

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMININE
IN MELODRAMA

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMININE
IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH-CANADIAN
RELIGIOUS MELODRAMA

BY
HEATHER IRIS JONES, B.A., M.L.S, M.A.

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
McMaster University
March 1993

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Representations of the Feminine in Nineteenth-Century
 English-Canadian Religious Melodrama

AUTHOR:	Heather Iris Jones, B.A.	Western Ontario
	M.L.S.	Western Ontario
	M.A.	McMaster

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Linda Hutcheon

NUMBER OF PAGES: iv, 376

ABSTRACT

This study develops a theory of melodrama based on Foucauldian concepts of power/resistance relations in discourse. This theoretical framework is tested by means of an analysis of five nineteenth-century English-Canadian texts: Elizabeth Lanesford Cushing's Esther (1840), Charles Heavysege's Saul (1859), Archibald Lampman's "David and Abigail" (1882), Oliver J. Booth's Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite (1901), and George Arthur Hammond's The Crowning Test (1901). The central premise posed in the study's Introduction is that melodrama's protestant aesthetic of the feminine deliberately counters the secular aesthetic of tragedy. Chapter One demonstrates that this premise reveals challenges and insights concerning melodrama not previously found in the critical literature. By means of the analysis of the texts given Chapters Two, Three, and Four, the study demonstrates the interpretive strategies made possible by this re-evaluation of the genre and its gender politics. The theoretical framework developed here contributes to an understanding of melodrama both as a trans-national genre and as central feature of nineteenth-century English-Canadian culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude belongs to Linda Hutcheon, whose influence and support as both teacher and supervisor are virtually the alpha and omega of this study.

For its early phases this study is indebted to Norman Shrive and Carl Ballstadt for their inspiring interest in nineteenth-century English-Canadian literature. In terms of research assistance, much thanks for my very own file drawer for 444 loan requests is owed to Anne Pottier and her gang in Mills' Inter-Library Loans Department. Not least, to Stephen Hills I owe the happy accident of applying to McMaster for graduate study in the first place. Many others have helped along the way, keeping me ex(o)rcised in more ways than one: Aruna Srivastava, Maria diCenzo, Susan Bennett, Eleanor Ty, and, of course, Jane Fonda, whose exhortations and Linda's have blended in my dreams more than once.

Elizabeth Craig and her husband David Torrance will always have a very special place in my heart for the generous and tender support they have given me over the past two years of my stay in Sackville, New Brunswick. It is to Elizabeth and David, with love, that I dedicate this study.

Preface

This study explores a number of issues which first began to take shape in the context of research undertaken for my MA thesis. Preparing, as I then thought, for doctoral work in contemporary English-Canadian drama, I took for granted that nineteenth-century dramatic literature¹ would provide valuable background for the study of the later works. Beyond the recent efforts of a few theatre historians and bibliographers, however, this literature appears to be largely ignored. It surprised me to find that, from the standpoint of literary criticism, this corpus has been mainly considered--when considered at all--to merit little more than the briefest treatment.² Persevering, however, I found a large number of texts which seemed to me to offer a wide and rich field of study.³

In addition, during this period of research I was becoming increasingly interested in the feminist literary potential of certain aspects of what is generally known as post-structuralist theory, some key terms of which I explicate in the Introduction. It

soon seemed apparent that my textual and theoretical investigations could--and should--be brought together. As a result of reading the texts from within a feminist post-structuralist theoretical framework, the focus of the study moved away from theatre historical concerns and from traditional approaches regarding relationships between Canadian literary genres and their cultural contexts. The focus shifted instead to a broader consideration of the functions of discourse and to issues of gender and genre--functions and issues that, in some ways, tend to disregard national boundaries. Indeed, I found the idea underlying my early research--that the texts constitute a somehow distinctly Canadian corpus--to be an unnecessary and unproductive hypothesis in large part precisely because many of the texts share a number of the features of melodrama.⁴ Hence the selection of the five key texts and the establishment of the parameters of the discussion to be followed in the thesis ultimately were determined by feminist theoretical concerns about how functions of discourse and issues of gender and genre are configured within melodrama generally.

The focus on melodrama in this study, therefore, is not intended to yield a description of what is unique in Canadian melodrama through the

examination of representative texts--although the possibilities of attempting such a description definitely merit further investigation. Hence strictly theatre historical and bibliographical features of nineteenth-century English-Canadian dramatic literature are only briefly referred to in this study.⁵ My interest here is to analyse the gender/genre relations within these five Canadian texts, which configure the discourse of melodrama in certain enlightening ways. Further, this study seeks to outline the parameters of a new definition of melodrama, reached primarily by addressing some of the key questions a feminist post-structuralist analysis raises about definitions already in place,⁶ and to explore some of the consequent implications and insights as illuminated by the five texts.

One key consequence of considering dramatic literature's discursive--as well as performance--parameters is that melodrama can be seen as not merely a theatrical phenomenon but a way of seeing with intimate links to nineteenth-century culture at large. Reflecting the customary division between performed and unperformed texts evident in Plant's definition (Note 1), the only one of these five texts dealt with in Canadian criticism as more than a mere listing,

Heavysege's Saul (see Edwards, Tait, Plant, and Davies), is set apart from melodrama because it is considered "closet" drama, as is Cushing's Esther. This study seeks to show that melodramatic discourse was a shaping force in much of the period's dramatic literature (of which criticism considers these two texts typical), regardless of a specific text's relationship to theatrical performance.

While the descriptive nature of most of the few pertinent studies of nineteenth-century English-Canadian dramatic literature limits their usefulness here, they are integrated with the overview of the critical literature on melodrama presented in Chapter One. These studies serve to substantiate a basic assumption of this study concerning the lack of generic boundaries between many of the English-Canadian texts and British and American theory, history, and criticism of melodrama. For example, Mary M. Brown's article on touring companies and Gerald Lenton-Young's article on variety theatre demonstrate the frequent and extensive availability of British and American melodrama (as well as opera, vaudeville, circuses, etc.) to English-speaking audiences throughout Upper Canada/Ontario during the century. These articles, among a handful of others, expand upon and reinforce the work (including

Montreal and the Maritimes, especially) initiated in the 1960s by Murray Edwards, who has noted that "[m]elodrama, generally written to fit the requirements of a touring star and shaped to please the masses, poured into the Dominion from England and the United States and filled the opera houses across the land until the outbreak of the First World War" (39). Speaking of a Canadian touring company, the Marks Brothers, Edwards observes: "[i]t was natural that they should have concentrated on melodrama" (43). Even though most of these studies do not contribute materially to the criticism of the genre, many exhibit a number of features found in the primarily American and British critical literature on melodrama, as we shall see. Differing fundamentally from other Canadian commentaries, the present study's value lies in its development of a theoretical interpretive framework which contributes not only to criticism of nineteenth-century English-Canadian dramatic literature in particular, but also to that of melodrama as a trans-national genre.

Because of the central importance of current critical theory to this study, it has been necessary to use a number of specialized terms. These terms take their meanings from within the conventions of much

feminist post-structuralist criticism and may be unfamiliar to some readers of this study. Therefore I have endeavoured to include explanations of certain terms, primarily in the Introduction, in an attempt to provide not merely a glossary, but also a brief overview of the theoretical contexts showing how the terms contribute conceptually to the discussion. The theoretical positions and the terms which signify them are of fundamental importance to this study's critical practice. Such positions and terms configure a space in which non-canonical texts can be discussed without constant defensive apologetics or strained attempts to assign new meanings to already overworked and value-laden positions and terms. Only in such a space can the possibility that an aesthetic of melodrama may have interests and values fundamentally different in many ways from those articulated in traditional criticism be discussed productively and persuasively.

Notes

¹ In his article "Drama in English" (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2nd ed.), Richard Plant provides the following definitions: "Traditionally, drama is a term referring to a literary genre which consists of texts written for staging in the theatre. Dramatic literature, however, includes many texts that have never been performed and many that, despite their form, were not intended for performance" (620).

