

THE LANGUAGE OF ILLNESS: A STUDY OF FIVE CONTEMPORARY
PATIENT-CENTERED TEXTS

BY

YVONNE M. TRAINER

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree
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ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines the significance of the patient-centered text to the study of medicine and literature by exploring the use of language to construct the patient in five texts. Along with attention to intertextuality, the discussions take a formalist approach in seeking detailed readings of how language functions in the works.

Chapter 1 focuses on scholars who view the experimental text as significant to medicine in literature and introduces each text. Chapter 2, "Illness in Timothy Findley's Pilgrim and the Healing Balm of Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain," demonstrates how Findley borrows Mann's idea of the leitmotif, while subverting the use of this trope, and explores how Findley simulates the schizophrenic thought-process. Chapter 3, "The Unruly Patient-Centered Long Poem Sequence: Kenneth Sherman's Words for Elephant Man," draws on an unpublished interview with Sherman and shows that by giving Joseph Merrick a voice, Sherman frees him from categories of freakishness and disease. Chapter 4, "The Contribution of Medicine to the Poetic Use of Words and Images in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient," explores how medical images lend verisimilitude to the text, simulate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and shows that patients can be healers. Chapter 5, "Unruly Texts: Metapathography in Works by Margaret Atwood and Raymond Carver," deals with a patient, a possible patient, and a patient as writer. Part 1 studies Margaret Atwood's Morning in the Burned House; Part 2

studies Raymond Carver's A New Path to the Waterfall. The chapter argues that the texts are more objective (intertextual) than a cursory reading allows. Chapter 6, the conclusion, provides further directions for the study of Medicine and Literature, such as Canadian Native Literature and Medicine.

Finally, self-reflexive writing is strongly conducive to the study of medicine in literature. Patient-centered texts emphatically literary in style and drawing attention to their formal operations are especially conducive to medicine in literature, because they are texts of feeling and healing. The reflexive text invites readers to participate vicariously in the patient's experience and is more open to thought processes of the patient within a particular culture and society than so-called "realist" texts.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Ann and Warren Trainer (Manyberries, AB)
and for my Godson, John-James Kereliuk (Lethbridge, AB)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Language of Illness in Patient-Centered Texts

This dissertation draws on the scholarly discipline of medicine in analyzing five contemporary, patient-centered texts: those in which the patient is a central character and is under the care of a licensed doctor or caregiver, such as a nurse or therapist, often but not always in a medical setting. Traditionally, the study of literature and medicine has focused on narratives of illness and healing, with the doctor or healer at the center. In this study, the focus is on patients, and I use the term "patient-centered text" because, unlike the frequently used term, "narrative of illness," it includes the possibility of lyric.

The texts selected are Timothy Findley's Pilgrim, Kenneth Sherman's Words for Elephant Man, Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient, Margaret Atwood's Morning in the Burned House: New Poems and Raymond Carver's New Path to the Waterfall. Each of these works fits my definition of a "patient-centered text." These particular texts allow for a study of the literary treatment of a wide cross-section of illnesses, diseases, and physical problems: paranoid schizophrenia, difficult childbirth, depression, suicidal feelings, neurological disorders, physical disability, the pain of severe wounds and burns, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), trauma, overwhelming grief, and cancer. While the central characters in these works seem to be isolated by their circumstances and especially by their illness, the power of the language weaves them back into the fabric of society. Finally, Canadian literature and

poetry are largely unexplored areas in the study of literature and medicine, and I want to work toward filling this gap.¹

Many medical scholars who discuss literature and medicine, whether the literature is patient-centered or not, focus on "referential" modes of writing. Most doctor-educators who teach medicine and literature are not interested in language-based texts, because they believe that referential (what they often call "realist") texts most clearly reflect medical issues and best speak to the needs of doctors and patients. For example, Dr. Jock Murray (a neurologist and Director of the Institute for the Medical Humanities at Dalhousie University), during a recent History of Medicine Conference, stated that he is not interested in the theory of medicine and literature or in experimental texts. The late Dr. Michael Tarrant (a medical educator at the University of Calgary's School of Medicine) and Dr. Anne Hudson Jones (past editor of the Journal of Literature and Medicine and professor at the Institute for the Medical Humanities in Galveston, Texas) are among the many supporters of "referential" writing as it concerns illness.² Outlines of Literature-and-Medicine courses posted online show a similar focus.³

Arnold Weinstein, an ardent supporter of the self-reflexive text (language-based text), or what he and several other scholars⁴ call the "unruly text" (a term I will adopt), provides a counter-argument. He explains that the notions of clarity, linearity, and readability, sometimes thought to characterize prose fiction, are themselves fictions (1-2). Citing a variety of canonical

authors, Weinstein explains that though we might refer to these texts as realistic, "they require considerable decoding if we are to reach their fuller say" (2). "Literature," he says, and he sounds here much like the contemporary critic I propose in the dissertation to be, "cannot be cleansed of its ambiguities, its excesses, its meta-consciousness as verbal artifact, its incessant trafficking in fantasy, desire, fear, folklore, myth and the like" (2). It is to scholars such as Weinstein, and to arguments such as his, that I turn in the body of the dissertation. Weinstein employs deconstructive criticism—in a move that for me will be exemplary—as a means to discuss "unruly texts" because, as he says, such literary texts emphasize "the play of meanings that every text gives rise to, the need to see linkage and pattern at the periphery as well as in the center" (3). I concur with Weinstein when he argues for the value of studying "lexical play" and "verbal indeterminacy" in texts, although I am well aware from my own experiences in designing and teaching a Literature and Health Care course that medical scholars are often skeptical about the practical uses of such texts in their field.

Weinstein makes the claim that language-based texts can actually revitalize the relationship between doctor and patient, since the unruly text "humbles the reader / diagnostician, challenges the reader's assumptions of cogency and control, and stubbornly asserts the primacy and authority of its own textual logic" (19). Weinstein explains that experimental literature, in resisting the notion of one clear meaning or ultimate truth about illness,

actually allows the reader to grasp the complexity of illness (19). My own readings are informed by his view that the text in a sense is a patient and is itself endowed with complexity and indeterminacy (18). Further, I draw on Weinstein in supposing that if we approach unruly texts openly and thoughtfully, "we can leave behind us notions of game and puzzle in order to negotiate the real issues: pain, violence, desire, libido in all its guises" (18). The literary guises in the unruly text are the concern of my study.

I use the term "unruly text," borrowed from Weinstein and Marta, because it allows for slippage between modernism, post-modernism, and post-colonialism. The term differentiates between traditional realist texts, mainly prose, that assume a one-to-one relationship between the language of the text and the so-called "read world" and texts that challenge realist assumptions by foregrounding language and by subverting cause-effect relationships. Most poetry falls under the rubric of "unruly text" because it is the nature of poetry to call attention to its language. Yet there are degrees to which poetry overdetermines the language. For example, an Alden Nowlan poem is not as unruly as one by Douglas Barbour or bp Nichol.⁵

Though I agree with Weinstein's basic claim that all texts are unruly, I argue for degrees of unruliness, from the moderate unruliness of so-called "realist" texts to the greater unruliness of more language-based texts. At the end of the continuum, the one that involves radical word play in the breakdown of phrases and words and the drastic erosion of narrative, one might find an

expression of excruciating pain, which is literally torture,⁶ a scream or even silence. That is, I have chosen language-based texts that retain some threads of narrative. As a result, though they are unsettled in their word-play and unruly in their fragmentation, in their polyphonic voices, in involving the reader in the process of creating characters and actions, they do not move into disjuncture so radical that it might produce a musical composition, or scream, or silence. I also rely upon Jan Marta and Peter Graham, who are among the few to consider "the experimental, avant-garde, or postmodern texts" to be worthwhile to the study of literature and medicine. Marta is helpful to me when she chooses to examine "the value of postmodern literary texts to the theory and practice of medicine," distinguishing between realist practice and the resistance to it (65).

I turn to what is mainly a formalist approach in seeking detailed readings of how language functions in the texts, and I examine how each text simulates the feeling and thinking of the patient. Louis Sass, in his extensively researched work, Madness and Modernism, provides a lengthy account of the schizophrenic use of language, explaining that "what schizophrenics seem to manifest, is not a single predominant style but a fairly diverse set of modes of language use" (176). This diverse use of "language modes" makes it difficult to find a language—or at least general categories—for discussing a text such as Findley's Pilgrim that addresses the subject of schizophrenia. Sass's critical text is particularly helpful to me in designating three general trends in

schizophrenic speech as they can be applied to Findley's text; his approach enables me to diagnose symptoms of "schizophrenic language" which would include, say, a lack of social courtesies in speech, a prominence of cryptic and terse sentences, and the absence of transitions. Sass points as well to the significance of abstract or concrete language, repetition, and various modes of "blocking" in expression (178-83). He finds all three of the categories exemplified in individual words, clauses, and more extensive structures of schizophrenic speech (179).

The type of text I am examining is self-reflexive and more openly committed than is the realist text to the rhetorical and formal properties of language and to the active processing of text. The so-called "referential text" provides more readily processed information about the world "out there" and invites the reader to act as if looking through a box camera, observing images of the patient or medical setting from a distance and then making a leap to translate those images into a feeling "about" what is "seen." In contrast, the self-reflexive text invites the reader to participate vicariously in the experience of the patient.

I demonstrate through the analysis of the five texts I have chosen that self-reflexive writing is highly conducive to the study of literature and medicine. I will be arguing that those texts that are emphatically literary in style and that draw attention to their formal operations are especially conducive to an understanding of the patient, because they are texts of both "feeling" and

"healing." I argue that by means of the language—the use of particular literary devices in each of the texts—the reader is invited to take on the empathetic process of feeling "with" and thinking "like" the patient. In other words, a receptive reader might be able to re-create him- or herself through the features of the language in the text as if the reader were a patient with a particular medical problem. In a case when the reader is an actual patient, this recreation ultimately could lead to one or more of the following: recuperation, acceptance, autonomy, and transcendence.

In analyzing the literary strategies in my primary texts I also propose that the element of intertextuality in all of them serves to connect the reader-become-patient with the past, the present, and a possible future, whereby the reader might gain a sense of identity in the larger pattern of both a lived life and a vicarious one. Unfortunately, medical scholars who advocate the realist mode of writing are generally not concerned with intertextuality and the constructed dimensions of texts. But literary devices such as rhythm and alliteration play upon the emotions of the reader—exciting, calming, distracting, infuriating. They can serve to convey an experience of harm or healing. My intent, therefore, is to argue for the importance of constructedness and intertextuality, as they work in association in the texts I have chosen.

Although these five patient-centered texts interweave borrowings from history, philosophy, case studies, psychology and so on, they also draw upon earlier literary texts. Some of these influential texts are quoted directly; at other

times they feature as allusions within my chosen texts. For example, occasionally Findley quotes directly from Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain. At other times, he borrows more obliquely, using several of Mann's leitmotifs, such as music, doors, the color blue, and windows. Borrowings from previous texts, in the works I have chosen, are sporadic and fragmented and do not require a linear approach. Therefore I deal with such borrowings, when necessary, as part of the intertextuality of the works I have chosen.

Although doctor-centered texts are not uncommon in literature, there are few patient-centered texts before the 1960s.⁷ A change from doctor-centered texts to patient-centered ones began with Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. These patient-centered texts have not previously received critical attention as a genre.

In American poetry of the early 1960s the confessional poets, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton among them, opened the way to discussing the clinical details of patients' lives—their use of medications and their hospital stays. This turn, further encouraged by a resurgence of the feminist movement during the late 1960s and into the '70s, made it possible for women to speak openly about painful menstruation, child birth, breast cancer, mental illness, and a host of other medical issues.

The second, third, and fourth chapters each deal with one major text—Findley's Pilgrim, Sherman's Words for Elephant Man, and Ondaatje's The English Patient respectively. The fifth chapter examines Atwood's Morning in

the Burned House and Carver's A New Path to the Waterfall. The sixth chapter provides possible directions for the further study of Literature and Medicine.

Timothy Findley's Pilgrim is especially significant to my thesis because of its hospital setting and its use of a patient as its central character. I argue that the most productive way to enter the text is by means of the language itself, because Findley attempts to simulate through language patterns, in syntax and diction, what is consistent with the speech of the schizophrenic patient. As readers, we can join in the process of "seeing" these patterns through the eyes of the patient. I identify these language patterns with the help of Louis Sass' Madness and Modernism, which serves as a framework for demonstrating the use of polyphonic language in Pilgrim. Second, I argue that Findley uses intertextuality, borrowing from literature, linguistics, the history of medicine, and psychology. In doing so, Findley demonstrates that texts in medicine and literature are constructed largely from other texts, and not necessarily from what is "out there."

Kenneth Sherman's Words for Elephant Man, based on medical accounts of Joseph Merrick, is the subject of the third chapter. This chapter draws extensively on an interview that I conducted with Kenneth Sherman by e-mail in June, 2003. Although Sherman borrows information for his long-poem sequence from more factual accounts such as Ashley Montagu's The Elephant Man: A Study in Human Dignity, Michael Howell and Peter Ford's The True History of the Elephant Man, and Sir Frederick Treves's essay "The

Elephant Man." Sherman's text differs from these because it simulates the emotional side of the neurological and debilitating aspects of Merrick's life. Sherman demonstrates the constructedness of the patient-centered text by echoing the previous works about Merrick. They are referential and more focused on authority figures, especially Dr. Treves, than on Merrick the patient. Sherman uses selections from these works and reshapes them within his patient-centered text. The unruliness of the text lies in its lack of linearity, its being broken up by photographs, etchings, x-rays and so on. There is dislocation and fragmentation of structure in the text.

Another significant feature of the work, as Sherman confirmed in his interview, is that Merrick becomes a poetic mask through which Sherman explores issues central to his own role as a poet. Thus Elephant Man turns out to be as much about Sherman as about Merrick.

Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient is the focus of the fourth chapter in which I explore references to historical healers that appear throughout the text. Through his choice of historical medical figures, along with references to the historian Herodotus, Ondaatje weaves philosophy and history into The English Patient in order to place it in the larger context of time and place. Although critics such as Thomas Harrison concentrate on the significance of Herodotus as a structuring device for the text, and others such as Catherine Hunter concern themselves with the political aspects of Ondaatje's texts in general, none have given more than brief mention to the

medical subjects in the novel: wounds, trauma, PTSD, the troubled caregiver-patient relationship, and the like. I demonstrate how Ondaatje's incorporation of historical medical figures and medical images lends verisimilitude to the text, simulates the vicarious experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (with its multiple symptoms) and shows paradoxically that patients can also be healers, and vice versa. I demonstrate how the elements of surprise and suspense and the interconnectedness of the body with both past and present settings (landscapes and buildings) work in the text to convey the trauma that all the characters experience.

Chapter five addresses the texts of two poets, Atwood's Morning and Carver's Waterfall. Both these works relate well to a discussion of the fusion of language and medical subjects. Atwood's recent collection of poems is significant to the study of language and medicine because it centers upon grief—grief for the death of Atwood's father, but also for the archetypal father. In Morning the death of the father permeates the poems in the collection. The dying patient ultimately cannot speak, but the memories as viewed through the eyes of the daughter or various disguised narrators speak for him. Morning is a significant contribution to writings considered to be metapathographies.⁸ I choose poems from various sections of the text, rather than focusing solely on the few poems that pertain specifically to the death of the father, as has been the practice among those who have written about the collection. The duality of

language—of paradox and irony as paramount to metapathographies—is prominent in my discussion of this text.

The second part of the fifth chapter deals with Carver's Waterfall, which itself stands as a central text in the study of Literature and Medicine, and which will enable me to make several telling comparisons to Atwood's Morning. Peter Graham in "Metapathography: Three Unruly Texts" offers a productive entry into Carver's book, pointing out how closely it parallels the narrative set out by Elizabeth Kübler Ross's study of pathographies, what she calls "well known stages of confronting death to evade considering it, and to shield others from the need of responding to it" (qtd. in Graham 82). In Waterfall, Carver transcends his own life by writing a collection of poems in which he draws on the inspiration of Chekhov, several poets, and a further selection of visual and written art, to write about his own death. Carver's final collection demonstrates, perhaps more than any other text I am addressing, the importance in patient-centered texts of literary devices to convey feeling and of the conspicuousness of intertextuality.

A final chapter summarizes the findings of the previous chapters. As well, it provides a brief speculation on directions for future research in Literature and Medicine. These include medical issues in Native literature, particularly Canadian Native literature, as well as consideration of texts that pertain to one particular illness, such as schizophrenia. The chapter also

considers further work I would contemplate in the creation of an anthology of World Literature and Medicine.

CHAPTER 2

Illness in Timothy Findley's Pilgrim and the Healing Balm of Thomas
Mann's The Magic Mountain

In a 1999 note published in Journeyman: Travels of a Writer, edited by William Whitehead, Timothy Findley exclaims, "there is nothing—nothing—on the face of this earth that equals the live performance of a play—an opera—a ballet" (291). In another note in this collection, Findley expresses delight in visiting a schizophrenic aunt and in talking to a friend with the same illness:

And when I think of my people, my family, myself and my society, I think of them very much as I think of my schizophrenic friend—as I know my schizophrenic friend. Our bodies, too, are living in one world, while our minds are living in another. (84)

It is not surprising, given Findley's penchant for operatic performances and his obsessive fascination with mental illness, that he would borrow for Pilgrim quotations, images, and ideas for leitmotifs from Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain. Mann's epic, for its structure and theme, employs the notion of the leitmotif expressed in Richard Wagner's musical compositions, particularly his operas. As Magic Mountain is a classic novel of illness, telescoping the larger theme of the illness of a society, it provides an apt model for Findley's large-scale work, Pilgrim, set at the famed Burghölzli Psychiatric Clinic.

First, this chapter notes several points of comparison between Findley's Pilgrim and Mann's Magic Mountain that critics tend to overlook. Specifically, it shows how Findley employs Mann's idea of the leitmotif to create structure and unity in the text, while also subverting Mann's use of this literary trope by employing it to depict the intense mental states of the characters, especially the protagonist. Second, this chapter demonstrates that although various readers find Findley's Pilgrim to be bland and disorganized—some accuse the author of "poor" writing—the novel effectively simulates the complexity and disorganization of the schizophrenic thought process.⁹

Mann and Findley think alike about the writing process. In the afterword of Magic Mountain, Mann expresses his philosophy:

If a writer had before him from the start all the possibilities and all the drawbacks of a projected work, and knew what the book itself wanted to be, he might never have the courage to begin. It is possible for the work to have its own will and purpose, perhaps a far more ambitious one than the author's—and it is good that this should be so. For the ambition should not be a personal one; it must not come before the work itself. The work must bring it forth and compel the task to completion. Thus, I feel, all great works were written, and not out of ambition to write something great which set itself from the beginning. (722)

Findley expounds a similar philosophy in a 1999 online interview with Linda Richards for January Magazine:

I don't believe in theory. I don't talk about it. Nothing is ever plotted along the lines of any given theory because that would kill the writing. Then you're writing for another reason, and you have to force your storyline and force your characters into a mold. And why do that? You've killed the impetus of what writing is about. Which is about exploring. Exploration. You're exploring the people you write and they develop under your hand and become whole. And you're exploring a certain situation. And the same is true. But if you were writing with a list of necessary ingredients or whatever. Oh I want this book to say this or do that. Then you've immediately cut off half the possibilities open to the people in the book and to the storyline.

These quotations suggest that both authors view writing as a process of exploration. Both novels are open to various interpretations, thus presenting greater unruliness than the so-called "realist" text.

In several places in his novel, Findley explicitly acknowledges the influence of Mann. For instance, in the introduction to Pilgrim, Findley borrows a quotation from the foreword of Magic Mountain:

Our story [. . .] is much older than its years, its datedness is not to be measured in days, nor the burden of age weighing upon it

to be counted by orbits around the sun; in a word, it does not actually owe its pastness to time. (v)

This quotation, while underscoring the link between Findley and Mann, also alludes to Pilgrim's mystical sense of timelessness, to the amalgam of past, present, and future that the novel embodies. In Madness and Modernism, Louis Sass recounts how a man with schizophrenia named Lewis described a similar sense of atemporality: "I feel as if I've lost the continuity linking the events of my past. Instead of a series of events linked by continuity, my past just seems like disconnected fragments. I feel like I'm in the infinite present" (156). This mystical sense of timelessness in Pilgrim is actually characteristic of schizophrenic thinking.

Findley again alerts readers to the importance of Magic Mountain during a discussion between two minor characters, Phoebe and Forster. Forster reprimands Phoebe for regarding the patients at the clinic as "crazies." "They are not crazies," insists Forster. "They are ill. And their consignment to the clinic is to make them well—same as if they had the consumption and went to Davos" (12). The reference to Davos is significant, as it served as the inspiration for Magic Mountain. As Mann explains in "The Making of The Magic Mountain,"

in the year 1912—over a generation ago now—my wife was suffering from a lung complaint, fortunately not a very serious one; yet it was necessary for her to spend six months at a high

altitude, in a sanatorium at Davos, Switzerland. I stayed with the children [. . .]. But in May and June I visited my wife for some weeks at Davos. There is a chapter in The Magic Mountain, entitled "Arrival," where Hans Castorp dines with his cousin Joachim in the sanatorium restaurant [. . .]. If you read that chapter, you will have a fairly accurate picture of [. . .] my own strange impressions of it [. . .]. (720)

The parallel that Findley draws between the psychiatric clinic and Davos is didactic. It is practically a cliché, but one of the messages in his novel is that society often fails to give people with mental illness the same respect accorded to those with physical ailments.

There are further strong points of comparison between the novels: for instance, both are set in Switzerland, and both focus on a clinic attended by upper-class patients. In addition, both novels are set in 1912, during the ominous period just before World War I, when Europe was both dis-eased and metaphorically diseased. Furthermore, both novels contain images of a spa. The spa in Magic Mountain is situated in nature, while in Pilgrim, the spa is constructed primarily indoors. Both novels deal extensively with death. Mann intersperses images of death throughout Magic Mountain, while Findley renders death "ever-present" in the character of Pilgrim, who lives to die but cannot manage to do so.

