

## **HEROES IN THEIR MIRRORS**

**HEROES IN THEIR MIRRORS**  
**AN EXAMINATION OF THE WARS AND FAMOUS LAST WORDS**

**By**

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**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Master of Arts**

**McMaster University**

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MASTER OF ARTS (1992)  
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Heroes in Their Mirrors: An Examination of The Wars and Famous Last Words

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SUPERVISOR: Dr. N. Rosenblood

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 105

## Abstract

To discover Robert Raymond Ross' and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley's motivations for situating their fantasies within a framework of war, this thesis examines The Wars and Famous Last Words from a psychoanalytic and formalistic perspective. The first chapter of this thesis examines Ross' and Mauberley's compulsions to repeat, through displacements, the pre-war deaths of family members, and their compulsions' origins within the Oedipus complex. The second chapter explicates the ramifications of Mauberley's inability to resolve his Oedipal conflict. The fourth chapter probes the protagonists' identification with deities of Judaeo-Christian theology. The concluding chapter explores how war functions as an externalized metaphor for the inner conflicts of Ross and Mauberley.

## Acknowledgements

It is with the greatest pleasure that I would like to thank the individuals who have generously contributed their abilities, time, and support to the writing of this thesis.

DR. N. ROSENBLOOD, who permitted me access to a deeper meaning of stories which emphasizes a common human basis, rather than compartmentalizing facets of the human experience.

MY PARENTS, John and Jean Stewart, whose love and support have given me the freedom and ability to explore my world.

THE FERGUSONS, whose kindness and patience never faltered even on the worst of days.

DR. J.R. (TIM) STRUTHERS, from whom I have learned, and am still learning, when it is better just to smile.

and KATHRYN, who persevered.

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## Introduction

In a letter written during the Summer of 1932, Albert Einstein asked Sigmund Freud to assist him in finding a solution for what Einstein believed to be “the most insistent of all problems that civilization has to face. This is the problem: Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war?”.<sup>1</sup> Freud could offer no immediate solutions; only his hope that, in time, all men and women will evolve to the point where they will physically and psychically abhor the waging of war (“Why War?”, 361-2). In their correspondence, both Einstein and Freud demonstrate their conviction that it is an innate human propensity to violence and destruction which is the paramount obstacle to be overcome before humanity can know lasting peace, but neither physicist nor psychologist knew how to curb the manifestation of what they

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, “Why War?” in Civilization, Society and Religion, vol. 12 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Albert Dickson (Markham: Pelican, 1985) 341-362 p. 345. All future references will cite only the essay name and page number.

perceived as humanity's instinctual aggression. Freud asserts that "a strengthening of the intellect which is beginning to govern instinctual life, and an internalization of the aggressive impulses, with all its consequent advantages and perils" ("Why War?", 362), will ultimately lead individuals to pacific behaviour, but that "there is no use in trying to get rid of men's aggressive inclinations" ("Why War?", 358). Civilization can teach men and women to behave peacefully, but unconsciously they will remain creatures driven by the instinctual passions of eros and thanatos: warriors.

"War is in the crassest opposition to the psychological attitude imposed upon us by the process of civilization" ("Why War?", 362), but it is the arena in which normally forbidden actions and idealities may be realised. The sphere of war is the penultimate form for the expression of the chaotic and aggressive irrationality of the human unconscious, and, as such, has enthralled mankind since the beginning of human history. Traditionally, war has been a masculine arena, in which, for the duration of the battle, men raised within western civilization are allowed, even encouraged, to dismiss many of the imposed social values of western civilisation that they have learned from childhood onward. During times of war, men are given



license to behave in ways that are not acceptable at other times: weeping, embracing, and nurturing while killing, raping, and mutilating.

Bruce Pirie insists upon treating the violence of The Wars lightly, and argues that the novel is a parody of a romance, in which Robert is a young knight, who, while on a quest "meets with his trusty horse and hound (maybe a Labrador Retriever) and rides off" (73) in search of knowledge and the loss of innocence. Although Pirie treats the violence of The Wars indifferently, he claims that the suggestion of incest between Robert and Rowena "reminds us that loving relationships can be twisted into demonic form" (72) and that Eugene Taffler's homosexual intercourse with the Swede is "demonic eroticism" (73). Similarly, Dennis Duffy finds the sexuality of Famous Last Words more disturbing than the violence described in Mauberley's narrative. He argues that "the elegant bisexual (Mauberley) surrenders to the ultimate rough-trade abasement as he licks the bloody hand of a killer before being sodomized by him" (198), even though there is no mention in the novel of Mauberley being sodomized by Reinhart. In Front Lines, Lorraine York demonstrates that in "The Wars, (and I would argue in

Famous Last Words as well) sexual politics *are* global politics” (35). The “demonic eroticism” and “ultimate rough-trade abasement” are expressions of private violence parallel to the public military and cabal violence which Ross and Mauberley use as metaphors for the conflicts within their unconscious’.

Effectively, war allows the soldier to act out some of the sublimated desires and fears of his unconscious, which are normally suppressed or placated by society, and to sometimes to brings these fears and desires to consciousness. Eugene Benson recognizes that, within Findley’s novels, life “is perceived as being violent per se (we are all “floating through slaughter” as Harris puts it in *The Wars* ), and warfare and totalitarian ideologies are merely violence’s more virulent manifestations” (600). The ostensible private and public freedoms afforded by military battle, however, are balanced by the constant inhibiting threats of death, injury, and disillusionment.

Both Hugh Selwyn Mauberley and Robert Raymond Ross recognize the psychological disparity between the arbitrarily ruled world of normal social experience and the nightmarish and irrational occurrences of war. Mauberley believes that “a war is just a place

where we have been in exile from our better dreams".<sup>2</sup> Ross recognizes that "everyone is strange in war....Ordinary is a myth".<sup>3</sup> An examination of the texts of Famous Last Words and The Wars as the dream experiences of two individuals who feel alienated from the "better" and "ordinary" aspects of their normal domestic lives, reveals the protagonists' perception of their identities in a chaotic arena where the normal rules of behaviour do not apply. The placement of their fantasies within the form of war allows Ross and Mauberley [respite from the fixed rules of civilization, and permits them to realize unconscious desires which are contradictory to the attitudes and rules of conduct imposed by civilization.]

In Front Lines, Lorraine York convincingly illustrates "there is no single war. There is, instead, a network of wars -- wars between nations, wars between family members, wars between genders, wars against nature, and wars of competing ideologies" (132). Additional to York's 'external' wars, there are also the wars fought within the

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<sup>2</sup>Timothy Findley, Famous Last Words, (Markham: Penguin, 1981) 176. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to Words and cite only page number.

<sup>3</sup>Timothy Findley, The Wars, (Markham: Penguin, 1978) 92. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to Wars and cite only page number.

individual. There are wars between civilised urges and primal desires; wars between love and hate; and wars between the desires to create and the desires to destroy. Although human beings fight national, familial, and ideological wars outside of themselves, wars are also fought within individuals. Peter Klován perceives<sup>察觉到</sup> the war of Robert Ross “as a metaphor<sup>隐喻</sup> of man’s conflict with his fate” (59) where “the war is merely the occasion<sup>契机</sup>, rather than the cause of Robert’s destruction” (61).

Diana Brydon points out, polite “society does not speak of its foundations on brutality<sup>残酷</sup>. Neither are individuals permitted to speak of the needs society cannot meet” (69). “Neither can we tell what we have no words to name, or what our society has identified as taboo” (69). To give voice to their internal wars, Ross and Mauberley adopt the metaphor of global war for their fantasies<sup>幻想</sup>. Through this metaphor they express their instinctual internal conflicts disguised as external conflicts.

To understand the instinctual motivation of what Einstein considers to be “the most typical, the most cruel and extravagant form of conflict between man and man” (“Why War?”, 348), Einstein turned to Freud. To understand the unconscious motivation of

Mauberley and Ross, which has impelled them to adopt the model of ultimate global conflict as the form of their fantasies, the critic may also turn to Freud. The use of formalistic and psychoanalytic methodologies to interpret the texts of The Wars and Famous last Words as dreams, reveals that the conflicts that Mauberley and Ross experience as the historical wars in which they are ostensibly involved, are metaphors for the internal conflicts of their own minds, for which the form of war provides the vindication and the means of expression. The wars of Robert Raymond Ross and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley are the dream manifestations of unconscious conflicts which are metaphorically represented by the upheaval and chaos caused by military world conflict. While in their dream worlds, Ross and Mauberley are exiled from the comforts of conscious standards of civilized behaviour, and thrown into the chaos of their own unconscious desires and fears.

Although neither Timothy Findley, nor the narrators of the stories, are aware of the function of the unconscious within the text of the narratives, what occurs unconsciously in Famous Last Words and The Wars forms an intrinsic part of both novels' structures. To understand the unconscious motivations of Ross and Mauberley, the

analyst must accept that The Wars and Famous Last Words are textual renditions of the dreams of the protagonists. "Dreams are nothing other than the fulfilment of wishes";<sup>4</sup> they are not willy-nilly gatherings of absurd imaginary characters acting out a pointless performance. For the dreamer, the events, personalities, and even the wording of the dream narrative have significance.

The best manner of understanding the latent content of any dream is for the analyst to request that the subject relax the analytical and critical portions of his/her thought processes and simply talk about the connections and significance that he/she perceives between the images of his/her dreams and his or her own waking reality. Because Ross and Mauberley are individuals who are obviously unavailable for such sessions of free-association which would lead the analyst most accurately to an understanding of the unconscious motivation of the dream events, the psychoanalytic reader must rely upon a close critical reading of the texts of The Wars and Famous Last Words to discover the hidden patterns of

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<sup>4</sup>Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams vol. 4 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Angela Richards (Markham: Pelican, 1976) 701. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to Dreams and cite only page number.

Mauberley's and Ross' unconscious desires. The absence of personal myths and associations forces the analyst to rely upon public, or archetypal myths and repetitive associations to discern the unconscious motivations and desires imbedded within the dream. The archetypal myths, symbols, images and forms, which embody Ross' and Mauberley's unconscious desires and wishes, are distorted, composited, condensed, displaced, censored, and apparently disguised by every possible means, but they are nonetheless the decipherable manifestations of unconscious desires and wishes.

In The Wars, Robert Raymond Ross draws the reader into the dark cave of his unconscious, where a picture of Robert ablaze upon a black sweating horse "will obtrude again and again until you find its meaning" (Wars, 13). Mauberley's testament on the walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel ends:

Thus, whatever rose towards the light is left to sink unnamed: a shadow that passes slowly through a dream. Waking all we remember is the awesome presence, while a shadow lying dormant in the twilight whispers from the other side of reason; I am here. I wait.

(Words, 396)

The meanings of Ross' haunting photograph and the twilight shadow of Mauberley's epigraph cannot be fully understood without an

awareness of Robert's and Mauberley's individual unconscious motivations. To discover the unconscious content of the texts of The Wars and Famous last Words, one may examine and interpret the paradigm of both texts as dreams through psychoanalytic methods. The meaning of the haunting photograph, the shadow's "awesome presence", and the texts as wholes, may be determined through an exploration of the symbols, images and myths that Robert's and Mauberley's dreams embody and invoke. Like Pound, I am convinced that "somewhere in here...is what we know already; forgotten and ignored. And I mean to find it" (Words, 5).



## Chapter One: "This is what they called *the wars*"

After the First World War, and the deaths of over sixty million individuals, including members of his own family, Freud published Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Before 1920, psychoanalysis <sup>精神分析学</sup> described human behaviour as motivated by only narcissism and sexual desire -- the seeking of pleasure. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud notes that certain phenomena, especially the recurring nightmares of the victims of shell shock, could not be fully explained as phenomena of seeking pleasure; in fact, they appeared as the seeking of "unpleasure". The victims of an agonizing or traumatic situation may repeat the unpleasant experience over and over as a contemporary experience, rather than establishing it as a part of the past. Freud names this enigma "repetition - compulsion" and suggests that when the psyche experiences a shock for which it is not prepared, it will seek to produce retrospective anxiety to prepare the mind for the precurring event which induced the neurosis. Normally, the human mind creates within itself anxiety which prepares the mind for danger and

protects the mind of the subject from fright or fright-neuroses. Fright occurs only when the subject's mind is surprised by a danger for which it is unprepared. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud remarks that the "study of dreams may be considered the most trustworthy method of investigating deep mental processes. Now dreams occurring in traumatic neurosis have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (282).

If the texts of The Wars and Famous Last Words are interpreted psychoanalytically, it becomes evident that The Wars is, on one level, an expression of Robert Ross' unconscious destructive compulsion to repeat the death of his sister. Paradoxically, Ross wishes Rowena dead, and desires to be punished for that desire. Like Ross, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley's unconscious wishes are fulfilled by repeatedly recalling a pre-war domestic death and seeking punishment for being an accomplice in his family member's demise. The protagonists' guilt and their desire to resolve the fear of retaliation incurred by the shock of wishing the death of a close family member cannot be wholly explained as the unconscious

seeking of pleasure; an examination of The Wars and Famous Last Words must rely partially upon Freud's later writings to resolve the conundrum of why Ross' and Mauberley's fulfilled wishes (the events of The Wars and Famous Last Words) are masochistic, repetitive and ultimately self-destructive.

