Rewriting the Masculine: The National Subject in Modern American Drama.

Francis Granger Babcock

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Rewriting the masculine: The national subject in modern American drama

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The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1993

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Rewriting the Masculine:  
The National Subject in Modern American Drama

A Dissertation

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Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by
Granger Babcock  
B.A., Hamilton College, 1981  
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1985  
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Dedication

Because they believed in and supported my education, this dissertation is dedicated to my mother Gloria Sternicki (1932-1982) and my father Harry Babcock.

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This dissertation would never have been completed without the support and encouragement of many people. I would like to thank Patrick McGee for his inspiration and labor—without him this was impossible. I would like to thank William Demastes for his patience and considerable skills as an editor and as an advisor. I would also like to thank Anthony Barthelemy for his support and encouragement and his talents as a reader and Dana Nelson for reading and commenting on early drafts. Thanks also to Mary Jane Smith for her advice on readings in American history. Thanks to my friends Leslie Stratyner, Doris Macdonald, and Connie Porter, who were always supportive. Thanks also to Kevin Milliman, Phil Atteberry, Joanna Newman, and Patrick McGee for financial aid in times of need. I also owe a special debt of gratitude to Joan Espy McGee for her support and kindness and great food. Lastly, more recent thanks are due to Eve Perry and Norma Jenckes.
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Abstract
This dissertation traces the development of an American masculinity, using the concept of the national subject (borrowed from Frantz Fanon), through three different stages of the American capitalism: mercantile, or market, monopoly, and corporate, or late-capitalism. It constructs a genealogy of American maleness and then examines how this genealogy was altered and reconstituted during times of economic crisis and technological innovation. It argues that successive technological revolutions in the symbolic apparatus of American culture allowed elite political and economic interests to gain consensus by deploying the national subject using various media. In the early national period Franklin and Crevecoeur used the national subject to encourage immigration and expansion; in the Jacksonian era, Jackson and his supporters used the national subject to sanction Manifest Destiny; and in the late 1880s, Andrew Carnegie and Horatio Alger, Jr. used the national subject to valorize the practices of industrial capitalism. In the forties, the national subject was resurrected to sanction the emergent structure of corporate capitalism, or what Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno called late-capitalism. The final three chapters of this dissertation examine the relationship between the writings of Eugene
The final three chapters of this dissertation examine the relationship between the writings of Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller and the advent of late-capitalism. Specifically, I examine how O'Neill, Williams, and Miller challenge the dominant version of the national subject by offering a counter-discourse to the consumerism and nationalism advocated by popular conceptions of American masculinity. Using the writings of Jacques Lacan and the Frankfurt School, I attempt to situate the drama of O'Neill, Williams, and Miller in a broader historical context, a context which has thus far been either ignored or repressed.
Chapter One

The Autonomy of the National Subject: An Overview

At 4:00 p.m. on January 13, 1982, Air Florida Flight #90 took off from Washington's National Airport in a snowstorm. Approximately twenty seconds later the Boeing 737 skidded across the 14th Street Bridge and crashed into the Potomac River. Seventy-seven people died instantly. Investigators later discovered that the plane had not been properly de-iced. In the hours that followed the crash, Washington and a national television audience watched as volunteers, park rangers, and police and firemen struggled to rescue six survivors floating in the icy water. Five would live. The dramatic images of Martin "Lenny" Skutnik diving into the water to save Patricia Tirado made him an instant celebrity. The footage of helicopter pilot Donald Usher and paramedic Gene Windsor hovering over the water and dragging the survivors to safety also made them instant heroes. In the days that followed the tragedy, the Washington media reported that the five survivors--Kelly Duncan, a flight attendant, Joe Stiley, a business executive, Patricia Felch, Stiley's secretary, Bert Hamilton, also a businessman, and Patricia Tirado, who lost her husband and child in the crash--were just "ordinary" Americans who had miraculously survived.
Two years later, on April 1, 1984, NBC aired a "docudrama" called *Flight #90: Disaster on the Potomac*. The movie starred Richard Masur and Dinah Manoff and was advertised as a "realistic dramatization" and a "fact-based account" of the Air Florida crash. According to the producers of the show, John McGreevey's teleplay was based on a 137-page federal report on the accident. In a review in *The Washington Post* on the same day, media critic Tom Shales called the movie "a loathsome, ghoulish production" filled with "third-rate Hollywood actors" (L:7). In the same review, Shales argued that "absolutely nothing in this pathetic recreation...can equal the impact or challenge the memory of the unforgettable news tape of the real rescue attempts and the aftermath of the crash" (L:7). Watching *Disaster on the Potomac* that night, one couldn't help but agree with Shales. Nothing in the movie represented my recollections of that day in Washington; nothing in the movie conveyed the sense of shock and loss I felt as I watched the crash coverage on local television. A blizzard had made travel in the city nearly impossible, but when the Air Florida jet crashed at the beginning of the afternoon rush hour--and a subway train crashed a half an hour later--the city was almost paralyzed. It took weeks for Washington to return to normal, yet nothing in McGreevey's teleplay reflected what I
remembered about that day. Instead, what McGreevey "challenged" my memory with was, as Shales wrote, a script that rigorously followed the formula of "Irwin Allen disaster films" (L:7).

The most notable thing about this film, however, was not its shallow exploitation of a tragic event, but rather the way the people who made Disaster on the Potomac turned a violent, disturbing accident into a didactic tale using the dominant cultural representations of masculinity. The most egregious example of the teleplay's didacticism concerns the character of Joe Stiley. In real life Joe Stiley was a business executive who, by his own admission, was lucky to have survived. His actions in the water after the crash were largely responsible for the survival of Patricia Felch, Patricia Tirado, and Kelly Duncan; because his injuries were the least severe of the five who survived, he was able to move around and help others in the water before they were rescued. In the movie version of the crash, Stiley, played by Stephen Macht, is an exemplar of American masculinity. The first time we see Stiley, he is hard at work for a company that he feels takes him for granted. At the same time, he expresses his desire to have his own business. These scenes are used to demonstrate that he will be "successful" because he is industrious and competent; he is technically proficient
and does not waste time. We are shown that Stiley possesses all the masculine qualities that will enable him to "get ahead."

Later, as passengers begin to board Flight #90, shots of Stiley hard at work are continually juxtaposed with shots of "lesser" men wasting time, flirting with flight attendants, or sleeping. As it becomes clear that the flight will be delayed because of bad weather, Stiley confidently and expertly explains to his secretary the complex process of de-icing the airplane. Specifically contrasted with Stiley's competence is the incompetence of Patricia Tirado's husband, Jose, who is played by Richard Beauchamp. Before take off, Jose, consistently expresses his anxiety--in a heavy Spanish accent--about his failure to be a man in his relations with Patricia's family. He also expresses his doubts about providing for his family and about the ability of a plane to fly in a snowstorm. ("A plane can fly in this weather?" he asks his wife.) These brief scenes make it clear that Jose Tirado lacks the knowledge and autonomy (he is too dependent on his wife) that make Joe Stiley successful; and because Jose and the other men on board Flight #90 do not conform to the essentialized type of masculinity sanctioned by the movie, it is much easier for viewers to accept their deaths. That is, Disaster on the Potomac gives the impression that Joe Stiley
survived because he is industrious and ambitious and, therefore, deserves to survive, while Jose Tirado and the other men on the plane deserved to die because they did not behave like Stiley. This lesson is further underscored in the epilogue where we learn that Stiley, after recovering from his injuries, opens his own business: he lives because he has what it takes to "get ahead" in business, and because he has these qualities, he is given a second chance.

There is nothing particularly outstanding about the didacticism of Disaster on the Potomac. In fact, the depiction of masculinity in the movie is a typical example of a discourse that permeates the symbolic practices of our culture and, as Shales vaguely suggests, works to marginalize lived experience by replacing it with formulas made familiar by repetition. The construction of masculinity in Disaster on the Potomac is only a single telling of a story that is told, or witnessed, thousands of times daily in conversations, magazines, books, movies, newspapers, and on television. The formula of the narrative is so omnipresent that, for most of us, it is completely natural. We have seen it and heard it before, and we will see it and hear it again. "Work hard," it says; "You'll 'get ahead.'" The natural trajectory of the American citizen is "moving forward" or "working up the
corporate ladder." The formula tells us that "hard work pays off," that we have nothing to fear but our own laziness--because that's the only thing that will "hold us back." Its voice is other to us, and it speaks to us and sometimes through us. It tells us, through Ronald Reagan, "that government should not do for men what they can do for themselves." It tells us, through Dan Rather, that "Ava Gardner died today. The daughter of a North Carolina sharecropper, she rose to the height of Hollywood fame and fortune." It tells us about Nolan Richardson, an African-American basketball coach whose Arkansas team is about to compete in the National Semifinals, that "he was born into a poor family with eleven brothers and sisters." It speaks as a frustrated glasnost entrepreneur: "In America they teach you to be rich, in Russia they teach you to be poor." It says in Reader's Digest that the "ultimate key to success is persistence."

This "it" is the voice of the other, a fragment of a dream first assembled during the early national period of American history. At present, it remains as a simulacrum, disconnected from its historical origins, "writ large" by the publicity apparatus of late capitalism.¹ As a body of knowledge, as ideology, it

¹ For an explanation of simulacra see Jean Baudrillard 253-81.
represents a unit of what Homi Bhabha calls "the national pedagogy" (i.e. the American Dream). As such, it produces a universal American citizenship through the (re)production of a national identity, or subject. It deploys a transcendent model freed from history and the determining structures of our culture: economic, racial, sexual, familial. That is, an "American" is normally thought as white, middle-class, male and heterosexual, or as someone who possesses the values of such a person. At the same time, the national identity, or subject, functions, as David Lloyd writes, "to occlude troublesome and inassimilable manifestations of difference by positing a transcendant realm of essential identity" (x).

The national identity was first consciously and deliberately constructed by America's eighteenth-century revolutionary elites as a strategy to gain economic independence for the colonies. As such, the national identity is a formation of the mercantile, or market, stage of capitalism (in America roughly 1700-1830). The rhetoric of the emergent nation--"America"--defined itself against the static, class-bound monarchy of eighteenth-century England and Europe. As the writings of J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Thomas Jefferson

2 For details see Bhabha 291-322. Lauren Berlant calls this discourse the "National Symbolic." See Berlant 19-56. See also Sacvan Bercovitch 5-42.
and Benjamin Franklin demonstrate, the hero of the new nation was the subject set free from the determining structures of Europe. (Their texts are discussed in greater detail in chapter two.) This nationalist rhetoric was an attempt to construct what Benedict Anderson calls the "nation-ness of the nation" (12); it worked not only to invent America as a nation, but also, more importantly, it functioned as a sort of ideological glue to bind people together in an "imagined community" at a time when feudal organizing structures—monarchy and the Church—were becoming obsolete.³ From our perspective of the late twentieth-century, it is perhaps too easy to dismiss the national identity as an ideological formation or trick. Still, in the context of eighteenth-century America, the emergent national identity represented desires and aspirations that were often possible (for white males) given the structures of an agrarian or mercantile economy. A man's labor did, in fact, many times permit him to improve his conditions and those of his family significantly. The desire for self-improvement is reflected in the writings of Crevecoeur and Jefferson who both present, as David Robinson remarks about Crevecoeur, "a vision of a society of social and economic equals, made independent through their economic dependence on the land alone yet

³ For details see Benedict Anderson 11-16
bound together in a supportive and compassionate community" (17). The paradigmatic national subject of Franklin's autobiography, on the other hand, is determined by the structures and practices of an early urban market economy. Nevertheless, what these writers emphasize—above all—is the autonomy of the national subject, the ability of an "American" to use, or misuse, his labor to determine the course of his life.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the emergence of industrial capitalism transformed the localized agrarian and mercantile economies of the National period. The conditions under which men lived and worked were radically altered as a national economy developed and as its structures became more and more centralized and regulated.⁴ New technologies in communication, navigation, transportation, and production made it possible for large industries (steel, for example) to increase profits and efficiency by controlling every stage of the production process. Because factories could now produce goods cheaper and faster than craftsmen in small towns and villages, or the local entreprenuer in urban areas, and because they could distribute their products nationwide at low cost,

⁴ For a discussion of the effects of industrial capitalism on American culture, see T. J. Jackson Lears (No Place of Grace) 4-58. See also Christopher Wilson 39-64 and Richard Ohmann 135-70.
local goods were replaced by the brand-name products of an emergent national market. In addition, the consumption that industrial capitalism encouraged opposed the traditional methods of buying and selling, or methods of barter, that people in an agrarian or pre-industrial economy understood. "Conspicuous consumption," as Thorstein Veblen named it, disrupted the practices of thrift, sacrifice, and saving that were necessary for small communities or households to survive in isolated areas as self-sufficient units. The relative independence of these economic systems favored the autonomous modes of production and labor used by the small farmer and the small entrepreneur in the National period.

The restructuring of the economy caused a crisis in the national pedagogy because it threatened to make the autonomy of the national subject obsolete. As the "Taylorized" labor of the factory replaced the self-regulated labor of the farm or the small shop, and as wage labor became a permanent fixture for millions of lives, the autonomy of the mercantile economy disappeared. Massive immigration and urbanization during this period, as well as a series of depressions at the end of the century, exacerbated competition for jobs and further restricted male autonomy. Westward expansion, it was argued, offered men a "safety valve" in which they
could reclaim their lost autonomy; this idea, in fact, was the driving force behind what has come to be known as "Jacksonian Democracy." As Emerson wrote at mid-century, "The land is wide enough, the soil has bread for all" (541). Significantly, Andrew Jackson emerged during the election of 1828 as the embodiment of the national subject. That is, like Napoleon, Jackson became a representative man. The press often constructed Jackson as a common man, as "one of us," as a frontiersman who rose to the presidency. Like Napoleon, who was perhaps the most popularized figure of the nineteenth century, "Old Hickory" represented the autonomy that the common man desired, the autonomy that was ironically beginning to vanish. Not coincidentally, for Eugene O'Neill in *A Touch of the Poet* and *More Stately Mansions*, the popularity of Jackson and Napoleon becomes a cultural symptom that represents the betrayal of the utopian values of the Revolution, a crucial point in American history where "the ethics commerce" supplant "the old values."

The emergence of monopoly capital in the final decades of the century, however, produced a more serious "legitimation crisis" for the national pedagogy. As production and labor became more rationalized and

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5 The term legitimation crisis is borrowed from Jurgen Habermas. For a detailed discussion of the term see Habermas 33-94.
segmented, labor lost control of the workplace. Hierarchical, or managerial, structures replaced autonomous practices, and fewer and fewer men made the decisions that controlled the lives of millions of others. Machines "deskilled" labor and eliminated thousands of jobs. For a time, labor openly rebelled against capital, but business and the state acted to repress strikes and "bust" unions. At the same time, intellectuals provoked anxiety by announcing the "closing of the frontier." America then looked outside its borders to expand it markets. In the midst of this crisis, as Jackson Lears, Richard Terdiman, Richard Ohmann, and others make clear, the "consciousness industry" was born. The spectacle of advertising gave men a way to (re)enact the desired autonomy by purchasing goods. In other words, the emergence of mass culture in the 1880s can be linked, in part, to the need of industrialists to sell their products; in order to do this, they used magazine and newspaper advertising to convince people to abandon older cultural practices and modes of consciousness. More specifically, at precisely this moment of crisis, rags-to-riches narratives and examples of masculine power and individualism began to proliferate in mass circulation magazines, books, and the penny press. However, whereas, earlier representations of the national subject were in some
ways representative—the images of manhood that Crevecoeur, Franklin, and Jefferson wrote about did correspond to the opportunities available to large numbers of white adult males in a pre-industrial economy—representations of the national subject found in emergent mass cultural texts were disconnected from the historical conditions and processes that gave rise to the national identity and the version of masculinity which it sanctioned. Capital took advantage of the available technology ("the magazine revolution" of the 1890s) to rechannel desire for autonomy into desire for consumption.

The core assumptions about the national subject survived in the new mass cultural texts in a slightly altered formula that reflected the social Darwinism of the period. In sum, these representations constructed social relations between men in very unproblematic, ahistorical ways. They represented America as a unique place where everyone had the opportunity to rise (i.e. to become wealthy and powerful) through hard work and industry, and that there were no constraints on self-determination except personal behavior and will. If a man wanted to be successful, he would be successful, and if he failed, it was his own fault. Summarizing Theodore Greene’s research on magazine biographies and profiles between the years of 1894-1903, Richard Ohmann concludes
that "The typical subject of a biography at this time is a man (almost always) characterized above all by his power, of thought and of will. His achievement flows from extraordinary personal qualities and especially from his strength and determination. He has risen from his humble origins. The main criterion of his success is fame" (Ohmann 164). This characterization also describes the typical trajectory of Horatio Alger's best-selling protagonists as well as the rising self found in popular autobiographies written by famous men like Andrew Carnegie and Teddy Roosevelt—and of the heroes that appeared in hundreds of cheap magazines like Work and Win, Pluck and Luck, and Fame and Fortune Weekly. (Alger and Carnegie are discussed in greater detail in chapter two.) As John D. Rockefeller said in 1906, "No boy, howsoever lowly--the barefoot country boy, the humble newsboy, the child of the tenant--need despair....They have but to master the knack of economy, thrift, honesty, and perseverance, and success is theirs" (qtd. in Rodgers 35).

This rationalization of the national subject decontextualized it and initiated a process whereby the national subject eventually became a simulacrum, or what Baudrillard describes as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (253). The advent of new

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6 See Theodore Greene, especially 110-65.
media technologies in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, along with successive technical revolutions in mass production, prepared the way for what Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno first called late capitalism in the early forties. Their research theorized a mutation in subjectivity brought about by the structures of industrial modernization, which produced what they called an "administered society."

In their view, the autonomous individual had ceased to exist; he had been "reduced to the nodal points of conventional responses and modes of operation expected of him" (Horkheimer and Adorno 28). Knowledge was now heteronomous; reason had become instrumental. What Horkheimer and Adorno called the Culture Industry constituted citizens as consumers and consumers as citizens. That is, the Culture Industry, or what I call the publicity apparatus, programmed subjectivity so that it became an effect of the economy. As Bob Harper insists in Tennessee Williams' *The Last of My Solid Gold Watches* (1945), business reduced individuality to "vital statistics." "Individual" desire was massified (Sartre's term), so that the essence of one was the essence of every other. In expressing his uniqueness—in the prescribed manner, of course—a man expressed the desire of every other. Men were thus isolated from each other
in their (same) desire, which was organized by the images and the othodoxies of the Culture Industry.

As Horkheimer, Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse were aware, their discovery of late-capitalism destabilized the central myth of American culture—the autonomy of the American male. Their discovery also revealed a contradiction. As Marcuse suggested in 1941, masculine desire for freedom had been turned into a repressive instrument of control. He theorized that radical self-interest, which had been a progressive force during mercantile capitalism, was in the process of being transformed into a repressive ideology by "the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age" ("Social Implications" 138):

Individuality, however, has not disappeared. The free economic subject rather has developed into the object of large-scale organization and coordination, and individual achievement has been transformed into standardized efficiency. The latter is characterized by the fact that the individual's performance is motivated, guided and measured by standards external to him, standards pertaining to predetermined tasks and functions. The efficient [i.e. successful] individual is the one whose performance is an action only insofar as it is the proper reaction to the objective requirements of the apparatus, and his liberty is confined to the selection of the most adequate means for reaching a goal which he did not set. Whereas individual achievement is independent of recognition and consummated in the work itself, efficiency is a rewarded performance and consummated only in its value for the apparatus. ("Social Implications" 142)
Thus, according to Marcuse, "Under the impact of this apparatus, individualistic rationality has been transformed into technological rationality" and "Reason has found its resting place in the system of standardized control, production and consumption" ("Social Implications" 141, 146).

Significantly, at approximately the same time the Frankfurt School was rewriting Freud's theory of introjection to reflect the new subjectivity (or what they called instrumental reason or technological rationality), Jacques Lacan was rewriting Freud's theory of primary narcissism to account for the same cultural transformation. By introducing the concept of the mirror stage at the fourteenth International Psychoanalytical Congress at Marienbad in 1936, Lacan disclosed a structure of self-alienation similar to the structure of self-alienation inherent in the Frankfurt School's conceptualization of instrumental reason. According to Lacan (I am quoting from his 1949 essay on the mirror stage, which is a revision of the earlier paper),

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. (Ecrits 4)
Lacan adds that this development in the life of the subject is "experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history" (Ecrits 4). In other words, and I will have more to say about this in chapter three, the infant's identification with the "specular image" of his (m)other is a misrecognition, or what Lacan calls meconnaissance, which grants to the child a unity or coherence that the child does not yet possess. The structure of this primary relationship presents the child with the "illusion of autonomy," given from the outside, that is the "source of all secondary identifications" (Ecrits 6, 2). The self-alientating structure of the mirror stage propels the subject into history, or human knowledge. As Jane Gallop comments, "The mirror stage is a turning point. After it, the subject's relation to himself is always mediated through a totalizing image that has come from outside" (79).

The Frankfurt School's theorization of instrumental reason and Lacan's development of the mirror stage are partially determined by the crises of the thirties and forties—American technocracy and consumerism, on the one hand, and Nazism on the other. Both apparatuses deployed technologies that mediated subjectivity from the outside in order to produce consensus and conformity through misidentification. Significantly, the same
recognition of the subject as a social construction takes place in the plays of Eugene O’Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller. Up to now, however, it has gone unnoticed because (first) a narrow formalism has dominated American dramatic criticism and (second) the field has been neglected and therefore has not undergone the same critical revisions that have taken place in the study of other genres. All this, hopefully, is changing.

In his important book Communists, Cowboys, and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams (1992), David Savran writes,

In questioning the popular images of these two playwrights, this book is designed, in part, as an answer to the double-dealings, recriminations, obfuscations, and amnesia that seem to have afflicted so many writers and critics at the height of the Cold War and that, deplorably, remain widespread in highly visible portions of the theatrical and intellectual communities. This book represents my critique both of the formalism of the 1950s and of its continued domination of much of the scholarship of Miller and Williams. (6)

Like Savran, I consider my work a response to the formalism that has dominated the field, especially as it has affected the reception of the plays by Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Eugene O’Neill discussed in this dissertation. As a critique of these practices, my project argues that to decontextualize Death of a Salesman, The Glass Menagerie, A Touch of the Poet, or More Stately Mansions with a universalizing gesture is
to miss something fundamental about their construction as drama and as text; and it is also to miss something fundamental about the historical moment of their creation.

All three playwrights, as Savran remarks about Miller and Williams, focus our attention on the hegemonic construction of masculinity during the emergence of late-capitalism in order to expose the contradictions inherent in that construction. As George Lipsitz's research has shown, the economic policy of the United States government during World War II helped an emerging corporate structure consolidate its power by subverting "the greatest capital expansion in American history" (Class 4). Lipsitz concludes that this transformation "permanently altered economic and political power relations within American society, and produced a totalitarian oligarchy of the major interest groups" (Class 2). As in the 1890s, the national pedagogy was again deployed to sanction the emergent social relations. Specifically, if economic expansion were to continue, the conversion to a peace-time economy involved keeping consumption at its high war-time levels. This was partially accomplished by the expansion into foreign markets that the rebuilding of Japan and

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7 See Lipsitz, especially chapter one of Class and Culture in Cold War America.
the Marshall Plan made possible. Consumption at home, however, also had to be refocused as individual consumption, which had been disrupted by the dislocations of the Depression and World War II. The technologies of cinema and television were therefore deployed to rechannel male desire; and as in the 1890s, the anxiety produced by the (further) decline of masculine autonomy was displaced onto consumption by using residual images of masculinity to erase the historical transformations then taking place. The subject was thus restored to fullness by engaging in programmed consumption.

The plays of O'Neill, Williams, and Miller written during this period contest new subject-formation in American culture by exposing the national subject as an ideological illusion or as an effect of the economy. Their critique of the standardized modes of masculinity advocated by the publicity apparatus amounts to a cultural inversion; they turn the standardized model inside out and reveal an automaton at the heart of autonomy.

Specifically, in A Touch of the Poet (1943) and More Stately Mansions (1939), Eugene O'Neill discloses the national subject as predetermined, as subject to and subjugated by the twin evils of consumerism (what O'Neill calls materialism) and nationalism. Neither
consumerism nor nationalism is able to provide the masculine subject with meaning; both are bestowed upon the subject by a mediating other which Homi Bhabha calls the national pedagogy. As a result, the subject mistakenly masters himself--gains what O’Neill calls self-sufficiency--by dispossessing himself, by embracing an ideological mirage. Like Lacan, O’Neill had read Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), and like Lacan, O’Neill rewrote Freud’s work to reflect his understanding of human subjectivity. O’Neill’s reconstruction of Freud, as we shall see in chapter three, is remarkably similar to Lacan’s in that both rewritings point to the historical mutation of the subject I have been describing.

Williams’ and Miller’s rewritings of the subject are more closely related to the Frankfurt School’s ideas concerning instrumental reason. Both authors attempt to document the dislocations of late-capitalism through the examples of paradigmatic male characters. In *The Last of My Solid Gold Watches* (1945) and *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), Tennessee Williams represents the normative desires of American masculinity as predetermined and destructive. Jim O’Connor’s desire to express his "uniqueness" is what makes him "ordinary"; in other words, O’Connor’s uniqueness is expressed as the heteronomous knowledge of the apparatus, which makes him
no different than any other (American) man who identifies with the metanarrative of national identity. His reason—"Knowledge—Zzzzp! Money—Zzzzzzp!—Power! That's the cycle democracy is built on!" (100)—can thus be viewed as the utter banality of programmed conformity. Williams opposes the normative model of subjectivity by, as David Savran points out, "celebrating various subjugated masculinities" (81). In The Glass Menagerie, for instance, Williams uses the artistic values, or what Marcuse called autonomy of reason, of Tom Wingfield to resist the instrumental reason represented by O'Connor. But this resistance is incomplete since, in the end, Wingfield (and Williams) cannot restructure what is.

The debate surrounding the tragic stature of Death of a Salesman (1949) has diminished the radicalness of Arthur Miller's play. As I suggest in chapter five, most criticism of the play focuses too narrowly on the individuated character traits of Willy Loman and the attendant issue of tragic stature. As Kenneth Tynan wrote in 1967, "Death of a Salesman...is not tragedy....What ultimately destroys Willy is economic injustice, which is curable, as the ills that plague Oedipus are not" (67). Tynan's assessment is representative and from his perspective it is certainly accurate; that is, economic injustice is (or should be)
curable, but the fate that structures Oedipus' life is not. Tynan's judgement, however, when viewed from a different perspective, ignores the fact that Miller has rewritten the classical, or Aristotelian, structure of fate to reflect the economic reality of postwar America. For Willy, the economy, or apparatus, is his fate; it structures his life from without, and he is completely unaware of its processes, much like Oedipus is completely unaware of the forces that influence his life. Or, to put this another way, as Horkheimer and Adorno suggest in 1944, "The actual working conditions in society compel conformism--not the conscious influences which also made the suppressed men dumb and separated them from truth. The impotence of the worker is not merely a stratagem of the rulers, but the logical consequence of the industrial society into which the ancient Fate--in the very course of the effort to escape it--has finally changed" (37).

My purpose here is not to redeem Death of a Salesman as tragedy--that would be (is) irrelevant--but rather to call attention to Miller's historically specific rewriting of the subject, which has, to this point, been either ignored or repressed. Willy Loman, as I argue in chapter five, represents the death of the subject; he is, like his precursor Jim O'Connor, a product of the initial stages of late-capitalism and, as such, he too
is other to himself having been transformed by the ghostly Other of the Culture Industry.
Chapter Two
Formations and Reformations of the National Subject
I.

Stage One:
From Political Economy to Market Capitalism

Narratives praising the industry and autonomy of the American farmer and small entrepreneur became widespread as America's Revolutionary leaders rhetorically distanced the colonies from England in preparation for war. Franklin and Jefferson, the architects of *The Declaration of Independence*, believed that the independence of the colonies depended upon population growth and territorial expansion, so, in an effort to promote American independence, they constructed a trajectory of American citizenship that encouraged immigration.¹ Not surprisingly, representations of the small farmer managing his farm and the small entrepreneur operating his shop began to appear frequently in publications on both sides of the Atlantic. Before the Revolution, these types of representations of American life began to dominate the print culture of the colonies and then became part of an

¹ See Benjamin Franklin's essay "Observation Concerning the Increase of Mankind" (*Writings*) 367-374. For a detailed discussion of the migration of Scottish and English citizens to America in the years immediately preceding the Revolution, see Bernard Bailyn, especially 126-203.
emergent "Republican ideology" as the colonies became a new nation. According to these representations, America was a unique place: a country with a new social order and unlimited opportunities for the white male who was willing to work hard and save his money. Within a few years after setting foot in America, the emigrant, having labored hard for other men and saved his money, would be able to buy land and start his own farm; and, in time, if he was frugal and prudent, he would be able to buy more land and have other men work for him. If he was truly industrious, he could even rent his land to other men. In America, the story went, a man could start with nothing and end up with everything: wealth, property, and political power.

The political documents that created the United States also helped to promote this version of America. In The Declaration, individual self-determination was linked to the independence of the colonies; and in "The Bill of Rights," the "pursuit of happiness" set forth in The Declaration was legalized when the authors guaranteed (on paper at least) individual rights and personal liberty. In America, citizens would no longer be subject to the arbitrary rule of a foreign power, nor would they be subjected to the rigid class structures of eighteenth-century Europe, which made it almost impossible for a man to rise above the station into
which he was born. America, these texts suggested, provided the social and political conditions that guaranteed social mobility and individual success. During this stage of American capital, the trajectory of the national subject has its most typical articulation in the writings of Thomas Jefferson, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, and Benjamin Franklin.

If the "American experiment" was to succeed, Jefferson, Crevecoeur, and Franklin insisted that a specific type of masculine citizenship was necessary. Specifically, they argued that America offered unlimited opportunities because it was essentially an open, agrarian society; they also believed that because America had a vast frontier into which its population could expand, the new nation would not suffer from the overcrowding and the economic crises that plagued European countries.2 Jefferson, for instance, in his first inaugural address, spoke of a "rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich production of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye" (492). The optimism of Jefferson's speech was supported by his belief that individual and national

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2 For a detailed discussion of these matters see Drew R. McCoy, especially 13-104.
progress could be maintained indefinitely if the economy of the United States remained predominantly agrarian. He was convinced that individual males engaged in the practice of farming were autonomous and independent, and that their autonomous labor would keep the nation free from the class turmoil he associated with Europe. As he suggests in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phaenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend on the casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition" (290-91).

Jefferson's belief in the virtues of husbandry is typical of the political economy of the eighteenth century. Its American manifestation, as Drew McCoy notes, was typical of "classical republicanism," which, McCoy argues, Jefferson was trying to "reconcile...with more modern social realities" (10). According to McCoy, "In its purest form, classical republicanism stipulated that republics had to be rather rude, simple, pre-commercial societies free from any taint of luxury or corruption. The essence of corruption was the encroachment of power on liberty, an insidious process
most likely to occur in advanced, stratified societies where great wealth and inequality promoted avaricious behavior and dangerous dependencies among men" (67). The way to retard this eventuality, in Jefferson's mind, was to make all American men property owners, so that they would, as Voltaire put it in Candide, mind their own gardens and remain independent of commerce and the vagaries of a full-blown market economy. In other words, their labor managing their farms would make men productive and self-sufficient and therefore autonomous. Manufacturing jobs, on the other hand, would make them dependent on the ups and downs of the market or the practices of unscrupulous men.

Crevecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer (1782) provides a more concrete description of the husbandry of the period. The centerpiece of this book--"Letter III"--asks in its title, "What is an American?" and Crevecoeur answers the question by essentializing male identity. The letter begins with the stereotypical claim that America was an asylum for men "who, when convulsed by factions, afflicted by a variety of miseries and wants, restless and impatient, took refuge here" (66). What made America so attractive to the dispossessed of Europe was that the new country did not yet possess a stratified social structure: "It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything and of a
herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one" (67). What America possessed, instead, writes Crevecoeur, was "a pleasing uniformity of decent competence" (67) and opportunity: "new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system" (69). In America, the disposed "become men" because "they receive ample rewards for their labours; these accumulated rewards procure them lands; those lands confer on them the title of freemen, and to that title every benefit is affixed which men can possibly require" (69). According to Crevecoeur, the opportunity that America provided--autonomy through industry--was within the grasp of every man if he was "sober and industrious." If he "embraced" these "new principles" and threw off the poverty and idleness of Europe, then he would succeed and in doing so become an American; but if he failed to achieve even an "easy, decent maintenance by his industry" (81), he had no one to blame but himself since, unlike Europe, "[t]here is room for everybody in America" (81). To illustrate the

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3 The complete passage from Crevecoeur's text reads "He [the immigrant] does not find, as in Europe, a crowded society where everyplace is overstocked; he does not feel the perpetual collision of parties, that difficulty of beginning, that contention which oversets so many. There is room for everybody in America; has he any particular talent or industry? He exerts it in order
efficacy of these new principles in a more concrete form, Crevecoeur provides us with the "the short history of a simple Scotchman," Andrew the Hebridean. Andrew's story, as Crevecoeur tells it, does not contain "a single remarkable event to amaze the reader" but is included in the book to "delineate the progressive steps of a poor man, advancing from indigence to ease, from oppression to freedom, from obscurity and contumely to some degree of consequence—not by virtue of any freaks or fortune, but by the gradual operation of sobriety, honesty, and emigration" (90). Andrew's story precisely follows the elements of the universal American narrative that Crevecoeur constructs in the previous pages of the letter: he lands on the new continent a penniless exile, but through his hard work, honesty, and moderation, Andrew becomes an American: "a freeholder, possessed of a vote, of a place of residence, a citizen of the province of Pennsylvania" (102). Andrew's history—because Crevecoeur suggests that it is not remarkable but representative—becomes the history of a new race of
to procure a livelihood, and it succeeds. Is he a merchant? The avenues of trade are infinite. Is he eminent in any respect? He will be employed and respected. Does he love a country life? Pleasant farms present themselves; he may purchase what he wants and thereby become an American farmer. Is he a labourer, sober and industrious? He need not go many miles nor receive many informations before he will be hired, well fed at the table of his employer, and paid four or five times more than he can get in Europe" (81).
men called Americans. The narrative functions to universalize Andrew's experience as the experience or personal history of all Americans, and because the letter has the force of a moral exemplar, it sanctions a specific kind of behavior or competence. Crevecoeur's letter also functions to exclude or marginalize what he calls "freaks or fortune"—social or economic barriers that prevent(ed) immigrants from achieving the sanctioned life he describes.

Franklin's Autobiography (1791), as Leo Lemay points out, "is the only enduring best-seller written in America before the nineteenth century" (xiii). Lemay and Zall note that "[n]o other classic of English or American literature has served as a model for the lives

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4 For a discussion of de Crevecoeur's utopian vision see David M. Robinson 17-31.

5 This was the beginning of the process whereby participation in the national pedagogy was at once symbolically extended to all people but granted only to those Americans who fit the essentialized version of national identity: white, male, non-Irish immigrants from Northern Europe. A contemporary reader of Crevecoeur's letter would have had a very different response from a present-day reader. In Crevecoeur's time, it was assumed that the subordinated classes—women, the Irish, and slaves—were non-persons and therefore not citizens. An uncritical, present-day reader, however, will have a slightly different response. S/he will assume that all Americans have the same opportunity to succeed and that failure to do so is an individual problem, thereby ignoring the lived experiences of race, class, sexuality, and gender.
of so many people" (xiii). More important, however, Lemay and Zall argue that the *Autobiography* offers "the definitive formulation of the American Dream...expressed by the standard cliche, the rise from rags to riches" (350). During the height of its popularity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the *Autobiography* was read in Europe as a "true" account of American life. Because Franklin anticipated this reading, the story that he tells shows a representative American and the social and political conditions that produced him; it tells the story of a new man in a new land, a land where the individual has the right to determine his own history. As a exemplar of the national subject, the persona that Franklin creates stresses many of the same values as Crevecoeur; he too suggests that America has a revolutionary social order that guarantees individual autonomy and wealth; he too traces the progress of an immigrant (in this case, an immigrant’s son) from "rags to riches," and he also asserts that the paradigmatic American possesses specific qualities that make him "successful."

Franklin intended his *Autobiography* as a model for young males to help them acquire "some degree of wealth, power, and reputation" (1). On the first page, for

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6 See Lemay and Zall’s introduction to Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*. 
example, he writes, "Having emerg'd from the Poverty and Obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a State of Affluence and some Degree of Reputation in the World and having gone so far thro' Life with a considerable Share of Felicity, the conducting Means I made use of, which, with the Blessing of God, so well succeeded, my Posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own Situations, and therefore fit to be imitated" (1). The "conducting Means" turn out to be a repetition of the qualities that Crevecoeur's American possessed, except that they are articulated in a more formal, extended manner in the Autobiography. The famous thirteen "Virtues," which appear in part two of the book, are intended to give the reader a guide to follow in order to "acquire the Habitude of all these Virtues" (68). The reader should not, warns Franklin, attempt to acquire all the virtues at once, but he should rather attempt to acquire them one at a time since "one being acquired, would keep [him] firm in [his] Endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues" (68). The accomplishment of "Frugality and Industry," he insisted, "by freeing me from my remaining Debt, and producing Affluence and Independence, would make more easy the Practice of Sincerity and Justice, etc. etc" (68). Daily examination, of course, was necessary, and in order to make this task more easy, Franklin created a
schedule to chart his (our) progress. The motivation behind the habitude was to provide readers with a way to create affluence and independence by practicing the "virtues" associated with the labor of a entrepreneur, which, as we know, Franklin was.

The advice that Franklin offers to his readers is not done for purely altruistic reasons, however. Like Jefferson, Franklin believed that for the United States to become politically independent the country had to become economically independent. To gain acceptance for his viewpoint, Franklin constructed a narrative that encouraged the labor and economic practices that would make independence easier to accomplish.

Like Jefferson, Franklin linked the autonomy of the individual to the independence of the nation. The philosophy of individualism espoused in the Autobiography—represented by the social practices of industry, sacrifice, and diligence—was inextricably linked to the progress of the United States of America. By symbolically making the autonomy of the national subject the essential ingredient of American citizenship, and the economic progress that automatically accompanied that citizenship if certain modes of conduct were followed, Franklin helped to publicize the conceptual framework whereby the national identity worked, as David Lloyd remarks in a different
context, "to occlude troublesome and inassimilable manifestations of difference [e.g. slavery] by positing a transcendent realm of essential identity" (x). In addition, Franklin's vision of social relations in the new Republic suggested that competition between men was not only normal but also necessary, and that those wishing to succeed as entrepreneurs should be prepared to seize any opportunity to get ahead. (As we shall see in chapter five, this is part of Franklin's legacy that Arthur Miller is acutely aware of.) Evidence of this belief is illustrated by Franklin's willingness to bribe delivery riders in order to get his paper distributed.

Further, the "competitive spirit" and desire for self-improvement that Franklin exemplifies in the Autobiography represents "the manners and situation of a rising people," and as Benjamin Vaughan points out in a letter to Franklin included at the beginning of part two, "It will moreover present a table of the internal circumstances of your country, which will very much tend to invite it to settlers of virtuous and manly minds....I do not know of a more efficacious advertisement than your Biography would give" (59; italics original).7

7 For a early discussion of Franklin's Autobiography as it relates to the historical processes at work in modern European civilization, see Max Weber 47-78.
What needs to be emphasized here is that the political philosophy of Jefferson, Crevecoeur, and Franklin represents the political economy of the period. Their representations of social relations in early America are also part of an emergent nationalism, which American historians identify as "republicanism." Like Drew McCoy, Joyce Appleby uses republicanism to conceptualize the dominant cultural and political practices of pre-Civil War America. In the historical period under discussion—the national period (roughly 1780-1840)—the political ideology of republicanism constructed American society as essentially classless and asserted that the best way to keep America free from the corruption of stratified wealth was through the independent labor of free men. It was argued that self-interest based on property ownership created a community with shared values, in which equivalence of status (i.e., property ownership) insured social harmony. As Appleby points out, to the theorists of political economy, property did not possess exchange value but rather social value. Ownership, that is, was an expression of community and not of individual desires or needs.

According to Appleby, "Commerce which prompted private

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8 For a historical discussion of American republicanism, see Joyce Appleby 461-73 and (The Republican Vision of the 1790s) 1-78. See also Linda Kerber 474-95 and Cathy Matson and Peter Onuf 496-531. In addition, see Robert Shalhope 49-80 and 334-56.
interests...threatened civil order," and therefore "Men deeply involved in their own business, in getting ahead, and seizing opportunities for [private] gain were not proper candidates for public office" (Vision 9). Nor were they proper citizens. In addition, Appleby notes, that the ideas which we tend to associate with industrial capitalism—"free enterprise and greater productivity"—"did not inspire confidence, but rather provoked anxiety" (9).

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, a market economy had emerged in America. According to Lawrence Kohl,

In the half-century since the Revolution the population of the country had nearly quadrupled. The nation's boundaries had been pushed southward to the Gulf of Mexico and westward to the foothills of the Rockies. Industrialism took root in the Northeast, while America's burgeoning population poured over the Appalachians in search of fertile land. These pioneers, however, did not remain isolated in the west for long. A transportation revolution linked them by way of roads, canals, and, later, railroads to the east and ultimately to markets abroad. Economic enterprise throughout the nation was stimulated by legal changes which enhanced the opportunities of the risk-taker in the economy. State banks proliferated, offering easy credit to those willing to expand their operations. Storekeepers became merchants, craftsman became capitalists. Even simple farmers were caught in the restless pursuit of wealth. Enticed by new opportunities, they increasingly turned from a household economy of self-sufficiency and barter to production for the market and the cash nexus. High geographic mobility became inextricably linked with the desire for social mobility. The idea of the self-made man emerged as individuals scrambled to improve their situation in life. (4)
The "civic values" associated with the husbandry of the political economy were replaced by the values of commerce and "the common man." Significantly, the national subject was stripped of its more communal responsibilities as the concept of self-interest came to signify the private interests of the individual. Outsider texts--Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835) and Harriet Martineau's *Society in America* (1840), for example--record this shift by organizing themselves around the concept of democracy.

As Robert Remini points out, "By 1837 the word democracy had largely supplanted the term republicanism in the national discourse" (8; italics removed). According to Remini, this "substitution occurred because [Andrew] Jackson and company...deliberately worked to bring about that substitution" (8).

Jackson was president from 1829 to 1837. During that time, he embodied the national subject. Like Franklin before him and Lincoln after, Jackson literally represented the rags to riches trajectory of the national subject. Born into "humble circumstances," he eventually gained wealth and status. Popular representations of Jackson, however, differ in one very significant way from Franklin's self-representation in the *Autobiography*. Jackson was figured primarily as a frontiersman and Indian fighter--and not as an
entrepreneur—because he became a national figure at a time when the expansionist policies of the United States dominated national politics. At this historical juncture, then, the practices associated with the small entrepreneur and the small farmer were merged with the figure of the frontiersman, who came to stand for the (reconstituted) national subject.

The ideology of Jacksonian democracy is a radical reformulation and reinterpretation of the republicanism of the revolutionary fathers. That is, it pushed the earlier ideology to its limits by extending the role of the "people," by inviting them to participate in (all) the institutions of the state. Jackson declared the people "sovereign" and attempted to eliminate all vestiges of aristocracy in order to promote the interests of commerce and the common man. Jackson’s supporters in the political intellegensia and the national press began to associate democracy with individual autonomy and the expansion of the nation. As this happened, Jackson’s status as a frontiersman and as an Indian fighter were fused with older conceptions of enterprenurial and agrarian capital.  

9 For an excellent discussion of America’s nationalist discourse during this period see Wai-chee Dimock 9-21. See also Joyce Warren 1-19. For a related discussion of the link between nationalism and racism see Richard Drinnon 219-349.
greater detail in chapter five.) At the same moment, the republican notions of disinterested virtue and civic responsibility as the "hallmarks" of citizenship were sheared from the new politics of self-improvement and radical self-interest. This was accomplished, at least partially, through the governing practices of Jackson and his supports, who, for the first time in the nation's history, appealed to the masses by promoting the doctrine of the right of instruction (a strict adherence to majority rule) and rotation ("the spoils system"), as well as appealing directly to the common man for support in legislative and political battles. The Jacksonians' political agenda reflected their profound suspicion of aristocratic forms, or what they viewed as republican elitism—basically, anything that inhibited social mobility or the individual white male's ability to produce wealth and status. As Remini notes, this is a strong misreading on the Jacksonians part because Jefferson and the other founding republicans, especially Madison and Adams, never intended for the majority to rule since "majority rule...could jeopardize the personal and property rights of the minority" (24) Furthermore, "the Founding Fathers were not attempting to eliminate aristocratic government. They believed in a
mixed government with elements of aristocratic, republican, and democratic forms embedded in the whole" (25).

Jackson's administration, as Kohl notes, managed to "anticipate" the spirit of the age (6). The excessive autonomy that it promoted, and its vehement distrust of political and cultural forms that hindered the progress of white males, were the result of the nascent industrialization of rural and urban communities during the period, which initially contributed to the geographic and economic mobility of thousands of Americans. Until the 1880s in America, as James O'Connor points out, "individualism in the sense of both economic and social integration found greater material expression than in any other country" because "free land, cheap resources, favorable climates, and independent property inhibited the hegemony of large-scale capital" (17). Nevertheless, the Jacksonians' obsessive concern with autonomy can also be read as a reaction to the initial centralizing movement of modernization, especially their opposition to a central bank and to large-scale finance capital. Democrats were suspicious of the new lending practices of large banks because they felt that these practices would enslave the common man by making him dependent on the whims of opportunistic bank owners, who were anxious to make easy money (i.e. wealth without
labor or industry) by lending to poor men. Resistance to the early centralization of the economy produced representations of victimization of the small man. In the process, Jackson the Frontiersman came to embody the desires of the common man; and the economic practices and values that he sanctioned—private accumulation driven by personal industry and labor and their ability to produce individual wealth and economic growth—were organically linked to a market economy. Therefore, the frontiersman and the values that he represented marked a slight reformulation (a minor adjustment compliments of a market economy) of the national subject, which had previously been embodied by Crevecoeur's farmer and Franklin's entrepreneur.

What should be emphasized about all three models of the national subject (the farmer, the entrepreneur, and the frontiersman), however, is their similarity. First, all three represent the autonomy through industry trajectory of American citizenship. Second, all three are essentially mimetic. That is, their sanctioned behavior is generated by economic structures specific to the historical period in which they arose. In other words, the autonomy represented by the farmer, the entrepreneur, and the frontiersman closely corresponded to the actual structures of economic life in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America; and, as I argue
below, these representations were far more "accurate" than the rationalized discourse of self-determination that emerged with the advent of monopoly capital. This is not to suggest, however, that every white male in early nineteenth-century America had the opportunity for economic self-determination. That claim would be untrue.

II.
Stage Two: Monopoly Capital and the Transformation of Memory

In his study of the American working class between the years of 1865 and 1920, Melvyn Dubofsky speculates as to why "workers continued to come to the United States from Europe and why they continued to move from the country to the city" given "the prevalence of poverty, the recurrence of economic depression, the drabness of working-class neighborhoods, [and] the severe shock by preindustrial peoples adjusting to industrial society" (28) Dubofsky also wonders, given these social conditions, "why rebellion appeared so rare an event" (28). As he asserts in *Industrialism and the American Worker* (1975), the years between the Civil War and the end of World War I were unprecedented in terms of their economic instability and social conflict. During this period, the United States evolved from a largely agrarian nation of small communities and towns into a modernized urban and industrial society. This
transformation, as Ernest Mandel argues, was the result of three successive "technological revolutions" in the mode of production, transformations that delineate the second stage of capitalism, what Mandel and others call "monopoly" or "industrial" capitalism: " [one] craftworker-operated (and craftworker-produced) machines driven by steam engine; [two] machinist-operated (and industrially produced) machines driven by steam motors; [three] assembly line combined machines tended by semiskilled machine operators and driven by electric motors" (43). These successive changes in the mode of production, Mandel notes, "presuppose...different types of labor organization. The transition from one to another has historically involved serious working-class resistance...because it implies serious deteriorations in working conditions, not necessarily linked to a lowering of real wages or to an increase in the physical work load, but felt and understood by a significant part of production workers as a deterioration in overall labor conditions" (43). The deterioration of overall labor conditions associated with these technological advances was (is) most often experienced by workers as a loss of autonomy--an alienation of their labor and a loss of control over the
conditions of their labor; it was also experienced as a
loss of control over the general conditions of their lives.

The emergence of industrial capitalism radically
altered social relations in America. The autonomy of
"island communities," as Robert H. Wiebe calls the
isolated, self-sufficient cities and small towns of
preindustrial America, disappeared as the economy was
industrialized and consolidated.10 As this happened,
there was an attendant loss of individual autonomy; the
workplace was reorganized and this reorganization
displaced traditional skills and forms of worker-
controlled labor. Traditional labor practices were
further displaced as capital "rationalized" the
production process. Horizontal and vertical integration
of business were introduced and new administrative,
scientific, and technological practices were deployed to
ensure that owners had complete control of machinery,
labor, production, and distribution so as to "maximize"
profits by ensuring a smooth flow of goods for
consumption. By the 1890s, as Alan Trachtenberg notes,
"the corporate office virtually dominated the work
place, imposing demands for speed, regularity, and

10 In addition to Robert Wiebe, see Nell Painter,
Alan Trachtenberg, Jackson Lears (No Place of Grace) 4-
58, and Warren Susman 237-85. See also Glenn Porter,
David Noble, Leo Marx, and John Higham 73-102.
quotas of output. As a result, human effort fell more and more into mechanical categories, as if the laborer might also be conceived as an interchangeable part" (56). As this took place, a hierarchy emerged in the workplace that increasingly subjected workers to the dictates and "expertise" of a growing managerial class, which became responsible for work-related decisions and the daily operations of larger factories and corporations. This new class of managers and their practices, collectively known as "scientific management," radically segmented the labor process and deskill ed large numbers of workers so that a new class of capitalists, such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, could control "the new system."

The new modes of work were at odds with the dominant labor practices of antebellum America. In the early nineteenth century, as David Montgomery shows, it was common for workers to practice a "mutualistic ethic." Workers often asserted collective control over the workplace by determining "their own conduct" and working hours, and, as Montgomery points out, "these rules were not negotiated with the employers, but were unilaterally adopted by the workers" (The House of Labor 17). As machines and management came to dominate the

11 For a more detailed discussion of the transformation of working conditions in industrializing America and how these changes affected social relations,
workplace, however, the older forms of labor were displaced. Workers were now continually supervised and their labor subject to the pace, regulations, and authority of others. The rationalization of labor also had a more profound effect—the loss of "worker knowledge." "With machines performing more of the work previously performed by people," comments Trachtenberg, "workers themselves were required to know less in order to perform their tasks—to know less because their machines know more" (68; italics original). This "transference of technical knowledge from workers to machines" resulted in a "process mediated by a new corps of engineers" whereby the "rise of specialized skills and arcane knowledge corresponded precisely to the obliteration of traditional knowledge among skilled [craftsmen and] manual laborers" (68-9).

Workers did not, however, passively submit to the "proletarianization" of work. They rebelled, as has been well-documented; and many times their resistance brought results, especially in the 1870s and 80s before capitalists established control of the economy and before they learned to use the repressive apparatus of

see Daniel Rodgers 1-93, Melvyn Dubofsky, Herbert Gutman (Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America) 71-92 and 213-54 and (Power and Culture) 3-78 and 211-60. See also Francis Couvares 9-30 and 80-95, David Gordon 1-15 and 48-165, and David Montgomery (The House of Labor) 1-57 and 214-256. In addition, see Montgomery's Worker's Control in America.
the state to defeat mass strikes. Nevertheless, to return to the point Dubofsky raises, if working-class living and working conditions during this period were so horrible, and open rebellion at times appeared imminent, why was it so "rare an event"? A partial answer has already been given: business, with the cooperation of the state, violently suppressed the more radical parts of the labor movement. Capitalists understood, however, that government-endorsed violence was not a long-term solution to worker resistance. For the new system to function properly, periods of instability, such as those brought about by mass strikes or depressions, had to be avoided. Everything—materials, markets, machines, managers, workers—had to submit to the structures of the system. Anything that disrupted the process, as did worker resistance, had to be transmuted. Consequently, what also had to be transmuted were older economic practices and modes of thinking. To put this another way, order (or consensus) could also be maintained by symbolic violence. If the new social relations were to be accepted, then those relations had to be naturalized or stabilized. If workers were to become submissive laborers and consumers, then a new cultural paradigm had to be created.

As it turned out, however, the new paradigm was not all that new; it was based on pre-existent, or residual,
versions of the national subject, which were (re)deployed—using the emergent technology—to authorize the new social relations and the practices necessary for the functioning of a consumer economy. In the 1890s, "American manhood," notes Amy Kaplan, became a "spectacle" rather than something organically linked to history or lived experience ("Romancing the Empire" 661). A secondary- or after-effect of this rationalization of the national subject, but equally important, was the transformation of cultural memory. Individual, local, and communal memory were increasingly colonized by representations disseminated in mass cultural texts. As Sherwood Anderson commented in 1919, "Books, badly imagined and written though they may be...are in every household, magazines circulate by the millions of copies, newspapers are everywhere" (71). Mass cultural texts were so pervasive that Anderson argued they had replaced the "beautiful childlike innocence" of the small village so that the "farmer by the stove is brother to the men of the cities, and if you listen you will find him talking as glibly and as senselessly as the best city man of us all" (71). As mass-produced representations became part of the discourse of industrial capitalism, memory became the site where masculinity materialized itself and thus helped to reproduce existing social relations. The
national subject, (re)present in memory, became part of what Richard Terdiman describes as a "complex of systems" developed in the late nineteenth century "to insure that the practices and knowledges which make social production and reproduction possible would be so thoroughly internalized as to function in effect outside memory" (20). Just as important, this initial colonization of memory marks (or makes possible) the advent of what is now—from the perspective of late capitalism— theorized as "the precession of simulacra" (Baudrillard) or "instrumentalized knowledge" (the Frankfurt School) or "the death of the subject" (Lacan). What is important to note here, however—because of its consequences for the social subject—is that memory became the site of the other, the heterogeneous knowledge that, as Terdiman suggests, functions as if outside (but within) memory to reproduce dominant social relations. It is also important to note here that, as Fredric Jameson argues, the passage from market to monopoly capitalism produced a crisis in "figuration": the publicity apparatus produced "a growing contradiction between lived experience and structure, or between a phenomenological description of the life of an individual and a more properly structural model of the conditions of existence of that experience" (Postmodernism 410). Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel"
(1899) offers a nascent allegory of the effect of this contradiction on the reading subject since the "Swede" in Crane's story is killed because he confuses the codes of dime westerns with real social relations.

The "cult of strenuousness" that developed during this period along with the mass production of success narratives and masculine adventure stories were symptomatic of the contemporary crisis in figuration and produced what Jameson theorizes as "fabulation"; these narratives offered compensation for "social and historical impotence, of the blocking of possibilities that leaves little option but the imaginary" (Postmodernism 369). According to Jameson, fabulation becomes a substitute for "real history": "here the making up of unreal history is a substitute for the making of the real kind. It mimetically expresses the attempt to recover that power and praxis by way of the past and what must be called fancy rather than imagination" (Postmodernism 369). Historically, the "fabulation" of the national subject was used by the emerging cultural elite for three reasons. First, it sanctioned current social relations by repressing problems associated with industrial capitalism. In

12 According to Jackson Lears, "What most [critics] have missed is that sentimental literature, by contributing to the evasive banality of the official culture, actually helped to legitimize modern industrial capitalism...Evasiveness underlay a central tenet of the
other words, by reemphasizing the rewards of industry and hard work, these narratives helped to create imagined social relations that marginalized conflict and rebellion. Second, as Amy Kaplan argues, the national subject was reasserted to sanction American imperialism. She specifically notes that the adventure novels that emerged in the 1890s "offer a cognitive and libidinal map of US geopolitics during the shift from continental conquest to overseas empire. By looking back with nostalgia at a lost wholeness, they created fanciful

modern world view: faith in individual autonomy. The official creed held not only that progress was inevitable but that the key to it was the disciplined, autonomous self" (No Place of Grace 17). Lears also argues that certain strains of "realist" fiction, functioned to ameliorate the conflicts created by expansion: "As the United States was becoming the most aggressively expansionist society in the world, American literature increasingly celebrated a sentimental vision of mutually dependent social relations. In the name of 'realism,' fiction concerned itself largely with decorous conversations and parlor intrigues; the domestic problem novel became the self-proclaimed 'modern' mode. The most distinguished realist, William Dean Howells, urged that American writers focus on 'the more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American'" (No Place of Grace 17). Lears, of course, is not alone in this belief. For an excellent discussion of William Dean Howells' fiction as a response to the emergent mass cultural forms, particularly "popular novels and mass-circulation newspapers," and the class conflict brought about by industrialization, see Amy Kaplan (American Realism) 15-64. For a discussion of Howells' fiction as a "pedagogy" for the emergent middle class, see Alan Trachtenberg 182-207. For a related discussion of how the novels of Booth Tarkington "salvage[d] the idea of individualism," see Richard Ohmann 164-68.
realms on which to project contemporary desires for unlimited expansion" ("Romancing the Empire" 661).

Third, and most important, mass-produced success narratives introduced workers to the new doctrines of work and consumption. The fiction of upward mobility helped to create a disciplined, subordinate workforce. The fiction of upward mobility also naturalized the emerging class hierarchy and the growing poverty and social inequality. In essence, it taught that autonomy was still an effect of American citizenship, provided that a man worked hard. In addition, men also had to be indoctrinated into the economy of consumption; they had to be persuaded to abandon the practices of local production, thrift, sacrifice, and saving used to survive in the small, isolated towns, villages, and neighborhoods of the older culture. These practices had to be transmuted because they were barriers to the structures of a consumer economy. To accomplish this, to establish what Jackson Lears calls the "ideology of consumption," businessmen introduced national advertising campaigns in the 1880s. The practice was an effort to "rationalize" another part of the system by controlling sales. This became possible during the last two decades of the nineteenth century for a number of reasons, the most important of which, as Richard Ohmann and Theodore Greene stress, was the rapid growth of the
magazine industry, which provided advertisers with a mass audience. To sell more magazines (and newspapers), owners "hit on a elegantly simple formula: identify a large audience that is not affluent or particularly classy, but that is getting on well enough, and that has cultural aspirations; give it what it wants to read; build a huge circulation; sell a lot of advertising space at rates based on that circulation....sell the magazine at a price below the cost of production, and make your profit on ads" (Ohmann 140).

The emergence of advertising at this time cannot be isolated from the emergence of mass culture as a field, nor can it be isolated form other social practices used to legitimate the new economic and political order; advertising also used received cultural knowledge concerning masculine autonomy and mobility in order to sanction an "ideology of consumption." As advertising in magazines and newspapers became part of the "consciousness of everyday life," it revised the older

13 For an excellent discussion of the rise of mass culture and "the new discourse of advertising" and how they functioned to structure consciousness, see Richard Ohmann 135-68. For a discussion of the emergent "ideology of consumption," see T. J. Jackson Lears ("From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930") 3-39 and Christopher Wilson 41-64. See also Theodore P. Greene 59-109. For a related discussion see Richard Terdiman (Discourse/Counter-Discourse) 25-81 and 117-46.
version of masculinity by continuously associating personal consumption with feats of masculine adventure and power. Mobility and autonomy were now asserted or expressed in the marketplace, by consuming goods. Progress was now judged by a man’s dependence on the market; his independence was asserted by what Thorstein Veblen called "conspicuous consumption." As autonomy outside the home was increasingly closed off, men were directed to make the home an expression of their masculinity by buying goods and services for themselves or for their families. Like their predecessors in the national period, Horatio Alger and Andrew Carnegie construct masculinity in very unproblematic and ahistorical ways. Their books, like Franklin’s Autobiography and Crevecoeur’s Letters, are intended to be didactic, to show young men how to act as proper Americans. As such, they reassert the national subject. In their texts, autonomy, or "success," is again constructed as intrinsic to the individual and contingent only upon personal will or character. Men who conform to the behavioral codes found in the pages of Ragged Dick (1868) and Struggling Upward (1890) and The Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie (1920) are guaranteed success and can expect to experience opportunity, independence, and mobility. Alger’s novels and Carnegie’s writings demonstrate that the good, worthy,
or competent man or boy will possess honesty, industry, perseverance, and he will be an optimist; and because he possesses these "good qualities," he will have "good fortune." Those who do not possess these qualities, like the "lazy" Johnny Nolan, the "violent" Micky Maguire, or the "young aristocrat" Roswell Crawford in Alger's *Ragged Dick*, or the union organizers in Carnegie's autobiography, will not get ahead because they do not possess "good qualities" and therefore do not deserve good fortune. Moreover, these villains do not respect "democratic values" since they become obstacles for the expression of autonomy through industry and the automatic progress that this habitus brings.

Before analyzing Alger's and Carnegie's texts in more detail, however, it is necessary to point out how pervasive and typical the discourse they embody was between the years of 1865 and 1920. Although there is no way to know for sure how dominant the male success narrative was in terms of constructing subjectivity and social relations, there is considerable evidence that suggests that it pervaded the culture. Richard Ohmann, Theodore P. Greene, Daniel T. Rodgers, and John G. Cawelti have all commented on the "ubiquity" of the success narrative during this period. Rodgers notes, for instance, that "Editors and interviewers never tired of the stories of the Andrew Carnegies and Henry Fords who
worked their way out of the factories and farms to the pinnacles of economic power" (36). The masculinity discovered in the typical success narrative of this period is consistent with the masculinity found in texts from the national period, with just a slight adjustment to fit the new culture. In the national consciousness, the inventor, business magnet, and politician of magazine and newspaper profiles and biographies began to replace the entrepreneur, farmer, and frontiersman so popular in the national period. Nevertheless, as Richard Ohmann points out, the formula and the core assumptions about the national subject remained the same: "The typical subject of a biography at this time is a man (almost always) characterized above all by his power, of thought and of will. His achievement flows from extraordinary personal qualities and especially from his strength and determination. He has risen from humble origins" (164). The discourse and its formula were pervasive; it could be seen in everything from cheap magazines like Success, Work and Win, Pluck and Luck, Fame and Fortune Weekly: Stories of Boys Who Make Money to more "middle-class" magazines like McClure's, Munsey's, and Cosmopolitan to the more expensive magazines like Harper's, the Century, and Atlantic Monthly. It was also found in the millions of success guides and manuals published during this period, as well
as in autobiographies like Teddy Roosevelt's, Andrew Carnegie's, and Booker T. Washington's, and in popular novels like Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) and Charles Major's *When Knighthood Was in Flower* (1898).

Horatio Alger's novels were, by the author's admission, designed to teach young boys "the gospel of success." The version of masculinity they sanction posits a simply formula that reduces complex social relations to a simple cause-effect logic; and although his texts often contradict this logic, especially if they are read in light of the *deus ex machina* appearance of rich benefactors, books like *Ragged Dick* and *Struggling Upward*—through the good example of their central character—attempt to assert personal agency as the only factor that influences individual mobility. If a weak or low-born boy wishes to escape his "humble" conditions, then he must simply display sufficient amounts of honesty, industry, initiative, perseverance, and desire, and he will be on his way up the corporate ladder; he will be on his way from being Ragged Dick the boot black to being Richard Hunter, Esquire. Alger continually reminds his readers that what his protagonists represent is universal, that "character" is egalitarian and something that all boys and men may possess: "To succeed in his profession, humble as it is, a boot-black must depend upon the same qualities which
gain success in higher walks of life" (125). In Alger’s novels, application of these "good qualities" always has the intended effect: upward mobility. Boys like Ragged Dick, Henry Posdick, and Luke Larkin, for instance, are always quick to rise because they have the right stuff: they are "enterprising," "studious and ambitious to excel," "alert," "ordinarily cool and self-possessed," "reliable," "independent," "plucky," and "determined"; they are also eternal optimists; when obstacles are placed in their way, they resolve not to be disappointed and work even harder, and this is what makes them worthy, in Alger’s eyes, of good fortune.

Bad boys or men, on the other hand, deserve what they get, which is usually nothing. Characters like Micky Maguire, Johnny Nolan, Roswell Crawford, and Jim Travis in *Ragged Dick* and Prince Duncan, Randolph Duncan, Tony Denton, and J. Madison Coleman in *Struggling Upward* are unworthy because, unlike the heroes of these novels, they are not proper citizens; they are snobs, thieves, drunkards, or just plain "lazy." In other words, they obtain either their money or their position by corrupt means; they do not labor for their just rewards and therefore, according to Alger, represent a type of citizenship that is anti-democratic.
As the most visible spokesman of "triumphant democracy" during these years, Andrew Carnegie used his wealth to advertise, like Alger, the "gospel of wealth" and masculine and national progress. On the first page of *Triumphant Democracy* (1886), his two-volume "paean to the United States," Carnegie notes with pride that "The old nations of the earth creep on at a snail's pace; the Republic thunders past with the rush of the express. The United States, the growth of a single century, has already reached the foremost rank among nations, and is destined soon to out-distance all others in the race. In population, in wealth, in annual savings, and in public credit; in freedom from debt, in agriculture, and in manufactures, America already leads the civilized world" (*Democracy* 1).