Like Mann, Findley employs a range of leitmotifs. Both writers conjure up windows, doors, numbers, music, and the color blue. In discussing the work of artists in general and the use of the leitmotif in particular, Mann writes,

He [the artist] tries to produce himself completely in each thing that he writes, but only actually does so in the way The Magic Mountain does it; I mean by the use of the leitmotiv, the magic formula that works both ways, and links the past with the future, the future with the past. The leitmotiv is the technique employed to preserve the inward unity and the abiding presentness of the whole at each moment. (720)

In Creative Mythology, Joseph Campbell discusses the use of the leitmotif in Mann's work:

Chance occurrences scattered throughout a lifetime, when viewed reflected in a mythic form come together and show an order in depth that is the order of man everlasting; and to effect such ideated epiphanies, where to the unassisted eye, only disconnected fragments would appear, both Joyce and Mann have employed the rhetorical device of the Leitmotiv, the recurrent verbal constellation, to bring together apparently unrelated widely separated occurrences, persons, settings and experiences. (325)

This use of the leitmotif to link apparently fragmentary images is something that Findley adopts from Mann.

Findley, however, is more intense, dramatic, and unruly in his use of it. For instance, Mann generally depicts the leitmotif of music in terms of harmony, as in the following passage:

The subdued chords of a hymn floated up; after a pause came a march. Hans Castorp loved music from his heart; it worked upon him in much the same way as did his breakfast porter, with deeply soothing, narcotic effect, tempting him to doze. He listened well pleased his head on one side, his eyes a little bloodshot. (38)

There are points in Magic Mountain where music is presented as having a non-harmonious effect, but Mann does not depict music as primarily discordant. Settembrini is the only character who tries to express the chaotic potential of music; the other characters consider him to be babbling (113). In contrast, to Pilgrim, the music room is a place to create anarchy.

Throughout Pilgrim, Findley's use of music as a leitmotif is plentiful and varied. For instance, Findley notes that Jung (a character based on the famed psychologist Carl Jung) carries scraps of paper and envelopes in his daughter's music bag. In an action indicative of a schizophrenic thought process, Pilgrim's eyes light on the bag (249). Findley again mentions the

music bag at the end of the novel (523). Even the small details of objects contribute to the music leitmotif.

The medical staff in Pilgrim view the music room as a therapeutic space for the patients. At various points, Findley devotes extensive description to the music room. In book 2, chapter 6, an unidentified narrator describes the music room in a manner suggestive of the way a person with schizophrenia might see it. Specifically, the narrator describes the details of the structure of the room and makes a number of absurd associations among the objects within it. We are informed that "in the music room—so-called because it had been set aside for patients for whom music provides therapy—there were twenty-one windows. Seven and seven and seven. Tall and narrow" (151). Then the narrator offers a rather odd but poetic view of the room's contents:

A cluster of music stands was gathered in a corner. Gossips.
Have you heard . . . ? Did you know . . . ? Two flutes, an oboe and a clarinet, also encased, had been laid on a shelf—and on the shelf beneath them, neatly piled, scores by Bach and Mozart lying on their sides. Schumann's Piano Concerto in A Minor stood upright, turned towards the wall. In another corner, what might have been a giant's boxed ear turned out to be a harp.
(151)

It is not unusual for schizophrenic patients, when delusional, to see objects as having human qualities, such as, in this instance, the music stands that

"gossip" or the harp that is like "a giant's boxed ear." These delusional features are highly poetic and contribute to the use of the music leitmotif.

Findley continues to use the music leitmotif in yet other ways. Significantly, Pilgrim's only interest in music is to destroy it and at the same time use it as a means to physical escape. The leitmotifs of numbers and music and the outrageously detailed descriptions of the music room come together to create suspense. That suspense culminates in an explosion of images that portray Pilgrim in a rage:

Pilgrim was barely recognizable. He had lost control entirely of his expression. His face was a mask of rage—his eyes wide and staring, his mouth split in two by what appeared to be a maelstrom of froth and spittle. (392)

Pilgrim's actions begin to assume an animal-like character. He moves at fast speed, tears the arm off the gramophone, and smashes it through a window. He then destroys the music room:

He lifted the gramophone from its place and crashed it to the floor. Its lid split in two and its disembowelled mechanical innards spilled out. He then systematically took whole albums of recordings from their shelves and heaved them one by one at all four walls, smashing their contents. But whether by chance or by crazed calculation, the album of Schumann's Scenes of

Childhood struck the pianist crouching in her corner and caused a wound that later would require stitches. (392)

Violence that suddenly erupts is not an unusual occurrence in schizophrenic patients. Often they are acting out as a result of paranoid fear of a situation, thing, or person. Of greater literary interest, though, in this quotation, is the phrase "disembowelled mechanical innards." Schizophrenic people often report, or indicate in drawings or in writing, that their bodies are turned inside out, and that their insides are parts of machines. They then project this imagined outward, machine-like body on to other objects (Sass 226-227). Here, the music leitmotif contributes to the representation of this strange feature of schizophrenic thinking.

Then, amid harsh pronouncements and absurd personifications, Pilgrim performs a final act of destruction:

Pulling the cello from its place he began to kick its prostrate body, crying out: "Damn all music! Damn all arts! Damn all beauty! Kill! Kill! Kill!"

He next smashed the violin and began to use its remains to beat against the glassed-in cabinets that contained the librettos and scores of which the Music Librarian had been so proud.

(392-393)

The harmony of music, intended as a form of therapy for the patients, transforms into chaos, anger, and anarchy for Pilgrim. However, strangely

enough, this is his form of therapy. He wants freedom—at least, physical freedom—and, locked in, can achieve it only by destroying the walls that hold him.

A short while later, when an orderly is preparing to take Pilgrim to another therapeutic spot, the spa, Pilgrim again runs to the music room. At this point, numbers and music, combined earlier in the description of the number of windows in the music room, culminate in a crescendo. These elements create suspense and alert the reader that something is about to happen. The appearance of the leitmotifs of music and numbers—evoked in a music room with twenty-one windows—marks the point at which Pilgrim's behavior explodes. Further, it is by means of the two combined leitmotifs—music and numbers—that he is able to escape the clinic. Therefore, while music provides therapy, a sense of togetherness, and mental relaxation for the other patients, it offers a vehicle of physical escape for Pilgrim. In this second instance, in which music and numbers converge, Pilgrim is in control. He talks the other patients into singing a counting song, which he conducts. As the patients intone the numbers in the song in descending order, Pilgrim escapes over the wall, following a plan prearranged with his caretaker, Forster. Though he succeeds in fleeing the clinic, Pilgrim is unable to escape his own mind and his knowledge that he has lived forever and cannot die.

Findley employs additional leitmotifs that are not borrowed from Mann, specifically the use of names and silence. These leitmotifs correspond with

Sass's descriptions of trends in schizophrenic thought. In Madness and Modernism, Louis Sass describes the language patterns of schizophrenia. Sass is one of few writers to see the utterances of those labeled "schizophrenic" as transcending mere babble. He infers that schizophrenic speech is a systematic language like any other and that one needs to learn this language to help those with the illness (176).

In Pilgrim, Findley's extensive use of naming and name-play appears to conform to Sass's description of "diverse modes of language play" (176). In case readers suspect that this excessive naming is merely coincidence or unmasterly writing by Findley, they need only skim the section from Pilgrim's journal containing Henry James's discussion of names. Sybil Quartermaine, Pilgrim's female companion, opens Pilgrim's journal and reads the following:

Henry James is given to lists. He told me this evening in the drawing room that his journal entries almost inevitably end with columns of names.

"People you've met?" I ask him. "Places you've been?" [. . .].

People and places I'm waiting to invent. Names I find, can be so provocative. Take the name *Bleat*, for instance. It occurred to me while riding on a train. What does one think of first? (32)

James continues to question his guest, Pilgrim, about associations he makes when he hears the word "bleat" (32).

Interestingly, if one applies Sass's descriptions of schizophrenic language to this journal entry, James's interest in lists is within the norm. The list-making is, for James, a form of entertainment—a healthy form of play and a way of presenting information about a character. His use of the list provides a contrast to the lists and discussions of those patients in the text whom doctors at the Burghölzli clinic label schizophrenic. For one thing, James follows the social conventions of conversation, providing the occasional transition from idea to idea, as with the phrase "for instance." He explains his interest in people's names and places, and in lists of these things. They provide fodder for his imagination as a writer. Further, he is able to see the humor in list-making. Pilgrim notes this humor when he writes, "James slid his eyes in my direction and gave a childlike smile. Almost smug. / I laughed. / 'You see, then, the value of lists,' he said. 'Indeed, I do. I've often wondered where writers get their characters' names'" (33). Here, Pilgrim's response is not what one would expect of a schizophrenic patient. He is thinking like a writer.

In a further act of naming, Findley presents a discussion by Lady Quartermaine that adds mystery to her personality and name. She explains her married name:

"My husband is the fifteenth Marquis of Quartermaine. His first name is Henry. There's an "e" at the end of Quartermaine. Too many ignorant people drop the "e". They don't understand the

French connection. Nine centuries ago, we came to England from the quarter of France known as Maine. I say we—but of course, I mean my husband's ancestors."

"Of course."

"I was born Sybil Copland. My father was Cyril Copland—Lord Copland [. . .]." (15)

In contrast to James's speech, Lady Quartermaine's begins to exhibit symptoms of the trend of schizophrenic speech that Sass terms "desocialization." Sass describes desocialization as "the failure to monitor one's speech in accordance with social requirements of conversation," accompanied by "terseness" and cryptic sentences that seem endless and lack "clear transitions" (178). In addition, he describes the failure of the "deixitic" aspect of speech in the schizophrenic: that is, "pointing and indicating who is being addressed, what the intended time frame is and what is being referred to" (178).

Lady Quartermaine claims that Pilgrim told her upon their first meeting in the garden, many years before, that his name was Pilgrim. Still, at times, Pilgrim claims to have no name. He does and does not have a name, in the sense that pilgrim (small p) is not a Christian name. In an internal monologue presented in italics in the novel, Pilgrim says to himself, "*I have no name*" (28). Perhaps when Pilgrim says his name, he will resolve the mystery of whether or not he is human.

On the cover of Findley's novel, the word "pilgrim" appears in lower case letters. The word's position on the cover clearly indicates that it is the book's title; however, if one has not read the book, there is no indication that it also functions as a name. Even if one suspects that "pilgrim" is a proper name, it is impossible to tell whether it is a first or last name, or whether it is male or female. The lower case font suggests that there could be text preceding or following this word—that the word could be stretched forward or backward, into the past or into the future. All of these possibilities hold some veracity once one reads the text.

The frontispiece of the novel, later reflected in the mention of a frontispiece in Pilgrim's journal, contains the same word in all capital letters. Findley repeats the name many more times in the short page and a half that contain the prologue: "Pilgrim muttered [. . .]"; "Pilgrim made his way across the grass [. . .]"; "Pilgrim looked up at the stars and leapt [. . .]"; "It was Pilgrim's valet-butler"; "Pilgrim had at long last succeeded. Or it seemed" (3-4). The many iterations of "Pilgrim" in this and several other chapters magnify the significance of the word. The word begins to form a jagged pattern throughout the novel, at times reading like a chant. This rhythmic repetition of the name resonates with Sass's contention that the language of schizophrenia is closely associated with music. Sass describes the musical quality of the schizophrenic text in a discussion of the poetry of Mallarmé:

Mallarmé advocated a poetry that would approach the condition of music, in which pure sound would nearly eclipse all reference; and he drew attention to the graphic appearance of a poem—not only to the positive markings of the letters but even to the negative spaces between them, which he compared to a "luminescent alphabet of stars" written across the "dim field" of the heavens. He also called for an art of ephemerality, a poetry of infinite ambiguity and suggestiveness that would depict "not the thing but the effect it produces." (199)

Examples of this "condition of music" are everywhere apparent in Findley's Pilgrim, especially in the repetitions and rhythms of the numerous instances of naming.

In a further instance of naming, Pilgrim, after the death of Lady Quartermaine, regresses into childhood memory by reminiscing about the storybook character Peter Rabbit. Before long, Pilgrim is wondering about the name of Peter Rabbit's cousin. Unable to stop himself, he launches into phonological association, listing name after name beginning with b—names of musicians, artists, characters, philosophers, sounds, types of animals and minerals, and family members, among others. He employs the b sound throughout this list, which takes many twists and turns, such as when he leaps from associating the name "Benedict Arnold" with "Benedict Bunny," to cousin "Benedick" (282). Finally, he arrives at the name of his own cousin, Benjamin:

"Benjamin. Ah yes. My cousin Benjamin. I bid you welcome" (283). This list of associations continues for almost seven pages. Pilgrim takes a circuitous route to access the name that he seeks. Seven pages of naming is obviously obsessive. Pilgrim's obsessive actions could be perceived as symptoms of "autonomization."

Concerning autonomization, a trend of schizophrenic speech, Sass writes, "Schizophrenics will often attend to the material qualities of the signifier, to the sound of words or the graphic appearance on the page, or they will become aware of a large number of the potential but normally irrelevant uses of words" (178). He states that "schizophrenics are hypersensitive to the polysemous nature of language" (178). They may become overwhelmed by a plethora of meanings, and they may "respond to normally unnoticed meanings in isolated syllables or letters" (179).

Findley depicts further features of autonomization through the use of the name "Pilgrim," reference to the first letter in the name, the graphic representation of it, and the overwhelming number of meanings that it presents. For example, the P in Pilgrim's name appears as a monogram on handkerchiefs. In a further instance, Findley presents an upper-case letter P with a period at the end. Much can be read into the parts of the words; when readers note concealed messages in the word, they vicariously experience the thinking of the schizophrenic mind that attends to an overwhelming level of detail and that searches for hidden meanings. A great deal can be "read into"

the capital P of pilgrim—Pilgrim without a future, Pilgrim as mortal, and Pilgrim as a patient barely noticed. Findley also transforms the word "Pilgrim" from a proper noun into a common noun when he writes "the pilgrim." Further, Pilgrim states, in a speech similar to several lines in the Hindu Vedas, "I am both male and female. I am ageless, and I have no access to death" (267). Pilgrim's statements suggest something beyond the mortal and human. Such confused and long-winded naming and the feeling that human identity is lost, when added to various other symptoms, are indicative of schizophrenic thinking.

In various chapters, Findley intersperses "Pilgrim" and "Mister Pilgrim" in the text to such an extent that the rhythms of these names begin to echo in the reader's mind. Repetition, according to Sass, is another symptom of schizophrenia. There is also an indecisiveness surrounding the naming of the protagonist. On the one hand, this juxtaposition suggests the doctor is mocking Pilgrim, and on the other, the title seems a sign of respect. Book 1, chapter 17, provides an effective example of the repetition of these names; there is an interweaving pattern of the words "Pilgrim" and "Mister Pilgrim" throughout. The narrator says "Pilgrim," and Jung says "Mister Pilgrim." This exchange occurs so often the reader can notice it just by glancing at the pages in the chapter. If, for instance, one were to take a marker and underline these two words every time they occur in this chapter, they would form a striking visual pattern; read aloud, they are hypnotically repetitive. This, too, is one of the ways that someone displaying schizophrenic thought-processes might

observe the work. It is as if the narrator is parodying what the other patients and helpers call Pilgrim. The word "Pilgrim," therefore, invites as many readings as possible, and all or none may be the correct one. As one doctor warns another, "You misread your patient" (305).

Sass notes similarities among these many possible readings, suggesting that this openness to various readings and the focus on the words' sound and graphic appearance comes close to a Derridian attitude:

That there is a connection between the sort of fragmenting awareness and an attitude of disengagement is made particularly apparent in many passages in which Derrida insists on the illegitimacy of restricting the meaning of any part of a signifying chain—of a sentence, phrase, word, or even syllable—to the particular meaning that may seem most obvious or appropriate to its actual linguistic setting. Since it is always possible to bring out other potential meanings by inscribing or grafting the signifying element on to other chains of signifiers, it follows, Derrida argues, that "no context can enclose"—and that we ought to open ourselves to all the other possible meanings this element could have. (203-204)

In Pilgrim this "fragmenting awareness" is present in the leitmotifs throughout, opening up possibilities for numerous connections among images.

Sass comments further concerning linguistic consciousness:

What Derrida in fact is recommending here is a peculiar mode of the linguistic consciousness—first narrowing, as it focuses in on isolated parts, then expanding as it incites an unchecked proliferation from the traces that seem to be discovered in each part (thereby precipitating assets into a kind of cognitive slippage). Underlying these responses to language is the adoption of a peculiarly hypothetical and disengaged stance: rather than directing our awareness toward what the speaker might actually have intended to convey, Derrida would have our awareness drift toward the things that could have been meant by certain isolated words or phrases if the context were different.

(204)

This depiction of "linguistic consciousness" is everywhere apparent in Pilgrim, in the narrator's detailed observations, sometimes in Pilgrim's hyper-awareness and observations of small details, and in the leitmotifs throughout.

Findley tells the reader several times that Pilgrim "is a man" (226). However, by reiterating the phrase "a man" to describe Pilgrim, the writer actually creates greater skepticism and mystery around this character, who seems to be both angelic and, later in the novel, beastly. Early on, the reader is met with "'What's his name this man?' Jung asked. 'A man called Pilgrim'" (13). Interested in playing with the word in more than one language, Findley also introduces the French word for Pilgrim, pelerin, which of course holds

many connotative meanings: religious pilgrim, peregrine falcon, British English "bloke," and American English "guy." These connotations of the word substantiate the notion that Pilgrim is a man. Kessler says, "my man has spoken" (223). Here, it is difficult to know whether this comment is meant as an expression of endearment or an expression of ownership of the patient.

Towards the end of the novel, Pilgrim proclaims, "But I am not a figure of speech. My name is Pilgrim" (443). This declaration is important, because each time the narrator mentions the word "Pilgrim" prior to this point, it is used as a figure of speech or a play on words—sometimes as a symbol, as Julian Evan points out, sometimes as a metaphor, as Aretha Van Herk discusses in her Canadian Forum review, and sometimes as a noun, but not necessarily as a proper noun.

There may also be a medical explanation for this declaration of "I am." As Sass explains,

given such profound experiences of ontological insecurity, of uncertainty about the very existence of the ego or the self, it is understandable that many schizophrenics will manifest the so-called "I am" sign—the habit of repeating over and over to themselves some desperate litany such as "I am"; "I am me, I am me"; "I am the one present in everything"; or "I am the mind, not the body." (215)

This sort of "I am" expression occurs throughout Pilgrim, from the declamation that the protagonist makes when he claims he is ageless and timeless to his pronouncement of his name.

Given Findley's excessive amount of naming and his many references and examples concerning naming, the associations for a nurse named Dora from *Kirschenblumen* (Cherry Flowers in English) are numerous. In the novel, Findley includes the name in several forms—Dora Henkel, Dora, Sister Dora, and sometimes Schwester Dora. If one places the last letter of the name first and adds the e that the French are fond of adding to the end of names (as Lady Quartermaine might do), the word becomes "adore." The name also recalls the Spanish prefix dora, which means "one who serves." One might also note that Dora is a shortened form of Dorothea, from the Greek meaning "gift of God."

Lest the reader fail to see "Dora" as having any significance other than as a name, chapter 14 of book 1 is dominated by this character: "Dora was leading the Countess [. . .]"; "Dora Henkel enjoyed Tatiana Blavinskeya's company [. . .]"; "Dora was forced to admit [. . .]"; "Dora's parents had [. . .]"; "The moon had always fascinated Dora"; "In Dora's case"; "Dora stood back [. . .]"; "Dora proceeded"; "Dora's hand" (84-88).

When readers become attentive to the repetition of the name Dora, the plethora of meanings it displays, and the parts of the word, they enter into the schizophrenic thought process. Sass notes, "The schizophrenic often seems

aware of a vast number of possibilities; but instead of focusing on only one [. . .] takes all the possibilities into simultaneous consideration" (129).

Dora, in later chapters, becomes Sister Dora. She is like a sister to Tatiana Blavinskeya, and there is, as well, the association with the "nursing sisters" of the past and present. At another point, Findley writes, "Sister Dora drifts by" (220). Indeed, she is like a ghost who floats in from another century. In later chapters, Findley portrays Dora as carrying medications now outdated and seldom used, but quite acceptable in the nineteenth century: "Sister Dora always kept a sedative standing by—a vial of ether, another of laudanum" (285). She turns from being the loving person, who is "other," is lesbian (loves T.B.), and who is caring and kind at the beginning of the novel, into a rigid, authoritarian nurse who carries medicine that was long ago replaced by newer and more effective medications.

In the final part of the novel, Dora becomes "Schwester Dora"; the reader's image of her shifts again. Findley uses the phrase "Schwester Dora" many times in the last section of Pilgrim. "Schwester" is also the name for a nursing sister, and the term recalls one of the nurses in Mann's Magic Mountain. There are many unnamed nurses in Magic Mountain, including the "corridor nurse" (107), "a private nurse"(312), and a guest dressed like a nurse (326), but Mann also mentions Sister Berta, Alfreda Schildknecht (291). Mann uses her name sparingly, and she appears "bored" (303) and does not have the love and devotion that Dora, a much more active nurse, displays. Unlike

the very present Dora, Mann's nurses appear as shadows in the background. Linked to the movement from the doctor-centered to the patient-centered text is a foregrounding of the role of the nurse. Findley's nurse, Dora, is thus more active than the Mann's nurses.

Findley mentions Dora's name so many times, and he adds so many extensions to it, that readers might think that every mention of Dora refers to some previous Dora forgotten in the annals of history. Although there is no sure way to know how many Doras or Dora-like characters Findley is alluding to, it is possible to discern at least one of them. When Findley uses the phrase "in Dora's case," he makes an intentional allusion to Ida Bauer, one of Freud's students and earliest subjects. Freud wrote a case study about Ida, in which he used "Dora" as a pseudonym for his patient. This study was published under the title "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (Dora)" (Davis). The play on the name contributes partly to the game of naming—the leitmotif of naming. It also serves as a further example of schizophrenic thinking, where endless associations of words and a plethora of meanings often occur, and where past and present become fused.