(Robert Ross is constantly brought back to thoughts of Rowena: when he has to shoot the horse on the ship "a chair fell over in his mind" (Wars, 65); when he sees Rodwell's collection of animals (which are destined to die) in cages he thinks "Rowena" (Wars, 87); when Harris is dying Robert is very confused because he has been told that "no one should die alone" (Wars, 94) and "no one except Rowena had made Robert feel that he wanted to be with them all the time" (Wars, 95); when he is speaking to Juliet d'Orsey "he said he had ...a sister who was dead" (Wars, 145); after Robert is raped and loses his sexual innocence, he burns the picture of Rowena: this "was not an act of anger -- but an act of charity" (Wars, 172), the last image of the dream is "Robert and Rowena with Meg" (Wars, 191). Robert is repeatedly reminded of his sister's death. As he continues to subject himself to her memory, he builds up the anxiety which he requires to calm his mind after the fright of

incurred by the realization that he was masturbating instead of preventing Rowena's fall.

Mauberley is also drawn to relive repeatedly the fatal fall of a close family member. Because he wants to deny his own culpability for his father's death, he will not participate in Ezra Pound's "dismantling of the past. The past was where he lived; or wanted to" (Words, 6) and he left "several times on journeys to the past where he lounged with his father on the roof of the Arlington Hotel" (Words, 32). Mauberley resists his own responsibility and guilt for wishing his father dead and instead blames the industrialization of America for his father's suicide, and has "always counted him among its early victims" (Words, 67).

Mauberley perceives most threats as falling, and Famous Last Words is filled with characters who fall or are ordered down because of the horrific and extenuating circumstances of mechanised war. "Mauberley, it would seem, is determined to battle the fear of descent which all demagogues inherit by ascending to political power" (York, 87). While Mauberley is on the train captured by German soldiers, the terrified passengers are repeatedly ordered "Down! Down! All you people on top get down!" (Words, 16)

“EVERYONE OUT AND EVERYONE DOWN!...OUT! OUT! OUT! DOWN! DOWN! DOWN!” (Words,17). “Down. Out. Down. Out. It was terrible” (Words, 16). Mauberley’s entire story is the narration of a fall: namely his father’s. When Quinn begins to examine Mauberley’s testament on the walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel, he is filled with a feeling of being confronted with a fall: “Quinn felt the same as he had when he made his first parachute jump -- suddenly confronted with the enormity of space and the death that might await him at the bottom. He closed his eyes and held his breath. And then he opened them -- and read...” (Words, 65). When Mauberley has completed his narration, in which he specifically describes the deadly falls of David, the Duke of Windsor (Words, 146); Wallis Simpson (Words, 192); Rudolf Hess (Words, 303); Lorenzo de Broca (Words, 288); Isabella Loverso (Words, 263); the city of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia (Words, 89); and the gecko lizards on the ceiling of his room at Westbourne (Words, 337) he concludes, “It was done. My fall was over. All the way down” (Words, 375).

It is obvious that both Ross and Mauberley are obsessed with the fatal falls that they wished upon a member of their families;

thus they have compulsively sought through displacements to repeat, those falls over and over again. The conundrum facing the psychoanalytic reader is to understand why Ross desires the death of an innocent child, and why Mauberley wishes the death of a compassionate and moral man, and why both repeat these deaths symbolically over and over again. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud asserts that an individual who wishes to deny the actual and repressed motivation for an action

is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, *remembering* it as something belonging to the past. These reproductions which emerge with such unwished for exactitude, always have as their subject some portion of infantile sexual life -- of the Oedipus complex, that is, and its derivatives; and they are invariably acted out in the sphere of transference

(289).

"This (discovery) is in complete agreement with the psychoanalytic findings that the same (Oedipus) complex constitutes the nucleus of all neuroses, so far as our present knowledge goes".<sup>5</sup> To understand

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<sup>5</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Totem and Taboo" in The Origins of Religion, vol. 13 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey, ed. Albert Dickson (Markham, Pelican, 1985) 43-224, p. 219. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to "Totem and Taboo" and cite only page number.

why Ross and Mauberley have wished for the deaths of Professor Mauberley and Rowena, the psychoanalytic reader must first understand the Oedipus complex. Sigmund Freud explains the complex best:

In its simplified form the case of a male child may be described as follows. At a very early age the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his mother, which originally related to the mother's breast and is the prototype of an object choice on the anaclitic model; the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships proceed side by side, until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to them; from this the Oedipus complex originates. His identification with his father then takes on hostile colouring and changes into a wish to get rid of his father in order to take his place with his mother.<sup>6</sup>

The son must give up his desire for his mother because he fears that his father will castrate him. Hopefully the young man will be able to resolve this conflict in a positive manner and identify himself with his father (creating an ambivalent relationship), develop an exclusively affectionate relationship with his mother, and replace his mother with another adult female; the bride.

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<sup>6</sup>Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" in On Metapsychology The Theory of Psychoanalysis, vol. 11 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Albert Dickson (Markham: Pelican, 1984) 339-407 p. 371. All future references will be incorporated onto the body of the text abbreviated to "Ego" and cite only page number.

This result is the ideal and simple configuration, but it hardly ever works out so simply; "one gets an impression that the simple Oedipus complex is by no means its commonest form" ("Ego", 372). The young man cannot be too submissive to the father, or he will never be able to assume the identified role as father himself, nor can he challenge the primacy of the father too drastically or he will be unable to abandon his attachment to his mother. The two dangers on either side of simple and positive resolution to the Oedipus complex correspond to the two sides of the little boy's sexuality. The heterosexual facet of the boy's personality desires the mother and opposes the father, but the homosexual side seeks to avoid the threat of paternal castration by taking the mother's place and becoming the father's love-object. Social expectations placed upon the young man oblige him to repress his incestuous feelings.

Robert Raymond Ross and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley have <sup>44</sup>sublimated their <sup>45</sup>infantile sexual <sup>46</sup>perversity, but it still exists within their unconscious'. Because the psychoanalytic reader examines The Wars and Famous Last Words from the perspective of dreams and fulfilled wishes of the protagonists, these unconscious desires become identifiable:



We have not only found that the material of the forgotten experiences of childhood is accessible to dreams, but we have also seen that the mental life of children with all its characteristics, its egoism, its incestuous choice of love-objects, and so on, still persists in dreams -- that is, in the unconscious, and that dreams carry us back every night to this infantile level. The fact is thus confirmed that what is unconscious in mental life is also what is infantile.<sup>7</sup>

Both Ross and Mauberley have wished the death of a family member because within their fantasy worlds which are not bound by the constrictions of adult civilised reality, they are able to act out the forbidden wishes of their infantile sexuality that have been repressed by the functions of civilization, and to act them out by wishing death upon members of their family.

On one level of interpretation, Robert Raymond Ross does not wish the death of his father; he wishes the death of his older sister. On this level, Robert has transferred his erotic desire for his mother to his sister.<sup>8</sup> Freud affirms that a boy "may take his sister as a

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<sup>7</sup>Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, vol. 1 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Angela Richards (Markham: Pelican, 1976) 247. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to Introductory Lectures and cite only page number.

<sup>8</sup>It is important to note that a psychoanalytic examination, like the mind, works on many levels simultaneously. It will later be discussed, on pages forty one and forty-two, that on another level of interpretation

love-object by way of substitute for his faithless mother”

(Introductory Lectures, 377). When Robert first sees Rowena from

his crib “he thought she was his mother” (Wars, 14). Rowena

becomes a surrogate mother with whom Robert can act out his

sexual desires. During the military concert in the park, Robert

stands behind his sister with his hands in his pockets (a

masturbatory posture) and then “reaches for the wicker back of the

wheel chair” (Wars, 13) to push her to another area of the park (a

coital image). Robert’s acting out of his desires, which are doubly

taboo because he is desirous of an individual who is both his sister

and a mother figure, makes him fear that he will be castrated as

punishment for his incestuous desires and actions.

Paradoxically, it is not Robert’s father, but Robert’s mother

who castrates him. Robert’s mother is a cold and distant woman

who repeatedly usurps Robert’s masculinity by mocking and invading

his life. When Robert is sitting in the bathtub, his mother walks

into the room, without waiting for his permission to enter, and

laughs at a story from his childhood, a story which evidently Robert

does not find humorous: “He hated the way she used his childhood --

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Robert does wish his father dead.

everyone's childhood as a <sup>武器</sup> weapon" (Wars, 26). The weapon of childhood is a blade which castrates Robert. In Mrs. Ross' recollections of his childhood there is an emphasis upon knives and cutting which play upon Robert's fear of castration, and language which Lorraine York notes "eerily combines the language of family and of war" (York, 32). Mrs. Ross reminds Robert that "[w]e're all cut off at birth with a knife and left at the mercy of strangers" (Wars, 28), and that when Robert came up the walk with skate blades scraping over bricks, it sounded like "someone sharpening knives" (Wars, 27). At the end of her cutting diatribe <sup>武器</sup> Mrs. Ross acts out a condensed primal scene: she "dropped the cigarette and used her toe to squash it out -- grinding and twisting it into the tiles until it was just a mess of juice and paper, torn beyond recognition" (Wars, 28). Mrs. Ross' destruction of the phallic cigarette completes the image of a woman determined to separate her son from his genitals, and destroy his <sup>男性</sup> masculinity. While she humiliates Robert, Mrs. Ross is seated on the toilet, which suggests that she controls his <sup>肛门</sup> anal <sup>27</sup> function and therefore his creativity to an extreme degree. Mrs. Ross' castrating words and actions are intended to keep Robert with her, and keep him as her child, rather than allowing him to leave her

and become a man. Lorraine York comments that "when Mrs. Ross realises...that she cannot maintain [her] nurturing role indefinitely, that motherhood cannot triumph over the war machine, she declares her own species of domestic war" (32) and claims to be just another stranger in Robert's life. In the bathroom scene Robert is cut off from both his <sup>physical</sup> ~~genitals~~ and his mother's affections. <sup>of a</sup> ~~of a~~

While Mrs. Ross is sitting on the toilet, she "watched her son with Delphic concentration while the smoke from her cigarette looped up and curled across her face" (Wars, 27-28). The evocation of the myth of the oracle at Delphi adds another dimension to Robert's perception of his mother as a distant castrating force. 'Delphi' means womb in Greek (Walker, "Delphi", 218). The Delphic Oracle was Greece's most famous oracle, whose priestess revealed the revelations of her son, Python. Python lived in an underground cavern and sent up potent visionary fumes to his mother. At the age of four days Apollo went to Delphi to kill Python who had tried to molest Apollo's mother during her pregnancy. Apollo succeeded in his assault upon the reptile and took the python's place in the Delphic cave (Cottrell, "Apollo", 132). This myth has three levels of interpretation within the context of Robert's dream. One level of

interpretation suggests that Mrs. Ross, as the Delphic priestess surrounded in smoke which loops around her just as a snake might is in possession of Robert's masculinity in the form of the phallic python and that Robert wishes to kill her and reclaim his manhood. Mrs. Ross has become the phallic mother who robs her son of his freedom and exploits him for her own purposes. On a different level, Robert believes that his mother has given birth to a 'dirty' feci-like son. "In childhood the female genitals and the anus are regarded as a single area -- the 'bottom' (in accordance with the infantile 'cloaca theory'); and it is not until later that the discovery is made that this region of the body comprises two separate cavities and orifices" (Dreams, 471-2). A third level of interpretation indicates that Robert feels that his role as son/man has been usurped by Mrs. Ross' dead brother, Monty, who is the ghostly smoky snake around her neck, and that his love object (his mother) has been taken from him by his uncle. "Monty Miles Raymond was everyone's favourite young man. All the girls loved him -- all the boys wanted to be his friend....The mourning had gone on for years" (Wars, 68) after his death. Monty Miles is Mrs. Ross' favourite, and Robert wants the primary status that her dead brother holds. This fantasy may be the origins of

Robert's own feeling of inadequacy, because he can never live up to the grandly mythologized Monty, and he cannot kill Monty because he is already dead. Robert wants his mother's love (which appears to be wholly invested in Monty), but he also wants to kill her for castrating and stifling him. The displacement of Robert's infantile sexual desire for his mother to Rowena embodies within it his desire to kill the mother for castrating him.

Mrs. Ross' castration of her son leads Robert to become suspicious and hateful of all women; all women, he believes, have the ability to castrate him. Heather Lawson "wailed, and railed and paled" (Wars, 19) because Robert would not fight for her. At the Kingston train station Robert is nervous of the young nurses because he "was shy of girls just [then] -- distrusting them and wondering why they had to look at you and make you think you wanted them....What did women mean to do with men?" (Wars, 18). At the Louse House Robert is apprehensive of Ella because he "didn't trust women with red hair. Heather Lawson had red hair" (Wars, 40).

Before he goes into the <sup>1678</sup>brothel "Robert thought for once he would like to be drunk and tilted the bottle skyward draining it dry. He had never been drunk before -- and the smell of the bottle

reminded him of his mother's room at home" (Wars, 38). The madame of the Louse House is a Jewish German woman named Maria Dreyfus. Maria, who also has red hair like Heather Lawson, becomes a mother figure in Robert's dream because she is the mistress of her liquor filled domain, just as Mrs. Ross is the mistress of hers.