² Nineteenth-century English-Canadian drama of all kinds has been only very cursorily treated from a literary approach. Michael Tait's MA thesis (1962) contains a chapter which became the article "Playwrights in a Vacuum" in the journal Canadian Literature and includes a commentary on Saul (6-9). Richard Plant's PhD thesis (1979) also contains a chapter which is similar to his entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia on "Drama in English: the Nineteenth Century." The most thorough treatment of poetic drama, including Saul (88-94), is found in Murray Edwards' book A Stage in Our Past (1968). More recent treatments include a mere eight pages in Eugene Benson and Len Conolly's History of English-Canadian Theatre and Drama (1988) and Robertson Davies' essay "The Nineteenth-Century Repertoire" in Early Stages: Theatre in Ontario 1800-1914, edited by Ann Saddlemyer (1990). None of these overviews considers English-Canadian drama of the time as much more than a hodge-podge of "astonishing curiosities" (Tait 18). Indeed, concentrating primarily on English and American plays performed in Canada, Davies seems almost completely unaware that Canadian plays were being written at the time.

³ Two recent bibliographies have been of great assistance in identifying materials for both my MA and doctoral studies. Adding to earlier checklists of Canadian drama, Anton Wagner's Brock Bibliography, focusing on published works only, contains descriptive annotations for each title. To date the most comprehensive bibliography of English-Canadian drama from its beginnings, superceding Dorothy Sedgwick's, is Patrick O'Neill's list published in two issues of Canadian Drama. I was greatly helped by Dr. O'Neill, who allowed me to read his microfilmed collection of English-Canadian drama housed in the library at Mount

Saint Vincent University. I also visited the Harris Collection at Brown University, the Drama and Theatre Department of the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, and the Fisher Rare Books Room at the University of Toronto. Many other texts were obtained through the Inter-Library Loan services of the McMaster University Libraries. By the end of my research, I had managed to locate and study over 300 examples of the period's dramatic literature.

⁴ Alan Filewod's MA thesis (1978), which I read in the fall of 1987, offers a description of what he sees as the compatibility of much early English-Canadian historical dramatic writing and conventional descriptions of melodrama. While our studies ultimately head in utterly different directions, his establishment of a connection between corpus and genre constituted a key starting point for my investigation.

⁵ Recent issues of Essays in Theatre (now an amalgamation of Canadian Drama and Essays in Theatre) and Theatre Research in Canada (formerly Theatre History in Canada) offer evidence that specialists in bibliographical and theatre historical approaches are currently focusing more of their attention on early English-Canadian drama. Work by veterans in the field, such as Richard Plant, Mary Smith, Mary M. Brown, and Patrick O'Neill, is being added to by that of relative newcomers, such as Paula Sperdakos, Moira Day, and Dwayne Brenna.

⁶ While the functions of the definitions and terminology traditionally associated with melodrama are investigated in detail in Chapter One, readers of this study may find an example of a traditional definition useful at this point. Frank Rahill's study offers one which is fairly representative:

Melodrama is a form of dramatic composition in prose partaking of the nature of tragedy, comedy, pantomime, and spectacle, and intended for a popular audience. Primarily concerned with situation and plot, it calls upon mimed action extensively and employs a more or less fixed complement of stock characters, the most important of which are a suffering heroine or hero, a persecuting villain, and a benevolent comic. It is conventionally moral and humanitarian in point of view and sentimental and optimistic

in temper, concluding its fable happily with virtue rewarded after many trials and vice punished. Characteristically it offers elaborate scenic accessories and miscellaneous divertissements and introduces music freely, typically to underscore dramatic effect. (xiv)

While descriptions such as this undoubtedly summarise a number of features shared by much drama written in English during the period, I find that they also articulate certain assumptions, interests, and values that--as we shall see--actually work to obscure many of the ways in which melodrama functions as a discourse.

Introduction

It is customary that apologetics of melodrama contest the conventional usage of the term as signifying a type of failure in art. A central argument of this study is that denigration of melodrama is inevitable within the boundaries of traditional scholarship, including apologetics. Through its feminist post-structuralist approach, this study argues that melodrama can uniquely reward critical analysis. Indeed, this approach seeks to prove and explore hitherto unsuspected challenges and insights concerning the genre.

This study's central premise, expanded upon and tested in the ensuing chapters, is that melodrama constitutes a fundamentally distinct and worthy set of aesthetic concepts and values, a set which was being formulated over two hundred and sixty years ago. In the Dedication to Sir John Eyles in the published version of his play The London Merchant (1731), the Dissenter George Lillo advocates a new form of drama "founded on moral tales in private life" (4), enlarging on "the province of the graver kind of poetry" (4). As

we shall see, The London Merchant's emphasis on a pragmatics--rather than an idealization--of virtue, and on a domestic--rather than a heroic--sphere of action is articulated within an explicitly protestant doctrinal framework. This change in aesthetic parameters represents, I suggest, a deeply significant departure from neo-classical aesthetics in dramatic writing in English and also from the rationalism often associated with the post-Renaissance tradition.¹

Working within sentimentalism's moralist critique of rationalist values, Lillo's project--"to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the case of virtue by stifling vice in its first principles"--provides drama with an outline for a counter-aesthetic.² Much nineteenth-century English-Canadian dramatic writing, since it is fully informed by the conventions of this counter-aesthetic, as we shall see, also focuses for the most part on "moral tales in private life." Five texts, based on Old Testament stories, have been chosen for study here because they seem to me to suggest most clearly the various ways in which protestantism informs and empowers, on a fundamental level, the counter-aesthetic I see articulated in melodrama generally.³ For the purposes of this study, I have called these texts religious melodrama.⁴

Much recent criticism of nineteenth-century writing in English suggests that morality, the domestic sphere, and protestant values may be seen as central not only to a counter-aesthetic of drama, but to that of the novel and poetry as well.⁵ That such a counter-aesthetic flourished substantiates recent theoretical work identifying the nineteenth century as the period when the relatively unified secular discourse of Western epistemological thought began to break down (Jardine 24).⁶ As we shall see in the following chapters, the five texts studied here illustrate how melodrama's counter-aesthetic can be seen to have participated in this fragmentation process, the study of which has been a key focus of post-structuralist theory. Since the elements of post-structuralism may be unfamiliar to some readers of this study, the following brief overview of pertinent key positions and terms--especially insofar as this theory makes possible a critique of humanism--is necessary here. This overview is followed by a short explication of my specific adaptations of post-structuralism and its critique of humanism. My position that, as a genre, melodrama functions specifically as a discourse of the feminine, will be argued by reference to the work of the nineteenth-century feminist art historian Anna

Jameson. In conclusion, some of the general implications of these insights for the analyses of the dramatic texts undertaken in the ensuing chapters are noted.

For the purposes of this study, then, post-structuralist theory can be seen to hold that, generally speaking, language is always in practice, and that language-in-practice does not refer to, or express, ineffable pre-existing ideas or conditions outside of itself. Rather, language-in-practice is seen to construct the ideas and conditions of and within which it speaks.⁷ Therefore language-in-practice, in the form of speech acts or in texts of all kinds, cannot be transparently meaningful, gender neutral, or without value bias. There can be no "objective," disinterested point of view or truth that is constituted outside of or beyond this language-in-practice. The term "discourse" as used in this study denotes language-in-practice as a general conceptual context, as in "humanist discourse" for example, or as a specific group of concepts such as theatre history or literary criticism. It is important to note that the connection between a signifying word or practice and the concept or concepts signified is not fixed and necessary. The term discourse here also is used as an

acknowledgement of and a reminder that language-in-practice structures, and is structured by,⁸ power relations. Chapter One develops these and other post-structuralist positions further in order to dismantle traditional approaches to melodrama and to posit an alternative.

Founded upon Michel Foucault's concept of power relations as a necessary function of discourse, much post-structuralist critical practice, including this study, consequently assumes that no scholarly or critical endeavour can be apolitical.⁹ The post-structuralist concept of power relations is not one in which a monolithic entity, such as the State, is represented as a law of prohibition and obstruction, which, since its values appear natural and universal, considers any resistance to its power as a transgressive act.¹⁰ Instead, power is seen as always, and dynamically, present in every kind of relation. In addition, no set of values is seen to pertain essentially to power relations. On the contrary, the ascription of values is considered an effect of power relations: it is seen as a discursive strategy which constructs, and is constructed by, the interests involved in power relations.