Doctors in Pilgrim are not free from the game of naming either. In the opening pages of the first chapter, Pilgrim notes the grass is "green." Shortly afterward, a Dr. Greene pronounces that Pilgrim is dead. Dr. Greene may be "green" as in immature, unintelligent, or inexperienced, as the name implies, since he pronounces Pilgrim's death when he only seems to have died.

Greene calls on a second doctor to verify that Pilgrim is dead, suggesting that he does not trust his own judgment. However, the name Greene may also imply life and growth; when he asks a second doctor to check the patient, his request might be a sign of caring. In this instance, the leitmotif of naming encourages the reader to remain open to possibilities and to various perspectives.

The name Dr. Furtwangler, meanwhile, suggests many possibilities for the character—one who is furtive, one who wangles his way, one who is a bit too slick in what he does. All associations that are readily made with the name are cold and negative. If we can trust the narrator, the name offers a good indication of the doctor's character: he appears as an "efficient figure" in a white coat, with an overdone bedside manner and "a well-practised smile" (8). It should be noted, however, that Furtwangler is also the name of a famous symphony conductor. Therefore, the doctor's name links him to the leitmotif of music—perhaps chaotic music.

Likewise, Dr. Jung's name is hardly exempt from the name-play. Emma, Jung's wife, refers to him several times as Carl Gustav, using the name given to him by his parents. Her tone when speaking this name is sometimes one of mockery and, at other times, of command. Emma also refers to Carl Jung as CG, reducing his name to a monogram, to initials that one might find on a handkerchief or a cigarette case. Sometimes, she merely refers to him as a "school boy." In this way, Emma reduces the image of Jung

to that of a childlike man with a wife to whom he is unfaithful and whom he views more as a mother than as a mate. Thus, this leitmotif of naming—this game of naming—discloses the childlike character of Doctor Jung, at least as he appears in Emma's view.

Forster, Emma, Wolf, Kessler, Schwarzkopf, Bertha (a nurse who reads Mann's Death in Venice) and other less prominent characters provide many possibilities for naming as well. Emma provokes association with Emma Bovary, the doctor's wife in Flaubert's famous novel, while Wolf recalls Freud's celebrated case study of the "Wolfman." Through connections such as these, historical and fictional medical write-ups blend with other features of the novel. They further contribute to the leitmotif of naming and to bringing the past and present into the now—the timeless state that Pilgrim feels he is living in.

Sass describes another trend in schizophrenia as the "impoverishment" of speech. He explains that patients may become "mute, overabstract, overconcrete, repetitive and stereotyped in their use of languages" (179). He further states that "blocking" is common (180). Silence—perhaps the most radical impoverishment of speech—is another significant leitmotif in Findley's novel. Paradoxically, silence is a language that speaks loudly in Pilgrim. As in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot, in which Vladimir and Estragon sit under a tree claiming nothing happens while a lot is happening, in Pilgrim, silence provides a space for extensive nonverbal communication and serves multiple purposes.

At times, silence is an indicator of medical problems or of possible medical symptoms, either physical or mental, or both. Findley presents several examples of silence in Book One of the novel. For instance, Lady Quartermaine says, "He [Pilgrim] is silent Herr Doktor. Mute. This has been so ever since he was found" (9). Dr. Furtwangler's response is "indeed it is not unusual" (9). He suggests that silence is a common symptom of mental illnesses, particularly schizophrenia. Later, Furtwangler reads Pilgrim's medical reports from other doctors and recommends that Pilgrim receive an examination of his larynx, in case he has any physical problem that might cause an inability to speak. Furtwangler demands of Pilgrim, "I want to know why you refuse to speak. Have you lost your voice? If you have there is treatment we can provide [. . .] (28). If we have no evidence of trauma in the larynx, I shall persist in asking my questions until, one day, you answer" (29).

Findley is able to employ Pilgrim's silence, which we can observe as part of his mental illness, to serve as a leitmotif that, in turn, performs functions beyond what we think of as the traditional use of this literary trope. The leitmotif of silence, at times, provides a space for the description and presentation of information, rather than dialogue. There are instances when Jung perceives Pilgrim's gestures and eye contact as forms of communication. When Findley mentions silence, he often follows this mention with information about other characters. For instance, Findley writes, "Silence, Furtwangler made a careful adjustment to the pattern of objects on his desk" (18). There

are several possibilities for Furtwangler's actions, but the text yields no single answer. Is Furtwangler simply thinking and absentmindedly organizing the objects on the desk, or is he obsessive-compulsive? Lady Quartermaine also experiences blocking of speech; it is difficult to determine why. Perhaps it is because she is not as proficient in the English language as in French and thus has to search for the right words to say, or possibly she is too ill to speak.

Furthermore, mentions of silence in the novel allow for inner speech that provides details about the characters' thought processes. In various instances, after the word "silence," there are words in italics signaling Pilgrim's inner thoughts. When Dr. Furtwangler asks, "Can you not speak to me? Will you not speak to me?" Pilgrim's silent thoughts are "Speak. It is useless" (28). Finally, silence sometimes foreshadows events, as when Pilgrim in his silence thinks "*Avalanche*"(29), and later an avalanche causes Lady Quartermaine's death (230). Like the leitmotifs of naming and music, the leitmotif of silence signals that the reader should sit up and pay attention.

This chapter demonstrates how Findley uses Mann's Magic Mountain as a framework for his novel Pilgrim. Throughout Pilgrim, fragments from the Magic Mountain appear in a word, a title, a sentence, an image, or a quotation. Significantly, Pilgrim borrows Mann's use of the leitmotif and employs it as a unifying element in the text. At the same time, Findley combines several leitmotifs—music and numbers to mention two—to show the chaotic mental states of his main characters and therefore subverts Mann's more harmonious

use of this literary trope. Findley also employs such leitmotifs as naming and silence, seldom used by Mann, to depict his main characters' disturbed mental condition. Ultimately, the main character, Pilgrim, is a leitmotif in that he is ever present and symbolizes both the past and present in a continuous now.

Findley's use of language simulates various features of the schizophrenic thought-process. Sass's description of the three main trends of schizophrenic language provides a tool for examining these features of Findley's work. Pilgrim has as a main character a patient in a clinical setting seen to by various caregivers; it is a highly language-based and carefully constructed text—all features of the patient-centered text in general.

CHAPTER 3

The Unruly, Patient-Centered, Long-Poem Sequence: Kenneth Sherman's

Words for Elephant Man

In the past several decades, there has been considerable interest in literary accounts of medical cases. One can attribute this interest, at least in part, to the much-acclaimed film version of Oliver Sacks's Awakenings, a book that describes catatonic patients at a Bronx hospital who succumbed to encephalitis lethargica during childhood. These patients were briefly brought out of their illness through the therapeutic use of L-Dopa, an anti-Parkinson drug. However, the continued administration of L-Dopa resulted in horrific seizures and significant relapses in many of the patients. More recently, Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace and Sylvia Nasar's A Beautiful Mind have received praise as creative studies. In the former, a young woman is sent to an asylum and later to the Kingston (Ontario) Penitentiary under suspicion of murdering her employer's housekeeper. Atwood's novel includes long passages pertaining to the case that could be described as medical in tone and content. In these passages, as Grace tells her story to Dr. Simon Jordan, the story becomes intertwined with Jordan's own narrative. In A Beautiful Mind, Sylvia Nasar borrows from scientific observations and related case studies to weave a "true" story about the mathematician John Forbes, who at the age of thirty was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Forbes's life

makes for an extraordinary drama because, despite his illness, he went on to win the Nobel Prize.

With the exception of Kenneth Sherman's Words for Elephant Man, which is based on the medical accounts of Joseph Merrick, there have been no Canadian long-poem sequences based on medical cases. Sherman's long-poem sequence is interesting not only because it is unique to twentieth-century Canadian poetry, but also because of its craft and form. Sherman draws on the famous British figure of Merrick, the "Elephant Man" (often described as a medical case), to sustain a subject for a long-poem sequence, to employ the figure of Merrick as a poetic mask, and to use this subject to create poetic tension and contrast. In so doing, he gives Merrick human dignity and autonomy. At the same time, Sherman demonstrates the constructedness of his patient-centered text; this seemingly simple collection of linked poems is an unruly one.

In June, 2003, I conducted an e-mail interview with Sherman (cited as Interview; printed in the Appendix) which provides entry points to further discussion of his text. This background shows why Merrick is an attractive subject for a poet. For one thing, an artist writing about a well-known figure such as Merrick has several factual texts to draw upon for information.

In a note at the end of Words for Elephant Man, Sherman explains that he borrowed information for his poem sequence from fact-based accounts such as Ashley Montagu's The Elephant Man: A Study in Human Dignity,

Michael Howell and Peter Ford's The True History of the Elephant Man, and Sir Frederick Treves's essay "The Elephant Man." In various instances, Sherman borrows so extensively from these other, more factual texts for his subject matter and diction that some of the pieces might be viewed as found poems. However, within his poetic text, he adds tension to the writing by subverting what he finds. When I asked Sherman about the text as a found poem, he responded that the "main advantage of Found Literature (after all, novelists use it too) is that it heightens irony" (Interview 146). (This point is discussed later in the chapter.) Although there was enough background material about Merrick to sustain a long poem sequence, there was also room for further exploration and poetic imagination in giving Merrick a voice.

By using a familiar subject, Sherman guaranteed that his long poem would attract interested readers. Indeed, the familiarity of Sherman's subject was an asset; as Sherman told me (E-mail June 6, 2003), his publisher was able to sell 2,000 copies of the text—a substantial number for a Canadian poet in 1983, even one living in a metropolis the size of Montreal. At that time, Canada was becoming receptive to the long poem. When Sherman wrote Words for Elephant Man, organizations such as the Canada Council, the League of Canadian Poets, and various regional foundations were providing considerable monies to poets. This funding was helpful to authors who needed to research subjects for long poems, and it helped to heighten exposure for writers of this form. As Sherman explained, "many long poems were being

written at the time and so I felt permission to go ahead and make use of the form" (Interview 141). Certainly, after the publication of long narrative poems by writers such as E. J. Pratt, F. R. Scott, Dorothy Livesay, Don Gutteridge, bp Nichol, Margaret Atwood, Robert Kroetsch (author of the much-acclaimed Seed Catalogue), and Michael Ondaatje (author of The Collected Works of Billy the Kid), there were a plethora of models from which to choose. Sherman, however, claimed that he was not greatly influenced by language-based poets such as Kroetsch or Ondaatje. In his words, "I was [. . .] taken by Gwen MacEwen's The T. E. Lawrence Poems, which appeared one year before my book. I loved the narrative force of her Lawrence. And her poem is less coy and tricky than many others one could mention" (Interview 141).

Sherman went on to explain that his long poem was profoundly influenced by Irving Layton, Dennis Lee, and Eli Mandel. Sherman studied under Layton at York University in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Layton was more than a mentor to him: "He'd often come by and have dinner with me and my wife. I dedicated the book to him to show my gratitude for what he'd given me as a teacher and artist." Dennis Lee, an editor at M&S, read Sherman's manuscript and made helpful comments. Eli Mandel, however, had the most significant impact on Sherman's creation of an "unruly" text. Sherman wrote that Mandel "was a marvelous reader. I had structured the poems in a straightforward narrative fashion and Eli pointed out that by flashback and juxtaposition I could create a greater variety of effects" (Interview 143).

Sherman said that he does not consider his sequence of poems to be fictionalized. He felt that Merrick "permitted me to use his figure as a poetic mask" (Interview 140). Through this poetic mask, Sherman was able to seek his own identity. Sherman was in his late twenties when he wrote this book, at a time when the poetry scene in Canada had become quite lively. He turned to poetry to discuss his own growing pains, and he found in Merrick a human being with whom he could identify. In response to the question, "Where's Kenneth Sherman in all of this?" he replied, "The person I was in 1982 is very much there in the poems" (Interview 148).

However, the mask of Merrick is not just a personal mask—it is also a mask for the identity of poets in general. This is a significant point. It leads Sherman to a discussion of the poetic use of tropes in the poem sequence:

One of the central tensions in the book is between science (medicine) and spirit (religion). This is acted out between Treves and Merrick. I was delighted to discover that Merrick had a religious bent and was reasonably well read. At the same time his deformity made it difficult for him to communicate. People couldn't understand him. I couldn't have asked for a more striking representation of the contemporary poet.[. . .]

One could see him as a modern day Job, Christ, or Hunger Artist [. . .]. He is suffering humanity. But because, in my book, he is the mask for a poet his voice is all important. That is what

defines him ultimately. (Interview 144-45)

To this end, Sherman's Words for Elephant Man is full of language and imagery related to the concepts of voice and speech.

The first poem, "A Psalm of the Elephant Man," establishes the significance of speech and communication in the collection, while demonstrating the unruliness of the text. This poem is divided into four parts. The initial lines begin in a simple and straightforward manner, with images of the Elephant Man's speech apparatus. The speaker depicts the apparatus as a bodily outgrowth. At the same time, he describes it metaphorically as a mollusk—a "clam"—and as a piece of machinery—"a tortured vent" (1-2). After the speaker notes this physically distorted apparatus, he attempts to describe the speech that comes out of it. Here, turning from direct metaphor to simile, he tries to describe the parts of his speech. His vowels are like warm-blooded vertebrates, "wild birds" (6), and his consonants are like machines, a wrecked engine that "grinds"(7) and "sputters"(8) because of damaged gears.

At the end of this second section, Merrick states, "my peculiar limp / beats time" (12). These seemingly simple words hold several meanings. The Elephant Man has already proclaimed at the beginning of the second section that "my speech is indistinct" (4). This line links the Elephant Man's limp (he had a congenital hip defect) to his broken speech patterns and to the poetic rhythm ("beats time") of the poet's words. His speech thus becomes distinct in terms of sound, pitch, tone, and timing. Paradoxically, however, it is not easily

separated from nature (the wild birds), his physical body, or machinery. Through speech—through poetry—what might originally seem like the estrangement of Merrick becomes his reconnection with nature, with the human body, and with machinery. At this point, the poem takes on another aspect of unruliness: it becomes not only a patient-centered text, but also a healing text.

Although Sherman strategically chooses the form of a religious hymn for the opening poem, he just as strategically places a scientific description taken from the Catalogue of the Museum of the London Hospital Medical College as the last poem in the collection. This final found poem, "From the Description of the Skeleton of the 'Elephant Man,'" is notable for its contrast with the first poem, for the tension it creates, and for its structure. "From the Description" includes medical language and objective scientific observations of the Elephant Man. Through this found poem, Sherman highlights the tension between religion and science.

This poem invites comparison and contrast with the first poem, "A Psalm of the Elephant Man" (11). Like the first poem in the collection, the last one borrows information from other sources: it is excerpted from a museum catalogue, which includes Treves's anatomical inventory of the Elephant Man's major body parts and their scientific measurements. Unlike the first poem, which employs biblical rhythms, this last one contains no religious imagery or strong rhythms. Instead, it presents a medical heading in technical

<i>Upper Limbs:</i>	<i>Right.</i>	<i>Left.</i>
Comparative weights (dry)		
Clavicle	3 $\frac{1}{8}$ oz.	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

(9-11)

These numbers might be part of a recipe for a physically distorted human being or for an anatomical drawing. Words and phrases such as "friable" and "soft texture" within the poem further lend to the notion of ingredients for a recipe, something easily crumbled or something dough-like. The poem becomes a formula for the components that make up the Elephant Man, as though a human being could be mixed together and made into a complete whole, like a cake.

Added to this radical move, the list for the right side of Merrick's body comes before that for the left; instead of reading left to right, we read the mirror image, right to left. This reversal interestingly reflects the way that technicians and doctors read x-rays. Radiologists and other doctors view the image on an x-ray film in reverse—right is on the left, and left is on the right. The earlier concept of "beating time," introduced in the first poem, is also played out here, because someone who reads these lines could set up a particular beat and rhythm—a chant of sorts—thrown off only by the fractions.

The unruliness is further strengthened by the contrast between the poem and the etching on the opposite page. This etching features short, delicately drawn line strokes with some dark spaces, merging the two sides

rather than presenting them as opposites. It preserves in art the delicate balance between medicine and spirit. While the poem may be viewed as a formula for making a living creature, it is also a poke at scientists who seek the essence of the human being in the physical form alone. In this way, the poem is Sherman's ironic look at the way in which science attempts to define a human being. The found poem, as Sherman contends, allows for this sort of irony to manifest itself.

The poem "Treves' Description of Merrick," which occurs part way through the text, is not only indicative of Sherman's use of the found poem, but also demonstrates the tension that he seeks to develop. In this piece, the tension is in the doctor-patient relationship between Treves and Merrick. Here, Treves's scientific language is a sounding board, and the Elephant Man persona bounces words off it, reacting to the clinical coldness of the doctor's written observations. As Sherman explained, "in the poem 'Treves' Description of Merrick' I used sections from Treves' famous essay and had Merrick respond with sections from the Psalms, the Book of Job, and pieces I'd invented. The effect is akin to a contrapuntal piece of music" (Interview 146).

Sherman excerpts statements from Treves's journal to juxtapose with comments by Merrick. Although Treves obviously attempts to be serious, factual, and measured in his description of Merrick, the responses by Merrick make Treves's words appear naïve. For instance, while Treves employs food comparisons such as "bony mass like a loaf" (3) and "a growth like a

cauliflower" (6) to describe Merrick's head and skin, Merrick makes the reader see the humorous side of these phrases by drawing on biblical quotations that offset the clinical description. In response to the description by Treves, the Elephant Man persona retorts with a reference to Psalm 22:7: "All who see me mock at me. / They make mouths at me, they wag / Their heads" (7-9). These three lines also play off the epigraph to the poem, which consists of a statement by Treves: "He (Merrick) had learned to read and had / become a most voracious reader. The Bible / And the Prayer Book he knew intimately" (2-3).

These biblical echoes remind the reader that human suffering has a much larger scope than that of one individual. It extends to all people in all times and places. But the poem is saying something more complex than this. By retorting with a passage from Psalms, Merrick acknowledges yet subverts the power of Treves. Merrick obviously sees and understands the disbelief on the faces of the people who see him. He also recognizes the astonishment in Treves's voice when he learns that Merrick has not only read the Bible but also memorized it. (After all, as Sherman said in his interview, Treves had hoped Merrick would not understand his own condition.) It is by reading and interpreting passages from the Bible that Merrick can disclose the foibles of others. Merrick metaphorically becomes the suffering Christ-figure, while Treves is put in the position of one of the mocking crowd.

In yet another passage Sherman borrows from Treves, there is mention

of food: "The thumb had the appearance of a / radish, while the fingers might have / been thick, tuberous roots" (48-50). The humorous, understated response from the Elephant Man persona is "God's own morsel" (46). Here, the persona mocks the food imagery and further demonstrates how small the human being is against the largeness of God. To put it another and more comical way, Merrick is merely a crumb to be eaten—or at least tasted—by Treves. This wordplay is significant to the poem as a whole; it adds to the unruliness of the text and to the image of Merrick as a mask for the poet, the lover of language, versus Treves who uses language for the practical purpose of providing information. Sherman described the interplay between these two, who speak seemingly different languages, in this way:

Thomas De Quincey said there are two types of literature: the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. The first teaches; the second moves. The literature of knowledge gives information while the literature of power heightens our capacity to be sympathetic. Treves' language falls in the knowledge camp. Merrick's is in the realm of the imagination. Throughout the book they play off one another. One could say that these uses of literature are emblems of larger themes: the rational versus the emotional, the pragmatic versus the sacred, Apollo versus Dionysius, etc. (Interview 146)

To provide Merrick with a voice—an identity—Sherman, throughout the

collection, includes poems that at first appear simply to describe things that are of emotional value to Merrick. Although these poems exemplify the people and things that occupied at least some of Merrick's thoughts, they also depict general human longing and suffering. At the same time, they express the gentle irony that is characteristic of Merrick throughout the collection. In poems such as "One Mother" and "A Pretty Lady," Merrick filters strong emotions such as longing and desire through an ironic outlook. In "One Mother," which appears at first to be a straightforward image of Merrick longing for the mother whom he idolized and idealized, Merrick cleverly demeans his stepmother and subtly indicates sibling rivalry, as when he describes "a thin lipped widow [the stepmother] with three / normal brats" (4-5). He uses a saying taught to him by his birth mother to further declaim his dislike for the stepmother: "God gives each of us only one mother / And after her death there is no other" (25-26).

Another poem, "The Model Church," depicts Merrick, helped by a nurse, building a church out of precut pieces of cardboard. In this poem, Merrick longs for something less perfect, something more organic: "I long to see a gnarled tree with red blossoms / weeds that bloom blue" (24-25). In other words, he longs to see things that do not define themselves as paradigms or models of completeness. "The Writer," written in the format of a letter of enquiry for a job, shows Merrick to be independent and capable. Paradoxically, the carnival job for which he applies will depict him as just the opposite. Thus, these simple poems do not stand as merely descriptive

pictures, but instead demonstrate human feeling and Merrick's capability to take control of his own life within the limits that other people have imposed on him.

Sherman's giving of voice to the patient stands in direct contrast to the work of Montagu and of Howell and Ford. These writers place Merrick in the background like a corkboard on which to present other people, things, and ideas. In fact, Montagu acknowledges that his The Elephant Man: A Study in Human Dignity is as much Frederick Treves's story as it is Merrick's.

Montagu's entire introduction centers upon the life of Treves and serves as a compressed bildungsroman that describes the doctor's birth, upbringing, education, appointment as "Surgeon-Extraordinary" to Queen Victoria, elected position as Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen, and stint as President of the Headquarters Medical Board at the War office. Finally, the introduction offers an account of Treves's first meeting with Merrick, which occurred sometime in 1884 (20-24). Figure 1 of the book, which follows a selection by Treves about Merrick, is a painting of Treves by Luke Fielden that is located in the London Medical Hospital. This image is followed by a photo of the cap and mask of Merrick, which is, in turn, followed by four photographs of Merrick. These photographs, which present Merrick in the nude from different angles, are accompanied by two additional pictures of Merrick's head and naked torso. Another set of photographs in the text depicts casts of various parts of Merrick's body such as his arms and feet, as well as an x-ray of his skull.