Maria's hair is as "frizzy as Medusa's" (Wars, 39). Medusa is the only mortal of the three Greek Gorgons. The three sisters had snakes for hair and turned people who looked at them into stone. Medusa was changed into a winged monster for having sex with Poseidon" (Cottrell, "Gorgons" 141). In Robert's dream world, the myth of the Gorgons is inverted, and instead of turning their viewers into stone, women are cold and stone-like themselves. In "Medusa's Head" Freud points out that the extreme fear of Medusa is, quintessentially, a terror of castration and the female genitals, but the hairs of Medusa "nevertheless serve actually as a mitigation of the horror (of castration), for they replace the penis, the absence of which is the cause of the horror" (105).

At Rowena's funeral Mrs. Ross refused to be touched and stood away from her family with her mouth set (Wars, 23). At the Royal Free hospital Barbara d'Orsey "was like that cold white vase and

never said a word. She stood and watched them dying like a stone” (Wars, 104-5). Robert knows that stones are lethal because Taffler has shown Robert that he can kill with stones. After Robert witnesses Taffler and the Swede he “picked up a boot and held it in his hand. It’s weight alarmed him and texture of its leather skin appalled him with its human feel. He threw the boot across the room and shattered the mirror. Then he threw the other boot and broke the water jug” (Wars, 45). After Robert is raped at Desolé he “threw the jug in the corner. It broke into sixteen pieces” (Wars, 170). Robert’s violence after a sexual scene is enacted upon boots, jugs, and mirrors which are specifically feminine objects, because he fears the threat of castration which all women hold for him.

Women are lethal and they haunt the battlefield as well as the domestic world of home, whore houses, and hospitals. The battlefield is feminized by the emphasis upon water, trenches and craters. Unconsciously, Robert’s feminization of the battlefield indicates his fear of women. On one level, when Robert is fighting the elements of the battlefield he is realising the internal battle he is fighting with his mother. On another level, the battlefield becomes an emblem, both of his fear of women and an outward



manifestation of the lethality of all females. The battlefields are filled with water, just like the water jugs, and "it was said that you 'waded to the front'" (Wars, 72). Water is a feminine element and reminiscent of the womb. The battlefield of Belgium was once a place of beauty, but now "it was a shallow sea of stinking grey from end to end" (Wars, 72). Harris reminds Robert that his "mother's womb is just the sea in small" (Wars, 105). "Drowning had always been a particular fear of Robert's....Harris said: he wasn't afraid at all [of drowning]. His mother had died when he was three" (Wars, 106).

Robert's fear of drowning is realised when he falls through the dike. This episode has bi-partite significance because Robert simultaneously acts out a primal scene during his own attempted murder by the feminine element of mud.<sup>9</sup> Robert was convinced that "[o]ne way or another -- he would suffocate and drown. He began to push again and to lift -- thrusting his pelvis upwards harder and harder -- faster and faster against the mud....his groin began to shudder. Warm" (Wars, 80). This description of Robert's accident

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<sup>9</sup>Mud is the combination of the two feminine elements, earth and water, making it a particularly feminine substance.

suggests that he is saving himself from drowning by mimicking the actions of sexual intercourse. Another dimension of the scene suggests that because the mud is a feminine combination of elements that Robert feels that sexual intercourse with women has the potential to suffocate and drown a man. During the episode in the sink hole "his hands were useless to him" and "he kept thinking; don't" (Wars, 80), as if he were speaking to another individual. Hands are representative of the penis, which suggests that the feminine element of mud castrates him before it ultimately attempts to kill him.

Even when Robert is not in danger of drowning, the threat of gas is equally treacherous, equally feminine, and reminiscent of his mother's smoky diatribe in the bathroom. When Robert is in Belgium the field stank of chlorine and phosgene, the "smell was unnerving -- as if some presence were lurking in the fog like a dragon in the story" (Wars, 75). Medusa, with whom Robert identifies several women, was turned into a winged monster. In one interpretation of the Apollo myth the creature in the Delphic cave is a she-dragon (Cottrell, "Apollo", 132). The dragon in the mist is feminine and it, again, threatens to suffocate Robert. When the gas threatens Robert

on the morning of the twenty-eighth of February, he sees “[s]lithering over the crater’s rim -- a pale blue fog...[l]ike a veil his mother might’ve worn” (Wars, 23). Robert’s immediate association of the deadly gas with his mother calls to mind the scene in the Ross’ bathroom where the “room was full of steam” (Wars, 26) and Mrs. Ross’ attempts to keep her son at home by castrating and suffocating him.

The trenches at the front lines are symbols of female genitalia, and are especially feminized by the domestic air of the stained glass dugout. “The dugout, in fact was rather grand as <sup>防空洞</sup> dugouts go....There were four <sup>床位</sup> bunks -- four stools and a chair and a large handmade table. Candles and lamps were set in holders nailed to the support beams and a large central lamp swung from a chain over the table” (Wars, 89). When the Germans attack on the twenty-eighth of February the roof of the dugout falls and threatens to suffocate the men within it (Wars, 111-113). After Robert finally <sup>逃脱</sup> frees himself from the debris and struggles to the other <sup>战壕</sup> trenches he discovers “[e]very last one of his men was dead” (Wars, 118). The trenches, as feminine symbols, are lethal and kill men by suffocating them. Robert’s fear of his mother follows him to the

battlefield, where she, and all creatures like her (women), have the ability and desire to kill him and other creatures like him (men) by suffocation.

At the Louse House Robert is introduced to women who initiate sex with dancing. "The dancing -- pelvis to pelvis-- had a kind of crazy marching formality to it -- everyone locked in military pairs -- round and round and round." (Wars, 40). At the front, Levitt claims that Clausewitz says that enemy forces must seek their own destruction so that "the whole war can be carried out as a serious formal minuet. 'That's nice said Rodwell. 'Everybody likes to dance'" (Wars, 92) and after that attack on February 28, "Rodwell was heard to say to Levitt: 'some minuet'" (Wars, 109). In her diaries, Lady Juliet writes about Robert's only experience of heterosexual sexual intercourse in the dream: his affair with Barbara D'Orsey. When the young Lady Juliet spies on Robert and Barbara tentatively fondling each other "everything they did was like a dance between two birds" (Wars, 151). When she sneaks in to Robert's bedroom, Juliet was confused by the violence of the sexual act, and was convinced that Robert hated Barbara (Wars, 156). Within Robert's dream, the act of sexual intercourse is associated with violence and war, not with

pleasant feelings.

Rowena, with whom Robert identifies his castrating and lethal mother, is the victim of Robert's repressed violence against his mother. Rowena fulfils Robert's conscious fear and unconscious desire when she falls at a time when he is helpless to prevent it, and in circumstances in which he can believe that he caused her demise. Because Rowena died while Robert was "locked in his room making love to his pillows" (Wars, 21), Robert has imposed a causal connection between his own sexuality and his sister's death. 原因

Throughout the text of The Wars, Robert's penis and guns are described together; the division between flesh and steel is indistinct. 模糊不清 When Robert kills the young German with the binoculars, 望远镜 he did not even know the gun was in his hand until he reached to wipe the mud from his face. "It smelt of heat and oil" (Wars, 131). Recently fired guns do not smell like heat and oil, they smell like metal and smoke; human bodies smell like heat and oil. When Robert is in his room at Bailleul "he slid his hand across his stomach and down between his legs. Bang-bang-bang! went the guns at the front. Robert didn't listen" (Wars, 162). The differentiation between Robert's 'gun' and the 'guns' at the front is blurred and Robert's 模糊不清

manipulation of his penis is associated with the killing at the front lines. In the same episode, Robert's ejaculation is marked by "[a] sudden vision of obliteration...[and] Oblivion" (Wars, 163). When Robert is raped in the baths at Desolé he is symbolically castrated (both by the rape and his blindness) and when he returns to his room "[h]e wanted his pistol...Gun . Gun. He wanted his gun." (Wars, 169-70). When Robert is in his hotel room at Bailleul, he "made a fist around his penis. He thought how small it was" (Wars, 163). Freud asserts that "Adler [1907] is right in maintaining that when a person with an active mental life recognizes an inferiority in one of his organs, it acts as a spur and calls out a higher level of performance in him through over compensation".<sup>10</sup> The next day, after judging his penis to be small, Robert describes "a pair of RAYMOND/ROSS steam-driven tractors dragging a 12-inch Howitzer" (Wars, 164). Associating his penis with a piece of field artillery which has a diameter of twelve inches, albeit a common male delusion, is Robert's unconscious overcompensation for his

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<sup>10</sup>Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction (1914) in On Metapsychology the Theory of Psychoanalysis, vol. 11 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Angela Richards (Markham: Pelican, 1984) 59-97 p. 93. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to "Narcissism" and cite only page number.

insignificant organ. Robert unconsciously believes that his penis, like a gun, is an instrument of death. He was masturbating when Rowena died, and therefore he associates masturbation<sup>?</sup> with her death. Freud points out that "a sense of guilt could be produced not only by an act of violence that is actually carried out,...but also by one that is merely intended".<sup>11</sup> Robert associates Rowena with his mother, and wants her dead, but he cannot absolve himself of the guilt of wishing her dead.

Robert's belief that Rowena died when he was masturbating is confirmed when the reader is told: "so far you have read of the deaths of 557,017 people -- one of whom was killed by a streetcar, one of whom died of bronchitis and one of whom died in a barn with her rabbits" (Wars, 158). Rowena did not die in the barn with her rabbits; she fell on Sunday in the barn, but she remained unconscious until Monday when she died (Wars, 21). Robert has confused the date of his sister's death so that it coincides exactly with the day for which he feels ~~guilty~~<sup>本罪</sup>. "Where there is a disposition to obsessional

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<sup>11</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents" in Civilization, Society, and Religion, vol. 12 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Albert Dickson (Markham: Pelican, 1985) 242-340. p. 330-331. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to C&D and cite only page number.

neuroses the conflict due to ambivalence gives a pathological cast to mourning and forces it to express itself in the form of self-reproaches to the effect that the mourner himself is to blame for the loss of the loved object, i.e. that he has willed it" ("Ego", 260).

Robert's imagined responsibility for Rowena's death, and the subsequent deaths of her rabbits, has led him to believe that his penis is a weapon, and that by masturbating with a murderous fantasy he has willed his sister's death. Robert is repeatedly reminding himself and punishing himself for wanting his sister dead, because she castrated him, and feeling guilty, for both wanting her dead, and not preventing her death. One facet Robert's dream, The Wars, is the repetitive cycle of guilt and punishment that Robert imposes upon himself for killing his sister, as a surrogate for his mother, with a wish and his penis.

As well as identifying his sister with Mrs. Ross, Robert also identifies himself with his mother, and throughout his military tour of duty he and his mother experience the same ordeals. In January, February, and March of 1916 "Mrs. Ross began to seek out storms" (Wars,135), while Mrs. Davenport stood "watching her friend being blown away" by the elements (Wars,136). When she received a



postcard telling her that Robert's leave in London was over, "Mrs. Ross retreated with him into France" (Wars, 159). On the sixteenth of June, when Robert is blinded in the fire, Mrs. Ross goes blind on the stairs (Wars, 180). When Robert dies "Mister Ross was the only member of his family who came to see him buried" (Wars, 190). Mrs. Ross does not attend the funeral; neither does Robert.

Robert's repressed, but dominant, homosexuality is a facet of his sublimated desire to become the sole object of his father's attentions, and possessor of his mother's phallic power. Robert's fear of women and his desire to be with individuals representative of his father lead him to join the exclusively masculine domain of the army and to fight in the war even though he "doubts the validity in all this martialling of men" (Wars, 13). Robert's fear of women unconsciously leads him to seek narcissistic sexual pleasure with creatures like himself (and like his father), rather than from castrating women. When he begins to masturbate at Bailleul "Robert undid all the buttons on his shirt and took it off. That was better. He stood up and slid his trousers and underwear to the floor. He could see himself now -- pale in the aureole of candlelight in the mirror" (Wars, 163). Robert's description of his own reflection

within his masturbatory fantasy expresses his narcissistic desire to make love with a body that is like his own and his father's.

Narcissism denotes "the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated" ("Narcissism", 65). To satisfy his narcissistic ego and his erotic desire for his father, Robert unconsciously seeks to create homosexual primal scenes while he is in the battlefield. Robert's actions in the sink hole in Belgium are reminiscent of Taffler's actions while having sex with the Swede.<sup>12</sup> After Robert shoots the young German with the binoculars, Robert is pulled over the lip of the crater and tumbles into Bates' arms "and the two men lay together for almost a minute before Robert moved" (*Wars*, 130). The firing of Robert's gun, which is associated with his penis, suggests that his embrace of Bates is a winning of the father.

Robert's rape at Desolé allows him to experience anal intercourse and feminine masochistic punishment without accepting any responsibility for the homosexual act. It is significant that the most detailed description of physical resistance in the dream is

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<sup>12</sup>Robert's emulation of Taffler's actions in the brothel will be expanded on pages thirty-seven and thirty-eight.

Robert's rape. "He struggled with such impressive violence that all his assailants fell upon him at once" (Wars, 168). If Robert is physically forced to submit to his attackers' homosexual attentions, he cannot be responsible. Robert removed himself even further from his own feelings when "he lost his breath and fainted" (Wars, 169). At the end of the rape Robert regains consciousness just long enough to realize that his assailants were "his fellow soldiers. Maybe even his brother officers" (Wars, 169). Robert wants to be raped so that he may experience homosexual intercourse with his brother (father) officers without the guilt that would be incurred by voluntarily submitting to homosexual intercourse. By assuming a humiliating and submissive feminine (castrated) posture, Robert is able to realize simultaneously his homosexual desires and punish himself for exercising his masturbatory desires which he unconsciously associates with the death of his sister.

