

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
Departamento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras

TRINITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NORTH AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

Dissertação submetida à Universidade Federal de Santa
Catarina para obtenção do Grau de Mestre em Letras

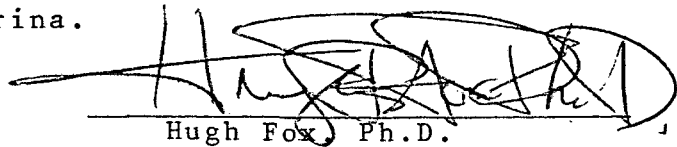
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Agosto - 1980

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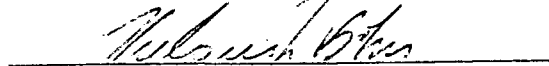
MESTRE EM LETRAS

opção Inglês e Literatura Correspondente e aprovada em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.



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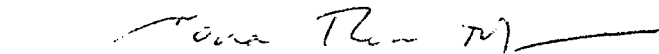


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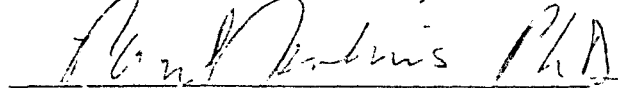
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MOSTLY FOR LUIZ CLAUDIO AND GABRIELA

This study is also dedicated to HARRY SMITH,
who made it possible,
and to HUGH FOX,
who made it necessary.

Special thanks to

Professor Nora Ther Thielen, from U.F.R.G.S.,
for her professional support during the past
ten years;

Mr. Harold Mercer Midkiff, Fulbright Deputy
Executive Secretary in Brasília,
for his patient correction of this work.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the book-poem Trinity by Harry Smith, in which I point out the author's ambivalence towards industrial society.

Smith welds together various parts of a literary past in which Transcendentalist ideas play a major role.

This analysis of Trinity aims to show the influence of Transcendentalist ideas on Smith and the evolution of these ideas towards the Neo-Transcendentalism of the 20th Century.

Smith's glorification of "natural man" is increasingly replaced by his acceptance of Faustian man. Smith's bias against factories and industrialization is moderated by a compromise with progress.

The material examined in this dissertation includes two other books besides Trinity: Me, The People and The Early Poems. Several issues of the newspaper NewsART and of the magazine The Smith were also examined.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação é um estudo do livro-poema Trinity de Harry Smith, no qual tentamos mostrar a ambivalência do autor frente à sociedade industrial.

Smith funde várias partes de um passado literário no qual as idéias transcendentalistas desempenham um papel importante.

Esta análise de Trinity objetiva mostrar a influência das idéias transcendentalistas em Smith e a evolução destas idéias para o Neo-Trancendentalismo do século XX.

A glorificação do "homem natural" é gradativamente substituída por sua aceitação do homem Faustiano. O preconceito de Smith contra fábricas e industrialização é moderado por um compromisso com o progresso.

O material examinado nesta dissertação inclui dois outros livros além de Trinity: Me, The People, and The Early Poems. Diversos números do jornal NewsART e da revista The Smith também foram examinados.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of Problem

This study will focus on the text of Harry Smith's Trinity in an attempt to explain it.

Trinity, published in 1975, is Smith's most important book. Following the publication of this epic poem, Smith was awarded PEN's 1976 Medwick Award for his poetry, his commitment to human values and his achievements as an editor. Harry Smith has been an influential figure in the small press "underground" since 1964. Also known as The Smith, he is the editor of the magazine of the same name and the paper NewsART. He is also a member of CONEP, Committee of Small Magazines, Editors and Publishers.

Besides Trinity Smith wrote several other volumes of poetry such as Rainscent, a small volume of early poetry published in 1962; Sonnets to P.L.A., a volume published in 1979 and written to Phoebe Lou Adams of the Atlantic Monthly as responses to Rejections Circa - 1966/68; The Early Poems, a thin volume containing some of the poems previously published under pseudonyms, 1978; Summer Woman, a volume of poems mostly dedicated to Smith's wife, Marion, and published in 1978; Two Friends; and Me, The People, his most recent book containing varied poems spanning fifteen years (1962-1977) ranging from the "riddles of The Smith" to pure lyrics as well as long narrative works about the major issues of our age.

Smith's works have also appeared in many publications, including Bitterrot, Discourse, Dust, East Village Other, For Now, Ghost Dance, The Literary Review, Kansas Quartely, Penumbra, Poet Small Press Review, Trace, University Review, UT Review, Woraword Review and The Unspeakable Visions of The Individual. Smith has

also appeared widely under pseudonyms, especially Raphael Talliaferro and Adam Dunne..

The Smith, born Harry Joseph Smith, Jr. on October 15, 1936 in the State of New York, grew up in a house loaded with books. His father, a Jack London socialist, used to read to his son from the books he himself was reading for pleasure.

At the age of eight, Smith read H.G.Wells's An Outline of History and afterwards he began to voraciously read a new book each day. When he was twelve, he read Lawrence's Lady Chatterly's Lover along with all the books about astronomy and paleontology he could manage to get..

Smith escaped religion until the age of eleven when his mother finally decided he should have religious instruction, which he received from the Episcopal Church. Today he is an agnostic. He may have some religious feelings and attitudes but he does not have an intellectual scheme of religion.

In high school Smith edited the newspaper and, because of his editorial opposition to Senator Joseph McCarthy, the school principal refused to recommend him to college.. Even so he entered Brown University just before his seventeenth birthday, enrolling in its rigorous program for a degree in chemistry. He had to work very hard for mediocre results in mathematics and science and, so, he decided to follow his English teacher's advice and become a writer. After starting with love poems to impress girls and satires to amuse himself and his friends, Smith increasingly enjoyed the writing in itself.

He was expelled in his third year at the university for "failure to abide by university regulations".. His chief offense was his drafting a Declaration of Independence, which was also signed by most other members of his dormitory. The declaration protested against the lack of student power in shaping university life.

The summer following his expulsion Smith left home and became a vagabond. In September, 1956, he returned to Providence for

several weeks and lived off campus with friends writing for the student newspaper under the name "Sasoon". His presence on the campus was discovered by the Administration because his essays, condemning conformity, hypocrisy and decadence in American life became highly controversial, posing further difficulties for his future re-admission.

When his admission finally occurred Smith's poetry and romance with Marion Camilla Petschek distracted him from his studies. However, he received highest distinction in his comprehensive exams in English literature. Nonetheless he failed to graduate on schedule because of not completing the requirements of one course on time. About this event Smith wrote:

The professor, S. Forster Damon, the renowned Blake scholar, said, "Young man, you have demons in you and you must cast them out." He refused to accept my late papers, saying, "I don't dispute that they are brilliant, but the class did not have the benefit of them." ¹

In the summer of 1958 Smith took a job with a small daily newspaper in Massachusetts, The Southbridge Evening News. From editor Jim Scott he learned valuable lessons about economy of expression. In 1959, before becoming a reporter for a larger newspaper, The Worcester Telegram, Smith married Marion on February 21.

Being a reporter means dealing with many sorts of people - criminals, government leaders, businessmen, the luckiest, the most learned, the most ignorant, etc. This work definitely enlarged Smith's understanding of the world.

Later Smith was an editor and journalist for a wide variety of publications covering law, medicine, alcoholic beverages, history, and many other subjects. He became familiar with the world of Madison Avenue and the mainstream of Big Business.

By the time Smith was able to found a small press company of his own, The Smith, he had accumulated a rich life experience.

This dissertation aims at dealing with Smith's basic

philosophy throughout his poem-book Trinity. The material selected to be studied also includes The Early Poems, Me, The People and several of the issues of NewsART and The Smith.

This study puts forward the issue of the American Romantic heritage in contemporary U.S. poetry, bringing out the core ideas of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and Crane, and their definite influences in Harry Smith's work.

Finally, this dissertation examines Trinity's text in an attempt to explain Smith's images and symbols. This study has been supported by contacts with the living author himself during the whole literary research process.

I.2. Review of Criticism

In spite of being a fairly recent author, Smith evoked immediate acclaim among the critics after the publication of Trinity in 1975. The critics' attitude became even more favorable after Smith received the PEN's 1976 Medwick Award.

Arthur Knight, editor of The Unspeakable Visions of The Individual, wrote in The New York Culture Review:

Trinity is so damned good -- so brilliant, in fact -- that I feel compelled to write a review of it ... It will possibly tempt some readers to say that the comfort Hamilton draws from nature is too easy -- "The tree of Heaven flourished always ... raspberries burgeoned from the ruins of rude shacks..." -- and that it is not enough to watch the shad swim "upriver into the future" and conclude that man can command the elements. But in a work as rich as this one, where the various poetic techniques become objective correlatives to the experiences set down, it is finally impossible for the analytical reader to say that anything works too easily. This is a book of enormous complexity: a poetic history of our times.

Other than being a pamphletarian work, Trinity is a poetic record of the 70's and it was well recognized for that. James Ryan Morris wrote in Small Press Review:

People I know seem to have forgotten what happened only last week, never mind 1970, and that television coverage that dwelled so gamely on the construction workers running amok in New York's streets clubbing, stomping poor helpless bearded kids, and all in the name of patriotism . . . Trinity shows a hardcore remembrance of that day, and this book is a backlash at the occurrence One is reminded of Kenneth Patchen when reading thru this work, cause there is a very strong force contained here: that force will make this one of the outstanding documents of the 70's . . . Trinity is one of those rare books of truth that we seldom see these days, everyone is so hung up on contriving a stance in poetry that they forget what the word poetry means. ³

Ed Sanders wrote something similar:

This work, in the mode of poetry that stays news, is right there - that is . . . that poetry should again assume prime responsibility for the description of history. ⁴

Lés Whitten, a writer-critic working with Jack Anderson, wrote enthusiastically to Smith:

Thank you for Trinity. I finished it this weekend and I think it just great, both as poetry and reportage. The pages 14 to 16 were more vivid than anything I've written about riots. Hamilton's helplessness has been my helplessness at such times so often I felt I was reliving the worst of them. Which I guess you intended. Then the switch to "Dogwoods, delicately . . ." Very fine stuff. ⁵

Trinity's protagonist, John Hamilton, was compared to a new Valmiki by Tambimutty, the editor of London's The Lyrebird Press. He wrote to Smith:

You have created a new Valmiki, who is the all-seeing narrator of the great Indian epic The Ramayana, which according to the Harvard classics was the prototype for the Odyssey, in Hamilton. I hope he has more stories to tell us. ⁶

As a matter of fact all critics had Smith's hero in good

account, and, most of them, as James Morris, identified with him:

His (Smith's) John Hamilton is you, me, every man who cares for the unification among the Americans, no matter what the beliefs of the individual.

Seymour Krim also writes positively about Hamilton:

Harry Smith's first major story/poem gives us a hero who is touchingly (who can touch him!) human, not monstrous, for a shredded time like ours. As a matter of fact, John Hamilton is an extremely likeable and decent man. One would like him to go on and on, like Nero Wolfe who bears witness. To create a new character for one's time is a humane as well as artistic act that moves all of us who need intelligent and honorable friends more than ideas. I won't forget you, John - you live for me like a real person.

As concerns the American literary Tradition in Trinity, critics seem to be split. While Dick Higgins, editor of Something Else Press, seems to believe that Trinity is completely innovating, professor Hugh Fox, from Michigan University, states that it follows the same epic pattern of The Bridge, Paterson and Maximus Poems.

Dick Higgins wrote in Contact II:

The hardest kind of poetry to review is that which does not resemble in any way the going schools of the art. One will read Trinity by Harry Smith in vain looking for the influences of Olson, W. Carlos Williams, The Black Mountain School or - although it is where he lives and works and edits his mag, The Smith - any of the New York groups. It is as if Smith used his central location as publisher and the city to know what others were doing and what he need not therefore duplicate. In fact, the only antecedent for the college style and use of found and concrete materials are the newsreel sections of John Dos Passos's U.S.A. In spite of which the overall tone of Trinity is not prosy but Whitmanesque lyrical. 9

Hugh Fox has written in one of the early comments included on the dust jacket of Trinity published by Horizon Press:

Rabelaisian Smith goes serious and produces a giant in the tradition of Crane's The Bridge, William's Paterson, Olson's Maximus Poems. Theme: human versus commercial/mercantile values. Wonderfully dynamic and apt in this Year of Our Lord 1975. 10

Charles Guenther analysing Trinity's language and rhythm

wrote:

A stylistic masterpiece . . . a narration containing the finest elements of lyricism and suspenseful drama . . . Trinity is a poem of confrontations, between young and old, weak and strong, idea and reality. More communicative than the Cantos, more synopated than Ash Wednesday, it is filled with the traditional rhythms and grand scope of American poetry from Whitman to Crane, Pound and Cummings. 11

An article published in The American Library Association journal, Choice, in March of 1976 identified Smith's Whitmanesque influence:

Smith is clearly a child of Whitman in his use of the language, and at times too much so; the words get away from him in an undisciplined torrent. But the book is of thematic richness and reveals a poetic hand that is skilled and sure most of the time; despite its sagging spots, it makes most recent books of poetry seem rather timid and dull. 12

Choice goes as far as Walter Lowenfield who had said Trinity should be required reading. Choice recommends the book for all college and university libraries:

A kind of poetry in which verse, prose and drama merge is demonstrated here, and it is quite possible the poet has provided a suggestive model for other poets wishing to deal with the public realities of our times. Recommended for all college and university libraries. 13

Regardless of the relevance of all this critical material, this dissertation attempts to bring to light new critical perspective on the work of Harry Smith, one of the established contemporary American authors of the past twenty years who are hardly

known in Brazil.

1.3. Statement of Purpose

This study does not intend to show Harry Smith as a purely Romantic poet but as an outgrowth of the United States contemporary scene which is greatly influenced by its own American past.

I shall basically point out that Trinity is an appraisal of nature and human individualism and, at the same time, a commitment to technology. In his Trinity, Smith accepts the basic transcendental ideas but also develops a Whitmanesque view of progress, paralleling his work to Hart Crane's The Bridge.

It is our objective to show that Trinity is not simplistically preaching the superior order of the past over the present and attacking technology, commerce and industry. Trinity favors an understanding of the machine age for it is an appeal to man's wise use of technology.

The means of arriving at these conclusions have mostly been a close analysis of the text itself.

In choosing Harry Smith's Trinity as the subject for the dissertation we mean to show a non-escapist contemporary piece of literature. Trinity is not only important for its inherited transcendental ideas which can be studied in the context of American literary tradition, but, also, for the actuality of its anthropological concepts which correspond to the mainstreams of thought encountered within high intellectual circles, not only in the United States but throughout the world.

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- ⁴Ed Sanders' early criticism included on the dust jacket of Trinity (New York: Horizon Press, 1975).
- ⁵Les Whitten's words in a personal letter to Smith on October 12, 1975.
- ⁶Tambimutty's words in a personal letter to Smith on April 3rd, 1977.
- ⁷Morris, "Hard Core Remembrance".
- ⁸Seymour Krim's early criticism also included on the dust jacket of Trinity.
- ⁹Dick Higgins, Contact II (p.24).
- ¹⁰Hugh Fox's early criticism also in Trinity.
- ¹¹Charles Guenther also in Trinity.
- ¹²Choice, March '76.
- ¹³ibidem.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PARAMETERS OF NORTH AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

There used to be a timelag between American and English literary movements. Romanticism which flowered in England in 1798, with the publication of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads, did not appear in full bloom in the United States until the middle of the nineteenth century.

During this half century, the United States went through some of the greatest changes in history. Around 1850 it was still mainly a country of farmers. Trade and manufacturing were growing more important each decade but it was not until the 1870's that a majority of Americans were making a living in non-farming occupations. Meanwhile, the population soared from 23 million to 76 million in 1900. In the middle of the century negro slavery was still a fact in American life and the nation was being split in two by it. The South defended slavery more and more vigorously; the North criticized it more and more earnestly. The bitter war waged between the North and the South from 1861 to 1865 permanently altered the character of American life. For many - Whitman for one - it was the central fact of their lives. For the South it meant the lingering flavor of defeat for the negroes it meant freedom from slavery, if not all the freedom enjoyed by the whites.

After the Civil War the nation entered a period of vast commercial expansion. Railroads stretched from one end of the country to the other. Factories were built. Cities grew. Fortunes were made.