Montagu follows this presentation of visually severed parts with an account of Merrick's "personality development, human nature and experience" (27). This section is followed by yet more x-ray images of Merrick's skull and skeleton, as well as brief appendices with comments about Merrick's death and disease.

Howell and Ford, while devoting greater attention than Montagu to Merrick in the beginning of their book, also present pictures of the London Hospital, of Treves, of Tom Penner (the carnival manager), and of the carnival. In addition, they discuss fibromatosis, the disease that doctors of the era believed afflicted Merrick.

Sherman, unlike these previous writers, positions Merrick at the forefront of his book by giving him a voice. He does not suggest that Merrick is separate from the various environments in which he lives; rather, he implies that Merrick was a part of their fabric. For instance, in his depiction of the sideshow in which Merrick worked, Sherman places Merrick high in the social hierarchy. He also establishes a sense of community among those working in the sideshow. In addition, Sherman includes descriptive poems that emphasize the things that please Merrick—his cardboard replicas of churches, his memories of his mother, and his grooming case. With humor, Merrick is able to hold his own against the scientific jargon of Dr. Treves. He breaks down categories and acknowledges that neuro-fibromatosis is not the problem. Sherman's Merrick refuses to be labeled. Even in the final image of a skull, there are black, empty spaces that seem to suggest what is unknown

and perhaps never can be known. Merrick achieves freedom by eschewing categorization, as does Sherman's unruly text. By permitting Merrick a voice in this sequence of poems, Sherman frees him from the categories of freakishness and disease in which others had placed him.

CHAPTER 4

The Contribution of Medicine to the Poetic Use of Words and Images in
Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient

In the preliminary pages of the Vintage Edition of Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient, the publisher provides several quotations from unsigned reviews in the Irish Times and the Spectator that situate the text in the categories of romance novel and adventure story. Elsewhere, various critics—Thomas Harrison to name one—acknowledge Ondaatje's diffuse references to The Histories of Herodotus. Still others, such as David Williams in "The Politics of Cyborg Communications: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and The English Patient," examine the text, as Williams' title indicates, as a political novel. Tom Penner, in "Four Characters in Search of An Author-Function: Foucault, Ondaatje, and the 'Eternally Dying' Author in The English Patient," discusses the absence of a specific narrator in the novel. Additionally, in "The Reading Lesson: Michael Ondaatje and the Patients of Desire," Stephen Scobie devotes one paragraph to discussing the novel as a healing text; the principal part of his essay is, moreover, taken up with the image of "fire" and with the view that the text can be read as a long poem. Significantly, none of these critics gives more than brief mention of the novel as a medical text, an illness narrative, or a patient-centered text, although Ondaatje presents a considerable number of images that would support such a reading. A reading

that pays attention to the employment of medical images better enables us to see how the writing does three main things: lends verisimilitude to the text, simulates the vicarious experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (with its various symptoms) and shows that patients can also be healers, and healers can be patients.

Ondaatje uses medical images and ideas in diverse ways. He calls on the history of medicine, including the image of the shaman, the changing depictions and roles of the nurse, the use of early pharmaceuticals, and the theory of the four humors as Hippocrates presented these elements. As well, he draws on the history of medicine as material for creating intrusive memories and sudden flashbacks in the minds of his characters. (Flashbacks, while a common technique in much twentieth-century fiction, are also one of the primary symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]).¹⁰ Further, these flashbacks are multiplicitous: the images Ondaatje borrows from the history of medicine reverberate, resound, echo and reflect off other images in the text, intensifying the depiction of this mental illness and adding to the power of these reoccurring flashbacks for the readers. As well, intertextuality in English Patient contributes to the more general argument in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, that the unruly novel is highly conducive to the study of literature and medicine because it connects the reader-become patient with the past, the present, and a possible future.

Furthermore, Ondaatje depicts his characters' loss of self-identity and blurring of boundaries, two further symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Ondaatje is fully aware of the patient-healer dichotomies. Surprise, suspense, and personification are interspersed throughout the text and these elements simulate the two aforementioned symptoms of PTSD for the reader. Through the use of these literary devices in the text, the reader is invited to take on the empathetic process of feeling "with" and thinking "like" the patient, and to re-create him or herself as a patient with the symptoms of PTSD to better understand and perhaps help find ways to transcend this illness.

Moreover, Ondaatje develops the images of healer-as-patient and patient-as-healer in this poetic novel. PTSD negatively affects all four characters in the text. English Patient is about both illness and healing. All four characters—Hana, Caravaggio, the English patient for obvious reasons, and Kip—are patients in that they suffer trauma, but they are also healers, whether directly as in the case of Hana and Kip, or indirectly in their relationships to each other and in their actions throughout the novel. Ondaatje's construction of the patient-as-healer invites readers to experience vicariously the possibility, if not of recovery from pain and trauma, then at least of ways to live and function with these symptoms.

From a medical and literary standpoint, then, the desert doctor—the shaman—is one of the most intriguing images in the novel. Ondaatje has constructed this fantastic and illusionary figure from previous depictions of

historical shamans, lending verisimilitude to the text.¹¹ However, Ondaatje is not the sort of writer who merely settles for writing a referential text. As with Ondaatje's earlier poetic novels and long poems, English Patient is an unruly and self-reflexive text, lending itself to greater immediacy and the need for interaction from its readers. In short, he employs the shaman figure to powerfully enact the English patient's trauma-induced memories and sudden flashbacks. This shaman is the English patient's vivid and fantastic flashback to the shaman who took care of him when he was initially discovered by tribesmen in the desert.

At the same time, this extraordinary image of the desert doctor motivates the English patient to recall religious images from childhood: "the figure resembled most of all those drawings of archangels he had tried to copy as a schoolboy, never solving how one body could have space for the muscles and such wings" (9). This quotation implies that the English patient, as a child, was more intent on discovering the power of the body—the superman perhaps—than the soul. And, in connection with this shaman-figure, Ondaatje presents other allusions to biblical scenes as well. The shaman first appears to the English patient, from a distance, as a head upon a table. The allusion to John the Baptist's head is one possibility here, but more likely Ondaatje is referring to the image of David and Goliath that also appears later in the novel, in reference to a painting by Caravaggio titled "David with the Head of Goliath"—an image that the English patient interprets as "Youth judging age at

the end of its outstretched hand" (116). Initially, then, the shaman manifests the characteristics of a biblical figure. In short, he is a prophet of the desert, who appears spectrally to the English patient. The desert that this figure has adapted to with such ease is often viewed as a site of visionary experience, hallucinatory revelation, and radical transformation. The number forty in the mention of the Forty Days Road that the shaman travels is a long favored biblical number as in the "forty days and forty nights" of flood (Gen. 7.4). However, in the end, by use of the carnivalesque, and in the spirit of the unruly text, Ondaatje undermines the religious significance attached to the shaman. The shaman reminds us of other carnival acts such as that of a showman cutting through the body of a person whom he coaxes into a box, later to have the person appear whole, or of a talking head seemingly without a body. Ondaatje fully intends this image to intrigue, entertain, and surprise his readers. Suspense and surprise serve again as techniques that the traditional shaman uses to heal the patient, and readers are drawn into this simulated experience.

Finally, this shaman, larger than any living person, and far more incredible in size and brightness than any historical shaman, because he is an embellishment born of the English patient's drugged and delirious state, simulates the experience of a morphine induced hallucination.¹² Ondaatje, with cinematic effect, describes the English patient's vision of the desert doctor:

he saw a man's head on a table moving towards him, then realized the man wore a giant yoke from which hung hundreds of small bottles on different lengths of string and wire. Moving as if part of a glass curtain, his body enveloped within that sphere. (9)

Ondaatje combines verisimilitude with the simulation of PTSD-induced flashbacks and intrusive memories and the further simulation of a morphine induced state in the English patient, to create this credible and extraordinary image in a moment of awed silence. After all, it was one of the shaman's roles, both in the past and here in the text, to shock or awe the patient into a greater arousal or state of mind (Jakobsen 250). This arousal or changed state of mind takes the patient / the reader out of the everyday world, helping to relax him or her, thereby contributing to the healing process, or to providing comfort when healing is no longer possible. In essence, the image of the shaman carries the power to transform the readers' feelings and thoughts, but not necessarily by religious means.

Paradoxically, this shaman is at once self-contained and completely fragmented. For instance, at various points in the "Villa" section, the unidentified narrator describes the shaman-figure as "an archangel," "a merchant doctor," "a king of oils and panaceas," "a Baptist," and "a vessel unto himself" when he walks across the desert with "his ears plugged with two small corks" (9-10). Moreover, in a compelling image Ondaatje says, "He made a skin cup with the soles of his feet" (10). Thus, the soles of the

shaman's feet when cupped together serve as a utensil—a mixing bowl for his potions. Add to this image the image of the shaman carrying his "shop" upon his back and he appears self-complete. Strangely, this self-completed shaman has no name, but he does not need one to define his identity, because he is already known to everyone on the Forty Days Road. He not only knows who he is, but also carries most of what he needs with him, or at least knows how to barter for the few things that he does require. Still, he is also fragmented into all the above things. Ondaatje further represents this fragmentation when he mentions the shaman "moving as if part of a glass curtain" and appearing as "a wave of glass" (9). The suggestion here is that the shaman must have "gone through" the experience of fragmentation at some point, in order to understand the breakdown of his patient. Yet the healer is also a patient because fragments of him are reflected in all four main characters. For this reason the shaman is not only an intriguing poetic image, but also another literary device—a leitmotif. For instance, like Hana, the healer provides comfort to the English patient. In the desert he spreads comforting herbs over the patient's body; Hana similarly applies lotion to the patient's burned body (4).

Furthermore, Ondaatje allies the shaman with Caravaggio in that he is self-sufficient in bargaining for food and his few needs. He is similar to yet contrasts with Kip. The speaker calls the shaman a doctor and he appears at the beginning of the novel, while Kip appears as a doctor in the final chapter.

This careful positioning of figures is noteworthy. After all, opening and closing chapters are traditionally permitted, even expected, to convey matters of special import. And Ondaatje's strategic positioning of these figures draws the reader's attention to them.

The implications here are several fold: the role of the doctor, while it may be pushed to the periphery in recent patient-centered texts, still overshadows the novel; the boundaries between past and present are not clearly delineated; and the blend of Eastern and Western medicine, rather than being merely chaotic, may be a healthy alternative to veering too far toward scientific medicine or too close to relying on the supernatural outlook for healing purposes. Whatever the case, the shaman, albeit a brilliant apparition born of Ondaatje's craft and his English patient's drugged mind, is an image that can bring comfort. This shaman, in his dispersal of essence into the other characters' lives, simulates several symptoms of PTSD, namely fragmentation and loss of boundaries. It is, paradoxically, his total fragmentation that gives him his experience of wholeness and the understanding of the entire experience of this illness. In his fragmentation, this brilliant illusionary figure functions as a leitmotif to create a fragile thread of unity for the text. That is, throughout the text readers recognize the shaman's essence in the four main characters and are thereby drawn back to the initial image of the shaman and therefore to the patient and his conjuring up of this figure.

In a further borrowing from the history of medicine, Ondaatje juxtaposes ancient (Eastern) remedies with scientific (Western) pharmaceuticals in order to enhance his poetic wordplay and to demonstrate the need for a symbiosis between these two dichotomies. In his strikingly poetic image of the shaman with his many potions in shiny bottles, Ondaatje writes: "With the uncorking of each tiny bottle the perfumes fell out. There was an odour of the sea. The smell of rust. Indigo. Ink. River-mud arrow-wood formaldehyde paraffin ether. The tide of airs chaotic" (10). In fact, he suggests that the scents are so strong that camels scream (10). In addition, visual images of "ground peacock bone" and "green black paste" titillate the readers' visual, auditory, and olfactory senses. To this already astonishing sensory image, Ondaatje adds that this bone is "the most potent healer of skin" (10) and difficult to obtain except by bartering. The need for the desert doctor to barter for these remedies contributes to their rarity.

In fact, Ondaatje, in part at least, lists these highly imagistic healing balms in order to contrast them with more scientific pharmaceuticals. He contrasts the image of the shaman mixing his panaceas and rubbing "ground peacock bone" (2) onto the body of the English patient with that of Hana secreting medications. Ondaatje writes, "She had salted away codeine tablets as well as morphine" (42). Here, the words, faithful to another disembodied domain, do not carry much imagistic power. There is a movement from "salt" (embedded in the verb "salted"), basically harmless and necessary in the

desert to stave off heat stroke, to the more potent pain killer codeine that is white like salt, to morphine which belongs to the same family as codeine (both are narcotics) except that it is usually injected rather than given in pill form and provides faster relief from pain.¹³

Here Ondaatje, in the interest of words, plays with the noun "salt," changing it to a verb, making loose associations from one word to the next to indicate degrees of potency. Codeine and morphine are medicines that are usually scientifically produced and carefully measured, but Hana puts measured doses aside in her attempt to lessen the English patient's pain. Although the metaphorical images of the shaman's healing balm have the greatest impact on the reader's senses, ironically these images are the creation of the English patient's drugged mind. Ondaatje creates a symbiosis—a fusion of Eastern and Western remedies and pharmaceuticals—that provides the ingredients for an intriguing image and the appropriate mix for an interesting story.

There are yet other borrowings from the history of medicine. Critics, among them Thomas Harrison, turn to Herodotus for a discussion of the allusions and echoes in the text, noting that he is mentioned many times and that The Histories by Herodotus is found in the English patient's possession when he is discovered in the desert. However, we can just as easily look to Greek medical thinkers to find other possibilities for parts of the text. Ondaatje's incorporation of the elements into the text parallels the theory of

the four humors. earth, air, fire, and water are elements of nature clearly represented, especially in the first section, "The Villa."

The Greek thinkers, and in particular Hippocrates, whom we know as the Father of Medicine, believed that all things consisted of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. In turn these elements were linked to the four seasons. And, in a further link, these ancient thinkers believed that the body contained four humors (fluids): yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm. A loss of the natural balance of these humors in connection with nature and the elements would result in illness.¹⁴ What makes this ancient understanding pertinent to English Patient is the fact that the desert doctor may appear supernatural, but he treats the patient with the natural elements, all in some way related to earth, air, fire, and water, rather than with religious philosophy or dogma.

The four elements relate, sometimes directly and sometimes by inference, to the four main characters in the text. Hana, for example, is often associated with water (life force), while the English patient is dramatically associated with fire and the dryer parts of the earth, such as the desert. Kip is representative of the earth as he digs in the ground to defuse bombs (and in the Vintage edition Kip is presented on the cover, climbing a rocky surface). And finally the fourth main character, Caravaggio, blows in like the wind, and is connected closely to the fourth element, the air.

Further, the seasons—four of them—are always present in the art works on the inside of the nunnery walls. Meanwhile, the outward seasons change so they are sometimes in accord and sometimes out of balance with the characters' personalities. But in the end, any link of the elements with the seasons and in turn with the body (as in bodily fluids) is shattered by the machine guns. The machine guns have shattered the balance of nature, and the bombs have shattered walls upon which the seasons are painted. In turn the characters are shattered by the trauma of war, so both the balancing of the elements within themselves and the outward balancing with nature and others is thrown out of order. Hana, for example, though she is associated with water, also becomes associated with light, and by extension "fire" (she lights the candle to read by). The English patient's penis "sleeping like a seahorse" (3) is also evocative of the water beneath the burning of the desert sand.

We would expect heat, dryness and fire to be associated with passion. Yet Hana, whom we would assume to be the passionate one, because we know that she is young, is often associated with coldness and water. Similarly, the English patient in his burnt state would most immediately suggest the fire of passion, although the patient is, in fact, quite studious and presumably self-possessed. He is the one who has read Herodotus, made scholarly notes and pasted other writing into the Herodotus text. Again, because the machine guns and bombs have shattered the balance of nature and the balance within each character, the humors are disharmonious, and as a result illness reigns, as

demonstrated in the unbalancing of the elements, the seasons, and the bodies and minds of the traumatized characters.

These combined opposites that seem confusing to our understanding of English Patient may reflect the opposites that early thinkers found in the word "phlegm" itself. Jouanna, in Hippocrates, writes about these opposites:

The evolution of the word 'phlegm' [. . .] reveals a strange prehistory. In Hippocrates' time, it was generally considered to be the coldest humor, predominant in winter. But, etymologically, the word phlegm denoted "fire"; this was the meaning it had in Homer. It may be supposed therefore that when the term came to be employed in medicine, it initially signified an inflammation; that later it acquired the more specialized sense of a humor resulting from inflammation; and that eventually it came to denote—exactly how, we cannot say—a natural humor such as bile and, ultimately, by an unsuspected reversal of meaning, the coldest humor of the body. The modern meaning of this term, which refers to an acute inflammation of the cellular tissues, has therefore remained faithful to the earlier medical sense of its etymological root. (316).

Given Ondaatje's obsessive interest in words, he may well have intended readers to make the connection to the early meaning of the term. Regardless of his intent, the prehistory of the word "phlegm" remains an apt comparison to

the mix of elements in the various characters, and in particular to Hana and the English patient.

In another borrowing from scholarly medicine, Ondaatje draws on the history of nursing—a rather underdeveloped area of study—for the depiction of Hana, the nurse, and for the construction of the English patient. The image of Hana not only retains fragments of early nurse stereotypes, but also represents thousands of nurses who never made it to celebrity status. After all, it is not until the advent of the patient-centered texts, of which only a handful existed until the 1960s, that the nurse becomes a prominent figure overshadowing the image of the doctor.

Ken Kesey's portrayal of Nurse Ratched in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is, of course, one such contribution. A few other female figures such as Boethius's Lady Philosophy in The Consolation of Philosophy and Dickens's Sairey Gamp can be included among the early depictions of nurse-types. Further, we can add Florence Nightingale, Edith Cavell and Walt Whitman to the list of names that came to stand as representations for war nurses of the time. Still, with the exception of these few, many thousands of nurses who worked under almost unbearable conditions during times of war remain minor figures if mentioned at all in literature,.

Briefly, as background for Ondaatje's construction of the nurse Hana, there have been four main depictions of nurse-types in literature: as mother figures, as erotic and immoral figure, as ecclesiastical presence, and (with the

celebration of such figures as Florence Nightingale) as medical professional. In the first instance, the mother figures take on either positive or negative qualities. Leslie Fiedler, in "Images of the Nurse in Fiction and Popular Culture," writes that "Nurse signifies 'nurturer,' and 'milk giver,' which is to say, Mother or surrogate mother" (101). In contrast, Anne Hudson Jones notes that Nurse Ratched in One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is a depiction of the "Bad Momma" figure, who is physically big, unrelenting, and controlling of everyone in the institution, including the doctors (11).

As to the second and third types, Fiedler writes:

After all, nurses preside at the bedsides of males—privileged, even required, unlike other members of their sex, except for prostitutes, to touch, handle, manipulate the naked flesh of males. And they tend, therefore, to be portrayed also as erotic figures of a peculiar, ambiguous kind. They are, that is to say, presented as being at once theoretically taboo (this their uniforms declare, white, cool, starched, reminiscent of the habits of Nuns pledged to eternal chastity. (101)

Additionally, G.W.L. Nicholson in Canada's Nursing Sisters comments on the negative image of nurses:

It was a time when everyone in England knew that hospital nurses were notoriously immoral. No respectable woman could expose herself to the conditions under which nurses lived and

worked. "It was preferred," wrote Florence Nightingale, "that the nurses should be women who had lost their character, i.e., should have had one child." The head nurse of a London hospital had told her that 'in the course of her large experience she had never known a nurse who was not drunken, and there was immoral conduct practiced in the very wards', of which she gave me some awful examples." (6)

Celebrity war nurse Florence Nightingale is widely noted for making scientific studies and keeping statistics and notes concerning patients. She has gained renown in part because her notebooks are readily available and because they have served to give the nursing profession a more respectable name. Several other celebrities, though, such as Edith Cavell and Walt Whitman held amoral positions. Cavell has become a vaguely political figure because she was executed as a spy, and Whitman was best known for his poetry and for the rumors that he was immoral in his dealings with young boys hospitalized due to injuries during the Civil War.¹⁵

Ondaatje's Hana is a composite of various stereotypical types of nurses and thus serves as an example of the deliberate constructedness of patient-centered texts. On the opening page of English Patient Hana is portrayed as "nursing" the English patient. In this instance, the word "nursing" carries not only the meaning of caring for, but also the connotation of breast-feeding a baby. Also like a mother, Hana knows the English patient's body. She carefully

washes him as a mother might wash a child. Further, Ondaatje describes the English patient as Hana's "despairing saint"(3), and in this image there is the suggestion of innocence. As well, the English patient lies supine without a pillow, like a carving on a sepulcher perhaps, but also like a baby who does not use a pillow. Hana reads to the patient just as a mother might read a bedtime story to a child. She skips passages while reading if she feels like it, in the way that a mother might read to a small child who is comforted by closeness and the sound of her reading, rather than seeking the meaning and content of the story. In the second image of Hana, immediately after this one, Ondaatje presents a far more sensuous description of Hana's handling of the English patient, bordering on the erotic. In fact, Ondaatje might just as well be referring to a woman on a beach spreading lotion on a sunburned lover: "She pours calamine strips across his chest where he is less burned and she can touch him. She loves the hollow beneath the lowest rib, its cliff of skin. Reaching his shoulders she blows cool air on his neck, and he mutters" (11).

Still, in the midst of these descriptions, there are also ones that are ecclesiastical. For example, Ondaatje presents the image of Hana carrying a "six foot crucifix from the bombed chapel to the garden" (14). But this is no wooden crucifix around her neck, and the garden is not the garden of Eden. The crucifix serves a practical purpose. "She," Ondaatje states, "used it to build a scarecrow above her seedbed, hanging empty sardine cans from it [. . .]" (14). Ondaatje undermines the traditional symbolism aligned with the

image of the cross and its connotations of redemption by including the comical image of sardine cans hanging from it. The garden, moreover, is not the garden of Eden but a "ruined garden" (33) containing the vestiges of war.

In yet a further image of ecclesiastical import, Hana takes care of the patient in an old nunnery. Here we are reminded of the nursing sisters who took care of the sick and dying. As well, monasteries were places for healing both body and soul. This nunnery has walls blown out of it, art works mixing with nature, and the lives of characters from different countries coming together within. It stands as a testament to the loss of boundaries that war creates.

