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Editors
Michael A. Denison
Robert P. Brinza
Ann H. Doering

Carolyn Louise Jacobs
Karan Longbrake (Music)
Irene Rakas (Business)

Adviser
Dr. T. L. Kinney

CONTENTS

Gone The Sun .................................. Eleanor M. McDonald 3
Haiku ........................................... Sherry Barba 7
God Died Last Friday ......................... Gwendolyn Rosemond 8
On A Death In Summer ....................... Sharon Lougheed 9
Waiting For Godot ............................. Robert P. Brinza 10
Initiation ....................................... Carolyn Louise Jacobs 12
Oratio Dominica ................................ Thomas J. Anderson 14
Down With The Dirty Blubber Lovers .... Jack W. Lakas 16
Poem .............................................. Robert S. Burger 18
Walking .......................................... Jim Hunter 18
Sometimes ....................................... Jim Hunter 18
The End Of Singing .............................. Carolyn Louise Jacobs 18
Aves Ego ........................................ Jack W. Lakas 18
Have Some Now ................................... Clint Preslan 19
Withdrawal ...................................... Sherry Barba 22
For One ........................................ Sherry Barba 22
Farewell Sunny .................................. Dennis Saitak 23
A Psychologica. Analysis of the
"Underground Man" .............................. Ann H. Doering 24
Thoughts Of Life ................................ Hope Stevens 28
Artwork .......................................... Sue Garst 2, 7, 9, 17, 22, 25
Donald M. Fuller 13
David B. Geppenberger 28

Cover Design ................................... Anthony Higgins

fifty cents the copy
Gone The Sun

Eleanor M. McDonald

A blob of paint flew from the brush and made a soft sloppy sound on the walk as he threw his arms wide and cried in a voice of wonder and astonishment.

"Oh, how beautiful! How perfectly beautiful!"

A ray from the descending sun flashed directly in his face and he threw up an arm to protect his eyes from the glare. The other hand, holding the palette, hung at his side. The paint thinner had run out of its cup, across his thumb, through a couple of pasty spots of color, and off the other side of the masonite. He stepped out from behind the canvas. As the colors subtly shifted he became quite excited and paced up and down, talking to himself in short disjointed adjectives. Finally as an ominous looking black and white thunderhead turned slowly into an ominous looking pink and black thunderhead, he cried out,

"Oh, it's too much! Too beautiful! I can't bear it!" and stood there numbly absorbing the sunset.

From the doorway of the house next door a voice cried,

"Hey, neighbor, what's the matter? Anything wrong?"

"Wrong? Just look at the sky and you'll see! Come out and look!"

The man standing in the doorway moved down the walk toward the Artist, his thong sandals making a soft plop, plop, plop on his heels. In his hand was a glass, and ice cubes clinked sharply as he walked. The clink, plop, clink, plop offered a soft accompaniment to his reluctant stroll. Finally he stood next to his neighbor, gazing dispassionately at the sunset.

The Artist stood in a rapture, gazing to the West. Suddenly he turned to his neighbor with a frown.

"It's an extremely moving and perfect thing to me, but you being a Scientist, I suppose you don't find it so. You probably think in terms of dust in the air causing the colors, and things like that."

The other man took a sip from his glass, and answered deliberately.

"Not exactly. But I do think in objective terms, not in terms like 'moving' and 'perfect.' As a Physicist, my special field of interest is light of a particular wave length. Now that area over there . . . " he pointed to a spot low on the horizon, and his voice took on a tinge of excitement. But the Artist disregarded his pointing arm and pointed instead to a fiery spot further to the South.
"But what about that? Look, look, isn't that a magnificent color?"

The Physicist shrugged, not interested in the spot of red, his eyes fixed on the spot he had pointed out earlier.

"I really couldn't say. That isn't in my line. But Jones would know. Or maybe Smith. Do you know them? They live around the corner. Wait, I'll call them, if it will make you happier to know what's making the red spots."

In a few minutes Jones and Smith were standing in front of the forgotten canvas. The Artist's wife had brought down cold beer, and Smith and Jones were analyzing their parts of the sunset. Finally Smith said,

"Well, of course, certain kinds of dust make different colors. That right, Jones?"

"Beats me, Smith. That really isn't in my line of specialization. If you want to know what's in the atmosphere right now, why don't you get Black? He's an Industrial Engineer. But, you take that spot of purple there . . . ."

Black looked at the sunset.