Moreover, the theory of multiple relations in power (and thus resistance) strategies displaces the conventional notion that power/resistance is a naturally occurring binary relation between dominators and dominated, a fundamental premise found in much traditional criticism of melodrama. The post-structuralist position favours, instead, power/resistance strategies as "relations of domination" that construct, and are constructed by, various and changing "interested" discourses (Foucault 1980, 142). Thus it is possible for any one individual or group to be simultaneously empowered within one discourse and resisting within another, and even empowered and resisting within a single discourse. Indeed, the perception that any one individual or group is either powerless or powerful is considered to be an effect of relations of domination. This is not to say that the perception an individual or group may have of being powerless or powerful is not a reality. It is, on the contrary, a distinctly real element of experience. Rather, it is the perception that the position of an individual or a group with regard to a power structure is a natural and inevitable necessity that is fallacious. In post-structuralist theory, therefore, resistance does not signify the necessarily

transgressive and futile actions of the naturally powerless. Rather, resistance to power is seen as occupying the "same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies" (Foucault 1980, 142). One such set of global strategies of resistance is feminism.

It has become a truism that there are as many definitions of feminism as there are people, including men, who call themselves feminist. For the purposes of this study, however, feminism is considered to denote the various power/resistance strategies voiced by women only and rooted in women's experience. Although all but one of the texts studied in the ensuing chapters are male-authored, the process of reading is feminist. Chris Weedon offers the following insights:

For many women, a feminist perspective results from the conflict and contradictions between dominant institutionalized definitions of women's nature and social role, inherent in the contemporary sexual division of labour, the structure of the family, access to work and politics, medicine, social welfare, religion and the media (to name but a few of the institutions defining femininity and womanhood) and our [women's] experience of these institutions in the context of the dominant liberal discourse of the free and self-determining individual. In order to make sense of these contradictions we need new theoretical perspectives which challenge individualism. It is here that feminist theories can make sense of women's awareness of the conflicts and contradictions in our everyday lives

which, from the perspective of an isolated individual, who does not consciously take the social construction of gender into account, may seem inexplicable. Viewed from the perspective of women as a social group, they can produce new ways of seeing which make sense of them, enabling women to call them into question and open the way for change.
(5)

Thus--it must be noted--my critical approach to melodrama is that of a woman whose way of seeing is, in many ways, a product of a wide variety of gaps I have encountered between discursively institutionalized feminine(s) and my own experience. As a result, what I see in melodrama, among other things, is a gendered challenge to the liberal/humanist concept of "the free and self-determining individual" by means of melodrama's implicit and explicit protestant critique of traditional (post-Renaissance) representations of the tragic hero, a critique unrecognized by most traditional studies of melodrama. We shall see, moreover, that aspects of the representation of this critique comprise the means by which melodrama, while most often not explicitly articulating feminist strategies in particular instances, can be seen in many ways to achieve a feminist effect as a genre by opening the way for change in women's self-representation.

The pairing in post-structuralist theory of a concept of textual reflexivity with a concept of power

also clearly has major ramifications for feminist concepts of gender, and, hence, for my study of traditional criticism and melodrama as gendered discourses in Chapter One. Traditionally, the term gender has been taken to refer to the sociocultural characteristics of masculinity and femininity arising from the biological division of human beings into the male or female sex. Taken together, masculinity/male and femininity/female form the concepts signified by the normative terms man and woman, respectively. From a post-structuralist position, however, sexuality and its attributes constitute, and are constituted by, discourse. Hence, in this usage, gender has no referential basis, such as sociocultural experience or biological functioning, external to discourse. This is not to deny that bodies are real, of course, and the importance of the body in the gendering of traditional criticism and of melodrama will be discussed shortly. As Weedon suggests above, the feminist post-structuralist concept of gender politics often targets, as this study does, the essentialist fallacy which informs much traditional criticism. Baldly stated, this fallacy presumes that men are superior and women are inferior because that is what nature, in the form of biological difference, intended. Feminist post-

structuralist studies often focus on the deployment of the essentialist fallacy in order to address/redress the interests of women.

As Alice Jardine has pointed out, post-structuralist theory, prior to its appropriation by feminist discourses, already had divided discourse into functions characterized as masculine and feminine. It is important to recognize here the influence of the work of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan on post-structuralism.¹¹ Lacan's work attempts to combine Saussurean linguistics with Freudian psychology. To use Lacan's suggestive terms, language-in-practice constitutes the realm of the "symbolic" in which the phallus functions as a "transcendental signifier" and serves to delimit meaning and to naturalize power relations.¹² Making use of aspects of Lacanian theory, much post-structuralist theory takes the position that up until the nineteenth century, Western discourse was effectively unified on the symbolic level by the Name of the Father, the phallus. Consequently, post-structuralist theory has ascribed to the masculine any totalizing discourse. Necessarily, then, any discourse resisting and disrupting masculine totality must be ascribed to the feminine; that is, to a castrated discourse, to the place of difference, of lack.

Because Lacan's concept of the discursively empowered, and empowering, phallus operates on the level of the "symbolic" and not the real, his theory suggests that both masculine and feminine discourses may be articulated by both men and women. We shall see that, in different ways and to quite different ends, this position is denied for the most part by the gender politics of most traditional criticism, but mainly affirmed by the gender politics of melodrama as a genre.

Central to my discussion of melodrama are a number of post-structuralist positions specifically concerned with what has been considered to be the dominant discursive mode in the West, and unproblematically so until the nineteenth century: humanist discourse.¹³ Humanist discourse takes Man, an entity it considers to be external to itself, as its focus of study.¹⁴ As we shall see, a version of this central concept--the "transcendental signified"--of Man serves as the unifying force of Western epistemological discourse in a variety of ways. Much traditional humanist literary critical practice, for example, assumes that some pre-existing aesthetic standards are in place, offering a calibrated scale of degrees of worth against which literary works can be measured.

Considered from a post-structuralist position, the degree of worth assigned by much traditional literary criticism is measured by the degree to which humanist Man can be reconstructed as the focus of a text's rhetorical strategies. If a literary text does not appear to empower the concept of humanist Man sufficiently or in orthodox ways, it tends to be ascribed little or no aesthetic worth. We have already noted an example of this process operating in the critical assessments of Lillo's work.

As a fundamental feature of its functioning, moreover, unlike the post-structuralist positions outlined above, much humanist discourse in general and much traditional criticism in particular tends to separate male from female, to derive "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics from the physiological distinction of male and female, and to establish binary power structures instituted by (seemingly) externally authorised oppositions. Often grounded physiologically as male and as an attribute of masculinity within humanist discourse, reason is considered to be the key defining feature of humanist Man.¹⁵ In addition, the exclusive association of discursive empowerment--possession of the phallus--with men is a basic and

often explicit function of humanist discourse, including humanist feminisms.

It should be noted here that in setting up and targeting a humanist strawMan, a post-structuralist critique such as this one, risks re-establishing the very binary power relations they seek to dismantle. Regardless of the preferences of post-structuralism, however, we shall see that much nineteenth-century melodrama targets its own humanist strawMan: the secular/Classical tragic hero. While contemporary critic M.H. Abrams may see Renaissance humanism as "emphasiz[ing] the study of classical imaginative and philosophical literature . . . with an emphasis on its moral and practical rather than aesthetic values;" in her study Legends of the Madonna nineteenth-century art historian Anna Jameson finds "the revival of classical learning, [the] passionate enthusiasm for the poetry and mythology of the Greeks, and [the] taste for the remains of antique Art" problematic: "dangerous became the craving for mere beauty--dangerous the study of the classical and heathen literature. This was the commencement of that thoroughly pagan taste which in the following century demoralised Christian Art" (xxxi). Thus in the ensuing chapters the term humanist is replaced by the term secular (as de-moral-ising

regardless of any Christian context) in order to specify the key aspect of humanism found to be problematic by much melodrama. The parameters outlined here as a preconceptual framework--personified by humanist Man--and as a critical practice in Chapter One, are intended to show some key limitations of this framework as a schema of interpretation for this particular genre and period, just as the post-structuralist parameters are offered as one other possible schema and not as a set of transcendent Truths.