Throughout Robert's dream, homosexuality is linked with horses. Horses are creatures which are mounted by men, especially by soldiers, and Robert's unconscious desire to be 'mounted' is revealed through the images of homosexuality within the text of the dream. The primal scene of Taffler and the Swede at the brothel is

an image of a horse and rider. "The one who played the horse was bucking -- lifting his torso high off the bed, lifting the weight of the rider with his shoulders and his knees -- and bucking, just like the mustangs Robert and the others had broken in the Summer" (Wars, 45). Robert's actions in the sink-hole are reminiscent of the description of Taffler laying beneath the Swede "He pushed. He tried to force his pelvis forward and up. The muscles in his stomach made a knot. If only he could lift the weight" (Wars, 80). Robert's identification of Taffler as his ideal has led Robert to emulate him in a homosexual experience within which he had no other option but to react as he did or to drown in the mud.

Lady Juliet explains that when her brother, Clive, was a young man his "only sport was riding" (Wars, 101). Clive's 'rides' were excursions with Jamie; the young man with whom Clive was in love (Wars, 102). Horses are dedicated to Mars, the god of war (Circlot, "Horse", 152). Until recently war has been an exclusively male pursuit and the ultimate expression of male bonding. Within Robert's dream world, horses are emblems of homosexuality, and a world which excludes women. Robert leaves the world of castrating women to join the world of men and horses.

Robert's actions throughout the dream suggest that Robert's escape to the world of horses is motivated by his identification of horses with his father. Horses become Robert's totem which act as surrogates for his castrated and absent father. Freud notes that psychoanalysis "has revealed that the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father" ("Totem and Taboo", 202). In German, Ross means 'horse' or 'steed', and Robert received not only the last name of Ross from his father, but his father also gave him a Colt revolver. The RAYMOND/ROSS company makes tractors which are mechanical replacements of the plough horse. On the S.S. Massanabie, Robert "became intrigued with this world of horses, rats and bilge that had been consigned to his care. It took on a life entirely of its own...Robert soon became completely disengaged from the other [human] life on the upper deck" (Wars, 61).

When Robert and Harris are taken off the S.S. Massanabie, they are unloaded in stretchers "and lowered into the tender much as the horses had been brought aboard" (Wars, 67). Before Harris dies in London, he tells Robert that his "mother's womb is the sea...Horses lie in the sea before they are born" (Wars, 104). On Robert's march through Belgium "[m]en and horses sank from sight. They just

drowned in mud. Their graves, it seemed, just dug themselves and pulled them down ... [into the] shallow sea of stinking grey" (Wars, 72). Robert's identification of himself with horses has allowed him the partial appropriation of paternal attributes.

When he is caught in a shell barrage at Battalion signals, "Robert went inside at one point to request of Captain Leather that he be allowed to take the horses and mules he had just brought forward and make a strategic retreat with them so they might be saved" (Wars, 176). Leather refuses his request, and Robert rebels. Robert's mutinous attempt to save the horses fails because a barrage of three shells destroys the barns and horses (Wars, 178). Three is the phallic number, and, within the construct of Robert's dream, Mrs. Ross is the phallic mother who threatens castration by bombardment of mocking stories. In the course of trying to save the horses, Robert kills Leather and Cassles, the two men who tried to prevent his rescue of the horses. The names of both officers suggest that they are representative of the feminine element. Robert associates leather with boots which are feminine, and castles (Cassles), like other enclosed spaces, are symbolic of the feminine. Robert kills the soldiers because they, in Robert's mind, desire the

death of the horses, just as his mother desired the death of Rowena's rabbits. Rowena's rabbit's lived in the Ross' stable in Toronto (Wars, 22), and Robert associates the horses in his care with his sister's rabbits as well as his father. By killing Leather and Cassles, Robert is able to kill his mother in an attempt to end her threat to him.

Robert's unconscious identification of his father with horses leads Robert to attempt to preserve the lives of horses, but when it is remembered that the occurrences in dreams fulfil, to some extent, the dreamer's wishes, the number of horses that die horribly in the battlefield and especially the fifty horses at the abandoned barn "all of them standing in their place while they burned" (Wars, 186) indicates a vacillation in Robert's feelings towards his father. Freud discovered that the "ambivalent emotional attitude, which to this day characterizes the father-complex in our children and which often persists into adult life, seems to extend to the totem animal in its capacity as a substitute for the father" ("Totem and Taboo", 202). Robert's failure to save the horses, suggests that he not only wishes to replace his mother within his father's affections, he also, perhaps on a deeper level, wishes his father

dead,<sup>13</sup> and that his adoption of horses as totems is a result of filial guilt. Robert's emergence from the flaming barn on the back of the stumbling mare<sup>14</sup> suggests that he has control over the stumbling and dying father. Riding is symbolic of sexual intercourse, and by riding the dying horse to relative safety Robert simultaneously expresses his desire and hatred for his father.

The fire that killed the horses, transforms Robert in a very significant manner. "There is a photograph of Robert and Juliet taken about a year before his death. He wears a close fitting cap rather like a toque -- pulled down over his ears. He has no eyebrows -- his nose is disfigured and bent and his face is a mass of scar tissue" (Wars, 189-190). Robert has wholly appropriated the phallic power of his father by actually transforming himself into a phallic image. "And he is smiling" (Wars, 190).

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<sup>13</sup>As was mentioned on page nineteen, Robert's desire to kill his father operates simultaneously with his desire to kill Rowena as a surrogate for his mother.

<sup>14</sup>Some objection may be raised here that if the horse that Robert was riding was identified with his father it would have been a male horse. This ostensible conflict may be explained in two ways: Robert, defending his conscious reality, will not acknowledge the horse as masculine and thereby identify it with his father, or; Mr. Ross has been castrated and has effectively realised the infantile idea that a female is a male who has been castrated.



Within Robert's dream, the implications of the Oedipus complex are multi-faceted and far-reaching. Unconsciously Robert has not come to a simple resolution of his Oedipus complex, and has never given up his desire or fear of his parents. His murderous anger and illicit desire for both of his parents has created within him overwhelming guilt and consequent fear of castration and of women. His fear of women, who all have the ability to emasculate him, and his homosexual desire for his father, which is extrapolated onto other men, lead Robert to join the wholly masculine world of soldiers and horses. The haunting photograph of Robert burning on the stumbling horse is the image which "will obtrude again and again until you find its meaning -- here" (Wars, 13) in the Oedipus complex.

## Chapter Two: Mauberley's "boxed set of wars"

The implications of the Oedipus complex within Famous Last Words are central to a psychoanalytic understanding of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley's unconscious desires. Mauberley wishes his father dead because he unconsciously covets his father's sexual primacy with his mother. Mauberley disguises his wish for his father's death by imposing his own wish onto his father. By transposing his own murderous wish into his father's suicidal purpose, Mauberley attempts, unsuccessfully, to alleviate the guilt incurred by his primal desire to kill the father. In the manifest content of the dream, however, Mauberley never assumes responsibility for his father's death, and continues to insist that Professor Mauberley was an early victim of the industrialisation of America (Words, 67), rather than of his son's incestuous jealousy and primal rage.

Before Professor Mauberley leaps from the roof of the Arlington Hotel, he presents his twelve year old son with a series of riddles, just as the young Oedipus was presented a riddle by the

inscrutable Sphinx. When Oedipus correctly answers the Sphinx's riddle, the defeated monster throws itself into the sea. The death of the riddling Sphinx, which had previously threatened to devour the citizens of Thebes one by one, makes Oedipus a hero, and consequently, he is made King of Thebes and his mother's husband. In Famous Last Words, Mauberley kills his paternal rival and the Sphinx simultaneously by condensing them into one figure: Professor Mauberley. When both the father and the Sphinx have been defeated, Mauberley is free, like Oedipus, to assume primacy within his kingdom and his mother's bed.

The riddles that Professor Mauberley presents to his son are all focussed on solutions ostensibly obtainable in the future. Professor Mauberley presents his son with a quote from William Wordsworth, which Mauberley can "look...up some day" (Words, 1); he tells his son of his own inability to love his mad wife, and hopes that Mauberley will "understand that failure later on" (Words, 1); and then discloses his dismissal from Harvard; "[t]his, again, is something [Hugh] will understand when [he is] older" (Words, 2). Implicitly and unconsciously embodied in these statements is Mauberley's infantile understanding that Professor Mauberley is the

owner of adult understanding and power which allows him sexual privileges with Mrs. Mauberley and the power to castrate; something Mauberley will have only when he acquires an adult penis.

Mauberley symbolically obtains adult power after his father's death; in fact, he obtains his father's penis. The silver pencil that Professor Mauberley leaves in his jacket for his son is Mauberley's Oedipal trophy from his father's death. Freud asserts in his Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, that when analyzing dream symbolism there is not "any difficulty in understanding how it is that the male organ can be replaced...by other objects which are capable of being lengthened, such as...extensible pencils" (188). Mauberley's appropriation of his father's penis transfers to Mauberley the powers and privileges that he accorded to his father before his death. As a scholar, Professor Mauberley was 'a man of letters', and the theft of his penis, symbolised by the inheritance of the pencil, facilitates Mauberley's entrance into the adult world of writing. Just as Oedipus gained rulership of his father's kingdom, Mauberley is granted status in the academic world from which his father seceded. By castrating his father Mauberley reduces the fear of his own castration by his father, and is simultaneously made the

possessor of the instrument which had facilitated his father's sexual primacy with Mrs. Mauberley and his academic success in the world of words.

On a parallel level of interpretation of Mauberley's fantasy, Mauberley's adoption of a silver pencil as a penile symbol, indicates that Mauberley also perceives the phallic symbol as feminine and consequently dangerous. The inconsistency of the silver feminine phallus is indicated by the impermanency of images created in pencil opposed to those inscribed in ink. The inconstancy and femininity of the phallic symbol are compounded because the pencil is made of silver, which is a feminine metal usually associated with the moon (Lasne, "Silver" 48). The feminine moon is symbolic of inconstancy because its appearance changes every night, unlike the masculine sun which appears constantly circular. Throughout Famous Last Words, Mauberley depicts women who are dangerous and who disappear without warning or explanation, just as the moon constantly waxes and wanes. "Another significant aspect of the moon concerns its close association with the night (maternal, enveloping, unconscious and ambivalent because it is both protective and dangerous) (Circlot, "Moon", 216). The association of the moon

to the silver pencil is directly linked to Mrs. Mauberley because Mrs. Mauberley is a 'lunatic'. "To this day, many people believe lunacy is affected by the moon, being characterized by increased psychic disturbance when the moon is full" (Walker, "Luna", 556).

Mauberley's projection of dangerous feminine and maternal traits onto the phallic symbol, which should be wholly masculine, suggests that, within Mauberley's unconscious, an inversion of phallic power has taken place before his acquisition of the silver pencil. The feminization of the pencil suggests that although Professor Mauberley gave the pencil to his son, Mrs. Mauberley had already castrated her husband and assumed ownership of phallic power. Mauberley finds the pencil in the pocket of his father's jacket tucked inside "a soft, flat, leather bill-fold with a clasp" (Words, 2). Freud has established that the "female genitals are symbolically represented by all such objects as share their characteristics of enclosing a hollow space which can take something into itself...for instance...pockets" (Introductory Lectures, 189). The soft leather billfold, by nature of being soft, folded flesh, is indicative of the external female genitalia. Mauberley must extract the phallic pencil from the feminine pocket and bill fold.

This image of a primal scene suggests that Mauberley's mother has already confiscated her husband's phallus and kept it hidden within her. The clasp that Mauberley describes as part of the leather billfold is evocative of an image of the fantasy of the Vagina Dentata which castrates and devours men during sexual intercourse.

This primal fear of intercourse with the feminine is repeated while Mauberley is at Rapallo with Ezra Pound, and Mauberley complains:

every single piece of lead I insert in my pencil is  
determined to break today, no matter how many times I  
fill it. Maybe it doesn't want to write. Maybe it has the  
same sense I have -- cum sybilla -- of impending  
doom....I lean out towards him (Ezra), clutching my  
notebook, stabbing my wrist with my pencil....All I can do  
is sit back and stare at him: my knees together, rubbing  
my wrist with its purple puncture.

(Words, 78-79)

The mechanical pencil, which is a phallic symbol because of its shape and extensibility, is violently transformed into a dangerous feminine weapon. The insertion of the lead into Mauberley's pencil suggests that the pencil is a feminine receptacle to the masculine lead. The ability of the pencil to break the lead repeatedly evokes,

again, an image of the castrating toothed vagina and the devouring female.

Mauberley's rather pretentious inclusion of the Latin "cum sybilla" suggests that the gift of prophecy that he has accredited to his pencil is feminine. Translated, sybilla may mean verses, prophetess, or female soothsayer, but all three derivations stem from the sacred female priestesses of Cybele (The Great Mother of Gods) who lived in secret sacred caves. The oracles of Cybele were very powerful women who, in the Second Century B.C., guided Roman Imperial policy and wrote their own literary works which were collected in the "Sibiline Books" (Walker, "Sybil", 966-967). Mauberley stabs his wrist, penetrating and injuring a symbolic representative of his penis (Introductory Lectures, 189) with the feminine phallus. Mauberley is left castrated with his knees pressed together in the posture of a man trying vainly to protect his genitals from harm. Despite the fear of heterosexual intimacy, especially with the mother, that these images indicate, Mauberley still "danced with his mother in the corridors of her asylum at Bellevue" (Words, 32). Rhythmic activities, such as dancing, are representative of sexual intercourse and indicate Mauberley's wish to be united with



the mother.