In Carnegie's estimation, the reason for this success was simple: equality and opportunity. America made men; it did not "emasculate" them, as did Europe, by making them "feel that their own country decrees their inferiority, and holds them unworthy of privileges accorded to others" (*Democracy* 19). In America, he argues, repeating Crevecoeur's claim, there are "No ranks, no titles, no heredity dignities, and therefore no classes" (*Democracy* 19). Men "reach the shores of the Republic subjects (insulting word), and she [America] makes them citizens; serfs, and she makes them men"
Carnegie, like his sometime protege Booker T. Washington, promoted this vision of American citizenship as a way to "overcome" the increasing class conflict brought about by rapid industrialization and urbanization, emancipation, and mass immigration—conflicts and dislocations that Carnegie had experienced in Pittsburg.

Carnegie's greatest fear was that ex-slaves and immigrants would not become properly assimilated into the new economy and would therefore pose a threat to the nation's stability. In Triumphant Democracy, he specifically singles out these two groups as troublesome, but then asserts that they represent no danger because the Republic has granted "every slave" and the "millions of foreigners who came from all lands" citizenship, an "equal voice in the State" (Democracy 17-18). Carnegie uses the concept of universal equality to obscure complex and sometimes violent social relations and problems in order to sanction the emergent industrial economy, and this is why Carnegie, like Alger, stresses the duties of an American citizen. "One man's right is every man's right" (Democracy 19), he insisted. And if this was true, if, indeed, everyone was equal, then the problems associated with industrialism—labor unrest, class stratification, poverty, and violence—must somehow be personal. Carnegie insisted,
as did Roosevelt and most of the political elite of the
time, that America was united, that the consent of the
governed was obtained "by the foundation on which the
political structure rests, the equality of the citizen"
(Democracy 19), and that those who resisted the new
social order were simply "malcontents" who had not been
properly "Americanized." And who better to Americanize
the inexperienced immigrant or the recalcitrant worker
or ex-slave than the Scottish immigrant who worked his
way up from "honest poverty" to become one of the
richest men in the world and a symbol of America's
industrial power.

Carnegie's Autobiography (1920), like Franklin's, is
a narrative of self-making; it is also the summation of
his political ideology, having been completed shortly
before his death. The plot is typical of the genre.
Suffice it to say that because he was a "clever boy" and
made himself useful, that because he was industrious and
hardworking, that because he showed initiative and took
risks, and that because he overcame many obstacles and
disappointments, Carnegie was deemed worthy, and
therefore rewarded with great wealth and power. Social
relations are once again reduced to a simple cause-
effect logic (i.e. if Carnegie resolved to do something,
the task was accomplished), and Carnegie's humble
origins, like those of Franklin's and Alger's heroes,
turn out to have been a great boon because they have been instrumental in his development of character: "Among the manifold blessings I have had to be thankful for is that neither nurse nor governess was my companion in infancy. No wonder the children of the poor are distinguished for the warmest affection and the closest adherence to family ties and are characterized by a filial regard far stronger than those who are mistakenly called more fortunate in life" (Autobiography 85). Character, and the "good qualities" of which it is composed, also turn out to be the keys to masculine autonomy, which liberate the good citizen from the constraints of history.

The discourse of success that Carnegie preaches, so he wishes us to believe, is egalitarian simply because it is capable of being taught to anyone. For him, it becomes a unique cultural possession, something that is accessible to all "Americans" simply because they were born in or have settled in the United States. Those who would become like Carnegie, therefore, have only to follow his example, which achieves its authority because Carnegie is the immigrant par excellence; his life, like Franklin's, is paradigmatic.

The "good qualities" that make Carnegie's wealth and power inevitable, that "could not help" but make him a "respectable character," were given to him by his
parents, in particular his mother. In an episode where a relative suggests that young Andrew might earn a "considerable sum" selling "knickknacks...around the wharves," for example, Carnegie tells readers that this suggestion provoked an "outburst" so strong in his mother that it was one of the "most tragic scenes I have ever witnessed": "My mother was sitting sewing at the moment, but she sprang to her feet with outstretched hands and shook them in his face. 'What! My son a peddler and go among rough men upon the wharves! I would rather throw him into Allegheny River'" (Autobiography 31-2). His mother's "outburst" was brought about on this occasion, Carnegie explains, "not because the occupation suggested was peaceful labor, for we were taught that idleness was disgraceful; but because the suggested occupation was somewhat vagrant in character and not entirely respectable in their eyes" (Autobiography 32). Carnegie, of course, had been taught that "[a]nything low, mean, deceitful, shifty, coarse, underhand, of gossipy were foreign to [the] heroic soul" (Autobiography 32). In fact, he assures us that a "keen sence of honor, independence, self-respect, pervaded [his] household" as a child (Autobiography 32). These gifts bestowed upon young Carnegie in his parents' household, and which are bestowed upon all citizens of his "beloved Republic," are the very same gifts that
Carnegie offers to bestow upon readers of his Autobiography. Like the nation, he is a prodigious giver, as the numerous examples of masculine success that cram the pages of his book are meant to demonstrate.

With the exception of two, his mother and his wife, all his exemplars are masculine, and they all demonstrate the same lesson: industry, determination, honesty, initiative, self-reliance, independence (i.e. what were known collectively at the time as "pluck") are rewarded. Two relatively brief examples should be sufficient to illustrate the already familiar formula:

I have already spoken of the intimacy between our family and that of the Phippses. In the early days my chief companion was the elder brother, John. Henry was several years my junior, but had not failed to attract my attention as a bright, clever lad. One day he asked his brother John to lend him a quarter of a dollar. John saw that he had important use for it and handed him the shining quarter without inquiry. Next morning an advertisement appeared in the "Pittsburg Dispatch": "A willing boy wishes work." This was the use the energetic and willing Harry had made of his quarter, probably the first quarter he had ever spent at one time in his life. A response came from the well-known firm of Dilworth and Bidwell. They asked the "willing boy" to call. Harry went and obtained a position as errand boy, and as was then the custom, his first duty every morning was to sweep the office. He went to his parents and obtained their consent, and in this way the young lad launched himself upon the sea of business. There was no holding back a boy like that. It was the old story. He soon became indispensable to his employers, obtained a small interest a collateral branch of their business; and then, ever on alert, it was not many years before he attracted the attention of Mr. Miller, who made a small investment for him with Andrew Kloman. That finally resulted in the building of the iron mill in
Twenty-Ninth Street....The errand boy is now one of the richest men in the United States... 
(Autobiography 126-27)

A few pages later Carnegie offers a similar account of the "old story":

Our strict system of accounting enabled us to detect the great waste possible in heating large masses of iron. This improvement revealed to us a valuable man in a clerk, William Borntraeger, a distant relative of Mr. Kloman, who came from Germany. He surprised us one day by presenting a detailed statement showing results for a period, which seemed incredible. All the needed labor in preparing this statement he had preformed at night unasked and unknown to us. The form adapted was uniquely original. Needless to say, William soon became superintendent of the works and later a partner, and the poor German lad died a millionaire. He well deserved his fortune. (Autobiography 131)

Both examples reduce complex social relations to a recognizable version of masculinity that is sanctioned and rewarded. The man who acts like Henry Phipps or William Borntraeger is rewarded because his worth is revealed by his industry and his success is therefore "well deserved." Once again, masculine success is the result of "inner worth," and other factors that might constrain individual mobility, such as race or class, are marginalized. Nevertheless, both passages also reveal the contradictions in Carnegie's simple-minded formula; Henry Phipps and William Borntraeger are not self-made men. Like Benjamin Franklin, Ragged Dick, Booker T. Washington, and Andrew Carnegie, Phipps and Borntraeger are at least partially dependent on other men for their wealth and power. That is, neither Phipps
nor Borntraeger would have become wealthy unless their "worth" was discerned by other men, and their contact with these sages was not determined by industry or personal initiative, but rather by the the social structures that determined their lives. In other words, Henry Phipps attracted attention because he was white and of Anglo origin; his ethnicity and social network gave him access to opportunity, not his "inner qualities." Likewise, because he was white and German, William Borntrager was able to get a job in the iron mills where his relative worked, so as to later impress Carnegie and become a superintendent and a partner. Race and family connections are the real heroes of these two passages since they provided the opportunities for these men to rise. For all his insistence on the rewards of industry in *Up From Slavery* (1901), Booker T. Washington would never have had the opportunities for wealth and position that Phipps and Borntraeger had, simply because he was not white.

The hidden, or perhaps not-so-hidden, agenda of Carnegie's autobiography is his desire for a passive workforce, a workforce that still believed in the national subject. The new social relations were therefore legitimized by re-presenting industrial capitalism and capitalists as benevolent, and this is why both Alger and Carnegie claim that the patriarchs of
the new economic order deserve to be where they are and that they have the nation's best interests at heart. In Alger's novels, capitalists never misuse their power for personal gain—only petty bourgeois figures like Prince Duncan in Struggling Upward are capable of such evil; and they always recognize and promote honest, clever boys who work hard and save their money.

Likewise, Carnegie's philanthropy, and the philanthropy of his friends, is meant to demonstrate the benevolence of the new system. Not only did the monopoly capitalists reward individual men for their determination and industry, but also they rewarded men collectively by donating parks, museums, college dormitories, concert halls, libraries, and other cultural institutions. As Carnegie put it, "there was no use to which money could be applied so productive of good to boys and girls who have good within them and ability and ambition to develop it, as the founding of a public library" (Autobiography 45). "The fundamental value of a library [or other cultural institution], Carnegie argues, "is that it gives nothing for nothing. Youths must acquire knowledge themselves. There is no escape from this" (Autobiography 46). There is also no escaping the fact that Carnegie's surplus value was, indeed, capable of producing something where there was nothing, and that collectively the men who ran the new
economy were capable of producing institutions that would enable good boys and girls to get ahead by reproducing the cultural knowledge that supposedly made this possible. In Carnegie's mind, philanthropy was possible because of the great wealth the industrial economy produced, and the implied threat in Carnegie's gospel of wealth was that any interference in the system would not only affect Carnegie but the thousands (perhaps millions) of people that Carnegie and his wealthy friends had helped to lead "onward and upward." In addition, Carnegie assured anxious readers that the "standard of commercial morality is now very high" (Autobiography 166), but that this standard could only be maintained if the economy continued to expand: "It may be accepted as an axiom that a manufacturing concern in a growing country like ours begins to decay when it stops expanding" (Autobiography 217). Again, as we have seen in previous writers, free labor is responsible for the wealth and the progress of individuals and the nation, and anything that blocks its expression or expansion, either at home or abroad, contributes to the decay of the nation: "America is soon to change from being the dearest steel manufacturing country to the cheapest. Already the shipyards of Belfast are out customers. This is but the beginning. Under present conditions America can produce steel as cheaply as any
other land, notwithstanding its higher-priced labor. There is no labor so cheap as the dearest in the mechanical field, provided it is free [i.e. non-union], contented, zealous, and reaping reward as it renders service. And here America leads" (Autobiography 218).

Another "great advantage which America will have in competing in the markets of the world," Carnegie continues, "is that her manufacturers will have the best home market" (Autobiography 218). The home market aided business because it could be used "for a return upon capital, and the surplus product can be exported with advantage, even when the prices received for it do not more than cover actual cost" (Autobiography 218).

Interestingly, in his Autobiography Carnegie strongly disapproves of the "annexation" of foreign territory. Like many Americans, he realized that our colonial experience, along with the national identity that was constructed during that struggle, made it extremely problematic for America to hold foreign possessions and deny foreign citizens the right to self-determination. He calls the annexation of the Philippines, for instance, America's "first grievous international mistake—a mistake which dragged in into the vortex of international militarism and a great navy" (Autobiography 353). Nevertheless, in spite of his opposition to imperialism in the Philippines, Carnegie
favored intervention in Central America to build the Panama Canal and in Cuba to free the island from Spain. This apparent contradiction, given that the official rationale for all three military actions was to free an enslaved population, is what William Appleman Williams calls "imperial anticolonialism." As a London Times editorial of 1900 explained, "Even anti-Imperialists [like Carnegie] welcome an Imperial policy which contemplates no conquests but those of commerce" (qtd. in William Appleman Williams 23). In other words, Carnegie did not favor the acquisition and administration of foreign possessions; he did, however, favor intervention, as did (do) most American businessman and politicians, when it provided stable markets for the selling of American goods. He did favor the construction of an "informal empire" because it was in the "best interest" of American business.

Carnegie's support of American expansion during these years is inextricably linked to the pedagogy of masculinity expressed in his writings, and it is, as Amy Kaplan points out in a slightly different context, a manifestation of the "rescue mission for American manhood" under way at the time (659). By refiguring and extending the frontier/entrepreneurial identity of Jacksonian masculinity to provide symbolic resolutions

14 See William Appleman Williams 24-44.
to the problems associated with the emergence of industrial capitalism, "empire offered the arena for American men to become what they already were, to enact their essential manhood before the eyes of a global audience" ("Romancing the Empire" 659). The essentialized manhood projected by the texts discussed here claims that the general welfare and economic progress of the nation were dependent on the autonomous male producing goods and services for domestic and international markets. The national subject, and the "good qualities" associated with it, became identified with personal consumption at home and the selling of surplus goods abroad. The duty of the good citizen, then, was to contribute to the wealth of the nation by helping to produce surplus value and by engaging in personal consumption.

The representation of the national subject found in the writings of Horatio Alger and Andrew Carnegie are typical of a reformulated nationalist discourse that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Not coincidentally the ideology of masculinity they deployed was an appropriation of an earlier republicanism, which was used to marginalize class conflict and legitimize the emergence of an industrial economy. Cultural elites used the technologies of the emergent mass culture industries to legitimize the new social relations, and
thus sanctioned a version of masculinity that helped to perpetuate the new order. These representations helped to create what Frederic Jameson calls a "political unconscious."\(^{15}\) As mass-produced representations of masculine success and autonomy proliferated and began to permeate everyday life and the memory of individual men, men increasingly interpreted their experience in terms of a previously elaborated mastercode, which taught them to see social relations in very reductive ways. The narrative taught them that because there was virtually no limit on masculine aspiration in America, state intervention to correct the problems associated with industrialization, such as extreme social inequality and poverty, was unnecessary. These problems, the narrative suggested, would be corrected by the "free market," whose benevolent capitalists miraculously intervened in the lives of "worthy" young men. Economic failure or stagnation, then, expressed the failure of the individual, not the system. Masculine "character" was thus reduced to an essence that replaced political rights, so that one's "American-ness" was now determined by one's ability to re-present the practices and norms of mass-produced fictional models--formulas that were normally contradicted by lived experience.

\(^{15}\) See Jameson (The Political Unconscious) 17-102.
Chapter Three
Eugene O’Neill and the Liminality of the National Subject

In the decade of the 1930s, Eugene O’Neill turned his attention to American history. At this time, O’Neill started work on *A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed*, a proposed cycle of seven plays that attempted to trace the history of America from the French and Indian War to the Depression, through the generations of a single family.¹ In a letter to Lawrence Langner in July of 1936, O’Neill described the project as "primarily...the history of a family," but "not an ‘American life’ in any usual sense of the word": "I don’t want anyone to get the idea that this Cycle is much concerned with what is usually understood by American history, for it isn’t. As for economic history...I am not much interested in economic determinism, but only in the self-determinism of which the economic is one phase" (Bogard and Bryer 452)

O’Neill never completed the Cycle and in 1952 destroyed all but two of the proposed seven plays, *A Touch of the Poet* (1943), which he now considered a separate project, and *More Stately Mansions* (1939), which was unfinished. During the same period (roughly

¹ For a history of the composition of the cycle plays see Bogard 366-453. See especially Floyd 215-22, as well as Gelb 790-805.
1935-1944), as part of what are known as the "great late works," O'Neill wrote The Iceman Cometh (1939), Long Day's Journey Into Night (1941), and A Moon for the Misbegotten (1944). All five plays mark an intensification of O'Neill's obsession with what he called in 1928 "the big subject": "the death of the old God and the failure of Science and Materialism to give any satisfying new One for the surviving religious instinct to find a meaning for life in, and to comfort the fears of death with" (Bogard and Bryer 311). Sixteen years later, in an interview with James Agee shortly after the Second World War, O'Neill remarked that America had failed to provide that meaning:

...[I]nwardly...the war [World War II] helped me realize that I was putting my faith in the old values, and they're gone....It's very sad, but there are no values to live by today....Anything is permissable if you know the angles. I feel in that sense, that America is the greatest failure in history. It was given everything, more than any other country in history, but we've squandered our soul by trying to possess something outside it, and we'll end up as that game usually does, by losing our soul and the thing outside it too. (Estrin 188)

The failure of America—in O'Neill's mind the inability of the nation to provide the "satisfying new One"—manifested itself as what he called the "drama of American possessiveness and materialism" (Bogard and Bryer 452), a process that had "squandered" the utopian promise of the nation's founding.
The "nation-ness" of the modern nation, as Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities*, was invented in the late eighteenth century, a time when previous models of political and social organization were breaking down. Nationalism (or what Anderson calls "nation-ness") came about at precisely the moment when what O'Neill termed "old values" were being destroyed by "Enlightenment and Revolution" (Anderson 16). Anderson theorizes that each nation invented itself, or created its own narrative, which sought to unify its subjects by universalizing them in the concept of "the people." In this respect, the modern nation can be viewed as a compensatory act or gesture; it was invented to replace monarchy and religion as the organizer-of-society, as the giver-of-meaning; it was to be the "satisfying new One" by providing continuity.

The American-ness of America has its most powerful objectification in the autonomous subject. In fact, as I

2 Anderson comments further: "in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought. The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation; nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning....few things were (are) better suited to this end than the idea of the nation" (19).
suggest in chapter two, the project of America's colonial leaders was the construction and dissemination of a national subject liberated from the values and structures of the Old World. As Gordon Woods writes in a recent book, the triumph—or what he calls the "radicalness"—of the American Revolution was that it "brought respectability and even dominance to ordinary people long held in contempt and gave dignity to their menial labor in a manner unprecedented in history and to a degree not equaled elsewhere in the world" (8). Not only did the Revolution reconstitute "what Americans meant by public or state power," but also "it made the interests and prosperity of ordinary people—their pursuits of happiness—the goal of society and government" (8).

One of the first examples of the national subject (Wood's "ordinary person") in pursuit of his happiness is found in Letter III of Crevecoeur's *Letters From an American Farmer*, where he describes the transformation of a European emigrant into an American:

Let me select one as an epitome of the rest: he is hired, he goes to work, and works moderately; instead of being employed by a haughty person, he finds himself with his equal...his wages are high, his bed is not like that bed of sorrow on which he used to lie... hitherto he had not lived, but simply vegetated....He begins to forget his former servitude and dependence....He looks around and sees many a prosperous person who but a few years before was as poor as himself. This encourages him much; he begins to form some little scheme, the first, alas, he ever formed in his life....He is
encouraged, he has gained friends; he is advised and directed; he feels bold, he purchases some land....He is become a freeholder, from perhaps a German boor. He is now an American, a Pennsylvanian....He is naturalized; his name is enrolled with those of the other citizens of the province. Instead of being a vagrant, he has a place of residence....From nothing to start into being; from a servant to the rank of master; from being the slave of some despotic prince....What a change indeed! It is in consequence of that change that he becomes an American....it extinguishes all his European prejudices, he forgets that mechanism of subordination, that servility of disposition which poverty had brought him (Crevecoeur 82-3)

Crevecoeur’s "good subject" represents what O’Neill calls "an American life" in the "usual" sense. As the "epitome," he stands in and for the rest (i.e the model has currency because it is e pluribus unum). The American-ness of the narrative is structured by a homology between "the nation" and "the people": a rising nation, a rising people. The teleology representing American history is progress, a shining future. For the immigrant, America represents a break with the past. The "mechanism" of the new country enables him to escape the poverty and dependence of Europe: the nation "extinguishes all his European prejudices." Crevecoeur’s paradigmatic American is part of the enunciation of the "imagined community" of the nation; he joins the nation only to have his specific history replaced by his ascendancy as a subject. The nation becomes his community; it nourishes him like a "family"; it gives him sustenance; its "good effects" provide him with
food, friends, property, position. If he works hard, he will have "future prosperity"; he will improve his condition and the condition of his family. His new government, like his new community, offers him "new felicity" and "protection." With the purchase of property, this "nothing" becomes a citizen; he becomes autonomous; he serves no man--his past life vanishes and he becomes an "American."

Within the legal territory of the United States, then, the essential quality of the national subject is his autonomy. Just as the legal and political structures of the new nation constituted the territory and governing apparatus of the nation, so too the ideology of the subject-set-free (re)constituted and mapped out the new citizen. As the epic hero of the American story, the autonomous subject became a symptom of American-ness, or what Homi Bhabha calls the objectification of a "national pedagogy," whose narrative power rests in its ability to create a "unisonant" discourse that interpellates individual citizens--a process that inscribes individuals as subjects of/to the nation by providing cultural identification and cohesiveness.3

Eugene O’Neill’s experience of the national pedagogy is (was) "disjunctive"; his writing resists the

3 For a further discussion of the concept of national pedagogy see Bhabha ("DissemiNation") 291-322.
totalizing or essentializing narrative of the nation. His plays, especially the surviving Cycle plays and the late plays, are a supplement to the already inscribed narrative of national identity. His stories are constructed around what Homi Bhabha calls the "liminality" of the nation: the gaps and fissures that expose the apparent plenitude of the national subject as incomplete. As Bhabha writes, "Counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries--both actual and conceptual--disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" ("DissemiNation" 300).

More specifically, O'Neill disrupts the "simultaneity" or "temporality" of the nation by rewriting it, by substituting isolation for community, greed for progress, repetition for ascendancy, and alienation for autonomy. In his last plays, the imagined trajectory of American history and the rising subject of American history come to a grinding halt: America has stopped moving forward. As Larry Slade says in The Iceman Cometh, "It's a great game, the pursuit of happiness" (572). Or, as Jamie Tyrone says in A Moon for the Misbegotten, "There is no present or no future--

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4 All references to O'Neill's plays are from Eugene O'Neill: Complete Plays, 1932-43.
only the past happening over and over again—now" (920). Or, as Simon Harford remarks in *More Stately Mansions*, "As if Freedom could ever exist in Reality! As if at the end of every dream of liberty one did not find the slave, oneself, to whom oneself, the Master, is enslaved" (365). The pursuit of happiness has not liberated the citizen, has not provided him with the "satisfying new One to replace the surviving religious instinct." In fact, the very thing—self-interest— that was supposed to liberate the American citizen had enslaved him and destroyed any possibility of community. This contradiction, or "duality" as Louis Sheaffer calls it, is best figured in the character of Simon Harford (the male protagonist of *More Stately Mansions*).

According to Sheaffer, "Simon's duality symbolized a rending duality in American life, a basic condition in which the forces of greedy materialism were ascendant and threatening to destroy all that was ennobling in our national heritage" (481).

The Second World War, as O'Neill's comments above suggest, destroyed his faith in the old values. Everything had become a shell game for him, a matter of knowing the angles. History had ended. The nation had betrayed itself. Utopia had turned into "cunning
acquisitiveness." The plays written during this period represent faith or meaning as a lack, or a fiction, as a drive that is just a drive—a representation of meaning without providing meaning; this is what O’Neill called "hopeless hope." The two plays that I will discuss in this chapter—A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions—suggest that O’Neill believed American citizenship is constructed around a necessary lack (he calls this lack "pipe dreams") which simultaneously prolongs and destroys the life of the subject. That is, to use O’Neill’s language, men (and women) need their illusions to survive, but these illusions alienate them from the two things that would give their lives meaning: themselves and other people. To quote Larry Slade

5 In a letter to Sophus Keith Winther on December 26, 1942, O’Neill writes: "I am sorry if I have said anything to affront your faith in an upward spiral of mankind. Because I myself believe that perhaps a million years from now it may begin to dawn on Man...that he has been a damned fool. But I hope you put your upward spiral in hock during the next peace conference. Otherwise, you will surely be rudely goosed by the hard fact behind the flimflam, and fall and maybe severely fracture your tamborine. As Rabelais said, or would have said if he thought of it, you can’t build Utopia out of turds!" (Bogard and Bryer 539).

6 Slavoj Zizek insists that alienation is a fundamental structure of "the democratic abstraction": "There is in the very notion of democracy no place for the fullness of concrete human content, for the genuineness of community links: democracy is a formal link of abstract individuals....Critics of democracy are thus correct in a way: democracy implies a split between the abstract citoyen and the bourgeois bearer of particular, 'pathological' interests, and any reconciliation between the two is structurally
again: "To hell with the truth! As the history of the world proves, the truth has no bearing on anything....The lie of the pipe dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us, drunk or sober" (570). In other words, the desire to possess something outside the self (the "satisfying new One"), in order to fill a lack or absence in the subject, gives the subject meaning. But that same desire is also destructive because the end of that desire does not satisfy the drive to attain it, because there is no end to that desire; there is only the fictional means to reach toward it. In O'Neill's mind, there is only the desire to satisfy the desire, which leads the subject outside himself into a quest that has no ending point. There is no ultimate meaning behind this quest. Meaning or satisfaction is understood as the process of the quest, and not as a specific destination or ending point. To use a more mundane formation (and one that is suggested by the last plays): materialism (or what O'Neill called the "economic phase" of self-determination) cannot fulfill the subject because its fruits--"power and

impossible. Or, to refer to the traditional opposition between Gesellschaft (society, as a mechanical, external agglomeration of atomized individuals) and Gemeinschaft (society as a community held together by organic links): democracy is definitely bound up with Gesellschaft; it literally lives on the split between the 'public' and 'private,' it is possible only within the framework of what was once...called 'alienation'" (164).
wealth and possessions”—lead only to desire and the desire for more things. As O'Neill pointed out, "life is a struggle, often, if not usually, unsuccessful struggle; for most of us have something within us which prevents us from accomplishing what we dream and desire. And then, as we progress, we are always seeing further than we can reach" (qtd. in Bigsby 1: 42). My investigation of A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions, then, will focus on the lives of the male protagonists of each play—Cornelius Melody and Simon Harford—as they "progress" and see further than they can reach. My investigation of these male characters will be supplemented with a discussion of how their desire affects the women closest to them: Nora Melody and Sara Melody Harford, respectively.

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In Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship, Michael Manheim argues that A Touch of the Poet is the precursor text for Long Day's Journey (8). More specifically,
Manheim asserts that "There should be little doubt that A Touch of the Poet is primarily a play about James O'Neill, Sr" (106-07). Like James O'Neill/James Tyrone, "Con Melody is a proud man who, having known success in his earlier days, is now forced to live in what he considers undeserved obscurity. He is also like the old actor in that the past he recalls seems linked to the role O'Neill's father played throughout so much of his career. Con thinks of himself as having once been a kind of young Edmond Dantes in his brilliant Napoleonic uniform, and like that character Con feels wronged by ill-meaning adversaries....Con, like James Tyrone, uses his illusions about his glorious past to obscure his humble, shanty-Irish origins" (106-07). While Manheim's comparison is accurate, his description of the correspondences between Con Melody and James O'Neill/James Tyrone is, obviously, skewed. Nevertheless, in trying to read Poet as an ur-text for Long Day's Journey, Manheim glosses over the complexities of the texts to insist upon a homology. My point here is this: by granting primacy to the "autobiographical motifs" of the earlier play, in order

Josephson's The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists, 1861-1901 (217). Additionally, although O'Neill finally completed work on Poet in 1943--two years after he finished Long Day's Journey--he began the play in 1935, four years before he started writing Long Day's Journey.
to read it as an incomplete version of the later play, the historicity that O’Neill gives to Poet is lost. A more specific example will illustrate my point. Although the uniform that Con Melody wears throughout the play is from the Napoleonic era, it is not, per se, "Napoleonic." In other words, unlike the Edmond Dantes character that James O’Neill played during his lifetime, Melody is not, nor does he think of himself, as a French aristocrat. For Melody wears the "brilliant scarlet full-dress uniform of a major in one of Wellington’s dragoon regiments" (228; italics removed), and he views himself as an English aristocrat. Con Melody, in fact, fights against Napoleon’s forces in the Peninsula War, and, significantly, the action of Poet takes place nineteen years to the day that Major Cornelius Melody distinguished himself at the Battle of Talavera. By ignoring this difference in favor of a homology, Manheim effaces the specific subject position that O’Neill creates for Melody (and, for that matter, for James Tyrone in Long Day’s Journey). To be fair to Manheim, Melody’s character is, of course, overdetermined, but to reduce his importance by way of a convenient comparison that sees Melody as a figure for O’Neill’s father, or the play as another working out of O’Neill’s oedipal problems, is to ignore the context in which the author places his characters and the lives he creates for them.
The subject position that O'Neill gives to Con Melody belies the disjunctive nature of O'Neill's experience of American-ness, a fissure or gap that threatens the plenitude of the imagined subject. Melody's father, Ned Melody, an Irish peasant by birth, was, as the barkeep Mickey Maloy says, "a thieven shebeen keeper who got rich by moneylendin' and squeezin' tenants and every manner of trick. And when he'd enough he married, and bought an estate with a pack of hounds and set up as one of the gentry" (185). Ned Melody's newly acquired money and property, however, were not enough to gain him access to the class to which he aspired since "none of the gentry would speak to auld Melody" (185), nor would they let his son Con near their daughters. Nevertheless, Ned Melody wanted his son to be a "true gentleman, so he packed him off to Dublin to school, and after that to the College with sloos of money to prove himself the equal of any gentleman's son. But Con found, while there was plenty to drink on him and borrow money, there was few that didn't sneer behind his back at his pretensions" (185). After college, Con Melody joined the British Army where he served as a cavalry officer in the Peninsula War and distinguished himself at the battle of Talavera where he earned the rank of major. According to his cousin Jamie Cregan, who fought with him in Spain, "[Con] was strong as an ox,
and on a thoroughbred horse, in his uniform there wasn’t a handsomer man in the army. And he had the chance he wanted in Portugal and Spain where a British officer was welcome in the gentry’s houses" (186). Shortly after the Battle of Salamanca, Melody is dismissed from the army and sent home in disgrace for killing a Spanish nobleman in a duel over his wife. Melody returns to Ireland where his wife Nora has given birth to his daughter, Sara. According to Jamie Cregan, "He married [Nora] because he’d fallen in love with her, but he was ashamed of her...because her folks were only ignorant peasants on his estate, as poor as poor" (187). Melody "Then raised what money he still was able," and took "[Nora] and Sara here to America where no one would know him" (187). Once in America, Melody buys a "tavern" in a "village a few miles from Boston" (183). According to O’Neill’s stage directions, "The tavern is over a hundred years old. It had once been prosperous, a breakfast stop for the stagecoach, but the stage line had been discontinued and for some years now the tavern has fallen upon neglected days" (183).

Con Melody’s immigration to America, however, has not given him the status that he enjoyed during the Peninsula War as an officer in the British army. According to Mickey Maloy, "The Yankee gentry won’t let him come near them....But once in a while there’ll be
some Yankee stops overnight wid his wife or daughter and then you'd laugh to see Con, if he thinks she's gentry, slidin' up to her, playin' the great gentleman and makin' compliments, and then boasting afterward that he could have them in bed if he'd had a chance at it" (186). Maloy also notes ironically that Melody "considers the few Irish around here to be scum beneath his notice" (186).

It is, of course, by design that O'Neill sets the action of the play a few miles from Boston. He places us in (or near) "the cradle of the American Revolution," presumably Lexington or Concord. This allows him to tie the action of the play to the Revolution and its founding documents, especially the pursuit-of-happiness clause in the Declaration of Independence. Notably, the welcoming act of the local gentry is to "swindle" the newly arrived Melody, just as Melody's first act as an American is to be swindled. Sara Melody describes her father's "American estate" as "a bit of farm land no one would work anymore, and the rest all wilderness!" (195). In their pursuit of happiness the local gentry steal money from Melody and his family, and in his own self-interest Melody impoverishes himself and consequently his family (more about this below). Melody's action is a repetition of a desire that returns him to where his father began, a run-down bar. His desire to be other
than he is, to be one with the local gentry, is also a repetition of his actions in Ireland. Here again, Melody aligns himself with a class that has nothing but contempt for him because he is Irish. O'Neill makes this point clear in a conversation between Nora and Sarah Melody:

Nora: ...I'm worried about your father. Father Flynn stopped me on the road the yesterday and tould me I'd better warn him not to sneer at the Irish around here and call thim scum, or he'll get in trouble. Most of them is in a rage at him because he'll come out against Jackson and the Democrats and says he'll vote with the Yankees for Quincy Adams.

