a funny sight it would be to see us going to our separate lairs at the end of day, women wincing with terror, not daring set foot to the street for fear of it.' (Barnes, Nightwood 98-99)

O'Connor's account of the night is tinged with his guilt at complying with Jenny's request to introduce her to Robin.

'... I went into a lather of misery watching them, and thinking of you, and how in the end you'll all be locked together, like the poor beasts that get their antlers mixed and are found dead that way... having had to contemplate each other, head-on and eye to eye, until death; well, that will be you and Jenny and Robin.' (Barnes, Nightwood 100-101)

Matthew then describes the carriage ride that ends the evening. "'We went straight as a die over the Pont Neuf and
whirled around into the rue de Cherche-Midi, God forgive us! Where you, weak vessel of love, were lying awake and wondering. . "" (Barnes, Nightwood 104). At this Nora becomes rigidly silent, but Matthew continues his description of the ride that differs little from the narrator's in the previous chapter except for the added prophecy at the end.

'And then I began looking at the people in that carriage . . . and I saw the English girl sitting up there pleased and frightened.

And then at the child--there was terror in it and it was running away from something grown up; I saw that she was sitting still and she was running . . . . And then I saw Jenny sitting there shaking. . . . And then Robin was going forward, and the blood running red, where Jenny had scratched her, and I screamed and thought: "Nora will leave that girl some day; but though those two are buried at opposite ends of the earth, one dog will find them both."' (Barnes, Nightwood 106)

Thus, O'Connor reminds us of the imagery of Nora's dream, of the increasing distance between Nora and Robin as "a pair of opera glasses turned to the wrong end. . . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 62) as well as foreshadowing the end of the novel.
when Nora's dog will discover Robin and bring them together in a moment of silence.

Like Nora, Felix, too, comes to Matthew for interpretation of his past involvement with Robin as well as for a prognosis concerning his son, Guido. "Where The Tree Falls" gives the reader a last glimpse of Felix, showing what has become of him in the ten years since his marriage to Robin and what is likely to become of him in the future. The chapter focuses on the polar opposition of innocence/corruption.

Felix has devoted his life to his son Guido who is "an addict to death. . . ." and "born to holy decay" (Barnes, Nightwood 107). With Felix, he has visited museums, palaces, churches, and it is Guido's desire to enter the church and the priesthood. Thus Felix has added to his preoccupation with aristocracy a a preoccupation with the clerical, addressing his speculations regarding the clergy to the Pope. Felix realizes that Guido, "mentally deficient and emotionally excessive" (Barnes, Nightwood 107), at ten the size of a six-year-old, is unlike other children, and ". . . in accepting his son the Baron saw that he must accept the demolition of his own life" (Barnes, Nightwood 108). His desire had been to produce an heir who would, in turn, carry on the Baron's line, but this desire for the completion of the pattern of his life is thwarted. "It is apparent to Felix that Guido will never marry and become a father; and, in accepting this knowledge,
Felix accepts the devastation of his own hope for a place in history" (Scott 97). From the point of view of Djuna Barnes, however, having children meant passing human misery on to yet another generation; thus, for Barnes, the idea that Felix's line will end with Guido can be seen as positive.

Although Felix realizes that it is unlikely that Guido will be accepted for the priesthood, nonetheless, he has decided to return to Austria, hoping that if he is "chosen" (an ironic pun upon the grandfather Guido's Jewishness) it will be "among his own people" (Barnes, Nightwood 109). Guido's desire to enter the church recalls the fact that Robin did enter the church while pregnant with Guido. Physically, in temperament, and in mannerisms, Guido reminds Felix of Robin. "The Baron bought his boy a Virgin in metal, hanging from a red ribbon, and placed it about his neck, and in doing so, the slight neck, bent to take the ribbon, recalled to him Robin's..." (Barnes, Nightwood 108).

Before departing for Vienna, the Baron seeks out the doctor whom he finds walking toward the Café de la Mairie du VIIe. The Baron invites O'Connor to dine in the Bois, and the drive through the Bois reminds the reader of the night O'Connor accepted Jenny Petherbridge's invitation and the subsequent carriage ride that ended with Jenny embracing Robin in the garden.

Felix wants to talk to O'Connor about Robin, whom he calls "the Baronin." He realizes that he never understood
her.

'. . . I never did have a really clear idea of her at any time. I had an image of her, but that is not the same thing. An image is a stop the mind makes between uncertainties. I have gathered, of course, a good deal from you, and later, after we went away, from others, but this only strengthened by confusion. The more we learn of a person, the less we know.'

(Barnes, Nightwood 111)

Felix states that what drew him to Robin was the hope of immortality. He admits that interpreting Robin's acceptance as "acquiescence" was his "great mistake" (Barnes, Nightwood 113). He asks the doctor, "' . . . why did she marry me? It has placed me in the dark for the rest of my life'" (Barnes, Nightwood 113).

O'Connor does not answer directly, but reverts to parable, saying to Felix, "'Take the case of the horse who knew too much. . . . She was in mourning for something taken away from her in a bombardment in the war . . . though her hide was a river of sorrow; she was damned to the hocks . . .'." (Barnes, Nightwood 113). According to Alan Singer, O'Connor discharges his "burden of explaining Robin Vote to all the other characters" by a "strategy of metaphoric displacement. . ." (Singer 59). Felix and Nora seek answers to the questions they pose to the doctor, "but
the doctor's replies do not fall within this literal (and
determinate) perspective: they are its figural complement" (Singer 64).

The answer to the question precludes the
questioner. Typically, after every one of
Nora's and Felix's entreaties to the
oracle of the night, each is left speech-
less or willfully ignores the doctor's
pronouncements, opening a chasm in the
dialogical premise of the scene. (Singer
65)

Rather than addressing the point of Felix's query,
O'Connor manipulates the question into "a point of de-
parture for his own narrative activity" (Singer 66). Felix
ignores O'Connor's tale of the horse.

For the attentive reader of Nightwood,
however, it is precisely the disruptive
pattern of metaphoric transitions dis-
membering the narrative that promises
the richest exfoliations of this text—
provided we treat disjuncture itself as
the threshold of interpretation. . . .

Where there is narrative discontinuity
in Nightwood, there is often imagistic
coherence to belie the impression of
formless drift and suggest new criteria
of relatedness. (Singer 67)
The "imagistic coherence" can be found in O'Connor's other beast/war fables. The first is that of the Breton woman's cow in the bomb shelter with tears in her eyes: "the poor beast trembling on her four legs so I knew all at once that the tragedy of the beast can be two legs more awful than a man's" (Barnes, Nightwood 22). The second is the story of "the horse who knew too much," and the last is the tale he tells Nora of another horse lying dead on a battlefield.

'Once in the war I saw a dead horse that had been lying long against the ground. Time and the birds and its own last concentration had removed the body a great way from the head. As I looked upon that head, my memory weighed for the lost body; and because of that missing quantity even heavier hung that head along the ground. So love, when it has gone, taking time with it, leaves a memory of its weight.' (Barnes, Nightwood 127)

Here the tenor and the vehicle of the metaphor are related, and the analogy is directly drawn. Yet the tale of "the horse that knew too much" does not attempt to directly answer Felix's question of why Robin married him. The point of the tale is that there is no answer to his question. Robin did not marry him for any "reason" at all. Being without a conscious will, she married him when asked
because she lacked the volition to refuse him (Barnes, Nightwood 43). If anyone is like "'the horse who knew too much'" it is Matthew, for he, like the horse, is damned and knows it.

Felix abruptly changes the subject, telling O'Connor that Jenny Petherbridge has visited him, ostensibly to purchase a painting. Ironically, it turns out to be the painting that Felix believes is the portrait of his grandmother that she wants. It is characteristic of Jenny that she would want to buy someone else's ancestral portrait, and Felix, thinking that it really is the portrait of his grandmother, will not part with it. The real purpose of her visit, however, is to talk about Robin. Guido, who is sensitive to animals, is present during the visit and becomes upset when Jenny says, "'She always lets her pets die. She is so fond of them, and then she neglects them, the way animals neglect themselves'" (Barnes, Nightwood 115). Then she tells of the child, Sylvia, who along with Robin was staying with her; "'... it appears that this little girl Sylvia had "fallen in love" with the Baronin and that she, the Baronin, kept waking her up all through the night to ask her if she "loved her"'" (Barnes, Nightwood 115). The girl left but Jenny brought her back to test Robin's "love," only to find that Robin had forgotten the girl. Just as she is leaving, Jenny turns and says, "'... Baronin Robin Volkbein, I wonder if she could be a relative'" (Barnes, Nightwood 116).
When Guido realizes that Jenny has been talking about his mother, he becomes ill. Felix says, "'I took him in my arms and spoke to him in German. He had often put questions to me about his mother and I had managed always to direct his mind to expect her'" (Barnes, Nightwood 116). Hope is what Felix has attempted to give Guido, and it is hope concerning Guido that Felix seeks from O'Connor, all the while knowing that Guido's situation is hopeless.

"Do you know, Doctor, I find the thought of my son's possible death at an early age a sort of dire happiness because his death is the most awful, the most fearful thing that could befall me. The unendurable is the beginning of the curve of joy. I have become entangled in the shadow of a vast apprehension which is my son; he is the central point toward which life and death are spinning, the meeting of which my final design will be composed." (Barnes, Nightwood 117)

As noted earlier, Nora, too, has known a moment of "awful happiness" (Barnes, Nightwood 64) in experiencing the unendurable, the loss of Robin.

For Felix, Robin is present in Guido, and he compares them. "'The Baronin' . . . 'always seemed to be looking for someone to tell her she was innocent. Guido is very like her, except that he has his innocence'" (Barnes,
Nightwood 117). He continues, saying that there are people

'. . . who must get permission to live, and if the Baronin finds no one to give her that permission, she will make an innocence for herself; a fearful sort of primitive innocence. If may be considered "depraved" by our generation, but our generation does not know everything."

(Barnes, Nightwood 117-118)

Like O'Connor's earlier statement about the dog, Felix's prediction foreshadows the end of the novel. It also allows us to see that although Robin's actions at the end of the novel may be considered "depraved," as they typically were by contemporary critics of the novel, this is not the only possible reading of the "primitive innocence" Robin seeks and apparently finds. The ending can be viewed as a positive fulfillment of Robin's desire to abandon all that is human.

Returning to Guido, Felix, seeking hope, asks if he is better. O'Connor's answer is oblique and fits with Felix's statement about facing the unendurable.

'Seek no further for calamity; you have it in your son. After all, calamity is what we are all seeking. You have found it. A man is whole only when he takes into account his shadow as well as
himself. . . . Guido is the shadow of your anxiety, and Guido's shadow is God's.' (Barnes, Nightwood 119-120)

To Felix's statement that people have said Guido's mind is not sound, O'Connor answers metaphorically that Guido's mind is "'. . . like a bowl picked up in the dark; you do not know what is in it'" (Barnes, Nightwood 120).

When Felix orders a drink, O'Connor, reminded of the night he first met Felix, observes, "'I said you would come to it'" (Barnes, Nightwood 120), recalling Felix's insistence when they met in Berlin that he did not drink and O'Connor's prediction that he would.

Felix asks whether the Baronin was damned, and O'Connor realizing that Felix connects Robin with Guido answers, "'Guido is not damned'. . . . Guido . . . is blessed--he is peace of mind--he is what you have been looking for. . . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 121). Felix asks whether O'Connor hears from the Baronin since she went to America, and O'Connor answers that he hears only through those to whom she writes asking them to remember her--"!Probably because she has difficulty remembering herself'" (Barnes, Nightwood 121). Still connecting Robin with Guido, Felix speculates about "'... the obscure life--darkly seen, the condition my son lives in; it may also be the errand on which the Baronin is going'" (Barnes, Nightwood 121-122).

"Where The Tree Falls" ends with a final view of Felix in Vienna with Guido and Frau Mann. Guido is frail and
Felix anoints his chapped hands with oil that he carries in a flask. Felix is drinking heavily.

Many cafes saw this odd trio, the child in the midst wearing heavy lenses that made his eyes drift forward . . . as Felix called for military music, for Wacht am Rhein, for Morgenrot, for Wagner . . . perfectly correct and drunk, trying not to look for what he had always sought, the son of a once great house. . . . (Barnes, *Nightwood* 122)

As Felix and Frau Mann drink and listen, Guido, absorbed in his own thoughts, presses the medallion of the virgin under his shift. Thinking that he sees the Grand Duke Alexandra of Russia, Felix tries not to look at him, yet "... as they arose to go ... he turned and made a slight bow, his head in his confusion making a complete half swing, as an animal will turn its head away from a human, as if in mortal shame" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 123). He stumbles into the carriage, pours oil onto Guido's hands, and they are gone into the night.

"Go Down, Matthew," transposed from the "Go Down, Moses" of Exodus again stresses the theme of descent (Hymes 45). The chapter title "... is at once a homosexual joke, a call to prayer, and a command to descent into Inferno" (Hyman 61). "Go Down, Matthew" parallels "Watchman, What of the Night?" In both, Matthew is trying to
help Nora to come to terms with the loss of Robin. "Watch-
man, What of the Night?" is almost a monologue on the part
of O'Connor, but in "Go Down, Matthew," Nora talks as much
as Matthew and gives the reader the benefit of her greater
insight into her relationship with Robin. "Go Down, Matthew"
continues to deconstruct the polarities of day/night,
waking/sleeping, consciousness/unconsciousness, innocence/
corruption, good/evil, child/doll, ascent/descent, and
heterosexual/homosexual. Yet most important to the
development of the chapter are the polar oppositions of
truth/lie, human/animal, and language/silence.

As the chapter opens, Matthew finds Nora writing a
letter to Robin. He begs her to give up the letter writing,
er her only contact with Robin, and, in a metaphor that
identifies Robin with Hell yet which places her above
Heaven, he implores Nora, "'Let go Hell; and your fall will
be broken by the roof of Heaven'" (Barnes, Nightwood 124).
In a typical Barnes paradox, he says, "'Don't you know
your holding on is her only happiness and so her sole
misery'" (Barnes, Nightwood 126). O'Connor reverses to
metaphoric parable, telling Nora of the dead horse whose
missing body is the weight of lost love remembered and in
answer to her complaint, "'She is myself. What am I to
do?'" (Barnes, Nightwood 127) he answers "'make birds'
ests with your teeth,'" (Barnes, Nightwood 127) comparing
Nora with the English girl who did so and Robin to the
birds who preferred her nests to their own.
When Nora confesses her desire to possess Robin in death, Matthew realizes that she has not recovered from the loss of Robin. "'Life is not to be told..." (Barnes, Nightwood 129) he warns her, but she complains that she must talk to someone, that she can't go on living as she is. Matthew tells her that she is

'. . . experiencing the inbreeding of pain. Most of us do not dare it. . . .
But when you inbreed with suffering . . . you are destroyed back to your structure. . . . [W]e all carry about with us the house of death, the skeleton. . . .' (Barnes, Nightwood 129-130)

This image is reminiscent of his earlier statement in "Watchman, What of the Night?" that "'Our bones ache only while the flesh is on them. . . . [T]he night is a skin pulled over the head of night that the day may be in a torment'" (Barnes, Nightwood 85). Robin's life was that of the night, and, since Nora's was that of the day, she finds herself in torment.

To distract Nora from her obsession with Robin, Matthew begins telling his stories, first about a variety of London whores that he refers to as "a Tuppenny Upright"-- "For tuppence, an Upright is all anyone can expect"-- (Barnes, Nightwood 130), and, in a more serious vein, of Father Lucas' admonishing him, "'Be simple, Matthew, life
is a simple book, and an open book, read and be simple as
the beasts of the field; just being miserable isn't
eough. . .." (Barnes, *Nightwood* 131). Following this ad-
vice, Matthew found an empty church where he knelt down and
exposed his penis, the embodiment of his conflict.

'Kneeling in a dark corner, bending my
head over and down, I spoke to Tiny
O'Toole. . . . there was nothing for it
this time but to make him face the
mystery so it could see him clear as it
saw me. So then I whispered, "What is
this thing, Lord?" And I began to cry
. . . . I was crying because I had to
embarrass Tiny like that for the good it
might do him.

. . . and all the time Tiny O'Toole
was lying in a swoon. I said, "I have
tried to seek, and I only find." I said,
"It is I, my Lord, who know there's
beauty in any permanent mistake like me
. . . ." "But," I says, "I'm not able
to stay permanent unless you help me
. . . . So tell me, what is permanent
of me, me or him?". . . And there I was
holding Tiny, bending over and crying,
asking the question until I forgot and
went on crying, and I put Tiny away then,
like a ruined bird, and went out of the
place and walked looking at the stars
that were twinkling, and I said, "Have
I been simple like an animal, God, or
have I been thinking?" (Barnes, Nightwood
132-133)

Nora's response, that he is like a child launches him
into the tale of the death of a child, the son of Don
Anticolo a "young tenor from Beirut!" who fancies sailors
and whose young son, bitten by a rat, develops a fever and
dies. The tale, typical of Matthew, is both light-hearted
and grotesque.

"His daddy was demented with grief and
fear, but did he leave his bedside for
a moment? He did because, though the
son was sick, the fleet was in. But
being a father, he prayed as he drank
the champagne. . . . But when he got
home the little son lay dead. The young
tenor burst into tears and burned him
and had the ashes put into a zinc box
no bigger than a doll's crate and held
ceremony over him, twelve sailors all
in blue . . . as the distracted father
and singer tossed the little zinc box
down upon the table crying: "This
gentlemen, is my babe, this, lads, my
son, my sailors, my boy!" and at that, running to the box and catching it up and dashing it down again . . . weeping and crying like a dog who noses a bird that has, for some strange reason, no more movement.' (Barnes, Nightwood 133-134)

Returning to Robin, O'Connor describes her unusual beauty: hers was "'. . . a face that will age only under the blows of perpetual childhood. The temples like those of young beasts cutting horns, as if they were sleeping eyes!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 134). The reference to the young beasts cutting horns recalls the introduction of Robin linked with the image of the eland and the unicorn. All these images refer to the controlling image of Robin as the beast turning human, revealing the associative pattern of Barnes' imagery.

Like the metaphor of the eland and the unicorn, the figure of the young beasts cutting horns marks in its imagistic abstraction an abridgement of the immediate dramatic context. But rather than dissolving contextual logic, if offers a new grid of logical coordinates . . . . . .

. . . . [I]t is a way of expanding the image of the horn to new associative
possibilities. The horn in the case of the unicorn expressed the imaginative deformation of human desire. Here it is linked to the eye... as the metaphorical product of its sleep. ... [S]leep, the activity of the night, produces the unicorn to satisfy human desires. It is this horn of the imagination upon which the 'other' is always impaled. ... The 'pattern' denoted by the recurrent imagery of the horn and the human beast is above all indicative of a 'practice' of narrative digression and supplementation whereby the expressiveness of the image comes to depend on its proliferation of new relational possibilities. (Singer 62-63)

Still thinking of animals, Matthew envies animal consciousness: "'to be an animal, born at the opening of the eye, going only forward, and, at the end of day, shutting out memory with the dropping of the lid'" (Barnes, Nightwood 135). This, of course, recalls Father Lucas' admonishing Matthew to be simple like an animal and the difficulty that the human mind encounters when it tries to do so. To return to Lacan, once the subject has entered the Symbolic by becoming part of the chain of signification, a direct relation with the Real may be longed for but is, according
to Lacan, impossible.

Not listening to Matthew, but thinking of Robin, Nora despairs: "'Everything we can't bear in this world, some day we find in one person, and love it all at once'" (Barnes, Nightwood 135). Nora has always valued honesty, so she asks, "'. . . why have I always gone seeking it at the liar's door?'" (Barnes, Nightwood 135). Matthew reacts to the word "liar," reminding Nora that he is a liar and that his telling of his stories is his method of easing the pain of people who suffer as she does. When ". . .
O'Connor establishes himself as a liar, all that he says becomes effected by it" (Kammenstine 112). For Matthew lying and healing are associated. "Lying, then, becomes a part of Nightwood's scheme of inversion, whereby the degraded becomes the exalted" (Kammenstine 112). O'Connor believes in the efficacy of the lie; "'. . . his fabrications are the framework upon which his peculiar form of salvation is built" (Pochoda 187). O'Connor is, like the author, a creator of fiction. For Matthew life is an unknowable mystery, a lie, or both. As he tells Nora, "There is no truth . . . you have been unwise enough to make a formula; you have dressed the unknowable in the garments of the known'" (Barnes, Nightwood 136). Nora's search for relief in the form of an answer or an explanation is futile. Robin can only be experienced; she cannot be explained.

Melodramatically, Nora calls love "'death, come upon with passion'" and declares that she loves Robin "'as one
condemned to it" (Barnes, Nightwood 137). In a passage characteristic of Matthew with his use of tree and bird imagery he characterizes her ironically: "'Behold this fearful tree on which sits singing the drearful bird--Turdus musicus, or European singing thrush....'" (Barnes, Nightwood 137). Then he cautions Nora that her suffering may not be as grand as she imagines. "'Bend down the tree of knowledge and you'll unroost a strange bird. Suffering may be composed wickedly and of inferior writhing'" (Barnes, Nightwood 138). O'Connor warns Nora against pointless suffering which fails to purify.

'None of us suffers as much as we should, or loves as much as we say. Love is the first lie; wisdom the last. Don't I know that the only way to know evil is through truth? The evil and the good know themselves only by giving up their secret face to face. The true good who meet true evil... learns for the first time how to accept neither; the face of the one tells the face of the other the half of the story that both forgot.'

'To be utterly innocent,' he went on, 'would be to be utterly unknown, particularly to oneself.' (Barnes, Nightwood 138).

Robin is neither good nor evil, but innocent, for she is
unconscious of any degradation that has touched her. Speaking of Nora's love for Robin and of all androgy nous love, Matthew links such love to the characters in fairy tales:

'. . . [T]he pretty lad who is a girl . . . the prince-princess . . . neither one and half the other. . . . We were impained in our childhood upon them. . . . They go far back in our lost distance where what we never had stand waiting; it was inevitable that we should come upon them, for our miscalculated longing has created them. They are our answer to what our grandmothers were told love was, and what it never came to be. . . .'