Americans, whether native-born or immigrants, earned more than ever before. They had more opportunities, more freedom. Often, as a result, they felt a patriotism, a trust in their country, that made them sure that the United States was the greatest nation on

earth. Only a few of their fellow countrymen felt otherwise. However, these few included some of the most notable thinkers of the time, and, most significant, some of the best writers.

American Romanticism embodies basically the same ideas as English Romanticism. It is a reaction against the development of industry and a highly civilized and artificial style of life; it turns in praise of all that is simple, natural, even primitive.

American Romanticism, like its English counterpart, does not believe there is no mystery left in universe, but, on the contrary, sees mystery everywhere - in a flower, a tree, a cloud, a star. It is a reaction against neo-classical, dry, intellectualized, "mathematical", rationalist thought; it is an attempt to go back to imagination, plugging inspiration and intuition.

The American Romantics of the mid-19th century, who termed themselves Transcendentalists, were led by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

The philosophy of Emerson and Thoreau was stimulated by the mystical writings of Oriental literature, especially the Bhagavad Gita (a sacred Hindu text) and the thoughts of ancient writers like Plato and Plotinus; it was encouraged by sympathetic ideas echoing in the works of contemporary Englishmen like Coleridge and Carlyle; it was fed by the German philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Goethe.

"To transcend" means "to go beyond" something. For the Transcendentalists, the term simply meant that there are truths that go beyond, or transcend, proof. These truths are known to the heart rather than to the mind, the truths are felt emotionally even though they can not be proved logically.

Philosophically, Transcendentalism is the recognition in man of the capacity of knowing truth intuitively, or, of attaining knowledge transcending the reach of the senses.

Emerson drew a sharp distinction between the 'Understanding', by which he meant the rational faculty, and the "Reason", by which

he meant the suprarational or intuitive faculty; and he regarded 'Reason' as much more authoritative in spiritual matters than 'Understanding'. Glorifying intuition and repudiating all external religious authority, he proclaimed in a speech at Harvard University in 1838:

Nothing is, at last sacred but the integrity of your mind.¹

The Transcendentalists held that most of what it is called "values" lies outside the limits of reason and belongs rather to the realm of instinct or intuition. It is a matter of private experience, faith, and conviction.

Transcendentalism is a philosophy which seeks to explain man, God, and nature through some means other than sense experience. For the Transcendentalists, the key word is intuition, the immediate grasping of things without depending upon reason or knowledge. Intuition 'transcends' reason and experience; the greater a man's intuitive powers, the greater his ability to understand the world around him.

Whereas the Puritan forefathers sought primarily to find the meaning of God and thereby the meaning of man, Emerson and Thoreau looked for the definition of man. This reversal of ideas caused a new stress upon the individual. Self-confidence, self-trust, self-reliance, and self development were the concrete bricks of transcendental thought. Emerson wrote:

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This

sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope. Trust yourself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.²

The spirit of God is everywhere for the Transcendentalists. Emerson referred to this always present force as the over-soul flickering with different intensity. Because the "complexion" of the over-soul varied from flower to animal to man and because man transcended each of these forms, the human being, by attempting to be himself, becomes divine. It is for this reason that an almost mystical love for nature is seen as an essential feature of Transcendentalism. Emerson said:

Nature is the symbol of the spirit.³

Through man's intuition, spirit could be recognized in the expressions of nature. Thoreau, in his experiment with nature at Walden Pond, seeks the meanings underlying the symbols of the New England landscape:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish

its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.⁴

As for Emerson, self-reliance and independence of mind were very important and, in this regard Thoreau said:

I would not have any one adopt my mode of living, each should find his own way, not his neighbor's or his parents".⁵

In the same spirit he also wrote:

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.⁶

Thoreau condemned all kinds of compromise, as Emerson had done, and advised his fellow citizens to enjoy life for its own sake. They should spend their time, he told them, living rather than getting a living:

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awakened almost every night by the panting of a locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure at once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blankbook to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the fields, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. If a man was tossed out of a window when an infant, and so made a cripple for life, or scared out of his wits by the Indians, it is regretted chiefly because he was thus incapacitated for — business! I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business.

Thoreau strongly believed in using civil disobedience to protest government actions. He wrote:

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into jail once on this account, for one night, and as I stood considering the walls of solid stone,

two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron granting which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up... As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

There was an undying stream of optimism running forcefully beneath each of Emerson's and Thoreau's essays and poems. Although intuition is primary, all men are bound together by 'the divine light of reason' and share the opportunity to seek the source of truth which they believe lies within them. The burden is man's own to bear; he should seek in order to discover the full force of the divine light, and, in this way, man would achieve perfection. Society, through reform, changes man.

Emerson's own words help the understanding of the true meaning of this vital nineteenth century philosophy which so much influenced succeeding literature:

What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us, is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into sects, the Materialists and the Idealists.... the first class beginning to think from data of the senses are not final The transcendentalist believes in miracle, in the perpetual openness of the human mind to new influx of light and power; he believes in inspiration, and in ecstasy.

Miracle, openness, inspiration and ecstasy - there is hope for mankind. They are the work points for Emerson and Thoreau. They are the fibers of the Transcendental mind which was inserted in American literary heritage.

The Transcendentalists tirelessly sound the same chord, straining to build a new society which should affirm the rights of

the individual and respect his dignity.

The belief in the individual, the idea that nature was ennobling, the criticism that commerce degrades men, all were basic planks in the platform with which the Transcendentalists tried to build in literature an identity and a heritage for the young American nation.

The ideas and goals set earlier by the Transcendentalists developed along with the United States, its history and character and American literature achieved a new depth in the Romantic tradition. The forces which made up America at the turn of the century were numerous, but Transcendentalism survived as the keystone of later American literature.

Walt Whitman, Emerson's contemporary, was one of the first voices to sing both the pastoral and the urban when he wrote about New York City, locomotives, world trade, all in the context of divinely "inspired" Nature.

Whitman's hymns to the glories of nature and the rustic life, and also his rejections of pastoral values in favor of the crowded life of the city represent the new split values of a Transcendentalism in movement, a Transcendentalism which was beginning to compromise with "civilization"/technology.

In the development of his ideas Walt Whitman was influenced most by the writings of Emerson. From Emerson he adopted the ideas of the need for Americans to be independent and self-sufficient, to do their own thinking, and to be democratic.

Whitman saw America as a nation of individuals. To him as to Emerson, the individual was supreme:

One's self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.
Of physiology alone nor brain alone is worthy for
/the Muse, I
say the Form is complete worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.
Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws

The Modern Man I sing.¹⁰

/divine,

Whitman understood the importance of the idea of democracy composed of 'simple, separate persons'. His "Song of Myself" is a declaration of independence of the individual:

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good as
belongs to you.
I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear
of summer grass....

The smoke of my own breath,
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my
heart, the passing of blood and air through
my lungs,

The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves and of the
shore and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay
in the barn,

The play of shine and shade on the trees as the
supple boughs wag,

The delight alone or in the rush of the streets,
or alone the fields and hillsides,
The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the
song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun...

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess
the origin of all poems,

You shall possess the good of the earth and sun
(there are millions of suns left),

You shall no longer take things at second or third
hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead,
nor feed on the specters in books,

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take
things from me,

You shall listen to all sides and filter them
from your self ^{ll}

Whitman wrote about nature a great deal though he also wrote poems which show his acceptance of urban values and his trust in progress. His poem "To a Locomotive in Winter" is a compromise with progress:

Thee for my recitative,

Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow,
 the winter-day declining,
 Thee in the panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing
 and the beat convulsive,
 Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery
 steel,
 Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting
 rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy sides,
 Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now
 tapering in the distance,
 Thy great protuding head-light fix'd in front,
 Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged
 with delicate purple,
 The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy
 smoke-stack,
 Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves,
 the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,
 Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,
 Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet
 steadily careering;
 Type of the modern - emblem of motion and power -
 pulse of the continent,
 For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse,
 even as here I see thee,
 With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling
 snow,
 By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,
 By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.
 Fierce-throated beauty! ¹²

Whitman's "Locomotive" is a hymn to the spiritualization of technology which is later repeated by Hart Crane's "Bridge".

His understanding of progress added to his exuberant affection for New York, which was then in the process of technification and hurried urbanization though it still preserved vestiges of a Melvillian or Irvingnesque pastoral past caused Whitman to write some of his most beautiful verses:

Trotoirs thronged, vehicles, Broadway, the women,
 the shops and the shows,
 A million people - manners free and superb -
 open voices - hospitality - the most courageous
 and friendly young men,
 City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires
 and masts!
 City nested in bays! my city! ¹³

12

Whitman was also an innovator in American literature. He thought that the voice of democracy should not be halted by traditional forms of poetry. His poetic style was the free verse, poetry without a fixed beat or regular rhyme scheme. His influence was small during his time but today elements of his style are apparent in the work of many poets. During this century, poets such as Carl Sandburg and the "Beat" Allen Ginsberg (and Smith) have owed something to him.

From Whitman on there was a gradual substitution in the belief that man was occupying an exposed and threatened position in the scheme of urban life. Man would no longer be seen simply as a specific individual against particular backgrounds but as a product of urban society, surrounded and made smaller by the city.

Before 1900, the United States was a largely rural country and this was what Emerson, Thoreau and other great 19th century writers reflected. Nevertheless, Whitman, transcending his time, exuberantly, unfetteredly, sang his young nation which was to change.

In the beginning of this century, the same struggle was fought by Hart Crane. In an agony of suspense between angrily rejecting the world about him, criticizing education, business, commerce, and the vulgarity of America, and seeing in America's vast beauty a power that he tried to understand, accept and express, Hart Crane wrote one of the most compelling of all modern poems, "The Bridge".

As we shall see later Crane is a kind of bridge between nineteenth century Transcendentalism and the Neo-Transcendentalism which still forms the base for much of contemporary U.S. poetry, especially that of semi-"conservatives" like Harry Smith.

This dissertation in a way could be subtitled "A Study in American Continuity" because contemporary U.S. poetry is heavily influenced by its own American past. The contemporary is a resurgence of the autochthonous. Paradoxically the most "fluid", quicksilver culture in the world at the same time is heavy with native tradition.

Unlike Eliot's The Waste Land which is an account of Western Civilization's apparent failure, Crane's The Bridge is the celebration of the unbroken stream of humanistic idealism that he saw in the American historical experience.

Fascinated by Eliot's technique, Crane fought his philosophy. He turned to Eliot's opposites -- the visions, the very motifs of The Bridge are those of Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

"To The Brooklyn Bridge", the prelude to "The Bridge" is an apotheosis of the technological, part of modern America:

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toll align thy choiring stings!)
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry, -

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sight of stars,
Beading thy path - condense eternity:
And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

Under thy shadow by the piers I waited;
Only in darkness in thy shadow clear.
The City's fiery parcels all undone,
Already snow submerges an iron year...

O Sleepless as the river under thee
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep,
And of the curveship lend a myth to God. 14

"The Bridge" acknowledges Man, the creator, as generic and anonymous. His creation is more important. In the American experience this creator is the master of a wild continent and the architect of the country's dreams.

"The Bridge" is a set of disparate poems united by national figures, legends, early history, modern inventions - all interwoven to express the "Myth of America".

The central idea of "The Bridge" is an organic panorama showing the continuous and living evidence of the past in the inmost vital substance of the present.

"Van Winkle" is a transition between sleep and imminent tasks of the day. The protagonist leaves his room filled with harbor

sounds and walks to the subway. In his walk he remembers his childhood which is also the "childhood" of the continental conquest. The protagonist identifies with Rip Van Winkle, who becomes the guardian angel of the journey into the past:

Macadam, gun-gray as the tunny's belt,
Leaps from Far Rockaway to Golden Gate:
Listen! the miles a hurdy-gurdy grinds -
Down gold arpéggios mile on mile unwinds.

Times earlier, when you hurried off to school,
- It is the same hour through a later day -
You walked with Pizarro in a copybook,
And Cortes rode up, reining tauntly in -

.....

Macadam, gun-gray as the tunny's belt,
Leaps from Far Rockaway to Golden Gate...
Keep hold of that nickel for car-change, Rip, -
Have you got your paper -?
And hurry along, Van Winkle - it's getting late!¹⁵

In "The River" the subway is a figurative, psychological vehicle for transporting the reader to the Middle West. The extravagance of the first twenty-three lines of this section is an intentional burlesque on the cultural confusion of the present, a great agglomeration of noises analogous to the strident impression of a fast express rushing by. The rhythm is jazz:

Stick your patent name on a signboard
brother - all over - going west - young man
Tintex - Japalac - Certain - teed Overalls ads
and lands sakes! under the new playbill ripped
in the garanteed corner - see Bart Williams what?
Minstrels when you steal a chicken just
save me the wing, for if it isn't
Erie it ain't for miles around a
Mazda - and the telegraphic night coming on Thomas
a Ediford - and whistling down the tracks
a headlight rushing with the sound - can you
imagine - while an EXPRESS makes time like
SCIENCE - COMMERCE and the HOLY GHOST
RADIO ROARS IN EVERY HOME WE HAVE THE NORTH POLE
WALL STREET AND VIRGIN BIRTH WITHOUT STONES OR
and no more sermons windows flashing roar
Breadhtaking - as you like it ... eh?

So the 20th Century - so
whizzed the Limited - roared by and left
three men, still hungry on the tracks, ploddingly
watching the tail lights wizen and converge,
slipping gimleted and neatly out of sight. 16

Noise, pollution, imposing architecture, business, all the
meretricious and vulgar beauty of America were important images
that Crane used to show the awaiting actuality which he felt could
be destructive and yet recreative.

Crane represents a curious contradiction that we shall
see repeated again in Smith's Trinity, namely a dual loathing and,
at the same time, loving of technology which becomes simultaneous-
ly beauty and beast, plague and salvation. Of course this ambi-
valence is not new. Hermit Thoreau was enamored of the idea of The
Modern. Hawthorne constantly toyed (for example in "The Artist of
The Beautiful") with the spiritualization of technology. Henry
Adams in The Education goes so far as to equate medieval mass re-
ligious sentiment with The Power of the "dynamo". Very traditional
all this - - an historical love-affair with the bright Medusa of
Technology and Science.

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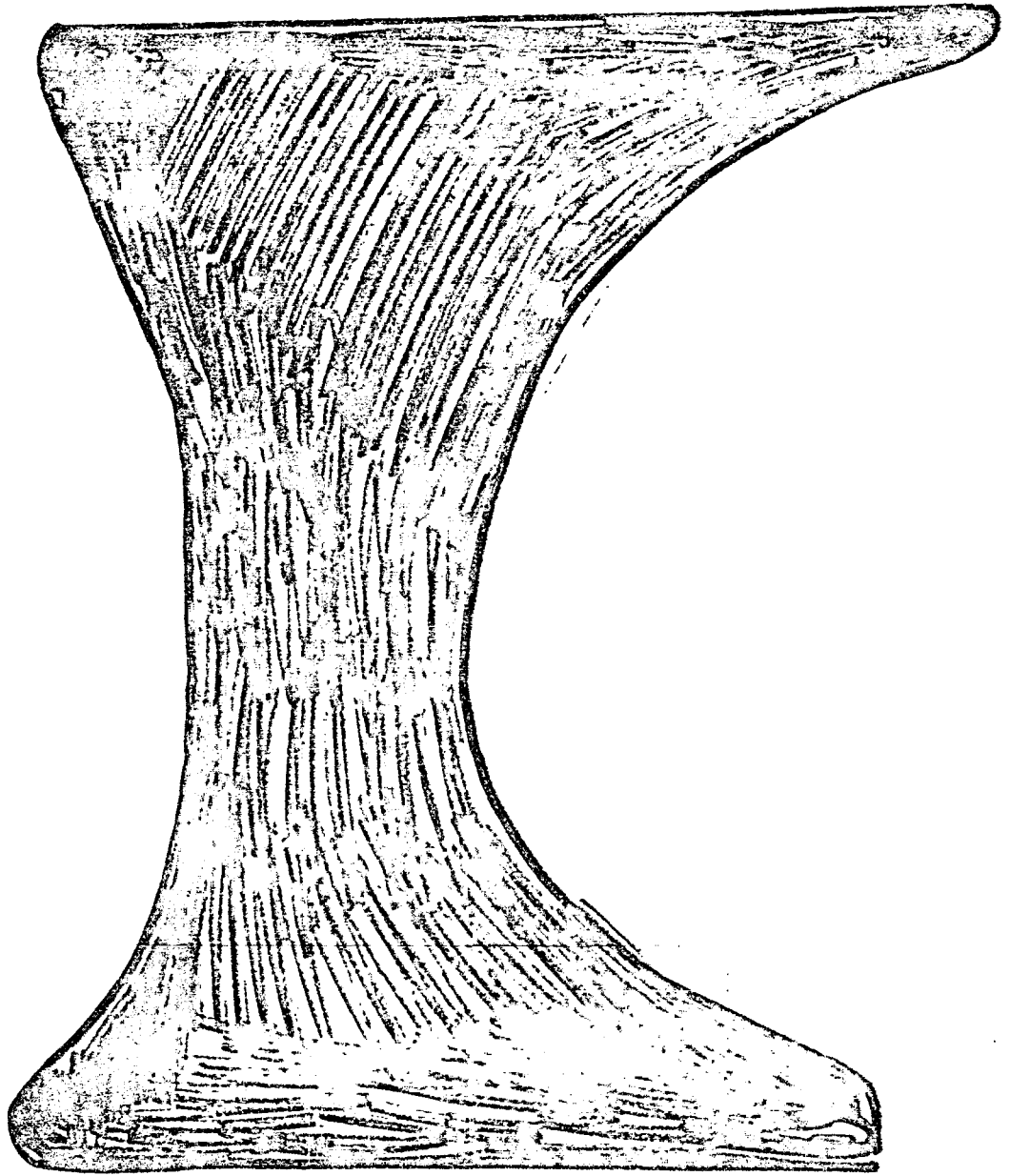
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The Smith's logos: the anvil

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMITH'S THOUGHT

This chapter is concerned with three of Smith's works: The Early Poems, "The Anti-Civilization League" and the writing of Smith as Raphael Talliaferro.