Before Mauberley's father leaps from the roof of the Arlington Hotel he tries to explain to his son that he does not blame his wife for the failure of their marriage and, it is implied, his suicide (Words, 1), and begs Mauberley not to blame her either. If Mauberley does not unconsciously perceive a reason for blaming his mother for his father's death, then there would be no motivation for him to wish that his father could convince him that she was not to blame. Mauberley's unconscious perception of his mother as a malefactor in his father's death, and a threat to his own life, is apparent throughout the text of Famous Last Words through Mauberley's sustained association of his mother with drowning and ferocious animals that live and kill in the water. Freud has recognized that birth "is almost invariably represented by something which has a connection with water: one either falls into the water or climbs out of it, one rescues someone from the water or is rescued by someone -- that is to say, the relation is one of mother to child" (Introductory Lectures, 186).

However, in Mauberley's dream, Famous Last Words, there is no rescue or climbing out of the water; there is only the threat of

drowning, sharks and alligators: in “the waters of the dark, the sharks of the S.S. had begun to swim in Requiem packs” (Words, 17-18). Mauberley cannot disassociate Hog Island, where the Windsors reside, from his fear of sharks. On the day of Mauberley’s arrival to the island he describes a primal scene: “someone fell -- or was pushed, as a prank -- from the decks of this public conveyance and eaten by a shark in full view of fifty or sixty people who all stood by and did nothing” (Words, 324). Mauberley associates sharks with the Nazi Schutz-Staffel and Hog Island, but on a deeper level, he has imposed the castrating threat of his devouring mother onto the aquatic predators. Mauberley is nervous about returning to the Porcupine Club on Hog Island because it means that he “would have to brave [his] way through the dark above the sharks” (Words, 333). The young airmen at Rawson Square, cruising for prostitutes, “had every intention of penetrating further into the dark than [Mauberley]” did (Words, 359). Mauberley’s association of darkness with sexual intercourse and with the threat of being devoured by sharks suggest that the darkness that he fears is the darkness within the toothed vagina of his mother. Sharks are commonly referred to as man-eaters and many species of sharks are mentally

and dentally prepared to validate their reputation. The only weapon that a shark uses is its mouth. Row upon row of tiny deadly teeth are angled inwards so that prey may easily be forced in, and caught on the points of the sloping teeth when it tries to retreat. The mouth of the shark is symbolic of the female genital orifice which Mauberley unconsciously believes has the ability to castrate him during sexual intercourse. Mauberley unconsciously considers his mother a cold-blooded predator who seeks to castrate and devour men.

Mauberley also imposes the threat of a gaping maternal mouth upon Harry Reinhart who has alligator shoes and alligator eyes. Reinhart kills Mauberley at the Grand Elysium Hotel, where Mauberley is found "leaning forward into a corner not unlike a man at prayer. One arm was crumpled under him and broken: the other twisted back with its hand, palm upward, clutching the silver pencil" (Words, 38). Mauberley has an icepick in his eye which, as well as the broken arm, symbolises his castration. Mauberley sexually desires Reinhart (Words, 142), and the submissive kneeling posture in which he dies recalls Mauberley's earlier sexual fantasy about the young Italian Black shirt, in front of whom Mauberley

imagined that he “knelt before his strength. And his victory” (Words, 91). Mauberley is killed in a sexual and submissive position that suggests that he had tried to appease Reinhart with the offering of the phallic silver pencil; and effectively offered his own castration in hopes of being taken sexually. Mauberley desires Reinhart because the henchman is “[i]nhuman and, therefore without the impediment of moral choice” (Words, 142). Mauberley has invested within Reinhart the characteristics he unconsciously attributes to his emotionally cold and mentally ill mother. Unconsciously, Mauberley wishes to be castrated (killed) by Mrs. Mauberley because he knows that is the price that he must pay to alleviate the guilt of wishing sexual intimacy with his mad devouring mother.

Mrs. Mauberley retreated from her family into madness before Professor Mauberley committed suicide. She was unhappy because Mauberley and his father had “intruded in her life” (Words, 2) and was embittered “with her failure to become whole” (Words, 2). Within Mauberley’s fantasy, the males of the Mauberley family have ‘intruded’ into the female Mauberley, just as a penis intrudes into the vagina during intercourse. Mrs. Mauberley’s attempt to be

'whole' is symbolic of her appropriation by castration of the male

Mauberley's phalluses. Freud notes that:

[a]s regards little girls, we can say of them that they feel greatly at a disadvantage owing to their lack of a big, visible penis, that they envy boys for possessing one and that, in the main for this reason, they develop a wish to be a man -- a wish that re-emerges later on, in any neurosis that may arise if they meet with a mishap in playing the feminine part.

(Introductory Lectures, 360).

Although Mrs. Mauberley failed in her attempts to become a man by poaching both her husband's and her son's penises, she nevertheless, had absolutely no sexual need for either of them. "She was a pianist you know. [Mauberley] spent [his] childhood -- all of [his] childhood -- listening to her play" (Words, 33). "Satisfaction obtained from a person's own genitals is indicated by all kinds of playing, including piano playing" (Introductory Lectures, 190). Mrs. Mauberley's auto-erotic piano playing satisfies her more than the sexual company of her son and husband, and when Mauberley thinks of his mother, he thinks of his "mother's hand, withdrawn -- her precious hand that must not be held too tight for fear its fingers would be crushed and the music in them destroyed" (Words, 145). Mrs. Mauberley's masturbatory musical hands give her more pleasure,

and are therefore, more highly valued than her son or her husband. By castrating her husband and her son, Mrs. Mauberley has taken that part of them which she cannot physiologically possess, and once that fragment of masculine flesh has been confiscated from them, she has no need for either her son or her husband. Mrs. Mauberley's control of the phallus, and the silver pencil which symbolizes it, cannot save her from madness, but it allows her complete sexual autonomy and dominance.

As a devouring and distant mother Mrs. Mauberley is associated with hotels. In his Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis, Freud notes that the "one typical -- that is regular-- representation of the human figure as a whole is a house" (186), but Mauberley does not perceive his mother as a homemaker or housewife, he perceives her as an impersonal hotel. During the conversation between Mauberley and his father on the roof of the Arlington Hotel, the day of Mauberley's birth is mentioned twice. Both times Mauberley's father, Mauberley, and the hotel are mentioned, but Mrs. Mauberley is excluded. "His father had spent much time up there alone on the roof of that hotel where Mauberley was born" (Words, 1). Biologically, Mauberley was born from his

mother's body, but as Freud points out all "neurotics, and many others besides, take exception to the fact that '*inter urinas et faeces nascimur* [we are born between urine and faeces]'" (C&D, 296). Mauberley has displaced his mother onto the hotel, because his fantasy is that he was not born from a 'dirty' place. Mauberley's anal obsession with cleanliness and order is apparent in his dress: "Mauberley, all his adult life, had been a fastidious dresser, famous for his suits of Venetian white and his muted English ties" (Words, 4).

Hotels are very different from homes in that they do not have a personal warmth or comfort about them. They may well be practical, but all services and amenities come at a price. The company of Mauberley's mother also comes at a price, and although many people complain about having to pay an arm and a leg for hotel accommodation, accommodation with Mrs. Mauberley costs her husband and her son far more dearly: she costs them their masculinity.

Mauberley is born in Boston in the Arlington Hotel, which is reminiscent the very well known Arlington Military Cemetery. Like hotels, cemeteries are divided into many essentially

undifferentiated spaces and taken care of by an impersonal hired staff. The association between Mrs. Mauberley and hotels, then, encompasses an association of his mother, not only with hotels, but with death. Mauberley is born in a place of death and spends much of his life travelling from surrogate mother (hotel) to surrogate mother (hotel).

In each hotel that Mauberley specifically describes in his dream there is a castrating woman and there is a death associated with that woman. Professor Mauberley leaps from the roof of the Arlington Hotel, in which Mrs. Mauberley resides. Hugh Mauberley meets Wallis Spencer in the lobby of the Imperial Hotel in Shanghai (Words, 68), and shortly after her arrival Dmitri Karaskavin goes missing and is presumed dead (Words, 72). In San Sebastian, at the Bilbao Hotel, Mauberley is frightened for Isabella Loverso's safety when he hears the noise of gunfire. Isabella is angry when he disturbs her and tells him to be quiet. "Her voice was like a knife and [he] backed instinctively away from it" (Words, 163). While Mauberley is staying at the Hotel Alcador in Valencia with Elizabeth Loverso he returns to the hotel one evening to discover that a young man, who he would later find was Luis Quintana, had shot himself in



the lobby of the hotel (Words,169). Mauberley spends June and July with Isabella Lovero at the Ritz on the Gran Ria in Madrid until the day she disappears (Words, 185). It is not until October that Mauberley finds out that she had been killed by von Ribbentrop (Words, 263).

The most actively violent of the castrating women in Famous Last Words is Estrade; the woman in the moleskin coat. Estrade throws a switchblade "--a knife?--at Mauberley's neck...and he could feel the cold, clean chill of the wound on his neck -- the sort of wound a razor makes, a pair of parted lips from which the blood has withdrawn in shock" (Words, 19). Estrade's wounding of Mauberley is a symbolic castration realising a boy's belief that if his penis (head) is cut off he will be left with the female genitals (pair of lips). Estrade, pursues Mauberley to the Grand Elysium, where Mauberley later is murdered, and she is imprisoned in the basement by Herr Kachelmayer. Mauberley is born at the Arlington Hotel on January 1, 1897. January 1 is the Catholic Festival of the Circumcision of Christ, suggesting that simply by being born to his mother he was castrated. "There seems to be no doubt to [Freud] that the circumcision practised by so many peoples is an equivalent

and substitute for castration" (Introductory Lectures, 199). Each hotel that Mauberley specifically names in Famous Last Words is the site of a violent death linked with the presence of a castrating and lethal woman with whom Mauberley unconsciously associates his mother.

Mauberley's mother is a cold and distant castrating woman with whom Mauberley identifies all other women in the dream text. The female characters of Famous Last Words all have a pronounced ability to castrate men, especially young men. Mauberley's obsession with women causing the falls of men recalls the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. It is Wallis Spencer who inadvertently causes the collapse of the Penelope cabal and the abdication and exile of her husband; it is Mrs. Mauberley who causes her husband to leap to his death ; it is Eve who eats the forbidden fruit at the bidding of the serpent, and leads Adam to fall from grace. Mrs. Mauberley, like Eve, is the originator and role model that all women following her in Mauberley's experience emulate.

Mauberley identifies Wallis Simpson closely with his mother, and for that reason, she is a very cold perfectionist, and the most

castrating woman in the dream. At the marriage ceremony of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor all Mauberley can see is his "parents standing side by side -- darkened by the shadow of their future"

(Words, 145). The Duchess of Windsor herself is the shadow that darkens the future of the heir apparent to the English throne:

He would have to accede. And -- in that moment--sitting there on his bed at the approach of that midnight in July of 1943, he did accede. With his mother's head in his lap and the shadow of his wife flung up against the wall, the Duke of Windsor knew he was condemned forever to be hidden by the shadow of his wife: a shadow that would lengthen till it all but shuttered out his own: just as his mother's had....

(Words, 354)

"All the rest of his [the Duke of Windsor's] life he found comfort in her shadow" (Words, 384).

The Duke of Windsor is "just a boy" (Words, 190) who "smiled like a wicked child who was passing a rude remark in the presence of adults" (Words, 197) after he makes silly sexual innuendoes.

Wallis Simpson castrates the childish Duke of Windsor so often that "he developed a phobia for edges" (Words, 237) and even "as he dreamt, it was real as knives" (Words, 244). Mauberley unconsciously equates his father with the Duke of Windsor because David is castrated by Wallis, just as Professor Mauberley is

castrated by Mrs. Mauberley. "A child's earliest years are dominated by an enormous overvaluation of his father, in accordance with this a king and a queen in dreams and fairytales invariably stand for parents".<sup>15</sup> After David's wedding to Wallis, Mauberley knows that "he has already leapt. Or jumped" (Words, 146). Mauberley feels that his mother castrated both him and his father, and by identifying Mrs. Simpson with his mother and the Duke of Windsor with both himself and his father Mauberley, repeats the Oedipal triangle of his childhood.

Mauberley's unconscious overvaluation of his father leads him to believe that his father should rescue him from his fall. Freud notes that dreams, in which the dreamer finds himself falling with feelings of anxiety are related to the experiences of childhood:

There cannot be a single uncle who had not shown a child how to fly by rushing across the room with him in his outstretched arms, or who has not played at letting him fall by riding him on his knee and then suddenly stretching out his leg, or by holding him up high and then suddenly pretending to drop him....In after years they repeat these experiences in dreams; but in dreams they leave out the hands which held them up, so that they float or fall unsupported.