Sara: ...Faith, they can't see a joke, then, for it's a great joke to hear him shout against mob rule, like one of them Yankee gentry, when you know what he came from. And after the way the Yanks swindled him when he came here, getting him to buy this inn by telling him a new coach line was going to stop here. (193)

O'Neill underscores Melody's self-alienation here by having him support John Quincy Adams in the election of 1828, thereby aligning himself with the Anglo-American ruling class that has swindled Melody and regards him as a "drunken Mick" (249), just as in Ireland he aligns himself with the Anglo-Irish ruling class. Both political structures allow him to participate in the imagined community of his adopted country without giving him access to the status or power that would make him a gentleman. Like Wellington, who was also Irish, Melody ironically fights to protect the commercial interests of a colonial power. While Melody is in Spain fighting
Napoleon and helping to break a boycott on British exports, the ruling apparatus of British Imperialism is exploiting Irish land and labor. Indeed, at the time, the Irish-Protestant ruling class that Melody aligns himself with was responsible for the exploitation of Ireland's predominantly Catholic peasants—the class that Melody and his wife are both born into. The Anglo-Irish ruling class was also the beneficiary of the Act of Union (1800), which officially made Ireland part of the United Kingdom and set up an administrative apparatus for the "colony" open, for the most part, only to members of Protestant sects.  

Viewed retrospectively, from the position of recent post-colonial theorizations of the subject, Melody's position as an Irishman resembles what Salman Rushdie calls a "chamcha," an Urdu word which means spoon and which Rushdie uses to describe a class of natives who "suck up" to the colonial ruling class, or its surrogates, in order to gain power. Rushdie argues that the "British Empire would not have lasted a week without such collaborators among its colonized people" (8).  

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8 For further details on this period of Irish history see MacDonagh 13-52. See also Boyce 123-191.

9 Melody's formative years would have been spent in what Abdul JanMohamed calls the "hegemonic phase" of British colonialism in Ireland: "By contrast, in the hegemonic phase (or neocolonialism) the natives accept a version of the colonizers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality, institutions, and, more important,
Melody's internalization of the empire's values—he speaks the Queen's English and has been educated as an English gentleman—is constructed around his lack of status; that is, he desires to be like them because he is not (Frantz Fanon calls this phenomenon the "native's envy"). For the subject, this involves a negation of the self and the assumption, or introjection, of an imaginary other, which stands outside the self and presents to that alienated self a plenitude. The process is similar to Lacan's mirror stage during which the (m)other reflects back to the baby a "specular image" in order to give the child a unity or coherence that the child does not yet possess. Initially, subjectivity for the child is constructed around this alienated image. According to Jacqueline Rose, "This image is a fiction because it conceals, or freezes, the infant's lack of motor co-ordination and the fragmentation of its drives. But it is salutary for the child, since it gives it the first sense of coherent identity in which it can recognize itself" (30). However, as Rose points out, the mode of production. This stage of imperialism does rely on the active and direct 'consent' of the dominated, though, of course, the threat of military coercion is always in the background" (62). Although JanMohamed is writing about the colonization of Africa, his theorization is applicable to Ireland's condition at the end of the eighteenth century.

10 For details see Fanon 35-105.
image in which we first recognize ourselves is a misrecognition (30; italics original).11

Con Melody’s identity as a subject is constructed around a similar misrecognition, which operates along the same lines as Lacan’s mirror stage. This reading is suggested by O’Neill’s presentation of Melody in the play. His behavior is described in the stage direction as "that of a polished gentleman," but "Too much so": "He overdoes it and one soon feels that he is overplaying a role which has become more real than his real self to him" (197-98; italics removed). The excess

11 Shoshana Felman’s reading of the mirror stage is also pertinent here, especially in light of the unity that Melody tries to construct by gazing in the mirror: "Self-reflection, the traditional fundamental principle of consciousness and conscious thought, is what Lacan traces back to ‘the mirror stage,’ to the symmetrical dual structure of the Imaginary. Self-reflection is always a mirror reflection, that is, the illusory functioning of symmetrical reflexivity, of reasoning by the principle of symmetry between self and self as well as between self and other; a symmetry that subsumes all difference within a delusion of a unified and homogeneous individual identity" (61). It should be noted here also that Melody’s dual structure resembles what W.E.B. DuBois theorizes as a "double consciousness" that affects African-American subjects: "the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (45).
in his manner is evidence of his lack of status. He overacts in order to protect himself from the symbolic order. Melody's self-alienation is most clearly seen in his relationship with the mirror which hangs in his bar; he is continually looking in this mirror throughout the play, and it is only when he sees himself in the forth act--after the intervention of the law--that he sees his "real" self. The first three times that Melody looks in the mirror, he cannot see his excess. In what has become a ritual act, he sees himself only as a gentleman: "Thank God, I still bear the unmistakeable stamp of an officer and a gentleman" (203). O'Neill writes that "[Melody's] eyes are drawn irresistibly to the mirror. He moves in front of it, seeking the satisfying reassurance of his reflection there" (215; italics removed). The gestures accompanying the first three lookings are "exact" repetitions, followed by Melody's reciting his favorite lines from Lord Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:

I have not loved the World, nor the World loved me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo: in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such—I stood
Among them, but not of them.... (203)

12 Melody's excess also allows members of the ruling class to stereotype him. In his flirtations with Deborah Harford, for instance, in which he overplays the role of a "gracious, gallant gentleman," she asks him "Is this--what the Irish call blarney, sir?" (218).
The intended irony of these lines, which, of course, Melody is unaware of, is that in his desire to be a gentleman Melody has committed all the sins that he uses Byron to rail against; he has "flattered" rank, "bowed" to idolatries, as well as "coined" his cheek to smiles. More important, however, he has "worshipped" an echo, which is a reflection of sound, by worshipping an image in a mirror, which is a reflection of an image. The last line of the passage—"I stood/Among them, but not of them"—also points to Melody's confusion about his subject position. By quoting Lord Byron, Melody identifies with Lord Byron. Like Byron, he believes he is a victim of the ruling class (the Anglo-Irish and, later, the Anglo-American), but, unlike Byron, he is not born into that class. Melody misrecognizes his position by misidentifying with Byron; he believes that he is "among" the ruling class, but "not of them." This construction allows Melody to marginalize, or avoid, his present condition by making himself superior to the

13 Commenting on this stanza from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (III, 113), Jerome McGann writes: "whenever Byron says, 'I have not loved the world, nor the world me' he is uttering a desperate and piteous lie. The truth is that he has loved it much too long and far too well, and that in this love his illusions (which are part of his loves) have always been threatened with collapse. Byron's poetry is born in the conflict of love and illusion, in the contradictions which are a necessary part of that conflict" (144). Likewise, Melody's illusions, and the contradictions they produce, are a necessary and sustaining part of his life.
class that refuses to grant him admission. O'Neill also uses the line to suggest, ironically, that Melody's class identification has alienated him from his wife and the men who frequent his bar. He stands, literally, among them, but his pretensions function to make him "not of them." In worshipping his cultural other, Melody denies himself access to those around him.

Nowhere is Melody's worship of the other made more apparent by O'Neill than in the mirror scene in act three. In this scene, Melody stands in front of the mirror in his British cavalry uniform, which he is wearing to celebrate the anniversary of Talavera; he looks at his reflection and begins to recite the stanza from Childe Harold. O'Neill tells us that he does this "seeking satisfying reassurance." Like Lacan's child, Melody is imagining himself as other using the image of his cultural other to sustain a coherent self. The image granted by the mirror, by England, as I suggest above, is self-alienating; in this misrecognition, Melody finds the satisfying reassurance that allows him to maintain his imaginary identity. His lack is subsumed by his glance, which constructs a unity that covers over what is missing.

14 In her article on A Touch of the Poet, Laurin Porter argues, convincingly, that Con's cousin Jamie Cregan and the "Irish locals"--Dan Roche, Paddy O'Dowd, and Patch Riley--represent "Ireland and a past which Con seeks to escape" (371).
Like Lacan's child, however, Melody cannot maintain this "one" indefinitely.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, as Melody begins to look into the mirror in this scene, he is interrupted by Henry Harford's lawyer, Nicholas Gadsby.\textsuperscript{16} Gadsby has come to Melody's bar to offer Melody a bribe so as to prevent Sara Melody from marrying Simon Harford (Henry Harford's son). Melody, at first, mistakes Gadsby's intentions and believes that he has come "to arrange, on Mr. Harford's behalf, for the marriage of his son with my daughter" (247). Gadsby, however, informs him that Harford is "unalterably opposed" to any relationship between Sara and Simon since "There is such a difference in station" (247). Gadsby then offers to pay Melody three thousand dollars if he and his family "leave this part of the country" (247). Insulted and enraged, Melody orders "his soldiers" Roche and O'Dowd to throw Gadsby

\textsuperscript{15} As Laurin Porter points out, this "transformation is destined to fail. In the first instance, as a Gael, the status he enjoys as a British officer is temporary at best; the English are still the enemy. Moreover, one efficacious ritual is missing: a communitarian context. Rituals emerge from a shared belief system, articulate the faith and hope of the community, and derive their power from communal participation. Con's incantations can only be performed when he is alone; an audience would not only break the spell, it would render the moment ridiculous" (373).

\textsuperscript{16} Gadsby's name is a fusion of character names from Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway. O'Neill uses a similar combination in Strange Interlude when he combines the painters Charles Sheeler and Marsden Hartley to come up with Charles Marsden. O'Neill does this to suggest a duality in the character.
out of the bar. Melody then sets off with Jamie Cregan to extract an apology from Henry Harford, or "By God, I'll face him at ten paces or across a handkerchief" (249).

When Melody and Cregan arrive at Harford's mansion, they are met at the door by Harford's servants. Melody demands to see Harford by insisting on his rights as a British officer. As Cregan narrates it, "Con spoke with the airs av a lord. 'Kindly inform you master,' he says, 'that Major Cornelius Melody, late of his His Majesty's Seventh Dragoons, respectfully requests a word with him'" (265). The servants refuse Melody's request and then insult Melody and Cregan by calling them "drunken Micks" and saying "'the place for the loiks av you is the servants' entrance'" (266). A fight begins, and Melody and Cregan manage to overpower Harford's servants. But just as they are about to enter the mansion, the police arrive and drag Melody and Cregan into the street, where Melody and Cregan are savagely beaten; they are then jailed and released only after Henry Harford intervenes on their part. At the end of the night, Cregan returns to the bar "half-supporting, half-leading" Melody.

O'Neill's stage directions indicate that Melody's condition does not signify "drunkenness," but something more serious: "It is more as if a sudden shock or stroke
had shattered his coordination and left him in a stupor" (264; italics removed). O'Neill continues: "His scarlet uniform is filthy and torn and pulled awry....His eyes are empty and lifeless. He stares at his wife and daughter as if he did not recognize them (246; italics removed). In this state, Melody conflates his drunken brawl with the police and the Battle of Talavera, after which he curses himself--"like a rum-soaked trooper, brawling before a brothel on a Saturday night, puking in the gutter" (267)--and runs to the barn where he kills his thoroughbred mare ("the livin' reminder...av all his boasts and dreams" [273]). Melody then begins to speak with a brogue and act as "auld Nick Melody's son" (274). He rejects his desired identity--"I'll be content to stay meself in the proper station I was born to" (274)--and gives his daughter "a bit av fatherly advice": if she wishes to rise in the world, she should "Remember the blood in your veins and be your grandfather's true descendant." In other words, Sara "must make the young Yankee gentleman [Simon Harford] have you in his bed, and after he's had you, weep great tears and appeal to his honor to marry you and save you" (274). Sara and her mother are confused and outraged by Melody's behavior, which they attribute, respectively, to his "play-acting" or a blow to the head during his fight with the police. Melody assures them that he is not playing a game--
"You'll find it's no game. It was the Major played a
game all his life...and cheated only himself" (274)--and
returns to the bar as "fresh as a man new born" (277) to
drink with his Irish-American peers, where he tells
Cregan, Maloy, O'Dowd, Roche, and Riley that "I'll vote
for Andy Jackson, the friend av the common men like me"
(279).

Before joining his friends, however, Melody stands
in front of the mirror for a fourth and final time. In
his dirty, torn British uniform, he says, "To hell wid
Talavera!" (277) and begins to recite the familiar
stanza from Byron's Childe Harold, but this time, as
O'Neill indicates in the stage directions, there is a
difference; his gestures are not a repetition: "He
strikes a pose which is a vulgar burlesque of his old
before-the-mirror one" (277; italics removed, emphasis
added). The "old before-the-mirror one" has
disintegrated in the face of the symbolic order.
Melody's rebirth, as O'Neill describes it, is his
belated entry into the symbolic.17 The unity of the

17 Laurin Porter sees Melody's "abortive attempts
at establishing himself as a businessman and American
aristocrat" as "valiant exertions of his imagination
[i.e. imaginary]" (373). Further, she argues, "only when
he is disgraced in his attempt to duel Henry Harford, a
real aristocrat...is he finally forced to acknowledge
the changes that time has wrought, to re-enter the
stream of history. But even then, he eludes reality,
shadowboxing with the present. In discarding the role
of the Major he accepts another, becoming not 'himself,' if
you will, a distinguished but poor proprietor of a New
mirror is interrupted first by Harford's lawyer and then, more dramatically, by the local police—both force, or enjoin, Melody to take up his position as a subject relative to a social hierarchy, or structure, that Harford has the power to control. For Melody, there can be no admission to Harford's house; he cannot gain access, for his admission would be a transgression that Melody's "Irishness" will not permit. To Harford and his servants, Melody represents a stereotype—another "drunken Mick"—that should recognize his place and use the servants' entrance. The outcome of the brawl is that Melody submits, or takes up, the position assigned to him by the symbolic order. Sara and Nora interpret his actions as either the result of his perverseness or of an injury. Melody, on the other hand, interprets his actions, as do many critics, as a consequence or comeuppance of/for his "ambition." These interpretations, while they are at least partially accurate—he is perverse, his change does occur after the police club him on the head, and his pride is destructive—ignore the cultural apparatus that functions to subjugate Melody.

England inn, but his father, with a brogue so broad it becomes self-parody" (373). I disagree with Porter because, as I suggest below, Melody does not accept his role as an Irish-American; he is forced to accept this role.
Like Lacan's child in the mirror stage, Melody's unified "one" is disrupted by "the name of the father"—that place in the order of culture represented by the father's function in the castration complex. In the structure of the castration complex, the father becomes the "expression" of a "paternal metaphor" that initiates the child into the already-existent values and representations of a culture (i.e. the law[s] of the father). In Juliet Mitchell's reading of Lacan, "The castration complex is the instance of the humanisation of the child in its sexual difference....If the specific mark of the phallus, the repression of which is the institution of the law, is repudiated then there can be only psychosis" (19). The oneness of mother and child is broken by the intervention of the father, and the normative cultural values the father stands for (and stands in for) enjoin the child to take up a position in the symbolic order as either male or female. In much the same way, the intervention of the law (Nicholas Gadsby and the police, acting for Harford) acts as a catalyst that forces Melody to accept his difference. From this point of view, his earlier class pretensions appear as a kind of psychosis as he refuses to be subjected to (or by) the cultural order in which he lives.

Melody's preten(d)sions make him a disjunctive force because he is, in some ways, an absolute believer in the
national pedagogy, and this absolute belief makes him disjunctive; that is, he refuses to yield to the order of culture that makes his value only seeming. As his daughter Sara says, "he's the easiest fool that ever came to America!" because "when he came here the chance was before him to make himself all his lies pretended to be. He had education above most Yanks, and he had money enough to start him, and this is the country where you can rise as high as you like, and no one but the fools who envy you care what you rose from, once you've the money and the power that goes with it" (193-94). Sara, of course, believes that Melody is self-dispossessed because he allows himself to be tricked by the Yankee gentry into buying a worthless piece of property, but Melody is not just self-dispossessed; he is ripped off by a hereditary aristocracy that controls the wealth of the community into which he moves his family. Melody believes he is a member of this community because he possesses the criteria that should enable him to join its apparatus: he has money, and he has been properly educated. His "lies," as it were, represent a cultural capital that should open doors. Like many immigrants, Melody believes in Jefferson's concept of a "natural aristocracy," an aristocracy based on education and individual merit and not inherited wealth and power. Unfortunately for Melody, the local gentry does not
recognize his merits. In fact, his "gentlemanliness," like his drinking, becomes an "excess" that makes his difference visible to the ruling class; his "overplaying a role" (197) makes him "unnatural" to a community that values priority and the proper ethnicity as the standards for gentlemanliness. Melody, like Crevecoeur's farmer or Jefferson's natural aristocrat, fails to acknowledge the constraints established by the pre­existent structures of a class system, a system which the founding of the nation was supposed to erase.

Viewed in this light, Melody's subjectivity is disjunctive; he is not autonomous since his life in the United States is a repetition of his life in Ireland. America has not eliminated the class mechanisms of Europe--the old subjectivities and dependencies do not disappear in Massachusetts because they have been transported to America, along with quasi-European class structures (what Melody calls "old-world standards" [205]). American history does not represent a break with the past, but a repetition. Subjectivity becomes recursive since Melody is subject to the same inequalities as in Ireland. In other words, the new nation becomes a stage on which Melody reenacts his colonial relationship with England. In Poet, the community is not a "melting pot" where everyone is welcome, but rather a space where opportunity is
transformed into greed and radical self-interest, which act in tandem to destroy the community by alienating individuals.

In *Poet*, the structure most disrupted, or alienated, by masculine desire is the family. In other words, Melody’s desire to be other is most problematic for his wife and daughter. Travis Bogard comments that this pattern is the central concern of O’Neill’s last plays: "What happens to a man who cannot deny his dreams? What happens to his woman when he fails to deny them?" (389). In *Poet*, as in all of the late plays, the answers are inextricably linked, for Melody is dependent on his wife and daughter to define his dreams. Like any proper gentleman, he needs servants to insure his superiority. He models his "American estate," as his daughter calls it, on the patriarchal forms of European civilization, but the space in which he operates as lord of the manor, a bar, serves only to parody his aristocratic pretensions. Nevertheless, as O’Neill suggests, Melody’s treatment of Nora has consequences that are other than comic. Because Melody feels their marriage is exogamous, he treats Nora as a social inferior, as a servant. While he rides his mare and entertains his friends, Nora and Sara are *de facto* responsible for the daily operations of the bar. In fact, the bar would not function—and thereby earn the family a living—without Nora and Sara.
Nora acts as cook, and Sara is the bar's only waitress. Melody, however, hires a bartender so that he will not have to work.

Melody's desires have also put the family in debt. Any cash earned in the bar is spent on feed for Con's horse, while the mortgage and grocery bills are left unpaid. Nora and Sara are also responsible for negotiating with creditors when payment is demanded. In addition, Nora's rheumatism is never treated because Melody spends the family's money on his horse. As Sara says, "The mare comes first, if she takes the bread out of our mouths....he cares more for a horse than he cares for us" (191). Although Nora and Sara have more control over their lives, Melody exploits his family in the same manner that Harford exploits his hired servants. Because Melody sees them as peasants, especially his wife, when he speaks to them "His tone condescends" and he addresses them as if they are persons of "inferior station" (198; italics removed). Melody complains to his wife, "I tried my best to educate you, after we came to America--until I saw that it was hopeless....You won't even cure yourself of that damned peasant's brogue. And your daughter's becoming as bad" (201). Commenting on these lines, C.W.E. Bigsby suggests that "Nora Melody's subservience is underlined by her accent, as her daughter's rebelliousness is by hers." Bigsy also
suggests that Nora's "linguistic reticence marks...her social impotence" (95). Another mark against her, in Melody's eyes, is her physical appearance: "For God's sake, why don't you wash your hair? It turns my stomach with its stink of onions and stew" (202). To which Nora responds: "I do be washin' it often to plaze you. But when your standin' over a stove all day" (202).

Melody, on the other hand, is immediately attracted to Deborah Harford, who O'Neill deliberately contrasts with Nora's "peasant" qualities. While Nora is overworked and "worn," making her look "much older" than her forty years, Deborah is "forty-one, but looks to be no more than thirty"; while Nora is "dumpy...with sagging breasts, Deborah has a "fragile, youthful figure"; while Nora is dressed in "old clothes" with "cracked working shoes," Deborah "is dressed in white with calculated simplicity" (190, 215-16; italics removed). Deborah embodies Melody's desire in that she represents an object of exchange which Melody believes he can use to gain status, just as he was able, albeit temporarily, to gain access to the ruling class in Spain by possessing a nobleman's wife.

When Sara points out to her mother that Melody devalues her by treating Nora like a slave, Nora insists that "I've pride in my love for him....For the love of God, don't take the pride of my love from me...for
without it what am I at all but an ugly, fat woman gettin' old and sick" (192-93). Nora's "pride of love" is her pipe dream. Her pride is also what O'Neill views as the culturally specific behavior of a "typical pure Irish family." In a letter to Eugene O'Neill, Jr., O'Neill describes the quality: "My family's quarrels and tragedy were within. To the outer world we maintained an indomitable united front and lied and lied for each other. A typical pure Irish family. The same loyalty occurs, of course, in all kinds of families, but there is, I think, among Irish still close to, or born in Ireland, a strange mixture of fight and hate and forgive, a clannish pride before the world, that is peculiarly its own" (Bogard and Bryer 569). Nora's love for Melody, then, can be seen in the context of the play, and in O'Neill's experience of his "Irishness," as a way to hold the family together, as an attempt to build a community where there is none, or where none is provided. Nora's endurance of Melody, and the hardship he exposes the family to, is a product of her habitus (i.e. the internalization of her class position--Catholic Irish peasant). Her "clannish pride" is a residual practice of her peasant background, which enables her to survive in a Protestant culture, first in Ireland and later in the United States.
In *Emigrants and Exiles*, Kirby Miller uncovers a "series of basic distinctions...between native Irish Catholic culture and Protestant Irish, British, and American cultures": "In broadest terms, much evidence indicates that, in contrast to the Protestants they encountered in Ireland and North America, the Catholic Irish were more communal than individualistic, more dependent than independent, more fatalistic than optimistic, more prone to accept conditions passively than to take initiatives for change, and more sensitive to the weight of tradition than to innovative possibilities of the future (107). Historically, Kirby argues, these practices were created so Irish Catholic peasants could survive the deprivations of rural poverty and a rigid class system that prevented mobility. It is somewhat ironic that Nora Melody is forced to employ Kirby's categories in order to survive in America. Certainly, there is an economic change in her station since her days in Ireland, but she still uses what Crevecoeur would call the "mechanisms of dependency," for the community she has entered is not, as the national pedagogy asserts, assimilatory. In fact, in many ways, O'Neill suggests that America is the same as Europe. Nora's communal approach to life is a repetition of her life in Ireland; she has not been liberated from the oppressive class system of Europe by coming to
America; she does not better her condition. Ultimately, she is left with Melody's debts and eventually retires to a convent. In O'Neill's mind, America provides the same opportunities for exploitation as Europe; there is little difference. Immigrants do not escape their past---the New World subject is recursive.

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The sequel to A Touch of the Poet is More Stately Mansions. In Mansions, Sara Melody has risen from the poverty of her youth by marrying Henry Harford's son, Simon. The play begins four years after the action of Poet (1836) and traces the marriage of Sara and Simon Harford until 1842. In Mansions, the overt political context of the setting (i.e. the rise of Jacksonian Democracy) is not as foregrounded as in Poet. One possible reason for this is that the manuscript is unfinished and survives merely by chance. O'Neill did, in fact, believe he had destroyed the play. Another possible reason for this adjustment is that in Mansions O'Neill turns his attention more specifically to the pathology of "cunning acquisitiveness" (i.e. the big subject), to which he gives a psychological reading (Freudian).¹⁸ That is, success, or the desire for success, is not attributed to some positive, simplistic

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¹⁸ O'Neill's knowledge of Freud is well-documented. See Bogard 345-47 and Sheaffer 244-45.
national pedagogy, but rather a maternal lack within the male subject. Men are not materialistic because they choose to be successful, or because they possess opportunity and mobility, but because they psychologically have to be. In O'Neill's mind, men are acquisitive because they lack the "satisfying new One" that would give their lives meaning. More important, their desire is not the projection of an autonomous will; it is predetermined by the structure of the pre-oedipal relationship with the mother. In fact, the desire for autonomy (what O'Neill calls "self-sufficiency" or "self-possession") is only ever expressed in absolute terms and is therefore always destructive, which is what O'Neill evokes when he uses the phrase "possessors, self-dispossessed."

To help readers identify the psychological dimensions of Mansions, O'Neill provides us with a clue in the second scene of Act III, where Simon retells a "fairy tale" that his mother has told him as a child:

There was once upon a time, long ago in the past, a young King of a happy and peaceful land, who through the evil magic of an evil enchantress had been dispossessed of his realm, and banished to wander over the world, a homeless, unhappy outcast. Now the enchantress...had in a last moment of remorse...revealed to him that there was a way in which he might regain his lost kingdom. He must search the world for a certain magic door....She told him that there was no special characteristic to mark this door from other doors. It might be any door, but if he wished to find it with all his heart, he would recognize it when he came to it, and know that on the other side was his lost kingdom.
And so he set forth and searched for many years, and after enduring bitter trials, and numberless disappointments, he...found himself before a door and the wish in his heart told him his quest was ended. But just as he was about to open it...he heard the voice of the enchantress speaking from the other side...."Before you open I must warn you....If you dare to open the door you may discover this is no longer your old happy realm but has been changed...into a barren desert, where it is always night, haunted by terrible ghosts....So you better be sure of your courage," the enchantress called waringly, "and remember that as long as you stay where you are you will run no risk of anything worse than your present unhappy exile befalling you"....She did not speak again, although he knew she remained there...waiting to see if he would dare open the door...But he never did....He felt she was lying to test his courage. Yet, at the same time, he felt she was not lying, and he was afraid. He wanted to turn his back on the door and go far away, but it held him in a spell and he could never leave it. (443-44)

In the context of the play, Simon's story is an allegory of male desire. The "young King" is Simon Harford as a child, while the "beautiful enchantress" is Deborah Harford, his mother. The "happy and peaceful land"--"long ago in the past"--is the pre-oedipal unity, or oneness, shared by son and mother, in which "all [was] happiness and beauty and love and peace." In this state, Simon's relation to his mother is "presocial"; he has not yet taken up his position in the symbolic order. As Nancy Chodorow argues in a different context, he "is not yet under the sway of the reality principle. The child does not originally recognize that the mother has or could have any separate interests from it. Therefore, when it finds out that its mother has separate
interests, it cannot understand it" (79). The young King's banishment or exile from the kingdom, then, marks his entry into the symbolic order through the structure of the castration complex; he is forced to give up his mother as an object of desire and find "suitable" substitutes. For Simon, this is the moment of the "lost kingdom," after which he is forced "to wander over the world, a homeless, unhappy outcast."

All is not lost, however. In an effort to recreate, or "regain," the oneness of the pre-oedipal relationship, "He must search the world for a certain magic door." This magic door, identified only by the article "a," has "no special characteristics" to mark it from other doors. It can only be discovered or recognized by his desire (i.e. "with all his heart"). But his search for the door, unfortunately, never ends, for after he pursues the door "for many years...and numberless disappointments," he finds himself standing "before a door" (not "the" door) that he cannot enter: the enchantress warns him that if he enters the door (behind which she stands), he may discover that the lost kingdom is really a "barren desert...haunted by terrible ghosts." If he does not enter, however, he will remain as he is in his "present unhappy exile" (what Freud views as normal adult unhappiness). In the end, Simon can neither turn his back on the door nor can he enter
the door, so he remains "standing before the door...a beggar, whining for alms" (444). The final gesture—the inability to enter or to leave—marks Simon's ambivalence toward his mother.19 Because he still desires the oneness of their primary relation, he is both angry at her and attracted to her; he is still dependent on her (because he desires her) at the same time that he desires not to desire her. As Simon tells his mother, "You dispossessed [read: abandoned] yourself when you dispossessed me. Since then we have both been condemned to an insatiable unscrupulous greed for substitutes to fill the emptiness, the loss of love we had within us" (534).

The "necessary concrete symbol" (533) of this emptiness, or loss, becomes the structure of desire revealed in the fairy story, the search for a magic door. The door can never be entered; it can only be sought after as a door because the original object ("the One") is irretrievably lost to the subject. This is the lack that, in Lacan's view, constitutes desire. Simon's

19 Linda Ben-Zvi argues that this ambivalence is paradigmatic of male identity in many of O'Neill's plays; she identifies the structure as the "pull between...two seemingly dichotomous poles": "freedom and fixity." In Mansions, for instance, Simon represents "the dual image of the man who would go and the man who would stay...O'Neill presents in [Mansions] one character with a dual self, desiring both movement toward individuation and a commensurate movement back to infancy, mother and primal home" (21-2).
goal can never be reached because its completion would bring incest (and madness), and so in seeking out substitutes for his mother, he never attains, or catches up to, his mother. Yet his mother is always "speaking from the other side" of each door that he finds himself before. In many ways, Simon's quest resembles what Slavoj Zizek describes as the "paradox" of Lacan's object petite a:

A goal, once reached, always retreats anew. Can we not recognize in this paradox the very nature of the psychoanalytic notion of drive, or more properly the Lacanian distinction between its aim and its goal? The goal is the final destination, while the aim is what we intend to do, i.e., the way itself. Lacan's point is that the real purpose of the drive is not its goal (full satisfaction) but its aim: the drive's ultimate aim is simply to reproduce itself as drive, to return to its circular path, to continue its path to and from the goal. The real source of enjoyment is the repetitive movement of this closed circuit. (5; italics removed)

The structure of desire (drive/goal/aim) in the play is constructed around Simon's loss of the pre-oedipal object, his mother. He then compensates for this separation by finding substitutes for his desire. As he says, "What has been taken for me, I take back" (529). His abandonment marks his entry into the symbolic order, in which he gives up his mother as an object and identifies with his father's role, a feat that is only fully accomplished when Henry Harford dies.

The literal loss of the imaginary in Simon's life is marked by his abandonment of his vocation as a poet, as
a would-be writer of utopian tracts. When he gives up his mother, who encourages his writing, and becomes as his father (a husband, a father, a rich businessman), he also renounces his utopian project, the authorship of a book "to show people how to change the Government and all the laws so there'd be no more poor people, nor anyone getting the best of the next one, and there'd be no rich but everyone would have enough" (305). Simon begins his project in Poet, where he lives, after graduating from Harvard and refusing to work for his tycoon father, in a cabin—which he builds—by a lake. The cabin's measurements, as described in O'Neill's stage directions, are the same as those of Thoreau's cabin on Walden Pond, according to Virginia Lloyd.20 O'Neill links Simon to Thoreau in order to underscore Simon's eventual rejection of Thoreau's politics, which are embodied in Simon's desire to construct a society, as David Robinson remarks in another context, "of social and economic equals, made independent through their economic dependence on the land alone yet bound together in a supportive and compassionate community" (17).21

20 Floyd calls the cabin "an exact replica of Thoreau's hut at Walden" (217).

21 This rejection is underscored in the stage directions at the beginning of Act Two, where O'Neill describes the cabin as "[giving] evidence of having been abandoned for years. The mortar between the stones of the chimney has crumbled and fallen out in spots. The moss stuffing between the logs hangs here and there in
O'Neill links the action of *Mansions* to the ideology of the Revolutionary fathers in order to underscore the spiritual abandonment of the principles of the Revolution. That is, Simon's rejection of Utopian politics for the greedy acquisitiveness of a robber baron parallels a similar rejection in the collective values of the nation; and given Simon's subject position, O'Neill sees this trajectory as inevitable; he becomes like his father because he can be nothing else, or, to put this in terms that I have already used, his life is structured by a structure that, O'Neill suggests, is at once universal and particular.

As I suggest above, the structure that most determines Simon's life is the oedipal structure within his particular family. Inseparable from this construction—indeed part of it—is the specific class habitus O'Neill gives to Simon. That is, as a child/member of the ruling class, Simon has access to a network of opportunity (a set of specific social relationships) that is denied to someone born into a lower class (Sara Melody, for example). Simon's class position therefore enables him to compensate for the straggly strips. The windows have boards nailed across them" (314). As Simon becomes more corrupt, he is unable to remember how he built the cabin or even how to repair it without using the labor of others: "I shall have to send someone out here to repair things. I wish I could do it myself. What labor it cost me to build this without help. Yet I was never happier" (318).
maternal lack in very specific ways. Simon's start in business, for instance, is provided by a loan from his mother, which he uses to buy into a friend's textile mill. These doors are not open to either Con or Sara Melody, or even to Simon's mother. Further, after his father dies, Simon is invited by his family to take over the Harford Company, which he then merges with his cotton mills to form a corporation ("His Company must cease to exist. There must be only my Company" [375]). His assumption of his father's role, however, as Laurin Porter notes, leads to a "complication": "Unlike his father [Simon] is not content with the role of business tycoon. Having experienced the world of the imagination at his mother's feet...he knows that life holds more than the thrill of concluding another deal" (377). Yet while he may recognize this, he is powerless to change his life precisely because he sat at his mother's feet in the imaginary, and so his desire oscillates back and forth between the maternal and the material. As he says to Deborah, "I'll admit I do get deathly sick of the daily grind of the counting house--the interminable haggling and figuring and calculation of profits, the scheming to outwit the other man, the fear that he may outwit you--a life where Mammon is God, and money the sole measure of worth! It is not the career I would have chosen. I would have lived here [his cabin] in freedom
with Nature, and earned just enough to support myself, and kept my dreams, and written my book" (331). At the same time, however, as his wife argues, "when he’s himself, there’s no one takes more joy in getting ahead. If you’d see his pride sometimes when he comes home to tell me of some scheme he’s accomplished" (306).