The works, anterior to Trinity, are clear evidences that Smith remains basically unvarying, unchanging. Trinity represents the culmination of all themes he treated earlier and which form part of his consistent epistemological, social, economic vision.

3.1. The Early Poems

Smith's early poems are an entrance into Smith's psyche, a revealing clearing, revealing in so far as they indicate themes and directions Smith uses throughout his professional career.

Smith represents himself in his early poems as one of the Romantics, with all that implies: stress on individualism; a partial antipathy towards industrialization, a bias against factories and time-schedules, a strong feeling against the taming of the individual. Somehow, in Smith's mind, taming means slavery and slavery means fascism. As the individual gets tamed he loses his soul.

Smith's early poems present a fear of ecological disaster. With the wise innocence of a Blake, Smith, in his own ingenuous vision, sees ecological balance threatened.

Paradoxically, Smith still remains an enthusiast for the machine, or better, for machine power, like Whitman in "To a Locomotive in Winter". While at the same time he attacks the factory and "the modern" he is attracted by them.

In a way this is not a real contradiction. Apparently this is a relatively easy puzzle to be solved: Smith differentiates between the

machine age as regimentation and the machine age as power for the good of man. On one hand Smith attacks the negative aspects of the machine age and, on the other, he glorifies the machine which could, according to his personal vision, be at man's service if appropriately used.

Early Smith is a dream-oriented Romantic. Smith's early poems include not only poems based on dreams but also poems based on daydreams, premonitions and waking visions.

In "The Wild Ducks", for instance, Smith writes in a simple but vivid language about a recurrent dream dealing with ducks he had had since childhood. In real life the ducks belonged to Smith's great uncle and the phlox-lined cesspool in the poem was at Smith's childhood home at Bellmore, Long Island.

The motif of this poem arises from a real scene in real time and develops in the last line to hypnogogic dream-awake vision. In this poem, written in the winter of 1956/57, Smith brings in his personal fear about death without resurrection.

This early Smith lives in a world of imminent disaster as he shows in "The Wild Ducks":

Somewhere on the water circle
flashrimmed with purple, jagged phlox,
the wild ducks, straining, swim in threes
and terror-close the circle down

Tense glossy mallards swimming on:
brown pairs of females trail the drakes,
and purple-green, magentisheened,
the drake is straining, centerbone¹

Smith presents a micro-cosmic picture in which the circle of flowers is a micro-scale "emblem" of the whole world. And as this circle disappears, the rim (real "parameter of the real") disappears along with it:

The wild ducks close the circle down
and all the purple rim is gone
and suddenly a sunken stone
chillbreaks the light and whirls and depths²

The wild ducks are symbolic representation of ecology. Smith himself identifies with the male duck as is indicated in the last lines and changes from the third to the first person:

Tensing, swirling, terror-turning,
the drake has closed the circle down
and crossed the sunken centerstone -
my life is stuck, my soul is gone.³

The minute that there is a breakdown, a destruction in the ecological circle which contains the world, Smith himself feels existentially threatened. There is an essential connection between self and world, a "closeness" of Smith's own nature with external "reality" which reappears again in Trinity.

Smith's praise for the natural is clear in many of his other poems. In "Unthinking" he attacks garters and corsets, pointing them out as signs of women's modern artificiality.

Smith implies that contemporary civilization is "coarse" because women are wearing "artificial" clothes and smelling unnatural perfumes:

Perfumated primate
crackling with elastic rubs:
I, unthinking well,
yearn for harsher smells
and silken leaps of leopards⁴

Ten years after this poem was written (1954/5), "the 'natural' anti-garter approach" turned to be fashionable. But Smith's poem is part of his "unthinking", anti-city, anti-artificiality, anti-machine, anti-rationality stance. Epistemologically speaking he is interested in becoming one with nature, echoing the traditional Romantic Liebestod into The All/oversoul.

In "Ice Song" Smith preaches a cyclic end of history in which civilization is going to end and cavemen hunting deer are going to return:

Sky stabs, ice cliffs where the moon creeps,

And blinding gulfs are echo fear
Of dawn men hunting straining deer --
The arrowed deer will race again,
And torchlight cries will soar iceclear:
Weep! Time and crystal stars are here
For hunting songs and world throbs.⁵

Here he preaches a complete return to the primitive with no electricity, no machines but with natural power and nativistic, raw, primitive "instinct".

The early Smith has a Romantic vision of the primitive. It is this vision that will induce him to later on write "The Anti - Civilization League" and "The Savage Manifesto".

However, like in Trinity, Smith's duality towards the big city is marked by contrasting poems such as "New York Nightfall" and "Spectown".

In "New York Nightfall" Smith's Whitmanesque praise for Manhattan comes on chillingly clear:

Wet and rough like mountain rock,
a chill day fades.
No pale softness comes to the river,
no twilight to adorn the granite ranges.
Low planes hum through the evening,
passing shadows merging into cloud,
small jewels for a moment flashing.
Freight trains thudding creaking
shrilly brake and start;
their smoke wafts flatly without rising:
their keen whistles smite dense air.
Hailing tugboats, creeping other ways,
wail like pained and straining beasts,
pulling with giant chains against the silent barges.
I want to pray.

As in the case of Whitman, the fascination the city holds for Smith made him write beautiful verses to New York, the city he was raised in and where he still precariously manages to maintain his "calm" suburban life.

However, Smith combats against what he considers the evil of overcrowding. One of his first attempts at socially-significant

poetry was his poem "Spectown," which was written in 1960.

Spectown is Southbridge, Massachusetts, "owned" in those days by American Optical. There, like in Trinity's New York, Smith sees workers as cogs in the machine:

The Southbridge boosters speak of Spectown,
lens capital of the cosmos,
hustling hub of scenic Central Mass.,
and the people of the greengrass
who have ground eighteen billion lenses
union free

This splendid clean and gleaming Godtown,
lens capital of the cosmos,
can boast more skilled labor than Duluth --
it's guaranteed goldshonetruth
certified by CoFC ET AL
union free

MELODIOUS MACHINES
MURMUR IN MY DREAMS
MACHINES; MACHINES;
& YELLOW STREAMS;
MURMURING MACHINES;
MURDER IN MY DREAMS⁷

Ultimately Smith understands labor unions as workers grouped and controlled by the mass-will. This hurts his principles of individualism and, because of that, he is against industrialization. Industrialization is the evil that brings about factories, organized labor and labor unions. Men can no longer be individuals.

In another poem, "The Coming", written in 1961, Smith clearly describes industrial man as a machine-tender:

Thick air is ambient with yellow rare
In afternoons of men who tend machines;
Like eyes of cougars cornered in dank lairs,
It is a furtive stillness, an unseen
Tensing of strength to be unbared.

What power lurks in mystery of air?⁸
What fearsome truth to be unbared?

Again Smith brings in one of his poems the apocalyptic future of his world in imminent disaster. The stillness in the air is a warning of approaching danger. The air inversion, the in-

version, the industrial pollution are signs of ecological chaos. In this scenery Smith describes religious revivalists filling the Yankee Stadium as if they were cheering and screaming in a football game:

In a gigantic bibleballpark where
Cultists stare, singing shivers into screams.
The citydwellers shun their thoroughfares
And know pure hate and fear as in a dream
Of unknown hunting unprepared.

What coming moves mystery of air?
What fearsome truth to be unbarred? 9

Smith's apocalyptic feeling is always an indirect result of a mental process that organizes and decodes the evidence of his perceptions in a city life. Added to this are his silent fears of ecological and human disasters and his longing for the used-to-be New York.

It is interesting to observe that in the Smithian psyche, below the layer of optimism and romanticism, there is a layer of existential anguish.

The anguished Smith's defense mechanism is to create a series of projections and faces, attitudes and theatrical poses which try to balance out his deep hearted existential fear.

Often there is a certain morbidity, a longing for death in Smith's poems. The idea of death, sleep, alienation, non-thinking are always escapes from conflict. In "Homecoming" he writes:

I want a rainscent woman, straight and fair,
With silence fragrant in her damp blown hair,
Whose knowing breasts will be my home to weep
When only tears will lull me to my sleep. 10

Paradoxically, combined with this longing for absence, there is a wish for epic action. In "Sleeptrain Quatrains," written in 1961, this is clear:

Awake I am a common smith:
Asleep I am a megalith,
To whom nude Druid maidens spray
At green awakening of day.

Alone amid the desperate flowers,
I fought the army of the hours;
They writhed & wept, but I
Defied Time's demon butterflies. ¹¹

Dreaming Smith is the Romantic hero, awake he is one of the millions of inhabitants of New York, like John Hamilton in Trinity; dreaming he is an epic hero while awake he is more of a bee in the bee-hive:

In a dream I was the morning,
I wore a saffron cloak.
I was beautiful, I was free, ¹² -
When morning came I broke.

3.2. "The Anti-Civilization League"

In his 1968 essay -- which turned out to be a manifesto -- "The Anti-Civilization League", Smith suggests a return to Ovid's Golden Age, a time when there was no restriction of laws and men were free from coercion, living in "natural rightness":

Thus, I, The Smith, have returned from a wild northern island, and in this madness, I am creating a movement called the Anti-Civilization League. ¹³

As Smith says the essay was inspired by two (unidentified) articles in Natural History Magazine. The first one was a study on the Neanderthal man and the other of overpopulation and the coming famine.

Smith, haunted by the ghost of Malthus, worries about the theory the English economist had set forth at the end of the 18th century, that while world food supplies increase by arithmetical progression, population increases by geometric progression, and that the day is certain to arrive when the world population will exceed its capacity to feed itself. He quotes from Natural History Magazine :

Massive food-population gap.... world population growing at a rate of nearly 2 per cent a year//
Time required for population to double 20 to 30

years in underdeveloped countries/Developed countries
50 to 120 years - U.S. one of the fastest, 63 years
...Doubling Times ... The world today is over-pop-
ulated... Few people face the hard cold facts ...
We are rapidly destroying our planet as a habitat
for homo sapiens.¹⁴

The solution Smith proposes is a rather anarcho-Romantic one: the Anti-Civilization League. He desires to somehow go back to early primitivism, to a Somewhere Over the Rainbow, never-never land (state?) of The Natural/ Primitive.

Between the time of the writing of "The Anti-Civilization League" and Trinity, Smith evolved tremendously, but at the same time, the general truth of both pieces is essentially the same. In the former work he simply preaches the supreme order of the past over the present; he proposes a return to earlier times in a complete discrediting of homo rationalis, while in the latter the same motif is still present but modified. In Trinity Smith evolved to an acceptance of the Faustian fulfillment: man shall command the elements for good and evil, man shall be the incarnation of the scientific spirit, which is how he finishes Trinity:

He commanded the elements.

Of the numbers of shad and men,

Of law and banking and the suns,

I sing wild raspberries and world trade.¹⁵

In "The Anti-Civilization" Smith does not accept the fact that men themselves have at hand the means of avoiding starvation. He does not allude to the fact that if what men already know were simply applied to all the agricultural land of the world, and the problem of proper distribution were solved, the world could feed itself.

In his manifesto Smith does not mention what he poetically points out in Trinity: plants and animal under adverse conditions reproduce frantically in order that some species may survive; nor does he mention that, as diet and living standards move upward,

the increases in population coming from lower economic levels tend to stabilize themselves somewhere within the limits of potential food supplies, i.e. the poorer the diet and the living conditions, the faster the population tends to breed.

Here before descending to the realm of hard rock solution Smith allows himself the vagaries of pure speculation. He totally ignores the argument that it is not impossible that, once men begin to feed the world properly, particularly the more starved areas, the population problem in relation to the food supply tend to correct itself.

In a simplistic vision of Marxism, Smith reduces this socialist doctrine to a mere distribution of the same amount of food:

The revolution is beyond Marxism, for it is not motivated by need for daily bread. TAKE ALL THE OUTPOURINGS OF THE MONSTROUS CORNUCOPIA & DISTRIBUTE THEM EQUALLY AND MEN WILL STILL BE HUNGRY.¹⁶

Marxist equalitarianism should also include "the guaranteed minimums of money & vital services and equality of opportunity" Smith is claiming in his essay. What Marxists cannot suppress is the reality of technology which, along with the Industrial Revolution, gave rise to Karl Marx's theories. And Smith in this essay points out that technology might be the great danger:

Then might dynasties of Lord Techniks rule, ruled by the inertia of their industries until the world is smothered in shit? Will only virus life remain?¹⁷

As a representative of contemporary American thought Smith loses his belief in homo rationalis. He no longer believes man has control of his environment. He fears the sterile dead-end intellectualism of science and technology:

Shall every civilization end insane? I sat down to write a carefully reasoned essay, but perhaps I no longer believe in human reason.¹⁸

Perhaps the fact that Smith lives in New York is a contrib-

utory cause to his ultimate cynicism. New York more than any other place in the United States represents the apotheosis of the problems of contemporary technology facing an urban environment. As he says:

...8,000 garbage men are growling beneath my window as they mob New York's City Hall. URRRRRRRRRRR now they mightily howl for money.¹⁹

The representation of this howling sound - URRRRRRRRRRR - is familiar in Smith's texts. It also appears in Trinity. It is the cry of the so-called rational man returning back to caveman habits which Smith both rationally abhors and emotionally agrees with.

Smith points that the entire urban system has been corrupted in New York:

The longshoremen have already gone on strike. Momentary peace has come to schools: with more than 2,000 policemen to muscle them in, the union teachers have returned to Brownsville as an army of occupation: the principle of community decision has been successfully defeated by the teachers and the board of education bureaucracy. Even the policemen and firemen are threatening to strike, but I am cheered by the thought of the radio wave writers also striking.²⁰

For him New York is the microcosm representing the entire macrocosm. New York's problems are the same as any industrial centers.

Smith never relents once he is on the trail of a problem. What he has tried to do is to deal with his real environment; he is not an escapist.

Technology, business, ecological unbalance, war, atomic waste, pollution, political repression, they are all everyday issues. And Smith deals with them all:

Vietnam-urban putrefaction-insane thingfulness-
The Bombs - Presidential elections mocking the
will of the people ... The production societies
run like spastic giants. The control centers do

not function. Unmonitored, uncoordinated, techno -
cracy blunders onward, blind to ultimate environ-
mental and spiritual consequences. This acquisitive
sickness ... 21

Smith does not think that industries - a necessary evil of
the 20th century - can have an effective ecological control, pri-
marily because of industrial economics. He quotes Natural History
Magazine:

The War on Hunger Conference was started with a
filmed Esso commercial promoting the use of oil,
asphalt and pesticides for shortrange productivity
gains with no consideration of longterm environ-
mental consequences.... poisoning of the sea, the
air and the soil.... chronic poisoning of people....
the reduction of photosynthesis on land and in the
sea leading to a serious reduction in the oxygen
in our atmosphere... the possibly fatal interrup-
tion of delicately balanced ecological cycles...
unplanned acts despoiling our environment... A m
insane preoccupation with an ever growing gross na-
tional product could lead in the not-too-distant
future to no national product²²

This ecological-industrial impasse, though, isn't "acci -
dental," but embedded in the fiber of human psychology. We are - -
in Smith's view - - witnessing the unfolding of psycho-genetic
inevitability. Civilization produces frustration; frustration spurs
on technology. The stimulus (the civilized) - feedback (the ecol-
ogically unbalanced) circle is inherent in "progress".