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<sup>15</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Moses an Egyptian" in "Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays" in The Origins of Religion, vol. 13 of 15 vols. trans. James Strachey ed. Albert Dickson (Markham: Pelican, 1985) 237-386 p. 249.

(Dreams, 375)

The castrated Professor Mauberley is unable to catch his falling son, and in revenge, Mauberley makes his father leap off the roof of the Arlington Hotel with a "purpose" rather than a "cause". Mauberley dreams that Professor Mauberley has no cause to jump, but his death has a definite purpose: to satisfy, without guilt, Mauberley's desire for vengeance and allow Mauberley primacy with the mother. "The hatred of his father that arises in a boy from rivalry for his mother is not able to achieve uninhibited sway over his mind; it has to contend against his old-established affection and admiration for the very same person" ("Totem and Taboo", 189). The extreme guilt and anxiety incurred by wishing death and punishment on his father are disguised and soothed, but not alleviated, by Mauberley dreaming that he did not want his father to die, but that his father sought his own punishment and demise.

Within Mauberley's dream, Mauberley's inability to resolve his Oedipus Complex in a simple manner has perpetuated his angry and fearful feelings for his parents. He has never been able to leave them emotionally, and continues to impose unconsciously their

perceived attributes and behaviours upon other individuals within his dream. Mauberley wants to believe that his lack of sexual desire for other individuals has little “to do with [his] father’s leap and [his] mother’s madness. But something of [his] fear of physical contact and commitment had to do with that. Something to do with the fear of descent and the fear of being powerless in the presence of desire” (Words, 142). Mauberley’s fear of physical contact and powerlessness is derived from his instinctual fear of being castrated by his father for desiring his mother, and being castrated by his devouring mother during intercourse. Mauberley’s choice of the words ‘commitment’ and fear of ‘descent’, recalls that his mother was committed to a mental institution because of her “fallen mind” (Words, 145) and his father committed suicide when “he leapt down fifteen stories to his death” (Words, 2). The “shadow lying dormant in the twilight [that] whispers from the other side of reason; I am here. I wait” (Words, 396) is the darkness of Mauberley’s own Oedipus complex and his desire to reunite with the lost mother.

### Chapter Three: Gods of War

Robert Raymond Ross and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley are haunted by their fears of castration and their dreams are filled with ever present displaced images of their devouring mothers. The anxiety experienced by the fear of castration created by their Oedipus complexes, is not a fulfilled wish -- experiencing the distress of fearing for the safety of one's own genitals cannot be put forth as a source of pleasure, or a fulfilled wish for either of the dreamers; but since dreams "are things which get rid of (psychical) stimuli disturbing sleep, by the method of hallucinatory satisfaction" (Introductory Lectures, 168), it may be reasonably asserted that overcoming or reducing the pre-existent threat of castration would fulfil the wishes of both Ross and Mauberley. Within their respective dreams, Ross and Mauberley regress to an infantile state, in which their actions and reactions are dictated by the desires of the unconscious more than directed by intellectual thought. Freud discovered that for the male child the threat of castration is

almost an incomprehensible menace because of its magnitude “for he cannot easily imagine the possibility of losing such a highly prized part of his body” (“Splitting the Ego in Defence”, 462), but that the “fear of death has no meaning to a child; hence it is that he will play with the dreadful word” (Dreams, 354). “Our unconscious, then, does not believe in its own death; it behaves as if it were immortal”.<sup>12</sup> For Ross and Mauberley the threat of death is a ‘safer’ development of the fear of castration. Ross and Mauberley both cheat death by effectively immortalising themselves within their dreams, and through that not insignificant achievement, reduce their own castration anxiety.

“It is indeed impossible to imagine our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present as spectators (“Thoughts”, 77). Both Ross and Mauberley relate events that occur after their deaths; they die, but they are not ‘really’ dead. The historian of The Wars picks up a photograph:

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<sup>12</sup>Sigmund Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death” in Civilization, Society and Religion Vol. 12 of 15, trans. James Strachey, ed. Angela Richards, (Markham: Penguin, 1985) 57-89. p. 85. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to “Thoughts”, and cite only page number.



Robert Raymond Ross -- Second Lieutenant, C.F.A....*Dead men are serious* -- that's what this photograph is striving to say. Survival is precluded. Death is romantic -- got from silent images. I lived -- was young -- and died. but not real death, of course, because I am standing here alive with all these lights that shine so brightly in my eyes. Oh -- I can tell you, sort of, what it might be like to die

(Wars, 49).

At Dubrovnik, Mauberley decides that he too will survive death :

somewhere south of Dubrovnik was the cave where Cadmus had been transformed into a serpent (dragon?) who was made the guardian of myth and literature....Folklore had it that Cadmus was the Phoenix, or a sort of lizard-Lazarus, rising from the flames of some forgotten human rebellion; an assurance that in spite of fire, the word would be preserved. And it was then I decided what might be for that incognito rendezvous. I should play the serpent's part

(Words, 62).

Paradoxically, Robert Ross and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley seek their own deaths, but go to great lengths to ensure that they do not die. Marian Turner offers Robert an overdose of morphine while he is a patient at Bois de Madeleine hospital. He said "Not yet'. Not yet. Do you see? He might have said 'No'. He might've said 'never'. He might've said 'Yes'. But he said 'not yet'" (Wars, 189). Robert is

unwilling to accept nurse Turner's offer of suicide because he is not assured of being remembered. His answer, as well as preserving his life, instilled his memory in the mind of Marian Turner to the extent that 'Not yet' has been her motto ever since (Wars, 189). Marian Turner's memory of Robert's time at the French hospital is then accessible to the historian, and is then accessible to the masses. Robert's refusal of Turner's morphine is a rejection of Morpheus' forgetfulness. Six years after his hospitalization at Bois de Madeleine, Robert dies at St. Aubyn's under the care of Lady Juliet d'Orsey. He is willing to die because he is assured of being remembered. Lady Juliet d'Orsey loved Robert. "There can be no doubt of this" (Wars, 189). Assured of Juliet's love, Robert is assured of living on, because "in a way being loved is like being told you never have to die" (Wars, 157). In his dream Robert is allowed to simultaneously submit to his death instinct and his narcissism because he can die, but can also remain alive in memories, photographs, archives, and The Wars.

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, like Ross, dies very early in his dream, and is brought back to life by Lieutenant Quinn's reading of the walls in the Grand Elysium Hotel. Robert is kept alive by love, Mauberley

is kept alive by curiosity. Even the reader of the dream text is caught in the curiosity trap that Mauberley has set to keep his story, and therefore, himself alive. The article that killed Mauberley is described only as "that thing" (Words, 44, 52, 64), and the reader is left frustratingly unaware of who killed Mauberley or how he was killed until the final chapter of the book. The desire to solve the mystery of Mauberley's death, forces the audience of his dream to bring the dreamer back to life so that the mystery may be solved. Ned Allenby is caught in the same trap, but does not live to know the solution to the puzzle. Ned "made a desperate attempt for just the right words '-- what I really want is to know how it ends, you see. I mean your story. This.'" (Words, 90). When Quinn begins to read the etched walls "[a]t once he was in another time, another idiom. And the voice he heard was hoarse with the distance it had journeyed in order to be heard" (Words, 60). "Mauberley could tell [his story] -- so long as Quinn went on with his reading" (Words, 65). Mauberley is kept alive as long as his story is read, and he goes to great lengths to entice his reader with mystery, prestigious characters, and the wonder of "sixteen walls of meticulous etching, every word set deeply in its place, all the writing clearly cut and decipherable"

(Words, 58). Curiosity keeps Mauberley alive.

Both Ross and Mauberley are willing to face death, but they are unwilling, perhaps unable, to accept that their death will end their existence. To obtain the ability to exist beyond death, which they so desperately desire, Ross and Mauberley must effectively become more than human; they must become gods. "Long ago he (man) formed an ideal conception of his omnipotence and omniscience which he embodied in his gods. To these gods he attributed everything that seemed unattainable to his wishes, or that was forbidden to him. One may say, therefore, that these gods were cultural ideals" (C & D, 280). Perhaps because Ross and Mauberley are raised in North America, their cultural ideals are greatly influenced by the stories of the Judeo-Christian theology. Both young men adopt, as a large portion of their dream framework, Biblical allusions, and identify themselves extensively with deities within the Judeo-Christian God belief system.

( Robert Ross identifies himself with the Christ of The Book of Revelations, who condemns and violently destroys the world that has forsaken him.) Robert identifies himself as a Christ figure early in his dream, when he decides, finally, that he will join the Field

Artillery. "Easter was early in 1915. Good Friday fell on 2 April. It snowed. Robert got off a train that morning in Kingston, Ontario" (Wars, 17). When Robert arrives at Kingston, and is still not wholly sure he wants to join the army, he must decide whether to step down into the puddle or stay on the train platform. "Then Robert closed his eyes and made his choice. He stepped down into the puddle and stood there" (Wars, 20). "So Robert Ross was admitted to the army, 2nd of April, 1915" (Wars, 28). Robert is willing to put his life in jeopardy because he is confident of his ability to cheat death.

Robert's joining of the army on Good Friday suggests that, like Christ, he was forfeiting his life.

If, however, Christ redeemed mankind from the burden of original sin by the sacrifice of his own life, we are driven to conclude that the sin was a murder....And if this sacrifice of a life brought about atonement with God the Father, the crime to be expiated can only be the murder of the father....Atonement with the father was all the more complete since the sacrifice was accompanied by a total renunciation of the women on whose account the rebellion against the father was started. But at that point the inexorable psychological law of ambivalence stepped in. The very deed in which the son offered the greatest possible atonement to the father brought him at the same time to the attainment of his wishes against the father. He himself became God, beside, or, more correctly, in place of, the father.

(Totem and Taboo, 216).

By identifying himself with Christ on the day of his execution, Robert is unconsciously admitting, on one level, that he seeks both atonement and submission from his father. Mr. Ross' submission comes only after Robert has joined the army. Mr. Ross repeatedly tries to send Robert pistols, and Robert repeatedly sends them back until Robert receives a Webley . 455. This extended shuttling of guns back and forth between father and son suggests an image of sexual intercourse with the father. Mr. Ross came in person to the dock yard in Montréal to deliver a Colt 45 in "a polished wooden box" (Wars, 50), but Robert is not satisfied with the six-shooter and sends it back, and requests the Webley automatic. Mr. Ross' offering of the Colt revolver is symbolic of his relinquishing his own penis to his son. The gun, however, is delivered in a wooden box in a condensed primal scene. "The female genitals are symbolically represented by all such objects as share their characteristic of enclosing a hollow space which can take something into itself; by...boxes (Introductory Lectures, 189), and wood is interpreted as a "female maternal symbol" (Introductory Lectures, 193). Mr. Ross' delivery of his own penis, in a female and maternal receptacle,

suggests that Mrs. Ross has already castrated her husband, and has appropriated the phallic power. Robert Ross does not want his father's offering of the Colt because it has already been disempowered by his mother. If Mrs. Ross has already confiscated her husband's penis, she is the phallic power within the Ross family. Robert's desire to simultaneously appease and subdue the father by identifying himself with Christ, then, is also an unconscious attempt to appease his mother for his renunciation of her and the murder of her surrogate (Rowena). Robert's renunciation of his mother and all other creatures like her (female) is evidenced by his retreat to the exclusively male world of the army, and his repeatedly expressed homosexuality. It also indicates Robert's unconscious desire to overcome his mother's threat of castration. Robert unconsciously transposes the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into his own Oedipal triangle of father, son, and mother.

In the Hebrew Bible, God is a singular identity, but in the New Testament, God is tri-partite: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt: 28:19). Although Jesus Christ is acknowledged by Simon Peter as "...the son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), Jesus claims after his

death and resurrection, "I and my father are one" (John 10:30). The last book of the Bible is "The Revelations of Jesus Christ" in which the names of God and Jesus Christ are used indiscriminately. Robert does not identify himself with the paternal God of the Hebrew Bible, because, by identifying himself with son God of the New Testament, he can simultaneously strengthen his identification with his father, and usurp his father. "A son-religion displaced the father-religion" (Totem and Taboo, 217) with the invention of Christianity, but the son still had a paternal authority to rely upon, unlike God, who was fatherless.

The most important facet of Ross' identification with Jesus Christ is Christ's ability to overcome death and to rise from the grave. On the evening of the second day of his burial, Christ appears before his disciples as they were gathered for a meal. He makes it very clear that he is not a ghost, and that he has physically left Joseph of Arimathea's garden tomb. He commands his disciples, "'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke, 24:39). Just as Christ rose from the dead, Robert Ross is killed and brought back to life in the flesh, not as an ethereal image. The



events of Robert's dream, which begin decades after his death in 1922, bring him back to life, describe his death, and again, bring him back to life. At the train station in Kingston, Robert stands in a fog "and the mist was filled with rabbits and Rowena and his father and his mother and the whole of his past life -- birth and death and childhood. He could breathe them in and breathe them out (Wars, 20).

The text of Robert's dream closes: this "is the last thing you see before you put on your overcoat: Robert and Rowena with Meg: Rowena seated astride the pony -- Robert holding her in place. On the back is written: 'Look! you can see our breath!' And you can." (Wars, 191). "Symbolically, to breathe is to assimilate spiritual power" (Circlot, "Breathing", 32). The last words of the book are Ross' assertion that he has once again begun the birth and death and childhood cycle once again. He has cheated death.