As shown by the example of Abrams and Jameson, post-structuralist practice often attempts to confront and break down humanist discourse's configuration and privileging of reason by showing the functions of the concept of reason within power/resistance relations. Michel Foucault's study entitled Madness and Civilization, for example, seeks to dislodge reason from its place of privilege by showing how it requires the concept of madness as a negative against which it may define itself as a positive, thus revealing the dynamic of power and resistance strategies at work in both concepts (107). Reason, the lynch-pin of humanism as a totalizing discourse, is seen as operating in the phallic realm of the masculine; madness, a form of

resistance progressively more marginalized within humanism through institutionalization, is seen as operating in the realm of the feminine.¹⁶ Insofar as it shows that reason and madness are relative concepts, Foucault's own discourse can be seen to participate in and to promote the feminine processes post-structuralism tends to associate with the epistemological disruption(s) at work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As we shall see, however, for much traditional criticism of melodrama, reason is not relative, but absolute. Unlike Foucault's rhetorical strategies which challenge--at least on one level--the humanist hierarchy of (masculine) reason/dominant and (feminine) madness/dominated, much traditional criticism of melodrama explicitly retains this hierarchy with (masculine) reason/criticism/tragedy as the dominant and (feminine) madness/theatre practice/melodrama as the dominated. Foucault's discourse, despite its paradoxical gender politics, effectively empowers what post-structuralist theory identifies as the feminine--disruption and difference; while much traditional critical discourse, arguably pro-masculine in its gender politics, continues the humanist project of disempowering--or feminizing--disruption and

difference, including that articulated by melodrama. Thus I would like to suggest that post-structuralism, rather than humanism, tends to have more potential as a source for effective feminist political strategies.

While there is much that is useful to feminisms in the post-structuralist challenges to humanism--the emphasis on the self-reflexive operation of language-in-practice and the gendering of resistance as feminine, for example--few of the early ground-breaking post-structuralist works specifically address the place and functioning of women in either discourse. Mainly it has been left to feminist critiques--often concerned more with the politics of the body than of discourse--to note the corollary to the pro-masculine functioning of both discourses. Here post-structuralism, no less than humanism, is seen to articulate its concepts of disruption and difference solely within the context of men's discourse with each other. As noted above, the implicit and explicit ascription of reason to men (doctors, therapists, theorists--and the representation of Foucault himself as rational scholar by virtue of the methodologies of his own text) leads inevitably to the ascription of lack of reason to women (patients, literary and folkloric figures--as objects of analysis by men, including Foucault). Many such critiques also

indicate that men, self-reflexively identifying themselves as some version of humanist Man, tend only to represent themselves as occupying the discursively empowered place of order and power, the place of the Individual and his Self, and thus relegate women to the disempowered place of undifferentiated chaos, of difference, of lack: the place of the Other.

But while much post-structuralist practice often seems to consider only language-in-practice at the expense of the gender politics of the body, it also appears that much feminist practice often seems to consider only the body at the expense of the gender politics of discourse, often with the unfortunate effect--as we shall see in Chapter One--of perpetuating and promoting humanist discursive strategies disempowering women. It is my contention in this study, however, that a post-structuralist politics of discourse and a feminist politics of the body can be brought together to configure a feminist post-structuralist theory. Chris Weedon and Alice Jardine, among others, have approached this position from different directions. To the best of my knowledge, however, the key theoretical insight gained by this approach to melodrama--the possibility that there may be not one feminine but two not-unrelated feminines (a

pro-masculine feminine and a pro-feminist feminine) operating in disruptive ways in much nineteenth-century discourse--has not been posited before. In order to clarify my position here I would like to introduce a key post-structuralist concept which will be important for the rest of the study, that of the Subject.

The word "Subject" has been developed in post-structuralist theory as a special term. The term Subject indicates both the one who speaks and the one who is spoken of in discourse. The Subject is both the place of authority and power and a construct of this position and relation. Subjectivity is the condition whereby a Subject apprehends his or her psychological identity and agency as a person. Subject positions, that is, a person's orientation within and with regard to discourses, and the condition of subjectivity are discursive constructs. It can be posited that humanism relies upon what are perceived as extra-discursive entities, Reason or God, for authorisation to construct the Subject in and of its discourse as Man. But Man can be seen to be, in fact, a gender-specific construct by which humanism privileges masculine characteristics. Hence, any construction of Woman as the Subject in and of discourse--but not as the Object/pseudo-Subject of a

discourse where Man is the actual Subject--is clearly a feminist project. For such a construction constitutes, and is constituted by, a fundamental reconfiguration of the concepts designated by the words feminine, female, woman. Such a reconfiguration also must serve necessarily to disrupt humanist discourse and its configurations of masculine, male, man and also, inevitably, even the post-structuralist (pro-masculine feminine) configuration of the phallus. From this position we may conclude that the disruption of the Western epistemological tradition, rightly identified by post-structuralist theory as a function of the feminine, can be an appropriately gendered ascription only if this feminine performs as feminist as well; that is, if Woman displaces (not replaces) Man as the Subject of discourse. Consequently, the feminine constituting, and constituted by, much post-structuralist discourse cannot be seen as feminist precisely because it can be seen to retain a form of humanist Man as its Subject. Since much post-structuralist discourse continues to participate to some degree in a pro-masculine gender politics, the disruption--what I would call a feminist effect--it purports to document is often appropriated and undermined.

For example, in post-structuralist descriptions of the breakdown of epistemological thought in the West, references tend to be made to implicit and explicit challenges to the old order. But it may be posited that, because of its pro-feminist feminine gender politics, an important discursive set of challenges has tended to be overlooked: that of protestantism.¹⁷ In the nineteenth century, protestant discourse can be seen to resist many of the relations of domination often perpetuated in various ways by much post-structuralism and traditional criticism alike. Generally speaking, protestant discourse in the nineteenth century can be seen to collapse the opposition, but not the difference, between pre-Renaissance Christian and post-Renaissance humanist discourses. But a major aspect of the protestant project, it appears, can be seen as the reconfiguration of Christianity and its relation to humanism.¹⁸ Protestantism here can be seen to have reconstituted Christianity as a system that justifies belief as an inevitable and necessary outcome of Man's spontaneous moral functioning.

In addition, nineteenth-century protestantism's resistance appears to have been informed by the gendered binary power relations at work within humanist

discourse, but to a quite different effect. Since rationalist humanist empowerment can be seen to have been informed almost exclusively by pro-masculine rhetorical strategies, protestant resistance in melodrama can be seen mainly to be able to articulate itself by means of conventionally feminine rhetorical strategies, privileging--among other values--intuition, emotion, and spirituality. Consequently, much protestant discourse seems to suggest that these aspects of the feminine configure the place where the moral motivation to imitate Christ originates and, therefore, they are closer in essence to God than Reason. It can be posited, then, that melodrama's protestant rhetorical strategies structure, and are structured by, newly interdependent values of the feminine and the moral, forming a disruptive "counter-system of figuration" (Wynter 32) to the interdependent humanist values of the masculine and the rational. However, protestant resistance, insofar as it continued to function partially within humanist power relations, appears to have been hampered in some ways in its self-empowerment project by its alignment with the feminine.

Specifically, much nineteenth-century protestant discourse can be seen to be vulnerable because of its apparent reliance upon the person of

woman to represent its values. Indeed, it is a testament to the displacement capability of humanism that humanist epistemological models were found to articulate Man as a man so completely that the new protestant model could only articulate Man mainly as a woman. Protestant discourse's advocacy of the feminine effectively disguises Man by embodying him as a woman. Consequently, as we shall see, although a woman often is the ostensible focus of protestant discourses such as melodrama--particularly in the form of a female central character--the Subject of its discourse, nevertheless, often remains humanist Man. But I would suggest that protestantism was also open to an empowered, and empowering, appropriation of the protestant feminine and its female icon by and for explicitly feminist agendas.