"Sure is a good one. All kinds of things in the atmosphere. But the angle of incidence . . . Say, doesn't Green live around here? He's an Earth Scientist. Call him up and ask him if he knows about the angle of incidence. And tell him to bring Harvey along. He's a Mathematician, and I imagine Green will need him to correlate."

Green and Harvey brought lots of paper, and good sharp pencils, and were soon busy with figures. Palette still hooked on his thumb, the Artist looked on with astonishment as Physicist Short Rays, Physicist Long Rays, plus Earth Scientist Angle of Incidence and their friends Mathematician, Astronomer and a crowd of highly specialized people decided objectively on the quality of the sunset.

"Boont ought to be here," grumbled Black. "Those batteries . . . ."

"While you're on the phone, call Gunther," said Mathematician. "It isn't in my line to go further than this theory. But Gunther is a Statistician, and it's his job to carry it from here."

When Gunther arrived, he drove up in the truck which housed his portable Think, Inc. Statistician's Special. He hustled around the group, making lists and advising the Scientists how to make their lists more concise so that he could process them. He didn't look at the sunset.

By this time a few more Scientists had arrived, and a few had gone to their labs to get equipment to measure the sunset. Holloway, who lived in the house on the other side of the Artist, was an Efficiency Expert whose special interest was arranging laboratories. Attracted by the bustle from the Artist's yard, he came over to investigate. With lips pursed in disapproval, he arranged Things, grouping equipment and men so that as few ergs as possible would be dissipated in the undertaking. Off to one side of the lawn, in a tiny free spot, the Artist's wife snapped two pictures with her Brownie and retreated to the house.

It was getting dark when all results were ready to be tabulated. Gunther snapped on the overhead lights in the van, and started collecting data. The crowd of Scientists grouped themselves around the tailgate, excitedly discussing the phenomenon.

"Ooops, sorry, Brown, I just spilled some beer on your foot."

That's O.K., Green. Say, did you see that reflection of the long waves at . . . Let's see here, if I can find it in my notes . . . Oh, yes, at '067'".

"No, I didn't. That isn't my field. But I'm sure that Knowles caught it. Reflection of that wave length is his field!"

The machine growled sedately as Gunther pushed buttons and played on the keyboard. Suddenly, the growl stopped. He pushed a button once, then again, pulled a lever, frowned, and said,

"Can't understand it. Just stopped. Hmmm . . . ."

"Don't tell me it's broken down. How are we going to get this data processed?"

"Well, this is a very sensitive machine, you know. Highly specialized. Can't expect too much of it." Gunther frowned at the Scientist.

"Why don't we call Lowell? Isn't he a Specialist in these machines?"

"Yes, but He's a Specialist in charge of Repairing Machines Processing Sunsets. Have to go clear to Napoleon to get Sykes. He's our Specialist First Class, charge of Repairing Machines Processing Sunsets. Maybe if someone calls him right away . . . ."

Sykes straightened up from behind the machine, and very deliberately leaned over to lightly flick a switch. A hum of activity from inside the machine greeted his endeavor, and the Scientists murmured their approval. Gunther sat down again, and started processing. The pile of beer cans at the side of the truck grew larger, the machine hummed steadily. On the fringe of the group the Artist stood looking very much out of place. He had finally removed the palette; the thumb hole had left an ugly red welt around his finger. He rubbed it gently, more or less to have something to do with his hands, which were not filled with sheets of objective data as were the other men's.

His Neighbor showed him one of his lists.

"Now you see, my Artist Neighbor, how that spot of purple that I pointed out to you fits in with the total scheme of sunsets. Percentage-
wise . . . Let's see now," he shuffled through the papers, "I have the percentage figures here somewhere."

The Artist said,

"But the sunset was beautiful for itself. I just called you out to appreciate it, to look. Why take it apart into little pieces?"

"But we are helping you to appreciate it! Don't you see that once we give you all of the objective data and summaries, you'll know, finally and definitely why you appreciate it? You'll have objective standards by which to judge. All of what you call the little pieces are objective phenomena and once you understand their parts in the whole. . . ."

But the Neighbor was interrupted by a bustle and an angry muttering from the part of the group that was closest to the truck. Gunther was handing out sheets with his summary, and the Artist judged from the sounds of the group that something was wrong.

"Now, Gunther," one of the Scientists was saying, "this is manifestly impossible. This isn't, I'm sure, what my data would indicate when completely correlated. Sykes must have done something wrong."