(Barnes, Nightwood 136-137)

This image recognizes desire in the Lacanian sense as the longing for impossible fulfillment that recalls the pre-Oedipal period. Here it is linked to the grandmother's romanticized vision of love, and, for Nora, Robin is associated through her dream imagery to her memory of her grandmother.

Again, Matthew warns Nora against poisoning herself with her own heart: "'every man dies finally of that poison known as the-heart-in-the-mouth. Yours is in your hand. Put it back. The eater of it will get a taste for you; in the end his muzzle will be heard barking among your ribs"
(Barnes, _Nightwood_ 139). Thus does Matthew, with the image of the dog, foreshadow the end of the novel. Matthew's final sentence provides an example of Barnes' use of syntactical violation to produce surrealistic metaphor (Nelson 88).

When Nora asks if believing Robin was a sin, Matthew answers, "'Of course, it made her life wrong'" (Barnes, _Nightwood_ 140).

". . . [W]hat did she have? Only your faith in her--then you took that faith away! You should have kept it always, seeing that it was a myth; no myth is safely broken. . . . [Y]ou are not just a myth-maker, you are a destroyer, you make a beautiful fable, then put Voltaire to bed with it. . . ." (Barnes, _Nightwood_ 140)

Voltaire, the ultimate satirist, preferred the ghastly face of reality to the optimistic fables of metaphysics. Robin was Nora's fable, but it was impossible to sustain her belief.

Nora describes the destruction of her faith in Robin. After the night she saw Robin in the garden with Jenny, Nora went to see Jenny. She found a doll like the one Robin had given her on Jenny's bed as well as Robin's photograph that she had told Nora was lost. Jenny openly admitted to her affair with Robin, and explained to Nora
that Robin told her that there was nothing between them any longer, but that she didn't want to hurt Nora. What hurts Nora most is the sight of the doll. "'We give death to a child when we give it a doll--it's the effigy and the shroud; when a woman gives it to a woman, it is the life they cannot have, it is their child, sacred and profane . . ."' (Barnes, Nightwood 142). Explaining her love for Robin, Nora tells Matthew, "'A man is another person--a woman is yourself, caught as you turn in panic; on her mouth you kiss your own. If she is taken you cry that you have been robbed of yourself'" (Barnes, Nightwood 143).

Robin leaves Nora as abruptly as she left Felix. In both cases she finds herself in an impossible situation and flees out of self-preservation. Nora returns from Jenny's to find Robin waiting. Nora tells her, "'It is over--I can't go on. You have always lied to me, and you have denied me to her. I can't stand it anymore'" (Barnes, Nightwood 142). Robin simply takes her coat and without a word walks out of Nora's life.

When Matthew asks if Robin never disgusted her, Nora tells him of the night when someone called to tell her that Robin needed help getting home. She found Robin drunk and Robin ran after her crying, "'You make me feel dirty, and tired and old!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 143). They passed a whore and Robin sat down with her, stroked her hair, and demanded that Nora give her money telling her, "'... they don't want you to have your happiness. They don't want
you to drink. Well, here, drink! I give you money and permission! These women--they are all like her... They all want to save us!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 144).

Clearly, Robin identifies with the whore, and this is the permission to live that Felix spoke of earlier which Robin wants from Nora. But Nora, ironically, because she loves Robin, cannot give her permission to pursue a life of self-destruction. Yet Robin does not see such a life as destructive; she sees gaiety and pleasure in drunkenness and indiscriminate sex.

That same night Nora struck Robin, and just as she reacted to Jenny's physical attack by going to live with her, she reacts to Nora's attack positively as well. When Nora struck her "'. . . she started, and smiled, and went up the stairs . . . without complaint'" (Barnes, Nightwood 144). She called Nora "'Angel'" and fell asleep. This is when Nora most fully expresses her desire to possess Robin in death.

'Then I kissed her . . . and I said:

"Die now, so you will be quiet, so you will not be touched again by dirty hands, so you will not take my heart and your body and let them be nosed by dogs--die now, then you will be mine forever."

(Barnes, Nightwood 144-145)

Ironically, however, it is only when Robin is drunk and has passed out that Nora feels that Robin belongs to her.
Robin's drinking takes Robin away from Nora and delivers her into the hands of others but ultimately Robin returns, and Nora regains physical control over Robin when she is unconscious. Nora's desire to possess Robin grows out of her maternal desire to protect Robin who does and does not want to be possessed and protected.

"All the time I didn't believe her life was as it was, and yet the fact that I didn't prove something is wrong with me. I saw her always like a tall child... walking and needing help and safety; because she was in her own nightmare. I tried to come between and save her, but I was like a shadow in her dream that could never reach her in time... and I was going mad because I was awake and, seeing it, unable to reach it..." (Barnes, Nightwood 145)

As "la somnambule" Robin lives in undivided consciousness. It is only when Nora accuses her and thereby divides her consciousness, forcing her to see herself from Nora's point-of-view, that Robin becomes degraded. Her degradation is not a result of what she has done, but a result of her sudden consciousness of Nora's perception of her actions (Johnsen 39). Nora's ending her relationship with Robin strikes Robin awake.

'. . . [S]he was asleep and I struck
her awake. I saw her come awake and
turn befowled before me, she who had
managed in that sleep to keep whole
... . I didn't know that it was to
be me who was to do the terrible thing!
No rot had touched her until then, and
there before my eyes I saw her corrupt
all at once and withering; because I
had struck her sleep away, and I went
mad and I've been mad ever since... .
(Barnes, Nightwood 145)

Matthew replies,

'You were a "good woman," and so a
bitch on a high plane, the only one
able to kill yourself and Robin! Robin
was outside the "human type"--a wild
thing caught in a woman's skin... .
Robin is not in your life, you are in
her dream, you'll never get out of it.
And why does Robin feel innocent? Every
bed she leaves without caring fills her
heart with peace and happiness. She has
made her "escape" again. That's why
she can't "put herself in another's
place," she herself is the only "position":
so she resents it when you reproach her
with what she had done. She knows she
is innocent because she can't do anything in relation to anyone but herself. You almost caught hold of her, but she put you cleverly away by making you the Madonna." (Barnes, *Nightwood* 146)

Thus, ironically, it is Nora who finally causes Robin to lose her innocence by dividing her consciousness and making her see herself through Nora's eyes. Robin finally loses her innocence as a result of Nora's efforts to penetrate the sealed depths of her being... Nora forces Robin into an instant of intense contact, in which Robin becomes aware of Nora for the first time, and thus of her own guilt towards Nora, and of herself as seen through Nora's perspective. Thus Robin passes from a static insanity to a state of fragmentation and perpetual torment, having gained a conscious perspective on her own madness and degradation, while remaining subconsciously trapped in her trancelike incapacity for responsive love. Nora represents to Robin the Madonna, both as inaccessible redeemer and tacit accuser, since it is only through her that Robin possesses a vision of unattainable salvation and a
sense of her own degradation: thus Robin must leave her, hoping to slip back into the sleep of insanity. (Williamson 71)

Robin's turning Nora into the Madonna and herself taking the position of the child playing with toys and watching Nora was Robin's way of controlling Nora, too.

Associating Robin with another dream of her grandmother, Nora recounts a second dream, one in which Robin is not present but in which it is clear that Robin is linked to Nora's grandmother. In Nora's dreams the "... grandmother is the dominant figure, the mother is missing, and Robin ... is being called upon to replace the grandmother" (Gunn 552). Like Robin, her grandmother was someone whom Nora "'loved more than anyone'" (Barnes, Nightwood 148). In the second dream the grandmother lies dead in a glass coffin in a forest. The coffin was "'... tangled in the grave grass. ...'" (Barnes, Nightwood 148-149), and her father who was still living was going '... into the grave beside her, his head thrown back ... struggling with her death terribly, and me, stepping about its edges, walking and wailing without a sound; round and round, seeing them struggling with that death as if they were struggling with the sea and my life; I was weeping and unable to do or take myself out of it'" (Barnes,
Nightwood 149).

Clearly, her dream is about her entanglement with Robin which is pulling her down into a madness that feels like death. Her father seems to be attempting to save or join his mother in death, just as Nora has attempted to save or join Robin. As we know, Nora has felt that she and Robin could be united only in death.

The dream of the grandmother in the glass coffin and the father's futile attempt to save her being sucked into death, too, is a dream about Nora's futile attempt to save Robin, Robin corresponding to the grandmother and Nora identifying with her father. (Williamson 71)

'There they were in the grave glass, and the grave water and the grave flowers and the grave time, one living and one dead and one asleep. It went on forever, though it had stopped, my father stopped beating and just lay there floating beside her, immovable, yet drifting in a tight place. And I woke and still it was going on; it went down into the dark earth of my waking as if I were burying them with the earth of my lost sleep. This I have done to my father's mother, dreaming through my father, and have
tormented them with my tears and with my
dreams; for all of us die over again in
somebody's sleep. And this, I have done
to Robin: it is only through me that
she will die over and over...'.
(Barnes, Nightwood 149)

Separation from the mother and return to the mother in
death would seem to be the basis of the symbolism of the
dream. "The coffin, the water it floats in, and the earth
in which all is placed, all symbolize death. Yet earth and
water and the act of being drawn back to mother and terra
mater also symbolizes rebirth" (Gunn 552). Clearly,
"drifting in a tight place" is the experience of the fetus
in the womb. There is the desire to be reunited with the
mother, the origin of life, through the loss of conscious-
ness, the desire to experience the original unity of the
initial relationship with the mother that can only come
with the obliteration of the divided consciousness and the
restoration of an original unity of consciousness, the
eternal desire for the return to the womb. Nora's two
dreams are the basis of Nora's two desires. The first
dream presents the grandmother as a symbol of bisexual
unity (Gunn 552). The second dream represents Nora's
desire to save Robin and ultimately to be united with her
in death. Nora asks Matthew to tell Robin "'not to
forget;'" (Barnes, Nightwood 150) but Matthew warns her,
again recalling the dream imagery of the floating dead,
that she keeps "'bringing her up, as cannons bring up the
deaf from deep water'" (Barnes, Nightwood 150).

Nora tells Matthew of "'the girls Robin had driven
frantic'" (Barnes, Nightwood 150) who come to her for com-
fort. She confesses the true nature of her love for Robin.
"'I thought I loved her for her sake, but I found it was
for my own'" (Barnes, Nightwood 151). She asks Matthew,
"'[H]ave you ever loved someone and it became yourself?'"
(Barnes, Nightwood 152). This recalls Nora's earlier
description of the love between women, that on the lover's
lips one kisses one's own. Robin is the unconscious
portion of herself, and, therefore, with the loss of Robin
she feels that she has lost herself. Nora is haunted by
memory, but Robin is free because she does not remember.

Suddenly, Matthew who has been trying to help Nora
let go of her hopeless love for Robin recognizes the
futility of all his efforts and that he, too, has been
drawn into the experience of human suffering.

'And I was doing well enough,' he snapped,
'until you kicked my stone over, and out
I came, all moss and eyes; and here I sit,
as naked as only those things can be,
whose houses have been torn away . . . and
it my only skin--labouring to comfort you.'
(Barnes, Nightwood 153)

Matthew's efforts to comfort Nora have left him vulnerable
to feeling the pain of the human predicament, and he
realizes that his sacrifice has been in vain. Their
troubles, he says, are so insignificant that what they
leave behind will be like specks of the hummingbird compared
to the dinosaur dung of the past. Recalling earlier bird
imagery, Matthew exclaims, "Do I wail to the mountains of
the trouble I have had in the valley . . . or of every lie,
how it went down into my belly and built a nest to hatch me
to my death there?" (Barnes, Nightwood 155). He ends with
another bird metaphor warning Nora, "'Keep out of my
feathers; you ruffle me the wrong way and flit about,
stirring my misery!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 155).

Yet Nora persists, for in explaining her love for
Robin to Matthew, she is explaining it to herself as well.
The pain of lost love remembered is her only explanation.
Making Nora into the Madonna, the only human exception to
sin, Robin would return after one of her nights and say,
"'I want to make everyone happy'. . . . 'I want everyone
to be gay, gay. Only you . . . mustn't be gay or happy,
not like that, it's not for you, only for everyone else in
the world'" (Barnes, Nightwood 155). Thus in Robin's mind,
"Nora becomes the Virgin Mary, the divine exception from
the human predicament, yet fated to take on suffering"
(Gunn 554). Reminding the reader of Robin as "la somnambulèe,"
Nora describes her as "'like someone in a dream . . . she
wants to be loved and left alone, all at the same time'"
(Barnes, Nightwood 155). Robin seems passive, without
volition, yet she is aggressive in her hostility toward all
that threatens her with consciousness. "'A shadow was falling on her--mine--and it was driving her out of her wits'" (Barnes, Nightwood 155). Nora sums up her loss:

'I have been loved' . . . 'by something strange, and it has forgotten me'. . . . 'It was me made her hair stand on end because I loved her . . . . She wanted darkness in her mind--to throw a shadow over what she was powerless to alter--her dissolute life, her life at night; and I, I dashed it down. We will never have it out not'. . . . 'There is no last reckoning for those who have loved too long, so for me there is no end. Only . . . I can't live without my heart!' (Barnes, Nightwood 155-156)

Nora tells Matthew, who has been drinking throughout their conversation, how she tried to recapture Robin by imitating her actions, going to Marseilles, Tangier, and Naples, haunting the cafés where Robin had drunk and danced, "... but all I knew was that others had slept with my lover, my child. For Robin is incest too; that is one of her powers'" (Barnes, Nightwood 156). Nora realizes fully the extent to which maternal and romantic love were fatally mixed in their relationship. In Naples, Nora sees a girl in a room off an alley way that enables her to understand what she had been to Robin. Behind the
girl was a Madonna with candles.

'Looking from her to the Madonna behind the candles, I knew that the image, to her, was what I had been to Robin, not a saint at all, but a fixed display, the space between the human and the holy head, the arena of the "indecent" eternal. At that moment I stood in the centre of eroticism and death . . . and I knew in that bed Robin should have put me down. In that bed we would have forgotten our lives in the extremity of memory, moulded our parts, as figures in waxworks are moulded down to their story, so we would have broken down to our love.' (Barnes, Nightwood 157-158)

The paragraph in which Nora sees the girl with the candles and the Madonna and realizes, as a result, what she had been to Robin is typical of Barnes' associative style. Barnes uses metaphor in this passage, yet the vehicle is not sufficiently concrete to make clear the tenor, leaving the comparison with a sense of vagueness by which Barnes suggests "... that the power of language is insufficient to make Nora's love for Robin perceivable to the reader. The lines of the passage also show a predilection for explaining one thing in terms of another by analogy" (Allen, "Dressing" 116).
The passage also typifies the way in which a full reading of Nightwood depends on associations made by the reader among repeated words or ideas. . . . Virtually every noun and several verbs in the passage belong to a repeated series which in turn signals a thematic concern. In addition to . . . death, emotion, and love, 'madonna,' 'candles,' 'image,' and 'saint' recur in relating the danger of passionate worship. 'Figure' and 'story' recall the emphasis on the stories and story telling of Matthew, the fictional life of Felix, and the destructive fabrications of Nora's memory. 'Broken down' belongs to the semantically related set of verbs including 'go down,' 'going down,' 'bow down' that Kenneth Burke calls the 'transcendence downward' mode of Nightwood. 'Moulded' itself is not repeated, but references to birds and birdnests recur several times. These latter differ from items like memory, death, and love, in that they are less thematically significant, but their recurrence signals Barnes' associative style by indicating that even metaphoric items used to call up different ideas
are recurrent. (Allen, "Dressing" 116)

Realizing that he has failed utterly with Nora, Matthew leaves in silence and goes to the Café du la Mairie du VIe where he continues to be troubled by thoughts of Nora and all those whom he has tried to help with his words. "To think is to be sick,' he said to the barman" (Barnes, Nightwood 158).

The drunken Matthew, now in the company of an unfrocked priest, tells an ironic parable, his last bird image, about the ducks in Golden Gate Park who are fed so much by people out of kindness that when the time comes to fly south they find that they are too heavy to fly. This he says is an illustration of love in which intended kindness leads to destruction and death. Pounding his glass on the table in anger and desperation, he cries, "May they all be damned. The people in my life who have made my life miserable, coming to me to learn of degradation and the Night. Nora, beating her head against her heart . . . rotten to the bone for love of Robin'" (Barnes, Nightwood 161). He speaks of the hopelessness of Felix and Guido, "Felix holding on to his hand and the boy holding on to the image of the Virgin on a darkening red ribbon . . . calling it mother. . . .'" (Barnes, Nightwood 162). Robin has made Nora the Madonna for her own purposes and Guido has made Robin the Madonna, too, finding in the Madonna the mother he never had. Matthew has warned against dressing "the unknowable in the garments of the known'" (Barnes, Nightwood 136), yet he with his
metaphors and parables he has succumbed to the same
temptation to express the unknowable and the inexplicable,
the night, the unconscious, love, and death, in the
metaphors he uses and the stories he tells. All his talk,
all his stories, fail to heal the pain of those who come
to him seeking to know the unknowable.

In "Go Down, Matthew," he like the others must bow
down to what he finds unendurable. Having failed to cure
Nora of her love for Robin, he can no longer sustain the
illusion that his stories can heal; his fictions no longer
work for him either.

Dr O' Connor's predicament . . . reflects
back upon the situation of the contemporary
novelist . . . whose formulas once seemed
to recreate, to turn words into flesh, and
now simply turn upon their speaker. . . .

In Nightwood the aesthetics of words
become the aesthetics of verbal rituals
whose efficacy has vanished. (Baxter 1176)

In Matthew 5: 13, Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the
earth; but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith
shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but
to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot by men."

Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor, whose
words were always meant to be taken with a grain of salt,
finds that his " . . . use of words is, in fact, not good
for anything . . . and his mission loses his savour once
he acknowledges his own powerlessness" (Baxter 1178). Struck by his own futility, O'Connor says, ". . . 'I stand here . . . knowing I am not what I thought I was, a good man doing wrong, but the wrong man doing nothing much. . .'" (Barnes, Nightwood 162). The chapter ends with Matthew despairing the efficacy of words and narrative. "'I've not only lived my life for nothing, but I've told it for nothing. . . . [I]t's all over . . . and nobody knows it but me. . . . Now . . . the end. . . . (Barnes, Nightwood 165-166). Thus does Matthew go down, having collapsed spiritually, physically, and rhetorically (Allen, "Dressing" 108). Throughout the novel Matthew has embodied discourse. "He knows he substitutes talk for living . . . but still he fills the air with words" (Allen, "Dressing" 113). Ultimately, Nightwood is about the failure of words.

The inadequacy of the word suggested in 'Watchman, What of the Night' becomes the complete failure of verbal communication in . . . 'Go Down, Matthew'

. . . . The more Matthew tries to convince her to give up hoping for Robin's love, the more Nora understands why she cannot. (Allen, "Dressing" 114)

Thus the failure of words becomes a significant point made by the book as it attempts to triumph over that very failure itself.
Deconstructionists argue that contrary to the theological certainties upon which the descriptive faculty of traditional realistic narrative presumes, the reflexiveness of the contemporary novel offers an insight into the 'fictionality of reality' that is fundamental to all acts of mind. When the novel is aware of its own contingency, it participates actively in the dynamic of consciousness. In other words, acts of mind supplant the world of actions as the proper scope of novelistic imagination. (Singer 8-9)

Since metaphor "... is an inherently self-reflexive trope, always disclosing an authorial presence, it is an apt figure for any discussion of literary self-consciousness" (Singer 5). As a metaphorical novel, Nightwood is concerned with its own fictionality and expresses this concern through the character of Matthew O'Connor who is a liar and a maker of fictions whose metaphorical language equals that of the narrator. Nightwood is essentially a novel about storytelling, about acts of the mind, human consciousness, and desire. The lie becomes a metaphor for fiction which in turn becomes a metaphor for human consciousness. Most of Nightwood is concerned with talk which aims at enabling the various
characters to endure their lives by accepting the fictions that O'Connor presents. O'Connor's failure to cure any of the characters of their obsessions brings into question the efficacy of fiction and human consciousness itself.

"The Possessed" forms the coda for *Nightwood* and differs from the rest of the novel in its silence. Talk dominates the rest of the book, but, here, silence prevails. "The Possessed" focuses on the polarities of human consciousness/animal consciousness and language/silence. The chapter opens with Robin and Jenny living in a hotel, for Robin no longer wishes a home as she had with Nora. Robin again wanders, going by train and visiting churches. "As she had taken the Catholic vow long before, now she came into church as one renouncing something..." (Barnes, *Nightwood* 167). Robin also wanders through the countryside

... pulling at flowers, speaking in low voices to animals. Those that came near she grasped, straining their fur back until their eyes were narrowed and their teeth bare, her own teeth showing as if her hand were upon her own neck. (Barnes, *Nightwood* 168)

Robin who was initially the beast turning human has given up that direction of evolution and is now reverting to beast. The pain of human consciousness having proven to be more than she can bear, she has chosen to seek the
unity and the immediacy of animal consciousness, returning to the premythic state before human consciousness was born.

Meanwhile, Nora, too, has returned to America. In her wandering Robin gravitates toward the decaying chapel on Nora's estate. Their physical proximity makes possible the fulfillment of O'Connor's earlier prophecy that one dog will find them, for it is Nora's dog who senses Robin's presence in the chapel and leads Nora to Robin. The dog, outside Nora's house, begins to bark and whine. As he moves away from the house toward the chapel, Nora follows him. Even before she sees Robin, Nora, too, seems to sense her presence, for when she sees a light under the chapel door she knows exactly whom to expect as she runs crying and cursing and hurls herself against the door.