Simon’s "duality," as Travis Bogard calls it, gradually gives way to an insatiable greed. He renounces his utopian book in order to become the "King of America," a phrase that O’Neill often juxtaposes with the word "Napoleon." Deborah, in fact, often refers to Simon as "the Company’s victorious little Napoleon" or "the conquering Napoleon" (434, 515). This combination is not accidental; it is used not only to comment on Simon’s character, but also the "character" of the nation. From O’Neill’s perspective, as the nation became more interested in "commerce," it betrayed its democratic principles in favor of a "false aristocracy" of Industry, just as in France, Napoleon the Liberator betrayed the French by becoming Napoleon the Tyrant, a dictator who, in the name of freedom, attempted to enslave Europe. O’Neill also uses Napoleon as a figure to represent what he saw as the brutality of the "greedy capitalist ruling classes" who were destroying the country for profit and eliminating what he referred to as the "Forgotten Class": "the small businessman, shop
keeper, white collar worker, professional man, small farmer, etc.... The people who are the finest type of American" (Bogard and Bryer 528-29, 539).

Simon, of course, is a representative of the former and, like Napoleon, becomes so greedy that he cannot see when his own greed begins "devouring itself" (Bogard and Bryer 529). Phrased differently, he becomes a slave to his "possessive instincts," which he mistakes for freedom, autonomy, and self-sufficiency. As he insists, "the possession of power is the only freedom" (392). This is the "foundation of the new morality" that, in his mind, replaces the utopian dream:

The game of Commerce has its own ethics, and they are more frank and honest--and so, more honorable!--truer to the greedy reality of life than any hypocritical personal ones. The only moral law here is that to win is good and to lose is evil. The strong are rewarded, the weak are punished. That is the sole justice which functions in fact. (388)

A codicil to the new moral law is the "true revelation of [man's] nature": "What he desires is what he is" (361). In Simon's mind, the objects of his desire ostensibly replace the pre-oedipal self-sufficiency of the mother-child relationship. As I have been suggesting, his desire enacts a substitution that is supposed to compensate for the loss of the mother, but the loss is never satisfied. Significantly, every accomplished deal leaves Simon feeling empty: "It's the usual reaction. I concentrate all my mind and energy to
get a thing done. I live with it, think of nothing else, eat with it, take it to bed with me, sleep with it, dream of it—and then suddenly one day it is accomplished—finished, dead!—and I become empty, exhausted, but at the same time restless and aimless and lonely, as if I had lost my meaning to myself—facing the secret that success is its own failure" (389).

At this point, the quest for the lost object begins again. As he tutors his wife, "You must keep your eyes fixed on the final goal of your ambition....Keep your whole mind and will concentrated on what must still be accomplished before your Company can be out of danger, safe and absolutely self-contained, not dependent on anything outside itself for anything, needing nothing but itself. Until that is done, how can you enjoy any true freedom within yourself—or any peace of happiness" (499). The outcome, however, will always be the same: emptiness, loss, frustration. The consequence of this revenge against the maternal is that the objects of Simon's desire have no use value, only exchange value. Caught up in a circuit of horizontal expansion, he accumulates possessions that bring him no satisfaction or meaning, just endless repetition and a desire to "complete the chain" (499). That is, in order to make his cotton empire self-sufficient, he not only buys cotton mills but also slaves, plantations, slave
dealers, slave ships, shipping companies, banks, railroads, retail stores; and his "crowning achievement," that "would complete the circle with a vengeance," is to "conceive a scheme by which the public could be compelled to buy...cotton goods" (500). In the end, however, as Simon says, "One finally gets a sense of confusion in the meaning of the game, so that one's winnings have the semblance of losses" (413).

Simon's confusion, or lack, ultimately leads him full circle to his mother, the inaccessible object. In Act IV, Simon attempts to give the fairy tale a "happy ending" by entering his mother's "forbidden summerhouse" (445).22 As Deborah says in an earlier conversation with Simon, "I remember how resentful you were at the [original] ending. You used to insist I imagine a new ending in which the wicked enchantress had reformed and become a good fairy and opened the door and welcomed him home and they both were happy ever after" (444). Simon then confesses that he has confused the door in the story with the door to his mother's (real) summerhouse. In the climax of the play, Simon tries to stage the happy ending by passing through Deborah's door in order to reconstitute the imaginary: "Mother....All I ask is that you go back and change that--change the ending--

22 In Poet Deborah calls the summerhouse "a little temple of liberty" (224).
open the door and take me back... There will be only love and faith and trust in life... There will be only you and I! There will be peace and happiness to the end of our days!" (535). Simon's return to the maternal, however, is doomed to failure because it signifies psychosis. Crossing the threshold of the "forbidden" door would be incest, an absolute transgression because it is a denial of the symbolic. Simon's act will not bring, as he desires, "greedless security and content with what we have" (535); it can only bring only madness and suffering for him and for Deborah. In the end, however, Sara upholds his position in the symbolic by maintaining her position; by acting as his wife, and not an acquisitive whore (more about which in a moment), Sara rescues Simon by restoring him to his proper post-oedipal role, father and husband. Ultimately, her actions force him to forget his mother.

Sara begins the play as Simon's business partner. As Simon's chief advisor, she is conspicuously involved in the daily operations of the Harford Company. But as Simon's appetite grows, a traditional division of labor arises. Sara becomes more and more responsible for the children and the household, while Simon focuses exclusively on making deals. Simon becomes so obsessed with business that he eventually stops sleeping with his wife and moves to another bedroom. To alleviate her
loneliness, Sara begins a friendship with her mother-in-law that eventually excludes Simon from the domestic operations of the home. As Simon complains, "I was never anything more than a necessary adjunct of a means to motherhood--a son in one case, a husband in the other...so I am left alone, an unwanted son, a discarded lover, an outcast without any meaning or function in my own home" (391). At this point, as Laurin Porter notes, "He becomes a fondly tolerated outsider who wrests a living from the world and returns home at night, a member of the family in name more than essence" (374). Feeling "left entirely out of it" (389), Simon prepares to "take back what belongs to me" (391). Using the knowledge he has gained as "a Napoleon among traders," Simon sets in motion "the strategy of dividing in order to conquer--of creating strife and rivalry, and waiting until the two opponents are exhausted destroying each other--then I step in to take advantage of their weakness to possess them both" (392-93). In the end, however, Simon possesses nothing since his strategy eventually leads to Deborah's madness and death and to Sara's spiritual transformation.23

23 It should be noted here, albeit perhaps too briefly, the implicit criticism of the bourgeois family structure that Porter sees in the play. That is, because the family is necessarily constructed around the demands of a the market, because the father travels out everyday to the world of commerce to support the family, he becomes a member of his family in name only. He becomes,
Sara's spiritual rehabilitation occurs only after she succumbs to and then rejects the dominant values of the play, which Simon represents. This is also O'Neill's way of denouncing the dominant, acquisitive (masculine) values of American culture. As Simon's wealth and power increase, Sara's goal, at first, is to build "more stately mansions" on the property where his utopian cabin stands in ruins. About this property, Sara says to her mother: "There's over two hundred acres, and he bought it for a song, and the little lake on it is beautiful, and there's a grand woods that would make a fine park. With a mansion built on the hill by the lake, where his old cabin was, you wouldn't find a better gentleman's estate" (305). Hearing this, Nora tells Sara "Glory be, but you sure av havin' your way" (305). To which Sara responds, "I am, Mother, for this is America not poverty-stricken Ireland where you're slave! Here you're free to take what you want, if you've the power in yourself" (305). The irony of this statement is that in rising Sara becomes a "slave," or enslaved, by her as O'Neill suggests, an outcast without any meaning or function in his home. He does, however, have a meaning, and this meaning, as Nancy Chodorow argues, is reinforced by his absence: "Although fathers are not as salient as mothers in daily interaction [within the family], mothers and children often idealize and give them ideological primacy, precisely because of their absence and seeming inaccessibility, and because of the organization and ideology of male dominance in the larger society" (181).
desire. As she puts it, "for where is the glory of life if it's not a battle where you prove your strength to rise to the top and let nothing stop you!" (305). Like Simon, however, enough is never enough; there is no end to accumulation or consumption. Sara's original dream, "to make him [Simon] retire, a landed gentleman the minute we've enough" (336) never materializes because Simon is never satisfied. O'Neill, again, as in Poet, constructs Sara's desire as different from Simon's. Her subject position, and its habitus, does not give her the same options as does Simon's--although, interestingly, it gives her the same goals: wealth and power. As she tells Simon, "I'm a fool always dreaming of wealth and power...even while I know in my heart that it doesn't matter at all, that your love is my only wealth--to have you and the children. But I can't help dreaming....I've known what you haven't--poverty--and the lies and dirt and hurt of it that spits on your pride while you try to sneer and hold your head high" (308-09). In a similar vein, she tells Deborah, "I may have greed in me. I've had good reason to have. There's nothing like hunger to make you greedy" (335).

Nevertheless, because she is essentially subordinated to Simon's desire, because of her unequal gender and class status within the marriage, the family, and the culture, she enslaves herself by embracing his
desire; she identifies too closely with his masculinity. In other words, her possession of power is always once removed and always dependent on the other; she can only have access to power through her husband, through his desire. In this respect, she resembles, for a brief period, what Shari Benstock calls "woman-in-the-feminine." The role she plays, or represents, for the masculine acts as a "guarantor" of the cultural system that oppresses her.24 She participates in his desire when Simon, as part of his "campaign" to destroy the union of mother and wife, asks Sara to become his "mistress." In order to repossess his house, to "become absolute master" (396), Simon negotiates a deal with Sara whereby she agrees to become his business partner by becoming his whore:

This is a new secret life for us...which concerns the Company's life, since it will be lived here in it. So it must be strictly a business partnership, a deal for profit on both our parts. A double life of amorous intrigue for each of us....You will be revenging yourself on your husband who has grown bored with his virtuous wife, by selling yourself to a lover. And I think the husband will be keeping a beautiful mistress to take my wife's place. (411)

Sara's payment for her services will be a "piece by piece," or trick by trick, acquisition of "the whole Company," which is already bankrupt, made worthless by Simon's desire for complete autonomy. At this point,

24 For a detailed discussion of "woman-in-the-feminine" see Benstock 3-46.
Sara is a symptom of Simon's desire since he cannot get pleasure but through acquisition. For him, all purchase has become equal, in business and in love. Again, everything has only exchange value. Sara's "use" satisfies nothing; it is merely a trick he plays on himself by becoming dependent on his desire.

As Sara gradually purchases the business, she becomes like Simon. She acts as if she is "an understudy learning to play [his] part" (414). "As you learn," Simon says, "I will let you act in my stead now and then until finally you will find yourself capable of taking my place" (414). It is only, however, when she stands in his place—in the position of male power and dominance—that she is able to reject Simon's desire and thereby overcome her own. In the penultimate scene of the play, Simon gives her "full authority" to act for him in a meeting with Benjamin Tenard (492). He instructs Sara to "humiliate" Tenard—a former bank president who Simon has "ruined"—so that Tenard will come to work for the Harford Company. According to Simon, Tenard's "old-fashioned ethics and honor" made him "open to attack and...easy to ruin" (491). Simon's final words of advice to Sara before he turns the meeting over to her are "Just bear in mind that the end you desire always justifies any means and don't get life confused with sentiment" (491).
Fortunately, for both Tenard and Simon, Sara does not confuse life with sentiment, or feeling. As she is acting as Simon, trying to "swindle" Tenard by forcing him to submit to Simon's brutality, which she can do only because Tenard is unemployed and has a family to support, Sara can imagine herself only as the other of Tenard and Simon. When she tells Tenard that he will be required "to conduct [her] banking business with the entire ruthlessness as to the means used of a general in battle," and that "where it is necessary, you must faithfully do things which may appear to your old conceptions of honor like plain swindling and theft" (495), he refuses her offer of a job. "I'd rather starve in the gutter," he says (495). Enraged Sara berates Tenard: "Arrah, God's curse on you for a man! You and your pride and honor! You're pretending to love your women and children and you're willing to drag them down with you to suffer the bitter shame of poverty, and starve in the gutter..." (495). Tenard thanks her for reminding him of his "duty," and he then accepts the job. O'Neill's stage directions describe Sara's outburst in the following way: "[she] suddenly bursts out in a strange rage as if he had touched something deep in her and infuriated her--[she lapses] into broad brogue, forgetting her office attitudes" (495; italics removed). Sara's forgetting of her office decorum is caused by a
recollection of the destructiveness of masculine desire, specifically her father's pride, which she and her mother experienced as suffering and deprivation. Because of the unequal family relations of her youth, Sara can only know herself through her previous subordination, and she is therefore ultimately unwilling to align herself with Simon and his male perspective. In other words, she can imagine herself as Tenard's daughter or his wife and does not want them to suffer as has she. In regaining this knowledge, Sara in turn renounces the end-justifies-the-means business practices, or acquisitiveness, that O'Neill sees as the dominant mode of American masculinity, and which Sara sees as the cause of her suffering. She warns Simon that she'll leave the Company and "take my children and go to the old farm and live a decent, honest women working in the earth" (496). And she makes good on her promise, for in the epilogue of Mansions, Simon and Sara and their children are living on the "old farm" in Simon's "old cabin by the lake," where they are content and working the land (548; italics removed). Here, Sara tells Simon, who is recovering from a "brain fever," that she'll never ask him "to succeed again" (556) and that they are at last free "from the soul-destroying compulsion to keep on enslaving [themselves] with more and more power and possessions" (555).
On O’Neill’s part, the gesture of Sara’s return to the Thoreauvian cabin by the lake partially represents a nostalgia for an agrarian utopia as set forth in the writings of Crevecoeur, Jefferson, and Thoreau, a strategic retreat from the complex historical problems the nation was facing in the 1940s. Sara’s refusal, however, also represents a utopian moment amidst the despair of O’Neill’s late plays, where any kind of redemption seems to be illusory, or a necessary fiction. The return to the cabin is a genuine commitment on Sara’s part, and O’Neill’s, to recover America’s utopian book ("the old values"), to construct an imagined community where "there’d be no more poor people, nor anyone getting the best of the next one, and there’d be no rich but everyone would have enough" (305). Sara’s plan, however, is always in danger of being disrupted by a repetition of masculine desire, an eruption of the national subject, for as her son Jonathan says in the epilogue: "No, I don’t want to be a farmer....There’s no money in farming. You can’t get ahead. And I’m going to get ahead" (550). The ambiguity created by the juxtaposition of Sara’s and Jonathan’s speeches (and the ideologies they represent) at the end of the play works to supplement the more sanguine message of Mansions, and produces a reading more in line with the pessimism of O’Neill’s final plays. That is, by suggesting that
Simon's sons will repeat their father's mistakes, just as Sara and Simon reenact their fathers' pathologies, O'Neill underlines the recursive, predetermined nature of American subjectivity, a pattern that the national pedagogy denies. In addition, O'Neill also suggests, as do Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller a few years later, that men have little choice about what they become; their lives are predetermined. O'Neill's more "psychological" interpretation of American culture, however, stresses that the basic structures of American life--the family and the economy--provide men with little satisfaction or meaning.
Chapter Four

Tennessee Williams and the Instrumentality of Reason

During the 1940s, the Frankfurt School theorized a new stage of capitalism, what Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno called late-capitalism; and, as Frederic Jameson reminds us, their model stresses two fundamental points: first, "a tendential web of bureaucratic control...and [second] the interpenetration of government and big business...such that Nazism and the New Deal are related systems" (Postmodernism xviii). What this "interpenetration" of government and industry meant was a fascistic organization of society. As Herbert Marcuse argued, fascism "is not only a terroristic political coordination of society [i.e. Nazi Germany], but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination [that] operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests [i.e. American big business]," which also "precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole" (One-Dimensional Man 3). The Frankfurt School redefined fascism in order to record the emergence of similar tendencies in Germany and the United States; according to Horkheimer and Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944), "One day the edict of production, the actual advertisement...can turn into the open command of the Fuhrer. In a society of huge Fascist rackets which agree among themselves what part of the
social product should be allotted to the nation's needs, it would seem anachronistic to recommend the use of a particular soap powder. The Fuhrer is more up-to-date in unceremoniously giving direct orders for both the holocaust and the supply of rubbish" (160). Horkheimer and Adorno's comparison of Nazi propaganda—"blarring from radios, movies, and bullhorns"—and the commercial media in the United States, or what they called "the culture industry," is not simply a warning about the brutality of the Fuhrer; it is a radical reformulation of the idea of the subject, a reformulation which is historically determined by the rationalization of two related systems, Nazism and American mass consumerism.

The figure of the Fuhrer is more "up-to-date" only because it represented a hyper-rationalization of production that made the "edict of production" in the United States, by comparison, seem "anachronistic." Indeed, as Andrew Hewitt asserts, the "key analytical observations [in Dialectic of Enlightenment] arise from the insights afforded by the comparison of capitalism and fascism," which Horkheimer and Adorno use to "insist upon a historical mutation in the structure of subjectivity, a mutation brought about by capitalism as the rational instantiation of Enlightenment thought" (144-45; italics removed). By identifying the subject as an effect of the "technological rational" that dominated
late-capitalist cultures, Horkheimer and Adorno suggested that representations and models of the liberal subject (constituted by the culture industry and always present in memory) were being used repressively to reduce subjectivity to a series of "protocols" or, as Marcuse argued, "pre-given external standards."

Their discovery was a radical rewriting of Freud’s theory of introjection. In other words, as Marcuse suggested at the time, introjection no longer described how individuals internalized social controls because it represented "a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a self (Ego) transposes the 'outer' into the 'inner,'" a process that was hostile to external standards and modes of behavior and therefore created "an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious apart from public opinion and behavior."

Under late-capitalism, or what Marcuse called "the machine age," "inner freedom" or "private space" had been "invaded and whittled down by technological reality": "Mass production and mass distribution claim the entire individual....The result is, not adjustment but mimesis: an immediate identification of the individual with his society and, through it, with society as a whole" (One-Dimensional Man 10; italics original).
Horkheimer and Adorno in turn argued that this claiming, or interpellation, of the subject produced instrumental reason: "Through the countless agencies of mass production and its culture the conventionalized modes of behavior are impressed upon the individual as the only natural, respectable, and rational ones. He defines himself as a thing, as a static element, as success or failure" (28). They believed that individual consciousness was being reduced to a series of homogenous codes or modes of operation found on the job, on the radio, in the movies, and in the then emerging television industry. For Adorno, these standardized models signaled the end of the liberal subject since "motivation in the old, liberal sense" was being appropriated and "systematically controlled and absorbed by social mechanism which are directed from above" ("Freudian Theory" 136). In other words, the subject's desire for success--for material wealth, to "get ahead"--, which the subject believed was self-generated, was, in fact, his identification with the rationale of the apparatus, which had programmed individual consumption as spontaneous thought or reason or the assertion of individual will.

The effect of their rewriting of the subject radically destabilized received cultural knowledge about masculine autonomy and revealed desire as a self-
alienating structure constituted by the other. In effect, they revealed the national subject of American culture as a contradiction, as a sort of Orwellian cliche (i.e. conformity is freedom), and in so doing tarnished the most sacred object of American life—the self-made man, the rugged individual, the exceptional American. The effect of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was to reduce the hero of the nation to its hated opposite, the victim. His desire was constituted and structured by the edict of production; his reason had become instrumental; it was used by the apparatus for profit. Thought had become anachronistic and reappeared as "stereopathy," the desire to conform. In Horkheimer’s estimation, reason was merely "the ideological projection of a false universality which now shows the autonomy of the subject to have been an illusion": "exploration of meanings is replaced by an acquaintance with functions"; to be successful, the subject need only "sound like the vocal chords of the radio, film and magazine" ("The End of Reason" 36-40).

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I do not want to suggest here that Tennessee Williams was an avid reader of the Frankfurt School—he was not. Nor do I want to suggest that he was a cultural theorist. What I do want to suggest, however, is that many of Williams’ plays written in the forties reflect
the transformation of subjectivity theorized by the Frankfurt School, and that he linked these changes to political movements in Europe. More specifically, he compared the construction of American masculinity to the practices of European fascism. In my opinion, he would have agreed with Marcuse's argument that fascism is the coordination of "society" from above, which masks the agenda of vested interests and blocks the emergence of humane social relations.¹ This belief is especially evident in his two most famous plays, *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) and *The Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), in which artistic figures struggle against a homogenizing, repressive masculinity that seeks to eliminate difference. Scholars and critics have resisted such overt "political" readings of Williams' plays because they have been too interested in defining his "Southernness," or they have been too interested in universalizing his aesthetic using neo-Aristotelian

¹ In his *Memoirs*, Williams suggests that he was interested in discovering a "new social system": "One day Leonard Bernstein and I were both invited to lunch by a pair of very effete American queens. Bernstein was very hard on them and I was embarrassed by the way he insulted them. 'When the revolution comes,' he declared, 'you will be stood up against a wall and shot.' Bernstein has since been accused of something called 'radical chic.' But looking back on that luncheon, I wonder if he is not as true a revolutionary as I am, the difference being that I am not interested in shooting piss-elegant queens or anyone else, I am only interested in discovering a new social system--certainly not Communist, but an enlightened form of socialism, I would suppose" (93-4).
categories in order to bring it in line with New Critical ideologies. A third tendency has also emerged, most notably in readings of *The Glass Menagerie*: that of reading the plays using the playwright's biography or family history (notably absent in this narrative, until recently, however, is any concrete theorization of the author's homosexuality). While these approaches sometimes yield interesting results, they fail to account for the author's realpolitik during the decade of the forties. In fact, in the hands of many critics, Williams' politics are reconstituted as a non-politics, as a kind of neo-Romantic evasion of the political.

Like Arthur Miller, Williams was acutely aware of the economic and technological changes taking place during the two decades that followed the Depression. The more autonomous practices of labor were slowly becoming obsolete as scientific innovation further homogenized the workforce and often reduced work to a series of "Taylorized" movements. The "managerial revolution" that took place during these two decades, which brought large numbers of white males into the middle class, programmed men to fit into a homogenous corporate structure. Like

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2 Two recent and notable exceptions to this trend are John Clum's *Acting Gay: Male Homosexuality in Modern Drama* and David Savran's *Communists, Queers, and Cowboys: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*. See Clum 149-66 and Savran 76-174.
their working-class counterparts, the labor of these men was often reduced to a series of repetitive tasks.

Culture too was being homogenized as the emergent entertainment technologies (radio, movies, television) were used to produce consumers. The consumer became an "abstract" projection of the publicity apparatus of capital; the white, male, heterosexual American citizen was now the universalized consumer. In other words, the wishes of the "individual" (an empty category, according to Horkheimer) were equal to the desires of the machine, of which the individual was a function.

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One of the earliest plays in which Williams deals with the standardization of American culture is The Last of My Solid Gold Watches, a one-act written circa 1940. In the play, Charlie Colton, "the last of the Delta drummers" (Wagons 75) lectures Bob Harper, a young corporate salesman, about the changes in the economy:

The road is changed. The shoe industry is changed....You can take it from me--the world that I used to know...is slipping and sliding away from under our shoes....The ALL LEATHER slogan don't sell shoes anymore. The stuff that a shoe's made of is not what's going to sell it anymore! No! STYLE! SMARTNESS! APPEARANCE! That's what counts with the modern shoe-purchaser, Bob....Why I remember the time when all I had to do was lay out my samples down there in the lobby...A sales-talk was not necessary. A store was a place where people sold merchandise and to sell merchandise the retail-dealer had to obtain it from the wholesale manufacturer, Bob! Where they get the merchandise now I don't pretend to know. But it don't look like they buy it from wholesale dealers! Out of the air--
I guess it materializes! Or maybe stores don’t sell stuff any more! Maybe I’m living in a world of illusion! (Wagons 81-2; italics removed)

Colton goes on to tell Harper that "Initiative...self-reliance...independence of character," the "old sterling qualities that distinguished one man from another," are "Gone with the roses of yesterday" (Wagons 83-4; italics removed). Harper, bored with Colton’s speechmaking, insists that Colton has missed the "vital statistics" and that Colton belongs to the "past" (Wagons 84).

Furious, Colton, with a final warning, throws Harper out of his hotel room: "My point is this: the ALL-LEATHER slogan is not what sells anymore—not in shoes and not in humanity, neither. The emphasis isn’t on quality. Production, production, yes" (Wagons 84).

Colton’s exchange with Harper reflects Williams’ understanding of the structural changes taking place within monopoly capitalism during the first four decades of this century: in theory, the shift from monopoly capitalism to late capitalism represents itself as the eventual elimination of the "Delta drummer" in the face of the organizational man, Bob Harper, who Williams views as a product of the restructuring of the economy. The further rationalization of production, which was intensified by the advent of World War II, made the qualities that Colton values—initiative, self-reliance, independence—obsolete, at least as these qualities were
embodied in the practices of a drummer. Likewise, Colton's complaint about the disappearance of the wholesale manufacturer points to a consolidation of production and distribution brought about by centralized corporate planning, a practice which also eliminated traditional practices and meanings. In Williams' view, the standardization of production represented by Harper reduces social relations to "vital statistics" so that men (and women) became interchangeable. That is, the symbolic apparatus deployed to construct consumers constituted them as generic so that they became indistinguishable from one another. The transubstantiation of meaning represented by the replacement of "ALL-LEATHER" with "STYLE! SMARTNESS! APPEARANCE!" marks the advent of the publicity apparatus, the illusion, the simulacra. Meaning is no longer immanent in the material; it has been detached from the object so that it can be used to program consumption.³ Desire is thereby transformed, and the subject is now merely a consumer--an abstract projection subject to the same slogans and desires as all consumers, a statistic.

Bob Harper represents Williams' earliest critique of a standardized masculinity determined by instrumental reason. He is also an early version of both Jim O'Connor

³ For an explanation of style, or preplanned, obsolescence see Marchand 156-63.
and Stanley Kowalski. Harper also resembles another salesman, Willy Loman, in that like Willy Loman, Harper is a consuming/producing identity; he consumes the mass-produced objects of commodity culture—Williams has him carrying a comic book throughout the play--, and he generates sales for the concern of "Schultz and Werner." His surname is meant to remind readers of Harper's Magazine, and, as such, it suggests a standardization of the subject by making Harper conterminous with the commodity form. And this is precisely the rationalization of consciousness (conformity) that Williams sought to oppose in his plays.

As he wrote in 1945, "art is a kind of anarchy, and the theater is a province of art" (Wagons vii):

Art is only anarchy in juxtaposition with organized society. It runs counter to the sort of orderliness on which organized society apparently must be based. It is a benevolent anarchy: it must be that and if it is true art, it is. It is benevolent in the sense of constructing something which is missing, and what it constructs may be merely criticism of things as they exist. (Wagons vii-viii)

Here Williams was commenting on the function of community theater, which he felt had become too

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4 Charlie Colton, on the other hand, with his insistence on "tradition," is meant to represent what Williams perceived as the passing of Southern aristocratic culture, the collapse of a traditional social structure in which relationships were regulated by rigid social codes and a class hierarchy based on race, gender, and inherited wealth and property. In this sense, Colton resembles both Amanda Wingfield and Blanche DuBois.
"respectable" (i.e. "the province of grey-suited corporate lawyers and...their wives...impeccably lady-like" [Wagons vii]). But he was also commenting on the conformity of American life in general, which, he argued, was a reaction to European Fascism and Communism--and the opposite of the "Democratic impulse" as envisioned by Jefferson and Lincoln (Wagons xi). For Williams, this enforced conformity resulted from a paranoia (Williams calls it confusion) that threatened to eliminate the "freaks": "It seems to me, as it seems to many artists right now, that an effort is being made to put creative work and workers under wraps. Nothing could be more dangerous to Democracy, for the irritating grain of sand which is creative work in a society must be kept inside the shell or the pearl or idealistic progress cannot be made. For God's sake let us defend ourselves against whatever is hostile to us without imitating the thing we are afraid of" (Wagons xii); and in Williams' mind, America had come to imitate "the thing" it feared, as the antagonism between the "irritating grain of sand" and the progress of the nation became more one-sided in favor of repressive forces. At this point, Art, or artistic labor, became a kind of resistance, criticism, or anarchy that sought to oppose standard modes of thought or conduct.
Williams specifically calls for a "new" artistic praxis in the "Production Notes" to The Glass Menagerie, where he aligns himself with the European avant-garde by calling for "a new, plastic theater" that would "take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions" (GM 7); this "must" be done, he argued, if "the theatre is to resume vitality as a part of our culture" (GM 7).5 Commenting on these lines, Esther Merle Jackson notes that Williams associated "vitality" with "the return of the theatre to its natural functions: to joyous and irreverant entertainment, to shock and terror, to symbol-making, and to the figurative exploration of life" (Broken World ix). Nevertheless, Williams' adoption of expressionist techniques in The Glass Menagerie was, in my opinion, primarily driven by his opposition to realism, which he associated with the homogenizing forces, or "orderliness," of "organized society."6 Realism, which he describes as "the

5 Because it is the most widely circulated version of the play, I have used the "reading edition" of The Glass Menagerie. For an explanation of the debate surrounding the "reading" and "acting" editions, see Rowland 62-74.

6 By "expressionist" I mean to suggest an attitude or praxis rather than a specific artistic style that can be defined as expressionistic. That is, many of the "isms" of the modernist or avant-gardist movements are opposed to the status quo of institutionalized art and hegemonic cultural arrangements. For discussions of Williams' "expressionism," see Esther Merle Jackson 3-42. See also Frank Durham 121-34 and Nancy Tischler 31-41.
unimportance of the photographic in art" (GM 7), had become ineffective for conveying the "truth":

"Expressionism and all other unconventional techniques in drama have only one valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth" (GM 7). He was attempting to discover "a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are" because "truth, life, or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest...only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those merely present in appearance" (GM 7). For Williams, "the merely present in appearance" was the dominant way of narrativizing experience in a commodity culture, a structure or way of seeing that led away from the truth. By adopting a position antagonistic to the realistic narrative of American culture, then, he hoped to resist the "means-ends rationality" dominating state "Democracy." One of the models he chose for such a task was Picasso's Guernica.

The word "Guernica" appears twice in The Glass Menagerie, and most critics have assumed that Williams used it merely as part of the "social background" of the play (GM 23). Readers will remember that the city of Guernica was leveled by German and Italian fighters and bombers on the afternoon of April 26, 1937. The city burned for three days, and over three hundred people
were killed, mostly civilians. The destruction of Guernica was part of a Nazi policy to use the "Spanish Civil War as an arena for trying out the airmen and planes of [Goering’s] new Luftwaffe" (Chipp 24, 32-34). This early coordination of land and air forces also became the model for the Nazi Blitzkreig; that is, the attack on Guernica was part of the Nazi concept of "total war." As German military journals argued at the time, "war [was] not just between armies but between whole peoples--thus justifying the bombing of civilians as well as of the armed forces" (Chipp 22). It is clear that in bombing Guernica no effort was made to differentiate between military and civilian targets. Key military targets were, in fact, not even touched, and eyewitnesses reported seeing German fighters kill peasants and townspeople by strafing the streets and the countryside. Guernica marks the first atrocity of the Second World War—a bloody example that would be followed by the firebombing of Dresden, Shanghai, and London, the nuclear conflagrations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Holocaust. Goering's "laboratory experiment" was also paradigmatic of the type of masculine violence and domination that led to mass slaughter and annihilation: men were programed by the war machine to kill one another, and they were joined together with other instruments (guns, tanks, airplanes)
in order to accomplish their killing in a more efficient manner. Organized by their alienation and fear, men became parts of the killing machine that destroyed other human beings.

In mentioning Guernica, critics have systematically taken Tom Wingfield at his word—that as part of the "social background" of the play, Guernica is only an isolated reference to the social, and it is therefore not essential to the play's (universal) meaning. A good example of this type of reading is found in Gilbert Debusscher's "Tennessee Williams's Unicorn Broken Again." In this essay, Debusscher attacks Grigor Pavlov for misrepresenting the following lines from Tom Wingfield's opening narration:

In Spain there was revolution. Here there was only shouting and confusion. In Spain there was Guernica. Here there were disturbances of labor, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis... This is the social background of the play. (GM 23)

Pavlov, according to Debusscher, interprets these lines in the following manner: "That was a time of profound social and political upheaval in the bourgeois world." Debusscher claims that Pavlov's "description of the late thirties illustrates his characteristic method of twisting the work out of shape to fit his preconceived [read: political] views" (50). He goes on to berate Pavlov for presenting the narrator's comments "out of context," thereby "imply[ing] that the destruction of
the Basque city, and more generally, the events of Spain are comparable in impact to the social unrest prevalent in American urban centers" (50). According to Debusscher, "What Tom says...is precisely the opposite of what Mr. Pavlov leads us to believe: compared to Spain, where World War II was in rehearsal, America witnessed only minor disturbances" (50). Quoting the critic Joseph N. Riddel, he then argues that Williams was "grouping for a more universal statement" (51). And just what was that more universal statement? "It is less the social picture in itself that Williams is interested in than the effect of strained circumstances on his characters, less middle-class America under financial stress than man in general reacting to adversity of any nature" (51).