Sykes was indignant. He didn't do anything wrong. He was a Specialist First Class in Charge of Fixing Machines that were Processing Data on Sunsets, he had a couple of degrees to prove it, and if anyone were to be blamed, well—here he glanced at Gunther, who glared back and suggested that inasmuch as every figure could be checked with the originals, perhaps the fault lay with the data he had been given by the Mathematician. But checks and double checks of the data indicated that there had been no slip.

"Well, well, I must say that I'm disappointed in this report," grumbled one of the Scientists. "I'm going down to my lab and work out my own part of the phenomenon. And then I'm going to write my own report, telling what I saw, and what I measured. And I'll probably submit it to a journal, because I'm sure that when I get done there will be no doubt that my area of interest in the phenomenon will be much greater than is indicated by this." he angrily waved Gunther's summary, "worthless rubbish!"

All were in agreement with the sentiments expressed by the Scientist, but as no one could objectively agree on the importance of individual aspects of the study, the group disintegrated. The Efficiency Expert directed the orderly dismantling of equipment, and the removal of the group was speedily effected. The Artist was soon left alone with a disorderedly pile of beer cans and his half-finished canvas. While Specialists worked angrily in their labs on individual objective reports, he sat on his mess-up front lawn and contemplated the dark, dark, night ahead.

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**Sue Garis**

**HAiku**

Sherry Barba

The wind's frozen hand
slaps faces sharply, cutting
with nails of keen ice.

Withered trees scratch the
evening sky. The sun bleeds
on the horizon.
GOD DIED LAST FRIDAY
Guendolyn Rosemond

There must be a nothing
To create a something,
silence before sound,
white canvas before
the artist's image,
tuneless song before
the instrument before the
Jazzman gives new form
to Soul. Inside the
grey, dirty, smoke-stained
coffee houses, avid
disciples of the cult
contemplate Life, and
Liberty, and the
Pursuit of the great
individual, MAN
in purest form, as if
man were a common
mineral waiting
for somewhere to smelt
his gross impurities.
Presupposition: Man is
impure. What the hell!
The cult will never
purify man. The
INDIVIDUAL! they
shout. Long may they
scoff. Only tell me, why
are all the members
of the cult dirty
mirrors of themselves? But
enter Jazzman. He has
a right to stare at
the cult in contempt.
Blow sweet, Jazzman knows
THE INDIVIDUAL.

Play on, Jazzman, until
the cult finds more to
create. CREATE! That's
it now. Gather near
you of the elite cult.
CREATIVITY. Our
gold. So the cult is
gone, really gone. But
Jazzman knows the real,
his is the CREATOR.
But then this cat in blue
comes in and says its
two-thirty jack, blow!
And the strange lonely
blonde in the corner looks
at him, very drunk but
very pretty, soft
slurred voice, says, hey, man,
God died last Friday.

ON A DEATH IN SUMMER
Sharon Longhead

I should have wished, finally,
For dignity in your going,
Though the sap had slackened,
And the leaves,
Still green,
Lay shriveled at the roots,
You feigned no honorable withering.
But that you had not valued
So cheaply, this death,
Flaunting your ill-borne
Blight so publicly,
Hated, rather, chosen autumn
To camouflage your aspen-hearted
Trembling... .
I should have wished, finally,
For dignity in your going.
Waiting For Godot

Robert P. Brinza

There is a passage in *Alice in Wonderland* that goes: "The rule is, jam tomorrow, and jam yesterday—but never jam today." It could be paraphrased thus: "The rule is Godot will come tomorrow, and Godot will come yesterday—but never Godot today." Or thus in an even greater generality: "The rule is that what man is waiting for will come tomorrow, and what man is waiting for will come yesterday—but what man is waiting for will never come today." All three say something different, and all three statements say the same thing. We wait for something, we know not what, and that is all we have, our waiting. Vladimir says, "Yes, in this immense confusion one thing is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come—"

Time is a part of this immense confusion. It passes, and yet we can never be sure of its passing, or where the time really is.

Estragon: You're sure it was this evening?
Vladimir: What?
Estragon: That we were to wait.
Vladimir: He said Saturday. (Pause) I think.
Estragon: You think.
Vladimir: I must have made a note of it. (He jumble in his pocket, bursting with miscellaneous rubbish.)

Estragon: (very insidiously) But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (Pause.) Or Monday? (Pause.) Or Friday?
Vladimir: (looking wildly about him, as though the date was inscribed in the landscape.) It's not possible!