On a contrived altar, before a Madonna, two candles were burning. . . . Before the image lay flowers and toys. Standing before them in her boy's trousers was Robin. Her pose, startled and broken, was caught at the point where her hand had reached almost to the shoulder, and at the moment Nora's body struck the wood, Robin began going down, sliding down she went; down, her hair swinging, her arms held out, and the dog stood there, rearing back, his forelegs slanting; his paws trembling under the trembling
of his rump, his hackles standing; his mouth open, his tongue slung sideways over his sharp bright teeth; whining and waiting. And down she went, until her head swung against his; on all fours now, dragging her knees. (Barnes, Nightwood 169)

True to Barnes' associative style, the passage is full of images that the reader will associate with other scenes and situations. The Madonna with candles reminds us of Matthew's telling Nora that Robin had escaped by making her into the Madonna as well as Nora's realization upon seeing the girl with the Madonna and candles in Naples. Then there are the boys and Robin dressed in boy's trousers which recalls the scene of Robin playing with toys in their Paris apartment. Next, we have the thematic action stressed throughout the novel of going down, and finally we have the dog that Matthew said would bring Nora and Robin together. Also there is the "pose" recalling the introduction of Robin "as a 'picture' forever arranged" (Barnes, Nightwood 37). The hand on the shoulder would seem to indicate that Robin is making the sign of the cross, but at Nora's entrance, just as she crumbled before Nora's accusation, her pose is broken and she begins to "go down."

The dog attempts to avoid her as she comes toward him "grinning and whimpering" (Barnes, Nightwood 170). She
backs him in a corner, and the dog claws at the wall trying to escape.

Then head down, dragging her forelocks in the dust, she struck against his side. He let loose one howl of misery and bit at her, dashing about her, barking, and as he sprang on either side of her he always kept his head toward her dashing his rump now this side, now that of the wall.

Then she began to bark also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry then, running with her, head-on with her head, as if to circumvent her; soft and slow his feet went padding. He ran this way and that, low down deep in his throat crying, and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then, and lay down, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees. (Barnes, Nightwood 170)

This then is the "'fearful sort of primitive innocence!'" (Barnes, Nightwood 117) that Felix had
predicted Robin might make for herself. Gerald B. Nelson calls Robin's return to animal consciousness through communion with Nora's dog a "ceremony of innocence. . ." (107). But Felix also warned, "It may be considered "depraved" by our generation. . . ." (Barnes, Nightwood 117), and he was right. Some critics have accused Robin of attempting sexual intercourse with the dog (Williamson 74), while others less directly have implied that there is some sexual aspect to the encounter (Nadeau 160). Clearly, this is not what is going on. Robin's actions are definitely sensuous, but not sensual in any explicitly sexual sense. What Robin is attempting to do is to have the dog accept her as an animal rather than as a human being. This act of communication and communion with the dog is her final renunciation of human consciousness. It represents her return to unified animal consciousness. In it she is being simple like an animal as Matthew sought to do earlier. She has attempted the state of consciousness "'... born at the opening of the eye ... shutting out memory with the dropping of the lid'" (Barnes, Nightwood 135).

The dog, it might be noted, is confused and frightened by her behavior, but finally accepts her as an animal rather than as a human, and they interact on an animal level. The scene ends with the tableau of Robin and the dog lying on the floor together with Nora presumably watching. After her striking the door Nora is not mentioned in the book again. Critics, however, speak of Nora's watching
the scene "horror-stricken" (Williamson 74), projecting their own reactions onto Nora. Interestingly, Nora is silent throughout the scene. She speaks neither to Robin nor to the dog. She in no way attempts to prevent the action. The implication is that she silently watches and sees what the reader "sees" through the narrator's description.

Robin, in her actions with the dog, is allowing her animal nature to come forth by interacting on an animal level with another animal, yet ironically the animal, a dog, is the most domesticated of animals and is an animal normally possessed by humans as this dog is by Nora. Matthew O'Connor had described Robin as "a wild thing caught in a woman's skin" (Barnes, Nightwood 146), but the scene with the dog allows her wild nature to emerge, to be experienced openly, allowing Robin to escape the confines of her human existence.

The final scene is full of bitter irony. Apparently, what Nora had wished for has happened. Robin has returned, yet she has returned not as a human being with whom a relationship is possible, but as a creature who has rejected human consciousness. As a creature, she, like the dog, can be possessed. Ironically, to possess Robin was what Nora had wanted those nights when she wished Robin would die so that she could be hers alone. Possession of Robin was Nora's desire, but the possible fulfillment of that desire comes with bitter irony. A relationship with
Robin as a human being is no longer possible; she is beyond the human type.

Whether her repudiation of human consciousness and return to animal consciousness is a triumph or a tragedy for Robin is a matter of perspective. According to Jack Hirshmann, the last chapter of Nightwood ends in a "... victory of the human over the bestial..." (119), a victory for Nora as a representative of rational, human consciousness. Douglas Messerli would basically agree, saying

At the novel's end, order is restored
... Man's connection with his animal past (represented by Robin) must be sacrificed to his futurity.
Nora (the character who represents the future, the new) stands at the end of Nightwood ... as a testament to man's civilized future. (183)

James B. Scott views the end of the novel as tragic for both Nora and Robin.

We are left with the characters in a tragic predicament. Robin and Nora are divided by an unbridgable gulf: for one is beast; the other, human. But Robin's situation is the more tragic, for not only is she unable to reach across the isolation of her own now fallen nature to another human being;
she is also unable to reach backward
to a purely animal nature to make con-
tact. Robin ends frozen between two
worlds. (Scott 103)

Clearly, Scott does not regard Robin's attempt to reject
humanity in favor of animal consciousness as successful.
Yet there are other critics who do, and for them the major
question is whether her success represents a tragedy or a
positive achievement.

According to Louis Kannerstine, the ending is one of
paradox: "... [T]here is salvation in her ultimate
damnation. . . ." (118). Dell Hymes is more positive, say-
ing, "... the logic of the book demands that we recog-
nize this outcome as an escape, a victory" (60). Yet
Hymes, viewing the dog as symbolic of Nora's "night-self"
or unconscious contends that Nora and Robin are reunited
at the end.

Nora's day-self remains alien. . . .

But the night-self and Robin meet at
last, and the final chapter is a great
separating out and a grand uniting.
The day and night counterparts of Nora
separate out; Robin barking, separates
from the human. In their night and
animal aspects, Robin and Nora join
. . . . (Hymes 58)
Thus Hymes views Robin's spiritual union with Nora's dog as a union with an aspect of Nora's divided consciousness.

For William A. Johnsen, the ending of Nightwood is consistent with the feminine sensibility that is basic to the novel. "Robin Vote becomes a part of the order beyond the chaos of human existence by opening herself totally to all that the day world renounces in its compulsion for mastery" (Johnson 40). "Robin represents the power of unified existence, undifferentiated consciousness that man became separated from when he ceased being totally a beast..." (Gunn 550), and it is to this consciousness that she returns. By retreating into the undivided continuum of animal existence, Robin escapes past and future attempts of others to impose meaning, order, or structure on her life. For Robin it is an ultimate and apparently permanent escape. No longer can she be exploited by those who see in her a "... means of self completion..." (Williamson 68).

What happens to Robin at the end of the novel is important, but in terms of the book as a whole, what is most important about the final chapter of Nightwood is its deconstructive reversal of the traditional hierarchical relationships of human consciousness to animal consciousness and language to silence. In Robin's return to animal consciousness, animal consciousness is elevated above human consciousness which has been portrayed as contaminated with misery and selfishness. That Robin has become like an
animal indicates a purer level of consciousness, although a lower level of consciousness as viewed from the perspective of Western culture that automatically places the human above the animal.

Accompanying Robin's return to animal consciousness is her rejection of language. In very significant contrast to the rest of the novel which is made of elaborate tales and conversations, the final chapter is characterized by silence. The only sounds are animal sounds, the barking and crying, the whimpering of Robin and the dog. In the end, then, in a novel which has been preoccupied with language as its subject (Allen, "Failure") as well as its medium, language gives way to animal cries, and ultimately silence prevails as Robin and the dog lie peacefully and exhausted on the floor of Nora's decaying chapel.

Thus, in Nightwood, we find Barnes making a break with twentieth-century phallocentric hegemony on several levels. Culturally, she takes a deconstructive stance toward the traditional hierarchies of polar opposition such as day/night, light/dark, consciousness/unconsciousness, human consciousness/animal consciousness, innocence/corruption, ascent/descent and language/silence. She turns them upside down, taking the culturally-devalued secondary term and elevating it above the culturally-privileged primary term. Also, she populates her fictional universe with socially marginal characters whose sufferings she
depicts as characteristic of human suffering on a universal scale. Finally, by writing a surrealistic, poetic novel, she counters the then-sanctioned, phallocentric literary hegemony by transgressing and inverting the conventions of literary realism.
JUDY WOLFE

ANTI-PATRIARCHAL STRATEGIES
IN THE MAJOR WORKS OF
DJUNA BARNES

VOLUME II
CHAPTER IV

THE ANTIphon

Augusta

May God protect us! I wonder what you'll write
When I am dead and gone!

(Barnes, Selected Works of Djuna
Barnes 209)

In my lifetime I'll probably not know what
fate the play is to have. But the point is
I really shouldn't care. If ever a thing
were truly written for the writer this is it.
This may be what is objectionable. If so it
has to be so.

(Quoted in Curry 142)

Nightwood was published in 1936 (1937 in America),
but as early as 1937 Djuna Barnes mentioned in a letter
to Charles Henri Ford that she was working on a verse
drama about her visit in 1936 to her ancestral home in
Oakham, the site of a manor house, Burley-on-the-hill,
formerly a monastery (Field 192). She began serious work
on The Antiphon in 1947-48, and by 1949 she was corres-
ponding with Eliot about it (Field 220; Curry 2). Yet
between 1937 and 1949 incidents occurred that would
manifest themselves in various ways in the play. First, there was the approach of World War II. At the time just prior to the Occupation, Barnes was in France, had suffered a breakdown, and was at a nursing home. Emily Coleman, who had been so instrumental in persuading Eliot to push for Nightwood's publication, was able to locate and remove her from the home just as the Occupation began. Peggy Guggenheim was persuaded to pay her fare and Barnes was placed on a boat to America just in time to escape the extermination of the mentally unsound and alleged homosexuals by the Nazis (Field 216). The Antiphon opens with the fleeing of Miranda, the Barnes figure, from Paris so hurriedly in the wake of the war that Miranda, an actress, arrives in England in costume from a play in which she had been appearing. The Antiphon, however, has Miranda go from Paris to England to stop over for a last visit to her ancestral home before proceeding to America. But Barnes sailed for America and was thrown into a family situation not unlike that portrayed in The Antiphon.

Upon her return to America, she lived for a few months with her mother in a cold-water flat on East Fifty-fourth Street (Field 216). These months were traumatic for Barnes. Elizabeth Chappell Barnes belittled her daughter's writing, claiming that she was capable of writing better poetry (Field 219).

In March, 1940, she told Emily Coleman, she had been bruised head to foot being
taken to a sanitorium by force. She didn't stay there long but claimed that the family threatened to return her there if she didn't toe the line. (Field 218)

In one typescript the brothers and the mother discuss having Miranda committed (Curry 80). Also in 1940 there is some indication that there was the burning or the destruction of the beginning of a manuscript by her family (Field 191). The play mentions the confiscation of Miranda's book by her mother and brother. Finally in September, 1940, Barnes was able to obtain her own apartment where she lived and worked alone for the rest of her life. Her father had died in 1934 (Field 205), and following her mother's death in 1945, the story Barnes partly revealed in Ryder could be fully told (Field 220). This, then was the background against which The Antiphon came into being, merging the distant past where Ryder left off with the more recent familial conflicts and set against the more general chaos of a world at war and a civilization that seemed on the verge of collapse.

As in Ryder, and in Nightwood, there are dichotomies in The Antiphon, and, as in the previous two works, Barnes reverses many of the hierarchical values, elevating the popularly devalued term. Among the dichotomies presented in The Antiphon is the one that pervades all of Barnes'
major works, that of male/female, and, as was the case in Ryder, the general theme is man's betrayal of woman. Yet, despite this basic theme, the central conflict of The Antiphon is between another hierarchical pair, that of mother/daughter, and the crux of the drama is the love/hate relationship between them (Curry 151). Echoing Nightwood in which Nora exclaims to Matthew of her lover, "... a woman is yourself... on her mouth you kiss your own. If she is taken you cry that you have been robbed of yourself" (Barnes, Nightwood 143), in The Antiphon we are presented with another female pair, a mother and daughter, eternally at odds, and yet who find their identities merged.

Other dichotomies include brother/sister, modern secular values/traditional religious values, American values/European values, modern utilitarian values/traditional values of craftsmanship, commercially successful, capitalistic values/artistic, non-capitalistic values, and most importantly life/death. Finally, there is the only dichotomy that is not reversed, that of response versus betrayal or abandonment or, in terms of the play, the antiphon.

The central character of The Antiphon is the Barnes figure, Miranda, now fifty. As Marie Ponsot points out, "Julie of Ryder, Nora of Nightwood and Miranda are essentially one person, grown from girlhood to death" (Ponsot 48). Other characters, too, are taken from real
life and from Ryder. Wald Barnes, who was Wendell Ryder in Ryder, becomes Titus Oates in The Antiphon. (In history, Titus Oates was a "seventeenth-century imposter and fabricator of the story that there was a popish plot to burn London, assassinate the King, and massacre the Protestants, and was responsible for many deaths") (Field 188). The real life Elizabeth Chappell Barnes, the Amelia Ryder of Ryder becomes Augusta, widow of Titus Oates. Zadel Barnes, Djuna Barnes' real life grandmother, portrayed as Sophia Ryder in Ryder, becomes the late but much remembered Victoria of The Antiphon. In real life Djuna Barnes had four brothers. Thurn (sometimes known as Bud) was the eldest and was Timothy of Ryder. Younger than Djuna were Zendon, Saxon, and Shangar (also known as Charles). It is likely that Saxon was the Hannel of Ryder. Originally in the early drafts of The Antiphon, there was an additional character named Kit, perhaps a fourth brother, and in the early drafts Jeremy was the youngest rather than the eldest brother (Curry 6, 128). It is interesting that Barnes uses the name Elisha for one of the brothers in The Antiphon. In Ryder, Elisha was the son of Kate Careless, the woman that Wendell Ryder chose over Amelia when he betrayed his legitimate family. Jonathan, Augusta's brother and a stabilizing influence on the family in The Antiphon, is not the same brother of Amelia mentioned in Ryder as having contracted syphilis. Other differences between the two works include the place
of courting and marriage for Amelia-Wendell and Augusta-Titus. In *Ryder*, Amelia met Wendell in London where she had gone to study music. In *The Antiphon*, Wendell is said to have come to Burley Hall in Bewick to study organ with Augusta's brother, Jonathan. In *Ryder*, the young couple left for America at once and all the children were born there. In *The Antiphon*, Titus and Augusta lived for several years at Burley Hall where Jeremy and Miranda were born. It was when Augusta was pregnant with her third child that they left for America (Curry 197). In *Ryder*, Wendell begins his polygamy in America, but in *The Antiphon*, his adultery begins while he is yet at Burley Hall and he is confronted in both England and America for his polygamy and his refusal to send his children to school. Although *Ryder* is superficially light in its tone and seems on the surface to revel in the unorthodox exploits of Wendell, it remains a tragedy of women, especially of Amelia, exploited and then abandoned by a weak, ineffective man, who is only bravado. In *The Antiphon*, "as in a dream re-dreamed, the tale of *Ryder* is here clarified and concluded . . ." (Ponsot 48). As in *Ryder*, the tone in *The Antiphon* shifts. Begun as a tragi-comedy (Curry 127), Barnes would ultimately transform the play into "A Tragedy in Verse" (Curry 105). Still the first act retains some of its comic aspects and the play evolves toward tragedy through the succeeding acts.
The Antiphon begins as a tragi-comedy, ends as a modern verse tragedy. . . . the drafts show it was not originally pure comedy or tragedy, but a mixture of both with stress on comedy in the first two acts, tragedy in the third, allowing the audience to slowly acquire a deepening sense of the problems portrayed as entirely serious and far-reaching in their implications. (Curry 127)

. . . The Antiphon has much in common with Ryder. . . . The novel depicts the farm life in New York which in the play is depicted by character reminiscences. . . . Ryder deals with all the humor inherent in an unconventional marriage and family situation, The Antiphon with all the agony, the two stories overlap at the end. . . . (Curry 127-128)

Although one might disagree with Linda Curry that Ryder is totally humorous, there is a vast difference in the tone of the two works, and The Antiphon emphasizes the agony of the family's situation and all the destruction for which Titus is responsible. Yet, although Titus is responsible for the havoc his actions have wrought, Augusta shares his guilt through collusion and
is guilty of acts against Miranda that in no way involved Titus. But, like Titus, Augusta goes to her death refusing to assume responsibility for her actions, eternally the accuser and refusing the role of the accused. Most of all, what makes The Antiphon a tale of horror is its detailed description of attempted incestuous parental rape of Miranda by Titus, a rape which was finally carried out by a surrogate after Miranda was successful in foiling Titus' attempt. In Ryder, Wendell's most serious offense is adultery and the abandonment of his legitimate family. There is humor in Ryder, but in The Antiphon the attempted rape of a child by a parent can evoke only horror and revulsion. In Ryder the rape is obliquely hinted at when Ryder says he has sold a lamb for too cheap a price (Barnes, Ryder 316). But only a reader familiar with the lamb imagery associated with the description of the attempted incest in The Antiphon would realize what Ryder's sale of the lamb foreshadowed. Yet from Miranda's point of view it is Titus' abandonment of his family which is the most serious offence, for in so doing he failed to respond as a father and failed utterly as a responsible human being. In The Antiphon, Titus, now dead, is a memory, but he is very much present in the play in the sense that his actions in the past have shaped the present with which all the characters in The Antiphon must contend. Essentially, The Antiphon is a play about coming to terms with the past. Yet is is also a play about
communication, communication in the present and the tragic results when communication fails.

The Antiphon opens with the entrance of Miranda and Jack Blow (her brother Jeremy in disguise) into Burley Hall, Miranda's ancestral home, but more recently a college for Benedictine chantry priests. The time is 1939, and the setting with its doorless doorway, paneless window, broken statues, and half-fallen wall reflects the state of Western culture at the opening of World War II. The house is doubly symbolic.

The house is a visible symbol of the civilized past and its traditions. Since Burley is badly damaged—the door and windows are gone from their frames; a wall has been blown down—the house is also a symbol of the destruction of the modern world. The condition of the house, with its contents, suggests, moreover, the divided and hostile condition of modern man. (Scott 120)

Thus Barnes uses the setting to make a social and cultural statement. It is a "crumbling shell of an old religious structure, no longer capable of providing shelter. . . ." (Curry 44). Barnes clearly establishes "... the important theme of religious response, the antiphonal dialogue of the Christian service from which the title of the play derives" (Curry 44). "Both the physical and
historical settings provide a statement about the social situation depicted on the stage" (Curry 148). Miranda notices the "... scarred walls where altars once stood, dry basins that originally held holy water..." (Curry 148). There is also the gryphon, now in halves, sawed apart by Titus, a symbol of unity destroyed, divided. Even "the structure itself is unsound, revealing cracked or fallen walls and empty casement windows" (Curry 148). All in all, the setting is a metaphor for both society and family, now fragmented (Curry 148).

As Act One opens, Miranda has come to say good-bye to her ancestral home and to her uncle Jonathan, the caretaker of Burley Hall, the last keeper of family tradition. Miranda comments on her mother's youth at Burley Hall, "This starting-post from which my mother ran..." (Barnes, Selected Works 83) and how she "Fell victim to... Marriage to my father..." (Barnes, Selected Works 85) desiring a life filled with aristocracy, royalty and glory, all the excitement hinted at by Titus' mother Victoria to the young impressionable Augusta, but ultimately falling victim to Titus' charm, "All backward in a flail of lock went to,/ With cobalt eye in passion's clabber drowned,—... Performing the tragic ballet on her back..." (Barnes, Selected Works 87). Thus did she conceive first a son, then Miranda, and two more sons, favoring the sons, and weeping at the birth of her daughter:
Of that sprawl, three sons she leaned to fairly:
On me she cast the privy look of dogs
Who turn to quiz their droppings.
Yet in her hour, her either end being terror,
The one head on the other stared, and wept.

(Barnes, Selected Works 87)

Miranda feels that Augusta regarded her with the attitude with which dogs regard their feces, and we have the powerful image of the child not even fully emerged from the mother's vagina, mother and daughter still united as a two-headed entity with both heads weeping, the child as a natural consequence of birth, but the mother responding to the fact that she has given birth to a girl.

Abruptly Miranda exclaims to Jack, "I fear merchants," foreshadowing the entrance of her two brothers Dudley and Elisha, American businessmen who are plotting to kill their mother simply to be rid of her and include Miranda in their plot when they find she is present at Burley Hall, too. Meanwhile, however, Miranda and Jack discuss Titus, revealing that he was a believer in Brigham Young and in sexual freedom. Again Miranda expresses fear of merchants, and Jack asks if perhaps she fears "something nearer home" (Barnes, Selected Works 90).

Brothers? with their ticker tapes and totals?
Or worse yet perhaps, your widowed mother
Checking up on what is not her business?

(Barnes, Selected Works 90)
Miranda admits that she fears her brothers, and this is ironic. Miranda does not recognize Jack Blow as her brother and it is to Dudley and Elisha that she refers, yet by summoning his sister and his mother to Burley Hall, Jack will inadvertently be responsible for their deaths.

Miranda moves to the back of the hall and Jack goes to the formally set dining table and inspects its contents. Meanwhile, Dudley and Elisha appear. Sensing their presence, although they remain unseen, Jack speaks of the fact that he as the eldest son has been cheated out of his inheritance, an allusion to the story of Jacob and Esau. He hears a noise and echoing Eliot's *The Wasteland* says, "Do I hear the world approaching at my back?" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 93). Then, pretending to be a Barker at a carnival, he cries out,

This way, strutters, for the bearded lady;
The human skeleton, the fussy dwarf,
The fat girl with a planet in her lap;
The swallow of swords whose hidden lunge
Has not brought up his adversary yet!
(Barnes, *Selected Works* 93-94)

The imagery of the passage suggests that the inhabitants of Burley Hall and perhaps the world are a collection of sideshow freaks. The final image of the sword swallowier lunging at the enemy within suggests the internal struggle of modern man and more particularly the internal struggles of the members of the Hobbs family.
Following Jack's soliloquy,—"They say soliloquy is out of fashion, / It being a kind of talking to your betters" (Barnes, Selected Works 93)—Jonathan Burley enters and Dudley and Elisha dodge from his sight. Jonathan and Jack discuss Burley Hall, now a haven for travelers. Jack asks if Miranda visits, and Jonathan replies that she visits often and has used Burley Hall as a storage place for her theatrical costumes. Jack remarks that he has heard the tale of how Titus during his time at Burley rode a horse into the house up one staircase and down the other, and Jonathan affirms that indeed he did, to which Jack replies, "Well, I'm lesser--I tied mine to a tree" (Barnes, Selected Works 96). Jonathan and Jack exit to take care of Jack's house and luggage, and, as they go, Dudley and Elisha enter. Dudley through the window carrying an open umbrella and chewing a cigar, Elisha through the door, eating almonds and strewing the shells on the floor. As men of trade and commerce, they inspect the contents of the hall to determine the monetary worth. They express surprise to find Miranda present and comment, again thinking of money, that they have nothing to gain from her. For the brothers, all things, including people, are measured in terms of profit and loss. They discuss their intention to murder their mother, who is sleeping in the car, and decide to include Miranda because she can only be a financial drain on them. "We'll never have so good a chance again" (Barnes, Selected Works 101).
But hearing Jonathan and Jack approaching again, they duck out of sight.