Though he stresses he is not a Freudian, Smith affirms
that the famous psychoanalyst was not a scientist but a prophet
when he said things such as:

Civilization is neurosis of a progressively more
severe order. ²³

Or:

Civilization is founded on repression. ²⁴

Smith agrees with Freud's ideas about civilization though
his worries are based on more economic rather than psychological
reasoning:

I see what has been repressed or suppressed or unsatisfied seething underneath, breaking out at many points, as if the beginning of our age of great volcanic activity. Sexually and in the values of work, production & social goals - the forces of upheaval. The institutions, even the very systems of government, no longer adequately serve the purposes originally intended nor change fast enough to fulfill our needs. No longer does the industrial civilization provide sufficient stability, security, predictability, environmental control and planning - above all, purpose. As lives become more crowded and more corporately organized, as work itself becomes less basic and more specialized, fewer & fewer basic human wishes are answered.²⁵

As in Trinity, "The Anti-Civilization League" presents hints of cabalism:

Yet perhaps the horses of destruction can be harnessed. Good & evil are inseparable in life: creation and destruction rise from the same sources.²⁶

At this point Smith approaches even closer to Trinity. Good and evil coexist. Life is a force which is constantly making experiments with good and evil in order to re-organize itself.

Although Smith's "The Anti-Civilization League" seems so "crude" his worries about a new dark age might contain a bit of this truth in them:

There might be a new dark age of anarchy, and then at least the human race would live.²⁷

"The Anti-Civilization League" is a rehearsal of Trinity's ideas. Trinity is a poetic re-saying of "The Anti-Civilization League" 's ideas in a more complete hardnosed down to earth way.

3-3. Smith's Work under the Pseudonym Raphael Talliaferro

Smith disclaims any influence from Hart Crane in Trinity though he admits his own identification with Crane's lonely daring in taking the epic risks, attempting, as in The Bridge, a synthesizing

definite statement on twentieth-century American civilization.

However, under the pseudonym of Raphael Talliaferro, Smith wrote a poem, "The Bridge of Fire", confessedly dedicated to Hart Crane and also named after Crane's compelling poem:

White bridge of fire
 Cathedral-window portals to the stars
 : stones winged by sailing harps -
 Whelming into song - - æole Elohin!
 Cathay! Atlantis! Troy! Manhattan! 28

Raphael Talliaferro is strongly influenced by Crane. He identifies with The Bridge, the symbol of technological spiritualization:

Dark poet
 Of ship lights on black ocean
 I also anvil on The Bridge
 perilous of fire the wondrous forge
 in pale suspension over tides
 - the windswept altar onto night 29

Harry is The Smith who is going to anvil on the bridge, "the windswept altar onto night." The only thing is that The Smith is here hidden behind Talliaferro, one of his splinter-selves.

Smith is a technological hater, Talliaferro is pro-machine. Smith is pastoral, Talliaferro urban. Smith is closer to Emerson, Talliaferro closer to Crane. It is difficult at this point until further evidence is in, to distinguish between Adam Dunne and Raphael Talliaferro. Could it be that all of Smith's masked nocturnal (ID)-selves are the exact opposite of his daytime "Smithness"?

These various faces of Smith are present in Trinity. There is a face of Smith which is anti-materialism, mainly at the beginning of Trinity. Towards its end, another part of Smith is presented. It is one that launches itself towards materialism and matter as an answer. In fact this ambivalence is carried throughout Trinity. On one hand we have anti-materialistic pastoral remembrances. On the other, we have materialism, Manhattan as the take-out point

to the stars. It is a confrontation between past and present, dream and reality.

Talliaferro celebrates his bridge-like Crane somewhat celebrated his, as a beautiful symbol of man's ability, through technology, to overcome the inadequacies and the fragmentation:

O dark companion,
returning to death again!
Blind poets & crippled engineers!
Homer! Milton! Hephaestus! Roebing!
Odysseys! Argonauts! Sky aspirings!
Again, Ho, Cochius! Jason! Hesting harps!
Wings! Aeolian strings: eoning
Up the long processional aisle of lamps:
To the white altar terrible of stars!
Again, the anvil rings! The epic cry!
Atlantics! Brooklyn! The Bridge of Fire...
Infinite consanguinity we bear.
We live the longitude of beauty spanned.
Man is metaphor.³⁰

"Sky aspirings": Man wants to reach higher and higher. The plane becomes a religious vehicle for a visionary encounter with God, the same proposed in Trinity:

What is all this?
man thought
what is all this
to the stars³¹

This is an allusion to the enormity of humanity's journey of which the space technology is a dizzying process that is very imperfectly understood by Man.

Man is "the metaphor". Man becomes like God through the extension of knowledge, according to The Book of Genesis.

Smith might present himself as a rustic Thoreau most of the time but that is only part of the total Harry. He is fragmented. Obviously, in the heart of all his splintered game-playing selves, there is a well-integrated self that drinks in the world around him and sweats it out poetry.

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CHAPTER FOUR

A CLOSE READING OF TRINITY

Before going into the analysis of the text of Trinity the discussion of its poetic symbolism, we shall briefly comment on its form and the techniques Smith used in writing it, so that Trinity's content can be better understood.

Trinity was written in 1975, formwise, as Smith points out, it is "symphonic". The themes are introduced, abandoned and re-introduced with variations and elaborations. In reference to Trinity's basic organizing principle Smith himself wrote:

Trinity is perhaps most akin to Bartok, especially in the accommodation of dissonance.¹

In fact Smith maintaining a coupled dissonance-consonance counterpoint pits pastoral against industrial, natural against urban, traditional against modern, but all in a balance revealing way.

Two earlier narratives by Smith, "Stones" and "West Battery" are characterized by somewhat similar symphonic approaches.

The former, by the way, is set at St. Paul's Chapel, the oldest colonial building in Manhattan and a part of Trinity Parish, only a few blocks uptown from Trinity Church:

Wall Street & its streets are walled.
The only open bits are the graveyards.
Of old churches.

- - St. Paul's²

Trinity is an epic narrative but it differs from traditional epic poetry which is metrical and tends toward symmetry by units, uniformity of line, stanza and stanzaic groupings. Trinity is multiform, only partially metrical, and relies on asymmetry. Its multiformness is a larger synthesis of prose and poetry, now-

Dear Jandryra,

6/10/180

I agree, yes, that Melville is a better comparison than W.C. Williams. Also, Trinity indeed is the poetic formulation of ideas expressed in the Anti-Civilization League essays (see enclosures; I'm not sure that these essays were received by you). I never activated the League because these issues moved into the political mainstream soon after I conceived the idea (1968), as Common Cause was founded by John Gardner and many environmental action agencies were created.

Yes, the end of Trinity is a vow, charged with intuitive optimism about the power of dreams (wishes) to endow the future.

Shaw? Yes, I've read most of Shaw (while I was a student) and seen many plays ^(mostly when in my 20's) and I'm not sure how I might have been influenced.

Good luck — Harry

el and epic, epic and lyric. About this Smith wrote:

Trinity is epic, fusing prose and poetry. I think of it as a poem, but it might as accurately be called a novel that got loose. 3

Regarding the visual possibilities, Smith learned most about technique from e.e.cummings, whose works he read avidly while a student at Brown University. In important passages, Trinity has a spatial design of words which is psychologically important to what is being described.

Various techniques used in Trinity were first used by Smith in parts of "Gawaine Greene," an unfinished novel which had a section published in the anthology X-1. Actual patterns of perceptions and verbal content of consciousness were some of the techniques used in "Gawaine Greene" which were extended to Trinity:

THE UNIVERSE IS NOT FOR SALE

: a way of reminding himself of the pettiness of such matters, he theorized. Buying & selling:
Buying & selling should be relatively unimportant in a life. - Yes, The Joys of Life NOT FOR SALE:

"The best things are free,"

he sang in his mind.

: Monetary success is no true measure of a man. Money should be only a means toward reasonable ends.

moongo We moongo
pushed to & fro
to & fro

pulled
pulled

& pushed & worn pushed & pulled & worm
by motions before us & beyond us, Inevitable as
moonpull

Inevitable
moonpull

the wear of spaceforce

Down Down

weight & time

flesh stress virus mould & old & old

Nitrocarbo

-hydro

la la la

Lavoris for the Clitoris
Keeps you kissing sweet

la la la 4

Objective description alternates with streams of consciousness the patterns of perception and thought rendered by psychologically appropriate spatial-positioning, projective-bits, corresponding to the discordant barrage of sensory data, including signs, shouts, graffiti, etc.

Thus Trinity contains elements of concrete poetry, as materials for the larger structure, not as an end in itself.

4.1. Textual Explications

Trinity's drama unfolds on Hardhat Day, May 8th, 1970, when workers from the World Trade Center attacked a peace march in downtown Manhattan.

The first movement, "Order for Burial," occurs as historic Trinity Church, at Wall Street and Broadway, becomes a besieged Red Cross station for the wounded.

The second movement, "The Growth of the World Center," is a summation of modern life, a dreadful perspective on human transformation.

The third movement, "Day of the Earth," brings to life both the early history and the natural splendor of Manhattan and the wistful pageantry of the Earth Day celebration on 14th Street.

The three movements are linked together by the protagonist John Hamilton, an epic hero who, like the classical epic heroes, is the embodiment of humanistic values. His personal struggle is the colossal agony of modern man: human versus commercial, mercantile values.

In the first movement, John Hamilton witnesses the riot and, in the confusion, is beaten by the workers. He envisions the completed towers of the World Trade Center and thinks of the ma-

terialistic life it represents.

The second movement also occurs on May 8th, 1970, as Hamilton, dazed, wanders around the city.

The third movement begins within the same time frame, as Hamilton continues to walk around. Hamilton's thoughts revert to the First Annual Earthday, an observance which had occurred the preceding month, April, 1970. This extended flashback finishes by the end of the book where the time circles back to Hardhat Day again.

Actually Smith himself was a witness to the Hardhat Day march. A friend of his (at his side) disappeared. Later on Smith learned his friend had wandered the city in shock. Thus *Trinity* is "fact," although individual characters are fictional.

This much is certain that *Trinity* reflects the major issues of the American 70's: the Kent State massacre, the invasion of Cambodia, young people's protest movements, the rise of technology, ecological concern, besides the mentioned attack on peace marchers.

4.1.1 First Movement: "Order for Burial"

The title of *Trinity*'s first movement is similar to the title of T.S. Eliot's first section of "The Waste Land", "The Burial of the Dead". As a matter of fact, "The Burial of the Dead" is also the Anglican burial service and it sets the tone of both poems and signals the reader to prepare for a recitation of grief and lamentation.

The first part of *Trinity* resembles the same theme used in the first part of Eliot's "The Waste Land". Eliot's poem is an attack on Western Civilization which seemed hopelessly bankrupt in the early twenties. Eliot starts his poem by talking about "memory" and "desire". "Memory" suggests past; "desire" associated with memory, suggests a return of the past:

April is the cruellest month, breeding

(I just looked at '71)
"Order for the Burial of the Dead"

report for the ...

III.B.1. First Movement: Order for Burial

The title of TRINITY's first movement is similar to the title of T.S.Eliot's first section of "The Waste Land", The Burial of the Dead. As a matter of fact, The Burial of the Dead is also the title of the Anglican burial service and it sets the tone of both poems and signals the reader to prepare for a recitation of grief and lamentation.

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Here's a copy of what I sent help. My only additions to what I found a reasonable discussion

April is
Lilacs o
Memory a
Dull roo
Winter k
Earth in
A little

The Order for
**THE BURIAL
OF THE DEAD**

Harry Smith starts TRINITY, as "The Waste Land", is an attack on the flowering of past feelings in the flowering g

→ We were both right

Look through this leaflet as you wait for the service to begin. It will explain the service to you and show you how to take your part in it. The things that you are to do as a member of the congregation are printed in red.

The man
Old grav
of dream
of father
exposed

There is an obvious analogy between TRINITY, as "The Waste Land", is an attack on the flowering of past feelings in the flowering g is specifically related to the United States

The polemic title of the Anglican burial service.

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
 A little life with dried tubers.⁵

In the same general tone/mood Harry Smith starts Trinity with "Order for Burial" speaking of past feelings in the flowering graves:

Ago feelings
 déjà déjà
 the flowering graves

The man became a boy -
 Old grave the new grave's maw
 of dreams, and the recurring
 of father's scattered bones
 exposed in an open grave⁶

We begin both poems reaching back into a common Anglo-European past. "Memory" here is very specifically the memory of the pre-industrial Europe-America before the great wars, before the horrors, a bath in the languidness of "civilization" Henry James talks about in Beyond the Rim, the almost ingenuous Europe-America of the fin and beginning of the new siècle.

There is a clear analogy between both poems. Trinity, like "The Waste Land", is an attack on Western Civilization but is specifically related to the United States, the essence of Occidental capitalism. Similarly, Trinity is a criticism of the capitalistic system.

"Order for Burial" is a trip back into the past, a personal and historical return.

In this trip Smith remembers his pastoral childhood and the pear orchard his father had planted before his birth. This pear orchard had previously been used as a theme in "Time in the Pear Orchard", a four-poem series published in Me, The People:

At the twig tips
 the faint push of yellow-green
 soon to bud & bud to blossom & smell to fruit
 my father planted for, before my birth
 - the eighteen trees, tree-rowed closely,
 young tall in my childhood,
 smaller. There will be a few pears
 this fall, even for a child.
 My father's orchard has grown old.⁷

"Order for Burial", at this point, presents a cumulative sense of the pastoral. Words such as "blossom," "white," "pear orchard," "petals," "childhood," "bough," "breeze," "rain," and "fragrance" form an extensive remembered pastoral mosaic:

The man remembered a blossom Sunday in the pear orchard, his young fair daughter playing with petals, at the place of his childhood. On a swing, a neighbor boy, shouting high, and daughter laughing... He shook a bough and made it rain upon his daughter as it rained upon his childhood, when he had lain full afternoons in fragrance. White, and the men knew sorrow in passing things and joy in life renewing. And in the passage of a breeze, falling blossoms reigned.⁸

This Eden also resembles the "rose garden" memory at the beginning of "The Waste Land":

Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
 With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colomnade,
 And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
 And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
 Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
 And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,
 My cousin's, he took me on a sled,
 And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
 Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
 In the mountains, there you feel free.⁹

For Smith the personal memory is mixed with an overview of the United States:

"Isn't the founder of the Marine Corps buried here?"
 The man shrugged, turned his palms up.¹⁰

The question a visitor asks the protagonist is not answered but it raises the historical reference to the Marine Corps which gives the reader a sense of resurrection of the dead. Similarly Eliot's "The Burial of the Dead" also suggests resurrection within a mythical and ritualistic burial. Smith also deals with resurrection, no matter if at a personal or at a historical level, but always in the context of a collective memory.

It is the sign in the churchyard that calls the reader's attention to the solemnity of the event of death:

NOTICE:

Visitors are requested to respect the privileges accorded to them in the use of the Church - yard and to aid the Authorities in preserving the sanctity of the Graves.