Lastly, like Florence Nightingale, known as the Lady with the Lamp, Hana too carries a light. Her light is a candle: "She lights a match in the dark hall and moves it onto the wick of the candle: Light lifts itself on her shoulders" (1). Moreover, at the end of the novel Hana is thirty-four years old, the same age as Florence Nightingale when Nightingale led a group of women to nurse soldiers at Scutari in the Crimean War ("Nightingale, Florence"). However, the image of Hana as a professional is undermined by the fact that she too has been shattered by the war and succumbs to the symptoms of PTSD. Hence, Hana becomes not only a healer but also a patient.

This image of the healer as patient and patient as healer is a common feature among most patient-centered texts. In English Patient, ultimately all the characters present themselves as patients. Even Hana and Kip who

perform the major roles as caregivers (Hana as a nurse, and later Kip as a doctor) suffer from PTSD. As noted earlier, symptoms that manifest themselves in PTSD patients include a loss of self-identity and a blurring of boundaries. Hana, as Ondaatje represents her, loses her sense of identity and acts outside the normal boundaries of an adult woman in her culture. She becomes a patient succumbing to mental trauma. She is in shock, and therefore denial, regression, and sublimation (not uncommon in patients suffering from PTSD) become methods of coping. Ondaatje employs these medical symptoms as a means of lending verisimilitude to the novel. For most of the first chapter, Hana is merely referred to as a pronoun, "she," as in the first paragraph of the novel:

She stands up in the garden where she has been working and looks into the distance. She has sensed a shift in the weather. [. . .] She turns and moves uphill towards the house, climbing over a low wall, feeling the first drops of rain on her bare arms. She crosses the loggia and quickly enters the house. (3)

Ondaatje's reference to Hana as "she" throughout most of the first chapter is significant. There are further instances of Hana's loss of identity throughout the chapter. For example, the English patient whose eyesight has been damaged by the fire and further blurred by morphine can neither see nor touch Hana, so he hears Hana's voice when she reads to him, and he hears her feet smacking down when she plays hopscotch and relates the sound to that of

marching soldiers. In fact, it is not until Caravaggio is introduced in the novel that Hana goes from being a pronoun or merely a "talking voice" to a woman with a proper name: Hana (32).

Ondaatje depicts Hana's loss of identity and a blurring of boundaries by blending her with the landscape and the things in it, often in part, rather than as a whole. For instance, in the final page of the "Villa" section, we are told that Hana removes all mirrors. After she removes the mirrors, Ondaatje writes that "she grips the sink and moves her head from side to side, releasing a movement of shadow" (23). So throughout the chapter, Hana is the pronoun "she," she is a shadow, and she is "a talking face" (5). To Caravaggio she is like a dog: "He watches her sniffing him out, searching for the trace" (39). As well, she, in her bodily dispersion, is a "listening heart," and an occupation, that of nurse. Perhaps Ondaatje's most revelatory sentence concerning her loss of identity is, "Now she is darkness. Just a smell of smoke" (15). Here, the indication is that Hana, like the hundreds of other military nurses and caregivers, will disperse after the war and become like smoke wafting into the general atmosphere, unseen and unremembered.

Hana, as a patient, experiences still further symptoms of PTSD. She uses denial, regression, and sublimation as methods of coping. She also displays symptoms of restlessness, akin to obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) which also would be a common condition considering her situation. Ondaatje uses these medical symptoms as a means of lending verisimilitude.

Ondaatje clearly presents the image of nurses in shock in this passage:

Nurses too became shell-shocked from the dying around them. Or from something as small as a letter. They would carry a severed arm down a hall, or swab at blood that never stopped, as if the wound were a well, and they began to believe in nothing, trusted nothing. They broke the way a man dismantling a mine broke the second his geography exploded. The way Hana broke in Santa Chiara Hospital when an official walked down the space between a hundred beds and gave a letter that told her of the death of her father (1).

Here, Hana represents the many military nurses who suffered the shock of war. If she were not in shock, the dampness of the villa, the smell of carnage, the constant suspense of living in a space that may be booby-trapped would matter to her. These things no longer seem to bother her, though. She can sleep in a dead man's hammock and walk in a dead man's shoes without thinking about it. As well, the boundaries between male and female are blurred. She wears men's clothing, cuts her hair, and becomes reckless, not features considered appropriate to a woman at that time.

Hana's image as an adult blurs with that of a child. Ondaatje depicts her regression in two ways: through the child-like drawings that she creates and through the game of hopscotch—a young girl's game—that she plays. These regressive tendencies allow Ondaatje to make multiplicitous poetic

connections in the novel. The child-like drawings parallel with the tracing of archangels by the English patient, and remind the readers of the paintings on the walls of the nunnery. By playing hopscotch Hana makes an irony of war. Hopscotch was, in its origin, a game reaching back to the time of the ancient Roman Empire. Hopscotch squares were once used by the military for training exercises, because it was a means for soldiers to increase their dexterity and footwork. Children then began imitating the soldiers who were preparing for war. The children made smaller representations of the squares, created a method of scoring and thereby turned this military exercise into a game (Salley).

Hopscotch is also a game of balance and, in a world out of balance, the hopscotch game may be Hana's way of attempting to regain balance. Step on a line, miss a square and the game is over; similarly, if one of the characters steps in the wrong place a bomb could explode. Moreover, Hana ultimately plays the game in darkness, because nothing matters. There is no balance, only the sounds of war "smacking down," "shoes banging and slamming" on the dark floor (15). The burned man cannot discern the banging sound. To him, it could just as easily be gunfire or bombs exploding, as Hana playing hopscotch. The thought is not far-fetched for all the characters suffer from shell shock and any loud sound is a reminder of war.

The English patient is, of course, a patient, but in some ways he too is a healer both to Hana and to Ondaatje's readers. He provides Hana with the

opportunity to have a substitute father and child. He meets her need to have someone to care for, which, given the excruciating circumstances that nurses had to work under, would be a necessity. One does not spend day and night attending to wounded young soldiers and then just sit down and relax. There is a component of restlessness, akin to OCD, that often presents itself as part of the PTSD symptoms, and so this ability to continue caring for a patient provides a healthy transition phase for Hana. The patient also provides her with a wealth of stories, and perhaps the stories distance her from her immediate past of tending so many wounded soldiers. Further, the religious images that enshroud the English patient suggest that he has healing qualities. He has plummeted burning out of the sky like God perhaps, or like a fallen angel. Hana says he "has the Hipbones of Christ [...]. He is her despairing saint" (3). Earlier, in the scene of the cave with Catherine, he rolls away the boulder. He falls, and he emerges from fire, and from the lower parts that are water, to become like the desert itself—a place of burning. In the end, this saint-like quality is only Hana's view of him, and his only redemption may be in the merging with the other characters. He is at most a wounded healer.

The English patient is a healer / helper to readers in several ways: he provides fantastic images and stories that allow readers some escape from the present day world. Moreover, he helps to hold the novel together. In a sense, he serves a function similar to the one fulfilled by the food scenes in novels by Charles Dickens or James Joyce where a gathering at a meal provides an

opportunity to bring characters into contact with each other and to allow for lengthy discussion and conversation. The English patient is the center around which the other characters gather. When he succumbs to complications from third-degree burns, the story ends.

Like the other characters in English Patient, Kip is both a patient and a healer. On the one hand, Kip suffers from PTSD, and displays symptoms of this illness such as numbness and paradoxically hyper-alertness, through flashbacks and intrusive memories, and by means of the blurring of boundaries. On the other hand, Kip is a composite of healer types. Ondaatje contrasts Kip with the shaman figure at the beginning of the novel, but he also depicts Kip as nurturer "nurse," as a medical technician, and as a stereotypical doctor. As readers, we view Kip's numbness through Hana's eyes, appropriately enough since she is a nurse: "She watches Kip lean his head back against the wall and knows the neutral look on his face. She can read it" (178).

As well, Kip is hyper-vigilant. He has become so alert to what can kill that he himself becomes a weapon or part of a machine that can save or kill. Ondaatje writes, "He simply acknowledges the possibility of rain, a certain odor from a shrub. As if his mind, even when unused, is radar, his eyes locating the choreography of inanimate objects for the quarter-mile around him, which is the killing radius of small arms" (87). In a second instance Hana reacts to Kip's mechanical action:

He was standing at the foot of the bed, his arms hung over the rifle that rested across his shoulders. She disliked this casual handling of the gun, his lazy spin towards her entrance as if his body were the axle of a wheel, as if the weapon had been sewn along his shoulders and arms and into his small brown wrists.(88)

This image also presents a fusion in which the human becomes mechanical. In an earlier example of this fusion, Ondaatje writes, "Now his [Kip's] face is a knife" (28).

Images of Kip that present flashbacks to earlier happenings occur often in the novel. Ondaatje constructs the image of Kip treating a child's chemical burn, and immediately we are drawn back to the images of war. Moreover, when Kip's daughter drops a fork, he catches it, and this not only displays his dexterity, but also his memory of the war, for after all, the wrong silver piece landing suddenly could cause an explosion (301). His memories, no matter how much he has succeeded, are of the past images of his time in the desert.

Nevertheless, Kip is also to a great extent the healer. Kip is the one who builds suspense for the readers, and then allows release from it when he manages to defuse the bombs. He shows us, through his successful disposal of dangerous goods each time—through surprise and the release from it—that he will survive no matter what. In fact, Kip is as much a nurturer as Hana. He brings a sense of calm to Hana. And, in a representative image, Kip is the one

who gives condensed milk to the English patient. More prominently Kip is also a medical technician. Concerning the defusing of the large bomb, Ondaatje describes him as "shaving it off in layers, hoping the freezing would accept this kind of surgery" (214). Further, when Kip stands in water trying to defuse an Esau bomb, comparisons are made to medical technology:

There was no magic or X-ray that would tell anyone when some small capsule broken, when some wire would stop wavering.

Those small mechanical semaphores were like a heart murmur or a stroke within the man crossing the street innocently in front of you. (270)

Then, in the final chapter we are told that Kip "is a doctor" (299), and so our expectations of his success are fulfilled. He has brought the East and West together—the Eastern young man, returned as Westernized doctor to the East. In this way, Kip, who has a role as healer throughout the novel, is now a licensed healer. He also serves to bring the novel full circle, thereby providing a sense of completeness, which some might consider to be a sign of health. His office with the fan—a false wind—is a reminder of the shaman's shop and the desert winds of the first chapter. Kip's papers contrast with the oral knowledge of the shaman. He is other and as other he is severed from his homeland, but manages to merge with the West and learn what he needs in order to return home and do useful work.

Caravaggio is both patient and healer too. He has lost both thumbs and the bandages are heavy on his hands that once stole for a living. He serves a practical purpose in the novel, in that he is able to obtain food for Hana and the others. He also heals in that he is able to give Hana a sense of her past before war, and provide her with her name. Furthermore, he provides missing pieces to the English patient's identity. He allows the triangle of characters to become a foursome, lending an "altered harmony" to the novel that deals with the unbalancing that war causes.

Although the aftermath of war has isolated the characters and left them with haunting flashbacks, it has also blurred boundaries between the oral and the written, East and West, landscape and body, male and female, past and present, the human and the machine. In essence it has allowed the characters to forge new connections to the past, to the landscape, to technology, to each other, and to find some peace in making these connections.

CHAPTER 5

Unruly Texts: Metapathography in Works by Margaret Atwood and
Raymond Carver

Margaret Atwood's Morning in the Burned House and Raymond Carver's A New Path to the Waterfall are two accounts that are clearly autobiographical, Atwood's partially so and Carver's completely. Both are metapathographies, not pathographies. Pathography is a term used in the study of literature and medicine for those texts in which, in Peter Graham's words, "the patient's falling ill precedes the impulse to write. Illness [in pathographies] is not just the subject but also the cause of authorship" (70). In contrast, metapathographies are

artful transformations of the genre, works whose authors [. . .] write themselves out of illness and suffering [. . .]. [T]he metapathographer takes a narrative position above his or her struggle with disease and thereby redefines the relations of patient, illness, cure and narrative to one another. (Graham 73)

Graham's discussion of metapathography is central to the analysis of the texts in this chapter.

Mourning in the Burned House: Language Play, Intertextuality and Objectivity
in Margaret Atwood's Morning in the Burned House

Atwood's Morning may not have raised as much attention as her earlier collections of poems, but it is vintage Atwood. Dualities, mirror images, juxtaposition, irony, deadpan humor and other discursive strategies are among the tools of this 1995 collection of poems that she wrote leading up to and shortly after her father's death. These literary features are characteristic of Double Persephone (her first sixteen-page chapbook) and are found throughout her collections of poems and novels.

There are various reasons why critics of Atwood's oeuvre have appeared diffident towards this collection. First, the poems may seem rather simplistic and personal. It is difficult to read individual lines, such as "Cat, enough of your greedy whining / and your small pink bum hole / Off my face!" ("February" 29-31), and to conclude there is something more substantial than surface meaning at work. Second, the publication of this collection, only two years after her father's death, suggests that Atwood may not have detached herself far enough from this death to write a well-developed collection of poems. She was, after all, as biographer Rosemary Sullivan in Red Shoes and interviewers such as Victor-Lévy Beaulieu in Two Solicitudes acknowledge, emotionally very close to her father, an entomologist who fueled her interest in

insects and reptiles and who taught her techniques of survival in the woods. An assumption that the book is somewhat personal and slight—a collection of poems to fill in time between writing novels—may have kept a number of critics from giving considered attention to the text. There are only a handful of short reviews, one master's thesis that pays homage to the work, several short articles that deal with mourning in Atwood's works in general, and an analysis of "Half-hanged Mary" in Sullivan's biography Red Shoes.

While those few literary critics who have written about Morning have categorized the book as highly personal or an only somewhat objective look at grief, I will argue otherwise. Morning is typical of the patient-centered text in that, though at various points it is obviously autobiographical in its origin, it is more widely objective than a cursory reading might allow. It depends profoundly on the author's personal life, but it surpasses the reportorial or the confessional mode. Such intimate sources might have tempted lesser writers, but Morning moves into a domain of sophisticated literary formation.¹⁶ Even the fourth section of the text, claimed by critics to be the most personal of the sections,¹⁷ if read in context with other poems in the collection, proves to be highly intertextual and what I am calling "objective." As it would be difficult to dwell upon the subjectivity of the text without launching into a biographical study of Atwood and her life—a direction I leave to her biographers—this discussion touches only briefly on the personal and concentrates on ways in which the text is objective or, to put the claim in other terms, the extent to

which Atwood has made very personal experience into a literary accomplishment. The discussion examines the way Atwood takes notions of aging, death, late-mid-life crisis, and anxiety and presents them through allusions to various other literary texts, and through the literary tropes characteristic of both her various poetry collections and her novels.

Certainly there are images in Atwood's Morning that can be considered autobiographical. Atwood's father died in 1993 after a long illness, and this collection contains a sequence of poems dealing with a dying father and the father-daughter relationship. Atwood does have a brother who is a neuroscientist, and he would have recognized that the father's death was near, much as does the brother in Atwood's poem, "The Time": "You'd better come down my brother said / It's the time, I know death when I see it. / There's a clear look" (1-3). (Even these lines begin to travel out in other directions, though, as I shall discuss in a section of this chapter that deals more closely with this particular poem.) There are other related connections. Atwood has a sister, Ruth, twelve years younger than she, so it is not unlikely that the sister in the poem "Two Dreams 2" and her version of a dream about the father may be based, in part at least, on that of Atwood's own sister. Further, most of Atwood's early childhood was spent in the bush, years about which she talks in sundry conversations such as Two Solicitudes (41-57), a long, rather informal discussion with Victor-Lévy Beaulieu on matters concerning life and writing. She uses those experiences from her early years in the wilderness in

other poems in Morning, such as "The Ottawa River at Night" and in several images in "Flowers." She draws on these images of the bush in earlier collections as well, including the initial chapters in Cat's Eye, in Wilderness Tips, and sporadically throughout The Journals of Susanna Moodie. At times the links have taken a humorous, even quirky, direction in her writing, the "bush" sometimes referring to Atwood's own infamous kinky hair which once caused her distress in the days of straight-hair glamor. Atwood herself has drawn self-mocking sketches of her bushy hair, some of those sketches being now housed in the National Library of Canada.

Ultimately, though, even in the poems considered to be her most autobiographical, Atwood moves beyond the personal to a larger textual "reality" of literary, political and social structures. As Beaulieu says to Atwood about her writing in general, "Your writing is so polyphonic that you can approach it in different ways, beginning at the end, for example, or jumping right into the middle" (1). Although Beaulieu's comment refers to the structural features of Atwood's texts, it can just as easily be applied to the content that is both autobiographical and objective. Several examples demonstrate this shift from the personal to objective and show how prevalent it is in the text. Atwood, for instance, brings the father into an association with King Lear in "King Lear in Respite Care." Further, the daughter in this poem is a shadowy figure sometimes appearing to be Atwood, or a persona, and, at other times, one of Lear's daughters. To add to this shadowiness, the narrator becomes animal-

like, fox or ermine at various points. This section of the chapter notes these changes in some of the individual poems and provides a closer look at the intertextuality and craft of a few individual poems in the collection. This movement away from the autobiographical mode creates a text not only of feeling but of a distancing that allows for healing. In shaking off the "truth" of "what really happened" or what might have happened in the "real" world, and in resisting whatever constraints those experiences might have had upon her, Atwood chooses to observe matters of efficacy and accomplishment in literature.

"King Lear in Respite Care," one of the key poems in Morning, shows Atwood's literary playfulness. The title itself indicates that this is not merely a poem of therapeutic value for Atwood. It is highly objective and deeply concerned with the writing of a "good" poem. Atwood first creates a metaphor for the father, employing the character of King Lear. This observation may seem rather obvious and banal, as King Lear represents the father-daughter relationship, the ravages of old age, and "madness" in Western culture. But Atwood sets out to accomplish a lot more in this poem than to make didactic and clichéd statements about the elderly. She uses humor and plays on language as a way of coping with a father's death and of constructing an entertaining story, and, true to her usual style, she delights in the use of literary tropes. In fact, she places emphasis upon diction right from the start, because even this title, "King Lear in Respite Care," is humorous. Respite care

in Canada and the United States is the place where we place elderly and short-term patients if we feel that they are being a burden or that we ourselves haven't the capacity to cope with them any longer. Atwood's view of such care is comical, though, because in Shakespeare's King Lear, "respite care" includes throwing the aging father out into the storm and locking him out or imprisoning him. We hear in the word "respite" a discomfiting play on the word "spite." There is every reason to do so, to hear the words as doubly appropriate, particularly in the knowledge that both the father and daughters—both Shakespeare's and Atwood's—are spiteful. The father, as Atwood's narrator describes him, knows he must play the fool, rage and refuse to eat his supper or let his caregivers know what he can and cannot understand, see, hear, and feel. This spitefulness is what allows him, as it does many elderly people, at least an illusionary sense of control over his own destiny. The daughters have their own lives, and any attention to him is bittersweet as the final line, "I love you like salt" (51), spoken by Cordelia, suggests.

The first two lines of "King Lear in Respite Care" are "The daughters have their parties / Who can cope?" (1-2). The daughters in Atwood's poem are a reference not only to the narrator and her sister, and perhaps to the narrator's daughter mentioned early on in the collection, but also to Lear's three daughters: Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. The second line implies that Lear cannot cope, the "Lear" father in Atwood's poem cannot cope, and the

daughters, whether those of the twentieth-century poem or of the Renaissance play, cannot cope.

Further, we discern other telling connections between Shakespeare's King Lear and the poem when Atwood writes, "He's left in a chair" (3). The line not only implies that the father is left alone by the caregivers and is not independently mobile but also suggests the position that his counterpart in the play, King Lear, holds: the throne—the chair—is still his to do with as he chooses. Atwood writes: "He's left here in a chair / he can't get out of / in all this snow, or possibly / wallpaper" (3-5). These lines demonstrate the confusion that the father feels. The snow may be the blur of the father's thinking, or the snow that Lear was cast into. The father is confused about where he is. Is he inside or out? In a radical sense he is the fool, mad and hallucinating, while his characteristics are consistent with King Lear's personality as well.

The third stanza further develops the father's connections to King Lear and continues the play on the root word "spite," present in the word "respite." That is, King Lear's "mad" personality becomes even more transferred into that of the father. As such, Atwood creates a carnival-like figure. The father believes that he sees another man's hand coming out of his own sleeve. This hand-by-extension could be the hand of Lear himself, in which case one would have the merging of Lear and the narrator's father. Further, as often happens to the elderly, place and time in Morning no longer seem to exist. (Time of

course is a common subject in literature, and Shakespeare was particularly fond of dealing with time). Among the elderly, the passing of time blurs, but is still marked by sexual desire in the form of flirting and gaming:

They [the old women] giggle. They disappear
 behind the hawthorn bushes,
 in bloom, or possibly sofas.
 Now he's been left alone
 with the television turned on
 to the weather program, the sound down. (28-33)

The TV is useless to the father because he can neither see nor hear, so when the caregivers leave it on for him, it is like some macabre joke that they use in order to spite him. Atwood writes: "Rage occurs" (36). The matter-of-fact tone of the line implies that their claim is exactly what the reader already knows: this is the same old story of the aging father that has been written many times. Atwood, through demonstrating this recurring pattern and by concentrating on wordplay, has distanced herself from the personal loss of her father; she has moved us away from the feeling, for some among us at least, that we are peering in on her personal tragedy.

She directs us instead to two things: to the subject of loss that is common to humanity throughout time, and to the safety of language-play. As Robert Graves, whom Atwood mentions at times in various talks and essays

(most recently in Negotiating the Dead), aptly writes in his poem, "The Cool Web,"

But we have speech, to chill the angry day,
 And speech, to dull the rose's cruel scent.
 We spell away the overhanging night,
 We spell away the soldiers and the fright. (5-8)

Through language, Atwood moves us, as adults, away from too much reality; she dulls "the rose's cruel scent," so we can view aging, death and grief more objectively.