Estragon: Or Thursday?
Where does it go? It passes, from dawn into sunset, it passes. And no day is really different from the one that preceded it, nor will the following one be different. The details may change slightly: leaves may appear on a tree where before there were no leaves, a man is not quite the same—he may have gone blind or dumb. 'When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?'

Do we exist in this confusion, in this endless waiting? "We always find something. eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?" There is endless chatter, "blathering about nothing in particular." There is trying to remember about yesterday, which has been forgotten, and living today, which will be forgotten tomorrow. And sometimes something will come along, a diversion.

Vladimir: Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us represent worthily for once the fool brood to which a cruel fate consigned us!

* * * * *

We wait. We are bored. (He throws up his hand.) No don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it. Good. A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste. Come, let's go to work! (He advances towards the heap, stops in his stride.) In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!

Also in this world are other people. People whom we get to know and possibly love. Yet, can we be secure in knowing other people? There is always the possibility that we would be better off alone. The paradox is clear:

Estragon: You see, you feel worse when I'm with you. I feel better alone too.

Vladimir: (sucked). Then why do you always come crawling back?
Estragon: I don't know.

It is not a pretty world Beckett pictures for us. It is filled with inane and useless things. Life is lived only because of the way in which we live it. "But it's the way of doing it that counts, the way of doing it, if you want to go on living." And if this is the world, the world as it actually exists, what is there to do but go on "waiting for Godot."

Godot becomes all the hopes joys, aspirations that mankind is waiting for. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that Godot is the second coming of Christ, and the millennium that this second coming is supposed to bring. Godot becomes the embodiment of all those things to which man yearns as he wishes to free himself from himself, from the imbecilic prattling of the "thinking" man such as Lucky:
Given the existence as uttered in the public works of Puncher and Wattman of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without
extension who from the heights of divine apathia
divine athenobia divine aphasic loves us dearly with
some exceptions for reasons unknown but time
who claim to tell us what life, fate, the universe is all about, and tell us
nothing. Man wishes to free himself, but he cannot even hang himself for
there is never a rope, or even a suitable tree.

But in this dismal world, there is the hope that Godot will come. It
is the theme that runs throughout the play. Existence becomes equated
with waiting. If he does not come today, he will surely come tomorrow,
and tomorrow, and the infinitude of tomorrows that will mark the passage
of time passing into the infinitude of yesterdays, leaving the present
without presence.

Vladimir: We have to come back tomorrow.
Estragon: What for?
Vladimir: To wait for Godot.

* * * * *

Estragon: You say we have to come back tomorrow?
Vladimir: Yes.
Estragon: Then we can bring a good bit of rope.
Vladimir: Yes.

Silence

Estragon: Didi.
Vladimir: Yes.
Estragon: I can't go on like this.
Vladimir: That's what you think.
Estragon: If we parted? That might be better for us.
Vladimir: We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. (Pause) Unless Godot
comes.
Estragon: And if he comes?
Vladimir: We'll be saved.

INITIATION
Carolyn Louise Jacobs

Snug by a dilettante lover,
She was, like an old nylon,
Cast aside
With a runner in the fiber of her innocence.
Down With The Dirty Blubber Lovers

Jack W. Lukas

Unification of the American peoples can only be accomplished by the same means they are disunified. What causes groups of Americans to unite and be against other groups? Prejudice, that's what. Instead of having so many groups pitted against each other, it is possible to unite them in one large prejudiced group. Now that the Negro has become almost as acceptable as the Oriental and the Jew, we can speed up his joining by giving him a group to persecute in common with other Americans. Throughout history, people have been tied together by prejudice and the success of this connection is well known in politics and war. Therefore, not only can prejudice be used as a pastime but it can be used as a common bond to unite the larger groups of Americans.

Looking over the minority groups available for persecution, the Eskimo seems to be the most neglected in this respect. Now that they are forced on us as fellow citizens in Alaska, we can openly dispute their desirability as such. If they weren't citizens, subtle disdain would be as far as we could go, but citizenship declares open season on them.

