

## Ideas Whitman Got From Emerson

Toshiro Taniguchi

It is a well-known fact that Emerson found in the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" a new type of poet, whom he had thought of in his essay "The Poet" in 1841, fourteen years before Whitman sent him a copy of "Leaves", and that Emerson wrote him a letter of congratulation, celebrating Whitman's great career in future. Whitman said often that he had not read Emerson before the publication of the first edition of "Leaves," but it is clear he had read him thoroughly from his earlier years, in spite of his confessin to Thowbridge that he read Emerson only in the year before the publication of the first edition, because when we read "Leaves of Grass" we find too clear evidence that Whitman received much influence from Emerson in thought. The Transcendentalism of Emerson, though rather obscure in the system as well as in thought, may be understood if followed from his "Journals," "Nature," "The American Scholar" and other essays, such as "The Over Soul," "Self-Reliance" and "Compensation." Through these writings of Emerson's I have tried in what points Whitman has made use of Emerson's ideas, religious and philosophical, in his earlier editions.

## The Job Passage in Chaucer's "Clerk's Tale"

Isamu Saito

In the story of Griselda, a saintly woman, told by Chaucer's Clerk, occurs a stanza in which the humility and womanhood of Griselda are praised, being compared with Job. This makes a striking contrast to the passage in the Wife of Bath's Prologue in which Job's "patience" is mentioned in relation to a wife's sadistic rule of her husband. The Wife of Bath's citation of Job is based on the popular belief that he was the soul of patience, which she associates with a husband's surrender to his wife. In contrast, the Clerk's reference to Job is apparently an adaptation of the contemporary scholarly comment which interprets Job as an emblem, not only of patience, but also of humility or loyalty to God, leading finally to steadfast faith.

The Clerk's consciousness of *The Book of Job* is obvious in his treatment of the heroine, Griselda, whose experience of submitting herself to her husband's cruel tests is seemingly parallel to Job's experience of enduring God-given trials. Griselda's suffering is presented, not as a punishment for sin, but as a testimony of the constancy of her innocence and integrity, just as Job's suffering was in the biblical story. It is evident that the Clerk must have been thinking of Job throughout his tale, for he could not have remained indifferent to the presence of the Wife of Bath, who had referred to the name of Job to justify her own shrewd wifehood. He could not pass over the Wife's bold assertion: "It is an impossibility for any

clerk to speak well of wives, except for the lives of holy saints." Therefore he showed, through the life of a saintly woman (though not a canonized saint), that even a clerk can speak well of a wife.

My assumption is that the Clerk was not pleased with the Wife of Bath's association of her own experience of having conquered five patient husbands with the situation in *The Book of Job*, and he wished to correct her misinterpretation by putting forth, through his story, the orthodox position. For him, Job was not only the embodiment of patience rewarded, as the popular belief supposed him to be, but also an emblem of humility or steadfast faith. To use, as the Wife of Bath did, the name of Job as a lesson for "archwives," or to justify a petticoat government, must have seemed to the Clerk close to blasphemy.

Another question, however, which still remains unsolved, concerns the peroration generally called, "Lenvoy de Chaucer." In this the Clerk, to our surprise, suddenly disavows Griselda's feminine virtue and instead speaks flatteringly of feminine supremacy in a sort of toast to the Wife of Bath. But this is not a shameless *volte-face*. The Clerk is, by nature, "sobre," and would not like to cause trouble with such a woman as the Wife of Bath, notorious for her aggressiveness, by telling a story in which she is tacitly put to public censure. In this way he eludes an attack from her, turning his serious *exemplum* into a game, because he knows that the game of reconciliation, temporary though it is, is of great importance in such a chance assemblage as a pilgrimage. Thanks to this, he tells his story and delivers his message without arousing the Wife's anger, receives praise from "our Hooste," and generally acquits himself nobly.

## A Study of Iris Murdoch's *A Severed Head*

— Ways of Love and their Symbolic Treatment —

Yasuko Iwasaki

*A Severed Head* is in a class by itself among Miss Murdoch's novels. In it six men and women become intimate or estranged with each other, one after another, and a total of nine pairs of men and women engage in love, adultery, homosexuality and incest. In depicting them Miss Murdoch displays her talent fully, and the reader is made aware keenly how they have fallen a prey to fantasy, or how some of them are saved. Miss Murdoch's object is to inquire into the nature of love, liberty and morality.

Martin Lynch-Gibbon is the narrator in the novel. He is married to a beautiful wife and has a no less beautiful mistress. His "happiness", however, ends when his wife asks him to divorce her because she is in love with her psychiatrist. Soon he is deserted by his mistress, who has come to love his brother. The pretty mistress, however, tries to commit suicide on learning that her new paramour loves Martin's former wife, who has deserted her psychiatrist and turned to Martin's brother. The cuckolded Martin comes to love the psychiatrist's sister, who had been in incestuous relations with her brother. To make the matter more complicated, Martin had been in homosexual relations with the psychiatrist, who now comes to love Martin's former mistress.

This is indeed too kaleidoscopic, but Miss Murdoch dares to set

up this plot to illustrate her object. Miss Murdoch analyzes Martin's psyche minutely and shows that he is under the sway of the Oedipus complex and the source of his unhappiness is his misdirected rationalistic way of thinking and egoism. He has sense enough, however, to reflect upon his past and comes to seek true love. The woman who looms large before him and gives him a chance to reform himself is Honor Klein, the psychiatrist's sister.

Miss Murdoch attaches to Honor symbolic significance. First Honor symbolizes a severed head, which in primitive society was revered as having mystic prophetic insight. Honor is a prophet who tells modern intellectuals how they have fallen a prey to fantasy by not rightly grasping reality, given to rationalism and egoism.

Honor is also the symbol of the petrifying Medusa, who is interpreted by Freud as a castration fear. Those who are "observed" by Honor feel fear that their minds have been read. She is a god-like figure, having supernatural power.

What does Miss Murdoch want to tell her readers? She seems to want to give a warning to modern intellectuals who are irresponsible with regard to their thoughts and actions, who put greater weight on what others think about them than what they think about themselves... in short egoistic and subjective. She makes an experiment to see what it would be like when some of these people engage in the arduous task of love. These people are depicted with irony and satire. They have lost faith in God and have not yet found a norm in place of Him and have therefore not yet regained real love and freedom. They are living in a spiritual vacuum.

## E. Waugh's Imaginary Societies (2)

Bin Miyai

It is quite all right for a satirist, even for a social satirist, to be very conservative. Because satire, as a rule, starts from the strong motivations to point out the false, hypocrisy, unnoticed evils from his own norm, progressive or conseservative. But it is not all right for Evelyn to construct an imaginary world without having his own *Wellanschauung* to see world in its depth. Details are not important. Lack of trivial details in this imaginary new Britania will not put Waugh in harsh criticism. Lack of philosophy to analyze human civilization and history will always put him in a position as a satirical novelist who will not do well with a imaginary society, instead of his success as a menippean satirist.