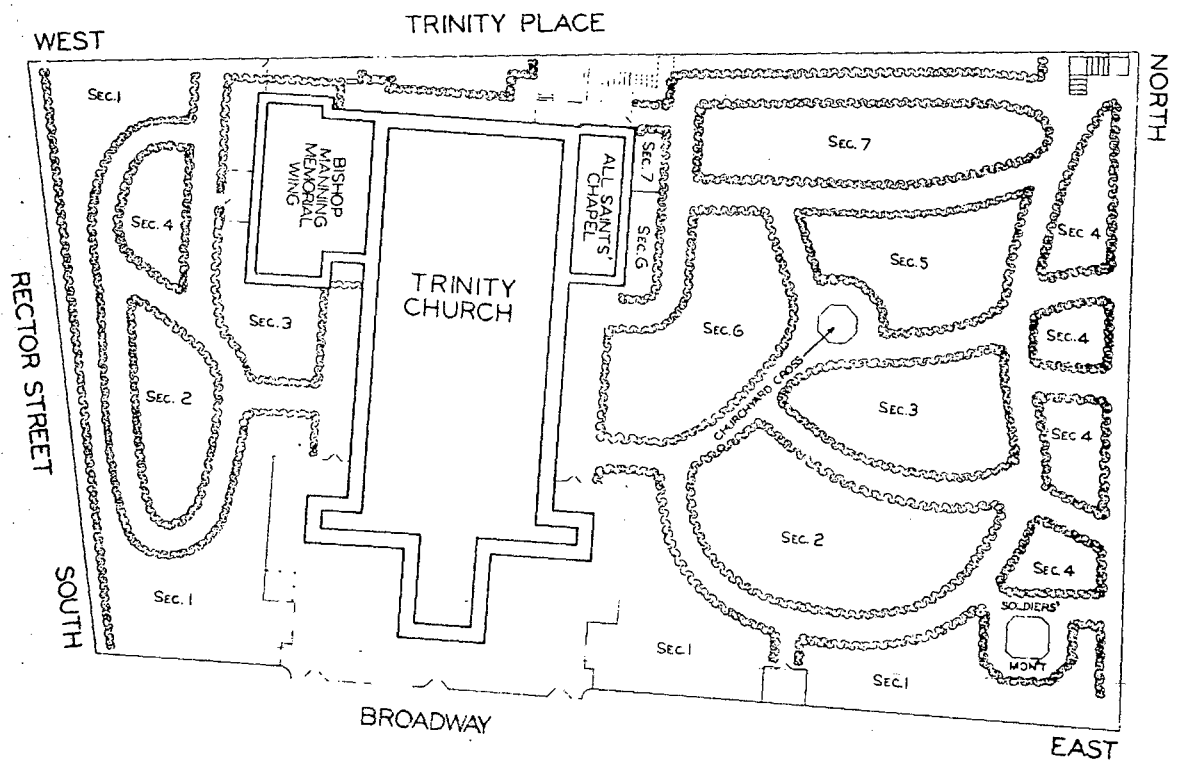
Sitting on the Gravestones is not permitted. 11

The last warning suggests prohibition. It is interesting to observe that this allusion to rules follows the first mention of American History, the Marine Corps. Smith has raised two ideas: war and rules. The keystone here is that American History begins with both war and military order. Smith plays on the ideas of death, war and rules, and tangles them in one: the American consciousness begins in the war, in a system of rules and prohibition.

Throughout Trinity's first movement we are in the presence of existential nothingness, a sense of infinity and death -- recurrent themes in Smith's The Early Poems :

Bright skull, startled. Beheld
Doom's grinning stereotype
eye sockets dark onto infinity
voids between the stars

Shook boughs.
White victory of bones. 12



MAP OF TRINITY CHURCHYARD

Here we have a subtle echo of the graveyard scene in Hamlet.[§] Smith hamletingly questions the very nature of zeit and seim.

However, Smith's expression "the white victory of bones" suggests an overview of religion, man trapped in time against a background of infinity.

After this allusion to supra-materiality of eternity, Smith pits mystical time against mercantile time. This is the first dichotomy in Trinity: the long view of man as demigod versus the contracted view of man as animal.

Trinity's protagonist is settled within a religious context. Referring to him Smith himself would later write:

Hamilton is an Episcopalian like his forebears and evidently a religious man who would recall these Biblical statements in such a situation.¹³

The Biblical statements Smith refers to are mainly taken from Psalm 90 which deals with the transitoriness of man's life. Smith plays with Biblical words and mixes them up with contemporary idiom like "THE AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGE" and "O Statistician" in order to suggest the contrast between the time of The Patriarch

§ ...why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quidits now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statures, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his land will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor have no more, ha? (William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act V, sc.1)

(part of his concept of noble-savage, mythic time) and the time of the Banker/Entrepreneur:

THE AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGE:
sign.. Signs. Green Greening
gone

For a thousand years are but yesterday
and as a watch in the night

Scatterest
and fade away suddenly like the grass

EXCHANGE
so teach us to number our days.

○ STATISTICIAN¹⁴

Smith links the Biblical words about man's transitoriness with a sign announcing THE AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGE which is located right across Church Street, opposite Trinity Church. He contrasts the shortness of man's life with the American capitalistic view which tends to eternalize man through bonds and stocks -- through money. Money becomes infinity and somehow the importance of human life is relegated to a secondary plane.

Man's vision of human life within the capitalistic system is short and subordinated to the eternalization of capital/money values. Human life is controlled and numbered by statistics which depersonalize men by transforming them in simple numbers.

Men do not live individual lives but are included in a society of mass-numbers. In this society men are identified by numbered cards and by how much they own in real estate. They are included in statistics which evaluate life and death by numbers. Statisticians are the high priests of a new religion of systems unrelated to flesh and body.

Smith also contrasts the ecological unbalance with the semiological world of signs. Man invades nature and tries to control it, he tries to curb it. This is another basic idea throughout Trinity: urban life versus Nature, uncontrolled use of natural

sources versus ecological unbalance.

In another analogy to Eliot's "The Waste Land" Smith writes:

"...the damm graves bloomin every spring," the fat slut said.¹⁵

Eliot wrote:

That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?¹⁶

Manhattan becomes the waste land, Trinity a reiteration of the theme in "The Waste Land". The unreal city under the brown fog of a winter dawn" is replaced by the frighteningly real city of New York. "The crowd (which) flowed over London Bridge, so many," is also present in Trinity's Manhattan:

Massive complex for dense-hive, honey combered
with costelier commerce, ... masses hiving sky-
ward and sky like a soiled sheet.¹⁷

The metropolis, in both cases, seeming to somehow surge beyond time into a timelessness of computerized statistical eternity, is reminded of the ancient facts of Death and Resurrection.

An important image of Manhattan is given from above Mount Olivert. Manhattan is the background to the cemetery where the protagonist of Trinity is placed:

When he was a boy the man went to Mount Olivert with his mother to put flowers on his father's grave each Sunday. From that ground, he would pull the dark green pronged vase stinking of rotting flowers. That cold green metal. The dead mess to be dumped; go for fresh water from the faucet by a rich man's mausoleum downhill. The small plot on the hilltop was green & (Perpetual Care). HAMILTON: a small wooden sign. The boy thought there should be a headstone. With the father was the boy's sister whom he had replaced, her death a year before his birth. From the hilltop, the distant spires of Manhattan stood in perpetual mist like a citadel of destiny, seen yet uncomprehended.¹⁸

The image given is that of many individuals quiet in their tombs after a vain struggle in or against the city. "The distant spires of Manhattan" pictures a cold and massive city where individuals fight hopelessly to survive. And this coldness and bareness of Manhattan not only suggests an economic battle but also an ecological one. It is young Smith again haunted by "The Blast":

The holocaust invaded my dreams. Before I saw the the first newsreels, I had dreamed them in the human detail they could never give; after seeing the films, I dreamed anew in the technical detail I had lacked before. Terror captive, I read scientific articles on atomic energy and a serialized novel in the *Colliers*, "The Blast", set in the remnants of Manhattan after worldwide war.¹⁹

Next comes a variation on the theme of death. The "boy's sister" in the poem is not an imaginary character. In real life Smith had a sister who had died before he was born. In 1952 Smith wrote "Death Song to his sister":

Why does she sleep so poorly and so long?
The dusk is coming on with fireflies:
The wind is warm: night voices start low cries.
Why is her breath the song of dimming stars?

Her lips are cold, I know; her tears lie new
Like evening dew upon a summer hill,
And now so white and lost, so far and still,
She only sleeps and smiles perhaps a love.²⁰

The experience of this sister's death seems to have been stocked deeply in Smith's psyche, especially in a kind of game he plays in which he is inexorably linked to the dead:

I was a kind of replacement for her.²¹

In fact Smith endows his protagonist, Hamilton, with some aspects of his own past. Smith's father, like Hamilton's, died when he was a little boy, precisely when he was four years old. His father was buried in a cemetery called Mount Olivert exactly

as happened to Hamilton's father. Smith's mother used to take him to the grave nearly every week while Hamilton's mother took him every Sunday.

Another important detail in the cemetery episode is the name Hamilton. It is the first time the reader gets acquainted with the protagonist's family name. From this moment on, Smith simply calls him by his last name, Hamilton. Coincidentally, Alexander Hamilton is buried in the yard of Trinity Church.

Obviously Smith is being ironic for Hamilton was the opposite of Jefferson and he wanted to free the United States from being agricultural and transform it into an industrial country. Jefferson was a bucolic, agricultural, farm-centered man. §

A less ironic and more obvious technique would have been to simply use Jefferson as the protagonist's name. But Smith chose Hamilton to be the name of Trinity's protagonist because of his own curiously ambivalent approach to the interaction between the bucolic and the commercial.

In a way Alexander Hamilton could be called the father of American capitalism and the great advocate for development of a factory system, fanatically against the Jeffersonian Franklinian philosophy of agrarianism.

§ (Jefferson) hated the cities - that is, the crowding of people together in squalor - ... he considered the yeoman or independent farmer the most reliable citizen of free society, and ... he feared the importing of industrial revolution into the United States ...

Stuart Gerry Brown, Thomas Jefferson (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p.viii.

Jefferson believed that a favourable environment, such as the American countryside, nourished virtuous characteristics in humankind, whereas cities bred or brought man's lowest and weakest traits.

Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 160.

Hamilton's economic theories were based on inequality of human rights -- as Merle Curtis points out in The Growth of American Thought -- and this Smith would never consciously accept:

Hamilton, in defending the thesis that the government must be strong and sensitive to the interests of the great property holders, emphasized even more baldly the theory of the innately unequal and selfish nature of man.²²

Of course "innately unequal nature of man" sounds ~~undemocratic~~. Smith, being married to a Jewish woman, would never accept this way of viewing man. Jews have suffered enough for having been thought "unequal." He chooses a new Hamilton, a descendent of Alexander, to reevaluate, in 1975, his ancestor's doctrine.

Trinity's Hamilton is not going to accept the techno-commercial conditions to which Alexander Hamilton relegated man:

... women and even girls found employment in the rising of factories and mills with the approval not only of humble men who needed the help of wives and daughters to support their families but of such champions of manufacturing interests as Alexander Hamilton. The hours of labor were from sunup to sundown; the shops and mills were often dark and damp, even according the standards of the time. It was these mills and factories that Hamilton, foe of equalitarian doctrines, regarded as nurseries of virtue for lower-class children and women.²³

Smith projects himself into Trinity's protagonist and sets John Hamilton in direct opposition to his familial past. Contrasted to Smith's "John," "Alexander" seems rather cynical, especially if the reader recalls what Alexander Hamilton himself said about manufacturing and the employment of women and children:

It is worthy of particular remark that, in general, women and children are rendered more useful, and the latter more early useful, by manufacturing establishments, than they would otherwise be.²⁴

John Hamilton is a touchingly human character. He is not stupidly blind to the harm of industrialization and is at times extremely critical of the big city which he first felt in his childhood memories up on Mount Olivert.

Back to the present, again in Manhattan, Hamilton is an unintentional witness of the attack launched by the workers from the World Trade Center construction site against a peace march in front of the City Hall.

In 1970 Smith himself was a witness to the hardhat march on City Hall and "the mellee at Pace College where ganged men with hammers and pipes beat solitary students, including girls, while the policemen watched." Ray Boxer, now an assistant editor of The Smith, was at Smith's side when all happened. Suddenly Smith noticed his friend had disappeared in the crowd. Later he learned Boxer had wandered around the city in shock.

What Hamilton sees is not any different than how things really happened:

Church - Unusual Something
Shouting Men yellow helmets shouting in the street-
On Broadway. Broadway & Wall Street in front of
the church

He walked toward angry men inside churchyard, and a short burly worker hauled down a flag. Red Cross Flag - into Broadway crowd - CHEERS - the grinning flagtaker.

"Why did they want the flag?" Feeling stupid, Hamilton asked a workman.

"That's a Commie flag."

"I thought it was a Red Cross flag."

"Not an ordinary Red Cross flag. There is something funny about it." 25

This episode well illustrates Harry Smith's philosophy. Smith is against the "easy" masses which he believes are easily manipulated and might be transformed into puppets of fascist tendencies. He has a special fear of the masses because, like in Trinity's mellee, they might easily be transformed into a disorderly

mob.. Here the mob, blinded by their hatred against communism, ironically sees in the red color of the Red Cross flag a symbol of communism. Smith not only expresses his personal fears but also warns against the dangerous feature of far right American "patriotism." Fascism, he reminds us, is also based on nationalist and anti-communist principles.

There is also a lot of irony in this episode. The proletarian pivot of socialist revolutions is here motivated to take attitudes which are against its own interests. The American working class sounds more like an echo of a strong and short-sighted government which is above all anti-communist. The yellow helmeted worker men of the World Trade Center are allied to a consciously "neutralized" police; they become part of the Establishment. The cold war and the terror against communists move the workers to assault the students. This is an expression of American fascism which Smith is extremely aware of.

In his article "Conscience & Consciousness of War" Smith patiently analysed the involvements the United States has had in recent wars. He showed the change in American consciousness towards war from World War II to Vietnam. American soldiers, transformed into barbarians, were no longer fighting for their democratic ideals but against the ghost of communism. In a passage of the article, talking about President Johnson, Smith describes this new barbarism:

His decisions (Johnson's) not to seek re-election in 1968 closely followed the apocalypse of Song My, wherein we had seen ourselves become no better than the Nazi murderers of innocents, save for one helicopter pilot who dared intervene to save hurt children.²⁶

Smith never ignored the fact that a powerful machine encouraged the war: the arms industry. In a way Trinity's workers also represent the military-industrial complex. As long as there is war, the arms industry will survive either producing armaments for allied countries or to use themselves. The working class is

for this arrangement because it means more jobs.

Trinity presents capitalism perverted and turned into a war machine. The Peace Rally is in Wall Street, the core of Western capitalism. This implies that capitalism thrives on war.

The police stand out in "Order for Burial". The orders are from above, where there is a place exclusively for the powerful. Power in a capitalist regime means money, a lot of money. Power in a capitalistic regime does not necessarily mean people or, at least, people's interests. Smith understood this when he wrote in NewsART:

As we escalated our defense of the Diem regime, I didn't see the entanglement for what it was. When we belatedly learned of our direct military action, I still uncritically accepted our government propaganda about International Communism versus Free World. I was disgusted by the rotten bunch we were backing, but I believed what I was told regarding the importance of keeping our commitments. Thus I rationalized our undeclared war. So did President Johnson. Initially, I saw him as a man of peace in a situation where evil rides all roads. I had not yet realized that our experiences with Nazi Germany & Imperial Japan were false guides in modern Asia, nor had I seen that our power politics could not justify this violence and violation. Nevertheless I was aghast at the slaughter of the people, as night after night we saw it on TV, the skillful pictures of death, suffering, devastation. In February 1967, I wrote a long letter to President Johnson. I said we "must use our might with the utmost restraint," trying to avoid civilian casualties. I protested "the chemical warfare aimed at destroying the crops of the people." I also told him: "We have been supporting a government most indifferent to the interests of the people, and we have been opposing what is essentially a populist movement. I agree with the critics who say this situation should never have happened: we should never have supported Diem as we did; we should have agreed to support only a government working for Vietnamese people, and we should not have dishonored the Geneva Treaty calling for free elections." 27

Trinity's drama unfolds when President Nixon was in the middle of his first term -- the "almost triumph" of American fascism. During Nixon's government the United States were sending bombers into Cambodia without the consent of the Senate. In reaction there was an increasing revolt of the young people against war. The Peaceniks started anti-Vietnam protests all over the country.

Smith is not as tolerant of this government as he was of the previous one. He detects a split feeling in the American mind: young versus old, renovation versus conservatism, peace versus war. The young were no longer misled by the nature of the Vietnam war; they had already found what the real conflict was:

Salami smell -

a thick slab of Jewish salami. Noticing Hamilton's stare, the old man said he didn't know what this world was coming to, the young have no respect, the elders lack conviction, authority is weakening. the Chinese are waiting, yes, the Reds make student riots and the spoiled young punks pee on the flag that gave them everything, he never had anything and things came hard. 28

The old man's talk is symptomatic. It is the same old talk young people in all Western nations have heard: there is infiltration of Reds among students; young people should be thankful to the government which fed them; they should be patriotic and not assimilate foreign theories especially if from the Communist World, etc.