Despite the continuing centrality of humanist Man, the ambivalence in the material representation of him as Subject by means of female Object in many nineteenth-century protestant discourses, such as melodrama, can be seen to have made the configuration of a female Subject possible. Protestant configurations of the feminine in the nineteenth century, including melodrama's, can be seen to have informed women's view of themselves as potentially

powerful, rather than as naturally powerless.¹⁹ At this time especially, many women became visible as essayists, poets, novelists, playwrights, and commentators on topics of all kinds. But it should be noted as well that the increasing discursive visibility of women in itself does not necessarily signal a feminist phenomenon, for women's discourses frequently can be seen to have supported the pro-masculine humanist gendering of relations of domination, constructing women as Objects rather than as Subjects. But in the nineteenth century certain discursive strategies, including those of melodrama, were appropriated by many women for feminist purposes. Women appear to have been enabled by much protestant discourse to begin to construct for themselves a new Subject of a different discourse.

One writer who attempted to theorize as well as to practice such a strategy was Anna Jameson. The central importance of Jameson's theory and practice to this study should not be underestimated. The insights I have gained from my study of Jameson's works have led directly to the development of a theory of melodrama as a discourse of the (potentially feminist) feminine articulating a protestant counter-aesthetic. The following overview is intended merely to outline the

inter-relatedness I see among some aspects of the post-structuralist critique of humanism, of my own feminist post-structuralist approach to melodrama, and of the feminist pragmatics of Jameson's (re)construction of what I call a protestant aesthetic of the feminine. Jameson's theory and practice is examined in greater detail in the third section of Chapter One.

Anna Jameson was born in Ireland in 1794, but lived most of her life in England and on continental Europe, dying in London in 1860. She visited North America once, including a ten-month sojourn in Upper Canada in 1836-1837 documented in the three-volume Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada published in England in 1838. Identified by Adele Holcomb in her article "Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian" as "the first writer to define herself as a specialist on art in Victorian England" (175), Jameson wrote extensively on the feminine as a configuring power in medieval art.²⁰ The main body of this work was written between 1840 and 1860. Jameson's theory of the feminine, set out in her multi-volume Sacred and Legendary Art series, offers a particularly effective framework within which to examine how many nineteenth-century representations of the feminine,

including that of melodrama, can be seen to have had a feminist effect.²¹

Anna Jameson's feminist project promotes the features of protestant discourse--the feminine, domesticity, and morality--to propose nothing less than an alternatively gendered history of signification. Countering (but not opposing) the centrality of Man in humanist discourse, Jameson centres the Madonna as the transcendental signifier in a specifically protestant and feminist system of knowing. In the articulation and privileging of what she calls "'the maternal organisation'" (qtd. in Holcomb above) as the Madonna's transcendental signified, Jameson's works seem implicitly to acknowledge--and resist--the tendency toward the gender specificity of the phallus in humanism. In Legends of the Madonna, fertility images are shown to provide the oldest examples of Woman (as a Subject), examples followed by representations of Isis nursing Horus in Egyptian art, the goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome, and the statues found in early Christian catacombs (xix-xx, 58-59). Jameson also claims to have found "in every land the ground prepared for [the Christian Madonna] in some already dominant idea of a mother-Goddess, chaste, beautiful, and benign" (xix).²² Hence Jameson's work on medieval

religious painting suggests that true Christian spirituality can be attained (by both men and women in the egalitarian relation to the divine fundamental to protestantism [Masson 305]) only through acceptance of what I have called pro-feminist feminine values as the original place of Christian Good. In the article cited above, Holcomb observes that "throughout Sacred and Legendary Art and the succeeding volumes it is not just the presence of women which is shown to have been significant for Christian tradition and the art it sponsored, but the ethically crucial status of charity and the pacific virtues which [Jameson] associated with a female point of view" (184). Jameson's groundbreaking analysis of Marian iconography reveals that Woman has been in the past and should be again the Subject of religious and moral discourses of all kinds.²³

To this end, in Legends of the Madonna Jameson suggests that the "feminine character" (xvii), constituting and constituted by protestantism and attributed to Christ (as protestant Man), in fact was not derived from the character of Jesus but from that of Mary (as protestant Woman). Indeed, not only the character of Christ, but even his physical form is seen to derive from that of Mary. Jameson refers to the

argument that since "Christ had no earthly father, therefore [he] could only have derived his human lineaments from his mother. All the old legends assume that the resemblance between the son and the Mother must have been perfect" (LM xli). Thus the "feminine character" of Mary actually precedes and enables the engendering of Christ as feminine. As the archeological record is made to show, the "feminine character" was already in place as a fundamental articulation of spirituality. Images of Christ's "mild, intellectual majesty" therefore are considered to be modelled exclusively after Mary's character and person. Thus Jameson's "portrait" of Christ and Mary can be seen to be virtually gynandrous, even as she notes also "that the type of person here assigned to the Virgin is more energetic for a woman than that which has been assigned to our Saviour as a man" (LM xli)--an observation of great significance to the study of melodrama as a gendered discourse, as we shall see. For Jameson, then, protestantism's pro-feminist feminine values indicate its status as Christianity's most progressive representation.

As a vital part of its project of resistance, Jameson's Introduction to Legends of the Madonna--and, by extension, the whole Sacred and Legendary Art

series--represents paintings and other non-discursive artifacts as texts, as having a language that must be learned so that they may be read "like a book" (SLA lxviii). The textuality of artwork must be established if Jameson's project is to be effective--seeing to it that these representations articulating an alternative history of signification have a configuring function at least equivalent in power and value with the texts of ancient Greece and Rome privileging and privileged by humanist discourse. In Sacred and Legendary Art Jameson observes, not, perhaps, without some sarcasm: "It is curious, this general ignorance with regard to the [Christian] subjects of Mediaeval [sic] Art. . . . We find no such ignorance with regard to the subjects of Classical Art, because the associations connected with them form a part of every liberal education" (5). In her promotion of what I call the pro-feminist feminine values of medieval art, Jameson places scriptural stories (such as those found in the five texts to be discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four) and their associated protestant values of feminine heroism, such as humility, self-sacrifice, and obedience, in a relation of displacement with the secular "great writings of the ancients" and their associated humanist values of masculine heroism such as

ambition, egotism, and rebellion. As we shall see in the examination of Charles Heavyside's Saul in Chapter Two, in particular, a comparison of these two differently gendered models of heroism reveals a key site of melodrama's resistance to the humanist aesthetics of tragedy.

The pro-masculine feminine gendering of protestantism, however, where humanist Man is retained as Subject, may also retain the conflation of Man, men, and the phallus found in humanism--arguing that the protestant ministry may be performed only by men, for example. Jameson's work suggests, however, that, although Christ is, in fact, a male Saviour, the character and body of Mary had a configuring power of virtually equal importance--if different in kind--to that of the mind of God. Thus it is not possible that the phallus pertain exclusively to men in imitation of Christ since he has now on one level become a male version of a female original. An inevitable corollary to Jameson's argument, then,--to translate into Lacanian terms--is that the phallus is not the sole transcendental signifier of empowerment in the symbolic. Indeed, the very nature of this empowerment is fundamentally transformed by the Madonna (signifier) and reconfigured as the maternal organisation

(signified). It is the Madonna, then, not the phallus, which empowers protestantism as men's feminine and as women's feminist discourse.