Jonathan is interested in how Jack came to be in Miranda's company and Jack explains that he met Miranda in Paris: "We are the waifs of Paris--/Orphans of the war" (Barnes, Selected Works 102). When asked who he is, Jack identifies himself as "the prudent ferryman" (Barnes, Selected Works 103), a reference to Charon, for ironically in bringing Miranda from France to England he has ferried Miranda to her death.

In response to Jack's oblique references to himself, Jonathan reminds him, "Courtesy requires that when you speak, /You make it more than silence" (Barnes, Selected Works 103), introducing the theme of the necessity of communication. Jack tells of how he met Miranda, "Descending the terraces of Sacre Coeur" (Barnes, Selected Works 104) and followed her "Down to the markets of the Avenue du Main" (Barnes, Selected Works 106). Introducing the theme of time flowing backward, Jack explains that "Miranda was going backward through her target, /Her face set grim for Beewick" (Barnes, Selected Works 106).

Before leaving Paris, Miranda makes several stops, one at a party where Miranda is among "her people" (Barnes, Selected Works 108). Jack describes the party and Miranda's final meeting with her aunt "the old Belle Laide of d'oc--/The one who'd roiled the bowels of the bank/To such effect, at ninety-one she stood/Stiff as a
hitching-post, and neighing diamonds---" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 109). Jonathan recognizes the description and responds, "That must have been Elvira, / The only sister got herself to France" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 110). This is the sister who in her youth as reported in Ryder became pregnant by the squire down the road who instead of marriage gave Elvira money and married her off to a young guard. (In Ryder, however, she was Amelia's aunt.) Elvira went to Paris "... where she presumably dropped the husband but kept the money, turning it into a substantial fortune..." (Curry 195). Jack describes the wealthy Elvira as holding up her bracelets "Loose on the bone" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 111), evoking a frail image of old age.

As Jonathan and Jack talk, Elisha and Dudley begin to sneak back on stage. Speaking of Miranda, Jonathan comments that recently she has been to Burley often, and Jack comments that he wonders "Will she recover from the stroke that felled her / At her people's gate, a life ago?" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 113). This is the first reference in the play to the attempted rape upon Miranda by her father Titus and their scuffling at the gate. Abruptly Jonathan predicts that Jack will betray Miranda, to which Jack replies, "It won't be necessary; she is her own collision / ... she will undo herself, / Meeting herself but totally unarmed" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 114). Thus the first act ends with a prediction of downfall as
Dudley and Elisha emerge further on the stage and Miranda, hearing the tapping of her approaching mother's cane, appears on the gallery and mutters "No, no, no, no, no, no!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 114).

Act Two opens with Augusta having entered and having inquired immediately about Jeremy. She seats herself on half of the gryphon, which reminds her of Titus, who sawed it in half, thus destroying the unity it symbolized. She notices the curfew bell and it reminds her of a cousin, a carpenter and a craftsman. Acknowledging the value she places on craftsmanship and traditions, Augusta, turning to her sons, says, "He lockes the turnkey up, with his own iron. / Best carpenter in Burley. What a craftsman! / Set up his own roof-tree. I say no man / Has a home, who has not smelled his scaffold" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 118).

The sons are unimpressed, and thus is introduced the dichotomy of values, artistry and craftsmanship (represented by Augusta, Jonathan, Miranda, and Jack) versus commerce and materialism (represented by Dudley, a maker of watches, and Elisha, a publicist). Looking about, Augusta inquires who Jack and Jonathan are. She recognizes neither, but Jonathan identifies himself as her brother while Jack Jeremy retains his disguise. She introduces Dudley and Elisha to Jonathan and, seeing that he already knows Miranda, asks what he thinks of her. Jonathan indicates that he thinks very highly of Miranda, contradicting Augusta's low opinion of her daughter.
They begin to reminisce, immediately bringing Titus to mind, and Augusta wonders, "Do you presume it possible his wenches / Still roam the countryside? I almost wish / They walked again, I'd have a fourth at bridge--" (Barnes, Selected Works 124) indicating the ambiguity with which she regarded Titus' women. At least they kept her company, and one is reminded of the jealousy interspersed with camaraderie that she felt for Kate in Ryder.

Dudley and Elisha begin to mock Miranda for her spinsterhood--"She stands for Virgo--just for laughs in heaven" (Barnes, Selected Works 124)--and for being British in her manners. Augusta responds, "Pay no attention to my boys, they ape their father, / Who looked down on the British with the utmost envy" (Barnes, Selected Works 125), thus introducing the conflict or opposition between the American brothers and their British relatives. They make fun of Augusta's aspiring in her youth to marry her way into a title, and they continue to mock Miranda: "I hear Miranda's all get-out in France, / And apparently a scribbler in England" (Barnes, Selected Works 125), yet when Jonathan points out that she is praised both on the continent and in England, they consider that of no importance for she is of "no credit in New York" (Barnes, Selected Works 125).

Again the conversation turns to Titus and his women, his beliefs in "free love" and "free everything," how he took the family from Beewick to America, living in a house
which he built himself called "Hobb's Ark." The name of the house seems a reference to Noah and thus a veiled reference to Biblical incest between a father and his daughters.

Augusta asks Jack why he wears an eye patch and he answers ironically, echoing "Little Red Riding Hood," "The better to see you with, madame" (Barnes, Selected Works 129). The patch, of course, keeps her from recognizing him as her son Jeremy whom she has not seen in twenty years, and, although it blocks half of his physical vision, it allows him to observe her without her realizing his identity. He explains why Miranda is dressed as she is, for having left Paris hurriedly she still wears the costume from the play in which she was appearing. The brothers continue to mock her, calling her "The Duchess" and "Queen of the Night" (Barnes, Selected Works 131), perhaps a reference to her aristocratic bearing, to her having authored Nightwood, and to Mozart's The Magic Flute. Yet they grudgingly admit some admiration for her. In Augusta's first indication of her identification with Miranda, Augusta warns the brothers, "Do not affront her; she's that part of me / I can't afford" (Barnes, Selected Works 131). They continue to wonder when Jeremy will appear and Augusta unabashedly admits that he is her favorite, saying he "can do no wrong" even if he did abandon her twenty years ago, an occurrence that she manages to blame on Miranda. Her memories of her time
with Jeremy are the happiest in her life.

Abruptly she charges Miranda, "When I am gone, Miranda, put me in a tree" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 133), a request that she will make several times during the play, keeping ever present the idea that she realizes that her death is near. In a moment of comedy, Elisha takes up the horn and plays a passage from Purcell while Dudley plays a drum, a reminder of the musical background of the family. They have all had musical training and at least on that level should know how to respond and harmonize (Curry 163). When Augusta complains that her foot hurts, Miranda comes to her, stoops down and responds to her pain by holding her foot. Still Augusta remains critical of Miranda and when Jonathan asks if she is happier in her sons she answers, "Of course, men are a pleasure. What is a woman?" "A cow, sitting on a crumpled grin," Dudley replies (Barnes, *Selected Works* 140). Suddenly noticing Miranda's rings, Augusta complains that Miranda has never given her rings. As Miranda hands the rings to Augusta (their first exchange of costume) she reminds Augusta that she has forgotten other rings she has given her. Just as Nora gave herself away constantly and carried her own betrayal money in her pocket, Dudley remarks, "It's true, Miranda gave the world away / And no one seemed to pay the least attention" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 141). Relenting, Augusta says that when she is in her grave she will remember that
Miranda held her foot, yet she adds sarcastically, "What do I owe you?" (Barnes, Selected Works 141). When Jonathan calls this treatment of Miranda unkind, Elisha responds obscenely: "There's only one kind inch on any woman--/ Between her tot and tail--/ There's kindness!" (Barnes, Selected Works 141). At this even Augusta chides him for his vulgarity, but returning to Miranda and her competition with her daughter, Augusta asks Jonathan to tell them how much more handsome than Miranda she was, but Jonathan replies, "I remember you as handsome as my niece,/ And both of you are handsome as each other" (Barnes, Selected Works 142). Thus he takes the sting out of Augusta's constant competitiveness with Miranda and reinforces what will later become their exchange of identities.

The talk turns to Titus and Elisha chides Augusta for doing exactly as Titus demanded and letting him get away with anything he wanted. Dudley bitterly recalls that when he was small Augusta held him in her arms and allowed Titus to lash him with a carriage whip, adding obscenely also that ". . . he whipped me / Before I knew him" (Barnes, Selected Works 143). They recall Augusta's accepting his behavior and scrubbing the floor while Titus entertained his ladies with ale and cakes and coffee while Victoria, Titus' mother, sat knitting, and how Titus sought to justify his polygamy with the Bible by comparing himself with Abraham. Even Augusta admits that he was a
faulty man.

Again emphasizing her identification with her daughter, Augusta says of Miranda, "She's all Augusta laid up in Miranda; / Born again to be my new account--'/ And all my candidature. / Daughter, when I die, I charge you, lay me in a tree, / I'll hop to heaven" (Barnes, Selected Works 146-147). Although she favors her sons in life, it is her daughter to whom she looks to take care of her remains after her death, ironically not knowing that her daughter will precede her in death and that she herself will cause her daughter's death.

Dudley criticizes Miranda for having left America: "As far as I am concerned, expatriate's / The same as traitor" (Barnes, Selected Works 147). Yet Dudley says "We loved the lamb--'/ Till she turned to mutton" (Barnes, Selected Works 147), the image of the lamb evoking sexual immaturity and the sacrifice to which she would be subjected, while the image of mutton connotes sexual maturity and loss of innocence. Augusta is reminded of their earlier life and recalls that "... Titus overwhelmed all but Miranda" (Barnes, Selected Works 147). Augusta and Jonathan tell how Titus first came from London with his mother Victoria in order that Titus might study the organ with Jonathan, whose musical skill was renowned. They describe Victoria in all her outrageousness, "The rage of London!" (Barnes, Selected Works 148) who presided over a salon of eclectic artists and intellectuals, ". . . free
thinker, nonconformist, mystic-- / Abolitionist, Hyde Park orator" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 149). When the description becomes a bit randy, Augusta reminds her sons "I am a grave and proper woman" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 149) to which Dudley replies "Proper! / You've pissed like a cat to hear of lechery!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 149). Augusta laments the obscenity of her sons, saying, "I who loved all things fastidious / Get me lewd men" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 150).

Returning to Titus and Victoria, Augusta remarks that "He was of the self-appointed race, American" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 152), reinforcing the American/European dichotomy, and tells how she was taken in by Victoria's talk of royalty, her exotic clothing, and her skill at procuring young women and their money for her handsome son. "She had my purse, my person, and my trust / In one scant hour" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 154). As in Ryder where Sophia had two husbands (the second a Swede who left her for another woman), so, too, in *The Antiphon* does Victoria have two husbands--the second this time is a Spaniard who left her "for a Cheapside Strumpet" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 153).

Continuing to recall Titus' days at Beewick, Augusta describes how the versatile Titus "Composed his own libretti; stuck his pigs / Sawed the gryphon up. . . . / Voiced the whooping clocks to keep his hours; / Wrote his credo, helped the cows to calve" (Barnes, *Selected Works*
Miranda recalls how in lean times Victoria supported the family by her wits and was beloved by all her grandchildren who gave her hand-made trinkets that she pinned to her dresses. Thinking always of the children "... as St. Peter shut the door, her heel / Stayed by, to let the children through" (Barnes, Selected Works 156). But Augusta remembers bitterly that Victoria knew of and sanctioned Titus' practice of polygamy. Speaking of Miranda, her second, born after Titus began his infidelity, Augusta openly says, "I called my child--/ My second child--/ A grief--" (Barnes, Selected Works 156), recalling the earlier image of Augusta looking at the half-born infant Miranda and upon realizing that the baby was a girl weeping. They begin totaling up Titus' mistresses and there are so many that they become confused about their names, but obviously the one that Elisha mentions who had visions, "The one that dad hooked off a barge in Erie" (Barnes, Selected Works 157) is Kate Careless of Ryder. Apparently Titus carried on shamelessly, for Miranda relates the incident of how Jeremy, only a toddler, found his father rolling in the grass with one wench and taking his thumb out of his mouth lisped "'Seducer'" (Barnes, Selected Works 159). Dudley relates what happened when the authorities (as in Ryder) challenged Titus.
He burned his credo, chucked up his account
And having utterly betrayed betrayal,
Turned us out like bastards, being none:
Hauled off on a stone-boat from the Cove
That he might make at least one hussy legal.
(Barnes, Selected Works 159)

To Augusta, Jonathan comments, "I never really understood
how you condoned it" (Barnes, Selected Works 159). But
Augusta protests that she was a victim of Titus' actions
and that she did her duty in bearing his children. "He
claimed himself a Saint of such day / Would sweep the
world of whores; but I believed him" (Barnes, Selected
Works 160). She adds that in those days (despite what
Zadel/Sophia/Victoria might have done) one did not leave
her husband. Illustrating the inconsistency of Titus'
beliefs and practices, Dudley tells how Titus forbade the
killing of animals on the farm but was found himself kill-
ing the cocks in the flock of chickens.

Again criticizing Miranda, Augusta says, "Who's
Miranda? / She gives her weapons to the enemy. / Look how
in magnificence defeated! / In short, I can't afford her /
She's only me" (Barnes, Selected Works 162). Yet again
she emphasizes her identity with Miranda. A few moments
later, she continues about Miranda, edging nearer the
central conflict between Miranda and Titus.
I'd say Miranda's in the ink-fish fog
Thrown off by her father, when recanting
How many years ago. She has the air,
Ruthless as the damned in heaven:
Yet in abandon of variety
She's lost the journey of her life
As does the owl the journey of his head.

(Barnes, Selected Works 163)

Though disappointed in her children, Augusta has not given up the hope that they will achieve distinction, but Elisha questions her desire to be distinguished through her children saying, "Who are you to rate a marvellous child?" (Barnes, Selected Works 164).

Dudley reminds Augusta of how she treated Miranda as a child, venting all of her frustrations on her so that Miranda felt she must be guilty of something terrible to deserve the punishment she received. He describes Miranda's cutting switches and bringing them to Augusta to beat her with just to gain her mother's attention. "You had her so convinced she was the devil, / At seven, she was cutting down the hedges, / To furnish brier to beat her to your favour; / All time since, been hunting for her crime" (Barnes, Selected Works 164).

The undeserved cruelty suffered by Miranda reminds Elisha of a yet more gruesome incident when a stray dog wandered onto the property and Titus, having Augusta bring him the love letters she had written him, instructed
Augusta to hold the dog (much as she had held Dudley while he whipped him) while Titus loaded his gun using the love letters as part of the wad and fired them into the dog, again emphasizing the discrepancy between Titus' edict that animals should not be killed (a theme carried over from Ryder) and his brutal killing of the dog (Barnes, Selected Works 162). According to Augusta the only one that escaped Titus' cruelty was the woman who died in childbirth (the one portrayed in Ryder who died like a Roman soldier on his blade impaled upon her child). Yet Miranda is forgiving enough to remember the moment of tenderness exhibited by Titus when one of his infant children died. This mirrors the description that occurs in Ryder of the death of Kate's firstborn and how Wendell tenderly dressed the dead infant for burial.

Dudley, ever the businessman, complains that Miranda may prove to be a financial burden, but Augusta protests "She never whined your purse. / What I find strange is that she is not famous. / I really thought she'd get into the papers. / She's met everyone of any consequence" (Barnes, Selected Works 168). Thus does Augusta confuse fame or notoriety with achievement. Elisha reminds Augusta how, thinking of her sons, she pushed Miranda at an early age into the role of "sole provider," but Augusta protests, "Miranda didn't need a push, she went" (Barnes, Selected Works 169). The reader is reminded of the early age at which Djuna Barnes left her family and
gained employment as a newspaper contributor in New York.

Augusta complains that Dudley and Elisha are baiting
her, and Elisha, alluding to her role as a castrating,
sharp-tongued mother, taunts, "And when she startles with
her carving knife-- / Three boy mice, see how they run!"
(Barnes, *Selected Works* 169), to which Augusta retorts,
"You'd not lose so much as one castrato / His dear weight
to bruit my case in alt; / Nor you never brought me any-
thing to flaunt!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 170). Jack,
having said he was going off to get dinner, returns with
a mutton bone which he presents to Augusta. All
references to lamb and mutton throughout the play refer
to the rape of Miranda, the "lamb" Titus chose to be a
virgin sacrifice to his "religion." The "hay-hook
scenario" is omitted from the published versions of The
*Antiphon*, but in the typescripts "there are several ver-
sions of this speech, all given by Dudley. . . . The last
two lines have been cancelled by the author in all drafts"
(Curry 56).

She's been knocked into the stubborn ever since
The hour she strove between our father and the gate
When he tried to make her mutton at sixteen--
Initiated vestal to his 'cause'!
Self-anointed Titus--Little Corporal--
Horn mad after false gods; madder still
For her wild teeth, and even wilder kicking.
And having failed in that, what did he then?
Hauled her, in a hay-hook to the barn
Left her dangling, while in the field below
He offered to give her, to the farm-hand, for a goat,--
You know, I've seen heifers dangling from a halter
Just like that, while he charged the rape-blade in. (Quoted in Curry 56-57)

Augusta bemoans the fact that her sons have not become great men: "Glory used to be the aim--now its possessions" (Barnes, Selected Works 172). Emphasizing their materialism, she predicts that after her death their wives will have her off the sheets before she is cold and the rings off her fingers before rigor mortis sets in (Barnes, Selected Works 172). Miranda chides Augusta and recalls to her brothers how she assisted in their births. Elisha jokes that he remembers that her hands were cold.

Jack and Jonathan exit, and while they are gone Dudley and Elisha don a pig's mask and an ass's mask respectively and proceed to maul, torment, and manhandle the women. Augusta, mistakenly thinking that they are playing, cries "A game! A game!" (Barnes, Selected Works 175). Dudley replies, "Want to play with baby? Going to play with baby? Who's afraid?" (Barnes, Selected Works 176). Meanwhile, Elisha taunts Miranda, "Got best rating from the bloody intellectuals?... You'll be crawling in my gutters yet... / And who can stand a beggar who
can point, / Even in her most 'distinguished' drunkenness? / Get yourself an occupation--souser!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 178). "Merchant--away with you!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 178) Miranda replies and when he threatens to rape her, weeping as he speaks, she pushes him aside saying, "Do not think to climb me, brother" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 179). Finally, Dudley takes Jack's whip and tries to make Augusta dance. "Jump, old woman, jump! jump off the world! / Be dead, be done, be modest dead, be quick!" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 180). But before the brothers can carry out any plan of murder, Jack and Jonathan return carrying a doll's house that Jack has built, an exact replica of Hobb's Ark, the house they lived in in America, thus bringing the American family home into the British ancestral home where the two houses become merged.

Augusta is lifted onto the table with the doll's house where she examines its contents, dolls which represent Titus' mistresses (seven in all) and one that is Titus himself. Seeing the size of Titus' most prized part, Augusta quips, "This size I could have jumped him, and have been / Happily unacquainted with you all" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 180). Miranda, sensing what is to come, comments, "Now has the mountain fallen on Mohammed" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 183). Jack bids Augusta look into the windows of the doll house. Looking into a bedroom she recoils, declaring, "I don't care what you've done, I
forgive me" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 184). But Jack accuses her of being an accomplice to what she sees, as Miranda describes the scene through the window; "Miranda damned, with instep up-side down, / Dragging rape-blood behind her like the snail--" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 185). Jack continues the description, "Beneath her, in a lower room, her father / Rubbed down his hands" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 185). "Who are you," Augusta asks Jack, "That you know anything?" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 185). And Jack replies, not to her question, but with an accusation that Augusta was an accomplice to the rape of Miranda.

The eye-baby now you're pregnant with
You'll carry in your iris to the grave.
You made yourself a madam by submission
With, no doubt, your apron over head,
Strewing salt all up and down the stairs
Trying to catch an heel on its last mile--
A girl who'd barely walked away sixteen--
Tipped to a traveling cockney thrice that age,
Indeed Brigid-Matilda's brother. Why?
Titus had him handy-- Barnes, *Selected Works* 185-186)

Augusta bids him stop, but Jack continues:
Though Miranda cried first, like the ewe,
'Do not let him--but if it will atone--'
Offering up her silly throat for slashing,
The jolted tongue

Blowing off the hacking caw--(Barnes,

Selected Works 186)

Augusta protests, "I did not see it! I did not hear it!" (Barnes, Selected Works 186). Jack, however, continues with his final accusation: "--So I say, between you both, you made / Of that slaughter house a babe's Bore'd!" (Barnes, Selected Works 186). At this Augusta becomes hysterical and beats on the doll house with both her hands, but Miranda helps her mother down from the table and puts her cloak about her mother's shoulders. Augusta mutters, "How I've fumbled my escape!" (Barnes, Selected Works 187), and as the group goes in to dinner as if nothing had happened, Elisha gives the ass's head to Miranda saying, "I give you our weapons" while to Jack he says, "to you/ My compliments. You pulled a trick unseats us all" (Barnes, Selected Works 187).