After Christ is killed and resurrected, he is rarely in contact with his followers until he approaches his disciple John with a vision of the apocalypse. John the Divine is made both author and witness to the events of the Armageddon. The desolation dreamed by the dead and revived Robert Ross is passed on to the historian who is author and, through photographs, witness to the destruction decreed

by Ross. Ross has, on one level of interpretation assumed the role of an angry and destructive Christ. Ross' choice to identify himself with the God-Christ of Revelations exposes an interesting aspect of Robert's unconscious wishes. The living Christ of the New Testament preaches forgiveness and love, but the Christ of the Book of Revelations expounds punishment and retribution. The book of Revelations appears almost to return to the Hebrew Bible theme of nations and people being punished by God for breaking their covenants with him. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle Freud asserts that the "manifestations of a compulsion to repeat...exhibit to a high degree an instinctual character and, when they act in opposition to the pleasure principle, give the appearance of some 'daemonic' force at work" (307). Robert does not wish to be the merciful Son of God who takes away the sin of the world by sacrificing his own life; Ross wants to be a punitive immortal God.

Both Revelations and The Wars describe complete global chaos and the destruction of men and the earth. While Robert is in boot camp in April of 1915, he seeks a model to emulate. "So what he wanted was someone else who had acquired that [murderous] state of mind; who killed as an exercise of will" (Wars, 28). "Robert Ross

was no Hitler. That was his problem" (Wars, 17). Hitler was a mortal fiend who physically ordered others to execute the holocaust and genocide of the Jewish peoples. Robert is a man who dreams of destroying the world by the sheer force of his will; the model he emulates is the model of the Apocalypse. While Robert is masturbating at Bailleul, a "sudden vision of obliteration struck him like a bomb...Oblivion. He slept with his fist in its place and the cold, wet blooming of four hundred thousand possibilities -- of all those lives that would never be -- on his finger tips" (Wars, 163). It is this masturbatory power of destruction that Robert seeks when he uses the archetypal myth of the Christian apocalypse as the essential form of his revenge upon humanity.

John the Divine describes his vision of the avenging Christ: "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like flames of fire,...And the armies in heaven...followed him on white horses" (Rev. 19: 11-14). When Robert is at the valley with the coyote, his "face was a mirror to the sun" (Wars, 31), and later in "the firelight, his eyes were very bright (Wars, 9) on the road to Magdalene Wood. Robert is described,

early in his dream, on a black mare following a hundred and thirty horses (Wars, 10), and is repeatedly depicted throughout the text of his dream as a mounted soldier leading men and horses through the exercises of war. The first four seals on the heavenly scroll of the apocalypse set loose four horses and horsemen who were meant to establish a conqueror of the earth, global conflict, scarcity on earth, and widespread death on earth exactly like the experiences of Robert Ross' dream. Robert is, on one level, Jesus Christ the mounted leader of a righteous cavalry, and on a different level, he is a horseman of the Apocalypse bringing death and destruction to the world.

The apocalypse of Revelations is announced by horsemen and trumpets. Robert's war is announced by tea dances where people dance to orchestras of "brass coronets and silver saxophones" (Wars,12) in a country of automobiles where "children vie to blow horns" (Wars,12) and this "is where the pictures alter -- fill up with soldiers -- horses -- wagons" (Wars,12). In Revelations 6:12 John the Divine tells of his vision in which "there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sack cloth and the full moon became like blood". In Robert's dream "It got completely dark"

(Wars, 180) on the sixteenth of June in Toronto, and a week later at Magdalene Wood "the moon rose -- red" (Wars,183). In Revelations 8:7, "the first angel blew his trumpet and there followed hail and fire mixed with blood, which fell on the earth; and a third of the earth was burnt up, and a third of the trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up". In The Wars the German liquid flame thrower was first used at Verdun.

The German high command had invested so much faith in this new weapon that they dubbed the Verdun offensive, where it would first be used, as operation Gericht. The Place of Judgement. Fire storms raged along the front. Men were exploded where they stood -- blown apart by combustion. Winds with the velocity of cyclones tore the guns from their emplacements and flung them about like toys. Horses fell with their bones on fire. Men went blind in the heat...The storms might last for hours -- until the clay was baked and the earth was seared and sealed with fire

(Wars, 132).

In John's vision "a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his head ...stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne" (Rev., 12:3-5) and the dragon, called Satan, was thrown out

of heaven. This aspect of the apocalypse is especially pertinent to the Robert Ross' dream of destruction. Mrs. Ross is described as a she-dragon throughout Robert's dream (Wars, 27-28, 75, 123), and she has the power to castrate and devour Robert. Freud notes that:

The psychoanalysis of individual human beings, however, teaches us with quite special insistence that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation, and that at the bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father

(Totem and Taboo, 209).

On one level of interpretation, Robert has usurped the paternal power of his father by taking his place as 'God', but on another level, Robert still wishes that his father would rescue him from the threat of the devouring dragon. The child who is rescued by the paternal God is "to rule all nations with a rod of iron". Colloquially, 'rod' refers to a gun, and vulgarly, to a penis. Robert identifies his penis repeatedly as a weapon that has the power to obliterate. If the reader has failed to note the number of deaths that Robert has the deific phallic power to execute, he reminds us that "[s]o far you have read of the deaths of 557,017 people" (Wars, 158). By evoking apocalyptic images within the text of his dream, Robert exercises

brutal punishment on a world which has castrated him, a mother who castrates him, and a father who allowed him to be castrated, while simultaneously denying his castration and empowering the father, by using a story in which the child is saved from the devouring dragon by the father and who will go on rule nations with a phallic iron rod.

Robert Ross describes an apocalyptic vision of the world, in which he assumes the status of ultimate controller (god) capable of destroying the world. Robert assumes the role of a god and satisfies his own narcissism because "even when it (the death instinct) emerges without any sexual purpose, in the blindest fury of destructiveness, we cannot fail to recognize that the satisfaction of the instinct is accompanied by an extraordinarily high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with a fulfilment of the latter's old wishes for omnipotence" (C&D 313). By identifying himself with the resurrected Christ, Robert is able to overcome and his fear of death and dominate his world, but since Robert can only tell his audience "sort of, what it might be like to die" (Wars, 49); death is unknowable. Ross' fear of death and subjugation is a development of his fear of castration. Castration is the main fear which Robert seeks to overcome by destroying his

world. By destroying the earth Robert is able to destroy the source of his castration anxiety -- primarily his mother. Robert's assumed mastery over death and the planet is an unconscious attempt to alleviate his fear of emasculation by his devouring mother.

Mauberley's desire to overcome death is motivated by the same instinctual drive: to divert the threat of his castration. Unlike Ross', Mauberley's unconscious associations to the Bible, however, are primarily from the Hebrew Bible, and Mauberley identifies himself with the God of the Hebrew Bible, rather than the Son of the New Testament. The epigraph of Mauberley's writings on the walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel is adapted from the book of Daniel:

IN THE SAME HOUR CAME FORTH FINGERS OF A MAN'S  
HAND, AND WROTE OVER AGAINST THE CANDLESTICK UPON  
THE PLAISTER OF THE WALL OF THE KING'S PALACE...After  
Maybe thirty seconds, Quinn said: "and the King saw the  
part of the hand that wrote." And turned, with a smile to  
Freyburg and said: "with a silver pencil?"

(Words, 52)

Mauberley's version of the Biblical quotation is slightly different from the King James Version of the story, which claims that "a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall" (Dan. 5:5), but Quinn's conclusion to the quote is



directly from the King James Version of the Bible. Mauberley has adapted the story slightly so that his writing on the walls by candlelight is the same as the image of the mystical apparition during King Belshazzar's feast. Mauberley's transposition of "hand" to "fingers of a man's hand" suggests a compounding of the phallic power of his writing. The hand is symbolic of the penis, as are fingers, which are penile in shape. The hand at the royal feast wrote:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. "This is the interpretation if each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; "Peres: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians"

(Dan. 13:25-28).

The contents of the mystic writing is proclaimed in Mauberley's dream as "the final scrawl, the ultimate graffiti" (Words, 287) written in the sky over the Duke and Duchess' of Windsor's disastrous party. The contents of Mauberley's testament are as damning and destructive as the message on King Belshazzar's palace walls. "All his testimony had been drawn from years of privileged relationships with people whose lives could now be ruined -- or

ended -- by the information contained in his notebooks" (Words, 21). Like the God of Daniel, Mauberley's writing is a powerful tool of justice, which has the power to exterminate and destroy. At the Windsor's party, the "fire had claimed its fifty-five victims and three days later the sea yielded up the fifty-sixth: the body of Lorenzo de Broca" (Words, 288). Throughout Famous Last Words, the analytic reader is confronted with the deaths and downfalls of many individuals; all of whom Mauberley has judged and found wanting.

Within this level of interpretation, Mauberley is the God who writes ciphered condemnations on the wall, Quinn is the prophet Daniel who interprets the writings and makes them accessible to the kings and the masses, and Freyburg, is a compressed compilation of Kings Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius. Nebuchadnezzar initially employs Daniel as a scholar, but, upon discovering that Daniel is the only individual in his kingdom who can interpret his dream, raises him to the status of prophet and statesman. Initially, Quinn is engaged as a demolitions expert, but after his mutinous display of respect for Mauberley, Freyburg places Quinn in charge of the written world on walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel.

Quinn, who has already "read every word he (Mauberley) ever

wrote" (Words, 46), is ordered "to read every word of this" (Words, 56), and to keep Freyburg informed of what is written. "Freyburg simply didn't understand. It was a question of interpretation, and this was Quinn's forte" (Words, 58). Like the kings of The Book of Daniel, Freyburg is unable to understand the words of God, and must use a prophetic interpreter to understand the message given by God/Mauberley. Quinn thinks, "[h]ow right it was and wonderful that Mauberley should have his king confront himself in a dream. The kings in Shakespeare did the same. They always met themselves in dreams -- as ghosts" (Words, 254). King Nebuchadnezzar, however, is the king most noted for meeting himself and his future in a dream.

King Darius, who does not worship the God of Daniel, unwillingly throws Daniel in with lions for worshipping his God against his recent legislation. Quinn, who has "said a prayer for Mauberley" (Words, 45) and developed "a new kind of hero worship" (Words, 60) for Mauberley, knows that Freyburg's orders to have Mauberley's suite roped off defines "The Arena" (Words, 48). Daniel is thrown in with the lions for praying to his god, and Quinn is thrown into The Arena, which is associated with the Roman predilection for pitting lions and Christians. Like the three kings of

Daniel, Freyburg loses his rulership. Captain Freyburg is ordered to vacate the Grand Elysium Hotel; “‘It’s the same old story,’ he said. ‘The same damn story all over again’” (Words, 392). The story that is being repeated, however, is not the story of mercurial military whimsy, it is the story of Daniel understanding the condemning words of God. Quinn knows that no one will escape the wrath of the deified Mauberley “The very fact that Mauberley put them there means they will not go free” (Words, 392).

On a slightly different level of Mauberley’s identification of himself with the God who wrote on the walls of Belshazzar’s palace walls, Mauberley identifies his father and the Duke of Windsor with the kings whose falls were prophesied by Daniel. Daniel receives his insight and into the dreams and futures of the kings, only by the visions that God decides to grant him. Quinn is able to interpret the abdication of David ‘correctly’ only after he has read the writing on the wall. Mauberley grants Quinn the insight that God granted Daniel. Daniel’s predictions primarily revealed the downfall of kings and kingdoms. The story written on the walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel refers to the fall of the future king of Britain to a pariah placated by a nominal title invented for him; the fall of the German Reich, which

was to last one thousand years; and the collapse of the Penelope cabal, whose members had envisioned a global empire. All of the kings and kingdoms of The Book of Daniel fell when God decreed their downfall because he was displeased; all of the 'kings' and 'kingdoms' of Famous Last Words fall because Mauberley has chosen their fate, and revealed it in the writing on the wall.

Mauberley identifies himself directly with the destructive power of his written words. Mauberley attempts to burn his notebooks in hopes of appeasing his pursuer in the moleskin coat, but discovers by burning the books, he burns himself:

a great, green flame shot up against the palms of his hands and his hair was on fire.

Mauberley rocked back onto his heels and fell away towards one side. His mind was burning: twenty-five years -- a quarter century of private thought

(Words, 24).

Mauberley is his words. During his sojourn with Diana at Naully,

Mauberley frets that he is "a cipher. Nothing" (Words, 311).

Mauberley's choice of the word "cipher" indicates that he consciously believes that he was just filling up space, but that unconsciously, he identifies himself with the powerful words in his notebooks. His journals are written in a "shorthand scrawl, the

cipher he had devised of signs and symbols and his own private way of telling the date" (Words, 23).

Mauberley's complete identification with his writing associates him with the Judeo Christian God, and assures that as long as his words exist; Mauberley will remain alive within them. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John, 1:1). The Christian concept of God as "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13) is echoed in Mauberley's identification of himself with the letters he had written, and his description of his corpse in the Grand Elysium: "Mauberley was lying with that thing in his eye, on the floor across the hall, and the beginning and the ending had already been joined" (Words, 65).

Within his dream, Mauberley is careful to preserve his words, and thereby himself, from the threat of destruction. Although Reinhart destroys Mauberley's notebooks, he does not destroy the etched walls. Although the Russians may deface or blow up the walls of the Grand Elysium Hotel, Quinn and Famous Last Words have preserved the words indefinitely. Mauberley's desire to entitle the text of his dream Famous Last Words, is indicative of Mauberley's

narcissistic evaluation of himself and his work.