Jameson's engendering of the domestic sphere, in accordance with the life of Mary, as a place governed by women yet informed by the feminine/feminist simultaneity of the protestant preconceptual context, can be seen to be a compatible extension of Lillo's privileging of domestic and moral values in the formation of a counter-aesthetic of drama. In The London Merchant, Lillo's realm of domesticity and pragmatic virtue is configured by the filial/paternal relationship between the apprentice and his master. As we shall see, by the end of the eighteenth century this realm is configured in much melodrama by women and in terms of actual familial relationships. This prevalence of the more literal representation of domesticity in melodrama increases to the degree that much criticism agrees that during the latter half of the nineteenth century domestic melodrama was the most prevalent form of stage production. As we shall see, the insights gained by attributing the phenomenal success of melodrama, especially in its domestic form, to the representation of the protestant values associated with the domestic, the feminine, and the

moral reveal the presence of two not unrelated discourses of the feminine at work in the nineteenth century. Post-structuralism helps to identify one; Anna Jameson's feminist theorizing, another. Thus the post-structuralist pro-masculine feminine may be seen as humanism imploding on its own discourses--rational Man collapsing under Darwinism, for example. Jameson's pro-feminist feminine theorizing reveals discourses of the feminine that, long before the nineteenth century, continually countered pro-masculine epistemologies. But in a newly achieved re-empowerment, articulated particularly in melodrama, nineteenth-century discourses of the feminine gained a different and, perhaps, much more extensive potential for disruption.

As we shall see, despite the prevalence of evidence that it is protestantism rather than humanism that provides the preconceptual context for melodrama in the nineteenth century, much traditional criticism of melodrama appears to remain largely unaware the former's presence as a structuring and thematic force in melodrama. The first two sections of Chapter One explore how this apparent lack of awareness serves certain gendered power/resistance relations promoting and perpetuating the feminization of melodrama. As we shall see, by privileging "the great writings of the

ancients" (Wynter 28-29), specifically by means of what I call an Aristotelian²⁴ aesthetic, traditional criticism (including apologetics) effectively ensures that the disruptive capability of melodrama as a discourse of the feminine is undermined.

In Chapter Two, Elizabeth Lanesford Cushing's Esther (1840) provides a particularly rewarding example of an appropriation of protestantism and its reconfiguration and re-empowerment, along Jamesonian lines, as a distinctly pro-feminist feminine discourse. Charles Heavysege's trilogy Saul (1859) is examined in Chapter Three as a key text in which the processes of melodrama's reconceptualization of the hero away from a pro-masculine Aristotelian toward a pro-masculine feminine protestant model is undertaken as an explicit project. Heavysege's trilogy provides many clear examples of how the protestant counter-aesthetic can be seen to undertake its work of feminine resistance in melodrama. In Chapter Four, three texts from later in the century are shown to articulate a pro-masculine counter-resistance to the feminine gender politics of melodrama. Archibald Lampman's dramatic verse poem "David and Abigail" (1892) provides the opportunity to study this process in a wide-spread form of melodrama.²⁵ The implications of pro-masculine

recuperation are pursued further in the analysis of Oliver J. Booth's dramatic monologue Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite (1901). The last play to be examined in Chapter Four is George Arthur Hammond's The Crowning Test (1901). This version of religious melodrama explicitly represents the ascendancy in protestant discourse of faith over reason, of intuition over science while, at the same time, installing an anti-feminine (and anti-feminist) gender politics.

No adequate treatment of melodrama, in all its myriad forms, has yet been devised that sufficiently and satisfactorily accounts for its tremendous past and present appeal. But there are many fruitful possibilities to be opened up to criticism of melodrama generally and English-Canadian melodrama in particular by a feminist post-structuralist theory of the genre.

Notes

¹ In his discussion of the religious poetry of Christina Rossetti, Jerome McGann notes:

During the Enlightenment a secular challenge began to be raised against Christianity in general, and the consequence of this was the emergence, within the various Christian sects, of a consolidating movement. Broad Church Protestantism gained its ascendancy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. . . . These developments within Christianity follow upon the challenge of humanism and secularism. . . . (nl 142)

McGann is dealing here specifically with English protestantism, yet this general statement is similar to some of William Westfall's general observations concerning the protestant scene in Canada during the nineteenth century (see note 3).

² Most critical studies of melodrama, including those by Eric Bentley, Frank Rahill, Michael Booth, David Grimsted, and Robert Heilman examined in Chapter One, also locate an origin of sorts in Lillo's play. Unlike my interpretation of the significance of this work, however, the traditional critical position considers it to be significant only structurally, insofar as Lillo's hero is "the common man" and the generic boundaries of comedy and tragedy are overstepped in historically important ways to accommodate this change. But, despite this appraisal, the actual moral content of Lillo's work is consistently dismissed as a set of "horrible homilies" (Smith 3) not to be taken seriously.

³ In his study of "protestant culture" in nineteenth-century Upper Canada/Ontario, William Westfall notes that:

Whereas establishmentarianism had emphasized the links between the church, society, and the world, the new [protestant] culture pulled the church away from society and the state and constructed a counterworld of the sacred that stood against the values and beliefs of the new secular society. (122)

It is this protestant "counterworld" that melodrama articulates, as we shall see. While Westfall's study traces in detail the peculiarities of protestant

culture specific to one region (wherein Archibald Lampman and Oliver J. Booth were writing), I am using his general statements and definitions as representative of protestantism in the Maritimes (George Arthur Hammond), and English-speaking Montreal (Charles Heavyside and Elizabeth Lanesford Cushing) as well.

⁴ The common designation found in many studies is "biblical melodrama." I have substituted the word religious for biblical in order to suggest the many ways in which a protestant preconceptual context can be seen to inform the thematic content of such plays and not merely the plot structure and costuming, as other studies (such as Michael Booth's and Robertson Davies') tend to assert.

⁵ For example, Jane P. Tompkins' article "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History" in Elaine Showalter's Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory (1985) demonstrates the pervasiveness of sentimentalism in best-selling American women's novels of the nineteenth century and its contestation of the values and concerns traditionally assigned to the 'best' American fiction. Also, Stuart Curran's essay "The I Altered" in Anne K. Mellor's collection of essays entitled Romanticism and Feminism (1988) re-evaluates and specifically undermines the position traditional criticism promotes--that the transcendental neo-platonism associated with the poetry and prose of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Byron dominated the early nineteenth century--by suggesting that the explicitly moral and domestic poetry written by women such as Jane Taylor and Felicia Hemans was, in fact, the most widely published, purchased, read, and revered.

⁶ Alice Jardine views this breakdown as inextricably linked to gender:

Over the past century, those master (European) narratives--history, philosophy, religion--which have determined our sense of legitimacy in the West have undergone a series of crises in legitimation. It is widely recognized that legitimacy is part of that judicial domain which, historically, has determined the right to govern, the succession of kings, the link between father and son, the necessary paternal fiction, the

ability to decide who is the father--in patriarchal culture. The crises experienced by the major Western narratives have not, therefore, been gender-neutral. They are crises in the narratives invented by men.
(24)

The argument I pursue throughout this study posits that melodrama's placement of the figure of woman and her domestic setting centre stage constitute and are constituted by aspects of these legitimation crises.

⁷ The post-structuralist theoretical works which inform this study most consistently are those of Michel Foucault (Madness and Civilization, I, Pierre Riviere, Archaeology of Knowledge, Power/Knowledge, Discipline and Punish, and the first two volumes of The History of Sexuality series). Feminist post-structuralist works include Catherine Belsey's Critical Practice and The Subject of Tragedy, Chris Weedon's Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, and Alice Jardine's Gynesis.

⁸ The general grammatical construction used here, and repeated deliberately throughout this study, in the words "structured and structured by" is intended to remind the reader that what can be said or written as discourse is made possible only by what has already been said or written as preconceptual context. The works of Louis Althusser and Emile Benveniste outline structural aspects of the reflexive relation in language-in-practice--reflexive, that is, in the sense that identity, agency, and meaning are products of discourse and do not refer to some entity, experience, or objective reality supposedly outside of discourse.

⁹ The term "politics" is used throughout this study, in various combinations, to denote the expediency and interest at work in power relations. This function is not intended, however, to carry the negative connotations resulting from the term's conventional usage as denoting state and governmental affairs almost exclusively.

¹⁰ Foucault outlines this position in the interview transcribed as the "Powers and Strategies" chapter of Power/Knowledge; see specifically pages 139-140.