Miranda detains her uncle Jonathan for a moment and asks that he not join them, for she foresees trouble. She says, identifying with Augusta, "I have loved / Three sons, and one woman to the heart." When Jonathan questions, "Sons?" Miranda answers, "What else, if I am she, and she Miranda?" (Barnes, Selected Works 189). She adds, "I think you must have heard the dead unpack / Their wings before, for here's a clapping air./ But no, not yet. This is a clocked encounter. . . " (Barnes, Selected Works 189). Finally she bids him return later "And help me make of
this divided beast / An undivided bed" (Barnes, Selected Works 189).

Thus in Act Two is Augusta accused of being Titus' accomplice in all his atrocities, his whipping of the infant Dudley, the brutal killing of the dog, and most seriously the rape of Miranda.

In an undated initial draft of The Antiphon (probably written in the early 1950's), Titus himself tries to rape the sixteen-year-old Miranda in open view in the farm yard. She succeeds in fending him off with teeth and feet in a battle of perfect silence fought at the gate of the farm. Unable to have his way with her himself, Titus binds her up like a side of beef and hoists her up to hang from a rafter in the barn while he goes off to barter her virginity for a goat among the local men. A deal is struck with a farmhand named Jacobsen who is nearly sixty, and the dazed young girl is led off to an upstairs room with the farmhand and one of her brothers to stand witnesses to the rape. She is to be the first virginal sacrifice to his new religion, he tells her. The young Miranda is terrorized
but submits because she feels that her mother is acquiescing in what is happening, and so she is finally willing to do what both her parents want. It may somehow atone for the guilt she has been made to feel in the family for her very existence. The only thing that her mother does is sprinkle salt in the hallway and on the stairway so that she can know that her husband has not gone to take part in the molestation. The salt or flour is a constant in every every one of the variants of this rape tale Barnes has ever told. She and her husband remain downstairs while the rape takes place, she with her apron pulled up to cover her face, he rubbing his hands together gleefully. When the experiment is done the girl crawls from the bedroom on her hands and knees bleeding and moaning for her mother. Her young brother has been transfixed with terror at what he has been made to watch. (Field 193)

All the references connecting Miranda to a lamb would indicate that she is in every sense the scapegoat of the
family, the child upon whom undeserved suffering and
guilt is heaped. Her only desire is to atone and ulti-
mately in The Antiphon she says, "God have mercy on us
all; and may He / Forgive me my abominable innocence /
That I can't think what it is I've done / Who have not
seen my people many years, / To so estrange us" (Barnes,
Selected Works 216).

Act Two is the longest act of the play, but in the
earlier drafts it was even longer. Barnes depended much
on the advice of T. S. Eliot as she had with the editing
of Nightwood.

When Eliot told her to cut the second
act, she literally slashed her way through
it, saving only the most essential in-
formation and the best poetry. The re-
sult was one, long, intricate, complex
image after another. Such images, en-
countered for the first time without
knowledge of their original form or pro-
gressive development, can be very dis-
couraging, as many critics were later to
insist. However, read in the context
of the drafts and their development,
these images become much more accessible
and intelligible. (Curry 131-132)

The critical neglect of The Antiphon is largely the re-
sult of its difficulty and its difficulty at least in part
is the result of the cutting and "... the collective results of author, editor, and publisher trying to get the work into print" (Curry 132). Both T. S. Eliot and Edwin Muir were responsible for giving Barnes advice on the play, but it was Eliot who was responsible for insisting on the cutting (Curry 131-132).

The editing in the fourth draft may have been for the best, but the excising in the fifth was too much. Gaps appeared in the play that the uninitiated reader would be hard-pressed to fill, and it became condensed, even abbreviated to such an extent that in some passages it turned into a kind of shorthand, indecipherable for a first-time reader, impossible for a listening audience. (Curry 131)

By this time, however, Eliot was too familiar with the play to see this and Barnes was anxious for publication. Thus it went into print, gaps and all, and the critical neglect of The Antiphon is largely the result of this (Curry 3). Barnes did, however, have one final opportunity with the publication of Selected Works of Djuna Barnes in 1962 to make revisions in The Antiphon. She agreed to the publication of Selected Works largely because it gave her a chance to edit The Antiphon one last time. She made 314 changes, some for clarity, some for
simplicity, and some in direct response to comments and misinterpretations by critics. Thus the version of The Antiphon in Selected Works is Barnes' final version of the play and Barnes' preferred edition (Curry 138, 134).

Act Three opens after a time lapse of a few hours. Dinner is over and as the act begins Miranda is asleep on the reunited gryphon with the tented lace curtain dropped down from the carnival crown; "... Miranda's futile gesture of joining the gryphon's halves ... represents the temporary unification of an essentially fractured structure" (Curry 172). When Augusta and Jonathan enter, Augusta remarks "It's terrible to walk behind old children ..." (Barnes, Selected Works 191). Referring to Augusta's earlier comments that Miranda is herself, Jonathan comments, "I think it time you saw her as Miranda" (Barnes, Selected Works 191) to which Augusta replies, "I think it's time I saw me as Augusta" adding ironically, "There's the curfew bell. ... Shall I ring and wake her?" (Barnes, Selected Works 191). The entire exchange is ironic, for in the third act the identities of Augusta and Miranda will become totally merged and, rather than ringing the curfew bell to wake her, Augusta will bring it down upon Miranda's head, killing her.

Augusta inquires, "Where are the boys?" (Barnes. Selected Works 191) and is assured by Jonathan that they are asleep in the gallery above while Jack is with his horse. Miranda is awakened by their conversation and
Jonathan exits wishing Miranda goodnight. Augusta inspects the gryphon, proclaiming it "A solid beast, an excellent stage, fit for a play" (Barnes, Selected Works 192). This is one of the many references to drama or play within The Antiphon, carrying with it the metaphor of life as a drama. Miranda attempts to hurry Augusta to bed, but continuing the play motif with double meaning on the word "play," Augusta exclaims, "So let us play. The epilogue is over, / The boys asleep, and we are girls again" (Barnes, Selected Works 193). "Let's be young again and tell us of our lives" (Barnes, Selected Works 193). Emphasizing Miranda's role as an actress, Augusta implores "Come, play me daughter" (Barnes, Selected Works 193). But Miranda is in no mood for play and what follows is the "Carrion Eve" speech in which Miranda develops the theme of lost Edenic time, a mythic time when there was innocence.

There was a time when we were not related.
When I first loved thee--I say 'thee' as if
It were to use a lost endearment
That in the loss has lost the losing world--
When I first loved thee, thou wert grazing:
Carrion Eve, in the green stool, wading,
In the coarse lilies and the sombre wood;
Before the tree was in the cross, the cradle,
and the coffin,
The tragic head-board, and the victim door,
The weeper's banister, the cunning panel.
When yet the salt unspilt, the bread unbroken,
The milk unquested, unwept for, and unsprung,
You came braying for a victim lover.
The cock crew, the spur struck, and Titus Adam
Had at you with his raping-hook
And you reared back, a belly full of thumbs.

(Barnes, *Selected Works* 193-194)

For Miranda, time is divided into earthly (chronological) time and Edenic (mythic) time. "According to Miranda, earthly time begins with conception, and Edenic time ends with Birth" (Curry 19). As the end of Edenic time, birth becomes for each individual the tragic fall, born into life that must lead ultimately to death.

Miranda describes the fetus as "The balking embryo, that mischief's parcel,/ That legless flight, that gizzard brain / . . . faceless, jellied in its course, / Rolling in a palm-full of the belly's Thames / . . . And time commenced" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 194). The fetus is born, and chronological time begins.

The salt spilled, the bread broke. Unmuzzled bone

Drew on the hood of flesh, entombing laughter:
Tongues came forth, and forth the hissing milk
Its lashing noose, and snared the gaping mouth.
A door slammed on Eden, and the Second Gate,
And I walked down your leg.
(Barnes, Selected Works 194-195)

For Barnes, parents are

... partners in crime when they con-
ceive the child and betray it into birth
... life is a terrifying situation
into which the child is thrust and
through which it is expected to make its
way, while often being inexplicably
punished for its actions, sometimes for
the actions of others... a kind of
stumbling in the night... (Curry 20)

Miranda's view of the relationship between parents
and children is grim. It is a tragic fact of life ex-
pressed in The Antiphon that men and women copulate and
give birth to the next generation of sufferers. Miranda's
view is summed up in these lines: "Perambulator rolling
to the tomb; / Death with a baby in its mouth" (Barnes,
Selected Works 219). "There can be no escape from tragedy
until there is an escape from the chain of procreation.
Its history condemns the foetus before it has learned to
move a muscle" (Singer 182). Thus Miranda's choice not
to marry or reproduce is in accord with her idea that
"... the parents sin against the child in giving birth
to it..." (Curry 124). Miranda sees suffering and death
foreshadowed in birth. "Miranda, then, voices the play's dark theme: to have been born at all is disaster. Conception is murder, and all men stand condemned" (Scott 132). "Again the cycle of procreation is seen to be unending, ceaselessly repeating the loss of Eden and terror of schism or division" (Kammenstine 156). Miranda uses her own version of the

... Edenic myth as a way of understanding what is happening in her present struggles. Her vision of original happiness and sin is rather unconventional in its concept of time... but it is grounded in the accepted idea of a fall from a previous state of innocent grace. (Curry 159)

Myth, then, provides "... a point of reference for Miranda, who with Edenic myth behind, death before, gauges her life between these two conceptual poles" (Curry 159).

She sees life as a lonely, terrible journey through pain and chaos, and therefore looks forward to death as a relief. Augusta reinforces this idea by murdering her daughter, thus becoming in herself the source of both life and death. (Curry 158)

As Lionel Abel sums up the basic theme of The Antiphon, it is "... the horror of what men do to women in making
them mothers, and women do to men in giving birth to them" (465). Giving birth is presented as condemning the individual to a lifetime of suffering and death. Death, therefore, is to be welcomed because it provides an end to the misery and suffering of life.

Augusta reacts to Miranda's speech, saying, "To think I have a daughter for Inquisitor!" to which Miranda responds, "To think I had a mother should betray me!" (Barnes, Selected Works 195). Augusta accuses Miranda of being merciless and revengeful, but then her mood becomes playful again and she suggests, "Let's jump the Day of Wrath. Let us pretend./ The play is over and the boys are put to bed./ Let's play at being Miranda and Augusta" (Barnes, Selected Works 197). Again the emphasis is on the double meaning of the word play, both in the dramatic sense and in the fanciful sense. Augusta wants to pretend that they are traveling to distant lands, from Monte Carlo to Palm Beach, from Ascot to Corso for the races and to Maxime's for dinner. Then without asking Miranda's permission, she removes Miranda's shoes and exchanges them with her own and Miranda comments, "Love puts forth her foot, and in my shoes" (Barnes, Selected Works 198). But Augusta wants more pretending, fancying herself as the Empress Josephine and then as Lily Langtry. Questioning Miranda, she asks, "Was I ever princess in a legend?/ Did I sleep a hundred years?" (Barnes, Selected Works 199).
But Miranda answers, "Mother, there's no more time. All's done" (Barnes, Selected Works 199). Augusta protests "I've too much nature in me, daughter/ And you too old" (Barnes, Selected Works 200), hinting at the reversal of identities. Miranda says angrily, "... had been a man / You'd been the bloodiest villain of us all" (Barnes, Selected Works 201). Realizing her own old age and approaching death, Augusta begs mercy.

Take mercy on my prentice cries, Miranda
Leave me not so sharp, unsung, and shrill;
With autumn's savage jet my bosom brooked,
My harvest awn all down, and leaning on my hand.
The once new-risen loaves of my brimmed breast
Kissed in the busk; how bowling low they knock
Their withered acorns on my knee:
So, the phoenix runs upon the ahs,
As the Roman on his sword!
(Barnes, Selected Works 201)

Knowing that "Man owes a death to God!" (Barnes, Selected Works 202), Augusta wonders how soon her death will come. She accuses Miranda of cruelty and unkindness, but then asks Miranda's forgiveness: "Then absolve me of the mischief is Augusta" (Barnes, Selected Works 202). She complains that Miranda will tell her nothing of herself, and Miranda compares herself, as Barnes did in real life, with a Trappist monk.

The exchange of clothing continues. Augusta takes
Miranda's hat and comments:

My daughter is winged serpent, and the urn.
Some damned dark Beatitude that sits
In her heart's core, mewling like an idiot,
Cribbs her out of eminence and profit;
Sweeps her from the kindon and the general world--
And she sits by, and strokes its bloody head.

(Barnes, Selected Works 203)

The first line combines male and female sexual imagery, indicating perhaps Augusta's realization of her daughter's androgyne. She bemoans whatever it is within Miranda that keeps her from fame and financial profit and causes her to isolate herself from the public.

When Augusta addresses Miranda as "You who should have been the first born of the two" (Barnes, Selected Works 203), she is admitting that Miranda should have been her mother and that in herself Miranda has had no mother at all. Still curious about Miranda's life, Augusta asks, "Is it true that you had forty lovers?" (Barnes, Selected Works 204). Perhaps Barnes is teasing the audience, for in her younger days Barnes had affairs with many men in addition to her affair with Thelma Wood. For a moment Augusta pretends to weep, but admits that she has no more tears left, only grins; "I'm grinned away, to catch my sons' attention" (Barnes, Selected Works 204). Returning to the theme of incest and delving into the
unknown, Miranda wonders aloud what Oedipus saw after he gouged out his eyes. "They say that he who digs far down for love/ Brings up the brightest burning coal./ Be not your own pathetic fallacy, but be/ Your own dark measure in the vein,/ For we're about a tragic business, mother" (Barnes, Selected Works 205). Thus she hints of impending death.

Augusta continues to question Miranda about her life: "No man died for you?/ Nothing? No news of famous people?" (Barnes, Selected Works 206), to which Miranda responds that there is no news and no man has died. But Augusta will not be stopped, "If you won't make either of us notable,/ Or put us on the index of The Book,/ Or tell me anything of life at all,/ Then put us near to someone who's been at it" (Barnes, Selected Works 206). She ends by asking three mysterious questions. The first, "'Who is Sylvia / That all the swains adored her?" (Barnes, Selected Works 206), is an allusion to the song from Act IV of Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Next she asks, "Tell me, was there a woman, once so well beloved / She yet lies still beneath a ton in India" (Barnes, Selected Works 206) which seems a reference to the Taj Mahal. The third question involves a mermaid, "And did a legend, undersea, break water / To leap into a lover's lap?" (Barnes, Selected Works 207). Ever seeking fame, Augusta declares ". . . I would be Helen" (Barnes, Selected Works 207), apparently a reference to Helen of Troy. She joins
Miranda in her condemnation of copulation and procreation, "Fie upon the whole of love's debris, / That horrid holocaust that is the price / Of passion's seizure!" (Barnes, Selected Works 207). Speaking of Titus, Miranda calls his a madman's crusade, but Augusta says that she forgives him and that it is younger men, her sons, that now concern her. Augusta calls Titus "a self-molested man" (Barnes, Selected Works 208), but Miranda cannot forgive the default by which he betrayed his family.

The Antiphon is a verse tragedy portraying the dissolution of a modern family, and, by extension, of civilization, through the sins of past generations coupled with the blind, unthinking demands of the present generation.

(Curry 169)

The present generation cannot escape the sins of the past. In failing to answer the antiphonal response, in denying his family, Titus, "He, who for fear, denies the called response, / Denies the singing, and damns the congregation!" (Barnes, Selected Works 208209). All are "... caught in the crushing effects of the past, the extreme disorder of the present, and the rushing chaos of the future" (Curry 166).

Thus, The Antiphon is a tragedy of situation concerned with showing the undeniably strong influence of past
actions and events on the present
and predicting the failure and eventual
dissolution of modern society as a
result of its present actions on the
future. (Curry 176-177)

Referring to another betrayal, Miranda reminds
Augusta of the time she confiscated her writings and
handed them over to her brother. Still Augusta fears
Miranda's writing, "May God protect us! I wonder what
you'll write / When I am dead and gone!" (Barnes,
Selected Works 209). The irony, of course, is that
Miranda will write nothing, for it will be Augusta who
will kill her daughter and then accidentally herself.

Miranda also reminds her mother that Dudley and
Elisha tried to have her put away, "Why mother, they'd
have thrown you in the pit--/ . . . Except I put my foot
against the door" (Barnes, Selected Works 20). Begrudgingly,
Augusta admits a limited admiration of Miranda,
"You almost amounted--once. I've said it." (Barnes,
Selected Works 20). But not, Miranda retorts bitterly,
in a way that earns money.

Augusta asks "Who are you become?" (Barnes, Selected
Works 210) and Miranda calling herself a player and a
wardrobe mistress reminds Augusta of their exchange of
clothing which symbolizes the exchange or merging of
their identities. Finding herself in costume, Augusta
reverts to her playful mood, "Do let's pretend we're girls
again; let's play" (Barnes, Selected Works 210). Teasingly, Miranda says, "Then let us speak of men / And the quantity that I'm recalled by" (Barnes, Selected Works 211). Humoring her mother's folly, she says perhaps a man gave her a hundred horses. "Because you had no seat?" (Barnes, Selected Works 211) inquires Augusta; "Because I had no stable" (Barnes, Selected Works 211), replies Miranda, dryly. "Daughter,/ There's a battlement in
every woman's heart / Whereon she keeps perpetual patrol /
To dodge the man she married, for a man / Scratching in
the wall" (Barnes, Selected Works 211), Augusta confides.
Speaking further of her marriage to Titus, Augusta con-
fesses that he was never gentle or kind and that Miranda
supplemented what was lacking in their relationship.

Miranda's place in the dynamics of her parents' rela-
tionship leads ultimately to the incestuous attempt of
Titus upon his daughter.

Miranda's conception is rape, and it is
rape that the father in turn eventually
brings upon the daughter. Miranda and
Augusta become co-sufferers, sacrifices
to the Old Testament force of Original
Sin. . . . The women in turn become the
victims of the next generation of men,
of Dudley and Elisha's overt malice as
well as Jack's uncertain intentions and
machinations. (Kannenstine 156-157)
Augusta complains of Titus that he never showed any affection and that she sought to find affection from her daughter to make up for what her husband failed to provide

... I said his acts to me
Were never gentle, fond nor kind;
Nor he never held nor stroked me anywhere;
And you stood up, as in a lost equation,
As you mended such economy.

(Barnes, Selected Works 212)

Miranda replies, "And so I should indeed, had I been able,/ But metempsychosis not for asking" (Barnes, Selected Works 212), implying that she would have taken her mother's place in suffering had it been possible, "... but this incestuous alternative was not possible for her" (Scott 129). Yet, within the play, after the death of Titus, Miranda does take her mother's place as they exchange or merge identities, even offering to take her place in death: "I'd lay you in the journey of your bed, / And un-bed you, and I could, in paradise" (Barnes, Selected Works 222). Thus Miranda offers to share both life and death with her mother.

"Make me something!" (Barnes, Selected Works 212) Augusta abruptly demands, and the two women begin to circle each other, beginning in earnest the duel referred to in the play's Cautionary Note ("... their familiarity is their estrangement, their duel is in hiatus, their
weapons tempered." (Barnes, *Selected Works* 79). "Do not confuse the advent with assumption" warns Miranda in a liturgical reference, the advent being the birth of Christ and the assumption being the bodily ascent of the Virgin Mary into heaven at her death. "The Queen of Heaven, holding trust ajar / For the entrance and the exit of Good News / Was nothing similar" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 212). "How is it that women who love children / So often damn the children that they have?" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 213), Miranda adds. In the significant speech that follows, Miranda warns Augusta of the danger of their confrontation:

Rebuke me less, for we are face to face
With this the fadged up ends of discontent:
But tie and hold us in that dear estrangement
That we may like before we too much lose us.

As the blacksmith hammers out his savage metal,
So is the infant hammered to the dance.
But if not wrapped in metric, hugged in discipline,

Rehearsed in familiarity reproved;
Grappled in the mortise of the ritual,
And turning in the spirit of the play.

Then equilibrium will be the fall;
Abide it. (Barnes, *Selected Works* 213)

This has been the story of Miranda's life, the discontent, the relationship with her mother composed of
their estrangement, the discipline undeserved, constantly reproved, but as they reach their equilibrium, their exchange and merging of identities, will come their fall, a prediction of their deaths. Realizing that Miranda has her identity, Augusta asks, "In what pocket have you my identity? / . . . I cannot find me" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 213).

Next comes Miranda's "antiphon speech" that sums up the drama's theme and more specifically predicts their deaths:

Where the martyr'd wild fowl fly the portal
High in the honey of cathedral walls,
There is the purchase, governance and mercy.
Where careful sorrow and observed compline
Sweat their gums and mastics to the hive
Of whatsoever stall the head's heaved in--
There is the amber. As the high plucked banks
Of the viola rend out the unplucked strings below--

There is the antiphon.
I've seen loves so eat each other's mouth
Till that the common clamour, co-intwined,
Wrung out the hidden singing in the tongue
Its chaste economy--there is the adoration.
So the day, day fit for dying in
Is the plucked accord. (Barnes, *Selected Works* 214)
"Would you call a plague of absence, company?" (Barnes, Selected Works 214) Augusta responds, to which Miranda replies "Yes." "We admire each other in our cruel way" (Barnes, Selected Works 214) admits Augusta.

Speaking metaphorically of her own treatment by her family, Miranda complains that she had not been "slain upon the altar" (Barnes, Selected Works 215), a fitting sacrifice but "Scotched by the sword her people snatched / From the gate of Eden, for a whip / To beat her, reeling like an headless cock" (Barnes, Selected Works 215) the sword a phallic symbol and the headless cock recalling Titus' slaughter of the cocks. She describes her "bloody head" her "mouth agape, / Lashing at the lattice with her paws--" (Barnes, Selected Works 215).

Expanding the violent family imagery to include the "family" of Christianity, Miranda proclaims, "I've seen my people set the canine tooth / Into the Host; / I've heard them lapping at the wound" (Barnes, Selected Works 216) reducing the transubstantiation of the mass into base cannibalism.

Augusta blames Miranda for the loss of her beloved Jeremy, and Miranda, who is always blamed for whatever goes wrong, declares that Doomsday will find Augusta still pursuing her "Crying 'J'acuse!'" (Barnes, Selected Works 217) and pulling her hair at the root. They start to ascend the stairs, Miranda in front fending off Augusta who follows. Miranda spread wide her skirt to keep
Augusta from getting past her. Augusta is determined that Miranda will not keep her from her sons, while Miranda is protecting Augusta from the harm the sons intend.