Smith clearly associates all this talk with "salami smell," "Jewish salami smell," which turns out to be a good metaphor for Jewish "flesh" during the Holocaust. Suddenly the old man's talk sounds very fascist. It is Smith's racial memory behind the Peace Rally's episode in Manhattan. §

§ It should perhaps be mentioned here that although Smith is not himself Jewish he surrounds himself with Jewish intellectuals. How much this has been brought about by his marriage to a Jewish woman can only be conjectured. Certainly, though, Smith is the soul of sympathy when it comes to the Jews.

In the middle of this consciousness or, as Smith would prefer saying, this lack of consciousness, the policemen "watched and smiled" at the massacre in silent consent. The situation is common in undemocratic countries. "Ganged men with hammers and pipes beat solitary students" provoking the tumult and giving reasons for police interventions.

policemen smiling apologetic requesting gesturing
mob back;
mob growled, gave away. 29

It happened in Manhattan; it happened in Kent State University, in Ohio.

On these occasions police are generally called to make sure there will be no tumult in the streets. However it is necessary to see that a Peace Rally is ultimately a protest against the government which is involved in war. The government cannot accept this and orders the police "to prevent tumult." What really happens is that members of the police, dressed in civilian clothes, are in charge of starting the tumult, infiltrating themselves among the students. The police then have a good excuse to interfere:

Lowered flags - Kent State - Hamilton Cambodia
Vietnam. KENT STATE SHOT DOWN BY NATIONAL GUARD -
a lowering of flags - Official morning - Schools
close - HARDHATS ATTACK PEACE MARCHERS - New York,
May 8 - Rampaging construction workers from the
massive World Trade Center site 30

The working class in Trinity becomes an efficient instrument of action for capitalism's status quo. Policemen in "civilian clothes" are not totally necessary. The reactionary American working class can solve the problem by itself.

For Harry Smith capitalism surges as the diabolical father of the fascist masses. In Smith there is the everpresent implication that aristocracy is inherently genteel:

NOSTOC GREEN POEM SERIES, NO. 1.
101 Neholden Road, Boston 02168



Put
Stamp
Here



Dear Maria Jandyra,
Thank you for sending the critique
of Movement I. I've commented
on only two minor distortions. Otherwise
I think you've built a reasonable
discussion of ideas which are in the
poem, even though, in some cases,
for instance, the churchyard sign
and the Marine Corps, I had no
cover

intention of praise, consciousness ~~of~~
of using them as elements in
an ideological edifice.

Green Towers

Tremendous towers aged in ivy,
sparrows hidden in the turret eaves;
Great towering oaks with broad young leaves,
hollows old in owl and squirrel love;
Quick honeysuckle's fragrance aching
up serpentine overtly inching;
Berryvines entwined on forest floor,
ripe in the dankness strong of sunflare;-
Live in green towers, take the plain loaf,
Drink the spurting June-juice, lewd with life.

HARRY SMITH

from Two Friends

But, yes, I agree that
this can be seen
as part of the
edifice. The
poem creates

intricately, not analytically
and often spontaneously.
at least I do.
Regards — Harry

Map enclosed.

Smith's reply to my critique of Movement I, "Order for Burial".

constructing each time taller buildings, inside himself he be -
comes cooler and more aloof, destroying his own being, de -
stroying his individuality.

The hysteria of the hardhat attack on the peaceniks has
as background the World Trade Center in the process of con -
struction and it will reappear finished in a "dream-sequence":

twin monsterings skyward
a man saw - Massive complex for dense-hive, honey-
combed with costlier commerce, and the construction
men marching to City Hall, singing, GOD BLESS AMERICA
masses hiving skyward
and sky like a soiled sheet.³⁴

Smith finishes the first movement "Order for Burial"
with this image of the World Trade Center as a part of a giant
beehive which stands for New York. It is the first time Smith
caricatures men as bees, an image that will be constant through-
out the rest of the book. A bee is a small insect of no individual
importance. Its life lasts as little as twenty-two, twenty-three
days and is completely dedicated to the work of the hive, gathering
nectar from the flowers in order to produce wax and honey. The
image is perfect. Symphonically Smith goes back to the starting
theme: the praise of the material in man's transitory life.

4.1.2. Second Movement: "The Growth of The World Trade Center"

Smith starts the second movement of Trinity in a mock-
epic tone saying that the United States is the incarnation of
the scientific mind, of technological ideas. He denounces the
replacement of human values by scientific and commercial ones:

To whom the cunning suck of commerce comes,
I sing, steel members of humanity, the growing mass
whose rising bulk portends dominion of the cube:
this athletic technocracy and its perfection of
rigidity, of works & systems & their sources,
structure & utilization, of programs and computations,
unit & uniformity, conformity & the continuous
process and continuous frame, conventions of columns
& beams, continuous walls skyward
Hamilton outgave. ³⁵

In an ironic parody of Walt Whitman's phrase "This athletic democracy," Smith uses the expression "this athletic technocracy" meaning a country of huge technocratic systems which has as citizens conformists, emotionally cooled by a utilitarian infrastructure.

Facing this ominous reality Hamilton "outgabe." "Outgabe" is one of the words included by Lewis Carroll in the nonsense poem "The Jabberwocky" in Alice in the Wonderland. It could be a pun on "grab," "grabber," meaning that Hamilton's chief aim in life is to make money out of this greedy society. It could simply work as a nonsense word: Hamilton outgabe, i.e., he saw no sense in such a society.

In fact, Hamilton, out of pity, felt like a court fool. In a clear re-allusion to Yorick, the fool in Hamlet, Hamilton thinks of himself as Hamlet thought of Yorick:

Let me see. (He takes the skull.) Alas, Poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is - my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your grinning? 36

Hamilton felt misplaced in the "dominion of the cube." He suddenly imagined himself after death:

JOHN A. HAMILTON
1924 -

Son of Nancy Arlens & Thomas Hamilton
Member of the Association of the Bar
of the City of New York, partner in
the distinguished firm of his father.
Devoted husband & father, he did his
Best for himself, his family & his
Fellow Man 37

Envisioning his own tombstone, Hamilton questions him-

self about what good he would have done for himself, his family and his fellow man, presumably in this order of importance.

Smith, projected in the character of Hamilton, worries about what is going to be felt after his death. Will people simply say "son of Anna Dinkelmeyer and Harry Joseph Smith, "member of this and that association"? Smith does not accept the idea of not being recognized for his individual efforts; he does not want to be simply identified with groups and associations; he wants to be known for his own deeds. He surely seems to believe that personal deeds as well as individual efforts are much more important than a life of imposed values and pre-established attitudes, which do not accept the individual's participation and modification of history.

Hamilton sees himself as a fool used by this cold and narrow-minded society, and he starts questioning the validity of such a society:

And Hamilton wondered on goodness & the good and the good in his life, vaguely in weariness like a weight of the infinite unknown forces onto & beyond him, a mononucleosis of history in him, this sickness into a vertigo of commerce & abyss, and he knew a dull confused despair he had not known before 38

As Hamilton wanders through New York he wonders what good he has done so far. He feels weary and sick of this essentially unjust society which has transformed God from accessible to mathematical:

- O God which art the idea of Good
and all the ideas of good
- O God which art the holy greening
and the sacred white love
- O God which art the dream of Perfection
and the perfection of dreams
- O God which art the theory of the rigid frame
we kill the greening & the love 39

Smith says there was a progression from softness to rigidity in God which was patronized by capitalistic society. God is the rigid frame which is central to skyscraper architecture. God who originally was good and tolerant, associated with the idea of love and nature, is now transformed into the god of perfect unerring equations, an intolerant god. The former is the god of the Old Testament, the latter the god of capitalism.

Smith speaks of the god that has been specifically "created"/"transformed" in New York City, in Manhattan, in Trinity Church. The traditional god, once natural, is now changed into an industrial god, a perfect man-made god.

As we have seen previously, Hart Crane, in the first part of The Bridge mentioned Brooklyn Bridge in a similar demonstration of man-made object-worship. Crane's bridge as well as Smith's skyscraper is a creation of man, a new idol of capitalistic technocratic America. However, this creator contradicts the Old Testament creator who never worshipped his own creations after they were finished. In reality the creation itself becomes divinized. There is a rise of the inhuman symbolized in architecture by rigid perfection.

The divinization of materialism is extensive to Satan as well as to God. God and Satan have been welded together in a technological meld:

"God is that which none greater can be conceived."

But listen: I say Satan is inseparable: god & devil
are one in perfect weld, the divine
demoniacs of the rigid bent, this
unspeakable skywardness

Hamilton outgabe. 40

The eruption of cabalism into normative Judaism previously presented in Trinity not only shows the influence of the Cabala in Smith but also denotes his repulsion at repressive ways of thinking:

God is the girder 0
 God the rigid frame
 this building
 Prince of this world
 Our will be done
 God & Satan one 41

In a way this unification of good and evil could be easily explained in Christian terms. It is the confirmation of the human surrender to satanic capitalism; it is the demonstration men are worshipping the wrong god. Along with the lines of the curiously evil acceptance (even welcoming) cabalistic theology, Smith departs from his episcopalian tradition and accepts "evil" as fact/substance.

Unlike the Christ of St. Luke's Gospel, man does not resist the temptation to adore the world and transforms his god into an instrument of evil. In order to be the "Prince of the world" man turns himself to a false and sinful god, matter, which is represented by skyscraper and the business world hidden within it. Matter embodies Devil and Manhattan becomes the city of Satan.

There is no doubt that God is identified with height in Trinity. Men want to reach the skies by building very high buildings.

The man stood before the tower of the world trade grown tallest and beheld the cloud-high derricks as tyranousari on some stern height.⁴²

The World Trade Center stands for a kind of reverse Tower of Babel. In spite of the linguistic differences of the people in New York City, because of their different nationalities, everyone still speaks the same language: commercial English. Even so these people, like the people of Babel, have been punished by a block in communication. Capitalism has reduced them to human muteness in the midst of economics-based communication. They "communicate," but only superficially. The curse of Babel has been refilled with an ironic two-level twist:

How did we do it?
a man thought:
How did we get up there?
How did we get there?
How come? 43

Smith describes men as bees in a giant hive:

Onward & Upward
honey combs of commerce
Hive
the buzzy borogrove of business
Gimbels
cubic tower of World Trade 44

The word "borogrove" used by Smith is another word borrowed from Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky." It suggests a borough in the grove and, in fact, Manhattan looks like a concrete forest.

"Gimbels" is at the same time another of Lewis Carroll's nonsense words and also the name of a store in Manhattan. Smith uses it to allude to the absurd beehive "business" of Manhattan commerce.

Smith describes a meaningless situation in human terms. He shows the insectification of men:

entrepreneurs, bankers, brokers, investors, architects,
engineers, construction men, exporters & importers,
all the captains & crews of World Trade

Swarming
workers
"Like bees," Hamilton heard the old farmer,
his summer neighbor in Maine. 45

There are times Smith puts himself so thoroughly in Hamilton that he himself becomes Trinity's protagonist. In real life Smith lives in a house in Brooklyn Heights but works right in the core of Manhattan, close to Wall Street and all the busy "buzzy" life of the world business.

Whenever possible Smith goes out to Maine, where he has an island of his own, where he can live as free as possible,

hiking and gardening, catching lobsters, fishing. This going back and forth in the city apparently contributes to Smith's reflections about the real life of man in a largely populated city. Hamilton's reflections are an echo of his own.

The image Smith gives is as accurate as possible. Bees are communal non-individualistic insects whose individuality is subordinated to the life of the hive. Man's present situation in a large city like New York is getting to be the same. He has developed a thoroughly hive-centered mentality, gathering money instead of honey, with the curiously human side-effect of spoiling New York's natural landscape by disrupting ecological balance, polluting the waters of the Hudson River and frightening its whales and fish away.

When bees construct a hive they use every single space for honeycombs. Men have started a speculation in real estate similar to this hive mentality. They construct everywhere, building higher and higher space contracts. The individual is submerged in density.

Trinity is an attempt to show that men in capitalistic systems are equal just in their same thought and values. There seems to exist a strong necessity of earning money, of buying a city house, of buying a summer house, of buying the newest car, of BUYING, BUYING, BUYING.

Equality, the collective and the collective of the
collective
workers swarming to their functions
Kingdom come
the Kingdom of the Cube
Entfremdung 46

At this point Smith introduces Karl Marx's term for alienation, Entfremdung. In fact what Marx wrote in Das Kapital is very much defensible for he reported what he was truly seeing in English factories in mid nineteenth century. This is what Smith presents here, the alienation, the dehumanization of man

purpose but, on the contrary, Smith wants to say human alienation is excessive and therefore is evil. What is excessive should be expelled ("dung dung Entfremdung").

At this point in Trinity Smith introduces Margaret, Hamilton's wife:

Hamilton telephoned his office: "Unavoidably detained."
 What would they say? -
 If they knew what he was doing. Thinking.
 And Margaret his wife, what would she? 48
 She might understand, with cool disdain.

Once more Smith is "analoguing" with Eliot's "The Waste Land". Margaret is a strong shadow of the lady playing the chess game in "The Waste Land":

The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
 Glowed on the marble, where the grass
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited wines
 From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
 (Another hid his eyes behind the wig)
 Doubled the flames of seven branched candelabra
 Reflecting light upon the table as
 The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it, 49
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion.

Margaret is also involved in an artistic world of wealth and majesty:

Aloof, lovely, pale lady of great halls.
 Her breasts ...
 At Salzburg for Don Giovanni in the Felsenreitschule
 her decollete as she leaned to him her breasts
 the full mystery
 of white like quick blossoms, translucent to the
 the blue delicate
 complexity of veins -
 and dark nipples glimpsed.
 the long necklace of pearls
 with the emerald cartuncle between her breasts.
 Flesh, ornament, a loveliness of mad elegance
 A fair contract. 50

Again Smith adds fragments / traces of his own experience.
 The physical model for Margaret was a cousin of Smith's wife.

Marion Camilla Petschek, Smith's wife, comes from a wealthy aristocratic background. His dead father-in-law was a Jewish banker in Czechoslovakia who had come to America escaping from the Nazis.

Smith himself spent several summers in Salzkammergut in Austria during the sixties and saw many performances in Salzburg. His mentioning of "Salzburg, Don Giovanni and great halls" suggests the involvement the wealthy have with Arts, an involvement akin to Smith's own. Smith sees the arts as a bi-product of capitalism.

As a matter of fact Smith is slanted in his own view of capitalism. He is anti-capitalistic and, at the same time, he is the supreme capitalist, living out of interests of a trust fund which is an investment in American capitalism. This might be the "fair contract" Smith talks of when he refers to the Hamilton - Margaret relationship[§]:

No.

he gave her Predictability, Access & Success
the town house, Bar Harbor the World
Predictability & Cultivated Pleasures
the art of elegance emerald on flesh

Decay

... the manhole to the underworld at his feet
sulphurous gases steaming

§ Having read my manuscript, Smith wrote about this comment:

My own capitalistic position is relevant to the general discussion, but the "fair contract" is the relationship between Hamilton & Margaret and is described specifically. He provides material advantages and social status; she provides social refinements and beauty in the realm of appearances. Actually he loves her; however, there is rather limited discussion between them; he describes the decision not to discuss his spiritual anguish.

(June 3, 1980)

he knew

the infinite void under the glittering surfaces & exquisite structures, the brilliant design of his life all his works and advocacies: individual rights while individuals are invalidated, penal reform while humanity goes to hive, Margaret? §

Why did he love her?

The truth. No need for Truthsaying.

Perhaps she knew.

.....
A fair contract. 51

Smith seems to feel guilty for attacking while at the same time being dependent on capitalism. He is pro-primitive, but at the same time he feeds off the mechanisms of technological capitalism.

Under the surface of money Smith still sees the hive. So does Hamilton. Hamilton has a house in Bar Harbor -- curiously close to Smith's own house in Maine -- and Margaret has a lot of jewelry. Both Hamilton and Margaret have all the social and economic privileges he always advocated all should have. Why does everyone not have them? Hamilton -- and also Smith -- understand they are part of the hive. Hamilton feels badly because he has always attacked the hive though he cannot deny he is part of it. §§

§ ~~For a note~~ Smith wrote some more information about Hamilton and this specific passage:

"As an Establishment liberal Hamilton has presumably been active to promote such causes as Civil Rights and Penal Reform."