To begin with, we should list some of the things with which we can justify persecuting them. Since we are uniting many races in this movement, the favorite insult of not being white Christian American can't be used. Socially then, Eskimos are far below us. They lack manners and proper clothing; their houses are shacks of snow or mud and sticks. Also, they do not care to raise their standard of living by purchasing cars, televisions, telephones, or refrigerators. Absence of cleanliness and decency is evident in their failure to construct showers. Most of them are unemployed and live off the land, not caring to obtain a more suitable living through higher education; the few number of Eskimos holding Ph.D. degrees is shameful. Morally, they are atrocious. Eskimos are rumored to share wives and whole families have been known to sleep nude together under the pretext of keeping warm.

By thus establishing a minority group for persecution, further unification of Americans is made relatively easy. Of course, there will be a few individuals who prefer to stick with older prejudices but time will eliminate these. However, it is obvious that a national organization to persecute Eskimos will have a unifying effect on antagonistic populations. The necessity of this method is that society cannot exist without prejudice; consequently, prejudice must be used to unify society. To organize this movement retired leaders of the K.K.K. could be consulted. Just picture in your mind millions of American Jews Negroes, Orientals, Indians, and Christians linking arms and chanting, "Down with the dirty blubber lovers." The picture of unity!
POEM

Robert S. Burger

I heard a man say to his son—

If I were God I wouldn’t let them

Crucify you—

And the boy replied—

But dad, you are, and you do—

WALKING

Jim Hunter

it’s just a town

like others I’ve walked through

at some odd hour of the morning.

of course, not being very large,

the sounds are different.

not the

cavernous echo of a truck blocks away

but the

cricket in the alley between the stores.

the quiet is the same;

a misplaced quiet, as though

the buildings didn’t know what to do

with their insides empty,

they stand awkward and embarrassed.

and I, in turn, am left embarrassed

at having a reason for being here

at this vacant hour of the morning.

SOMETIMES

Jim Hunter

sometimes

my cigarette

its dissipated smoke

consuming itself into not

is all

THE END OF SINGING

Carolyn Louisa Jacobs

In the white desert of sheets

And withered flesh

Must be yet an oasis—

But her eyes roam vacantly.

Outside the bedroom window

A locust shell

Clings to a limb.

AVES EG O

Jack W. Labus

When a bird is allowed to walk about proud,

Should we pluck out his plumage to show

Such an open display is only his way,

Of concealing a body of woe?

Have Some Now

Clint Preslan

Heat waves shimmered upward from the great yard of bleached slag. Grasshoppers hummed in the nearby field, and the sun blazed on the wide, cracked planks of the loading dock. Harry Kidd wiped his face with a soiled handkerchief, threw away the stub of his cigar, and walked down the dock toward the gaping warehouse door. He was thirsty. The drinking fountain that usually worked was out of order, and the two others barely mustered a lukewarm drizzle. It was strictly out of necessity that Kidd headed for the soft-drink machine, a convenience he had absolutely no use for. Every three days, the wise-guy serviceman from Lockman’s Lighting Canteens recharged the soda tanks and plundered the coin box.

In Kidd’s mind, Lockman’s Canteens were crooked, and so were their machines. He never wanted their machine installed in the warehouse in the first place, and fought his superiors’ desires every inch of the way. The liquids that issued from the machine were extremely gaseous, and whenever the opportunity presented itself, the machine stole the drinker’s money. Kidd complained about the machine’s furtive tendencies on several occasions, but nothing ever came of them. The machine was there to stay, and he would have to put up with it.

Once inside the cavernous warehouse, Kidd entered a small room on his right. A whirring yellow-and-blue metal case confronted him. “Cold—Refreshing. Treat Yourself!” cried the machine’s placard, “Have Some Now!”

Kidd’s sweaty right hand dug into his pants pocket, thrashed the damp handkerchief aside, and groped for the change beneath. Coins jingled. Pennies . . . pennies . . . he had a dime in there somewhere . . . . His eyes stared at the machine’s vibrating interior. It would be cool and smooth to the touch. His parched throat anticipated the bite of the carbonated drink, the wet sting on his tongue. He could almost feel the liquid coursing down his gullet. Hurriedly, he turned the red plastic dial to the illuminated space marked Orange Drink. There was a loud hum and a small electrically-lit panel flashed MAKE ANOTHER SELECTION. Kidd swore. He did not want to make another selection. He wanted orange.
Arrogantly, he swung the dial to the space marked Grapeade, and the thwarting panel light winked out. Kidd shoved his newly-discovered dime into the slot above the fat lime-green arrow that said INSERT COIN HERE. The dime clinked down the narrow shaft behind the thin sheet of yellow and blue metal. There was a tiny crunch, a clunk, and then nothing. No paper cup slid into position beneath the stainless steel spigot above the stainless steel grate behind the clear plastic door. No purple fluid gushed from the spigot to the paper cup, then, miraculously stopped before overflowing. None of these things happened. Instead, the machine continued to whirr happily. It had swallowed his dime.