Augusta threatens, "You, who have always been too fond of death, / Will soon be as nothing as your mother!" (Barnes, Selected Works 218). But to Miranda death is no threat; she exclaims, "Ah, the gauntlet in the gift / I've always been obliged to death, indeed. / It is the rate in everything I do" (Barnes, Selected Works 218). According to Miranda's values, the way that one faces death is the ultimate measure of one's worth.

Augusta pushes at Miranda, and when she hears Elisha and Dudley making their escape, she orders Miranda out of the way. But still Miranda tries to keep Augusta back until the danger she senses is past and asks,

Is it really possible that you don't know
That your sons have come to hunt you
down?...

I heard my brothers move through price of
pine
To a bargain-burning on a shovel...
You have such sons
Would mate the pennies on a dead man's eyes
To breed the sexton's fee. (Barnes, Selected Works 220-221)

The audience hears Dudley and Elisha scuffling away
in their departure and Augusta and Miranda have now pro-
gressed to the farther side of the landing to begin their
symbolic descent. Realizing that she is being abandoned
by her sons, Augusta orders Miranda out of her way. But
Miranda responds, "Stay with me. They left you long ago"
(Barnes, Selected Works 221). Augusta refuses, but again
Miranda begs, "Then stay with me and Uncle Jonathan"
(Barnes, Selected Works 222) offering to her mother the
sacrifice involved in sharing her life. Augusta and
Miranda have reached the bottom of the stairs, and a blast
of a horn makes Augusta realize that Dudley and Elisha
are in the car and are driving off without her. Taking
the curfew-bell she beats it crying "Stop them! Stop them!
You let them get away! / It's your fault! You-you-you!"
(Barnes, Selected Works 222). Again as in her youth
Miranda is blamed by Augusta for all that has gone wrong
with her life. Miranda tries to calm Augusta, but Augusta
cannot be comforted and continues to blame Miranda for
the loss of her sons. "You are to blame, to blame, you
are to blame-- / Lost--lost--lost, lost--" (Barnes,
Selected Works 223), she cries as she pulls at the bell
causing it to fall on Miranda and on herself. The two
women fall in death together upon the gryphon, the
symbol of unity, and, as they fall, they pull down the
curtains and the gilt crown upon them.

When Augusta brings the curfew bell down on Miranda
and herself it is a fitting symbolic end. Their falling
across the gryphon symbolizes their unity in a "love-death," perhaps ". . . the true antiphon of the play. Death, it is suggested, is not the calamity; life is" (Scott 131). In bringing death to Miranda and to herself Augusta has brought them peace. It helps make up for the fact that she initially gave Miranda life, the source of all human suffering. Fittingly the curfew bell tolls the end of their lives and their suffering as well as the end of the action of the play.

When the ringing has stopped, Jonathan and Jack enter. Jonathan recognizes Jack as Jeremy and asks, "What's done, Jeremy?" (Barnes, Selected Works 223). "Why everything's done, uncle" (Barnes, Selected Works 223), Jack replies, indicating that the action of the play, the "clocked encounter" between Augusta and Miranda is over. Jonathan asks if both are dead, and Jack affirms that they are. He says of Miranda, "She'd not defend herself. But could I know / Which would be brought to child-bed of the other?" (Barnes, Selected Works 223). Again we have the confusion of identities, for it is unclear even in death which is the mother and which is the daughter, implying in the incest motif that indeed Miranda has taken on Augusta's role.

Jonathan asks Jack why he did it and Jack, refusing responsibility and emphasizing the confusion of identities, answers,
Am I my father
That I should know what price the token price
That cashing in the utmost treasure would
exact?

This is the hour of the uncreate;
The season of sorrowless lamenting:

. . . . . . . . .
So I, who thought to medicine contumely
With a doll's hutch--that catches villains!--
Find I've breathed up disaster and myself.
Say I was of home so utterly bereft,
I dug me one, and pushed my terror in.
Stand back, uncle. (Barnes, Selected Works
223-224)

With this Jack leaves the scene, and Jonathan is left
alone to take care of the bodies.

Clearly, Jack whose intentions were good--to catch
villains--the villains of the present, Dudley and Elisha,
as well as the villains of the past, Titus and Augusta,
has inadvertently caused the death of his beloved sister,
an outcome that he did not intend yet one he should have
anticipated when he said of her, "she will undo herself"
(Barnes, Selected Works 114). Unwilling to confront his
brothers and his mother directly, he was unwilling to
take direct responsibility for the accusations that,
through his invention of the doll's house, he makes. He
claims that he is not like Titus, but ultimately he is like Titus in his refusal to take responsibility for what his actions, however well intended, have wrought. All has gone awry but rather than accept responsibility, he, like Titus before him, walks away from the consequences of his actions and insists that he is blameless. Jonathan, the ever-faithful steward of Burley, is left to deal with the consequences that all the brothers have abandoned.

As is evident in the passages from The Antiphon quoted above, the language of the play, often described as Elizabethan, is undeniably difficult and presents a stumbling block to any first-time reader who seeks to understand the drama. No one who writes of The Antiphon fails to mention the unusualness of its language, its most prominent feature. In this, her most difficult work, it becomes evident that Barnes uses language to conceal as much or more than she uses language to reveal. If Alan Singer is right that what Djuna Barnes does with metaphor in Nightwood is to strain the balance between vehicle and tenor to such an extent that it becomes what Derrida terms catachresis, then what she does with her metaphorical language in The Antiphon is to so contort its components that the language is practically absolved of its communicative property. "Indeed, part of the difficulty encountered in reading The Antiphon arises from the unusual and strained use of metaphor and from the rapid
succession of apparently unrelated figures. . ." (Scott 135).

No critic or reviewer has failed to note the complexity of *The Antiphon*'s language, and once the reader confronts Miranda's complex lines in the opening of the play she realizes that Barnes is making no ordinary use of language. One must concede that the language of *The Antiphon* is extremely difficult. A first reading of the play produces more puzzlement than understanding.

The language of *The Antiphon* is demanding for two principal reasons. It is largely informed by the diction and vocabulary of Shakespeare, and it is, as well, metaphysical in its conceits. The strained, unusual metaphors, drawn from apparently unrelated sources are demanding. . . . But the language of this play is made even more demanding by the author's evident indifference to the conventions of modern speech.

(Scott 137)

The critical responses range from Marie Ponsot's "... [I]t is a joy and an excitement to read. The theme, the persons, the decor are all matter for style. And what a style! It is English in a cauldron, kept at a faultlessly controlled boil. . . (Ponsot 48) to Donna Gerstenberger's complaint that "... the passion and
feeling of the play are lost in the intensity and difficulty of the verse. " (122). Much of the criticism of the verse is focused on whether its difficulty makes it "unplayable," unfit for the stage. Lionel Abel in "Bad by North and South" was perhaps the first to voice this objection. He is critical of verse drama in general, saying

The Antiphon is a perfect example of what is wrong with this kind of play. . . . You get the impression that each character is trying to make a poem of his or her feelings; no one is swept into speech by action or emotion. Now who wants to go to the theater to watch people writing poetry?

Abel 461) He also complains that the characters neither talk nor listen to each other. "Each one is intent on subtilizing and distilling his own thought and feeling into a verbal expression adequate to the author's norms of rhetoric, and these are not at all dramatic norms" (Abel 462). As a result there is no proper dialogue, he objects. One character's words have little effect on the others who are too exhausted by their own poetic efforts to listen. Furthermore, Abel protests "... no human being would ever talk like that . . . it would be impossible for even the most intelligent audience to decipher the meaning of
these lines when hearing them spoken on the stage" (Abel 464). "They would have to know the play by heart to hear it--that is to see it--for the first time!... A really good dramatic work should reveal itself most essentially when produced" (Abel 464). Certainly The Antiphon demands more intense engagement and effort than a typical American theater patron might be willing to give. It would require the fortitude of an opera audience, able to enjoy productions without a full knowledge of the language. Yet seeing the action of the play would add a dimension that reading cannot provide, and only a production of The Antiphon could prove whether those who call it "unplayable" are right or wrong.

Still there are many who agree with Abel's assessment. Richard Eberhart in "Outer and Inner Verse Drama" classifies The Antiphon as an example of inner verse drama, in which language is more prominent than plot.

Inner verse drama is verse drama in which the originality of English poetry, the peculiar richness of tongue given to or discovered by an originator, outweighs the plot and action of the play. The plot is embedded in linguistic contrivances and devices, an amalgam of splendid, hard-cut, extravagant, exciting, bizarre evocations performing in endless weavings, a precise and notable verbal texture.
One would enjoy the taste of the language first, and be most conscious of it; the story, the problems of the play and their resolution, would constitute an essential but secondary awareness. (Eberhart 618)

Eberhart concludes that *The Antiphon* is such a drama, saying that the language Barnes uses in the play "... would flabbergast an ordinary, cultivated reader, give pause to a brave lexicographer. ... It is this extraordinary poetic language by which she will be known ... the art-irradiated artificial talk" (Eberhart 619). He agrees that the work is more poem than play and not really suited for production (Eberhart 620). Dudley Fitts in his review concurs, stating, "It is scarcely a play: one cannot imagine it on any stage this side of 'Choas and Old Night'; but it is dramatic poetry of a curious and sometimes high order" (Fitts 22).

Kathleen Raine in "Lutes and Lobsters" complains of its lack of dramatic viability.

But the speeches of the characters are never, in the true sense, dramatic, shaped by a living emotion. For all the sombre violence of imagery, they are aggregates of fancy, not imaginative expression proceeding from an inner unity of condition or thought.
The characters rave, but they do not convince us that they feel their ravings with any immediacy. Fanciful in the highest degree, Miss Barnes, fails, within the meaning of Coleridge's definition, to be imaginative. (Raine 175)

Yet despite her complaints against the dialogue, Raine concludes, "Nevertheless, it is a work of a very great distinction. We shall not see its like again" (175).

According to James Burnes Singer, "A Daughter for Inquisitor," Barnes uses the language of The Antiphon to alienate her audience:

Archaic often, intense always, concise, mannered, conceited, even a philologist would find difficulty in understanding her diction at first reading and it is quite inconceivable that any actor could convey her gist to an audience that had not spent many hours in studying the text. (182)

Yet Singer ends his review with a bit of grudging sexist praise:

The Antiphon, because of its uncompro-mising language is even less likely than Nightwood to prove popular, but it is probable there will always be one or two
eccentrics who think that it gives its
author the first place among women who
have written verse in the English
language. (182)

Despite the critics' arguments that it is unplayable
and as drama simply does not work, The Antiphon has been
produced, not in English, but in Swedish, translated by
Dag Hammarskjold and Karl Ragnar Gierow. It opened in
February, 1961 at the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Stockholm
and the reviews indicate that it was well received
(Kannerstine 152). And there are those who would like to
see it performed in English. James Reeves, despite his
difficulty accepting as real the modern character that
utters lines such as Barnes wrote, is one who thinks to
the contrary of most that The Antiphon is "... intended
for the stage" (331). "It would be helpful," he adds,
"to see what happens as well as read it silently from the
printed page" (Reeves 331). I can only concur. Seeing
the play performed might mitigate much of the difficulty
one encounters when reading the play for the first time.

Although most critics call the language of The
Antiphon archaic, comparing it to Shakespeare or Jacobean
drama, Howard Nemerov considers Barnes' "treatment of
language as an independent value" (Nemerov 88) one of the
elements of the play that he says characterizes it as
distinctly modern. Recalling Derrida's linking of
catachresis with "'the use of a sign by violence, force
or abuse with the imposition of a sign on a sense not yet having a proper sign in language" (Quoted in Singer 58), Nemerov speaks of the violence of Barnes' use of language and

... dense compaction of words ... constantly taking us away from immediate action, away from narrative, away from the solidity of things ordered and involving us instead in a dimension specifically poetic rather than dramatic, a complicated vast web of relation in which the threads are spun among dissolving objects. ... (Nemerov 91)

It is the web of metaphor upon which The Antiphon is so self-consciously spun. The metaphors used by Barnes in The Antiphon are no ordinary metaphors. As in the case of catachresis, the relationship between vehicle and tenor is strained and skewed. For example, there is Miranda's description of her own birth:

... Unmuzzled bone
Drew on the hood of flesh, entombing laughter:
Tongues came forth, and forth the hissing milk
Its lashing noose, and snared the gaping mouth.
A door slammed on Eden, and the Second Gate,
And I walked down your leg.

(Barnes, Selected Works 194-195)
Within the destabilized trope, the complementarity of tenor and vehicle is undermined. The vehicle is no longer comfortably assimilable within the scope of the originally prefigured tenor. Thus, instead of nourishing the literal intentionality of the tenor, this vehicle declares its own purpose within the discourse. The vehicle usurps the contextual ground of the trope by proliferating itself, and so the univocality of the generating sign is lost in the multiplicity of its dissemination.
(Singer 173)

When we read lines such as these which describe Miranda's androgyny and her failure to achieve distinction and fortune according to Augusta's desire,

My daughter is winged serpent, and the urn.
Some damned dark Beatitude that sits
In her heart's core, mewing like an idiot,
Cubs her out of eminence and profit;
Sweeps her from the kingdom and the general world--
And she sits by, and strokes its bloody head.

(Barnes, Selected Works 203)
we realize that we are not in the presence of ordinary metaphor, but rather the violent and strained catachresis of which Derrida speaks.

A second element that Nemerov points to as modern is what he calls "a breaking up of surfaces; a destruction of the conventional sequences and coherencies of 'plot'; a return to something of the 'insanity' of Greek tragedy..." (Nemerov 88). The breaking up of surfaces reminds one of the concept of spatial form that Joseph Frank attributed to Nightwood, linking it to modern cubism. More intriguing, however, is Nemerov's linking The Antiphon with Greek tragedy.

The progression of the play, the external order of its coming to pass, suggests close comparison with Greek forms: after the prologue of Act I, Act II consists of a series of agons and an epiphany, Act III of a pathos, sparagmos and threnody. The theme is that of the curse upon the house.

(Nemerov 88)

Nemerov calls the curse "that wound in nature, ab illo tempore..." and says that ". . . the tragic flaw is neither more nor less than life itself" (Nemerov 88-89). "The doom on the house is allegorically the fall of civilization . . . the pathos of Augusta and Miranda in Act III, is, as it were, the lament of Eve looking back
upon the centuries" (Nemerov 90). "Morally, the play represents the soul seeking life and finding death, and finding death a mercy" (Nemerov 90). Furthermore, The Antiphon is reminiscent of Greek tragedy in its depiction of the disintegration of a family and its treatment of incest.

Another aspect that links The Antiphon with Greek tragedies is Miranda's role as scapegoat. It is a role that she not only plays within the context of the play, but one that she has played in the entire family saga. In Act II, Dudley recounts how the child Miranda was beaten by her mother. She never knew her "crime," only that it is her destiny to be the one that is punished and suffers. Unconsciously in search of a companion in her own suffering, Augusta encouraged Miranda's feelings of guilt. Miranda discovered that she could gain attention and at times even momentary affection from her mother by bringing her switches to be beaten with. "The strange, twisted relationship between mother and daughter continued to grow" (Curry 198). We find its full flowering in The Antiphon, yet by the time of the drama Miranda realizes that her mother has betrayed her and accuses her of allowing her to be sacrificed to her father's egocentric idea of religion. Ironically, however, the last moments of The Antiphon find Miranda continuing to sacrifice herself, offering to share her life with her mother and ultimately sharing her death.
According to René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, the victim must be marginal (13). As the only girl in a family of brothers and as the daughter of a woman who values only her sons, Miranda's marginality is assured. Also, her father is a man who views women as sexual receptacles, and he views his daughter as no exception. The sacrifice of her virginity, as described previously, he first attempted himself but ultimately was only able to experience vicariously when the actual rape was carried out by a surrogate.

Miranda was fully aware of the sacrificial nature of the rape. Jack's description of her cries and desire for atonement make this clear. Miranda is described as like a ewe. Ironically, rather than substituting the animal for the human, here we have the human substituted for a traditional sacrificial animal. It is her hymen rather than her throat that she offers up for slashing, but the result, the spilling of blood, is the same. Nor realizing the permanent inevitability of her position in the family as sacrificial victim, she hopes that submitting to the will of her father (and her mother, who acts as his accomplice) will "atone" for whatever she must be guilty of to make her parents abuse her so. Like most abused children, she assumes that her previous beatings and the violent rape to which she is subjected must be caused by her being guilty of some terrible crime. She believes that if she can only atone for her "sin" the abuse will
stop. The cruel irony is that the abuse of the child in families in which one child is singled out as the scapegoat victim is totally without reason. While it should be pointed out that on one occasion Dudley was abused also (when Augusta held Dudley in her arms and allowed Titus to whip the child) this was the result of Titus' misguided effort to teach his children obedience. There is no more rationale to the sacrifice of Miranda than there is to Titus' brutal killing of the dog; both are sacrificed to Titus' egotistical folly. Yet the sacrifice of Miranda by her father is in the past. What is evident in the course of The Antiphon is that in the present of the play Miranda continues to be the family scapegoat for all except Jack, who hopes to reveal the sick dynamics of the family's treatment of Miranda by causing the past to come alive in the replica of Hobb's Ark that he introduces in Act II.

In Violence and the Sacred, Girard writes about the pharmakon and the pharmakos. The pharmakos is the sacrificial victim who absorbs all the communal violence and evil of a community before he is ritually killed (Girard 287). Pharmakon, on the other hand, is a Greek word that denotes "... both poison and the antidote for poison ... any substance capable of perpetuating a very good or very bad action, according to the circumstances and the dosage" (Girard 95). Girard refers to Derrida's
discussion of the *pharmakon* in *Dissemination*. "The Platonic *pharmakon,*" Girard says, "functions like the human *pharmakos* and leads to similar results (296).

In "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida also explains that *pharmakon* "acts as both remedy and poison" (*Dissemination* 70). Plato relates writing, painting, and any form of mimesis to the *pharmakon* (Derrida, *Dissemination* 97). In *The Antiphon*, the replica of Hobb's Ark that Jack makes and into whose windows Augusta is asked to look and sees enacted through the tiny bedroom window the rape of Miranda is a type of *pharmakon*. A magical piece of machinery that can recreate the past it provides, perhaps, a reference to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as does Miranda's name. Brother, rather than father, Jack will play Prospero to Miranda, but instead of bringing about a marriage and reconciliation, all that his efforts will bring about will be death. His intentions were good, to catch villains, but the *pharmakon* rather than remedy, has turned to poison and led to death. As Jack says in his final speech, "So I, who thought to medicine contumely / With a doll's hutch--that catches villains!--/ Find I've breathed up disaster and myself" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 224). The word "medicine" emphasizes all the more the role of the doll's house as *pharmakon*. Similarly, the *pharmakon* is related to magic, wizardy, medicine, and poison by Plato (Derrida, *Dissemination* 130). Clearly, Jack intended the doll's house as "good" medicine that
would flush out into the open the evil of the past, would purge the past, and would force Augusta to accept her part of the responsibility for what happened. Thus the pharmakon may be both painful and good for one at the same time. "Good" medicine is frequently painful or unpleasant (Derrida, Dissemination 99). But in The Antiphon Jack's curative procedure produces the opposite of the desired result. As the two brothers, Dudley and Elisha, were plotting the deaths of Augusta and Miranda, comment to Jack, "You pulled a trick unseats us all" (Barnes, Selected Works 187). Jack has unintentionally created conditions that will lead to the deaths of the two women and has saved his brothers the trouble of murdering them. Jack makes his accusation to Augusta: "--So I say, between you both, you made / Of that slaughter house a babe's Bordel" (Barnes, Selected Works 186). But Augusta rejects all responsibility. Her rejection of responsibility is the equivalent of Titus' failure to respond when he abandoned his family. Augusta wants not responsibility but escape, escape through the lives of her children or escape through fantasy. She attempts both but finds little or only momentary satisfaction.

By bringing the past alive in the present, Jack may have reawakened old conflicts and reopened old wounds. Whether the duel of the third act would have taken place if there had been no doll's house, whether the bringing
together of the two women would have been enough to pro-
voke their conflict is impossible to say. Perhaps Jack
is not to blame (as he asserts at the end of the play);
perhaps, instead of a bad effect, his medicine had no
effect at all and they would have duelled to the death
anyway.

Yet, despite the conflict contained in the third act,
it opens with symbolic unity. Miranda has pulled together
the two halves of the gryphon (earlier sawed apart by
Titus, the destroyer of unity) to form a bed for her
mother and herself. This may be more significant than it
seems at first glance. The gryphon itself is symbolic;

. . . this mythic figure, half eagle,
half lion, relates to Dante's encounter
with the gryphon in canto 31 of the
Purgatorio, 'that beast/Which in two
natures one sole person is' . . . .
The allusion possibly extends to the
car that the gryphon fastens to the
barren tree in the subsequent canto,
causing it to flower. . . . (Kannerstine
149)

According to Cirilo's A Dictionary of Symbols, the gryphon
with a front half of an eagle and the rear half of a lion
with a serpentine tail was considered a benificent
uniting of two solar animals.
The griffin . . . is always to be found as the guardian of the roads to salvation, standing beside the Tree of Life . . . . From the psychological point of view it symbolizes the relationship between psychic energy and cosmic force. In mediaeval Christian art . . . the griffin is very common, being associated with signs which tend toward ambivalence, representing for instance, both Saviour and Antichrist. (Cirlot 128)

Augusta identifies Miranda with the symbolism of the gryphon when she says, "My daughter is winged serpent, and the urn" (Barnes, Selected Works 203).

By pulling the two halves of the gryphon together, Miranda has restored the unity that her father destroyed when he sawed the gryphon in half. Also by making preparations to share her bed with her mother, Miranda is indicating on her part a truce in the hostilities that have separated them. It is later as Act III progresses and Miranda becomes increasingly vexed with Augusta that Miranda's temper will flare and she will lash out at her mother in bitter accusation.