11 Works which engage Jacques Lacan's theory of subjectivity (translated and published in part in Ecrits and Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis) elaborate on the implications for psychoanalytic practice of the reflexive relations between discourse and identity. Some of the works involving this practice examined for this study, in addition to the above titles, are Kaja Silverman's The Subject of Semiotics, Paul Smith's Discerning the Subject, John Berger's Ways of Seeing, Stephen Heath's The Sexual Fix, Laura Mulvey's two key articles on film melodrama, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" and "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,'" and her keynote address given July 7, 1992 in London, England during a British Film Institute/University of London conference on melodrama, Luce Irigaray's Speculum of the Other Woman and This Sex Which is Not One, Maggie Berg's "Luce Irigaray's 'Contradictions': Poststructuralism and Feminism," and Jane Gallop's The Daughter's Seduction and Reading Lacan.

12 The term "signifier" is taken from Ferdinand de Saussure's definition of the sign, as Terence Hawkes notes:

The linguistic sign can be characterized in terms of the relationship which pertains between its dual aspects of "concept" and of "sound-image"--or, to use the terms which Saussure's work has made famous--signified (signifie) and signifier (signifiant). The structural relationship between the concept . . . and the sound-image . . . thus constitutes a linguistic sign, and a language is made up of these. . . . (25)

Lacan's notion of the nature and function of the phallus is much less clear. Jane Gallop's study Reading Lacan is most helpful in making connections between this term and feminist thought:

"Phallus" is the signifier which has no signified. . . . Loaded down with the seriousness of ideological meaning and sexual history, the phallus mires me in its confusion with the male organ[,] . . . although I am convinced of the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, the masculinity of the phallic signifier serves well as an emblem of the confusion between phallus and male which inheres in language, in our symbolic order. (140)

Thus it can be seen that the phallus acts transcendently precisely because it does not (only) act as a symbol of the penis or clitoris (139), but rather symbolizes power as a force. Gallop observes, however, that this force, in lived reality, is often materially attached to the male body. Of the "symbolic," Gallop notes its essential relation to the prior state of the "imaginary":

A mirror image can be understood as either a specular opposite (right vs. left) or as something identical. Lacan in fact situates opposites, rivalry, and aggressivity in identification; the adversary is simply one version of the alter ego. He terms the type of relation between the self and its mirror image (either as adversary or as identity) "imaginary." "The imaginary" (a noun for Lacan) is the realm where intersubjective structures are covered over by mirroring. Lacan's writings contain an implicit ethical imperative to break the mirror, an imperative to disrupt the imaginary in order to reach "the symbolic." One might say that "the symbolic"--which for Lacan is the register of language, social exchange, and radical intersubjectivity--would be the locus of dialogue. (59-60)

This notion of "mirroring" is suggestive for the study of the relation between tragic hero/melodramatic villain developed in Chapter Three. The general association of the "imaginary" with the prelinguistic infant also complements the discussion of tragic heroism in Chapter Two, in which melodrama alone can be seen to configure the aesthetic site wherein true adult dialogue may take place between the differently gendered spheres of discourse occupied by men and women.

¹³ Sylvia Wynter's concise overview of humanist discourse as a preconceptual context has proved valuable. In the latter half of her article, Wynter's specific interest is the function of humanism in the development of racism. My argument appropriates some of the aspects of this part of her article because, in my view, they apply to sexism as well. An examination of specific examples of early theological and humanist writings is beyond the scope of this study. The material presented is not intended to be comprehensive nor to indicate expertise with regard to humanist theoretical writings, but merely to establish, through

the expertise of others, the general conceptual parameters of the terms "humanism" and "protestantism" used in this study.

14 The words "man" and "Man" are considered by me to be gender specific, not as inherently including, but as explicitly excluding women. Consequently, where both genders are to be indicated, a form of the pronoun "s/he" will be used.

15 Reason, Wynter points out, defined eurocentrically and functioning from a classical/scientific foundation, became the universal measure of Sameness and Difference during the Renaissance. Any individual perceived to be lacking in reason to any degree became, to that degree, a lesser man. Wynter gives an example of the sexist and racist politics of this process: "The New World peoples were homunculi (little men) when compared to [European] man . . . ; as women to men/children to parents/monkeys to men. The proof of [their littleness] was that they lacked Letters and written monuments to their history" (35). In addition, like women, children, and monkeys, the native's "Lack of Reason excluded him from governing himself [sic]" (36). With regard to melodrama, Wynter's observation that groups targeted as inferior were considered to be "non-epic-owning" is especially relevant, for a similar politics can be seen in traditional criticism's representations of the class of melodrama's audiences as low and the aesthetic effect of the often central presence of women on stage as degraded. Wynter goes on to point out that the eurocentric view of New World peoples as lacking letters, as physiologically inferior, and as exhibiting irrational behaviour meant that, by nature, such peoples were consigned to the care of European men. For similar reasons, European women were seen as consigned, by nature, to the care of European men. Appropriately, as Eileen Krador points out, one of the initial steps in the women's movement in the nineteenth century was to make explicit the links between the position of women and that of black slaves in western society (1-2). It is my view that this notion of both (some) men and (all) women as "little men" needing the guidance of their betters informs many of the representations of melodrama and its "popular audience" found in most traditional criticism of melodrama.

¹⁶ In his discussion of madness in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Foucault refers to a commentator from the time:

Finally, neglecting an immense literature that stretches from Ophelia to the Lorelei, let us note only the great half-anthropological, half-cosmological analyses of Heinroth, which interpret madness as the manifestation in man of an obscure and aquatic element, a dark disorder, a moving chaos, the seed and death of all things, which opposes the mind's luminous and adult stability. (13)

It is important to note the association--and dismissal--here of female literary and folkloric figures with madness, as well as the images and elements of darkness, chaos, and water which most often traditionally connote aspects of the female body and psyche. While Foucault's study describes the many explicit associations made by medical men between the female body and psyche and madness--from the thirteenth-century figure of Folly and her attendant Vices designated by the pronoun "she" (Self-Love, Flattery, Forgetfulness, Sloth, Sensuality, Stupidity, and Indolence) (24) to the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century configurations of hysteria (143-144, 218)--the gender politics of these associations appears to remain unnoticed. In fact, the gendering of reason as both male and masculine and madness as female and feminine can be seen to be perpetuated in Foucault's study. The gendered complicity between Foucault's discourse and that of reason--not madness--illustrates the point I am about to make: that--from a feminist post-structuralist position--the feminine articulated by much post-structuralist discourse retains a version of humanist Man as its Subject in such a way as to articulate its pro-feminine gender politics in terms that render it complicitous with traditionalist pro-masculinism. This focus of critique has been taken up, for example, in the collection of articles, edited by Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, entitled Feminism and Foucault.

The terms "pro-feminine" and "pro-masculine" used in this study from this point forward are intended to indicate, in as succinct a manner as possible, the gender politics I see at work in a particular discourse. Distinction will be made in the text among "pro-masculine," indicating traditional (humanist) discourses; "pro-masculine feminine," indicating

discourses of the feminine having humanist Man as Subject (including, variously, much post-structuralist theory, protestantism, and much melodrama); and "pro-feminist feminine", indicating discourses of the feminine having Woman as Subject (some--including feminist melodrama and Anna Jameson's works--but not all feminist discourses, as we shall see, particularly in the discussion of the work of Martha Vicinus and Gabrielle Hyslop in Chapter One).

¹⁷ William Westfall defines the term protestant in the following three ways:

It can refer to a series of historical events that divided Western Christianity into two opposing camps--Protestants and Catholics. To a remarkable degree the history of the Protestant Reformation formed an important part of the collective memory of Ontario. . . People observed the rituals of the Reformation with devotion, and the division between Protestant and Catholic remained one of the primary facts of the religious and social life of the province well beyond the nineteenth century. Protestant is also used to describe a number of religious groups that traced their ancestry more or less directly to the original separation from Rome. The institutional history of the "denominations" (as they came to be called), especially the relationship between them, forms another major theme in th[is] study. Third and perhaps most important, the word refers to a rather amorphous body of religious, moral and social attitudes that provided a series of reference points for approaching a wide range of questions and issues--from wearing fashionable styles of dress and enjoying certain amusements to the role of the clergy in helping the individual achieve salvation and the place of God in contemporary events.