Kidd discharged a broadside of four-letter words. His thick thumb jabbed at the coin return lever. The lever clicked and bounced up and down, but no dime tinkled into the return slot. The whirr continued to grow louder, mocking his efforts. The machine had his dime and it was going to keep it. Kidd seethed. The madder he got, the thirstier he became. His throat began to burn. He did not have another dime, and a small white space near the selection dial declared NICKEL OR DIME ONLY. He did not have a nickel or a dime. All he had were pennies, and the machine did not take pennies. Suddenly, in desperation, he kicked the box. There was a hollow clang, and it rocked on its rubber mountings. The electric lights flickered. He kicked it again. He yelled oaths at it, and it hit with the heel of his right hand—hard. Both hands—hard. Nothing happened. He swore in louder and longer terms. He kicked and kicked, but the machine would not yield. Blood surged to his face, and his hands shook. It was ridiculous to think that a soft-drink machine; a mass of plastic, stainless steel and paint, could outsmart a human being!

The Locksman serviceman came the next morning. Kidd was waiting for him. Distant tires crunchcd on the slag. An engine roared, gears crashed, whined, and a brilliant orange panel truck tore alongside the loading dock. The brake-lights flashed, brake drums groaned, the engine roared a last time, and a tall, bony figure slammed open the driver’s door. A black leather pouch hung by a strap from his right shoulder, and the pouch jingled as he jumped to the ground. He grinned crookedly when he saw Kidd leaning against the huge warehouse doorframe.


The serviceman-whistled through his teeth as he climbed the loading dock’s rickety steps. He carried a chunky grey carbonation tank in the crook of each arm, and the pouch jingled. He kept whistling as he passed Kidd, turned, and entered the warehouse. Kidd followed him closely with his eyes. They did not speak, but the serviceman kept the crooked grin, and whistled.

Kidd’s teeth grated as he heard the distant tink-tink of nickels, dimes, and quarters dropping from the coin box to the serviceman’s pouch. His dime would be in there... the dime the machine stole. He thought of all the times the machine cheated him, then of all the times it cheated people he knew. He was figuring how much that might amount to, when a whistling, jingling shadow interrupted him. Kidd was ready to start something.

“Yer grapeade tasty like sheep dip?” Bavled Kidd as the serviceman walked by him. “It’s crap—first-class!”

The serviceman swung around sharply, the near-empty tanks in his arms. The smile was still there, and it spread sarcastically.

“You like sheep dip?” Twanged the bony face.

Kidd stared at him carefully. He began to imagine how the knuckles of his right hand would feel if they smashed into that slimy expression.

“Yer lousy company’s a bunch of crooks!” He continued. Still, the smile did not fade. If anything, it grew broader. The serviceman shook his head slightly, and clicked the roof of his mouth with his tongue.

“That’s terrible,” he chirped.

Blood roared in Kidd’s ears. His right hand clenched into a fist. It screamed for that twisted smile. “Crack!” would go the fist, slamming into that taunting jaw.

The serviceman slowly cleared his throat, shot a quid out the open door, and began to walk away.

“Where are you goin’?” Yelled Kidd.

“Back to the truck,” grinned the serviceman nonchalantly. “What’s the matter? You want me to fight you?”

Kidd did not want to make an absolute fool of himself by saying yes, but he could not think of the words to express himself.

“Relax, pappy, you’ll shriv our bearings,” chuckled the serviceman.

“See you Tuesday.” And the serviceman walked out the door. The back of Kidd’s neck flamed.

The panel truck’s engine snorted. The rear wheels spun on the slag, the driver made a sweeping U-turn, and barreled back down the loading dock. As he rocketed by Kidd, the serviceman stuck his head out the window and thumbed his nose. He howled with laughter. He roared.

Kidd scratched volumes of profanity. He stamped his feet, he waved his arms in defiance.

The glittering orange truck bumped out the main entrance, swung onto the highway, and disappeared in a rambling clutter of billboards.

“HAVE SOME NOW!” Shrieked a towering, multicolored sign... a dancing, winking dwarf held a frosty glass of grapeade. "LOCKSMAN'S LIGHTNING CANTEENS SERVE YOUR AREA."
WITHDRAWAL

Sherry Barba

Depression forces me to seek escape and know that I am not too proud to say I can no longer bear to hear the din of life so loud.