René Girard points out that at the center of all dramatic tragedy is the dialogue of opposition, "... the fateful confrontation during which the two
protagonists exchange insults and accusations with increasing earnestness and rapidity" (44). "The adversaries match blow for blow, and they seem so evenly matched that it is impossible to predict the outcome of the battle" (Girard 44). The weapons in _The Antiphon_ are words, but the battle between mother and daughter ends in death. Although _The Antiphon_ is unique in its language, the major conflict it presents is like that of many tragedies. "The more a tragic conflict is prolonged, the more likely it is to culminate in a violent mimesis; the resemblance between the combatants grows ever stronger until each presents a mirror image of the other" (Girard 47). In the third act of _The Antiphon_ as the tragic conflict between mother and daughter progresses, it becomes evident by the symbolic exchanges of clothing between the two women that they are becoming mirror images. Finally, Miranda has become Augusta and Augusta has become Miranda. Their duel reminds one of Jack's earlier image of the sword swallower who lunges at the hidden internal enemy. Having become each other they have internalized the enemy. Girard comments further about the growing resemblance of the combatants: "The destruction of differences is particularly spectacular when the hierarchical distance between the characters . . . is great--between father and son, for instance" (47). It is no less spectacular when the difference and hierarchical distance is between mother and daughter.
Order, peace, and fecundity depend on cultural distinctions; it is not these distinctions but the loss of them that gives birth to fierce rivalries and sets members of the same family . . . at one another's throats. (Girard 49)

Yet the obliteration of distinction between Augusta and Miranda is one of the most striking elements of *The Antiphon*.

Alone in the third act in the night where waking distinctions dissolve . . . the two reach the plane of metaphor, where Augusta is Miranda and Miranda is Augusta, familiarity in estrangement. As women they are estranged from the universe as a totality. As mother and daughter, they are at the same time one and separate. (Kannestine 157).

"As mother and daughter intermix possessions and identities, each is on the way to becoming the objectified Self of the other" (Scott 125). "Mother and daughter are by now in completely changed costumes; for Augusta now has the hats, boots, cloak and rings of Miranda. Thus, as the two women begin circling each other in mounting hostility, each becomes symbolically the other's lost identity" (Scott 130).
Miranda becomes mother to her own mother, thereby assuming responsibility for her own making, her own growth, herself. But Augusta accidentally, for she is incapable of real choice, kills them both. The two women either complete or cancel out their communication in death. (Ponsot 48)

Act III consists of a lyrical battle between mother and daughter. Augusta shows yet another aspect of her personality by becoming a frightened lonely child in the presence of Miranda's angry maternal love. Miranda finally reveals herself fully, accusing and excusing Augusta, whose thoughtless instinctual drives resulted in Miranda's birth and the beginning of the daughter's unhappiness. . . . the women try to soothe their own deep wounds while defending themselves from one another.

It proves impossible. (Curry 183)

As Augusta with her fantasies and fairy tales regresses to a child-like state, Miranda is forced to become the responsible adult, the mother to her own mother. It is in her final attempt to protect her mother from the
treachery of her brothers that she is for the last time accused by her mother of trying to come between Augusta and her sons.

Accidentally killed by her mother who rings down the curfew bell, killing them both, Miranda is the sacrificial victim to her mother's folly just as in her earlier rape she had been sacrificed to her father's folly. Miranda is the *pharmakos*, the human, sacrificial embodiment of the *pharmakon*. Like Jack, she would cure what has gone wrong with the family. She enacts her cure when she tries to keep her mother from her murderous sons and asks her to share a life with her at Beewick. But her solution to the family crisis is rejected. Her mother assaults her and ultimately kills her. In bringing about death, the *pharmakon* has turned from remedy to poison, and Miranda who offered to sacrifice her life by sharing it with her mother is sacrificed by her mother, the sacrifice of a daughter's love rejected to gain the love of sons who have rejected her.

As medicine or potential cure, the *pharmakon* cannot be placed in the binary dichotomy of good or bad.

If the *pharmakon* is 'ambivalent,' it is because it constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, the movement and the play that links them among themselves, reverses them or makes one side cross over into the
other (soul/body, good/evil, inside/ outside, memory/forgetfulness, speech/ writing, etc.). . . . The pharmakon is the movement, the locus, the play: (the production of) difference. It is the difference of difference. . . . Contradictions and pairs of opposites are lifted from the bottom of this diacritical, differing, deferring reserve. (Derrida, Dissemination 127)

The ceremony of the pharmakos is thus played out on the boundary line between inside and outside. . . . The origin of difference and division, the pharmakos represents evil both introjected and projected. Beneficial insofar as he cures--and for that, venerated and cared for--harmful insofar as he incarnates the powers of evil--and for that, feared and treated with caution. (Derrida, Dissemination 133)

In the language of The Antiphon we find catachresis, which Derrida regards as a deconstructive form of metaphor, and, in the conflict of the play, we find the concept of the pharmakon, which Derrida regards as deconstructive in its transcendence of dichotomy. Thus
we see Barnes using tools that Derrida would later associate with his concept of deconstruction.

Ironically, in *The Antiphon* the *pharmakos* is a writer, but to her mercenary brothers her writings are of no value. According to the standards of capitalism presented in the play, that which is not of monetary value is of no value at all.

*The Antiphon* speaks out against the standards of the marketplace, the dominance of clock time, and the illusion of recorded history. Its effort to get back to a lost reality is intense enough to risk obscurity and ambiguity. (Kannenstine 159)

The two brothers suggest, visually, a time-ridden, wasteful self-indulgence. . . . The American way of life with its preoccupations with time, money, and power sustains in the two brothers Miss Barnes's most severe indictment. (Scott 123)

Only American values matter according to the brothers, so the fact that Miranda has achieved fame as an actress in France and as a writer in England is unimportant. She has not achieved fame in New York, and that is all that counts (Scott 124). Augusta had hoped to achieve greatness
through her sons by mothering greatness, but she is disappointed in her sons' greed and the fact that they prefer money to greatness (Scott 126). Thus The Antiphon is critical of the American capitalists "with their ticker tapes and totals" (Barnes, Selected Works 90). Most importantly, Dudley and Elisha, the representatives of capitalism, American values are portrayed as a pig and an ass in the masks they put on in the second act when they harass Augusta and Miranda. They are portrayed as greedy, vulgar brutes (Raine 174).

In The Antiphon, American and capitalist values are linked. Opposing American and capitalist values are European values, as reflected in the attitudes of the other characters. To Dudley and Elisha, an "expatriate's / The same as a traitor" (Barnes, Selected Works 147). Thus do they judge Miranda and Jeremy. On the side of European values there is appreciation of craftsmanship and a reverence for things from the past, such as Jeremy's doll's hutch which is hand made as is all the furniture at Burley.

Augusta, Miranda, Jack, and Jonathan represent various aspects of European culture... Jack and Miranda are artists... absorbed in the past. They value its objects, such as the gryphon and the doll house, because of
what they represent. (Curry 154)
Augusta indicated her value for objects of the past and
memories associated with them. She and Jonathan share a
love for the traditions of the past. "The characters who
respect European culture possess a greater awareness of
their world; they have a higher consciousness and see
themselves in relation to history and civilization in ways
the Americans do not" (Curry 155)

The opposition of Dudley and Elisha, the Americans,
to the other characters depicts the opposition of the two
modes of society, "... the new, clever, boisterous,
iconoclastic, self-appointed, self-anointed American versus
the aged, ritualistic, artistic, highly-structured, formal,
and weary European" (Curry 155). To Dudley and Elisha,
... the past is only important for
what it can give them in material
wealth, and the future will be what
they make it. Their frame of
reference involves the accumulation
of wealth and power through immediate
action, and precludes the contem-
plation of art, beauty, or history
for its own sake or for what it can
teach. (Curry 159-160)

They are also not conscious of religion or tradition as
being a way to order reality (Curry 160). Dudley and
Elisha get what they want, the death of their mother
and sister, without having to be responsible. They escape, literally, on the boat to America. According to Linda Curry, the outcome of the cultural opposition in The Antiphon is that "the crass shall inherit the earth, at least what is left of it" (Curry 155).

Responsibility, taking responsibility for one's actions, and response, the response that one person makes to another or others, whence the title, The Antiphon, is crucial to the play and is the theme that Barnes stresses.

The word 'antiphon' means answer or response. In its original form an antiphon was a ritualistic chant or song in which the audience took part by answering the speaker; the Latin high mass of Roman Catholicism exemplifies the basic antiphonal structure. In its broader meaning the word has come to signify any kind of answering voice or verbal response, and thus includes the idea of conversation, or verbal exchange.

Inter-communication among groups and between individuals is the essential human need explored and described in The Antiphon. . . . In the answering voice, the articulated response of one human to another, lies the secret of humanity's continued existence on this
planet; and in the lack of it, the deadening silence that occurs when there is no response, lies the sign of impending disaster.

The play's title thus stresses the importance of language both as a means of inter-communication among the characters and as the essential medium of the author's communication with the audience. (Curry 160-161)

In light of the above it is extremely ironic that The Antiphon is faulted by so many critics for its failure to communicate or the difficulty with which it communicates. As noted earlier, some critics charge that Barnes uses the language of The Antiphon to alienate her audience (Singer 182; Kannenstine 141). Others insist that the characters do not respond to each other but remain pre-occupied with their own problems (Abel 462). It is true that, as Nemerov asserts, The Antiphon treats "... language as an independent value..." (Nemerov 91), drawing attention to the language itself (Kannenstine 142). According to James Scott, Barnes' use of language in The Antiphon...

... implies the thesis that literature exists quite outside of time and the fashions of the moment. The language of fine literature, she seems
to suggest, has nothing to do with colloquial speech; it may, in fact, be an absolute. Although the action of the play occurs in a modern world torn by World War II, the play's language suggests that the same characters could have existed in the same interrelations at any time during the past four hundred years. (Scott 137)

Furthermore, according to Scott, even the artist, Miranda, has no power;

... the artist's productions are exercises in futility. He or she has been stripped of important motivation to 'communicate' ... the audience to which The Antiphon is directed has been narrowed since it no longer matters whether the human race can understand its artists; the destruction is complete. Scott 132)

I, however, do not think that Barnes regarded The Antiphon as an exercise in futility. According to Linda Curry, Barnes wanted The Antiphon to be beautiful.

The poetry of The Antiphon is its single most important element. Through its language and imagery the play gets its universal qualities, the broadened
meaning that allows it to become a statement about the human condition. Barnes wrote in verse because she felt it would be the best way to achieve universal application, layered meaning, and beauty. (Curry 165)

"The uniqueness of The Antiphon does not lie in its tragic vision, but rather in the language which articulates that vision" (Curry 177). The Antiphon, Barnes' last major statement as an artist, has existed almost in a vacuum since its publication in 1958. It is up to us, as audience, to complete our part of the antiphon and respond.
CHAPTER V

THE MOST FAMOUS UNKNOWN IN THE WORLD--
A LOOK AT DJUNA BARNES' WRITING AND
HER PLACE IN THE MODERNIST CANON

"-I'm the most famous unknown
in the world..." (quoted in
Field 246).

Even when she was in the center of Left Bank society
in Paris as a member of the expatriate set or earlier
among the Bohemians of Greenwich Village, Djuna Barnes was
a writer of marginality. People never quite knew what to
make of her or her writing—her experimental prose, her
eccentric characters, always odd, exotic, people at the
fringes of society, the foreigners, the expatriates, people
out of place, or people with no place, the circus people,
the homosexuals, and her family, in its own way a group of
unconventional characters led by a polygamist father who
refused to send his children to school. But Barnes' marginality was not so much as a lesbian writer from an
unusual background, but because in the first half of this
century she was a woman writer who devoted her life to her
vocation as a writer without the aid of the support systems
that other writers enjoyed. Even when she lived her life

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among the crowd, artistically Djuna Barnes was a loner. Later, as a recluse, she would become, according to her own description, like a Trappist Monk. Yet if Barnes did not have the support of her family, and even if Thelma Wood proved to be no Alice B. Toklas, they were fodder for Barnes' fiction.

Perhaps as a result of Barnes' singularity, the vision that her writing communicates is a very private one, a world of the imagination and the surreal. There is a mythical element in her work, and *Ryder* with its religious/mythic chapters presents us with a rich vision of Barnes' view of creation and prehistory. In Barnes' private, prehistoric mythology, the earth is depicted as a better place to man. Man is presented as the slayer, who will despoil the primitive beauty that existed before him. Barnes would seem to be in agreement with those who see the attempt of man to control nature by force a misguided endeavor. The earth exists not for the dominion of man, for man is only part of the creation, not lord of it. Man should respect nature rather than exploit it. Exploitation of nature in Western civilization has been the norm, but Barnes' attitude toward nature is antithetical to that of most of her contemporaries in Western civilization, as she portrays man as the despoiler of nature.

The style of writing in the descriptions of prehistory in *Ryder* are very much like the description of prehistory given in *Nightwood* with the introduction of Robin, who
comes from a deep primordial past expressed metaphorically in terms of jungle, forest, and water imagery. Barnes' introduction of Robin as the "beast turning human" is Barnes' most complete mythic statement. Robin represents the transition between beast and human, a transition that according to Barnes' mythic vision can go in either direction. Robin begins as the "beast turning human," but ultimately rejects the human world and joins symbolically with the beasts in her communion with Nora's dog. She ends, perhaps, between beast and human, seeking simplicity in the beast but caught in human form.

In Ryder, "The Occupations of Wendell," we have the first expression of Barnes' recurrent theme of the relationship between humans and animals. In Barnes' work the relationship between humans and animals is a close and sensitive one. In Ryder, Wendell creates a plan that will eliminate the slaughter of animals for food. He will teach the animals to speak, for he believes that no man will eat that which has spoken to him. Yet Wendell's grand plan fails, for, although the animals seem to understand his words, it is a look that they respond with, not words. Yet the communication between humans and animals is part of Barnes' private myth which culminates in Robin's communion with the dog in the final chapter of Nightwood, and the gap between human and animal is central to Barnes' private mythic vision. Present throughout her work is the sense that those who are in touch with animal life are more
perceptive or more truly aware than those who see human life and animal life as radically different. Humans are animals, and man meets a facet of himself in animal life. With tales of prehistoric and fabulous creatures, Barnes harks back to a better time when man did not exist, and man is portrayed as the destroyer of prehistoric mythic beauty and harmony. In The Antiphon, she portrays life before conception as Edenic time. Life after conception is chronological time and is linked with suffering and death. Human life is not a gift, but a curse, and death is not a dreaded outcome, but a cure for the disease of life. As long as procreation continues, the disease will be spread from one infected generation to the next, passing on the legacy of suffering that it means to be human.

Barnes' view of the human predicament has been characterized as morbid and grim. In an early interview Barnes responded to this charge:

This life I write and draw and portray is life as it is, and therefore you call it morbid. Look at my life. Look at life around me. Where is this beauty that I am supposed to miss? The nice episodes that others depict? Is not everything morbid? I mean the life of people stripped of their masks. (G.B. 656) It is no accident that Barnes portrays life grimly, stripping away the flesh to expose the skull.
Linked with Barnes' view that man deludes himself when he considers himself superior to nature is Barnes' distinctly anti-patriarchal stance. The patriarchy assumes man's dominion everywhere, but Barnes constantly questions this assumption. In Barnes' writing the line separating the animal from the human is a fine one and one that can be crossed. Consciousness and language, which according to Freud/Lacan, come into existence together are the substance of that line. In Barnes' writing animals are portrayed as possessing a type of consciousness that allows them to communicate with humans who are sensitive to animal consciousness. Such a moment occurs in *Ryder* when Wendell communicates with his animals and they respond with an intense eye contact that indicates understanding and communication. In *Nightwood* there is the eye contact between the lioness in the circus and Robin which ends with the lioness weeping for Robin, an animal caught in human skin. Robin turns away from the lioness, temporarily rejecting the consciousness of animal communication, for she is still turning toward the human. Later, however, when she realizes the price of human consciousness, she reverts to animal existence, seeking out animals in the woods and finally attaining animal consciousness in her communication with Nora's dog at the end of the novel. For Barnes, the price of human consciousness is to be burdened with human suffering, with the consciousness of the grim knowledge that the animals are blessed to be without. In *Nightwood,*
Matthew O'Connor, too, longs for the simplicity of animal consciousness: "'to be an animal, born at the opening of the eye, going only forward, and, at the end of day, shutting out memory with the dropping of the lid'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 135). Memory is one curse of human consciousness; the expectation and the knowledge that life will mean continued suffering is the other. According to Barnes, animals exist in an eternal present. Humans are cursed by a past and a future that crowd out the present of simple animal existence.

According to Barnes' view, no man has the right of dominion over animal or human life. Mankind commits hybris when we declare ourselves superior to the rest of nature. That we have lost our connection with nature is one of the tragedies of human life. Yet Wendell fails in his scheme to teach the animals to talk and, at the end of *Ryder*, all nature seems to mock him. In *Nightwood*, Robin must choose between "turning human" or returning to the animal state. To be human is to relinquish the simplicity of the animal state, the simplicity of which Father Lucas speaks when he tells Matthew to "'be simple as the beasts of the field'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 131) and that to which Matthew refers when he asks God, "'Have I been simple like an animal, God, or have I been thinking?'" (Barnes, *Nightwood* 133). Thus Barnes presents the opposition of human consciousness (the complexity of thinking) to animal consciousness (the simplicity of existence). Unlike traditional Western
culture that valorizes human consciousness above animal consciousness, Barnes in the deconstructive manner of Jacques Derrida, reverses the traditional terms of the opposition, giving priority to the traditionally devalued term. In giving up animal consciousness and in gaining human consciousness, mankind has lost something of value. We have lost touch with nature, thus introducing another of Barnes' oppositions, that of culture versus nature.

Among the terms of opposition that expose the phallo-logocentric bias of Western culture, the most important are human/animal, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, parent/child. In Ryder the dichotomies are man/animal, male/female, nature/culture, heterosexual/homosexual, lie/truth, myth/religion. In Nightwood, Barnes adds to these earlier concerns the oppositions of day/night, light/dark, consciousness/unconsciousness, waking/sleeping, innocence/corruption, goodness/evil, false nobility/real nobility, Protestant/Catholic, American/European, ascent/descent, language/silence. In The Antiphon, once again Barnes is concerned with the opposition of male/female, but the central conflict is the opposition of mother/daughter. Other oppositions in The Antiphon include brother/sister, secular/religious, American/European, utilitarian/craftsmanship, capitalistic values/artistic values. By elevating the secondary terms of these oppositions in her works, Barnes was rebelling against the phallocentric hegemony of Western culture that still
prevailed in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet, her rebellion took the particular form that Jacques Derrida would later christen "deconstruction," that is, taking apart the polar oppositions set up by Western culture, and by elevating the secondary term, showing it to be not less than but merely different from the primary term, thereby demonstrating the undecidability of what are commonly perceived as clear-cut dichotomies, and ultimately illustrating the error of perceiving the world and experience in terms of polar opposition. Thus in Ryder, Nightwood, and The Antiphon, Barnes sets up the thematic opposites and deconstructs them by favoring the traditionally devalued secondary term of the binary pair. In doing so, she does what Derrida does throughout his writing when he exposes the tendency in Western culture to elevate speech above writing. The impetus in both Barnes' work and Derrida's is to expose the assumptions of dichotomous thought, and Barnes' reversal of binary oppositions is basic to her revelation of and rebellion against patriarchal oppression throughout her works.

A perceptive reviewer called Ryder "a tragedy of women" (L.B. 282), and in Ryder the phallus is revealed as an instrument of oppression, a source of the violation and violence suffered by women in a phallocentric society. Under the guise of sexual freedom, Wendell Ryder preaches and practices polygamy, a form of patriarchal philosophy which reveals the basis of patriarchy all the more clearly
because of its exaggerated form.

For Wendell Ryder, women are both a source of pleasure and a means of production. It is Wendell's intention that every mating should bear fruit, a fruit that will be his, ultimately bringing into being a new race of Ryders that will undo the consequences of the Fall of Man and reestablish communion between man and nature, especially communication between man and animals. Yet as the sisters Louise point out when Wendell proves unsuccessful in his proposition to seduce them, "'he paints a rosy picture,'... 'of polygamy for--' she stressed, 'the man--'" (Barnes, Ryder 49). Thus they see through his scheme and do not fall prey. Yet the major female characters in Ryder are not so astute. Amelia, Wendell's only legal wife, deludes herself before their marriage that his espousal of polygamy "'is a theory which he holds for the race in general, but surely not for persons in particular'" (Barnes, Ryder 55). To assure Wendell's fidelity she tells her sister Ann that she will devise a bed so that Wendell will mistake no other for his own. "'I'll paint it a bright red, tie it up in sashes, drape it about in lace, and in the very centre of the coverlet, I'll stitch, in bright scarlet twist the reminder, "Here I be!'"" (Barnes, Ryder 56). Wendell, however, not only strays in his fidelity to his wife but brings his mistress home to share his house. Despite Amelia's frequent assertions that the wife is privileged above the mistress, in the end it is the
wife and Wendell's legitimate children that he sends away when he is forced by society to choose between the two. Thus Ryder shows that marriage offers the woman no security of position. Within the phallocentric society a woman's destiny is subject to the whims and needs of man.

Throughout Ryder pain, death, and childbirth are linked. In "Chapter Thirteen: Midwives' Lament, or the Horrid Outcome of Wendell's First Infidelity," the theme is introduced as the unnamed woman dies in labor impaled upon her son like a Roman soldier upon his blade (Barnes, Ryder 93). The pain of childbirth is made evident when Amelia gives birth cursing life and maternity and warning her ten-year-old daughter Julie, ". . . don't let a man touch you, for their touching never ends, and screaming oneself into a mother is no pleasure at all!" (Barnes, Ryder 117). Other stories told within Ryder link death with giving birth. In Wendell's tale of The Beast Thingumbob, the creature that the beast loves, the Cheerful, dies as a consequence of mating and bearing ten sons (Barnes, Ryder 153). Later Amelia tells the story of two sisters, Felice and Alix, who were seduced by the same man at once and who died in childbirth one minute apart (Barnes, Ryder 203).