But Williams has not specified general adversity; he has specified adversity of a very specific nature—"the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving [American] economy" (GM 23), which Williams, as Pavlov suggests, compares to events in Europe. Debusscher chooses to deny this link, and in so doing becomes like "the huge middle class of America [that] was matriculating in a school for the blind" (GM 23). His eyes have failed him, and he thereby becomes a reader very much like Amanda Wingfield who rereads the social text by repressing it and engaging in nostalgia (Debusscher, for his part, prefers
the untainted categories of Aristotelian analysis.). Further, his repression of history from the text as a way to rescue it from contamination (or "false" contextualization) leads to an eventual and violent return of the repressed, much like Chamberlain's strategy of appeasement led to genocide. The connection for Williams, as I suggest above, is that by making European Fascism or Communism the Other of American Civilization, difference is repressed, and we become the thing we fear. Historically, the "disturbances of labor" that Tom Wingfield mentions in his introduction are the first instances of a renewed battle over the instrumentalization of the workplace, which is finally accomplished in the full-blown late capitalism of the Reagan era. The disturbances of the thirties mark the initial engagements of this centripetal movement; as "big business" and the state began to consolidate their

7 Debussher also misses another of Williams' gestures meant to comment on the blindness of the middle-class. In scene five, Amanda sits on a newspaper whose "enormous headline reads: 'Franco Triumphs'" (GM 56; italics removed). Amanda ignores current events as "She spreads [the] newspaper on a [fire escape] step and sits down, gracefully and demurely as if she were settling into a swing on a Mississippi veranda" (GM 56; italics removed); this gesture can also be read as the author s[h]itting on Franco. Jim O'Connor makes similar (mis)use of the newspaper when he spreads it on the dining room table to prevent candle wax from staining the finish.

8 Michael Rogin has theorized this mindset as the "countersubversive mentality." See Rogin 44-80.
control over the apparatus, a homogenization of consciousness was produced that eventually manifested itself as McCarthyism.  

I would now like to return to Guernica to expand on an earlier point: that it provided an important example for Williams. My remarks here will also serve as a transition to more specific remarks about the The Glass Menagerie. Picasso's painting, as Herschel Chipp notes in his study of Guernica, "became the most discussed work of art of the time, and the story of the tragic defense of the Republic might have faded from world consciousness much sooner had it not been for Picasso's powerful imagery" (166). Indeed, as soon as the painting arrived in New York in May of 1939, it became a cause celebre for the artistic left and an object of derision for more conservative elements in the artistic community. Its arrival corresponded with the opening of the Modern Museum of Art in New York, which had mounted a forty-year retrospective of Picasso's work to celebrate the occasion. Guernica was also exhibited in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago to raise funds for the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign. The American avant-garde championed the painting as the most important example of modernist art yet seen in the

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9 For a detailed explanation of the defeat of the American labor movement during this period see Mike Davis 52-101.
United States. Defenders of realism, or what Chipp calls traditionalism, however, ridiculed the painting as "cuckoo art" (163). In a review in the New York Times, for instance, the influential critic Edwin Allen Jewel attacked Guernica's "foreign values" and was upset by the "grotesque shapes, human and animal, flung into a sort of flat maelstrom" (qtd. in Chipp 162).10

Williams was certainly aware of the debate surrounding the painting, and it is very probable that he saw Guernica since, as Donald Spoto documents, he was in New York during the time the painting was first exhibited there.11 Picasso's masterwork would have interested him for two reasons. First, Guernica's fragmented imagery represented a type of modernism that Williams was trying to adapt for the stage, an "expressionism" that would challenge the realism that conformed to the instrumentality of organized society. The montage, in effect, was a way for the artist to construct a "higher truth"; this is precisely what Picasso's mural aimed to do, and this is what Esther Merle Jackson argues Williams was attempting to do with his art:

For the images created by Williams are not conceived as copies of any known reality. If there is a

10 For an extended discussion of "Guernica in America" see Chipp 156-79.

11 See Spoto 64-114.
nature, a state, an individual, a reality, a truth, or a God in the universe of Williams, it has been derealized. For Williams, reality itself lies shattered. In the fragmentary world of his theatre, new images are pieced together from partialities: they are composed from splinters of broken truths. (Broken World 36)

Second, the critique of Picasso’s painting from the right—that it was ugly, that it was political, that it was subversive—also figured for Williams the experience of the artist in a culture that was increasingly dominated by rationalistic ways of thinking, a conformity that endangered modernist artistic practices. As C.W.E. Bigsby notes, "Williams was...inclined to see the public world as an image of determinism that could never be successfully defeated or transformed by the impact of the moral will, but only resisted by the imagination" (2: 30). The rationality that dominated the public world, that determined male conduct, was in conflict with non-productive forces of art and the imagination freed from the efficiency of the apparatus; this antagonism between two opposing forces plays itself out in many of Williams’ dramas where two different types of masculinity (or ways of being)—the instrumental or the heteronomous and the artistic or spontaneous—produce the conflict which sustains the momentum of action.

The appearance of Guernica/Guernica in the text of The Glass Menagerie acts as a link between the type of
German nationalism (Nazi instrumentality) Picasso was protesting and the type of fascism Williams saw as latent in the dominant American masculinity, or nationalism. Williams' intervention can thus be theorized as an example of what Homi Bhabha calls "the antagonistic perspective of nation," whereby the marginalized intervenes in discourses that "rationalize the authoritarian, 'normalizing' tendencies within cultures in the name of national interest" (Introduction 4). Williams did not intervene only from the marginal position of the artist, however; he also intervened, as Gore Vidal points out, from the marginal position of a gay man who was always aware of his "otherness"--in a culture that sought to extirpate every vestige of homosexuality (xix-xxv). Nowhere is Williams' intervention into the dominant masculinity more pronounced than in The Glass Menagerie.

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The setting of The Glass Menagerie marks the same economic consolidation and resulting crisis of the subject that we see in Death of a Salesman and in the theorizations of the Frankfurt School:

The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in the overcrowded urban of the lower middle-class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist as one interfused mass
of automatism....At the rise of the curtain, the audience is faced with the dark, grim rear wall of the Wingfield tenement. This building is flanked on both sides by dark, narrow alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clotheslines, garbage cans, and the sinister latticework of neighboring fire escapes. (GM 21; italics removed).

The rationalization of the economic and the social structures of the nation ("The Century of Progress") has not, in Williams' estimation, resulted in the liberation of the lower middle-class, or any class (except, perhaps, those who run the apparatus). "Symptomatic" of this class' enslavement, Williams suggests, is its homogenization by the forces of production; its members are like worker bees, instruments that move to the tempo of the apparatus; they thus lack "fluidity" and "differentiation." They are not only self-alienated, but they are also alienated from each other in the "sinister," "murky," "tangled" environment of the tenements, a system of habitation that enforces isolation and alterity. People living in this space exist as atomized producer/consumer bits of a homogenized workforce.

These buildings are also the "warty growths" of what Southern cultural historians like to call the "New South," the "hive-like conglomerates" of the working class that sprung up in cities like St. Louis during the process of industrialization--a process that is narrativized as the "collapse" of Southern culture.
(i.e. the "Old South"). According to Joseph Davis, the narrative is a synthesis of W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* and Paul Gaston's *The New South Creed*. In this conceptualization, Southern "history" emerges by repressing slavery and constructing "the Old South...as an almost idyllic agricultural society of genteel people and an aristocratic way of life, exemplary in its pattern and content. A visionary moment of the American dream occurred and past; now its history transformed into the story of a fallen order, a ruined time of nobility and heroic achievements that was vanquished and irrevocably lost" (203). The tenements represent elements of this "fallen order." Davis calls them "landscapes of the dislocated mind" (192), and he argues that Williams employs the imagery of a tenement in order to problematize Amanda Wingfield's nostalgia for the "Old South." That is, because Amanda is unable to understand her historical situation, she invents (or goes along with) a "pseudo-history" which condemns her to a "marginal, inauthentic existence" (Davis 203). As a result, for Davis, Amanda becomes the "prototype for all of Williams' southern women":

...Amanda is directly responsible for the terrible and permanent alienation of Laura and Tom. Because she herself has withdrawn from reality, preferring rather dreams of a lost time in the South, Amanda has handed her children over to a similar, if not a worse, psychology and grim fate. *The Glass Menagerie*, in effect, gives us Williams' poignant dramatization of the dreadful human waste of
illusions. The majority characters in this play are so warped and their lives so distorted and perverted by fantasies that each is left with only broken fragments of what might have been. (205)

Two things strike me about Davis' reading of Amanda. First, he deals with Amanda unfairly, and, second, his reading is melodramatic in the sense that it is reductive. I agree with Davis that Amanda is unable to understand her historical position, but he places too much responsibility for her children's "dreadful" illusions on Amanda’s shoulders. I would argue, in fact, that her children have no illusions—they realize that the culture in which they live is hostile to artists and "cripples." As Nancy Tischler suggests, Williams "endow[s] the mother with some masculine practicality, thus giving Amanda Wingfield an exceedingly complex personality" (34). "Although she has approached much of her life unrealistically," Tischler writes, "her plans for her children and her understanding of their shortcomings are grimly realistic....She tries to find Laura a protective corner of the business world. When this fails, she rallies for the valiant but hopeless attempt to marry the girl off" (35). In the absence of the father, Amanda acts as the father.

What concerns me here, however, in regard to both Davis' and Tischler's remarks are the ideas of agency represented by both. Davis sees Tom and Laura as distorted or perverted by the psychology of their
mother. Tischler, more the diplomat, sees the faults of the children as "shortcomings," politely suggesting that the children have failed to conform to a normative model of behavior. The comments of both, however, reveal an interesting problem for readers of the play, a problem which Tischler is more self-conscious of than Davis. Namely, as she suggests, all the characters fall outside the Aristotelian or Neo-Classical categories of the tragic. In describing Amanda's failure to marry off Laura as "tragic," Tischler notes that her "use of the term tragic corresponds with Mr Williams's": "I do not see most of his people as having the stature of classical or neo-classical tragic heroes, but in their symbolic value they do express heroism. Their status and their values are not so exalted as in the older plays. They are more realistic and pathetic than the traditional hero was allowed to be. (35)

Tischler seems to be suggesting that although Williams' characters express or embody "the heroic," they are somehow diminished because they lack the status and/or values of kings, queens, or aristocrats. One of their "shortcomings" is that they lack agency or autonomy—the fundamental criteria of the tragic hero and not coincidentally the "quality" our culture most values, at least in males. In the eyes of Davis and Tischler, Amanda seems to be "short" this quality, just
as are Tom and Laura. A similar subtext often motivates criticism of *Death of a Salesman* since, as I suggest in the last chapter, Willy Loman is programmed by the apparatus to fit the body of capital; he is therefore not responsible for his subjectivity because he has none, at least in the normative sense of the word. The Wingfields and their "gentleman caller" are a bit different than the Lomans, however.

Amanda, like Willy, is only too willing to become an instrument of the apparatus. Amanda's nostalgia is, in fact, appropriated by the publicity apparatus of the machine; that is, in an effort to keep her from thinking herself as a subject the apparatus instrumentalizes her desire using the narrative of romance. Her desire for the "Old South" is represented by her constant retelling of courtship stories from her youth: "One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain--your mother received--seventeen!--gentleman callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all....My callers were gentleman--all! Among my callers were some of the most prominent young planters of the Mississippi Delta--planters and sons of planters (GM 26). Amanda's romance, however, ends unhappily; she married the wrong man--not a gentleman, but "a man who worked for the telephone company" (GM 82)--and he deserted her. In an attempt to rewrite history, Amanda tries to provide her
daughter with the "happy ending" that has eluded her. As Tom reports, after his sister has failed to become a
typist, "the idea of getting a gentleman caller for
Laura began to play a more and more important part in
Mother's calculations" (GM 37).

In order to accomplish this task, to raise money to
"properly feather the nest and plume the bird" (GM 37),
Amanda sells subscriptions to The Homemaker's Companion.
Tom describes the magazine as "the type of journal that
features the serialized sublimations of ladies of
letters who think in terms of delicate cuplike breasts,
slim, tapering waists, rich, creamy thighs, eyes like
wood smoke in autumn, fingers that soothe and caress
like strains of music, bodies as powerful as Etruscan
sculpture" (GM 37). In her telephone sales pitch (an
early version of telemarketing) to Ida Scott, Amanda
raves about a "new serial" by Bessie Mae Hopper:

Oh, honey, it's something you can't miss! You
remember how Gone with the Wind took everybody by
storm? You simply couldn't go out if you hadn't read
it. All everybody talked about was Scarlett O'Hara.
Well, this is a book that critics already compare to
Gone with the Wind. It's the Gone with the Wind of
the post-World-War generation! (GM 38)

Later, this time speaking to Ella Cartwright, she pushes
the same author: "It's by Bessie Mae Hopper, the first
thing she's written since Honeymoon for Three....It's
has a sophisticated, society background. It's all about
the horsey set on Long Island!" (GM 55).
Williams, of course, is critiquing Amanda's taste in literature; this is, after all, the same woman who refuses to have the novels of D. H. Lawrence in her house since she prefers the virtues of subliminated sex to "That hideous book by that insane Mr. Lawrence [Lady Chatterly's Lover?]" (GM 39). Amanda, in essence, resists the type of artistic production that her son finds liberating. The "literature" that she reads and that she peddles to her sisters in the D.A.R. represents a homogenization of form that Williams sees as repressive. Harper's comic books in The Last of My Solid Gold Watches are another example of the mass-produced fiction that Williams hated and so often parodied in his plays. (The plot of The Glass Menagerie, as Rodger Stein points out, is, in fact, a "failed" romance [136].) The standardization of "romance" represented by Bessie Mae Hopper's latest novel has appropriated Amanda's desire for the "Old South"; Amanda's description of the novel suggests that antebellum Georgia and modern Long Island have become the same thing (exotic locations) which only appear to be different. As mise en scène, these locations are emptied of their specificity and become fields in which interchangeable characters act out scenes for interchangeable plots. Romance and desire have been instrumentalized.
My characterization of the popular romance, as Janice Radway would certainly point out, is reductive and pessimistic, for as she argues in her research, women often read romances as an oppositional act that Radway calls "combative and compensatory" (211). Nevertheless, as Radway herself admits, the social practice of reading (consuming) a romance helps the reader to engage "in an activity that shores up her own sense of her abilities, but she also creates a simulacrum of her limited social world within a more glamorous fiction. She therefore inadvertently justifies as natural the very conditions and their emotional consequences to which her reading activity is a response" (214). My point here is also Williams'--that Amanda's consumption of romance fiction helps her to create a simulacrum within the oppressiveness of the tenement, which is a flight from history: the other justifies her misery. In her desire, like Willy Loman, she is (has become) a consuming/producing identity. She consumes by reading; she produces by selling the desires of others to others. She also reproduces, or attempts to reproduce, the desire of the other in her children. This is manifest by what Erich Fromm calls "pseudo-thinking" whereby, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, "The might of industrial society is lodged in [people's] minds"
(Fromm 208-30; Horkheimer and Adorno 127). As with Willy Loman, memory becomes the site of the other.

Amanda functions as a manager or regulator for the apparatus because she attempts to assimilate her children to the program of the machine; she wants them to conform, to be "normal people" as she puts it (GM 75). She wants them to become instruments, not "freaks" or "cranks." Indeed, as James Reynolds writes, "Tom and Laura are pushed into commercial careers that conflict with their temperaments and aspirations" (523). Amanda’s first words in the play are the words of the other:

Honey, don’t push with your fingers. If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew--chew! Animals have secretions in their stomachs which enable them to digest food without mastication, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavors that have to be held in the mouth for appreciation. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function! (GM 24; italics removed)

Her "constant directions" and "calculations," as Tom calls them, also include advice about health, work, and success. At various points in the play, for example, Amanda tells Tom to eat a good breakfast, drink less coffee, and spend less money on cigarettes so that he will be a productive worker:

Amanda:....Eat a bowl of purina!
Tom: Just coffee, mother.
Amanda: Shredded wheat biscuit?
Tom: No. No mother, just coffee.
Amanda: You can’t put in a day’s work on an empty stomach. You’ve got ten minutes--don’t gulp!
Drinking too-hot liquids makes cancer of the stomach...Put cream in.
Tom: No, thank you.
Amanda: To cool it.
Tom: No! No, thank you. I want it black.
Amanda: I know, but it's not good for you. We have to do all we can to build ourselves up. (GM 49).

Elsewhere, when Tom informs his mother that he goes to the movies every night because he "likes adventure" ("Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies" [GM 51]), Amanda tells him that "Most young men find adventure in their careers" (GM 51). Tom responds, "most young men are not employed in a warehouse" (GM 51). To which Amanda responds, "The world is full of young men employed in warehouses and offices and factories" (GM 51). She concludes the exchange by reemphasizing that most men find adventure in their careers, or "they do without it!" (GM 52). Amanda insists that Tom conform so that he can work his way up the ladder: "Try and you will succeed! (GM 49; italics removed).

The lines of Amanda's just quoted are typical of her idiolect--as such they represent the voice of the publicity apparatus, or as Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, the heteronomous knowledge of the non-subject. Amanda believes that what she is thinking is hers, that she has arrived at her beliefs through her own thought processes, but this is an illusion. Most of what she says and thinks is given to her by the other: magazines,
radio, newspapers (when she reads them). Like Willy Loman, she has been colonized from without, and the subject/object, inside/outside split of identity has collapsed. Her goals are determined externally. As Horkheimer wrote in 1941 ("The End of Reason"), "The individual has to do violence to himself and learn that the life of the whole is the necessary precondition of his own" (30). Non-subjectivity has been instrumentalized as subjectivity, as agency or character.

Nowhere is this non-subjectivity in subjectivity—an inversion that goes unrecognized by the subject—more apparent than in her advice to Tom about success and in her desire for "the gentleman caller"; both embody the rationalization of the whole. As both James Rowland and Rodger Stein stress, Amanda's cliches about success are part of the Horatio Alger/Dale Carnegie narrative of masculinity. According to Stein, for example, "Try and you will SUCCEED!" "is another of Amanda's illusions, [and] it is one shared by her fellow Americans, for 'try and you will succeed' is the traditional motto of the American dream of success, the theme of confident self-reliance canonized in the romances of Horatio Alger" (Stein 137; Rowland 69). Stein might have said "traditional model"; this would have been more accurate because hard work and perseverance as the "keys" to
success are the behaviors most often modeled by the publicity apparatus in its formalized version of American citizenship.

To Amanda, the gentleman caller embodies "this image, this specter, this hope" (GM 37). As she interrogates Tom about Jim O’Connor, it becomes clear that this is the type of man she wants, not only to "replace" Tom but also to provide financially for herself and Laura. But as we will see in a moment, Jim O’Connor, as Rodger Stein points out, represents an inversion of "democratic values" (142). Because he desires to use "knowledge to gain power and money," O’Connor is an "apologist" for the economic system that has imprisoned the Wingfields (Stein 142).

When Tom tells his mother that O’Connor is a shipping clerk, Amanda says, "Sounds like a fairly responsible job, the sort of job you would be in if you just had more get-up" (GM 63). Amanda also asks about his salary and is pleased to learn that he earns "approximately eight-five dollars a month" (GM 63). What really pleases her, however, is when she discovers that O’Connor is the "type that’s up and coming" and that "he goes in for self-improvement" (GM 64); this is "splendid" news to her:

Then he has visions of being advanced in the world! Any young man who studies public speaking is aiming to have an executive job some day! And radio
engineering? A thing for the future! Both of these facts are very illuminating" (GM 65).

In contrast to her son, the gentleman caller has the "get-up" needed to advance in the corporate world. Like Willy Loman, O'Connor possesses the desire of the other, the instrumentalized reason of the publicity apparatus; he too is programmed to fit the body of American capital. He is the hero of the Algerian romance; he desires upward mobility, and he is preparing for this expected eventuality by going to night school. What appears in his "character" to be subjectivity (free will, the desire to better himself) is actually external knowledge, the goals of every other that have been determined by the other. Jim O'Connor is not unique. Like Willy Loman, he is a "desiring machine" created by the culture industry to fit the needs of the apparatus. As a "type" he is necessary, but he does not necessarily have to be successful; he can desire success as long as he works and consumes, as long as he is not a "crank" or a "cripple," as long as he avoids the "sin" of inefficiency.

Jim O'Connor's conformity, however, has not brought him success. Tom tells us that after moving in a "continual spotlight" in high school, O'Connor's rise has slowed: "He was shooting with such velocity through his adolescence that you would logically expect him to arrive at nothing short of the White House by the time
he was thirty. But Jim apparently ran into more interference after his graduation....His speed had definitely slowed. Six years after he left high school he was holding a job that wasn't much better than mine" (GM 68). His "uniqueness" or "celebrity" achieved in high school disappears as he enters the regulated structure of the corporation; he becomes like all men. In fact, Tom suggests that he is useful to O'Connor merely because he can "remember his former glory" (GM 68). In order to resume his rise, O'Connor embraces the normative model of masculinity, the national identity, the masculine unconscious. His decisive non-decision to be unique (i.e. successful) represents an absolute conformity to the apparatus; his desire for autonomy is really its opposite. As Horkheimer and Adorno note, "The perfect similarity is the absolute difference....Now any person signifies only those attributes by which he can replace everybody else: he is interchangeable, a copy. As an individual he is completely expendable and utterly insignificant" (145-46).

Williams calls attention to Jim O'Connor's instrumentality on the first page of the play, where he describes Jim as "A nice, ordinary, young man" (GM 5). "[N]ice," "ordinary," and "young" are the only qualities Williams assigns the character. What calls even more attention to his description of Jim is that Williams
uses at least three sentences to describe the other characters. Jim gets only five words. My dictionary gives nine definitions of nice, four of which apply here: "Pleasing and agreeable in nature; enjoyable"; "Having a pleasant or attractive appearance"; "Courteous and polite; considerate"; "Of good character and reputation (American Heritage 840-41). Jim could certainly be described as "pleasing and agreeable," "pleasant" and "attractive," and "courteous." In fact, he's a stereotypical "nice guy." That is, he conforms to the dominant model of middle-class behavior: He's white, heterosexual, optimistic, hardworking; he's the high school hero that Laura worships; he's the gentleman caller that Amanda worships. In his banality, he's indistinguishable from the matinee idol that embodies what Williams calls "our national myth, the cornerstone of the film industry if not Democracy itself," the "Cinderella story": "Anyone with such beautiful teeth and hair as the screen protagonist of such a story was bound to have a good time one way or another, and you could bet your bottom dollar and all the tea in China that that one would not be caught dead or alive at any meeting involving a social conscience" (GM 11). He has the commodified appearance that the publicity apparatus engenders, but like the products he resembles, he is all surface; he lacks depth. He resembles all the others; he
is the normative, universal model that has reduced difference to repetition.

Jim O'Connor is also "ordinary": "Commonly encountered; usual"; "Of no exceptional degree or quality; average" (American Heritage 875). In this, he represents the standardization of American culture and masculinity that Harper was a precursor of in The Last of My Solid Gold Watches and that Stanley Kowalski represents in Streetcar. In Williams' view, he lacks imagination. He also represents the concept of instrumental reason as described by the Frankfurt School: "His yardstick is self-preservation, successful or unsuccessful approximation to the objectivity of his function and the model established for it" (Horkheimer and Adorno 28). Jim O'Connor, like Willy Loman, speaks as the other, and this voice is most apparent in his contact with Laura Wingfield.

Laura, as readers will remember, is crippled, and because of this, she is "terribly shy"; she is so shy, in fact, that Amanda is unable to assimilate her into the dominant modes of the apparatus. Laura is unable to conform to the codes of Rubicam's Business College. As her mother sarcastically says, "We won't have a business career—we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion!" (GM 34). The name "Rubicam" is an allusion to Raymond Rubicam, owner of, at the time, the nation's
most famous and powerful advertising agency, Young and Rubicam, which helped to develop the now hegemonic practices of the advertising industry. Williams uses the name to figure the kind of machinery that was deployed to insure conformity. Just as ad agencies view individuals as statistics to be manipulated, so too the Rubicam Business College reduces Laura to the abstract by employing a universal training method. The individual matters to the other only because he or she is able to become (to act, to perform) like every other. Unable to conform, Laura spends her days on the margins of the culture she cannot join:

I went to the art museum and the bird houses at the Zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I’ve been spending most of my afternoons in the Jewel Box, that big glass house where they raise the tropical flowers. (GM 33)

Laura’s problem—her inability to standardize herself—only arouses feelings of frustration in her mother/manager, whose solution is to marry Laura off to a "normal" man. Laura is apprehended by her administrator as a problem; she is at odds with the logic of the system and therefore must be reintegrated. Amanda believes, as the song goes, that "love is the answer," or at least romance and marriage.

12 See Marchand 33.
The gentleman caller, however, does not bring the "longed for" success. He is, as Tom Wingfield says, "an emissary from a world of reality" (GM 23), and as a "real" man, O'Connor is a target in much the same way as "real men" are targets for the gay community in the film Paris Is Burning. His masculinity is "staged" from/by a marginal position in order to expose its limits and reveal it as socially constructed; it is not natural or transhistorical. In fact, as we will see in a moment, the hegemonic masculinity represented by O'Connor is a threat.

Nancy Tischler argues that "Jim is not an especially effective character study because Williams can feel little sympathy with such a substantial and placid citizen" (37). "Yet," she claims, "he is a kindly reminder of the reasonable, normal human pattern, like the men Williams had met at the shoe factory--clean-living, honest, sweet-natured, materialistic, eager American businessman" (37). I would argue that Jim is ineffectual rather than ineffective since he does not produce the intended effect, at least in Amanda's mind. To call him ineffective as a character study, however, is to miss Williams' point. That is, his placidness is meant to convey a banality which appears to be kindly or reasonable but, in actuality, represents the repressiveness of instrumental reason. In other words,
Williams desired the type of masculinity that Jim represents because as its absolute other—artist and homosexual—he was constantly comparing himself to it and measuring himself against it. Jim performs a normative masculinity that is essential to the operations of American culture. Williams does not, again, find his type either "kindly" or "reasonable," and to make this judgement is to misread the play, for although he may appear to to be, Jim is neither reasonable nor kindly. The text of the play suggests the opposite. It is also important to note here that the conflict between Tom (Wingfield and Williams) and Jim is a precursor to a more brutal relationship; the conflict between artistic being, or what Fromm calls "spontaneous" being, which Tom and Laura represent, and instrumental being, which Jim represents, is compressed and intensified in *Streetcar* in the conflict between Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski.

O'Connor's banality is what makes him a threat. His banality is also what causes many critics to overlook him, to dismiss him. His pursuit of happiness, his desire for success, his "clean-living, honest, sweet-natured, materialistic," American-businessman eagerness is perceived as the "normal human pattern." Like Willy Loman, he is not a great man; he is not a king; he is not in the papers, but like millions of others he
desires to be other than he is. His "archetype" is so ingrained in the American grain as to be natural. He is, as E. E. Cummings wrote, simultaneously "a yearning nation's blueeyed pride" and a "blueeyed monster." To underestimate Jim is to see him as inevitable, as comic, as a "stumblejohn" (from a superior position, of course), and not as socially constructed and therefore resistable. This misrecognition of the instrumentalization of masculinity leads to a fatal error, for as a type, as a dominant cultural tendency, he is the *uber mensch*. As Jim says in 1945, "I'm Superman!" (GM 88). And we would be foolish to ignore Williams' implicit warning: "Look how big my shadow is when I stretch!" (GM 102).

Jim claims to be Superman after Amanda asks him if he can carry a candelabrum and a glass of wine. Read in the context of American popular culture, Jim's remark is, of course, an allusion to Superman the comic book hero, who was first introduced by Action Comics in 1938. Read in a larger historical context, however, the remark is used to remind theatergoers and readers--then and now--of Hitler's Final Solution and the men who attempted to carry it out. The two readings might at first appear to be contradictory, but they are not. That is, Superman the comic book character was a response to Nazi Germany; he was a freedom-fighter who represented
"Truth, Justice, and the American way." He was the enemy of the Third Reich; he was the enemy of the über mensch. But he was also like Hitler's superman in that his freedom or autonomy expressed itself as a nationalistic chauvinism or conformity. Although ostensibly less brutal than Hitler's forces, he was still an instrument. He was a weapon, and as a weapon he was totally subordinate to the United States government, just as as a reporter—as "mild-mannered Clark Kent"—he was totally subordinate to the apparatus of The Daily Planet. Like European fascists, he is controlled by the other—just as is Jim O'Connor.

O'Connor's otherness represents itself as (instrumental) reason programmed by the publicity apparatus, as an absolute conformity that sees itself as difference. Indeed, like Willy Loman, he is defined by serial alterity, which keeps him isolated from others and alienated from himself. "In the series," argues Sartre, "everyone becomes himself (as Other than self) in so far as he is other than the Others, and so, in so far as the Others are other than him" (262). The consequence of this alterity, as Sartre points out, is that individuals are different from each other only because they are the same. Alterity is both a link between individuals and, as such, a "paradoxical structure": "the Other has his essence in all the
Others, in so far as he differs from them (263). Jim’s desire to be successful is like the desire of all others, and this is how he becomes a "somebody," how he defines his "uniqueness":

Why, man alive, Laura! Just look about you a little. What do you see? A world full of common people! All of 'em born and all of 'em going to die. Which of them has one-tenth of your good points! Or mine! Or anyone else's, as far as that goes--gosh! Everybody excels in some one thing. (GM 99)

The essence of his masculinity, which he has in common with all others, is what makes him special. Horkheimer and Adorno call this "pseudo individuality": "individuals have ceased to be themselves and are now merely centers where the general tendencies meet" (155). He speaks the voice of the apparatus; he is not conscious of the self. In fact, he wishes to eliminate the self. Jim tells Laura, for example, that she shouldn't be so "self-conscious" (GM 93), that her difference can be extirpated by self-alienation. Jim is only conscious of the other, and he desires that others conform. Any difference is an obstacle to be "overcome." His advice to Laura is an expression of his conformity, of his rationalization and the standardization of consciousness that Horkheimer and Adorno theorize in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

The voice that speaks through Jim is the voice of the publicity apparatus. That "as a devoted student of the science of self-improvement," as Delma Presley
commennts, "Jim’s attitude perfectly matches [Dale] Carnegie’s view of the ideal man, as outlined in How to Win Friends and Influence People, a best-seller since 1936" (60). In his book, Carnegie stressed that "the man who has technical knowledge plus the ability to express his ideas, to assume leadership, and to arouse enthusiasm among men--that man is headed for higher earning power" (qtd. in Presley 60). Jim advises Laura as the other has advised him: he tells Laura that she "low-rates" herself, that she has an "inferiority complex": "Yep--that’s what I judge to be your principal trouble. A lack of confidence in yourself as a person. You don’t have the proper amount of faith in yourself" (GM 99). He "understands" her "case" because he has experienced the same problem, "until I took up public speaking, developed my voice, and learned that I had an aptitude for science" (GM 99). Jim has conformed to the model of the publicity apparatus. He has also discovered the "one thing" at which he "excels":

Jim:....My interest happens to lie in electrodynamics. I’m taking a course in radio engineering at night school....Because I believe in the future of television....I wish to be ready to go right up along with it. Therefore I’m planning to get in on the ground floor. In fact I’ve already made the right connections and all that remains is for the industry itself to get under way! Full steam--(His eyes are starry.) Knowledge--Zzzzzp! Money--Zzzzzzp!--Power! That’s the cycle democracy is built on! (GM 99-100; italics removed)
Others, of course, also believe in the future of television, and they will be ready "to get in on the ground floor." They may also have made "the right connections." They may even have the same blind faith in "democracy," which the apparatus has transformed into knowledge, money, and power. Commenting on these lines, James Reynolds notes that "'Knowledge' means inventing new technologies and capitalizing on their financial success, which in turn gives the system power over those without technology" (525). That is, those who control the system have power over those who are dependent on the technology of the apparatus. This power is mystified by the publicity apparatus in the form of the ideology of progress, or what Williams calls the "Century of Progress" after the Chicago Exposition of 1893 (GM 90).