Then Atwood returns to a tranquil image from nature, just as Shakespeare so often turns to nature: "The trees bend" (40). These trees, by their action, seem to be holding a kind of prayer vigil for the father, as they wait for his death. So, too, the dutiful daughter, caring and attending upon her needy father, asks about his well-being: is he being fed? The word "feed" carries several apt connotations. The caregivers may feed his anger, or they may feed him, as in cutting his food and putting it in his mouth, or they may simply place the plate before him in an act of provision.

Finally, in an intriguing last line, Atwood echoes Shakespeare's Cordelia, when she writes in italics: "I love you like salt" (51). Atwood draws on King Lear for the subject matter for her poem and further borrows from early fairy tales in her skilled and careful shaping of the poem, going out of her way to bring it into a realm of literary performance. The statement about salt,

similar to Atwood's play on the word spite, is itself rather spiteful, because the father is no longer able to "taste": "something he can't taste / a brownish texture" (38-39). Therefore, it doesn't make much difference what love tastes like; love from the caregivers' or daughter's point of view may be merely a duty and a necessity.

The intertextual force of Atwood's writing and its open allegiance to a larger body of writing finds another instance in the hints of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" that emerge throughout "King Lear in Respite Care." What we find in Atwood's poem—the taking of the tea that marks the time of day, the wasteland of the dreary and uncreative afternoon, the women who come and go—is found in the haunting images of Eliot's well-known "Love Song." In that poem, too, Prufrock's feeling of love, if he has any feeling at all, is bitter. As well, the despair and paralysis that Eliot portrays in "Love Song" and "Burnt Norton" mirror the frustration and despair of the father and daughters in Atwood's work. If there is a message in this poem, it is that the depiction of the aging father is traditional in literature and that Atwood adds her own version as another layer to the patterns of this representation, making her poem very much part of the literary domain and answerable to its conventions. The various allusions to other works of English literature and the playfulness of the language indicate that this poem is not merely a cathartic exercise by Atwood. Morning is carefully constructed, offering more than the naked facts of her

actual father's dying, and individual motifs of poems therein resonate in other poems throughout the collection as well.

The function of the title poem, like "King Lear in Respite Care," is several-fold. First, it is exemplary of Atwood's careful construction of poems, and it is emblematic of the resonating effect that the poems in the text exhibit in that it comes at the end of the book but still retains connections to the opening poem plus various other poems throughout. Second, in "Morning in the Burned House," Atwood presents fragmented depictions of her personal grief and loss; simultaneously she distracts us through wordplay and subtle allusions to other pieces of literature in order to make these images less distressful and more palliative for us.

The first point is self-evident, once readers notice in the first and last poems in the book the repeated imagery of returning to the present after thinking about the past. Connecting the last and first poem, Atwood is actually enticing us as readers (dare I say tricking us), in the way a fox—the animal with which Atwood identifies in several earlier poems in the text—might trick its prey in order to throw it off track. She entices her more attentive readers into physically turning back to the first page of the book, or to having them backtrack in order to see the reason for poems that we may simply have questioned as having little or no context when we read them chronologically. In the opening poem, for instance, Atwood states: "you come back into the room / where you've been living / all along" (1-3). When we look back at these

images, we see that they were the forewarnings of what was to come in the final poem, a gathering of fragments and depictions of loss. Our attention to Atwood's craft, therefore, helps us to distance ourselves from the cold reality of the poem's subject—the death of the father.

In short, this work is not just another illness narrative like the many unpublished ones we can find on the Internet or in a personal journal. The craft in Morning catches our interest and stops us from turning away from the subject matter. As T.S. Eliot proclaimed in "Burnt Norton," "mankind cannot stand too much reality" (45). Atwood, no doubt, is also cheering herself up; that is, she is entertaining herself and readers too by playing the game of the fox—leading readers in a circle—even at times leading us, if we desire, to make connections with earlier collections of her poems such as The Circle Game, though at the same time concentrating on the death of the father as subject matter. Atwood shifts from the connections between the final poem in this text to some of the earlier poems in it, to further connections between this collection and her other works, or even to writings by others whom she has read, works that readers have read, or to personal experiences conjured up by her images. These possibilities again demonstrate the unruliness of the patient-centered text.

The last poem—the title poem—in the book is central to my argument. Like Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey," the adult narrator returns to a childhood place. In this case the place is the house that has burned. She may physically

have returned to the location, or may have done so in her imagination. The title indicates that it is morning, a particular time of day, but it is also a time of mourning. So already Atwood involves readers in the wordplay. The word "morning" refers to brightness and light; nonetheless, the subject matter in the book—the death of a father and the grieving response—indicates that this is also a dark time. Mourning, depicted in such works as Dante's Divine Comedy with its journey through Hell, is a period of darkness. The burned house, with its suggestions of darkness, disintegration, and deterioration, retains strong connections to the image of the father. The speaker seems to find it much easier to discuss the destruction of the house and associated images than to talk in direct terms about loss and death. Atwood writes, "In the burned house I am eating breakfast / You understand: there is no house, there is no breakfast, / yet here I am" (1-3). The words "you understand" provide an invitation to explore the connotative meaning of the poem.

In fact, in some ways, Atwood is performing something similar to what counselors are trained to do when dealing with anxious or grief-stricken clients. She allows herself and her readers to experience feelings about the death of the father, through the metaphor of the burned house, rather than by directly referring to the death. She expresses her own feelings of mourning, but allows us to read the word "morning" as a way of reducing the negative impact of the image. Readers read the word "morning" with all of its connotations of light, rebirth and starting anew, but they also read it as the

opposite, "mourning". Atwood's narrator shifts between the two meanings, not necessarily settling on either one. In short, if readers are emotionally uncomfortable with the images of "mourning," they can switch to the images of "morning" and then, by reading further along in the poem, find more images of grief and repeat the reversal to the brighter image when they feel a need to dispel the more negative picture. Eventually, readers may, if they choose, come to realize that these two words—"morning" and "mourning"—are not necessarily opposites. In other words, grief is necessary in order to heal sadness or despair that may occur after a family member or friend dies, and in that association it carries with it, not the negative associations we generally think of when we see the word "mourning," but the more positive connotations of "morning," such as rebirth and hope. Finally, Atwood titles the collection "Morning in the Burned House," not "Mouring in the Burned House," and that is a good indication that healing—rebirth, renewal, and awakening—is the Rx that Atwood is prescribing for herself and for her readers.

In the second and third stanzas, the theme of mourning is found even in the narrator's dissolving memories of the place and in the diminishings which the narrator laments in other vivid depictions. "No one else is around" (6), Atwood says at the end of the second stanza. "Where have they gone to [. . .]"(7), she asks at the beginning of the next stanza. These memories, as Atwood presents them, are both personal and objective; that is, they include bits and pieces that, in the spirit of the unruliness of the text and in Atwood's

objectivity of the writing, relate back to childhood rhymes, ghost stories, and myths. For example, Atwood writes, "The spoon that has melted scrapes against / the bowl which has melted also" (4-5). There is no spoon, and there is no bowl. Both have melted and have become objects that remain only in the memory. Nevertheless, Atwood, being the inexorable craftsperson that she is, gains even more mileage out of these words. There are glimmerings of familiar nursery rhymes here, as in "the dish ran away with the spoon." Moreover, Atwood's spoon, conjured up in her memory, appears in fairy-tale fashion to maneuver itself without the help of a hand. It is not just a physical memory that sparks this nursery rhyme image, but the haunting, ghostly thought of a spoon maneuvered by some unseen force scraping a bowl. Here, Atwood has woven together several types of children's literature: the nursery rhyme, Through the Looking Glass types of distortions, and the ghost story—all types, according to Sullivan, that Atwood immensely enjoys (15). She creates, in a sense, a new form—a hybrid. These first two stanzas suffice to illustrate the constructedness of the poem, its use of wordplay, and its resonances to other poems in the collection and elsewhere. In other words, these stanzas show that the patient-centered text is an unruly text, highly constructed, and playing off other literary texts.

"Red Fox," set in a cemetery, extends these notions of constructedness and wordplay, even though the underlying theme of death is always present. It is not unusual for people, at least in Western culture, to go to the gravesite of

a loved one out of a sense of social responsibility or to find comfort for their grief. Therefore, it is not surprising that Atwood would include the poem "Red Fox," where the unnamed narrator, possibly Atwood herself, situates herself in the cemetery. This poem, however, is not merely about a woman at the gravesite of a dead father, or about Atwood expressing her personal grief for loss of her own father. Atwood uses the constructedness of her poetry, her careful attention to diction, and the fox's myriad associations as a symbol to magnify the "awful" presence of death by pretending to lead us away from it. As Atwood in her recent collection of essays, Negotiating with the Dead, explains, "Sometimes there's a taboo against mentioning them [the dead people] openly, but this doesn't mean they're gone: absence from conversation to a known quantity is a very strong presence" (159).

The fox is a symbol of slyness and trickery. For instance, the verb form of fox means to deceive, baffle, or trick ("Fox"). What Atwood appears to be attempting to do in this poem is to trick us by means of language away from the real issue—the reality that this is a cemetery with all its associations, underlying connotations and hauntings of the dead. For instance, we are introduced to this trickery of language as early as the first two lines: "The red fox crosses the ice / intent on none of my business" (1-2). Here, the word "crosses," something we would expect to find in a Christian cemetery, is instead a verb used to describe the movement of the fox in the cemetery. In a sense, perhaps the wily fox "makes crosses"—marks the territory or even

double-crosses it in acts of thievery or treachery. In the second line, Atwood again creates a line that can be read in several ways. The implication is that what the fox is doing is none of the narrator's business although she would like to know, but it also implies that the fox, being self-serving, is not interested in why the narrator is at the cemetery. By scrambling our expectations, Atwood, like the representative fox itself, lures us away from the real subject of the poem—the death of the father and the site of the burial ground—where, as she writes in Good Bones, the good bones are located. (The bones of criminals and other unsavory people were once buried outside the cemetery.)

This is not the only instance where language becomes tricky in the poem. The red fox is known to have a bushy tail, and then in the second stanza we read the words "bushy cemetery"—"I stand in the bushy cemetery" (16). The word "bushy" draws our attention to the adjective, and if we desire, we can then begin to make associations to the bushy-tailed fox and to other poems in the text where the word "bush" appears. Atwood, for one, makes fun of her own hair, in "Shapechangers in Winter," calling her mop of kinky hair a "bramble bush" (91), and the father of earlier poems builds cabins in the bush. By association then, this one word "bush" brings us back to the image of the daughter and the father. It would in no way be inappropriate, though, to note at the same time that the image of the fox might be King Lear's Goneril in disguise, since she is portrayed as conniving and fox-like. Moreover, the fox of this poem has a "white knife of a smile" (37), implying that it is conniving and

vicious like Lear's oldest daughter. This notion is not far-fetched if we think back to the image of Atwood's father connected to that of Lear in "King Lear in Respite Care" and recall that Lear's daughters are mentioned there. Yet another possibility is that the fox is one of the dead—perhaps the father himself—returned from the "other place" in another form. Such notions are not uncommon in much shamanistic literature, and Atwood herself, in Negotiating with the Dead, writes about how the dead reappear uninvited, citing as an example the ghost of Hamlet's father (159). Thus, it appears that Atwood is interested in creating a collage of images that represent various views concerning aging and death. Rather than focusing on her own father and his death, she uses the image of the "red fox" to represent polyphonic views concerning subjects most of us would rather not discuss.

The "red fox" carries with it other possible associations too. Red foxes were uncommon in Canada until the settlers came and cleared the bush. Once they had created a clearing, larger animals such as coyotes and bears stayed away, leaving room for the smaller ones to thrive ("Fox in Zoology"). In The Journals of Susanna Moodie, the immigrant husband in "The Wereman" walks across "the frosted field" (1). Atwood then describes him as returning "with the fox eye, the owl, / eye, the eightfold / eye of the spider" (19-21). Thus, readers can connect this image of the fox in the snowy cemetery to the past, to the father, and to the unidentified narrator's ancestors whose bones lie in the graves of the cemetery where the fox hunts. In other words, Atwood uses the

red fox as a literary trope to move from what is close and personal to her—the death of her father—to the more distanced deaths that have occurred and are marked by gravesites. At the same time, the fox signifies the scheming of the evil daughter Goneril and the haunting and watchful presence of the father.

In a sense, the cemetery is a playground for linguistic gymnastics, and the fox represents what is needy, malevolent, and self-seeking even in times of grief. It is in the end this instinct for survival (an old theme of Atwood's) and the need to be self-seeking that motivate people who are grieving to go on living, even when there might seem to be no reason to continue. The themes in the poem extend beyond Atwood's personal grief to human issues and to the representation of death in literature.

"Shapechangers in Winter," a poem near the end of the collection, again includes the mention of the red fox, and the title itself carries with it the connotations of trickery and slipperiness that we have seen in the "red fox." Here, though, there are constant shifting patterns and images in the poem, typical of Atwood's style, where language does not stay still, but suggests various meanings and possibilities. In addition, Atwood uses a few seventeenth-century literary techniques, similar to those employed by John Donne in many of his poems, including elaborate conceits, a movement from microcosm to macrocosm, an interest in circular movement (to lead us away from the personal to the universal), while all the while dealing with the subject of aging and change. Donne, for instance, in "A Valediction of Weeping,"

begins with the lines, "Let me pour forth / My tears before thy face whilst I stay here" (1-2). He then associates the image of tears with other rounded shapes such as "coins" (3), "a round ball"(10), "a globe"(16), and the "moon"(19). As he does so, he moves out from the small things that are close up to things at a distance. Finally, he returns to the intimacy of a couple when he writes "Since thou and I sigh one another's breath / Whoe'er sighs most is cruelest, and hates the other's death" (26-27). By borrowing literary techniques from writers such as Donne, Atwood adds a playful element to what otherwise would be a dreary subject, one that we are all aware of but often would rather not think about: old age. In short, she finds in artistic expression a form that surpasses her personal grief and that brings the reader to a greater awareness of aging and ultimately death.

Atwood's three-part poem, rather sprawling in terms of line length, and seemingly somewhat loosely written, begins with the voice of an unidentified speaker in bed with someone, and we learn by the end of the poem that they (possibly Atwood and Graham Gibson, themselves) have been together for many years. The setting is winter, and winter in myths symbolizes the death of a year. For instance, readers recall from Greek mythology that Persephone is drawn into the underworld for half the year as Hades Queen, and that half of the year is winter. This observation may seem rather mundane, but again Atwood's writing is not that simple.

In the first lines, the "wind" is associated with "nothingness"(2), which in turn is connected with "time"(3), because time cannot be seen, and with "snow" (4), or at least how snow empties itself and obliterates what is out there. All are things that cannot be seen, and yet they seem to exhibit some sort of power or sense of presence. Then the poem shifts from the personal and close view of two people in bed, one of them the narrator who describes the street: "everything out there, roofs, cars, garbage cans" (6); then she moves downward through layers of snow, to a mix of memories and seasons, "the white waterfall of snow / thundering down; then attic, moth-balled / sweaters, nomadic tents" (16-18). Then she moves outward again; finally she comes full circle back to the bed, so that the things in the universe connect with what is in the room where the couple lie together. The final lines read, "That's where / we are" (52-53). In the claim of these simple words, Atwood at the end of this first part of the poem comes full circle. The "air" (51) is the "wind" of the first line; the "stars" (52) are like the "candle flickering" (23) that has been in the room all along. The darkness, in which the two people in the poem lie, becomes the universe. Here the movement from microcosm to macrocosm is completed. Therefore, in a dazzling array of movements and shifts in movement, and sometimes by moving the images outward into larger and larger circles, Atwood allows readers, if they so choose, to find some comfort in the interconnectedness of all things. In a sense, Atwood suggests that, like the couple in bed, human beings are not alone in the constant shifts

and changes in themselves and in the universe; all human beings, other animals, and nature are in a state of constant circular motion and change.

The circle itself, as in much literature, suggests both completeness and continuation. Atwood continues the image of the circle when, in an imaginative leap, the couple take hands like children. The gesture is similar to one in her earlier text, The Circle Game, which in turn refers to Joni Mitchell's "The Circle Game," copyrighted 1966 and recorded on her 1970 album, Ladies of the Canyon. In it, Mitchell sings:

And the seasons they go round and round
And the painted ponies go up and down
We're captive on the carousel of time
We can't return we can only look behind
From where we came
And go round and round and round
In the circle game.

Not only are humans, animals, and the seasons interconnected, but all living things participate in a circle game where ends become beginnings and beginnings become ends. Finally, the couple awaken from the darkness inside the burned house—the empty space of the universe that is everything and nothing—to the realization of this ongoing connection.

Along with this circular movement, the narrator imagines a constant shifting and merging of humans, other creatures, and nature. This gesture

suggests that human beings do not die, arriving at some final stage of life, but merge and fuse with other things in eternal motion. The speaker imagines what her partner would be like if he could be other than human. She says he would have "put on [his] pelt of a bear" (56), but she does not remain with that image. He is not just some bear-like creature, but he is like a star (the great bear in the sky, perhaps) coming down among the trees, but then she shifts from this image to another of him as "a silhouette of human / fears against the snow bank" (58-59). The speaker, on the other hand, says she would have chosen fox, because she liked the jokes and the doubling back on her tracks (122), as indeed Atwood does. She has doubled back on her own writing in several ways: specifically, through the reference to the fox that reminds the reader of the earlier poem of the red fox in the cemetery and through her use of the fox image in earlier works such as The Animals in that Country and The Circle Game. The narrator says the other fox-like thing that she enjoys is theft. The theft is also a stealing of words and images from other works—early fairy tales, King Lear, and even her own work, further indicating Atwood's striving for objectivity in "Shapechangers." The speaker also connects herself and her partner to other creatures in action such as the "eel" (66), "pythons" (70), and things "silvery as herring" (71), but the aches and pains of aging call her back to the present and to the human world. The "knees hurt" (72) as a result of aging and wear and tear, but eels and herring having no knees; therefore, the

articulated anatomy separates this couple from creatures lower on the food chain.

In additional lines of the poem, one thing merges into another, or is made up of another so that there is a complex connectedness between and among all people and things—comforting knowledge for some that death may be a state of continuing change and shape-shifting, rather than a final end of life. The "blankets" become what they are made of: they "shed feathers of duck and goose," and "Wind pours like a river" (21, 22). It is flowing and still at the same time, in a state of flux and rest, just as humans are both self and, through their connectedness, "other." The couple, as Atwood indicates, have been dead many times, because their cells have renewed themselves so often. They have become removed from the originals, and like their ancestors are footprints becoming limestone, or coal turning to diamond that is less flexible and more fixed. As old age appears to bring on other conditions, the narrator's male partner is "the elephant- / hide suitcase" (89-90) and she comically is a "bramble bush" (91). They have eye problems as aging people tend to. The speaker states, "I used to say I'd know you anywhere, / but it's getting harder" (94-95). It is harder because of declining eyesight, but also, in keeping with the shape-changing, it is difficult because one becomes so many things that the sense of self is practically lost.

"Flowers" and "The Time" are in myriad ways the central poems in Atwood's book, although they do not occur in a strategic position such as at

the beginning, middle, or end, but rather in the fourth section near the end. Although each poem seems to be a straightforward description of the death scene, like the other poems in the text they reach beyond the personal to reflect fragments of other literary texts. On the literal level, the poem "Flowers" describes a narrator visiting the dying father. The second section presents the reality of the father's hallucinations when he sees himself on a ship, perhaps the ship of death as presented in a poem of that title by D.H. Lawrence—a poem Atwood quotes from at some length in Negotiating the Dead. In the third stanza the nurses see to the care of the father. Atwood follows this stanza by a short philosophical piece concerning suffering. Then she switches scenes smoothly and swiftly, returning to the image of the daughter who sits in the room and thinks about her father's death, realizing that these visits will also end.

The general structure and ideas in the poem seem straightforward and simple, but Atwood's usual wordplay, use of humor, and borrowings from previous works of literature (her own and those of others) are as prevalent in these poems as in the others in Morning. She uses these features to make the subject matter more inviting and to connect the ideas in the poem to larger patterns of representation. We are aware that flowers are brought by flower girls to celebrate weddings as well as funerals, and so we are not altogether surprised when Atwood writes "Right now I am the flower girl" (1). There is a tinge of humor here, in the thought of the narrator bringing the flowers, since

by this point she, to have such an elderly father, is likely past middle age and no longer a girl. Here, too, the notion of a wedding with death is a possible reading of the title and first two lines. Thus, the humor and notion of a renewal, a celebration—a uniting—replace the gloomier portrait of the dying father and place the focus on ritual instead.

Swiftly, though, Atwood brings her readers back to the cold reality of the hospital scene, when the daughter "snip[s] off the stem ends with surgical scissors [. . .] / from the nursing station" (6-7). In the line that follows, the hospital is referred to as a "hotel for the ill" (10). Here, for the second time, Atwood moves the focus away from the deathbed scene to something a bit more hospitable. Originally the word hospital came from the word hospitale—guest room, in a definition that derives from earlier terms for a house or inn. This etymological backtracking leads to the conventional notion that death is a journey and to the possibility that the father in Atwood's collection is himself a traveler, stopped momentarily to rest, while on such a journey. Indeed, Atwood goes on to write that "moment by moment he's sailing slowly away" (25).

In the poem, the nurses then minister to the father, seeing him through his final dark journey; "plump muscular angels" (32), the narrator calls them. "Pain," she says "is their lore" (36). At this point, these angelic-nurses seem more in keeping with classical images in literature than with a twentieth-century death scene. The narrator goes on to describe the suffering as something "you can neither cure nor enter" (38), her words serving to

mythologize the event, putting it beyond normal understanding or ordinary experience. The speaker manages in other ways, too, to promote the father's death into a larger pattern of understanding, available to us from the world's literature. Atwood's switch from "I" to "you" (42) in referring to the afflicted opens the passage even further to include all who suffer loss. The efficiency of the nurses makes the narrator's sense of helplessness yet more profound. At the same time, Atwood appears to include the readers in this sense of exasperated powerlessness when she says "Can't we do anything but feel sorry?" (41). Finally, Atwood returns to the use of the singular pronoun "I." "I sit there, watching the flowers in the pickle jar" (43), she says. The flowers, one notes, are "cut flowers" (55). They, like the father, will soon die. Just as the father will be given up to his death, so sorrow, anger and memory will be given up by the daughter. The loss of the father, in the end, represents part of the larger picture of loss—the loss that eventually occurs for all living creatures and things.