Yet not all the women in Ryder succumb to the tyranny of the phallus and the patriarchy. The sisters Louise simply reject Wendell's overtures, while others Molly Dance and Lady Bridesleep, enjoy Wendell sexually without
allowing him the satisfaction of paternity. When Wendell tells Molly that he can assure her of the paternity of her next child, she accepts his advances, but tells him afterward that the paternity of her child is not assured for another man proposed the same idea only two nights ago (Barnes, Ryder 261). Lady Bridesleep, too, enjoys the pleasure of Wendell's sexual companionship without bearing the consequences, and Wendell is devastated to learn that there will be no child for Lady Bridesleep is well past the age of childbearing (Barnes, Ryder 273). Thus patriarchal certainty is on two occasions subverted.

Sophia Ryder, Wendell's mother, is another independent woman who subverts the patriarchy. Sophia still trades on her past sexual appeal and favors in order to support Wendell and his growing family. Visiting old lovers and feigning poverty, she continues to collect past debts and exploits the patriarchy. She pretends to be powerless in order to gain power over the men she exploits, and they play into her hands easily. The word "mother" is what she uses, for according to the novel it is the word no one can refuse. She exploits men using both the memory of her sexuality and the appeal of her maternity and subverts the power of the phallus as an instrument of oppression turning it against itself.

Thus while Ryder is bawdy in its sexuality, it is anti-patriarchal in its depiction of the relations between men and women. Men are depicted as the source of woman's
woe. It is competition over men that sets woman against woman destroying sisterhood, and procreation is linked with pain and often death. Whether wife, mistress, or spinster, most women are victims of the patriarchy. Only the women who are sexually free agents escape to any extent the tyranny of the patriarchal system.

Ryder is anti-patriarchal primarily in content, but Nightwood is anti-patriarchal in both form and content. Most of the major characters in Nightwood are homosexual. As we have seen, the patriarchy, based on the exchange of women by men, is predicated upon a system in which women do not have the right of self determination and in which heterosexuality is obligatory, leading to the suppression of all homosexuality but particularly female homosexuality. "As long as men have rights in women which women do not have in themselves, it would be sensible to expect that homosexuality in women would be subject to more suppression than in men" (Rubin 183). The phallocratic social contract prescribes that only one who has the phallus has the right to receive a woman of his own. A girl has no phallus and, therefore, has no right to a woman, for she is destined herself to be given to a man. Those who refuse to accept the psycho-sexual social contract of the patriarchy are regarded as abnormal. Nightwood, whose major characters consist of a homosexual transsexual and two women who love each other, is in content blatantly anti-patriarchal. The characters suffer and experience misery, but what is made
clear in Nightwood is that their misery is not the product of their homosexuality; theirs is a universal malady, common to all who love and would be loved. In its failure to condemn homosexuality, Nightwood is inherently anti-patriarchal.

Yet Nightwood is also anti-patriarchal in its style. Barnes' associative style is that of anti-realistic collage and requires that the reader accumulate associations between widely dispersed images throughout the novel that coalesce into related semantic sets that are linked in a particular pattern of meaning. The demand that the novel makes is that the reader read associatively and intuitively, not analytically.

Barnes makes individual tropes part of a series whose items may shift metaphorical shape without losing their relatedness to the whole lexical or semantic set, and whose meaning is not fully graspable without the reader's power of intuition. As a result, logical reconstruction must be suspended in favor of allowing collective sets to suggest rather than present meaning. (Allen, "Dressing" 112-113)

William A. Johnson relates Barnes' evocative style in Nightwood to what he regards as feminine sensibility expressed by the novel. Rather than imposing meaning as does
masculine sensibility in the realistic novel, in the poetic novel feminine sensibility is characterized by an open receptiveness to the flow of experience and a tendency to avoid foreclosing the flow of experience in the imposition of meaning. The novel ventures into the unknown and the unknowable psychic territory of the unconscious and warns against dressing "the unknowable in the garments of the known" (Barnes, Nightwood 136). Even the ending of the novel avoids foreclosure and ends in indeterminacy of meaning. It is impossible to tell exactly what has happened to Robin in the final scene, whether her effort to reject human consciousness and revert to animal consciousness is a success or a failure, whether it represents a positive achievement, a tragic failure, or a tragic achievement. The book resists foreclosure and remains eternally open to interpretation, and Robin escapes all attempts (including the reader's) to impose the values of human consciousness on her life.

It is also important to note that Nightwood ends in silence. As the novel moves toward its close, more and more the opposition of speech/silence is brought forward as a thematic concern. In "Go Down, Matthew" it becomes clear that what has sustained Matthew O'Connor in his misery and what he has used to try to cure Nora of her obsessional love for Robin has been words, his narrative, his story. These have failed Nora, and, in the end, they fail Matthew, too. His fictions are useless. He has
failed to heal Nora and his fictions no longer sustain him. For Matthew, the word has lost its efficacy, and words were all he had. Acknowledging his own futility, O'Connor admits, "'... I am not what I thought I was, a good man doing wrong, but the wrong man doing nothing much. ..." (Barnes, _Nightwood_ 162). Despairing of the failure of his words for himself and others, he ends, saying, "'I've not only lived my life for nothing, but I've told it for nothing ... I know, it's all over, everything's over ... [N]ow nothing, but wrath and weeping!'" (Barnes, _Nightwood_ 165-166). Throughout _Nightwood_, Matthew has been the embodiment of discourse, and ultimately _Nightwood_ ends in silence, acknowledging the failure of words. Thus _Nightwood_ recognizes the failure of words even as it attempts by its very existence to overcome that failure. Fittingly, language is the last human attribute that Robin gives up in her attempt to move from human to animal consciousness, and in the final scene no words are spoken. Having gone beyond speech, _Nightwood_ ends with the silent tableau of Robin and the dog.

If _Nightwood_ repudiates language in the process of deconstructing the human/animal dichotomy, _The Antiphon_ takes language to a level of complexity to which the twentieth-century ear is unaccustomed. Rejected by most reviewers as too difficult, _The Antiphon_ has remained an obscure work. Yet _The Antiphon_ shares with Barnes' other works the pairs of polar opposition which Barnes approaches
deconstructively.

Returning her focus to the family saga, Barnes tells the most difficult story of all to tell, that of the attempted rape by her father which was carried out by a surrogate and the acquiescence of her mother who did nothing to prevent it. The tale is a cruel one and exposes more fully and more openly, despite the obscurity of its language, the brutality of the patriarchy from the point of view of its victims. What is demonstrated most eloquently is how, under the patriarchy, the victims may take the point of view of the oppressor and may themselves become victimizers of those who are like them. This is shown to have happened in *The Antiphon* when the only daughter of the family becomes the scapegoat and is abused even by her own mother, largely because the mother, who takes the view of the patriarchy, regards women and their achievements of little worth.

Futilely hoping to achieve greatness through her sons, the mother, Augusta, totally ignores the impressive achievements of her daughter, belittling her at every opportunity. During the course of the play, we find that this has been the case throughout the daughter's life, from the moment that her mother wept seeing that she had given birth to a girl. Throughout Miranda's life her mother has looked to her as a companion in her suffering and has inflicted suffering upon Miranda with beatings which Miranda sought from her mother because it was a means of getting
Augusta's attention and sometimes affection.

Augusta voices all to clearly the view of the patriarchy. Except in their relations with men, women are of no worth. As individual human entities, they do not count. They are mothers, they are wives, and they are daughters, but these are functions in their relations with men determined by how men utilize them and determining how men may dispose of them. Miranda has not played the woman's part according to the view of the patriarchy. She had not married and has not become a mother. She has shirked her natural function as a female and is, therefore, unnatural in her pursuit of a career, rightfully a male pursuit. Part of Augusta's difficulty in valuing Miranda is that she has so absorbed the values of the patriarchy that she cannot value herself, and she views Miranda as an extension of herself. In belittling Miranda, she belittles herself, but she truly believes that women are of no real value. She disparages Miranda, but dotes upon her sons, constantly seeking their attention and requiring their presence to keep her happy. Her only reason for coming to Burley Hall is to see her son Jeremy who abandoned her many years before. It was Jeremy she loved most, and she blames Miranda for his having left her, saying that he left because Miranda left.

Playing the role of the family scapegoat, abused by father, mother, and brothers, Miranda embodies the Greek concept of the pharmakos, the scapegoat victim that is
sacrificed. "Hobb's Ark," the replica made by Jack (Jeremy in disguise) of their home in America where the brutal sacrificial rape of Miranda took place, is the pharmakon, a term which Derrida discusses in Dissemination. The pharmakon, as Derrida explains, linking the pharmakon with writing in his deconstruction of the opposition between speech and writing, "acts as both remedy and poison" (Derrida, Dissemination 70). Jack/Jeremy intends his replica to be good medicine, but its effect is poisonous. "So I, who thought to medicine contumely/ With a doll's hutch—that catches villians!--/ Find I've breathed up disaster and myself" (Barnes, Selected Works 224). Rather than purging the evil of the past and forcing Augusta to take responsibility for her acquiescence to the rape of Miranda, the bringing of the two women together with the reminder of Augusta's betrayal of her daughter re-opens old wounds and reawakens old conflicts that lead to the deaths of both women. The intended remedy, the pharmakon, turned out to be poison, and Miranda, the pharmakos, offers the ultimate sacrifice, to share her life with her mother despite all she has done, only to be sacrificed at the end, killed by her mother who can only blame her for the loss of the sons who have rejected her.

The pharmakon and the pharmakos are terms which contain within them the binary oppositions of good/evil, medicine/poison, yet more directly in The Antiphon, Barnes treats deconstructively other binary oppositions, those of
American/European, capitalism/art, brother/sister, mother/daughter, life/death. American values and capitalism are represented by the brothers Elisha and Dudley. They are the American capitalists with their "ticker tapes and totals." Their values are opposed by the European and artistic values represented by Miranda, Jonathan, Jack, and even Augusta. To her capitalist brothers, Miranda's success as a writer in England and as an actress in France are unimportant. She is unknown in New York, and, so far as they are concerned, that is all that matters. Also her success has not brought her financial reward, and the brothers value everything by its monetary worth. They have no reverence for craftsmanship, the arts, or the past. They live for the present, and their values are determined by profit and loss. They fear Miranda will be a financial liability; hence, they include her in their plan to murder their mother. The masks that they wear in act two aptly portray them as a pig and an ass in all their greedy vulgarity.

The mother/daughter dichotomy is presented in the relationship between Augusta and Miranda. Foolish in her hope that she could marry her way into society, Augusta is a woman who never grew up. She has never accepted adult responsibility for herself. She has lived through others in the hope that her sons would distinguish themselves and thereby distinguish her. Having given up hope for her sons, she turns to Miranda and demands, "Make me something!"
(Barnes, Selected Works 212). Even in old age, she pretends to be a young girl and wants to live in a fantasy world that is far more satisfying than the bleak reality of her existence.

Most significantly during the course of The Antiphon the difference implied in the opposition of mother/daughter is erased as they exchange costumes and their identities merge. Miranda becomes Augusta, her own mother, and Augusta becomes Miranda. For Miranda this is part of her function as pharmakos, the innocent one who takes on the identity of the truly guilty in order to purge the guilt. For Augusta it is the loss of an identity she never really had. Augusta has never really been a mother to Miranda, first in punishing her as a child for non-existent offences and finally in acquiescing to Titus' sacrificial rape of Miranda at age sixteen. In becoming her own mother, Miranda is taking responsibility for her own life and in becoming a mother to her mother, she attempts to take responsibility for Augusta by offering her a home at Burley. As the two merge, Augusta becomes more child-like—-a child-like version of Miranda—-while Miranda becomes maternal. Augusta with her fantasies regresses, while Miranda remains the responsible adult. In her final attempt to protect her mother from the murderous plan of her brothers, Augusta accuses her of trying to keep her from her sons. She blames Miranda for her sons' abandonment of her and brings the curfew bell down upon them and
they fall dead, achieving in death the unity they could not achieve in life.

The final dichotomy in *The Antiphon* that Barnes deconstructs by reversing its terms is the most basic one of life/death. In all of Western culture life is privileged over death. Our most basic presupposition is that life is preferable to death, yet according to Barnes' view as presented in *The Antiphon* the reverse may be equally true. Life, not death, is the source of human misery and tragedy, "Perambulator rolling to the tomb; / Death with a baby in its mouth" (Barnes, *Selected Works* 219). This is Djuna Barnes' grim view of birth, and mankind cannot escape the tragedy of birth until procreation ends. Parents will continue to conceive children and will continue the process that leads down a path of misery ending in death. Birth, as Barnes presents it, is the parents' sin against the child, for suffering and death are foreshadowed in birth. For all mankind to be born is disaster, for life is but a painful journey toward death. Yet death, rather than being dreaded, is presented by Barnes as a welcome end to life's suffering and chaos. Thus the polar opposition of life and death is reversed. Death brings peace to life's tortured victims. It is fitting that Augusta the source of life for Miranda is also the agent of her death. Augusta may have condemned Miranda to a life of misery by giving birth to her, but in also giving her death she absolves herself of the sin
of birth. Barnes deconstructs the traditional hierarchical relationship between the polarities of life and death by elevating the usually dreaded term, death, above the usually desired term, life.

Thus we can see how in her major works, Ryder, Nightwood, and The Antiphon, Barnes deconstructs the binary oppositions that are basic to what Derrida has called the phallogocentricism of Western culture and the philosophical basis of Western patriarchy. The oppositions of male/female, human/animal, religion/myth, truth/lie, heterosexual/homosexual, day/night, light/dark, consciousness/unconsciousness, waking/sleeping, reality/ fiction, language/silence, parent/child, life/death are central value-laden oppositions that are behind the unquestioned assumptions of the patriarchy and are basic to the phallogocentricism that Derrida attacks. Like Derrida, Barnes deconstructs these pairs of opposition in her works by inverting their hierarchical relationship. As in Derrida's practice of deconstruction, Barnes is not attempting to create a new hierarchical opposition by inverting the terms. Rather, her purpose, like Derrida's, is to show that between the terms there is only difference rather than a relationship that is predicated upon the assumption of the necessity of superiority or inferiority, the basis of the either/or digital thought system of the patriarchy. Both Derrida and Barnes oppose this mode of thought, Derrida with his deconstructive philosophy and
Barnes by the ultimate indecidability of the polar oppositions within her works. Having first reversed the terms of opposition, placing the devalued term in the superior position, at the end of each work she places the terms in the perfect balance that Derrida calls "differance."

The patriarchal mind, accustomed to its either/or digital dichotomies, does not feel comfortable with the play of differences proposed by Derrida nor the indecidability between the binary oppositions that we find in Barnes' work. Instead of answers, Barnes leaves her readers with questions. When the work ends the reader is uncertain of the outcome. At the end of Ryder there are many reasons to abhor Wendell, yet the final scene evokes pity. In Nightwood, also, it is impossible to tell whether the final scene represents success or failure. Even in The Antiphon it is impossible to tell whether the play ends with death as defeat, triumph, or both. Such ambiguity is the hallmark of Barnes' endings which frustrate readers with patriarchal either/or expectations.

Also confusing to readers within the patriarchal tradition is Barnes' style. In Ryder the treatment of a tragic situation with a tone of levity is confusing. It is as if two works were superimposed, a light-hearted superficial tale of the exploits of an unconventional man beneath which are the outlines of a serious tragedy of the treatment of women within the patriarchy.
In *Nightwood*, however, Barnes goes beyond the experimental style of *Ryder* to achieve a style that breaks radically with patriarchal expectations. The style calls upon the reader's intuitive capacity to link sets of images that shift and change as they recur slightly changed throughout the novel in a kaleidoscopic effect. A distinctly feminine style, it calls upon a feminine sensibility to decode it, to make the subtle and illusive connections between images in the novel that are necessary to fully appreciate it. Such reading also requires letting go the patriarchal obsession with the imposition of meaning on a work in which the meaning is fluid and cannot be grasped except as the play of differences. Because *Nightwood* is concerned with the unconscious and the connections that the unconscious makes, what the patriarchy calls logic is of little use in interpreting it. It takes a reader sensitive to the unconscious and to a feminine aesthetic to appreciate the work. T. S. Eliot was such a reader, but he was a rarity among critics, and until recently most critics regarded *Nightwood* as perverse.

For critics and readers alike *The Antiphon* posed a different problem. If *Nightwood* seemed perverse in its style and content, *The Antiphon* seemed perverse in the difficulty of its language. If the purpose of language is to reveal meaning, the purpose of *The Antiphon*'s language with its obscure usage and tortured syntax seemed to obfuscate meaning. Yet it seems unlikely that Barnes
spent twenty years of her life composing a work that she wished no one to understand. The work can be understood, but to do so takes more than a cursory reading and requires some background knowledge of her previous works. The language of The Antiphon is difficult, for Barnes refused to write down to her audience. She chose instead to bring her audience up to her standards. The Antiphon represents her attempt to revitalize verse drama without compromising the poetry to the commonplace of everyday speech.

Another factor that makes the language of both Nightwood and The Antiphon seem difficult to understand is Barnes' use of what Derrida calls catachresis, "the archetope of deconstruction" (Singer 41), a strained use of metaphor in which the tenor and the vehicle do not fit smoothly. "The vehicle usurps the contextual ground of the trope by proliferating itself, and so the univocality of the generating sign is lost in the multiplicity of its dissemination" (Singer 173).

True to the strained nature of catachresis, Barnes' metaphors in Nightwood and The Antiphon are asymmetrical in the relationship between vehicle and tenor. Barnes' rhetoric is based on discontinuity instead of on any traditional analogy as in the case of metaphors of resemblance. For example, in Nightwood, we find metaphors that link bone, flesh, pain, and death, both in the narrator's descriptions of Robin and Matthew's descriptions of the
night. Robin is described as "... the infected carrier of the past: before her the structure of our head and jaws ache--we feel that we could eat her, she who is eaten death returning..." (Barnes, Nightwood 37). Similarly, describing the pain of the night, Matthew says, "... the night is a skin pulled over the head of day that the day may be in torment" (Barnes, Nightwood 85). In The Antiphon there is the linking of sight imagery with metaphors of pregnancy and birth and the linking of birth with terror and death. For example, Miranda describes her own birth: "Yet in her hour, her either end being terror,/ The one head on the other stared, and wept" (Barnes, Selected Works 87). Later after Augusta has witnessed the reenactment of the rape of Miranda, Jack (Jeremy) warns his mother: "The eye-baby now you're pregnant with/ You'll carry in your iris to the grave" (Barnes, Selected Works 185). Finally, there is Miranda's summary of life as "Perambulator rolling to the tomb;/ Death with a baby in its mouth" (Barnes, Selected Works 219). Hence we have the kaleidoscopic effect of Barnes' metaphors in Nightwood and The Antiphon. We see the beauty of the pattern, but the pattern shifts into another pattern carrying with it meaning that shifts from one lexical set to another.

In traditional narrative or dramatic exposition the "referential level" is privileged by patriarchal standards over the "figural level." Yet in Barnes' works the
referential level is subordinated to the figural level. The figural level dominates, making it difficult for the patriarchal mind to grasp the "reality" of the referential meaning. There is little "reality" or realism in any of Barnes' major works. Throughout Ryder and Nightwood poetry invades prose, transposing the literal-figural opposition characteristic of the realistic fiction favored by the patriarchy. The Antiphon as poetic drama violates the realistic norm of twentieth-century drama, the preferred form in twentieth-century patriarchal culture.

Throughout her career, Barnes as an experimental writer was working at the limits of language. In Ryder she was still using patriarchal forms imitating the Bible, Fielding, Rabelais, Chaucer, and others in her deployment of various styles. Yet in its content, its mythic vision, its sympathetic treatment of Matthew O'Connor, and its depiction of the suffering of women as a result of their sexually assigned roles, it is an anti-patriarchal work.

Nightwood is also anti-patriarchal in its content with its sympathetic treatment of homosexual love, but in Nightwood Barnes has also gone beyond the limits of patriarchal style. The associative style of Nightwood demands a consciousness that can follow non-linear thought patterns without becoming confused. In the labyrinth of imagery of which Nightwood is composed, those who would impose meaning on the configurations of images that are meant to remain in a state of flux are likely to misread
the work. Those whose values are invested with the
patriarchy have found the work perverse in its inversions
of traditional values. In Nightwood, Djuna Barnes is
reaching beyond the limits of phallogocentric language,
trying to invent a new mode of communication that uses
language, but in an associative, surrealistic way that
exceeds the patriarchal limits of expression.

In The Antiphon, too, Barnes was reaching beyond the
phallogocentric limits of language. The language of The
Antiphon is almost a private language, full of personal
symbols, written at times in a poetic shorthand that is
difficult to decipher. In The Antiphon, Djuna Barnes was
testing the limits of language. Some would say that she
stretched language beyond its limits, beyond its common
communicative viability. Yet what Barnes was saying in
The Antiphon could not be said easily. It required a
language as intricate as that of abstract poetry to con-
tain it. What could not be said is more hinted at than
said, and like the poetic prose of Nightwood requires
intuitive interpretation. The poetry of The Antiphon is
difficult and requires more than a casual reading to
ferret it out. Yet The Antiphon is not impossible to
decipher. It does, in the end, with beauty as well as
difficulty, communicate.

Djuna Barnes has long been regarded as an obscure
writer. Yet Barnes' criticism has changed over the years
as feminist criticism has emerged, offering an increased
awareness of the feminine aesthetic and the critical tools needed to be a competent reader of women's writing. One must share the feminine code or at least be empathetic to it in order to read it adequately. Feminist criticism and Jacques Derrida's critique of the phallocentric of Western culture have helped make clearer the bias of the patriarchal society in which we live and have helped bring into focus the anti-patriarchal writings of many women writers. Barnes did not consider herself a feminist, yet she wrote as a woman exposing the brutality of the patriarchy based on her own experience of it. Unique and anti-patriarchal as her writings are, they are very much within the tradition of Modernism. Like other Modernists, yet for different reasons, her writing has been perceived as cryptic and difficult to decipher. Yet Barnes is no more difficult than Joyce, Eliot, or Pound, and like them she deserves a place in the Modernist canon because of the artistic strength of her work, the unique vision that it seeks to convey, and the high quality of its execution. I feel certain that as more attention is focused on women writers of every period and on the phallocentricism of the culture in which we live, Djuna Barnes will cease to be "the most famous unknown in the world" and will become known as a writer who portrayed honestly and sensitively the circumstances of women in the period in which she lived.
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