For I have fought for others' cause and for a meaning all my own, but now my wounds are gone too deep and I cannot disguise a moan.

I need a time to be alone, to be, for once, emotionless, to let myself slip far away and lose—I must—this pain of stress.

I want to feel the drowsiness stinging my mind and pulling me into a pool of nothingness, a depth where I can cease to be.

FOR ONE

Sherry Barba

Why do you demand that I thrust my love at a cold world, try to warm so many with its sheltered glow? Can't you understand that I am content to warm you alone, hoard my love so that only you may feel its quiet burning?

FAREWELL SUNNY

Dennis Szilak

The last time
When mother and father threw you out
As you watched your canvas duffle bag
Waddle down the stairs after you
Why did you have to go and say:
"I'll show you, I'll show you."
A Psychological Analysis of the
"Underground Man"

Ann H. Doering

In Dostoevsky's short novel, Notes From Underground, the "underground man" is probably the most complete and complex characterization of the dualism which is a pervasive theme of all the novel's work. This account, written in the first person and thereby presenting a narrative untainted by the intrusion of an outside interpreter, presents a complete picture of the rational man who is in conflict with the mechanizing forces of civilization, who still recognizes the necessity of living in this world, but who refuses to surrender his freedom to choose for himself. The narrative in Part I, addressed to a civilized reader whom the "underground man" alternates between refusing to acknowledge and addressing in scornful tones, consists of a ruthless self-exposure and analysis. Part II is a dramatically written series of episodes from the "underground man's" early life which illustrates his attempts to live in the world.

In attempting an analysis of the complex nature of the "underground man," we may be tempted to dismiss or neatly pigeon-hole him as a simple example of what in modern psychological terminology is called schizophrenia. Indeed, the inability to conform to reality, the extremes of mood swings from suicide to mania, and the existence of conflicting desires which he describes fit very well into the modern definition of the disease. However, the author in his introductory footnote insists that the "underground man" is not an isolated or unusual type but is "one of the representatives of a generation." For this reason, and because of the repeated instances where the "underground man" insists that all men of intellect share his ambivalence to some extent, it seems that the "underground man" can neither be so neatly categorized as a victim of a mental illness nor so lightly dismissed from the conscience of civilization. If, as Dostoevsky so clearly implies, he is a representative of the man of intellect in conflict with the established order, his dualism must be considered as a normal reaction, in the sense that it occurs in a large number of humans, rather than a psychotic one.

There can be no question, however, that in terms of modern psychology the "underground man" has to be classified as a neurotic, a person living in society but not on completely satisfactory terms with it. Modern psychology easily identifies his various defense-mechanisms, such as projection and rationalization, which lead to such a definition.

What, then, concerns the analyst of the "underground man" from a literary point-of-view is not so much how to analyze him in clinical terms as the artistry and insight of the author who wrote many years before the science of psychology was clearly defined and formulated. On this basis, an analysis of the "underground man" must be concerned with two considerations: one, what are the characteristics and attitudes of the "underground man," and, two, how does the author present these characteristics and attitudes?

Essentially, the characteristics and attitudes may be summarized as "dual," that is, not one set of traits but two sets which are of necessity, because of their completely opposite natures, in conflict. This conflict is set forth immediately in the novel as the "underground man" begins to describe himself. He explains that he is a forty-year-old ex-government official, a Collegiate Amtor, who is sick and refuses to see a doctor. This initial incident is a foreshadowing of his dual nature which refuses to accept the conventions of his society both in the hope of spiting society and in the desire for self-destruction. These extremes of sadism and masochism, fulfillment by inflicting hurt on others and by hurting oneself, are climaxally built from the first statements through the incidents of the second part of the novel, culminating in the final triumph for both sides of his nature when he refuses the redemption of Lisa's love.

In the first part, the exposé of his inner self, the extremes of his character are revealed as the "underground man" first attempts to persecute himself by describing himself as "spiteful" and "unattractive." He continues, however, throughout the first part, to address his readers as men of small perception, as his inferiors in intellectual and spiritual qualities who can not possibly understand or appreciate his dilemma, thus displaying the opposite extreme of his nature, the wish to hurt others.