§§ About his identification with Trinity's protagonist in this particular passage, Smith wrote: replying my comments:

"Of course, Hamilton is a representative of the old Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, the Northeast Establishment. Therefore, he goes to Bar Harbor which is a fashionable summer colony of the rich -- Rockfellers et al, whereas I live among farmers and fishermen in places which have no electricity and no such fashionability. Perhaps the search for resemblances between Hamilton and myself has obscured the fictional creation. For instance, Hamilton thinks in lawyerly terms about his marriage: "a fair contract." The relationship between Hamilton and Margaret in no way describes my own marriage."

DURA BLA

no north side Liberty razed O
bliterated Open Site. World Trade
a girder UP

NO
crowd/

"I can see you're a man who don't like crowds.
voice. elevator man young black./ Subway./ St. George
in Brooklyn. Man Hamilton had entered empty car,
shunned one still loading in people. Operator spoke,
surprise, closed doors immediately UP
"I don't like them either," he told Hamilton.
"It must drive you crazy, all those people packing
into here all the time."
"It does." 54

It is very hard to separate Smith from Hamilton at this point in Trinity. Smith himself admits this when he uses reference places which also mean something to him. DURABLE, for instance, is an apt corporate name above the entrance to an office building close to Smith's own office in Manhattan. The St. George Hotel is where Smith gets on the subway in Brooklyn Heights.

Smith has the same feelings Hamilton does about crowds. Explaining the elevator passage he wrote that "World Trade Center elevators are popularly called "cattle cars" and that "the very large car has many persons herded into it." 55

The repeated use of con (with)-words is Smith's concretist way of stressing "hiveness" (withness) in the Manhattan social factor.

construction
casually
causeways conduits condominiums computers⁵⁶

Hamilton questions himself about his participation in the hive process. He feels neither innocent nor guilty. He is split like Smith himself:

Hamilton in
The Moving Target mystery novel by Ross Macdonald
who read Kierkegaard read the gulf looked into

is innocence lost here at some edge he looked his
 life & lives
 down, a building up outgabe/

But what innocence was it?

The man had a conviction of non-innocence not
 guilty of the world. Perhaps he looked down some
 other gulf. He did not know. 57

Somehow Smith is the outlaw who becomes identified with
 the law. He is the outsider who is inside. He is the rebel and
 at the same time the conformist. And Hamilton in Trinity reaches
 a position hardly acceptable: he is equally far removed from the
 problem. He did not cause it and yet lived in it. His expedient
 position does not satisfy even himself. He knows it is necessary
 to change:

beehive tombs

beeman

behave behave

BEEMAN

Be. Man 58

Hamilton is willing to act as a man; he wants to be free;
 he wants to feel free. He looks around and what does he see? He
 sees automatized men behaving as they are supposed to do in a
 non-individual, communal, insect-like society. He sees men being
 buried alive in their materialistic concern with earning money.

Playing around with religious symbols, Smith describes
 Hamilton's reflections about the existence of non-life beyond
 life:

UP

derrick

tendrilled

cables

the ascension of a girder

guy ropes

the riggers

Ascension

some new birth

fro Bethlehem steel what birth

o f steel the birth of Non

Life

DURABLE

Business is our most important progress.

ABSTRACTS

Abstracted from life:

ONGO

abstract life

Non Life growing

Systems are our most important products

abstractions things tools government industries

institutions organizations works of worldnon

Non accreting

by units 59

Bethlehem, the place where Christ was born, is substituted for Bethlehem, the steel company. Christ's birth is transformed into birth of steel. The birth of the steel in the U.S. steel company is the birth of a new religion, the religion of industrial capitalism. Capitalism becomes the theology of infinity. The individual is forgotten; the theology of systems relegated men to a secondary position. There is a deification of systems. Systems are the eucharistic center of the capitalistic Mass.

Throughout this passage, Smith's spatial arrangement of words is designed to be psychologically appropriate to what is being described. Thus the form implements understanding and is part of the meaning. As already indicated, Smith admits having learned this technique from e.e.cummings.

As elsewhere in Trinity themes contrapuntally re-appear and become more elaborated. The rigid steel frame, central to skyscraper architecture, which has been mentioned from the start of the second movement, now reappears as the symbol of muscularity:

Under the girder the man (small spasm at his lower spine) watched the casual riggers guiding, as passers by glanced dangerthrilled overhead, hurried on. He stayed, in solid awe

= = = the riggers & their easy motions, the girder midway, swaying, ascent momentarily stopped.

Godlike works ----- a foreman's wave up
godlike sweatblotched blue denim shirts

profane
sinister

a wave

as a secret of muscularity. 60

In a way this reverence for mystical materialism finds its expression in religious symbolism. The reader enters into the value-system of Henry Adams's "The Dynamo and The Virgin" which shows how concepts change as new values emerge:

To him (Langley), the dynamo itself was but an ingenious channel for conveying somewhere the heat latent in a few tons of poor coal hidden in a dirty enginehouse carefully kept out of sight; but to Adams the dynamo became a symbol of infinity. As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross. The planet itself seemed less impressive, in its old-fashioned, deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel, revolving within arm's length at some vertiginous speed, and barely murmuring - scarcely humming an audible warning to stand the hair's breadth further for respect of power - while it would not wake the baby lying close against its frame. Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. Among the thousands symbols of ultimate energy, the dynamo was not so human as some, but it was the most expressive.⁶¹

The reverence before silent and infinite force Smith presents at the end of "The Growth of The World Trade Center" is the same as that which Adam Dunne presented in "New York Night-fall." Smith's ambivalence could be easily transposed from his own life. He identifies with power/energy. He likes to feel small by contrast and hates this massive reduction of his heroic, romantic self.

Trapped in his own struggle Smith looks for a way out:

our units to the stars

What is all this

man thought

what is all this
to the stars⁶²

THE SMITH

5 BEEKMAN STREET

NYC 10038

RE 2-4821

Dear Jandyra,

I enjoyed reading your commentary,
which is mostly sound and perceptive.

I've enclosed copies of the
pages on which I made notes
to qualify or to elaborate on
your interpretations, including ~~that~~ on
the end of the second movement.

I'm pleased to see that you are
progressing rapidly.

Good luck,

Harry

6/3/80
I

Smith's reply to my commentary of the second movement, "The Growth of The World Trade Center".

Smith finishes the second movement of Trinity with the allusion that the machine age signals a journey of man to the stars. The journey to the stars is a mystical return to God. It is a return to religion and its traditional values for individual development.

The circle becomes complete. Matter becomes a bridge to the mystical. Opposing forces become fused into a new launching out into the world of The Over-Soul. As in Whitman the technological passage to India becomes a passage to more than India — a return to Old Testament deistic origins.

4.1.3 Third Movement: "Day of The Earth"

As "The Growth of The World Center" finishes with a journey into the future, "Day of The Earth" starts with a journey into the past.

In epic tone Smith takes the reader back to the seven-teenth and eighteenth centuries, discovering quite a different Manhattan than the one described in the previous movements:

Once upon Hudson's shores beached whales
 Heaved & shook, shook earth and the gathered men,
 Through their feet the life throes in the land,
 Resounding and receding like the waves
 of the lessening tide. The fathers of the church
 with whale spades, axes and long knives
 Cut-in, Great God, the yet living flesh,
 Flensing in long spiral peels fat thick blubber
 which the women tried out in coppers
 on the beach. Oil, soap, and from the head,
 spermacetti candles; steaks hewn from the small.
 Thus the leviathan nourished the church,
 Governor Ben Fletcher therefore chartered
 Trinity for salvage of wrecked whales
 from the High Seas. 63

Suddenly Smith shifts the reader back to the present contrasting past and present New York:

Where that rough strand had been

a man walks straight concrete athwart steel frames
for which New York pushed Hudson's pierced banks
west ward far, and no whales roil this thick marine. 64

Present day Manhattan is not a place of whales, fishermen and boats. Manhattan has even lost its bathing beaches because of the constant landfill operations and progressive pollution.

Harry Smith feels very nostalgic about the whole change in the Manhattan landscape. He, the viking-looking Smith[§], identifies with the sea. He weeps over the fate of the sea his grandfather sailed. §§

There is a whole tradition in American literature that has as theme the confrontation between man and sea. Melville, Whitman, Hemingway, Smith.... they all accept the heroic confrontation of the mythic legendary hero against nature, "force":

And on the eastwhile strand, the man
resonated to a raucous red-named generator JOY
..... (joy machines
erection ecstatico

Automation
men construction men

and Captain Hamilton, Korea, saw a blown man un-
bleeding thrashinggasp like a bleached whale

all Weifts Wrecks Drift Whales 65

§ Smith never fails to exploit his massive "Smithness".
The logo of The Smith, in fact, is an anvil.

§§ Smith wrote about his grandfather:

"My grandfather ran away from home at the age of fourteen to be a cabin boy on a whaling ship (1884) and was away at the sea for more than ten years; his seafaring was terminated by his second shipwreck, a grisly tragedy in the South Seas where only he and another man survived after six weeks in a life boat."
(April 28, 1980)

As a classicist Smith accepts the struggle between man and whales. He himself likes fishing in Maine. What Smith does not accept is the struggle among men. The mentioning of Korea and "a blown man bleeding" reflects his strong aversion to war.

In May, 1967, two months before advocating the unconditional cessation of American combat in Vietnam, opposing the war emotionally, before rejecting it intellectually, Smith wrote a long poem called "West Battery" with an unpremeditated recurrent image of the Screaming Eagle:

The Great Black Eagle
screaming down, with sweptback wings -
Talons clenched the olive branch.⁶⁶

The script - "all Weifths Wrecks Drift Whales" - from a document displayed in Trinity Church, chartering the parish for salvage of beached whales, contrasts with the image of men fighting men. The "natural struggle" Smith can accept, war as such disgusts him.

The melancholy tone which Smith uses to lament the ecological destruction of land is wistfully nostalgic:

thrice off Amagansett
the blow
of whales in his childhood, only
tiny geysers near horizon
and not again⁶⁷

Smith chose Amagansett, a town on Long Island, to be the scenery of Hamilton's remembrances. Amagansett is an Indian name and the Indians were engaged in whaling on those shores. Indians and whaling couple together in a romantic man-against-nature link, presenting the reader with a vision of noble savageness.

Once more Smith gives Hamilton a memory from his own past:

1996 - Hamilton

and whales perhaps close to common as the porpoise
packs sporting in the Sound his summers at Rocky
Point when foxes ran along the shore by his grand-
mother's place § the funny red dogs from the woods,
Gradma woods which went along farther than eyes
eastward around dunes into dark blue distances
of blur cliffs. Perhaps as Manhattan had been in
the fullness of the whales

a fair land to fall in with,
Henry Hudson.⁶⁸

Smith, in a pastoral interlude, remembers his (and Ha-
milton's) Long Island past, stressing the disintegration of the
natural "frame"/"context":

River North
River From Beyond
The Mountains
Ka Ka Ho
te da 69

The picture is recurrent throughout the third movement:
Long Island was an Indian land. Kahoteda is the Indian name of
the Hudson River, meaning "River from beyond the Mountains." Na-
ture past and Nature present will not be found in Nature future.

The accomodation of dissonance Smith is able to keep
in his symphonic Trinity can be felt in the contrast between
pastoral and industrial. Smith presents this contrast in har-
monic dissonance:

Kahoteda
acetelyne
man's lightning man's lightning dream
new higher towers without spires⁷⁰

§ As a child Smith lived at Rocky Point in the summer at
his grandmother's house on the North Shore of Long Island, on
a cliff overlooking Long Island Sound.

The image Smith conveys is rich. Acetelyne is "man-lightning." Man, through steel/industrialization/technology creates his own city of Divine Man.

Hart Crane used the same figure in "The Bridge." It is understood that acetelyne was an important element in the bridge's construction, and it is from the bridge's summit that Wall Street, the core of American capitalism, is visible.

In Trinity Smith compares pastoral Manhattan (Kahoteda) with the industrial man-made landscape of "new higher tower without spires".

Following Trinity's basic symphonic organizing principle, the theme of automation of men is introduced, abandoned and reintroduced with variation and elaboration in "Day of the Earth":

and in the guiding gyre Nought

Nought was

Nought was forgotten by th' infortune of Marte

Episcopal whales and Grama's woods

the carter over-ridden by his carte⁷¹

Quoting Chaucer § and weaving the medieval poet's words with his own, Smith water-colors an almost Hemingwayesque psychic landscape of Nought/Nothingness. Guiding? Guide? Direction? Nothing was guided, nothing directed.

Sarcastically, Smith again echoes Whitman:

Automation and the man, I sing.

Under the wheel⁷²

Opposite to Whitman Smith is being ironic about the progress of civilization which at times he presents as a retrogression in man's life:

§ Smith quoted Chaucer from "The Knight's Tale".

The gones of youth.. The forests of the past..
 Inertia
 inertia of species inertia of science
 inertial guidance of humanity, unmanned,
 automatic. the ongoing institutions systems
 onto systems

Let bygones by bygones?

No more chestnuts
 The Future

of man and earth
 Under the wheel
 full lowe
 i sing 73

Inertia is the property by which it remains in a state of rest or, if it is in motion, continues in the same direction and in straight line unless it is acted upon external force. In the poem the word is wisely used to express important images. There is environmental destructive inertia because nature is being destroyed and man does not do anything to change things. There is an inertia of species because man himself does not learn and consequently does not improve. There is inertia in science because it has not been used to serve man. There is an inertial guidance of humanity, unmanned, automatic, because man creates self regulatory autonomous inventions which become totally self-contained.

There is a separation between the systems created by man and their creator. Man creates something and that which he creates becomes self-regulatory and cannot be controlled, all of which smacks of atomic war, space programs, automatic missiles guidance.

Nature has endowed man with his brain in order that he shall not only be able to act, but know why he acts. According to Smith man has forgotten how to reason.

At this point Smith might seem as pessimistic as Shaw's Devil[§]. Later, at the end of the third movement, Smith shall

[§] Bernard Shaw, "Man and Superman".

reveal some hope in the saving of man and his distorted world.

Hamilton's awareness of what is going around might be a start. He is at least aware that things have changed when he remembers his youth:

The man recalled the gone forests of youth, the fine-tailed foxes from the oak, chestnuts, the grandmother cliffs beachplummed and the supplanting cottages, the flux of people outward along the shore, inexorable. Too much. Too much built upon the world of his childhood. Levittown was the potato flats of central Long Island. The Wantagh woods encompassed by the Phipps and Browning estates had become other Developments. The thought of Openness. Filled lakes and buried streams. Landfill, he stood on landfill.⁷⁴

Hamilton becomes aware that the land he is standing on is man-made. He understands how drastically the whole landscape has changed.

Bitterly, Smith himself remembers this change:

I was born in New York City, but I lived on Long Island for most of my childhood. It was, then, rural, with farmland and forest. Most is gone now; I witnessed its very rapid disappearance in the 50's. My town, North Bellmore, was only eight miles from the original Levittown, the world's first gigantic suburban-housing development, which spread like a cancer. Thus I watched the killing of natural beauty and the decline and decay of New York City.⁷⁵

It is clear that within Smith's shamelessly romantic world-view the crime of the city is the loss of beauty.

Hamilton's vision of Earth Day is Smith's ecological protest in Trinity. It is necessary to celebrate the beginning of Spring in April, otherwise nobody will notice it:

EAT SHIT Eat shit
the steam of a pile driver pounding saying
Eat shit Eat shit,
as on Earth Day

dandelions and cigaret stumps in the park
 City Hall sooted gray, Hamilton's Earth Day
Dear Lord the Sky

a vision through a yellow filter, sunny morning.
 April, First Annual Earth Day 1970. 76

The celebration is the reminder that New York has changed.
 Manhattan is no longer the land of whales:

Steam engines, Fathers
 Fathers of all this ALL
 that's ALL
 Father of this ALL

cars courts Pucci neckties secretaries smartly 77
 bargains business bar air badassed bitches

The shift here is from an economy of "encounter" with
 Nature to that of an economy of urbanized "service," a flight
 from primary emotion/encounter/experience to the derivative/syn-
 thetic.

Manhattan is not a city based on heroes and arms but a
 city based on automation and machines.