"The Time" provides the ultimate death-scene poem in the collection. Like "Flowers," it seems elementary enough, but that simplicity is deceptive. On one level, this is a poem about a family gathered at the bedside of the dying father. The son is with the father, and towards the end of the poem we learn that the mother and a daughter are there as well. However, they are waiting for one family member to arrive. On another level, the wordplay moves the reader away from the personal anguish of the death scene, allowing for

some objectivity and perhaps even a sense of healing. In order to distance readers from the starkness of the death, Atwood draws on their intellect in several ways.

First, Atwood uses the deathbed scene as a concrete means of demonstrating some of the unusual ways that human beings use language. In fact, in Good Bones, she includes an entire list of possible death-bed scenes. Her focus both in that selection and in this poem seems to be on creating a literary work rather than making us feel the horror of the subject. For example, "It's the time. I know death when I see it" (2), says the brother in the poem. Here, readers might question whether we really "know death." Obviously, it is possible for the living to watch someone dying or see someone who is dead. However, that does not mean that we are seeing death itself. Here, because death is personified, it seems like something large and frightening, yet something we can sense the presence of, like a bear in the woods.

A further example of this instance occurs near the end of the poem, when the mother says "I need some time / with him. Not very long. Alone" (14-15). Here, the mother is not thinking about what she is saying. She wants time with the husband, "Alone." Sadly, and ironically, since he is dead already, there is no need to say "Alone." She is alone. This attention to language marks for readers even more deeply the sadness of the death and the sense of the family's shock and distress. Yet by focusing on the language we can distance

ourselves from the scene and concentrate on Atwood's finesse with words and the poetic uses of them.

Second, in "The Time," Atwood both uses and subverts various depictions of death as presented in classical literature (we need only think of the chilly deathbed scene in Gorky's My Childhood, for example). In the third stanza, the terrifying image of death so often presented in literature surfaces. The nurse asks if anyone has been away, to which the "I" narrator answers "Me" (8), to which the nurse replies "They wait" (9). In this instance the person on the death bed is referred to as "they." The implication here, if readers look beyond the usual meaning of a person waiting for a loved one to come before he or she succumbs to death, is that this person had changed from one person into many. He has become "they" and this "they" waits with some terrifying expectation for the person to arrive. This idea corresponds with Atwood's interest in the Gothic, with all its horrifying images. According to Sullivan, Gothic tales fueled Atwood's imagination:

Those Gothic fairy tales layered her imagination with haunting images that would become part of her way of seeing the world. They were as real as anything else in her childhood. They "sank to the bottom of my mind," she [Atwood] has said, "and still send shoots." (36)

Here, Atwood implies that for her, the fear of death results from tales told to her in childhood. In reality, however, death may not appear at all in the dark and horrifying way that classical mythology depicts it.

If, for instance, readers back up to the end of the first stanza in the poem, the brother, upon observing the death of the father, notes "There's a clear look" (3). Yet, one would expect death, as depicted in descriptions of Hades in Greek mythology, say, to appear murky, dark, and moldering. But Atwood is fond of the word "clear." She uses the word to describe the lake in an earlier poem and also discusses clearings in The Journals of Susanna Moodie. A "clear look" (3) suggests equanimity, not chaos and confusion. Atwood is in control of her work and thinking as a writer, not as a grieving daughter who writes private entries about her feelings concerning her father's death.

Thus, Atwood's Morning is what medical humanists call a metapathography. The death of a father is central to the text and therefore the text is highly patient-centered. But this unruly text is even unrulier than a first glance might suggest, because while there is a dying patient in a hospital-bed, there is also a narrator who wears many disguises—sometimes appearing as King Lear's Cordelia, sometimes as a writer, and sometimes as an animal. This disguised narrator returns repeatedly to the image of death in what at times appears to be a show of melodrama and at other times downright obsession about it. Yet the notion of patient, whether the father in the hospital

or the daughter in one of her various disguises, remains central to the text. The circular structure with its zig-zagging attempts to lead the reader astray by allusions to other works of literature and to previous poems in the text, only adds to the unruliness of the work and demonstrates that, like other patient-centered texts, this one is highly constructed and not simply based on the realities of "what's out there."

2

A New Path to Raymond Carver's A New Path to the Waterfall

Raymond Carver's final collection of poems, A New Path to the Waterfall, is a paradigmatic work in the study of Literature and Medicine. In 1988, Carver died of a previously diagnosed brain tumor secondary to tumors in his lungs (Waterfall xvii-xxii). This last collection of poems—a metapathography—was organized and edited by his wife, Tess Gallagher, and was published posthumously. As with Atwood's Morning, few critics and reviewers have been willing to commit themselves to more than general comments and sentiments about the work. They unfortunately view the poems as too personal to deal with objectively. After all, how can Carver's readers judge, at least early on, the final collection of a poet who continued writing under the immense burden of knowing that he had less than six months to live? Under the circumstances, readers could expect the collection, especially

with its title that conjures up images typical of a Hallmark greeting card, to be effusively sentimental and self-pitying in content.

Carver's last book, however, is unmarked by sentimentality. The title of the collection refers to a friend's painting that hung on Carver's living room wall. The painting, depicting a waterfall with fish leaping, is reproduced in miniature on the cover of the book. The tone of even the most intense poem in the collection, "What the Doctor Said," is one of affirmation, the advance towards autonomy, and empathy for others, not sentimentality.

Carver crafts the individual lines and uses concise language to demonstrate that although he cannot control death, he (although extremely ill) has autonomy in life. Likewise, readers, if they choose, can vicariously experience this autonomy by a close analytical reading of Carver's poems. Further, there is a strong parallel between several ideas about death in Atwood's Morning and several of the poems in the latter part of Carver's last collection. The unruly text, and Tess Gallagher's introduction to the poems certainly acknowledges this unruliness, at least in terms of the structure, is an excellent example of the ways in which literature and medicine can work together. Ultimately, it is objectivity and not subjectivity that characterizes these texts; both Carver and Atwood work towards the continued development of craft and exploration of larger social issues.

In two one-page summaries and commentaries, Felice Aull and Irene Chen, and James Terry, respectively, note that "What the Doctor Said" is

about patient-physician communication and miscommunication. Aull and Chen, in one sentence, mention the "almost comical aspect as the doctor struggles to be sympathetic, and the patient struggles to absorb what the doctor asks." Terry presents a much more astute understanding of the poem when he mentions the "oddly blurred nature of the whole experience." He notes that it is Carver who feels sympathy for the doctor, as patients sometimes do, because it is incumbent upon the doctor to deliver the "bad" news. Both summaries include "affirmation" as one of the primary subjects of this poem. The individual features of the language in the poem, particularly the pronouns and diction, can move readers to empathize with both the doctor and Carver. Finally, the poem goes beyond empathy to autonomy—a point that neither Aull and Chen nor Terry notes as a possible outcome.

The use of various pronouns to change the position of authority from doctor to patient is one of the most intriguing features of "What the Doctor Said." As Aull and Chen correctly observes, "words rush forth in a punctuationless stream." The poem is one long, twenty-three line sentence. Even more intriguing, though, is the complex and strategic use and positioning of various pronouns throughout. "What the Doctor Said" begins as follows:

He said it doesn't look good
he said it looks bad in fact real bad
he said I counted thirty-two of them on one lung before
I quit counting them. (1-4)

Here the poem opens with the capitalized pronoun, "He." Its placement as the first word in the poem and its capitalization open several possibilities including that Carver uses the capitalized "He" to do more than correctly start a sentence with a capital letter. The capitalized "He" is the authority figure, the doctor in his role of delivering bad news to the patient. However, in context, the pronoun can also be read in a mocking voice, as in 'He said this may be the case, but I (Carver) don't have to believe him.' The second line contains nine monosyllabic words that prolong its reading, giving readers the opportunity to note that the "he" has lost its capital letter. The third line also begins with the lower-case "he." This loss of capitalization undermines the God-like supremacy of the "He" in the first line; that is, the "He" is reduced to the level of human being, merely doing his job, giving the facts, and expressing the situation as he (lower-case letter) understands it.

In the third and fourth lines there is a switch from "he" to "I," but the "I" is still the Doctor speaking. Then the next line switches to what Carver said, but retains the use of the "I" pronoun: "I said I'm glad I wouldn't want to know" (5). The three references to "I" in the line and their correspondence to the three earlier references to "he" are noteworthy. They show the tension between the "He" and "I" (the doctor and Carver). Then, in a further instance, the pronouns switch to "you": "he [the doctor] said are you a religious man do you kneel down" (7). Here, the tension between the "he" and "I" is released and although the "you" replaces the "I," it is less immediate and helps to

distance the "I" (Carver) from himself, as if the event is happening to someone else. In fact, Carver continues this sense of distancing for one-third of the poem by the use of "you" or various forms of it:

he said are you a religious man do you kneel down
 in forest groves and let yourself ask for help
 when you come to a waterfall
 mist blowing against your face and arms
 do you stop and ask for understanding at those moments
 I said not yet but I intend to start today
 He said I'm real sorry he said
 I wish I had some other kind of news to give you.

(emphasis added, 7-14)

In case this switch to "you" initially evades our notice, Carver uses it twice in the same line at one point: "he said are you a religious man do you kneel down" (7).

In the lines that follow, the "I" is Carver speaking:

I said Amen and he said something else
 I didn't catch and not knowing what else to do
 and not wanting him to have to repeat it
 and me to have to fully digest it
 I just looked at him [. . .]. (15-19)

Here, neither Carver nor the doctor has the right words or actions to express the feeling of this moment of realization. But the "I" (Carver) maintains control. The doctor is placed in the position of human being giving bad news and feeling the helplessness of the situation. It is the "I" (Carver) who takes the action of shaking the doctor's hand and the "I" (Carver) who thanks him. They seem to have arrived on even ground with each other.

Further, Carver strategically positions individual words in the poem to give himself autonomy as the patient. Carver presents these key words in the opening lines, in the middle, and at the end of the poem. As the patient, or at least as he presents himself as patient, he turns to listening to the surface features of the language rather than connecting the words to their connotations at these various points. This refusal to accept the content of what the doctor is saying may be a form of denial. For example, Carver writes, "He said it doesn't look good / he said it looks bad in fact real bad" (1-2). The first line ends with the word "good," a position where the word is quite noticeable, but the word "good" has been negated by the word "doesn't" as in "not good." The second line ends with the word "bad." It is as though the patient, Carver, is rewording the doctor's statement, as if there is another level of review where he is saying "well, if 'not good' then 'bad.'" To put it another way, it is as if Carver is trying to edit what the doctor says. Even more complexly the word coming before "bad" is "real." If the doctor were to use correct grammar the word would, of course, be "really." This colloquial language serves several

purposes. It puts the doctor in a lesser position, although, obviously, in order to be a doctor he must be highly educated. It also makes the reader stop and take note of the word and the one that follows, so in essence the incorrect grammatical word makes us take notice of the phrase "real bad," adding further emphasis to the word "bad." In addition, the word "real" serves to heighten the intensity of the situation, in that this is "for real," and not imaginary. The doctor later repeats the word "real" when he says "I'm real sorry," and this clause provides a further reminder of the profound seriousness and genuineness of the situation.

Near the center of the poem, Carver again plays with opposite words when he uses "stop" and "start." The doctor says, "do you stop and ask for understanding" (11). Carver replies that he "intends to start" (12). In a subtle way the two phrases come to mean the same thing. The stopping to ask is the same as starting to ask, in that both lead to an initial action of questioning. If the reader takes the words out of context, they begin to play on his or her emotions. The doctor's word "stop" comes across as negative, as in ending something, while Carver's indication of starting appears active and positive. The lines can be read as Carver having more faith and a more progressive outlook than the doctor concerning the diagnosis—a death sentence. Carver's affirmation of being told the truth is present in the last lines of the poem:

I jumped up and shook hands with this man who'd just given
me

something no one else on earth had ever given me

I may have even thanked him habit being so strong. (21-23)

Finally, the last word in the poem, "strong," is filled with positive associations, and this implies that Carver has now gained autonomy, while the doctor is the one left feeling enervated and wordless. It is this feature of the language, in conjunction with Carver's use of pronouns resulting in the "I" as patient gaining strength over the "He" as authority figure, that demonstrates the fact that although Carver may not be able to extend his life, he can come to terms with his illness and, despite all odds, maintain his sense of control. Moreover, what reviewers see as miscommunication in the poem may actually be a form of communication, at least insofar as it represents a reaching out to try to communicate something that cannot really be communicated in words. After all, it seems that one has not verbally miscommunicated if one is still searching for the right words. Both the doctor and Carver recognize this inability and therefore they come to realize that understanding is not derived through words alone.

The final poem in the collection, "Late Fragment," like some of Carver's other poems, may seem rather slight—something that a dying man might scribble in his journal when there is very little energy left to hold a pen. Yet this poem, like some of Atwood's seemingly slight poems in Morning, resonates off

other poems in the collection, connects to the larger world of literature, and presents itself as a well-crafted piece.

"Late Fragment" is a short, six-line poem composed of two questions by an unnamed speaker and a response to each by Carver:

And did you get what
You wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth. (1-6)

The questioner (perhaps Carver questioning himself) wants to know if life gave to Carver what he desired and what it was that he desired. Each question begins with the word "And," implying that there may have been another part to it, and that what is left is only a piece of the enquiry, as the word "Fragment" in the title indicates. Carver answers that he has received what he desired in his life, and that was to call himself "beloved" and to feel within himself that this was so (5-6).

Tess Gallagher, in the introduction to Waterfall, explains one meaning of the poem as follows:

In the final poem, "Late Fragment," the voice has earned a more elevated coda. There is the sense that central to the effort of the life, of the writing, has been the need to be beloved and that

one's own willingness to award that to the self—to "call myself beloved" and, beyond that, to "feel myself beloved on the earth"—has somehow been achieved. (xxvii)

Here, Gallagher is speaking about affirmation, but the poem goes beyond that to demonstrate that Carver maintains autonomy despite the realization that his own death is very near. He accomplishes this feat by means of the tremendous attention to craft that he displays in the poem.

When Carver's doctor was unable to give him any further help, Carver then turned to a physician in literature. He invokes as his muse Anton Chekhov, the nineteenth-century physician, playwright and short-story writer. So throughout Carver's collection, and especially towards the end of it (and in the last weeks of Carver's life), Chekhov and other Russian writers are the inspiration and consolers to whom Carver directs his attention. He includes excerpts of their works in the form of prose poems throughout Waterfall. The questions and answers that Carver presents in "Fragment" model the question-answer type form of one of the excerpts from Chekhov that Gallagher includes in the "Introduction" to the text :

"And you do not believe in the immortality of the soul?"

"No, honored Mihail Averyanitch; I do not believe it, and, have no grounds for believing it."

"And yet I have a feeling as though I should never die myself."

"Old Fogey, it's time you were dead!" but there is a little voice
in my soul that says: "Don't believe it; you won't die."(xix)

In Carver's "Late Fragment," note the questions: "And did you get what you wanted [. . .]. / And what did you want?" (1,4). Tucked between these two questions are answers. It is as if Chekhov himself haunts the poem and enters into it. What may seem like a simple poem of final affirmation—a fragile one made to appear more so by the four short lines on the page—read as an overlay of Chekhov's piece, becomes a poem of philosophical questioning about life and the soul. Further, given this borrowing from Chekhov in the poem, the reader is left to wonder if the entire poem is actually in one voice, as in Carver asking himself questions and answering them himself or whether the questioner might be another voice, perhaps that of Chekhov. In the end, there is no final answer to this query. The poem, typical of the patient-centered text, works in a manner that allows its readers to make various interpretations and take various directions in interpreting it.

Moreover, the poem, by means of its six short lines and placement on the page, readily opens itself to various other interpretations. The poem's placement, near the top of the page with a considerable amount of blank space below and an empty right-hand page following it, invites the reader to fill the space—to say something so as not to be left in the loneliness of those empty spaces. One might say, for example, that the word "beloved" echoes the title of the Toni Morrison's book, Beloved, in which a young girl dies, and

on her tombstone the word "Beloved" is inscribed. This novel would have been readily available in the US and was published only two years before Carver's death. It received international attention, and given the timing and success of it, this association may have been intentional. Carver, or at least Gallagher, would likely have read Morrison's novel. (Tess Gallagher often summarized novels and stories for Carver.) If this is the case, then by means of the word "beloved," spoken twice in the poem, Carver has merged with the dead child. Thus the emotional impact of this miniscule poem proves even stronger, because of the fusing of the loss of the child with the forthcoming loss of the poet. In its unwillingness to give itself up to only one interpretation and in its interconnectedness with other works, the poem attests to its strength and depth of meaning. By extension this poem is also illustrative of Carver's own spiritual strength, despite the foreboding news of his own imminent death.

In another two-stanza, four-line poem, "Quiet Nights," Carver searches for a metaphor to explain what will happen when he dies. He views the transition between life and death as going "to sleep on one beach" (1) and "waking up on another" (2). In the second stanza, he indicates that there is a boat made for such a purpose. This image evokes the mythological depiction of people being ferried to their death and is quite typical of similar journeys that have been described in classical poems about the descent into hell such as in Homer's Iliad, where Charon the boatman ferries the dead across the river Styx.

The final line is the most daunting, though. The "boat" is "all fitted out / tugging against its rope" (3-4). Here, the image plays upon readers' emotions in several ways. There is the visual depiction of this small boat juxtaposed with the immenseness of the space between shores, and the force of the water upon it. The "tugging" indicates that the boat is moving with the waves; additionally, it is a boat that is anxious to return to the other shore to ferry more of the dead to the other side. To add to this foreboding, Carver places the poem next to an excerpt from Chekhov's "Perpetuum Mobile" (101), that reads "I have a foreboding [. . .]. I'm oppressed / by a strange, dark foreboding. As though the loss of a loved one awaited me" (1-3). These lines, along with Carver's four-line poem, add a chill to the realization that Tess Gallagher (Carver's wife) will be left on the side of the living, when he is dead. Further, the poem has a parallel haunting quality to that of Atwood's "The Time" where the dying man seems to wait not just for the loved one to arrive, but also to convey him or her into hell.

It seems rather strange to find a poem titled "Proposal" among poems about Carver's knowledge of his short time left to live. We would expect a proposal for a marriage to be a joyous occasion, but in the instance of Carver's poem, it is a ritual that Carver and Tess Gallagher perform as a temporary escape from Carver's impending death. It is also a final bonding of love between them that allows Carver's life and writing to live on, metaphorically, through Gallagher once he is dead. Gallagher explains:

And one of the things we decided to do was celebrate our eleven years together by getting married in Reno, Nevada. The wedding was what Ray called a "high tacky" affair [. . .]. (xxi)

"Proposal" contains five stanzas of uneven length, and the lines lack strong alliterative or rhythmic qualities, suggesting that the poem was speedily written. This seeming carelessness adds intensity to the underlying consciousness of Carver's imminent death and his need to "get" the images down. Gallagher acknowledges that Carver wrote "Proposal" after their return from Reno. She explains how the poem carries "the urgency of that time, the raw sense of life lived without guile, or that cushion of hope we count on to extend life past the provisional" (xxi-xxii).

What, then, raises Carver's "Proposal" to a piece of literary art rather than a prose entry he might have written in his journal? Although Carver, for the most part, forgoes strong rhythmic or alliterative features in "Proposal," he has not abandoned allusion, irony, or symbol. The poem builds strength from the choice of words carefully positioned and from the allusions to other poems in Waterfall, both his own and excerpts from others—by Czeslaw Milosz and Anthon Chekhov to mention two—that he has interspersed throughout the collection. In fact, the poem highlights the importance Carver places on his interconnectedness with other artists (Gallagher too is a well-recognized American poet), some living and some dead, as a means to keep his memory alive for others after his death. Concerning the interconnectedness and the

intertextual borrowing from other authors, not necessarily poets, Gallagher explains, "Ray had so collapsed the distance between his language and thought that the resulting transparency of method allowed distinctions between genres to dissolve without violence, or a feeling of trespass" (xxi).

Carver plays on the readers' expectations throughout "Proposal." He juxtaposes romantic notions of a proposal with the reality of his offer of marriage to Gallagher when he discloses the setting for the event:

I suppose we should be
 in a rose-filled garden or at least on a beautiful cliff overhanging
 the sea, but we're on the couch, the one where sleep
 sometimes catches us with our books open, or
 some old Bette Davis movie unspools
 in glamorous black-and-white [. . .]. (4-9)

Here, what is most romantic to Carver is not the sentimental images of roses that symbolize love, or the Harlequin romance setting with its glamorized view. Instead, he proposes to Gallagher in a setting that is homey and familiar—the couch in the living room.

There is a second instance when Carver juxtaposes romanticism with realism, when the doctor in "Proposal" tries to explain in images what will happen to Carver as his brain cancer progresses. Carver writes: "The doctor going on finally about 'the shell' I'd be / leaving behind, doing his best to steer us away from the veil of / tears and foreboding" (17-19). Here, the word "veil"

not only suggests hiding the tears, but also serves as a reminder of the proposal of marriage and, by association, the veil of a wedding dress. Furthermore, the words "shell" and "steering away" are reminders of other images in Waterfall. The images are ones Carver was fond of because he loved to go river fishing. They also invoke memories of "Quiet Nights" with its water imagery and the connotation of the mythical journey with the ferry operator to the other side that is death. Readers are both drawn towards the image of death and away from it by Carver's attention to the connotations of words.