Mauberley's identification of himself with his words grants him the power that his words embody. "Mauberley's notebooks were feared like a morgue where the dead are kept on ice -- with all their incriminating wounds intact" (Words, 21). Mauberley's frozen corpse, is feared by Sergeant Rudecki, who believes that one should "never trust a corpse" (Words, 39), and Quinn, who, recognizes that "the body was dangerous after all" (Words, 43). The other members of Freyburg's unit, are afraid that Mauberley's corpse is booby trapped, but Captain Freyburg is solely concerned that the etched walls of the Grand Elysium are booby-trapped to elicit sympathy and compassion for the dead author (Words, 54).

Like the God of The Book of Daniel, Mauberley's condemnations are ambivalent: they expropriate political power and punish the ruler by disempowering him, but they also drive the ruler to love the generator of their downfall. This aspect of Mauberley's equation of his writing with the prophecies of Daniel suggest that Mauberley, on one level, is confronted with the ambivalence of desiring his father dead, but simultaneously wanting to be loved by him. Mauberley desires his father's fall, but he also seeks to draw his father closer

to him after he is dead. Like the primal masculine horde who killed the father and then sought to appease him by deifying him and respecting his totem, Mauberley kills his father, but seeks to be forgiven for his Oedipal crime, through the forgiveness of others who have, like the primal totem, become surrogate fathers. "They could attempt, in their relation to this surrogate father, to allay their burning sense of guilt, to bring about a kind of reconciliation with their father" (Totem and Taboo, 206). Mauberley wants to get rid of his father, but he also wants to be relieved of the guilt for wishing him dead.

Freyburg's concern that, "because he (Mauberley) has apologised, [Quinn] and twelve million others will all fall down on [their] knees before these walls and [they] will forgive him" (Words, 54), is well founded. In Freyburg's brief outburst, the walls of the Elysium are depicted almost like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem where Jews have gathered to recall their traditions and sufferings, and to wail and pray -- to Daniel's God. On this level of interpretation, Quinn is the primary surrogate father, and his forgiveness of Mauberley's actions represents the forgiveness of the father. Mauberley's identification of his writing on the walls of the



Grand Elysium Hotel with the prophecies of Daniel allows him to simultaneously exert punitive authority over the world, and entice that world, and especially his father, to forgive him.

By describing themselves as gods of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, Robert Raymond Ross and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley satisfy their desire to master the threat posed to their physical bodies. Others are able to castrate Ross and Mauberley, but both men are able to divinely restore their entire bodies to life; including their threatened penises. By making themselves effectively impervious to death, Ross and Mauberley make themselves invulnerable to castration as well. Their fear of death has evolved from their fear of castration, and by mastering the 'greater' they consequently reduce the 'lessor'; by preserving their body from death they effectively preserve their penises from castration. In the course of exorcising their dread of castration, Ross and Mauberley seek absolution from their fathers who they have wished dead. Their identification with Judaeo-Christian divinities allows them the power, the freedom, the framework, and most importantly, a form of justification, for punishing their worlds, while simultaneously needing their worlds to remember them.

## Chapter Four: Why War?

Both Ross and Mauberley adopt the form of war as the framework of their respective dreams, and each seeks to fulfil his unconscious desires within an ostensibly unattractive milieu of global chaos and destruction: a World War. To understand the unconscious desires that are expressed by Robert Raymond Ross in The Wars, and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley in Famous Last Words, the analyst, like Einstein, must ask, "Why war?". "Dreams are not to be likened to the unregulated sounds that rise from a musical instrument struck by the blow of some external force instead of by a player's hand; they are not meaningless, they are not absurd....On the contrary, they are psychical phenomena of complete validity -- fulfilments of wishes" (Dreams, 200), therefore, the form of war was not chosen indiscriminately; it was chosen to fulfil a specific wish or wishes of the dreamers. Ross and Mauberley desire the death and devastation of war because it is the form which best reflects and vindicate the activity of their unconsciousnesses. Both

protagonists unconsciously seek to experience the chaos and immorality of global conflict, because it is the closest paradigm of which they can conceive to represent their uncivilized unconscious desires.

Civilisation is learned; it is not an innate human characteristic. Humans must learn to control and repress their violent instinctual urges in order to profit from the benefits of relatively pacific co-operation. We now live in what is popularly called the global village, where, idealistically, we all repress our aggressive instinctual natures to the mutual advantage of ourselves and others. We have been lead to this ideality of global solidarity and co-operation partially through the efforts of various world governments to promote harmony and mutual goodwill. If we accept the paradigm of governmental and legal authority as the conscience of the masses we "have an impression of a state in which an individual's private emotional impulses and intellectual acts are too weak to come to anything by themselves and are entirely dependant for this on being reinforced by being repeated in a similar way in

other members of the group".<sup>13</sup> We allow, even demand, that others (leaders) define what is right and wrong; good and bad; permitted and tabooed, and we, as socially driven lemmings, blindly follow the rest of the horde wherever we are led.

Civilisation has taken full advantage of the human lemming emulation and has pressured humanity to repress every instinct which is not beneficial to the perpetuation of the social illusion of beneficent human altruism. We have all been made obedient children of our society:

Encouraged by this success, society has allowed itself to be misled into tightening the moral standard to the greatest possible degree, and it has thus forced its members into a yet greater estrangement from their instinctual disposition. They are consequently subject to an unceasing suppression of instinct, and the resulting tension betrays itself in the most remarkable phenomena of reaction and compensation

("Thoughts", 71).

The inhibited instincts, therefore, will seek any opportunity to break free of their artificially imposed social restrictions to reduce the strain of continually being forced into submission. The unconscious

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<sup>13</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" in Civilization Society and Religion, trans. James Strachey, ed. Albert Dickson (Markham: Pelican, 1985) 91-178. p. 149. All future references will be incorporated into the body of the text abbreviated to "Group" and cite only page number.

naturally seeks to extricate itself from the fixed rules of civilisation and act contrary to the arbitrarily imposed rules of conduct imposed by civilised society.

A social group reveals the tenuousness and hypocrisy of its basic tenets of pacific civilisation when confronted with another party which behaves contrary to the group's wishes. A world war is perhaps the most extreme example of a civilised world confronted with its own hypocrisy. "Our leaders, you see. Well -- Churchill and Hitler, for that matter!...Why, such men are just the butcher and the grocer -- selling us meat and potatoes across the counter. That's what binds us together. They appeal to our basest instincts. The lowest common denominator" (Wars, 17). In "Thoughts on War and Death" Freud offers his readers backhanded consolation for their societies' own primal reaction to a perceived external threat:

our mortification and our painful disillusionment on account of the uncivilized behaviour of our fellow citizens of the world during this war were unjustified. They were based on an illusion to which we had given way. In reality our fellow citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed

(72).

The constant pressure of civilisation has deluded humanity into

believing that human nature is innately moral, but we are still only an advanced breed of monkey that has learned consciously to play follow the leader into peace, but will always be instinctually prepared to follow our primal urges into war.

War is an arena in which all of the hard won obedience of society may be cast off from the individual and he/she, contrary to other times, will be applauded for acts of cruelty and violence performed upon other human beings. Ross and Mauberley are both very aware of the disparity between the behavioral rules of war and peace. Ross recognizes that “everyone is strange in war....*Ordinary* is a myth” (*Wars*, 92), rather than barbarism and heroics which suffuse the myths of peace time. Mauberley believes that “a war is just a place where we have been in exile from our better dreams” (*Words*, 176); but we are not exiled from our ‘lessor’ dreams. Whenever “we go to sleep we throw off our hard-won morality like a garment, and put it on again next morning” (“Thoughts”, 73). Both men perceive war as a time when the rules normally imposed by society do not apply, and both men take advantage of the socially condoned form of war to vent their atavistic and socially reprehensible unconscious desires. By expressing their desires

within a socially condoned form of withdrawal from the constant pressure of civilisation, Ross and Mauberley reduce the anxiety created by expressing their egoistic unconscious desires.

The form of war allows Ross to withdraw into an almost completely masculine world, from which women have been traditionally excluded. Until recently war, within modern western culture, has been an entirely masculine enterprise, and women have waited at home for their warriors to return. The soldier is surrounded almost exclusively with other males, "[n]or is there any doubt that all weapons...are used as symbols for the male organ: e.g. ...rifles, revolvers, daggers, sabres, etc." (Dreams, 473). (By immersing himself within military conflict, Ross vainly attempts to surround himself with masculine individuals and articles in order to escape the threat of women.) His absorption into the masculine military allows him to explore his repressed homosexuality, which, is, again, an attempt to avoid the threat of the feminine.

Unlike Mauberley, Ross desires to be part of the artificial group created to function almost exclusively during times of conflict: the army. Ross' willingness to join the field artillery even though "[h]e doubts the validity in all this martialling of men"

(Wars, 13) suggests that he is seeking the love of a substitute father. "The Commander-in-Chief is a father who loves all soldiers equally, and for that reason they are comrades among themselves" ("Group", 123) who are bound together by libidinal ties. Robert's adoption of the army as a incestuous masculine family is suggested when he acknowledges that his rapists at Desolé were "his fellow soldiers. Maybe even his brother officers" (Wars, 169). During war men are allowed to embrace and nurture each other -- admitting their love. Although he displays decidedly homosexual urges throughout the text of his dream, Robert's tender care of Harris at the infirmary at Shorncliffe presents perhaps the best example of soldiers' affection for each other being admired and encouraged. The pain of war, degradation of rape, and ultimately his life and the lives of the men he has loved is the price that is exacted from Robert for the release of repressed homosexual desire and male 'femininity' that is allowed exclusively during war.

During the course of normal human existence, the reality of death is usually easily ignored, but during times of war:

Death will no longer be denied; we are forced to believe in it. People really die; and no longer one by one, but many, often tens of thousands in a single day. And death



is no longer a chance event. To be sure, it still seems a matter of chance whether a bullet hits this man or that; but a second bullet may well hit the survivor; and the accumulation of deaths puts an end to the impression of chance. Life has become interesting again; it has recovered its full content

(“Thoughts”, 80).

By setting their dreams within wars Ross and Mauberley place their murderous wishes within a context wherein death and murder is not as abhorred as it is during times of peace. Their death wishes for other individuals are camouflaged as military deaths caused by the destructive nature of war. Ross and Mauberley also face their own death during the wars of their dreams, and, on a different level of interpretation, deaths during times of war are the deaths of heroes. “Clinton Brown from Harvard, who died a hero’s death at the battle for Belleau Wood in June of 1918 -- worthy of an exclamation point at last” (Wars, 15), but before his death nothing “in Clinton Brown from Harvard’s appearance warrants three exclamation points. He was only one of Peggy’s many beaux” (Wars, 14). Mauberley believes that after “the lamentation (of war): praise. Over the rubble: shrines. After the stench of death: the sweetness of flowers....And all the figures cut in stone” (Words, 176). By placing their dreams within a time when men who died were posthumously aggrandised

into heroes, Ross and Mauberley are able to satisfy their narcissistic desires to be revered and respected, while simultaneously masking the killing of others as the expected and accepted casualties of war.

Although war provides the vehicle for the relatively guilt free realization of many of Ross' and Mauberley's unconscious desires, on another level of interpretation war also reflects the internal conflicts of both protagonists. At Montréal Mrs. Ross refuses to leave her private rail car to wave to her son from the platform. "Instead, she waved from behind the glass and she watched her boy depart and her husband standing in his black fur coat -- it seemed for hours -- with his arm in the air and the snow falling down around him. '*Come on back to the raf, Huck honey.*' And this was what they called *the wars*" (Wars, 70). The 'wars' of the title of Ross' dream are fought within the Oedipal triangle of the Ross family as much as they are fought in the trenches of Europe. "The most easily observed and comprehensible instance of this is the fact that intense love and intense hatred are so often to be found together in the same person. Psychoanalysis adds that the two opposed feelings not infrequently have the same person for their

object" ("Thoughts", 68). Robert is fighting his own war with feelings of ambivalence for both of his parents. Mauberley's paradoxical observation that the "rockets flying up into the sky were celebrating [his] victory...and [his] defeat" (Words, 91) suggest that Mauberley, too, is fighting within himself a war he can neither win nor lose. "Mauberley's 'boxed set of wars'" (Words, 5) are the wars fought by the conflict of love and hate that he feels for his parents.

Because history is usually the tales told by the victor of a conflict, war is usually depicted as the effort to restore order to chaos.<sup>14</sup> Both Ross and Mauberley die after the end of the world war in which they are involved. Their desire to live through the war, rather than simply within the war, suggests that they are both seeking a resolution to the dramatic conflicts of emotion that can only be expressed consciously as a war. Both men are unconsciously seeking to reinstate order to their chaotic thoughts by allowing their diametrically opposed desires direct confrontation within the form of a war: Their love and sexual desire is allowed confrontation

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<sup>14</sup>It should be noted that 'order' is used here to denote a political arrangement, and in no way suggests that the intended or imposed order is just or moral.

with their hatred and urge to destroy: Eros face to face with Thanatos. Why war? Because war between civilised urges and primal desires, war between love and hate, and war between men are the most complete expressions of the human condition.

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