The ideology of progress represents what Raymond Williams calls "technological determinism," which, he writes, "is an immensely powerful and now largely orthodox view of the nature of social change" (Television 13). According to Williams,

New technologies are discovered, by an essentially internal process of research and development, which then sets the conditions for social change and progress. Progress, in particular, is the history of these inventions, which 'created the modern world.' The effects of the technologies, whether direct or indirect, foreseen or unforeseen, are as it were the rest of history. The steam engine, the automobile, television, the atomic bomb, have made modern man and the modern condition. (Television 13; italics removed)
The "rest of history" is further mystified by the "levelling" process of the publicity apparatus, which further marginalizes the effects of technology by reducing knowledge about these processes to exchange value. In this popular narrative, "Wrigley," "Franklin," and "Edison" blend together with "light bulbs," "Mazda lamps," "victrolas," and "chewing gum" to produce knowledge with no use value; these bits of information become things a person might know, a universal cultural capital that can be exchanged for recognition or status. Most often, however, this type of knowledge (what E. D. Hirsch calls "background information" or "cultural literacy") is used to control social relations by making language (and reason) heteronomous. That is, like advertising, "the important individual points, by becoming detachable, interchangeable, and even technically alienated from any connected meaning, lend themselves to ends external to the work" (Horkheimer and Adorno 163). This transformation from usable knowledge to publicity creates dependency rather than freedom. As Amanda says when the lights in her apartment go out,

Isn't electricity a mysterious thing? Wasn't it Ben Franklin who tied a key to a kite? We live in such a mysterious universe, don't we. Some people say that science clears up all the mysteries for us. In my opinion it only creates more! (GM 86)

Amanda, like Jim and Willy Loman, can name Ben Franklin as the "discoverer" of electricity and "Mr. Edison" as
the inventor of the "Mazda lamp," but she (and they) cannot see "the rest of history." Knowledge has become exchange value: universal bits of information that marginalize the real processes of technology and history. "Distant from both the practical and theoretical elements of technology," Reynolds suggests, "[Amanda] is made its servant" (524). Science has not brought progress, just technology and profit for those who control technology, whose history, as Raymond Williams argues, is based on the "assumption" of progress (Television 14).

As the "emissary" of progress, Jim O'Connor is manufactured to serve the apparatus. He is a product and a (re)producer. His desire is to remake Laura (and Tom) in his own image; this desire produces the central conflict of the play, which is "resolved" only when Laura's unicorn is castrated and Tom runs off to Mexico. As an artifact, the unicorn represents the antithesis of Jim's instrumentation. On one level, it symbolizes the hand-made craft of mercantile capital (like Willy Loman's father's flute). More important for Williams the artist, however, is that the unicorn symbolizes the position of the art object (and therefore the artist) in an increasingly mechanized world; it is the opposite of the mass-produced shoes, gum, and newspaper sports heroes that are identified with Jim O'Connor. As Fredric
Jameson argues in *Postmodernism*, "Modern art...drew its power and its possibilities from a backwater and an archaic holdover within a modernizing economy: it glorified, celebrated, and dramatized older forms of individual production which the new mode of production was elsewhere on the point of displacing and blotting out. Aesthetic production then offered the Utopian vision of a more human production generally; and in the world of the monopoly stage of capitalism it exercised a fascination by way of the image it offered of a Utopian transformation of human life" (307). Laura’s collision with Jim is a displacing or blotting out of older forms that do not fit the dictates of the new economy. The unicorn must become "like all the other horses" because, as Jim says, "Unicorns--aren’t they extinct in the modern world?" (GM 104, 101). Laura’s renunciation of her difference is complete with the breaking of the horn. Although Jim "was the cause," Laura will "just imagine he had an operation. The horn was removed to make him feel less--freakish....Now he will feel more at home with the other horses, the ones that don’t have any horns" (GM 104). Ultimately, Laura cannot conform to the values of either business or marriage, so she renounces the real world in favor of the couch, where she plays with her menagerie and listens to records. The "operation" that breaks the unicorn’s horn, as Thomas
Scheye comments, "takes on nightmare proportions" when we remember that Williams' sister Rose, on whom Laura Wingfield's character is based, had a prefrontal lobotomy in order to make her less "freakish" (211).13

Jim O'Connor also attempts to teach Tom how to "fit in," but their collision is less violent. In the end, Tom does not renounce the "real world" like his sister, nor does he integrate like his mother; he is in flight. Like Jameson's utopian modernist, Tom attempts to escape the world of late-capitalism by engaging in a form of artistic production that Jameson calls "the aesthetic of sheer autonomy, as the satisfactions of handicraft transfigured" (Postmodernism 307). Tom resists the Taylorization of labor and consciousness by closeting himself "in a cabinet of the washroom to work on poems" (GM 68). Tom tells us his "secret practice" made "the other boys in the warehouse [regard] me with suspicious hostility" (GM 68). "Jim," however, "took a humorous attitude toward me" and "Gradually his attitude affected the others, their hostility wore off and they also began to smile at me as people smile at an oddly fashioned dog who trots across their path at some distance" (GM 68-9).

Jim's patronage (and patronizing) of Tom is an effort to win Tom's confidence in order to teach him to conform to the routine of work and the ideology of self-

13 For an account of the tragedy see Spoto 59-61.
improvement. In the process, Williams reveals Jim as "suspicious" by demonstrating that his pedagogy is a hoax. When Jim warns Tom that "You're going to be out of a job if you don't wake up" (GM 78), Tom tells him that he has already awakened: "I'm planning to change [Tom has joined the Merchant Marine]," he says, which confounds Jim because he can see "no signs" of Tom's transformation. Jim cannot recognize the signs since, as Tom teases, "The signs are interior" (GM 78). In fact, Jim can only recognize the superficial, the standard gestures and motivations that permeate his culture and which appear as self-replicating, mass-produced models. In his advise to Tom, Jim's speaks as the standard gestures and motivations of the apparatus:

Jim: You know, Shakespeare--I'm going to sell you a bill of goods!
Tom: What goods?
Jim: A course I'm taking.
Tom: Huh?
Jim: In public speaking! You and me, we're not the warehouse type.
Tom: Thanks--that's good news. But what has public speaking got to do with it?
Jim: It fits you for--executive positions!
Tom: Awww.
Jim: I tell you it's done a helluva lot for me.

Jim: In what respect?
Tom: In every! Ask yourself what is the difference between you an' me and men in the office down front? Brains?--No!--Ability?--No! Then what? Just one little thing--
Tom: What is that one little thing?
Jim: Primarily it amounts to--social poise! Being able to square up to people and hold your own on any social level! (GM 77).
Tom understands in advance that Jim is selling him "a bill of goods." Jim "ordinariness," however, prevents him from seeing "his" advice as collusion or self-deception because, as Andrea Dworkin writes about Stanley Kowalski, he is "untouched by the meaning of any experience because he has no interior life, he is invulnerable to consequences, he has no memory past sensation. He is ordinary" (41). Jim's language further indicts "self"-making when he describes his night course as "fitting" him for executive positions--that is, he is being shaped by the other to conform, just as are the others in his class. Williams makes it clear that Jim is participating in his own deception because his public speaking has done nothing for him; he has gone nowhere in the six years after graduating from high school, and Williams gives us every indication that this pattern of moving without moving will continue. Jim will continue to be deceived by his desire, and like Willy Loman, he will continue to believe in his autonomy at the same time he is exploited by the apparatus.

Williams also undermines the ideology of self-improvement by showing that ability and hard work are not rewarded, but rather the artificial, interchangeable practices of late-capitalism. It is more important for Jim to "make the right connections" (he can imagine people only as "social contacts") and manipulate social
appearances (i.e. have "social poise") than it is for him to have "brains" or "ability." It is more important for him to conform to the mass-produced values of the other. In this practice, he resembles not the valorized autonomous male of the American Culture Industry, but rather the standardized mode that the same apparatus produces. As Horkheimer and Adorno argued, "On the faces of private individuals and movie heroes put together according to the patterns on magazine covers vanishes a pretense in which no one now believes; the popularity of the hero models comes partly from a secret satisfaction that the effort to achieve individuation has at last been replaced by the effort to imitate, which is admittedly more breathless" (156). Jim O'Connor is breathless in his imitation, not only because he desires the "excitement" the perfect copy brings, but also because desiring machines too are without breath, dead, corpse-like. In respect to the latter, Jim O'Connor does not subvert the practices of democracy by using "his" knowledge to gain money and power; he is rather the perfect copy of a citizen; he is what the apparatus desires. He uses his knowledge to exploit himself and others.

Delma Presley is correct when she sees a correspondence between Jim O'Connor and David Riesman's "other-directed man": "Jim splendidly represents
Riesman's other-directed man who operates as though he were controlled by radar, constantly sending out signals and adjusting his movement to conform to his environment" (57). Presley also argues that Tom rejects "other direction" "in favor of engaging in a quest for adventure" (57). According to Presley, "[Tom] generally fits the 'new' type of personality Riesman sees on the horizon, the autonomous man....He obtains sustenance from the inner-directed pattern of existence. He has an internal guidance system...and he does not constantly adjust his behavior to fit the expectations of his known and unknown peers (57-8). While Presley's characterization of Tom's autonomy may ring true for some readers, I believe her reading is too optimistic. His autonomy, or freedom, is always limited because he is in flight from the values of the other. As Horkheimer and Adorno put it, "Every bourgeois characteristic, in spite of its deviation and indeed because of it, expressed the same thing: the harshness of the competitive society" (155). As a non-supporter, Tom too bears a disfiguring mark, a mark that makes him suspicious to his co-workers and his mother, or freakish like Laura's unicorn. As an artist, the closeted poet, he desires Jameson's utopian transformation of the economic and social forces that control his life, yet his flight from these forces embodies what Peter Burger
sees as the central contradiction of modernist art: the "autonomy aesthetic...contains a definition of the function of art: it is conceived as a social realm that is set apart from the means-ends rationality of daily bourgeois existence" (10). At the same time, however, because of the rationalization of the social under late capital, "Only in the isolated form of monad-like works of art can truth still be spoken about this society. This is the function of art that Adorno [refers] to as 'functionlessness' because it can no longer be hoped that art will provoke change" (11). By being "functionless," Tom's writing of poetry on company time is a protest against "what is"; however, his secret act also affirms "reality" by offering only compensation for repressive social conditions. In this respect, Tom's seclusion in the bathroom is analogous to the atomistic moments of consumption witnessed throughout the play: Amanda's reading of romances, Jim's reading of the sports page, Laura's listening to records, and Tom's viewing of movies.

The standardization of the economy also turns social relations into relations of production. As Tom says about his job, "The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people! (GM 113). Workers move as isolated units suspicious of any part that does not conform to the gestures or values of the apparatus. As
Tennessee Williams observes in the "Production Notes" to *The Glass Menagerie*, modernization has not brought progress because technology has not been used to liberate men and women: "We should do more for ourselves or let the machines do for us, the glorious technology that is supposed to be the light of the new world. We are like a man who has brought a great amount of equipment for a camping trip...but who now, when all the preparations and the provisions are piled expertly together, is suddenly too timid to set out on the journey but remains where he was yesterday and the day before and the day before that, looking suspiciously through white lace curtains at the clear sky he distrusts. Our great technology is a God-given chance for adventure and for progress which we are afraid to attempt" (GM 15). To underscore this point in *The Glass Menagerie*—that technology has not been used to liberate, to light the new world—Williams borrows the central image from Picasso’s *Guernica*.

At the top center of the painting, there is a light bulb, complete with filament, enclosed in a disk-shaped form that illuminates the chaos and death of the bombing. Picasso, in my reading, does not use the electric light to symbolize hope or "enlightenment," as some have suggested. On the contrary, it seems to me he uses the image of the light bulb for the opposite
reason—to express his profound doubts about the way technology has been used to destroy human life. In the painting, the light merely illuminates the slaughter of the bombardment; it is part of the narrative of progress that has promised salvation but, in fact, has brought destruction and death. The light is like the light of the bombs; it produces illumination but not understanding; it hangs suspended above the scene and appears as if by magic. Yet like the "celotex" lights that illuminate the warehouse where Tom Wingfield works, which he finds so oppressive, Picasso's light only illuminates brutality and in turn mystifies the values that structure social relations—"knowledge," "money," "power." The oppressiveness of the celotex light is Williams' deliberate borrowing and transformation of Picasso's image, as is his use of the light imagery throughout the play. In their dominant form, these images represent an ideology at odds with what Williams sees as his more humanistic values. As James Reynolds argues, "Those without access to the real power of technology are limited as mere users unable to understand and control it. They remain outside the sphere created by larger cultural forces that place technology not as the servant of humanity but as a venture for capital investment, nationalistic rivalries, and costly toys" (526). Those unable to sustain,
purchase, or represent the instrumental values of
technological progress, as Lee Iacocca says in a recent
commercial, had better "get out of the way."

Nowhere is Williams more critical of these values
than in the final lines of the play. Here the assumption
of progress that informs our cultural institutions--
education, the media, science, and industry--is
deconstructed in a gesture which fuses individual and
international history, his sister's lobotomy and the
bombardments of World War II. The lightning of Ben
Franklin's discovery and the light of Thomas Edison's
mazda lamp are turned into the bombardments of the
Second World War, for, as Tom says, "nowadays the world
is lit by lightning" (GM 115). At the same time, Laura's
light is blown out: "Blow out your candles, Laura--and
so goodbye" (GM 115). Williams' sister Rose, of course,
did not blow out her candles; she was the victim of a
technological experiment, just as were the citizens of
Guernica. For Williams, both events are symptomatic of a
historical crisis in which technology was increasingly
being used to subdue or destroy human beings who did not
conform to the dominant values, whether those values
were American or Nazi. Both systems demand that subjects
conform to the whole; any resistance is suspicious. In
an American context, the dominant masculine model--with
its attendant ideologies of self-improvement and
mobility—is used to fit individuals to the corporate whole, reducing men to the role of instruments who are exploited by those above them for profit. In reality, the desire to be unique or successful is, as Williams points out, the desire to be "ordinary"; it is the desire of every other. Men are only valuable, then, when they become like the "cellular living-units" in which the Wingfield family lives, which in 1945 Williams saw as "symptomatic" of the "lower middle-class": "to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism" (GM 21). In the meantime, the "impulse" of this class has become the impulse of every other since the apparatus has penetrated every sphere of social life. Men today are, more than ever, valuable to others (and to themselves) only when they conform to the dictates of the machine, only when they tacitly adjust themselves to fit what is. Tennessee Williams' construction of Jim O'Connor (and later Stanley Kowalski) was prophetic. In a recent essay on Poland's conversion to a "free market" economy, for example, Lawrence Weschler reports that the most coveted men in Poland are the old party "nomenklatura." These career bureaucrats are valued by Western companies because they fit; the "skills" they learned in the Communist bureaucracy have given them the ability to conform to a Western corporate model. No one, Weschler
ironically notes, is rushing out to hire former Solidarity members (58).
Chapter Five

"What's the Secret?":
Willy Loman as Desiring Machine

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) conveys its critique of American capital in a far more complex and subtle manner than critics have thus far recognized. Most criticism of the play, as Sheila Huftel points out, is "governed by the need...to know and understand Willy Loman" (103). Unfortunately, much of the energy expended to understand Willy has been too narrowly focused on analyzing the individuated character traits of the protagonist and the attendant issue of tragic stature. The problem with these arguments is that they assume Willy has a character, that he is an autonomous subject. The play, in fact, suggests just the opposite---that Willy is not autonomous, self-generated, or self-made (even in "failure"), but that he is completely other to himself; he is more puppet than person, more machine than man, and as such he announces the death, or disappearance, of the subject, the death of the tragic hero, and the birth of "the desiring machine."

Most critics recognize that Arthur Miller intends Willy Loman as a victim of "society." But Willy's construction as a victim is interpreted within the parameters of a self-generated individual and is used as the main reason conservative critics deny *Salesman*
tragic status. As a victim, the argument runs, Willy has no understanding of his situation; he is, in the words of Dan Vogel, "too commonplace and limited" (91). Unlike Oedipus or Hamlet or Lear, Willy is incapable of self-knowledge and is therefore not heroic but pathetic; "he cannot summon the intelligence and strength to scrutinize his situation and come to some understanding of it," writes Irving Jacobson (247). Even liberal critics like Thomas Adler and Ruby Cohn, who are generally sympathetic towards Willy, judge him harshly; in their estimation he is either incompetent because "he is the victim of himself and his choices," or he is a failure because he "has achieved neither popularity nor success as a salesman, and has failed as a gardener, carpenter, and father" (Adler 102; Cohn 44). Even as astute a critic as Thomas Porter finds fault with Willy's "character" when he argues that "the Salesman...has accepted an ideal shaped for him and pressed on him by forces in his culture" (24). Willy's problem (or part of his problem), then, according to these critics, is that he accepts his fate; he does not possess the vision, volition, capacity, strength, knowledge, pluck to fight against the cultural forces that shape his life.

The underlying assumption of these arguments is that Willy can change his life—with a little hard work,
perhaps—but that he will not. Behind these arguments is a model, what I call the national subject and/or the masculine unconscious: the autonomous, active male subject. The subject that determines itself, that makes itself, the liberal subject, the rugged individual, the exceptional American. Whatever linguistic sign the masculine unconscious uses to communicate itself, it is wholly other to the subject since it is "enjoined" on the subject by the publicity apparatus of late-capitalism. Miller calls this other the "law of success": "The confusion of some critics viewing Death of a Salesman...is that they do not see that Willy Loman has broken a law without whose protection life is unsupportable if not incomprehensible to him and to many others; it is a law which says a failure in society and in business has no right to live. Unlike the law against incest, the law of success is not administered by statute or church, but it is very nearly as powerful in its grip upon men" (Collected Plays 35; hereafter CP).

In Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944), Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno identify the "law of success" as an effect of the "technological rationale" which dominates the cultural and economic institutions of modern industrial nations: "Through the countless agencies of mass production and its culture the conventionalized modes of behavior are impressed upon the individual as
the only natural, respectable, and rational ones. He defines himself as a thing, as a static element, as success or failure" (28). That is, under what Horkheimer and Adorno call late capitalism, individual behavior is reduced to a series of "protocols" or stereotypical responses found on the job, on the radio, in the movies, and in the then emerging television industry. For Adorno, these standardized models of behavior signaled the end of the liberal subject since "motivation in the old, liberal sense" was being appropriated and "systematically controlled and absorbed by social mechanism which are directed from above" ("Freudian Theory" 136). In other words, the subject's desire for success (e.g. for material wealth, to "get ahead"), which the subject believes is self-generated, is, in fact, his identification with the rationale of the apparatus, which has programmed individual consumption as spontaneous thought or reason or the assertion of individual will.

Viewed in light of Horkheimer and Adorno's discovery, the operations of Willy Loman's mind reflect this change in subjectivity. Specifically, Willy assumes that his desire is spontaneous, when in fact, as Miller suggests in Timebends (1987), it has been "hammered into its strange shape by society, the business life Willy had lived and believed in" (182). Willy's desire does
not make him autonomous; it makes him "common" since that desire is what motivates all the men in the play and indeed most men in our culture. In constructing Willy, Miller exposes the liberal subject as a fiction, as part of a structure of value that is an effect of the economy. To dismiss Willy as "pathetic" because he does not have the strength of character to understand his situation or because he has made the wrong choices is to recode the play according to the protocols of the apparatus (i.e. a man is either a success or he is a failure). Willy chooses nothing; he merely follows a blueprint. Like a machine, he operates according to plan. The publicity apparatus tells Willy that if he works hard like "Edison," that if he perseveres like "Goodrich," that if he is "well-liked" like Dave Singleman, then he will rise like Charley and become rich and powerful like "J.P Morgan." The blueprint also tells Willy that if he does not become "a success," that if he does not become like a "Gene Tunney" or a "Red Grange," then he is a failure—and that this is his fault. Willy's question to Ben and to Bernard--"What's the secret?"--is therefore by design. Willy cannot see that there is no secret—that success or status is largely determined by extrinsic factors.¹

¹ Willy's question also signals the breakdown of the machine. The machine has started to malfunction; it can no longer perform its labor because it drives off
In more recent remarks made in his autobiography, *Timebends* (1987), Miller has also made it clear that Willy Loman was intended to challenge the expansion of American capital after World War II: "there was the smell in the air of a new American Empire in the making, if only because, as I had witnessed, Europe was dying or dead, and I wanted to set before the new captains and the so smugly confident kings the corpse of a believer" (184). He hoped that the play would be a time bomb "under the bullshit of capitalism, this pseudo life that thought to touch the clouds by standing on top of a refrigerator, waving a paid-up mortgage at the moon, victorious at last" (*Timebends* 184). In other words, Miller sought to counter the agenda of the new American Empire by exposing the citizen (read: obedient consumer) as a fraud or a corpse. Before examining how Miller accomplishes this subversion, however, it is first necessary to contextualize the play in terms of the cultural forces that Miller was attempting to resist.

The consolidation and expansion of American business and the state that took place during and after World War II produced a cultural transformation that signaled the roads and talks to itself in the backyard. It is "tired to death" (*CP* 131), and it has started to ask questions it was not designed to ask. In fact, the machine is becoming self-conscious, becoming aware of its self-alienation. But the machine is designed too well--it will, according to plan, seek its own repression.
beginning of the Cold War. The economic policy of the United States government during the war, George Lipsitz points out, "permanently altered economic and political power relations within American society, and produced a totalitarian oligarchy of the major interest groups," so much so that the "elite that emerged from the war held unprecedented control over government and the economy....[and] unprecedented control over the lives of ordinary citizens" (Class 2).² At the same time that political and economic power became increasingly concentrated, industry and the government acted to regulate the economy by keeping levels of consumption at (high) wartime levels, since they believed this spending would cause the economy to expand. The rebuilding of Europe and Japan was an effort to gain control of foreign markets that the United States had supplied during the war. The Marshall Plan became the focal point of the "Truman Doctrine," which asserted a "vital connection between foreign policy and domestic well being": "Truman identified American interests as contingent upon three connected principles: world stability, expanding markets, and the defense of freedom. In practice, the three principles collapsed

² For a detailed discussion of this process see Lipsitz (Class and Culture) 1-12, 135-42. See also C. W. Mills 3-54. For a related discussion see Diggins 54-94, 177-219.
into one, as stability came to mean security for
American business and the measure of freedom became the
extent of Western-style 'free' enterprise in any given
country" (Lipsitz Class 136).

The market for consumer goods and services at home
was also reconfigured—that is, labor markets were
recategorized, and the practices of saving and community
that developed and evolved during the Depression and the
war were reconverted into spending and individualism.
The nuclear family emerged as the locus for the new
emphasis on consumption. Using network television,
government propaganda films, Hollywood movies, and
advertising, the publicity apparatus of American capital
helped transform the labor market. Women and minorities
were urged to return to their homes or low-paying jobs
so that veterans could have their (presumably) old jobs
back, thus returning them to the position of
paterfamilias. Mass cultural models set before men once
again stressed self-agrandizement. As Robert Mitchum
says in Till the End of Time (1946), "We were a team in
the war— everybody was together.... Now we're civilians,
rugged individuals. We're on our own, all of us" (qtd.
in Lipsitz Class 181). The Western was resurrected—My
Darling Clementine (1946) and Fort Apache (1948), for
example—and again focused its attention on male
autonomy and self-assertion. Magazine and newspaper
biography continued to report and describe the lives of successful men: military heroes, actors, politicians, athletes, businessmen, inventors. These men were, of course, model citizens; they were assertive, hard-working men who had risen to the top of their profession and had achieved great power and wealth, and their status as cultural celebrities confirmed their worthiness.

The masculine paradigms constructed by capital's publicity machine were, as C. Wright Mills notes, based on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of masculinity and success (xiii-xv). These paradigms combined with the discourse of advertising, which pervaded all mass cultural practices, to produce, or sponsor, gendered consumption. The result of the fusion of residual masculinity with the consumer ideology was that male autonomy or self-determination was again manifest by the practice of social aspiration through conspicuous consumption. Success and competence were defined as the ability of the national subject to provide for his family, and it was through this expression of "love" that masculinity, or power, was asserted.3

3 Lipsitz argues that the goal of male labor in early network sitcoms—The Goldbergs, Hey, Jeannie, The Life of Riley, I Remember Mama, The Honeymooners—was to obtain "material reward to enhance one's standing within the family or to obtain some leisure-time commodity"
The new medium of television provided the publicity machine with a mass audience whereby the home became the primary site of the struggle between older, more traditional cultural identities and the new consumer identity that television was constructing. "Television," Lipsitz argues, "advertised individual products, but it also provided a relentless flow of information and persuasion that placed acts of consumption at the core of everyday life" (Time Passages 42-6). Early network television was especially effective at shaping this transition. As Lipsitz notes, "Commercial network television emerged as the primary discursive medium in American society at the precise historical moment when the isolated nuclear family and its concern eclipsed previous ethnic, class, and political forces as the crucible of American identity. Television programs both reflected and shaped that transition, defining the good life in family-centric, asocial, commodity-oriented ways" (Time Passages 55).

Post-war movies also redefined family life in asocial, commodity-oriented ways. Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House (1948) is typical of many Hollywood films (and network sitcoms) produced between the years

(Time Passages 59). Women were interpellated in two ways; they were expected to care for the family by managing domestic consumption and to be a "helpmate" to the husband/father as he progressed up the corporate ladder.
of 1946 and 1955. In the film, James Blandings, a New York advertising executive, played by Cary Grant, moves his wife and two daughters out of their cramped Manhattan apartment to suburban Connecticut. In the process, Blandings and his wife (Myrna Loy) discover that the house they have purchased is structurally unsound, and Blandings reluctantly agrees to build a new one. Through a series of comic accidents and misunderstandings, the price for the new house escalates until Blandings almost gives up the project; but Myrna Loy persuades him to pay the money and finish the house ("We’re not just building a house. We’re building a home!" she says, and this, naturally, convinces him to finish). In the end, however, everything is accomplished with relative ease: the house is built, the construction problems are quickly forgotten, and Blandings writes a book about his "dream house."

The most interesting thing about Mr. Blandings is that it is a lesson in consumption (specifically, how to buy property and build a home). Much of the film is taken up watching architects, contractors, lawyers, artisans, and laborers consume money and materials; and although the film pokes fun at Blandings, it also valorizes his role as the head of the household; he is a model of success, and the tableau that ends the film, which resembles an advertisement, explicitly underscores
this point. As the camera pulls back, Blandings, pipe in hand, sits comfortable on a lawn chair in front of his large house. His beautiful wife sits near him, and his two daughters play with the black maid. The camera pulls back again, and we see Blandings' property: lawn, trees, and the sky. No other houses are visible. His daughters run into the house with the maid; his wife follows, and Blandings, smiling and relaxed, is left alone on his spacious lawn. The cramped apartment in Manhattan is completely forgotten.

Like Mr. Blandings, other movies, advertisements, and television shows produced during this period were used by the publicity apparatus to program consumption or desire in order to further stimulate the economy. As a cultural practice or symptom, their technology represents a rationalization of production that transformed subjectivity, a process recorded by the operations of Willy Loman's mind. Specifically, Willy assumes that his desire is spontaneous, when in fact, as Miller suggests in Timebends, it has been "hammered into its strange shape by society, the business life Willy had lived and believed in" (182). Willy's desire does not make him autonomous; it makes him "common" since that desire is what motivates Blandings as well as himself. As I suggest above, in constructing Willy, Miller exposes the liberal subject as a fiction, as part
of a structure of value that is an effect of the economy. To dismiss Willy as "pathetic" because he does not have the strength of character to understand his situation is to recode the play according to the protocols of the apparatus.

Conservative critics, such as Vogel and Joseph Wood Krutch, will not recognize Willy as an effect of the economy because the critical field in which they operate does not permit this. For them, he is a problem, not a cultural symptom. Critics from the left, such as Raymond Williams, Michael Spindler, and John Orr, while they see Willy as a symptom of capitalist culture, have focused more on Willy's objectification than on his relationship to the apparatus that produced him.4 Williams, for instance, argues that "Willy Loman is a man who from selling things has passed to selling himself, and has become, in effect, a commodity which like other commodities will at a certain point be discarded by the laws of the economy" (104). While Williams's argument concerning Willy is certainly accurate, given Willy's desire to "make an appearance in the business world" (CP 146), I would like to suggest a different way to read Willy, which is more in keeping with the model of subjectivity theorized by Horkheimer and Adorno in

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4 See Williams 103-05, Spindler 202-13, and Orr 208, 225-37.
Dialectic of Enlightenment, and which, I believe, more fully represents the rationalization of consciousness brought about by the symbolic apparatus of late capitalism.

In their book Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1983), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari problematize previous models of subjectivity by eliminating the opposition around which the subject is constructed: "There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines...the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever" (2). According to Deleuze and Guattari, the cognitive subject no longer exists since the subject-object split on which its identity is based has collapsed. The boundary between subject and object collapses, they argue, under the weight of the publicity apparatus of late capitalist cultures, which colonizes the subject from without by pouring its narratives inward. They replace the cognitive model with a quasi-cybernetic model, the desiring machine. The desiring machine runs on information from the outside; its goals, writes Jean-Francois Lyotard, are "programmed into it" and therefore it cannot "correct in the course of its functioning" (16). The man/machine is programmed to fit
the body of capital, to adjust to the demands of efficiency of the larger system. Deleuze and Guattari stress that the identity produced by the system is "a producing/product identity" (7). That is, the machine produces, or in Willy's case reproduces, not only biologically but also ideologically, for the system at the same time that it is produced or constructed by the system.

A more effective way to interpret Deleuze and Guattari's "producing/product identity," especially when we consider Willy Loman and the other men in Salesman, is to see it as a producing/consuming identity. The male subject desires to reproduce itself (pass itself on) at the same time it desires to consume success narratives, cheese, Chevrolets, Studebakers, aspirin, women, refrigerators, etc. The male subject reproduces itself by having children and acting as a model for those children. Willy, for instance, wants his sons to learn the law of success embodied by his brother Ben: "when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen. When I walked out I was twenty-one. And, by God, I was rich" (CP 159-60). The male subject consumes by buying products.

Listen to Happy:

...suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He's a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he's building another one. He can't enjoy it once it's finished. And I
know that's just what I would do. I don't know what
the hell I'm workin' for. (CP 139)

Or listen to Howard Wagner talk about his wire recorder:
"I tell you...I'm gonna take my camera, and my bandsaw,
and all my hobbies, and out they go. This is the most
fascinating relaxation I've ever found" (CP 178).

Willy's desire has also been programmed; listen to Linda
tell us why he bought a "Hastings" refrigerator: "They
got the biggest ads of any of them!" (CP 148).

The three passages suggest that Miller is aware that
(re)production and consumption are programmed. Desire is
mediated by an other, by the publicity apparatus of
capital. The "subject" merely occupies a circuit or an
outlet, or, to use Lyotard's word, a "post," through
which messages or units of information pass (15). Willy
(or Happy or Howard Wagner) is reduced to the function
of a receptacle/transmitter; information travels through
him and in him. In this process, memory (the site of the
other) becomes a depository for and a transmitter of the
masterprograms or "masternarratives" of the system in
which the desiring machine operates. The machine's
program can thus be viewed as a metanarrative that is
used to reinscribe or recode reality into a pattern that
the larger system finds acceptable. The metanarrative
acts like the unconscious because it is wholly other to
the subject and because it works through the subject to
structure social life. This operation is seen in Happy's
description of the merchandise manager's mindless consumption, in his building of houses which he soon deserts only to build new houses; his desire spins metonymically out of control seeking difference or fulfillment in what is essentially the same. Neither man understands why he buys things or why he works, yet they both buy and work without question. Presumably they work to "get ahead," to "accomplish something," but in reality they are, like Willy, programmed for the body of capital; it doesn't matter if they get ahead, if they succeed, or even if they become "number-one man." What does matter, however, is that everybody desire to work so that everybody can afford to consume. Desire, to use Sartre's term, has been "massified."

At this point, we turn our attention to Willy Loman in order to more specifically explore how the dreams of capital have programed his "life." Throughout the play, Willy consumes and then reproduces models and axioms that are part of the masculine unconscious:

Be liked and you will never want. (CP 146)

A man oughta come in with a few words. (CP 149)

I gotta overcome it. I know I gotta overcome it. I'm not dressing to advantage, maybe. (CP 149)

Everybody likes a kidder, but nobody lends him money. (CP 168)

But remember, start big and you'll end up big. (CP 168)
Start off with a couple of your good stories to lighten things up. It's not what you say, it's how you say it--because personality always wins the day. (CP 169)

Business is definitely business.... (CP 180)

It's who you know and the smile on your face. (CP 184)

These axioms (and the model they represent) appear in the text as isolated linguistic events, as the recitations of a lone idiolect, but they are in fact "splinters" or units (traces) of the metanarrative of national identity that speak through the idiolect. Willy consumes these bits of information just as he consumes aspirins and cheese. Their presence indicates that Willy has been interpellated by the publicity apparatus. Another indication of Willy's interpellation

5 Their emphasis on personality indicates, as Theodore Greene notes in another context, a historically mediated adjustment in the narrative, and the emphasis is consistent with the time period of Willy's "life." According to Greene, around the turn of the century masculine success models began to sound a "new note": "The new note was one of power. It called for strength of will, forcefulness, and what the period termed 'animal magnetism.' It was a change of emphasis not ideology" (112). In other words, new models were deposited on top of residual models with the authority of the residual models remaining in tact; this same authority remained in tact during a similar adjustment in the late 40s. This may seem a minor point, but it is important to note that Miller locates his critique of capital in an era once removed from the period which he attacks; he does this so as to draw upon what he witnessed first hand during the Depression--the lived experiences of his father and brother.
are his numerous contradictory statements. Early in the play, for instance, Willy calls Biff a "lazy bum" because Biff does not have a steady job. Three lines later, however, after Linda tells Willy that Biff is "lost," Willy replies incredulously, "Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such—personal attractiveness, gets lost. There's one thing about Biff—he's not lazy" (CP 134). Willy then reminds Linda that Certain men just don't get started till later in life. Like Thomas Edison, I think. Or B.F. Goodrich" (CP 135).