Carver further plays on the readers' expectations when he writes about the "bad" news. After the news, he says that he and Gallagher went to lunch in a "little cafe" (24). He notes, "she had pastrami and I had soup" (25). These details establish a larger picture of his connectedness and bonds with other writers, particularly Chekhov. Carver's drinking of soup, for instance, reminds us of an earlier poem in the collection, "Songs in the Distance," where Carver borrows sentences from Anton Chekhov's story "Peasant":

Because it was a holiday, they bought a herring at the
tavern
and made a soup of the herring head. At midday
they sat down to have tea and went on drinking it until
they were all perspiring: they looked actually swollen with
tea; and then they attacked the soup, all helping themselves

out of one pot. (1-6)

There is yet another mention of soup in Carver's "At Noon," an excerpt from Chekhov's "Across Siberia":

You are served "duck soup" and nothing more. But you
 can hardly swallow this broth; it is a turbid liquid
 in which bits of wild duck and guts
 imperfectly cleaned are swimming [. . .]. (1-4)

And in "Sorrel" Carver mentions "soup" (11) when he quotes from Chekhov's "An Unpleasantness": "Darya was wandering about / picking sorrel / for a vegetable soup" (9-11). Thus by the use of a simple word such as "soup," and borrowing references to it from Chekhov's work, Carver draws his readers away from his own suffering towards the larger picture of suffering humanity, not only in the twentieth century but in other times and places.

Finally, Carver uses the image of gambling to expound upon his own philosophy of life. Carver often explained that he lived in the "now" (xvii). He knew at this point that sooner rather than later his chances of survival would run out. In the final stanza of "Proposal"—the most alliterative part of the poem—he writes this chilling image:

the muffled sound of dice coming down,
the felt covered table, the click of the wheel,
the slots ringing on into the night, and one more, one
more chance. (50-54)

The fact that Carver saved the strong alliterative lines (note the d and hard c sounds) until late in this poem adds potency to these otherwise clichéd lines. In this instance, the sounds draw the reader away from Carver's life and hopeless situation to the muffled sounds, images and echoes of all who choose to see life as a gamble.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The models for the study of Literature and Medicine remain strongly dependent on traditional ones established more than forty years ago in the United States. Anne Hudson Jones, one of the first Literature and Medicine professors in the United States, succinctly summarizes these traditional topics in "Literature and Medicine: Traditions and Innovations." She notes "themes of illness, suffering, and death in literature," "images of healers," "the type of the physician-poet or the physician writer," and "literature as a mode of healing"(11-12). I have largely resisted these traditional models that keep appearing, despite their durability. For instance, Dr. Jock Murray and his daughter, Shannon Murray, recently (May 2003) presented a Literature and Medicine Conference at the University of Prince Edward Island, in Canada, but the discussions were based on the familiar topics and themes of illness in medicine and literature.

My dissertation, while supportive of any study of Literature and Medicine in Canada at all, moves away from these traditional themes of illness and representations of the doctor. Instead it examines individual character-patients such as Findley's Pilgrim, Sherman's Merrick, Ondaatje's English patient, Hana, Kip and Caravaggio, Atwood's image of the aging and dying father, and the self-as-patient in the case of Raymond Carver (the one American author I include in my study). In the cases of Sherman, Atwood, and

Carver the characters of the speakers-as-poets are blended with those of the patients they present, so readers meet with writer-patients rather than writer-doctors.

Secondly, although conventional approaches emphasize "realist texts," I have focused on more experimental texts (what I refer to as language-based texts or self-reflexive texts). I find the more poetic and more experimental works, those which most people would consider to be less linear, less clear, to be highly conducive to the study of literature and medicine. They present a greater complexity of language and image, and at times chaos that often proves indicative of the patient's state of mind or physical being, or both. These texts do not isolate the patient from society or the world, but include his or her interwoven relationships with caregivers, family, community, environment, spirituality, technology, work, and self. As Peter Graham and Jan Marta, among the few who take a similar view to my own, acknowledge, the language of illness is not one of neat, tidy, sentences, with the measured language that institutionally trained doctors use. The language of the patient is unruly. It is a language of fragmentation, discontinuity, a language that is speeded up or slowed down from what is the norm in Western society. Sometimes it is a language of emphasis on individual words, of emphatic statements and exclamations; at times it is a language, as Sass acknowledges, that comes close to music, and at other times, to silence.

Literature as a mode of healing is something I touch upon in a different way than most. That is, most medical humanists see storytelling or personal stories as healing. While I embrace this notion, the texts I have chosen note that healing, or at least affirmation and autonomy, come from the connectedness with people and things, rather than the isolation people feel when they are patients. While the characters in the works I have chosen seem to be isolated by their circumstances and especially by their illness, the artful language of the texts puts them back into the fabric of society. In texts by and or about patients, this reconnection may be by means of intertextuality.

The unruly text also invites the reader in more readily than the so-called realist text. Readers participate in following the various directions the texts take, even at times possibly including their own stories and in that way joining in a shared community of suffering. The texts are open to possibilities rather than providing one set answer. This openness allows readers, if they choose, to empathize with the characters more readily. Both the author and the reader are allowed to be a voice for the patient, who often is not heard or cannot be heard because of some inability to speak clearly, or without difficulty, or at all.

The dissertation lays the groundwork for future projects. The time is ripe to extend the study of Medicine in Literature and Literature and Medicine. For example, Native Literature is replete with images about the physical, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of the characters' health. Few critics, however, view Native literature through the lens of medicine and health.

This is not to say individual articles about these works do not exist; indeed, there are quite a few, as one can see from skimming the long-established journals, Canadian Literature or Journal of Native American Studies.

Nonetheless, scholars have seldom placed these articles and texts under the rubric of Medicine in Literature or Literature and Medicine. The Medical Humanities NYU Resource Database, edited by Dr. Felice Aull, the largest collection of its kind, includes only a small section under the category of "Authors of Selected Ethnicity." Under the subtitle of Native American Writers there are merely seven names listed, of well-established Native writers such as Paula Gunn Allan, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Linda Hogan. In all, there are only twelve titles listed, and this includes both poetry and prose.

A course in Native Literature and Medicine, with emphasis on Canadian writers, would be a logical direction to move in. I would include Thompson Highway, Beatrice Culleton, Thomas King, Maria Campbell, Janet Armstrong and Yvonne Johnson (whose selections from journals are included in Rudy Wiebe's memoir, Stolen Life).

Wiebe and Johnson's Stolen Life provides the most potent example of a novel dealing with medical problems and trauma. Although the novel is not set in a medical milieu but in various locations, including jail, Yvonne's life was complicated by a physical disability. Born with a double cleft palate, Yvonne was unable to eat solid food until she was sixteen, when a judge demanded

the State of Montana cover the cost of medical treatment. During childhood, Yvonne was raped by a family member and experienced the suicide of her brother. In her teen years, she lived in Canada, where she ended up with a life-sentence for the murder of a man in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Three other people involved in the case were released with little or no jail-time, but the lawyers did not think Yvonne would be able to present herself well in court, because of her cleft palate. She was not allowed to speak on her own behalf. Wiebe juxtaposes the raw, more "natural" voice of Yvonne's journal entries with his own carefully measured writing. In some ways Wiebe in this text is like a doctor listening to Yvonne's story and recording it.

The work shows that secondary orality has a strong place in patient-centered texts, another direction for possible exploration. The mode of analysis employed in this dissertation would yield interesting results when applied to this and other Native Canadian novels. What is it about the constructedness of these works that makes one want to read them? Certainly, they do not survive because of sheer sensationalism.

Much work needs to be done in collecting the texts for a study of Literature and Medicine. A World Anthology of Medicine and Literature would open the stage for instructors of both Literature and Medicine to see what is available. For instance, while I have chosen a wide range of illness and diseases to discuss, it would be worthwhile to examine a group of works concerning an individual illness, such as schizophrenia. Here, for example,

readers might look not only at Findley's Pilgrim but also at an anthology entitled If I Played My Life, a pathography written by patients hospitalized with the illness, and at a collection of poems by Margo Buttons, The Unhinging of Wings, about her schizophrenic son who killed himself in his early thirties. It would be interesting to discover whether or not Sass's "trends in schizophrenia" would apply to these texts as well. Further, one might question whether one type of genre or one particular trope is more conducive to a particular illness than another.

Literature and Medicine has looked toward ethics and philosophy for a theoretical approach and a place to exist, but medicine itself, as this thesis demonstrates, can be a tool by which the reader can view literature to highlight new areas of study.

Appendix

Interview with Kenneth Sherman

The interview, primarily on Sherman's long-poem sequence Words for Elephant Man, consisted of an e-mail exchange on June 8, 2003, between Yvonne Trainer in Edmonton, Alberta, and Sherman in Toronto, Ontario. Trainer posed questions to which Sherman replied.

YT: *Over the past several decades there seems to be considerable interest in fictionalized versions of medical case studies, perhaps as a result of the movie version of Oliver Sack's Awakenings that demonstrated some of the possibilities for writing creative cases. But, except for your Words for Elephant Man, I haven't discovered any long-poem sequences based on medical case studies. What led you to choose Joseph Merrick as a subject for this intriguing long-poem sequence?*

KS: It would be inaccurate to say that I chose Merrick. He chose me. I never thought I was fictionalizing a medical case study. In my opinion, that would result in taxidermy, not poetry. I believe Merrick permitted me to use his figure as a poetic mask.

YT: *Does your interest in medical subjects, or in practicing medicine perhaps, extend beyond this one publication?*

KS: Books in Canada:

VENUS OCCLUDED

I awoke one morning to discover one eye
 Weird, blurry, as if opened underwater.
 At first I thought I was imagining the effect,
 Denial my reaction to any physical mishap.
 But two days later I found myself sitting
 In the darkened chamber, the ophthalmologist
 Hunched over me, his miner's light probing
 The flooded landscape of my retina. "There it is."
 Then the ominous pause. "A venous occlusion...
 Some damage..." I understood occlusion as blockage,
 But not being from the scientific side of things
 Or wanting, perhaps, to accept responsibility for failed vision
 I heard him speak the name of the Goddess
 And wondered if those images were fading
 Because they'd not been loved enough.

YT: *Ondaatje's Billy the Kid Poems and Robert Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue were both published in the 1970s and Words for Elephant Man appeared in 1983. Did these previous long-poem sequences influence your writing of Elephant Man?*

KS: Many long poems were being written at the time and so I felt permission to go ahead and make use of the form. But neither of the two books you mention affected me much. I was far more taken with Gwen MacEwen's The T.E. Lawrence Poems, which appeared one year before my book. I loved the narrative force of her Lawrence. And her poem is less coy and tricky than many of the others one could mention.

YT: *The hardback edition of Words for Elephant Man, I have here, has an etching pasted on it of Joseph Merrick dressed in a high-buttoned suit, sitting*

upright and facing forward, with hands on his knees. This photo is in stark contrast to Michael Howell and Peter Ford's The Illustrated True History of the Elephant Man, where the title appears in the format of a poster with a small shadow of a naked Joseph Merrick centered in the lower section of it. I like the dignity that your photo gives to Merrick. Did you intend this contrast? Can you talk a bit about this cover choice? Did you decide what picture to use on the cover, or was it your publisher who made the decision?

KS: The artwork and cover were my choice. Doug Frank, the book's designer, helped a great deal in the layout and graphic impression. My friend George Raab - an extraordinary artist - agreed to produce etchings that capture our conception of 19th century London. The etching used for the cover is from an actual photograph of Merrick. The advantage of using an etching over a photo is that it provides some distancing. It lets the reader know that my Merrick has been imaginatively re-worked.

YT: *And were the choices of the other artworks (very fine etchings) in the book yours or that of the publisher? And can you talk about that etching of an elephant tied in ropes? What are the ties (no pun intended) to the collection?*

KS: Howard Aster, the publisher, had little to do with the project other than to see it through promptly. I sent George Raab the manuscript and he did a series of etchings and then we got together and discussed which would best complement the text and produce the particular effect we were after. We wanted to create a 19th century ambience with a tinge of irony. We hoped that

each etching, such as the one you refer to, could be "read into" in light of the text.

YT: *Words for Elephant Man is dedicated to Irving Layton. You mention to me in a previous e-mail that you studied under Irving Layton. Did he help to edit Elephant Man, read drafts of it, suggest that you write about this subject . . .? Was Layton's own poetry influential to your writing style?*

KS: Irving was one of my teachers at York in the late 60s and early 70s. He was an important model for me at the time. He was encouraging and more importantly, intellectually stimulating. As a teacher he was as interesting as Northrop Frye, with whom I did graduate work later. After I finished at York, Irving became more than a mentor. He'd often come by and have dinner with me and my wife. I dedicated the book to him to show my gratitude for what he'd given me as a teacher and artist. Dennis Lee read the manuscript as editor at M & S and made a few helpful comments. There was originally a section on Joseph Merrick's attraction to socialism and Dennis, wisely, suggested that I remove it. But the greatest help came from Eli Mandel. He was a marvellous reader. I had structured the poems in a straightforward narrative fashion and Eli pointed out that by using flashback and juxtaposition I could create a greater variety of effects.

He taught me how to foreground and background certain themes. It was his idea to use Treves' description of Merrick's skeleton as the final poem.

YT: *The opening poem in Elephant Man, "A Psalm of the Elephant Man" is a rather curious one. One of your critics, Geoff Cook, in Danforth Review, calls the work your "Book of Job." Can you speak to this comment? Howard and Ford, whom you credit for the factual information in your collection, explain that religion played a crucial role in Merrick's life—that his mother had taught him the psalms and that he read the Bible. Is this poem, placed strategically as the first one in the book, a kind of gift to the elephant man, or a reminder of the significance of religion to Joseph Merrick and to your long-poem sequence as a whole?*

KS: *Poetry relies on tension. One of the central tensions in the book is between science (medicine) and spirit (religion). This is acted out between Treves and Merrick. I was delighted to discover that Merrick had a religious bent and was reasonably well read. At the same time his deformity made it difficult for him to communicate. People couldn't understand him. I couldn't have asked for a more striking representation of the contemporary poet.*

YT: *There are many references to speech and the speech apparatus throughout the collection. Obviously, giving a voice to Joseph Merrick is a significant part of what you intend in this collection. It seems also to focus the text on Joseph Merrick—to make this a "patient-centered text" rather than place Merrick in the background as Howard, Ford, and Montagu tend to do in their historical versions. Did you intend this contrast? Was it the lack of the ability to speak that moved you most about Joseph Merrick's case? (In asking*

this question, I might mention, I was reminded of Rudy Wiebe and Yvonne Johnson's A Stolen Life where Yvonne was not given the opportunity to speak at her own trial, when she was accused of murder, because the lawyers did not feel that she would present herself well enough. Yvonne was born with a double-cleft palate and literally was unable to speak or even eat any solid food until she was sixteen, when a medical operation helped to correct some of the problems. Yet her words, sent to Wiebe in journal form, spill out on the page in spell-binding images in the novel). Were you attempting in your Words for Elephant Man to present larger questions such as the right to free speech? Or, am I reading too much into the collection?

KS: The essential problem of our age is estrangement and Merrick's inability to be heard is our common fate. In his essay on Merrick, Treves says he believes Merrick to be an idiot and hopes he is. Treves couldn't bear the idea that Merrick was cognizant of his condition. Not only was Merrick cognizant, it turned out he was highly intelligent. And compassionate. One could see him as a modern day Job, Christ, or Hunger Artist (re: Kafka). He is suffering humanity. But because, in my book, he is the mask for a poet, his voice is all-important. That is what defines him, ultimately.

YT: *The abstract language of medicine and the more metaphorical language of poetry clash, no doubt intentionally, in Words for Elephant Man? Can you discuss the interplay between these two seemingly different languages in the work?*

KS: Thomas De Quincey said there are two types of literature: the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. The first teaches; the second moves. The literature of knowledge gives information while the literature of power heightens our capacity to be sympathetic. Treves' language falls in the knowledge camp; Merrick's is in the realm of the imagination. Throughout the book they play off one another. One could say that these uses of literature are emblems of larger themes: the rational versus the emotional, the pragmatic versus the sacred. Apollo versus Dionysius, etc.

YT: *In a way, Words for Elephant Man could be considered as Found Poetry. I realize that Found Poetry was quite popular in the '70s and '80s and is still around. It could perhaps be called the "Sonnet" of the past three decades. What aroused your interest in the Found poem? In what way do you consider the Found poem significant to long-poem sequences?*

KS: The main advantage of Found Literature (after all, novelists use it too) is that it heightens irony. It provides a ready-made sounding board. For instance, in the poem "Treves' Description of Merrick" I used sections from Treves' famous essay and had Merrick respond with sections from the Psalms, the Book of Job, and pieces I'd invented. The effect is akin to a contrapuntal piece of music. When you write a long poem, you can think of it as a musical score. Counterpoint can be very effective.

YT: *Did you have a particular sequence in mind for the poems and write them that way, or did you work more intuitively and then arrange the poems for the collection once you completed a considerable number of them?*

KS: The latter.

YT: *How was Words for the Elephant Man received by your reading and listening audiences at the time it was published?*

KS: It was reviewed in most of the literary journals in this country and in the major newspapers. I don't recall a single negative review which is too bad because I myself can see faults with the poem. I was excited about the book when I completed it but after a couple of years I disowned it. I'm now neutral about it. It was, after all, written by a younger and more troubled man.

YT: *Do you think of poetry as an appropriate form for dealing with physical disabilities—dare I use the phrase "the grotesque?"— because the form itself can empathetically correspond with the subject matter, and because poetry is often cut-off and isolated from the other genres, and because poets are often viewed by the general population as "freaks" who live outside the norm. The maritime poet Alden Nowlan, for example, used to sometimes refer to himself as Frankenstein's creature, and wrote some poems and a play dealing with this image.*

KS: I saw Nowlan's Frankenstein play years ago. It was performed in the park just around the corner from where I live. I thought it was excellent. The freak theme seems to be very modern. Think of Kafka's characters. In his

"Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," A.M. Klein calls poets "schizoid solitudes" who, ironically, make, out of their "status as zero... a halo." One doesn't get that degree of estrangement before the late 19th century. And the estrangement isn't confined to poets. Think of photographer Diane Arbus's fascination with the grotesque. It's a prevailing theme. But frankly, it's not one that interests me much anymore.

YT: *I note in reading the various versions of case studies concerning Joseph Merrick, including Words for Elephant Man, that the practical aspects concerning people with disabilities are present: issues concerning adequate housing, suitable work, finding clothing to fit, transportation needs, the sense of isolation and need for community, the need for security both physical and emotional, the need for adequate, comfortable furnishings. Were you attempting to emphasize these basic needs in particular?*

KS: No. They are just part of the history. Poetry. I believe, resents being used for political or social purposes.

YT: *Where's Kenneth Sherman in all of this? Are you in there, in the poems?*

KS: The person I was in 1982 is very much there in the poems.

YT: *Where's Kenneth Sherman literally? Out here, where I decline in Klein country and listen to Mad Cow stories we don't always hear about our poets in other parts of Canada. Tell me, if you will, about some of your latest works. I*

understand that you have a new collection recently published by Wolsak and Wynn, and a collection of essays?

KS: The Wolsak and Wynn *New and Selected Poems* appeared in 2000. My essay collection, *Void and Voice*, was well received. I hope to write more essays. I like the form. Like the poem, the essay demands concision, yet allows for playfulness. I am presently working on another book length poem titled *Black River*. I'm excited about it because the style I've developed is allowing me to incorporate personal history with the history of the area around Lake Simcoe where I spent much of my youth. The poem seems to be going well, but then again, you never know.

YT: *Thank you so much for all that you have contributed to Canadian literature, and best of luck with all your writing projects.*

(Kenneth Sherman gave permission for this interview to be reproduced and used in this dissertation.)

Notes

¹ For a sampling of a few individual collections of Canadian medical poetry, see Ron Charach's The Naked Physician, Glen Downie's Wishbone Dance and Heather Spears's Panum Poems. Although there are various articles available concerning subjects in literature and medicine, they are scattered and for the most part not collected under the rubric of Literature and Medicine.

² Preferences for referential texts (so-called "realist" texts) were mentioned by Dr. Michael Tarrant in informal conversations during rounds at Foothills Hospital in August 1993, by Dr. Jock Murray at the History of Medicine Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, May 2001, and by Dr. Anne Hudson Jones during in-class discussions in Literature and Medicine, at the Institute for the Medical Humanities, Galveston, Texas, in January, 1994.

³ See, for instance, Felice Aull, ed., Medical Humanities NYU Resource Database, which lists syllabi both by topic and by institutions. (Note that there are no Canadian syllabi listings.)

⁴ For other proponents of the "unruly text," see Robert Murphy in The Body Silent and Rita Charon in "To Render the Lives of Patients."

⁵ I owe this perception to Dr. David Arnason, Department of English, University of Manitoba, my doctoral supervisor.

⁶ For a lengthy discussion concerning degrees of pain, see Elaine Scarry's The Body in Pain, chapters 1 and 2.

⁷ A few works from previous centuries centering upon the patient include the biblical book of Job, although, of course, Job was not in a clinical setting; Molière's The Imaginary Invalid; and John Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.

⁸ For a discussion concerning the definition of "metapathography," see Peter Graham, "Metapathography: Three Unruly Texts." For a contrasting discussion of "pathography," see Anne Hunsaker Hawkins, Reconstructing Illness: Studies in Pathography.

⁹ For a sense of the negativity and confusion that reviewers have expressed about Findley's Pilgrim, see for instance the reviews by Timothy Bemrose and Bill Richardson.

¹⁰ See American Psychological Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Medical Disorder IV. This manual is widely used by general physicians and psychiatrists in the United States and Canada.

¹¹ For a general background, see for example Jakobsen, Shaman: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to the Master of Spirits and Healing.

¹² See, for example, the section on morphine in "Drug Addiction and Drug Abuse," in The Columbia Encyclopedia.

¹³ See, for example, "Drug Addiction and Drug Abuse," The Columbia Encyclopedia; or Travis Thompson, Peter B. Dews and J. E. Barrett, eds., Neurobehavioral Pharmacology.

¹⁴ See, for example, W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds., Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine, Vol. 1; Lawrence Conrad et al, The Western Medical Tradition.

¹⁵ For a discussion on Walt Whitman, see for example, Sam Abrams, ed., The Neglected Walt Whitman: Vital Texts.

¹⁶ By "domain of sophisticated literary formation," I mean that Atwood plays off other texts including her own previous works to create this poetry collection. She also makes use of the multifaceted features of language and the significance of literary tropes in creating the poems. Self-reflexiveness is an essential part of her work.

¹⁷ See, for example, Janice Fiamengo's "'A Last Time for This Also': Margaret Atwood's Texts of Mourning."

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