His masochistic ideas are stated in his self-analysis when he explains the "enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation...that one had reached the last barrier." At the moment when he visualizes his plan to humiliate Lisa, he says, "misery and spite seemed surging up in me and seeking an outlet." This outlet, of course, was in the sadistic manner in which he played upon the girl's emotions until she was reduced to blackest despair and complete humiliation.

The author builds the idea of this dual nature when in the second part he illustrates these extremes in the incidents of the "underground man's" wish for punishment at the hands of the passing pedestrain whom he allows to crowd him from the sidewalks, and in his desire to be thrown from the billiard parlor by the arrogant officer. The opposite,
wish, to hurt others, is illustrated by his plans for revenge, his contemptuous treatment of his superiors in the government office, and his outrageous comments and behavior which are aimed at ruining the reputation of his former schoolmates.

In order to delineate completely the polarities of the "underground man's" character, the author has built from the initial self-exposure through the remarks of the "underground man" to his reader, through the gradually more intense experiences of part II to the final scenes with Liza. In these last moments, the entire conflict, the extreme dilemma of the "underground man's" dual nature, is crystallized. His heartless torment of Liza, the young prostitute, is the most cruel of any of his sadistic experiments. His tortuous introspection after the incident leads him to the depths of masochism, but his final rejection of her love, which would certainly lead him into redemption, is the most bitter and final instance of his desire for self-destruction.

This sadomasochistic duality, while very strong and certainly obvious to the reader, is, however, only one aspect of the central problem which confronts the "underground man." This problem is defined when he speaks of the normal man, the man of action, the man of conviction who is able to accept a positive identity and a firm place in society, as stupid, limited creatures. As he proceeds with his self-analysis, he describes himself as the abnormal man, the man who is unable to become anything, the man of supreme awareness, the continually questioning man of intellect who is perpetually searching for an identity and for answers to his questions.

Along with the continual questioning, examination, and eternal inconclusiveness of the intellect, the "underground man" has to contend with his will, his absolute conviction that man really wants the freedom to choose, whether for apparent advantage or disadvantage. These dual convictions-nonconvictions leave the "underground man" stifled and miserable in the mechanistic world in which he exists. Because he refuses to become merely a cipher, a "piano key" of some centrally controlled instrument, he must insist on this freedom to choose even though it invariably leads to unpleasant, even painful consequences. He condemns his "evil brain" as a source of his unhappiness and says "reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man's nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and all the impulses."

The author discloses this conflict of rationalism and will through passages which deliberately state a quality, deny it, and then establish a tentative middle point which is essentially inconclusive. On the various points concerning the limits and stupidity of men of action and heroes, the author has his central character ask questions of the reader which amount to a cross-examination on every point; he furnishes logical answers for every question but concludes this quiz by calling it a mere "logical exercise," thus reducing its worth both as a conclusion for the reader to accept and as reality even to himself.

The only absolute decision of which the "underground man" is capable, that man must be free to choose, is developed both through the analysis of Part I and the dramatic illustrations of Part II. The choices which he makes in all the situations are never for the direct benefit of the central character, himself (whom he describes as his own most interesting and pleasurable topic of discussion); his choices are made for the sole purpose of exercising the freedom to make a choice. The development of this idea parallels that of the dualism of masochism-sadism previously outlined so that the final choice which the "underground man" makes is also the disadvantageous one which forever denies him the pleasure of resuming a normal place in the society of his day.

The author sums up the hopelessness of the "underground man" in a few paragraphs at the conclusion of the novel where he again details the thoughts formulated by the rational side of the "underground man's" nature: "We are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less." If we were to gain more independence, "we should be begging to be under control again at once." The "underground man," who realizes that he is doomed to be an anti-hero, utters his final defiance, his final assertion of free will, when he claims that there is a possibility that he, although he carried his defiance to an extremity, was more of a realist than his supposedly well-adjusted reader who tries to be a "generalized man." Thus, in his final summary, the author not only maintains the duality of the "underground man" but further establishes and reinforces the reader's kinship with him as an intelligent human being, capable of free choice and independent thought. It is this very fact, that the reader is able to find, at the least, sympathy and, quite probably, a kinship approaching empathy for this central character, that fully discloses the extent of Dostoevsky's artistry. He has taken an "undesirable" character, an anti-hero, disclosed him in all his worst moments, and still is able to touch upon universal perceptions which can survive the test of time and remain acutely pertinent to his readers.
THOUGHTS OF LIFE
Hope Stevens

Half-perceived,
half-grasped,
half-held,
half-assed.