In this instance, the masterprogram operates to allegorize the experience of the "subject" by making the subject part of the national narrative of progress; the process is therefore synecdochical (e pluribus unum). The process reveals itself as a fusion or syndesis of narratives, modes of masculinity from different historical periods, that cover over the reality of the present and mystify history. This fusion is first

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6 Brian Parker sees these contradictions as evidence of Willy's "incorrigible inability to tell the truth even to himself"; they therefore express an "emotional, nonlogical mode of thought, which allows him flatly to contradict himself, and of which schizophrenia is merely an intensification" (33). Bigsby argues that Willy's "constant contradiction is a linguistic reflection of the collapse of rational control, but, more fundamentally, for all the Loman men it is indicative of a basic contradiction between their aspirations and the reality of their lives, between their setting and the essence of their dream" (2: 177).
discovered in the practices of late nineteenth-century advertising, where the consumer ideology is bound together with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of masculinity. The adjusted or emergent narrative is deposited on the hegemonic narrative, which in turn lends the newer representation its legitimacy or authority.\(^7\)

However, the crucial thing to note about the masterprogram is the way in which Miller suggests it operates through Willy to reinscribe his family history as part of the success narrative of the national subject. Willy desires to be the same as his father or his brother Ben; he desires to be other than he is, to inhabit earlier periods of capital through an other’s body, which is essentialized or universal. By banishing differance, Willy hopes to construct a stable subjectivity. He no longer wishes to feel "temporary" \((\text{CP} 159)\) about himself. He no longer wants to be part of the body of capital, which is always (magically) transforming itself, adjusting itself, expanding itself—like the neighborhood in which he lives. The desire to be successful, then, is the desire to connect himself to a transcendental masculinity that erases the reality of his present social position. This erasure is achieved, \(^7\) For a detailed discussion of the emergence of the consumer ideology see Jackson Lears ("Salvation to Self-Realization") 3-38.
however, at a cost. The subject is restored to fullness by transforming extrinsic social factors into personal failure. Willy performs this function to empower himself, to restore the independence of the subject, which has been irretrievably lost. In the process, however, he learns to misrecognize himself (and Brooklyn). At the same time, Willy also learns to marginalize other masculinities, the alternative men he might represent, in favor of the dominant models advocated by the culture industry (i.e. Edison, Goodrich, etc.).

As C.W.E. Bigsby notes, "Willy Loman’s life is rooted in America’s past" (2: 184). More precisely, his identity is rooted in models from two different periods of American capital, which have become conflated in his mind.8 Willy’s father represents the unfettered and

8 Michael Spindler, for instance, writes that "In Willy’s family history we are offered a cameo of social change in America, from the pioneering father who drove his wagon and horses westward, to the elder brother who gained a fortune in the great outdoors, and finally to the travelling salesman hemmed in by the towering tenement blocks of the modern big city" (204). Brian Parker suggests a similar reading of Willy’s family when he argues that "the deterioration of American individualism is traced through the Loman generations in a descending scale, from the Whitman-like exhuberance of Willy’s father, through Ben, Willy himself, to the empty predatoriness of Happy" (32). Thomas Adler also reads Willy’s family history as symbolizing a gradual disappearance of American exceptionalism: "Willy’s ancestors represent and recreate within themselves different stages in the country’s history: Willy’s father as the last of the pioneers, a hardy, self-reliant carver and peddler of flutes who made his way
unalienated labor of mercantile capital. His brother Ben represents the accumulative processes of monopoly capital. Both figures are mythic, that is, both figures embody a heroic past that is disseminated by the symbolic practices of capital and reproduced in individual men. Together, Miller suggests, they represent the (his)tory (not a history) of the (white) race in America. Or, as Irving Jacobson suggests, "What Willy Loman wants, and what success means in Death of a Salesman, is intimately related to his own, and the playwright's, sense of the family. Family dreams extend backward in time to interpret the past, reach forward in time to project images of the future, and pressure

west across the continent; his brother, Ben, as a self-made capitalist and living proof of the rags to riches who went to Africa and discovered diamond mines. By the time, though, that Willy, as a salesman who lived through the Depression and World War II, tries to make the dream of Ben Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Horatio Alger operative, it has been reduced and even become debased" (101). The above interpretations of Willy's family history either ignore or underestimate the effect of the dream on the present, how, in fact, the dream creates an illusion which subverts its potential reduction or debasement. For a reading of the conflation of Willy's father and Ben, see Gross 405-10. See also Bates 164-72.

Thomas Porter, for example, asserts that Willy's "background fits an idealized model rather than any plausible or realistic family-tree. As a typical character, the salesman has a typical background; he envisions his origin in terms of the American experience. It is one version of the idealized experience of the race" (29).
reality in the present to conform to memory [ideology] and imagination" (248).

The flute "melody" that marks the beginning and the end of the play, and which is heard periodically throughout, is the emblem or signature of Willy's lost father. According to the stage directions, "It is small and fine, telling of grass and trees and the horizon" (CP 130). It is, as numerous critics point out, the aural symbol of his "pioneer virtues" (Brian Parker 33). It is the sound of the unaliented commodity, which later returns (transformed) as the mass-produced "golden" pen that Biff steals. It is the sound of the past in the present, the still active residual model which operates to marginalize the present. It represents the desire for opportunity and mobility associated with westward expansion. Willy's father, as Ben tells him, was a small entrepreneur whose life was determined by the structures of a mercantile economy: "Father was a very great and very wild-hearted man. We would start in Boston, and he'd toss the whole family into the wagon, and then he'd drive the whole team right across the country; through Ohio, and Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and all the Western states" (CP 157). Willy's father was a "great inventor" who would "stop in the towns and sell the flutes he'd made on the way" (CP 157). "With one
gadget," Ben tells Willy, "he made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime" (CP 157).

Ben's last statement seems unlikely, and its hyperbole marks a confusion in Willy's "mind" produced, or mediated, by the other's desire. Willy desires to be like his father because his father is like other successful men, other "great" inventors; he is a model citizen—he has amassed a fortune. He is like America's first model citizen, Ben Franklin, who "invented" electricity and the lightning rod. He is like Thomas A. Edison and B.F. Goodrich, both rich and famous because of their inventions. Nevertheless, given the mercantile economy in which Miller locates Willy's father, it is unlikely that he would have produced a "gadget" that earned him more in a week than Willy earns in his lifetime. This type of event was more common (but still relatively isolated) in the period of capital Ben represents (monopoly capital) when "great" inventors like Edison and Goodrich did earn more money in a week (by producing technology/inventions for an emergent industrial economy) than a salesman could earn in thirty-five years. The figure of Willy's father exists simultaneously in Willy's "mind" with the figures of Edison and Goodrich. The simultaneity of the Franklin-Edison-Goodrich-father Loman narrative produces a fusion, or syndesis, of the individual stories, which
erases the specific history of the individual figures by marginalizing their difference; this fusion, again, is produced by the publicity apparatus of capital. Through the other, that is, Willy plugs himself into the success narrative as he rereads his family history.

A more elaborate example of this type of conflation is found when we examine Ben Loman. On one level, Miller uses the figure of Ben to link the formation of the national identity to the founding of the Republic—that is, Miller clearly chooses the name Ben to remind his readers of Ben Franklin’s paradigmatic American masculinity. Ben’s continual repetition of the rags to riches story—"Why, boys, when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen. When I walked out I was twenty-one. And, by God, I was rich" (CP 157)—is a deliberate echo of Franklin’s *Autobiography*, in which Franklin tells his readers that he walked into Philadelphia with the clothes on his back and a loaf of bread and within a few years became rich and famous. Notably, Miller conflates the Franklin myth with another version of masculinity from a later stage of American capital, not to differentiate the two, but to suggest that they are both operative, and that the latter version is just a rearticulation of the former. The phrase "acres of diamonds," which Ben continually uses, alludes to a series of lectures and books written by the evangelist
Russell Conwell in the 1890s "to spread the gospel of material wealth" (Innes 64-5; Porter 24-7). Conwell's writings, which included The Safe and Sure Way to Amass a Fortune and Be a Benefactor, and Achieve Greatness, were typical of the "success cult" that dominated American magazine and popular book culture around the turn of the century (Greene 111).

The assumptions about masculinity at the core of Franklin's Autobiography are present in Conwell's writings as well. Both writers construct masculinity in very unproblematic ways by insisting that "success" is the result of personal agency or character. Miller uses Ben's speech, which Willy is remembering, to illustrate that language has a history. The traces of Franklin's and Conwell's stories survive as moments of the past in the present, and because they have been decontextualized by the operations of the publicity apparatus, they exist only as ideology within memory (i.e. devoid of their cultural context, they become part of the same moment, the typology of American maleness and not products of specific historical periods and circumstances). These representations do, however, bear the mark of their history, and, as such, their difference can only be recognized when their history is restored. The conflation of Franklin and Conwell in Ben's speech is recognized when we try to account for the fact that Ben
Loman and Russell Conwell inhabit an America radically different from Franklin's. Ben's ascendancy to what Willy calls "success incarnate" (CP 152) takes place in the late 1880s, a period marked by intense imperial expansion and expropriation of native labor and resources. As what Ruby Cohn calls a "ruthless adventurer" (41), Ben represents the accumulative processes of monopoly capital (roughly 1880 to 1910).

Further, the mode of masculinity that Ben represents is radically out of place in the America of the late 1940s (as is Willy's father's "pioneer" masculinity). Willy's desire to be like Ben and like his father manifests itself as a nostalgia that seals him off from the present. As a result, Willy cannot recognize "reality," and he therefore engages in the success fantasy given to him by the other. In addition, Miller also suggests that the nostalgia for previous models or paradigms is constituted by their ability to provide

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10 From indications that Miller gives in the play, Ben Loman was probably born around 1869; this would put him in Africa between the years of 1886 and 1890. Biff Loman, interestingly, was born in 1915, the same year as Arthur Miller.

11 Brian Parker argues along the same lines when he writes, "The values represented by Ben need not detain us very long. Their inadequacy is apparent. Miller's work, as a whole, does reflect a certain admiration for the pioneer virtues of courage and self-reliance, but this is matched by an awareness that such attitudes are dangerous in modern society: the aggressiveness which is admirable in combatting raw nature becomes immoral when turned against one's fellow men" (33).
ready-made (read: reductive) interpretations of the world; this operation, as Hayden White suggests, is disabling (and therefore destructive) because it prevents individuals and societies from constructively confronting the problems of the present: "history is not only a substantive burden imposed upon the present by the past in the form of outmoded institutions, ideas, and values, but also the way of looking at the world which gives to these outmoded forms their specious authority" (39; italics removed).

One result of Willy's interpellation is that he cannot see Brooklyn as it is—that is, he is not satisfied with seeing it the way it is; he desires to see it as other, as the old west or the frontier. As he tells Ben, "It's Brooklyn, I know, but we hunt too" (CP 158). Willy's desire to see Brooklyn as other is also a symptom of the machine in crisis. The flute melody that represents the fiction of infinite space and unfettered masculine autonomy of the frontier (i.e. the mobility that most Americans expect and desire) is an ideological formation directly at odds with Willy's "reality." Willy can see the "towering, angular shapes" that surround his house "on all sides" (CP 130), and he is aware the changes in his neighborhood:

The way they box us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks....The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow anymore, you
can't raise a carrot in the back yard. They should've had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing between them....They should've arrested the builder for cutting those down. They massacred the neighborhood....(CP 134-35)

Yet the cultural processes that allow the "they" to box him in, to massacre the neighborhood, go unrecognized because his models program him for "oversight." In other words, his knowledge of the world is produced by the models that act to exclude or screen out disruptive bits of information. Willy's knowledge of his world represents a desire for older modes that reduce his understanding of his social position.

His models also prevent him from seeing the history of his present (ultimately they push his vision inward, which leads to annihilation). His question to Linda that concludes the diatribe about the neighborhood--"How can they whip cheese?"--outlines the contour or boundary of his knowledge about the operations of capital; this question marks the limits of his awareness, outside (or inside) of which he cannot see or transgress. The question represents his limit as a "subject." The salesman does not understand how products are made. They appear to him, as they sometimes did to Marx, "as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own" (165). Willy's seemingly trivial question reveals how effective the publicity apparatus (with its fetishization of consumption) is in marginalizing the
effects of technological change. As William Brucher points out, Willy's "unexpected, marvelingly innocent question about whipping cheese reveals an ambivalence toward technology livelier and more interesting...than a simple dichotomy between farm and factory, past and present" (83-4). Willy's "marvelingly innocent question" reveals a complete ignorance of the cultural processes that affect his life, that cause him to lose his job.  

Willy's life is, in fact, a denial of the transformative powers of capital. Any recognition of change is subverted by the transcendent (fetishized) models that he worships, which do not record or reflect any change. Celebrity--the lives of B.F. Goodrich and Thomas Edison and Dave Singleman--has replaced history. The consumption of technological "progress," as Willy's broken cars, refrigerators, fanbelts, and leaky shower and roof attest, has replaced concrete social relations.

A second result of Willy's interpellation is that he "embues" his sons with the values of the other, what he calls the spirit of the jungle. These values are

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12 In the conversation Willy has with Howard Wagner immediately before Wagner fires him, Willy seems to (almost) recognize that his job has become obsolete: "In those days there was personality in it, Howard. There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried, and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear--or personality. You see what I mean? They don't need me anymore" (CP 181-82). Willy's comments here also resemble the comments of Jack Colton in Tennessee Williams' The Last of My Solid Gold Watches.
mediated through the figure of Ben Loman. "There was the only man I ever met who knew the answers," says Willy (CP 155). "There was a man started with the clothes on his back and ended up with diamond mines" (CP 152). How does Ben achieve this goal? According to Willy, "The man knew what he wanted and went out and got it. Walked into the jungle, and comes out, the age of twenty one, and he's rich!" (CP 152). And this is just what Willy wants for his boys; when Ben comes to visit, Willy brags to him that "That's just the spirit I want to embue them with! To walk into the jungle!" (CP 160). He's bringing them up to be "rugged, well-liked, all-around" (CP 157). Ben, of course, approves: "Outstanding, manly chaps!" (CP 159). Willy's desire is therefore reproduced through and in Biff and Happy; because of Willy's pedagogy, they become carriers of the program. Willy wants them, as Ben advises him, to "Screw on your fists and...fight for a fortune" (CP 183). He doesn't want them to be "worms," like Bernard (CP 151). But as Brian Parker points out, the aggressive practices Ben represents while "admirable in combatting raw nature [become] immoral when turned against one's fellow man" (33).

I suggest above that Ben's aggressiveness represents a brutality that Miller equates with American imperialism. Another way to read Ben's "aggressiveness"--this time, within the boundaries of
the nation—is as competition. Historically, as C. Wright Mills notes, "for men in the era of classical liberalism, competition was never merely an impersonal mechanism regulating the economy of capitalism, or only a guarantee of political freedom. Competition was a means of producing free individuals, a testing field for heroes; in its terms men lived the legend of the self-reliant individual" (11). Whether or not what Wright argues is historically representative, it is safe to assume that in a decentralized economy (an economy without the hierarchy of industrialized structures), individual competition through labor was a way for many to create mobility and wealth. However, as the economy of the nation became more centralized and hierarchical, competition, as Willy says, became "maddening" because it did not have the same results (imagined or otherwise) as it did for men of Willy's father's and Ben's generations.

In Willy's time, in fact, competition has become war-like. After returning from a selling trip, for instance, Willy tells his family he "Knocked 'em cold in Providence, slaughtered 'em in Boston" (CP 146). Willy's gift to his sons on his return from this same trip is a punching bag with "Gene Tunney's signature on it." "[I]t's the finest thing for the timing," he tells his apprentices (CP 144). Elsewhere Willy describes business
as "murderous" (CP 159). When Biff goes to ask Bill Oliver for a loan, Willy's advice is "Knock him dead, boy" (CP 170).

The violence of Willy's language echoes the ruthlessness of his model, Ben--the man who attacks Biff: "Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way" (CP 158). Willy's desire to emulate Ben's power thus leads him to bring "the spirit of the jungle" into his home, where it reveals itself as what Sartre calls "counter-finality."13 His positive intention of providing his boys with a model for success results in the negative legitimation of theft and fantasy.14

Miller problematizes Willy's pedagogy by suggesting that even sanctioned expressions of masculinity involve theft. In the scene which follows Ben's fight with Biff, for instance, Willy has his sons start to "rebuild the entire front stoop" (CP 158) because Willy doesn't want Ben to think he is just a salesman; he wants to show Ben that Brooklyn is not Brooklyn ("we hunt too" [CP 158]);

13 For a detailed account of "counter-finality" see Sartre 153-96.

14 Willy's positive intention of providing for his family has also led to the isolation and betrayal of his wife Linda (much like the career of James Tyrone in Long Day's Journey into Night leads to the isolation and drug addiction of Mary Tyrone). For extended discussions of the representation of women in Salesman see Austin 59-66, Stanton 67-102, and Mason 103-15.
he wants to show Ben what kind of "stock" his sons come from: "Why, Biff can fell any one of these trees in no time!" *(CP 158)*. Instead of providing the materials to rebuild the front stoop, however, Willy directs his sons to "Go right over where they’re building the apartment house and get some sand" *(CP 158)*. Charley warns Willy that "if they steal any more from that building the watchman’ll put the cops on them" *(CP 158)*. Willy responds, addressing Ben, "You shoulda seen the lumber they brought home last week. At least a dozen six-by-tens worth all kinds of money" *(CP 158)*. This, of course, is a parody of Ben’s logging operations in Alaska, but it also suggests that the individualism that the success ideology sanctions legitimates theft, just as that ideology legitimates the expropriation of foreign land and mineral resources. This is made even clearer in the following lines, when Willy excuses his sons’ behavior because, as he says, "I got a couple of fearless characters there" *(CP 158)*. Charley counters: "Willy, the jails are full of fearless characters" *(CP 158)*, and Ben says, "And the stock exchange, friend!" *(CP 158)*. Again, these lines suggest that for Miller even legitimized expressions of masculine behavior, practices and beliefs, which the American publicity apparatus valorizes, involve theft.
A further example of Miller transforming the success ideology into theft is found in the scene where Biff "borrows" a football from his high school locker room so that he can practice with a "regulation ball" (*CP* 144). Willy, predictably, laughs with Biff "at the theft," and rewards the action by saying, "Coach’ll probably congratulate you on your initiative!" (*CP* 144). Initiative, even in Franklin’s day, is one of the key elements of masculine autonomy, and here Miller insists that initiative is a form of theft. Later in the same scene, Biff tells his father, "This Saturday, Pop, this Saturday—just for you, I’m going to break through for a touchdown" (*CP* 145). Happy then reminds Biff that he is "supposed to pass" (*CP* 145). Biff ignores Happy’s warning and says, "I’m taking one play for Pop (*CP* 145; italics mine). This taking is a pattern that will eventually take over Biff’s life, for as Biff tells Willy at the end of the play, "I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was in jail....I stole myself out of every good job since high school!" (*CP* 216). More important for Miller, however, is that this one moment of taking represents a typical moment in the dominant version of American masculinity. Biff’s theft of the play is another instance of his initiative, another example drawn from the headlines which celebrate individual achievement. For a moment in Willy’s mind Biff is like
Red Grange or Gene Tunney. As he tells Charley, "When this game is over...you'll be laughing out the other side of your face. They'll be calling him another Red Grange. Twenty-five thousand a year" (CP 186). What is lost in Biff's taking, however, is the team. Biff's initiative and his desire to place himself above the goal of the team has, for a moment at least, jeopardizes the collective goal of the team—to win the City Championship.

Miller addresses the counter-finality of fantasy in the "climax" of the play, which is organized around Biff's trip to Bill Oliver's office where he plans to ask Oliver to "stake" him in a new business venture, "The Loman Brothers," a line of sporting goods.15 This fiction has been created as a way to deflect Willy's fury at learning that Biff plans to "[s]crew the business world!" and return to the West, because in the West he can do as he pleases. That is, he can swim in the middle of the day, and working as a carpenter, he can whistle on the job; he also tells Happy that "we don't belong in this nuthouse of a city! We belong mixing cement on some open plain" (CP 166). At the same time, Biff expresses his hatred of the business world

15 "The Loman Brothers" is an ironic echo of the phrase "The Carnegie Brothers," which Andrew Carnegie uses in his autobiography to describe his family's industrial empire.
because "They've laughed at Dad for years" (CP 166). Willy responds in a characteristic manner: "Go to Filene's, go to the Hub, go to Slattery's, Boston. Call out the name Willy Loman and see what happens!" (CP 166). At this point, to quell Willy's anger, optimistic Happy starts the familiar story—"He's going to see Bill Oliver, Pop" (CP 167)—that quickly develops into a success fantasy before the fact: Happy's "feasible idea" is to borrow money from Bill Oliver to start a line of sporting goods (CP 167). Of course, Happy's idea is neither feasible nor sensible; it is in fact absurd that Biff believes he can borrow ten thousand dollars from a man he has not seen in fifteen years and from whom he stole merchandise.

At the end of the second act, however, Happy's "pipe dream" comes apart as Biff begins to insist on the "truth"; Biff tells Willy that he "was never a salesman for Bill Oliver," that he was a shipping clerk. Willy insists that Biff was a salesman for Oliver, and when Biff tries to correct Willy by asking him to "hold on to the facts," Willy says he's not "interested" in the facts (CP 198-99). What he is interested in is another "story," and Willy and Happy begin to work to reimpose the success fantasy they have constructed at the end of
the first act, but the fantasy is interrupted by Biff's announcing that he has stolen Bill Oliver's fountain pen.

The final confrontation occurs two scenes later when Biff tells Willy "you're going to hear the truth--what you are and what I am" (CP 216). Biff rejects Willy's "phony dream" because

I ran down eleven flights [of stairs] with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped....I saw the things that I love in this world. The work and the food and time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am!. (CP 217)

This is an assertion of Biff's desire against Willy's desire and the fantasy that Willy's desire constructs.
Because Biff recognizes that his father's dream is "false," that his father has been positioned by the law of success to believe in the autonomous male, he is in a position to resist (at least partially) the ideology. Biff does not believe in the version of universal citizenship that Willy believes in. Biff recognizes that he is "a dime a dozen" (CP 217), that he will never be B. F. Goodrich or Thomas Edison or Red Grange or J. P. Morgan or Gene Tunney. He attempts to resist the ideology of the success narrative because he doesn't want to be other; he doesn't want to be number one: "I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are
you....I'm a dollar an hour, Willy....A buck an hour" (CP 217). Willy, a believer to the bitter end, insists that he is exceptional: "I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman" (CP 217).

At this point there is a complete repudiation of the success fantasy: Biff screams, "Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop" (CP 217), and he begins to hug his father and cry. Commenting on this scene, Miller writes that Biff embodies "an opposing system which...is in a race for Willy's faith, and it is the system of love which is the opposite of the law of success" (CP 36). However, Miller claims that "by the time Willy can perceive [Biff's] love, it can serve only as an ironic comment upon the life he sacrificed for power and for success and its tokens" (CP 36). Biff rejects the law that makes men compete with each other and steal from each other in order for them to be successful. Instead, through his characterization of Bernard, Charley, and, (at the end of the play) Biff, Miller seems to offer the possibility of a system where men love each other and try to help one another, rather than exploit one another. His solution to the problem of "individualism" is moral rather than revolutionary, for as he points out, the "most decent man" in the play "is a capitalist (Charley) whose aims are not different from Willy Loman's" (CP 37). The "difference" between Willy and Charley "is that
Charley is not a fanatic": "he has learned how to live without that frenzy, that ecstasy of spirit which Willy chases to the end" (CP 37). Likewise, "Bernard...works hard, attends to his studies, and attains a worthwhile objective" (CP 37). Miller also notes that these "people" all come from the same social class (CP 37), yet Charley and Bernard do not succumb to the "frenzy" because, in Miller’s view, they manage to resist the law of success and can act like decent men. What makes their resistance possible? Miller offers no specific answer. The play suggests that some men are able to do this while others are not; it offers hope, but no specific program: "What theory lies behind this double view? None whatever. It is simply that I knew and know that I feel better when my work is reflecting a balance of the truth as it exists" (CP 37).

Nevertheless, because the play is organized around the consciousness of Willy Loman, the play does not reflect the balance that Miller seems to have intended. Because Willy is such a "strong" presence, he pushes Bernard and Charley to the margins of the play. Willy’s is the dominant voice, and it is through this voice that Miller maps the discourse of national identity as it interpellates the "low man." Through this process, Miller attempts to construct a counter discourse by exposing the contradictions within the dominant
understanding of the social world. The power of the dominant discourse lies in the ability of its codes and protocols to regulate understanding of the social world; they allow individuals to interpret their experience only in previously elaborated paradigms. In Salesman, Miller shows how these codes and protocols are reproduced through memory as they are recirculated and repeated in the texts and representations of the publicity apparatus. The epilogue of the play also suggests that we are free of these representations only in death. When Linda says "We’re free....We’re free" (CP 222), Miller is not just ironically commenting on the paid-up mortgage; he is also suggesting that Willy is free from the law of success only in death.

D. L. Hoeveler suggests that Linda’s lines are ironic for another reason. Reading the drama as a "psychomachia," Hoeveler stresses that the Requiem functions as a final comment on "Willy’s dream": "All the characters who had previously functioned as parts of Willy’s dream or nightmare are now supposedly free of him....But each of the characters continues to embody the values that Willy demanded of them" (80). These "parts," however, to revise Hoeveler, not only embody the values that Willy demands of them, but also they embody the values of the dominant mode of production and the cultural apparatus which reproduces that mode by
reproducing its values. Willy is a part of the body of capital, just as are Happy, Biff, Charley, Bernard, Howard Wagner, and Linda; and as Mark Poster writes, the capitalist mode of production forces human beings not only to become "things...in appearance," but also "They undergo...a profound interior alteration" (53). They become desiring machines, or as Sartre stresses in Critique of Dialectical Reason, they become other to themselves. They embody the values of the Other (the publicity apparatus) that programs them to see others as rivals. The irony of this operation, as Sartre points out, is that in attempting to be different (in attempting to be number-one, to earn the most money, to conquer the world) everyone's desire is the same. Desire therefore organizes individuals so that it can isolate them. Sartre calls this formation serial, or unified, alterity.16

By highlighting the consequences of Willy's interpellation, Sartre's concept of serial alterity offers us an alternate way of reading the play. That is, Willy is the only man in the play isolated by the pursuit of happiness. Most critics imagine that he is because Willy's voice marginalizes the other characters, and because Miller's commentary on Willy results in a kind of damage control whereby the success of the play

16 See Sartre 256-310.
is dependent on Willy functioning as an aberration (a "failed social adjustment," as Thomas Greenfield suggests). Miller's argument that the social positions of Willy (the salesman) and Charley (the business owner) reflect a balance is also misleading since it suggests that mobility itself is a balanced operation. Charley's rise seems to be magical since, as Charley says, "my salvation is that I never took an interest in anything" (CP 191). Miller, to his credit, does problematize the mobility myth in other parts of the play. Ben's success is dependent on "a faulty view of geography": I discovered after a few days that I was heading due south, so instead of Alaska, I ended up in Africa" (CP 156); and Happy, no matter how hard he works, won't progress up the corporate ladder until the merchandise manager dies (CP 139). The most potent symbol of Willy's desire, Dave Singleman, whose name, as Ruby Cohn notes, embodies the irony of male desire in American, also problematizes the mobility myth (43). These instances of problematization, however, suggest that the myth is merely arbitrary in distributing it goods (somewhat like a lottery) instead of an ideological formation which disguises a structural limitation at the very center of capital. The secret of the myth (the national subject, the masculine unconscious) is that admission to the higher echelons of capital is limited. The publicity
apparatus therefore organizes the cultural field around a false promise that sets men against other men.

Willy, again, is not the only one implicated. All the men in the play compete with each other, either directly or indirectly. The most obvious examples (other than Willy) are Happy and Biff and Ben. Happy's desire turns him into an inveterate liar and, in a scene that recalls Peter's betrayal of Jesus, leads him to deny his father: "No, that's not my father. He's just a guy" (CP 205). Biff's desire turns him into a criminal. Ben scoffs at Willy for being a salesman: "What are you building? Lay your hands on it. Where is it? (CP 184). Even Howard Wagner, Bernard, and Charley are implicated in the frenzy, although to a somewhat lesser extent. Howard Wagner's fear of other businessman leads him to fire Willy because he is inefficient. "Successful" Bernard, who embodies Franklin's dictum "Well done is better than well said," does not have a loving relationship with his father because he is too busy competing with other lawyers (CP 191).

Charley's "compassionate treatment" of Willy, however, seems to contradict the dominant male behavior of the play; but, as Bigsby points out, "the system of which he [Charley] is the most admirable representative can clearly accommodate itself to individual acts of charity provided that these don't threaten its
structure. The fact is that Charley underwrites the system that destroys Willy" (2: 180). Charley’s desire is more manageable than Willy’s only because he is in a superior position to Willy; he’s got the goods; he is the other to Willy, which separates him from Willy.¹⁷ Willy, however, wanting what the other has, denies Charley’s charity because taking charity is a sign of weakness or failure. Willy wants to be self-made—and this desire not only isolates him from Charley but also separates him from his sons and his wife.

Ultimately, all the men in the play labor in alterity programmed by the other (or others) as parts of the machine of capital. Their desire and their isolations are expressions of the larger machine. Their "prefabricated being" (being as other-than-itself) is fixated on consumption by the publicity apparatus of capital (Sartre 227). Even when they question the program, as Biff does when he says "I don’t know...what

¹⁷ Charley’s desire to help Willy is also an effect of the apparatus, which does nothing to disrupt the demands of the system (i.e. Willy still gets fired because the company considers him inefficient). Likewise, Willy’s refusal of Charley’s job offer is based on Willy’s desire to emulate the protocols of the apparatus: Willy wants to be successful; he wants to continue to play the role of the provider, and Charley’s loans enable him to do this since loans can be repaid; but his acceptance of a job from a friend is charity and therefore signifies failure, according to the models he emulates.
I'm supposed to want," they know what the machine wants them to desire:

...I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in the summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. To suffer fifty-two for the sake of a two-week vacation...And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. And still--that's how you build a future. (CP 138)

Biff's "moment of epiphany" is not disruptive or transcendent because Miller can imagine no mechanism whereby Biff's insight is translated into social action (Bigsby 2: 185). In fact, as Bigsby suggests, Biff's return to the West, like Crevecoeur's farmer's return to the wilderness, or Huck Finn's "lighting out for the territory," is an empty, ahistorical gesture, a flight from reality: "in The Misfits....Biff Loman has become Gay [Langland], an aging cowboy as bewildered by the collapse of the world as Willy Loman has been. And so Biff, who at the end of Death of a Salesman has supposedly learned the lesson which Willy could not, seems to be committed to the same mistake of seeking in movement and space what he could perhaps have sought in relationship" (2: 185).

The system of value that the play represents, as I have argued, permits no true relationship between men; it permits only isolation through competition. The dissatisfaction of the desiring machine can therefore
only express itself through nostalgia, an eternal return to previous models and their (pre)determining goals. The consequence of this interpellation is that solidarity is nullified by the desire of the other, thereby ensuring that men will continue to be exploited by their desire.

It is fitting then that in death Willy returns to the earth that sustains his dream in life. The garden scenes that frame Willy's life in the play represent Jefferson's agrarian vision, or what Thomas Porter calls "a pre-Alger agrarian way of life" (42), which no longer exists--except in memory kept alive by popular representations of masculinity. The autonomy, wealth, and power that Willy longs for are as sterile as his garden. Surrounded and closed off by the post-war suburban expansion, nothing will grow. His attempts to control and to understand this transformation--by retreating into representations of the past--have failed to free Willy, have failed to earn Willy the title of "single man,"--so he kills himself. The desire of the success machine cannot be deceived. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, "Desire can never be deceived...It happens that one desires against one's interests: capitalism profits from this" (257). In the end, then, "attention must be...paid" (CP 162) to Willy Loman not because he is exceptional (by being an aberration) but because his repression in paradigmatic. Not because, as
Michael Spindler writes, "Willy has seized upon the notion of commercial success as a substitute for genuine identity" (206). Willy, again, seizes nothing; his gods are given to him. Attention must be given to such a man by readers of Salesman who would fetishize masculine autonomy, since Miller powerfully suggests that masculine desire is an instrument used by the American culture industry to organize and regulate social relations and the economy.
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