Hamilton sees a "blue jean flower child," a girl only a
 few years older than his daughter Carol. He feels attracted to
 the girl but cannot "reach her," either physically or psychologi-
 cally. She should be the answer, should she not? The flower
 children should be a symbolic help to Smith in his quest for
 the primary, but all he can feel is the presence of yet one
 more "outgrowth" of the civilized. He wants the genuine but he
 is confronted again with the Ersatz:

bouncing BRAless gently
 flesh form
 etched
 tight against the white fabric
 /cotton T-shirt
 transparency
 deep rose through a white screen
 sweet loll
 blue jean girl flower child
 a calm smile

she looked at him and he blushed. He smiled to her hurriedly (like a Fool, he thought) and looked away. He wanted to talk to her to reach to touch / he hurried past. 78

He feels attracted to the girl but he runs away. Hamilton, as a businessman, is marginal to the flower children and their anti-technological movement. He is pro-ecological and at the same time anti-ecological. He is split like he was towards the hive: he hates the hive but cannot do without it:

flesh, flesh, all this flesh

Ashamed. Only a few years older than Carol.
Unashamed. Early woman, flowering
Carol would be
ashamed. Private school. The Graces. What would she be?
become? what what would the world be for her?

stereothink future
SPEED 79

Hamilton wants to get involved but he is ashamed, ashamed of feeling youthful again, ashamed of having the same necessities his daughter Carol does, ashamed of others' criticism, ashamed of HIMSELF.

And yet Hamilton worries about the youngsters. He cannot act like them but fears for their future. As a matter of fact he fears for the future of humanity without youth:

Carol, good girl, believed in Ecology. Riding on a pony.
Bicycles. Jet/ travel
MOD
Population Control
Love Margaret,
What could we
what world 80

Smith believes in youth but, at this point of Trinity, he does not trust the flower children's ecological movement and he says it is not "natural":

marching sweatshirt
 she
 sloven

Decidedly unattractive
 Hamilton decided. 83-

Lib=ID, what is the point here, surrender to the Super-Ego, a revulsion with the grey interior world of our primitive subconsciousness?

Women's Lib and "flower children" 's movements are unnatural. Smith is crying for natural things, for things which represent life ... like human excrement:

Our shit, I sing,
 under
 the girder and the wheel
 all earth and life I sing 84

Smith seems to be very much against sophisticated surfaces for they hide the dirt underneath. The basic problems and pollution in New York City remain in spite of the dressed up people who run around. New York remains the apotheosis of the alienated/false.

In comparison with this corrupted society Smith presents a personal picture of the natural world. Toward the end of "Day of The Earth" he arranges words abstracted from the memoir of Francis Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot captured by the Russians, in order to suggest Powers' descent and his perceptions while descending to earth:

orange & white
 blossom beautiful
 against the vast
 of sky
 the silence
 the cold serene
 no sensation of falling
 parachute
 very
 small

hanging in the sky

terrain

rolling hills a forest a lake roads buildings
what looked like

a village

pretty country

typical American scene

like parts of Virginia

It was spring in Russia

Francis Gary Powers

landed. a plowed field a tractor and two men
MAYDAY 1960. 85

Gary Powers thought he was landing in the United States but, in reality, he was landing in Russia. The United States was once like Russia, less developed, less industrialized. Russia becomes the pastoral part of the United States. Russia becomes the early stages of capitalism. Smith sees the Russian backwardness as a blessing.

After this episode Smith reproduces the imitation of a child's chalk drawing on the sidewalk, a drawing which was signed by Rebecca Smith, Smith's daughter. It says:

FUCK THE MOON! FIX THE EARTH! 86

The message is clear: the United States should not be worried about space programs but in solving earth's problems.

Smith is setting up a system of values in which the mechanical is evil and what is good is the natural. Thus, the space programs is evil.

Following the standard Romantic-Transcendental pattern Smith has a strong tendency of seeing evil as external to himself and his protagonist. Margaret, Hamilton's wife, incarnates the "gadgeteer", which for Smith, is the unnatural. She is also involved with surface-effects, fond of technology, the mechanical effects, whatever that does not require her deep participation, everything superficial "gaudy":

Our Trees

ghastly elm
 Hamilton hated
 the elm in his townhouse garden.
blue blue glowing ghastly elm
the damn foodlights, Margaret.
 I eeriéd his nights. Like a scene from another
 planet, Purgatory or the Far Future, that's right.
 Of course it was all right in the day and popular
 with guests at night.
 "I loathe it."
 "Our light show, Darling? I think it's some mar-
 velous electric sculpture in fiberglass."
 "It makes the tree Something Unnatural."
 "You are so silly sometimes, Darling, but I love
 you" Margaret, arching, Cat. Sensuous & arch,
 Margaret of white. Artifice and flesh. She made
 herself into a work of art. Parisian styles, a
 body proud /

poise, grace and breasts a gell
 electric elm
 Margaret's beauty

the man saw old oaks after ice storm.
 Icy oaks in the sun.⁸⁷

The artificially lit elm is applied technology and
 consequently it is bad -- according to Smith's system of values.
 The thing in itself is good but the artificial context is bad.

When Hamilton encounters a rock band performing a song
 about pollution he dislikes it for he thinks rock is urban,
 electrified and super-artificial:

: POLLUTION POLLUTION onewordrock
 & roll, liturgical,
 electric music
 instruments amplified
 lified
 electric sex/
 that beat like a n artificial heart/
 free dancers
 Stop & Go
 like traffic
 wearing hideous masks.⁸⁸

Smith compares the standard, monotonous rock rhythm with the city traffic. Its "noise" has invaded the traditional ecclesiastical domain. Mass has been turned into a rock concert:

The Noise

hurt Hamilton's head. He deemed it Agression,
The chanting dancers seemed in a trance.

Rock, Stop. Shake'' the fine-formed young dancers
moved mindlessly NOW Like zealots Now like zombies
Life/Death - zeal comb - Cry Life dancing Living
Dead - the heart mechanics NON.
NOW - Hamilton was puzzled. 89

Smith believes teenagers use rock music to punish adults. He thinks this kind of music is aggressive for it can be physically harmful. Smith also thinks the music is symptomatic of urban alienation:

Throomp Throomp the pulse in this man's temples,
aching, beating heart :::: hurt bombardment:::::
circumstantial matter sensory, like nature amplified
AB

incomprehensible
Blare
decibel despair
Score hope percentiles. 90

Smith loves all encompassing irony. That seems to plead for total purity. If the priest is "impure," his ministrations as a priest are also "impure." The protestor must reach the purity of the level of the content of his protest.

Smith equates Hardhat Day, Earthday and Doomsday:

Hardhat Day Earthday and all designed
days
Doomsdays 91

His skepticism comes close to naturalism in a momentary slip back into despair when he indirectly says life is sick:

The werewish is upon us.
a sickness in life Hamilton's life
itself was sick

Martin Eden

into the ocean 92

Martin Eden is the hero of a rather autobiographical novel by Jack London. Smith alludes to the novel because Martin Eden, a healthy minded, uneducated sailor who became a leading writer, disillusioned by his experiences in high intellectual society and increasingly afflicted by a malaise of civilization, commits suicide at sea after concluding that there is a sickness in life itself.

As it was said before, this despair is momentary in Smith's Trinity for, after all, the book is a message of optimism and immediately after this lapse into pessimism rebounds with the vitality of nature-images centering around "shad" and "lilacs." Very rich "texture" here. We're in the world of Melville's lilacs in the Catskills, Thoreau's Walden lilacs in farmer housesites, the lilacs of Whitman:

In Maine, late spring at Northeast Harbor, the cottage of the lilacs in the night that night, of conception. Yes, God, conception. Hamilton felt sure he knew. That night - the simple wildness - must have been

Ago.

fucks, work, fame future.
daughterwoman. Hamilton felt listless.
a spent shad.

The shad were journeying
up the river to the Hudson Highlands,
more shad than people
in the city, to spawn
in waves the generations of the shad
and the generations of man and the great May
run of the lilac 93

The "shad" are also symbols of vigor. Smith reinforces this image of vigor by talking about "the 'run of the lilac". The largest shad spawn in late May are called "lilacs" because they come when lilacs bloom.

Smith goes on playing with the word "shad" but in a different context:

shad rack

Me shad?

shad roe - How did it go? Hamilton didn't know much

about popular music.

"Shadrach, Teshach, Abednego," Old Petie answered.

Hamilton realized that he had spoken or sung aloud. Embarrassing.

He put a dollar on the counter and left, feeling Awkward. ⁹⁴

"Shadrack, Teshach, Abednego" are words from a Negro spiritual that tells about the Jews who were threatened with burning in ancient Egypt because they would not worship any other god than Jehovah. They were put in a bonfire and did not die because they were worshipping the true god.

However Smith admits the spirit of Manhattan and its pollution are spreading around across the globe:

OUR FORESTS

THE OCEAN IS DYING

reproduction of diatoms

Photosynthesis

Union Square, greening

Spring

la la forsythia

and the flowering girls

loving all in green

The man thought he thought of sex more in periods of stress

STRESS ----- SEX ---

In times of stress, sex

stress sex intense stress ---desperate sex

Hamilton felt as though he had made an important discovery. ⁹⁵

Here in the midst of an elegiac lament for a dying planet, Smith suddenly couples "sex" and "stress." Because man is living

in a (human) zoo, his sex-life, his life in general, is more frantically active, and it is this very "activeness" that feeds back and accelerates the rate of planetary destruction.

Hamilton realizes this frantic reproduction will help the species survive:

The tree of Heaven flourished always, in ash & rubble of inner city, its blighted places and untended yards abandoned to that lush redemption. Hamilton found curious poignancy in the life of the vacant lot. He thought of wild raspberries, how they grow, best prospering in the shelter of decaying homesteads and collapsed barns and sheds and out of rusty derelict vehicles in overgrown pasture and along fallen fences and by the sills and up through the Maine island where raspberries burgeoned from the ruins of rude shacks which were once fishing camps. Raspberries in old ruins. 96

Hamilton has a sort of vision/revelation. He says to himself:

"Learn ethics from the shad."

The shad running, heavy with roe, successions, and the soon, lilac culmination, the run of the lilac shad.

Of Shad and men, I sing,
and all the particles of life
and of Hamilton who also
saw himself a particle of the successions
and, unspeaking, cried

Damn you, I am infinite." 97

In contrast with the "natural man", Smith introduces the sociopath, Speck,§ the Chicago nurse-assassin, the prototype psychopath outsider:

§ In the book dedicated to the author Smith wrote:

"Speck is an appropriate name for a mass murderer in the Age of Mass Man".

The indeterminate particle determined.

name: Speck

did murder in the techno
name

archetype

mass murder mass man known as Speck.⁹⁸

In spite of this fear, Smith seems to believe there is hope. Mystically he sings:

Yea, the infinity of man and the power
of life beyond man
the wonder of water
carbon & its compounds
of sun and genes, of DNA
determinating and the
indeterminate particles,
of that which ~~is~~ always is
I sing, at the end & beginning of mysteries.⁹⁹

In a beautiful psalm to fertility Smith trips back to the past after Hamilton has realized Nature is totally abundant:

Once upon Hudson's shores, the namegiver
sucked-in a wind of flowers off the Jersey meadows.
He paused, that blunt captain, unmoving,
unknowing of his calm smile. The pleasure
of that land-smell! Pollen, resin, leafy earth.
So sweet one Dutchman did not know What
had greeted them. A mariner, wading,
with cutlass did-in a seven-foot sturgeon
for a common feast. The richest of rivers!
Such sturgeon and the shad and striped bass surged
in the fertile meeting place, the river's
slow sea-mingling; mackerel, silver hake & bluefish,
menhaden for fertilizer, cod and herring
and anchovies upstream at the strong freshening
joined carp and sunfish and yellow perch in a long
/ wide bay.

More, an estuary full of oysters,
blue crabs teeming in the shallows. Finding,
at that landfall, fame of mink and otter,
muskrat and beaver in hardwood highwolds
with many wolves and deer, easy heath hens
and huge wary cats, and such gabble of turkeys
hunters shot only for twenty-pound-plump,
O Providence, all said For Ever.¹⁰⁰

As elsewhere before, the picture of former Manhattan is beautiful but never has it been so majestically elaborated. The lyricism with which Smith describes the splendor of nature in Manhattan precedes his conclusion of "Day of The Earth" which is also the final page of Trinity:

Hamilton, in his city, dreamed
 the land's last fragrance.
 Running a gauntlet of gorp, shad still swam
 in hordes upriver into the future.
 A man willed them into the future.
 He commanded the elements.

Of the numbers of shad and men,
 Of law and banking and the suns,
 I sing wild raspberries and world trade

Smith, in a semi-reversal of previous positions, becomes sympathetic and sees a happy league of technology and nature. His last message is of hope. The future will be what present men will it to be. Man, the highest work of Nature so far, shall command the future, striving for self-awareness and self-knowledge in the present.

Technology and trade, after all, in Smith's final accounting, are as much an expression of Nature (the Nature of man) as the life-circle of shad and whales.

4.2. Overall Themes and "Idea-Blocks"

As an epic, Trinity presents the oldest struggle of all, between good and evil. It is a poem of confrontations, between young and old, weak and strong, idea and reality, unconscious and conscious, inner and outer world.

In Trinity Harry Smith explores unorthodox trinitities such as Humanity, Earth and God/self, community and depersonalized institutions.

Time is also Trinitarian: past, present and conditional future. The shape of the present is determined more by past aspirations than by recent decisions while the shape of the future is dependent on modern aspirations. The "werewishes" act

in the present and the dreams act in the past in a radical experiment accomodating discontinuity and disruption.

The book itself also has three movements, "Order for Burial", "The Growth of The World Trade Center" and "Day of The Earth".

In a sense splitting Trinity in three is peculiar for there are a number of similar themes which are redundantly stressed in all movements.

Symphonically repeated, the leading motifs throughout the book are:

(1) Superior Order of the Past over the Present -

Romantically, Smith believes in a Golden Age. He preaches a return to past when men were freer of social restraints and government regulations. Smith is of the opinion that natural righteousness exists; Trinity is his ecological appeal.

(2) Attack on technology, commerce and industry -

Trinity is a criticism of industrial society and its capitalistic overlords. Smith describes mechanized man as a machine-tender, a cog in a machine, a directed fragment in an increasingly alienated system. The city, New York, is a big hive and city dwellers are bees swarming about their hive towers.

(3) Attack on the movements against technology, commerce and industry -

Smith shows a total withdrawal of belief in the entire society. He disbelieves in industrial society and, but the same time, he does not trust the "movements" which want to combat it. Smith is skeptical about ecological movements which preach technological solutions to technological problems. He does not accept the young rebels who combat noise pollution with rock music. He does not approve of "flower children" who talk of the natural from inside drugged dreams.

(4) Mystic belief in creative evolution and the strength of the life force -

Towards the end of Trinity there is another important theme which is not much repeated but of equal importance. It is the mystic belief in creative evolution and the strength of the life force. It is the confidence that man is approaching the limits of ethereal conquest. Along with the ultimate limits of the rational, a new man is coming to life, a man who shall incarnate the scientific mind, according to modern Faustian concepts, and represents a syncretic melding of Humanism.

Smith, with Arthur Clarkean optimism (cf. The City and The Stars) sees the next step in evolution as a synthesis of The Primitive and The Post-Industrial.

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CONCLUSION

From everything that has been said in this dissertation we may conclude that Smith's previous works are a rehearsal for Trinity's ideas.

Since his early poems Smith had already shown the Thoreauian pledge to nature and the Melvillian apocalyptic view of the Earth he presents in Trinity.

Smith remained basically the same. In Trinity, as in his earlier works, he stresses individualism and presents a strong feeling against the taming of the individual.

Trinity is a poetic re-statement of Smith's earlier works, now written in a Whitmanesque lyrical tone.

In the first part of Trinity Smith presents the basic ideas of American Transcendentalism: he is pro-Nature, anti-machine, anti-Machine Age. He presents a bias against factories, a partial antipathy against industrialization and a fear of ecological disaster. He expresses his belief in Nature and glorifies "natural man."

From the middle on, Trinity semi-reverses its previous positions and presents a new and more complete vision of Man's destiny, where the agony between angrily rejecting and struggling to accept industrial society is suspended. Here Smith introduces the Faustian man who shall command the elements in a future in which technology will be part of Nature.

Based on a careful reading we may say that 19th century Transcendentalism and the Neo-Transcendentalism of the 20th century are represented in Trinity. Heavily influenced by the American literary past, Smith mystically believes in the creative evolution and in the synthesis of The Primitive and The Post-Industrial.

Trinity is the culminating point in Smith's work in the sense that, for the first time, in one single work, he achieves

a combining balance of his masked selves. Nocturnal and daytime "Smithness" emerge in a symphonic dissonance-consonance, bringing out his personal criticism and compromise with progress.

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