(12)

¹⁸ Westfall notes within protestantism "two quite distinct representations of the very nature of God and the world" (30). The first seems to pertain to humanism, the second to protestantism as articulated in much melodrama:

The first pattern of interpretation was based on a distinctive interpretation of "nature."

Its representation of religion was highly rational and systematic and appealed to the values of order and reason. The second pattern turned over the cultural coin and appealed to the other side of early nineteenth-century psychology--the feelings--by reworking the Bible into a religion of intense personal experience. From the story of the resurrection it drew the paramount doctrine that to be saved one must directly experience the saving grace of God. (30)

An observation Westfall makes earlier suggests that these two patterns may in fact be gendered:

The well-documented practice of dividing human nature into masculine and feminine spheres relied once again on the basic categories of the religious and the secular. Sex and religion were closely joined: man was material and practical, while woman was moral and spiritual; man had power, woman had taste; man was active, woman reflective; man was rational, woman intuitive. In the words of a popular moral guide to almost every conceivable aspect of Victorian life, man was "the creature of interest and ambition . . .

[sic] But a woman's whole life is the history of the affections. The heart is her world." The union of these secular and sacred elements in wedlock sanctified the family and transformed the home. . . . Home, in effect, was presented as a heaven on earth . . . [and] the movement from an external material environment to an internal spiritual one was seen as an everyday enactment of the future journey from life on this earth to "heaven itself . . .". (7-8)

These dual and gendered values are fundamental to most melodrama. In some, as we shall see, one sphere overrides the other: the masculine in Heavysege's Saul, the feminine in Cushing's Esther. For the purposes of this study the term protestantism with regard to melodrama signifies that primarily based on feelings. In the Upper Canada/Ontario case, Westfall traces the process of "Dissolving the Religion of Order" in the fourth chapter of his study, leaving that of the feelings triumphant until the middle of the century when, in 1856, Bishop John Strachan called for all groups to form a protestant alliance "to fight the Church of Rome and the secular society" (123).

¹⁹ Michael Booth provides the following quotation from the Illustrated London News of April 20, 1895 of a review by Clement Scott of a production of David Belasco's The Girl I Left Behind Me:

"In the very highest form of drama it would be difficult to find acting more tinged with inspiration than that of Miss Millward in the great act of the play. She is doomed to death. The miserable little encampment is surrounded by bloodthirsty foes. She has waited and watched with the strongest man. She has tended the sick, ailing, and dying, and now she hears that in a few minutes she will not be slain, but preserved for outrage. Then it is that she asks her father to blow her brains out sooner than encounter this savage horror. Why then do they complain of melodrama when melodrama gives an actress such a chance as this, and when melodrama shows all the women assembled in the theatre that women in the supreme moments of life can be as plucky as the best of men." (185-186)

I would argue that it is precisely melodrama's privileging of the actress and of the female spectator that provides the fundamental cause for critical complaint, then and now. As we shall see, with certain adjustments, Scott's pro-feminist feminine gendering of melodrama bears a certain similarity to the gender dynamics Anna Jameson finds at work in the representations of the life of Mary in medieval painting. Jameson's analysis is briefly outlined below and discussed in detail in the third section of Chapter One.

²⁰ Victorian medievalism is a well-documented phenomenon. But most commentaries on its elements tend to stress the centrality of chivalric and courtly themes and references, as I discovered at the 1990 MLA Convention panel on Medievalism. In ways that have important ramifications for the study of melodrama, Jameson's work outlines what I call in Chapter One an alternate medievalism.

²¹ For clarity, in the citations throughout this study Jameson's works will be referred to by abbreviations of their titles rather than by date of publication. The two most frequently referred to are Sacred and Legendary Art and Legends of the Madonna, noted as SLA and LM, respectively.

²² Jameson's works, while contributing ground-breaking feminist theory to British and European discourses on art and the sociocultural roles of women, participate in many aspects of the racist discursive politics of eurocentrism and humanist universalism pervasive at the time, and already mentioned in the note above in reference to Sylvia Wynter's article on humanism. Jameson's works, implicitly and explicitly, privilege the (white) British racial character and protestant Christianity as the highest examples of human civilisation. It should be clear that, despite my extensive references to her writings, I do not intend to condone or advance these policies. I contend, though, that even while acknowledging the various historical, social, and cultural delimitations operative in Jameson's studies, her work can be seen, nonetheless, as a profound and deeply significant contribution to theory written in English about (white) women within a specifically European and North American context.

²³ Margaret Masson observes of early eighteenth-century New England Puritans:
 [they] were constrained from making a complete separation between the sexes because they used the norms for the female roles of bride and wife to describe the role of the regenerate Christian in relation to God. This regenerate status . . . was the goal for sincere Puritans of both sexes. It followed, then, that men as well as women who believed themselves regenerate would be expected to behave toward God like brides and wives. If the norms for these women's roles were strikingly different from those dictated to men as bridegrooms and husbands, Puritan preaching would require that males change their behavior in fundamental ways when they adopted the regenerate posture. Thus, the Puritans would have to believe that nothing in the innate personalities of each sex prevented them, in certain specified circumstances, from adopting the behavior of the other. (305)

Melodrama's (re)articulation of this dynamic in terms of a pragmatic morality may perhaps be seen to signify a breakdown between the seemingly absolute boundaries between men's everyday masculine roles and the feminine posture of the regenerate Christian.

²⁴ The adjectival designation, "Aristotelian," is intended to indicate a certain general configuration of dramaturgy ostensibly derived by traditional criticism from that philosopher's Poetics and Rhetoric. As Tracy C. Davis and Sue-Ellen Case have noted, this aesthetic can be seen to empower, and to be empowered by, the pro-masculine secular humanist assumptions, interests, and values at work in much traditional criticism concerned with standards for performances and dramatic texts. Certain specific elements found in Aristotle's works often are featured in much traditional criticism of melodrama, especially the adherence to the explicit emphasis seen in the Poetics concerning the superiority of tragic emplotment as a formulation of human nature, an emplotment--I would suggest--explicitly critiqued in melodrama. In addition, Aristotle's apparent dismissal of spectacle especially is seen to confirm that melodrama, in which spectacle frequently is vital, fails as dramatic art. Terms found in the Poetics describing the key features of tragic dramaturgy (conflict, complication, recognition, reversal, resolution) frequently are used in much traditional criticism usually to show, implicitly or explicitly, melodrama's failure on each and every point. Part of the general legacy of Aristotle's works can be found in the ubiquitous presence in much traditional criticism of the assumptions, interests, and values inscribed by such terms as unity, coherence, and universality. Perhaps the most influential amendment to the Aristotelian aesthetic informing much traditional criticism concerned with melodrama has been post-Romantic emphasis on character psychology as the key structuring principle of tragic emplotment. The dynamic of the conscious mind--rather than fate, for example--thus becomes the motive determining the tragic hero's actions (see Byron's Cain, for example). Hence the Aristotelian aesthetic found in much traditional criticism of melodrama and referred to throughout this study is actually a hybrid blend of classical concepts of emplotment and post-Romantic concepts of characterisation, both of which, as we shall see, are antithetical to melodrama.

Although often represented as tragedy's Other, melodrama does not displace comedy's relation to tragedy. In Aristotelian aesthetics, generally speaking, comedy is considered to have the same purpose as tragedy (to delight and instruct) and the same set of values, but to articulate its purpose and values in

an opposing mode. Melodrama's mode often is seen to be similar to tragedy's. The relation between melodrama and tragedy in most traditional criticism, then, is seen to be that of the same to the same; most often tragedy is seen to succeed and melodrama to fail in achieving the same aesthetic goals.

²⁵ Several English-Canadian poetic verse dramas, some of considerable length and complexity, were written in the last century, representing various religious and philosophical themes. Two notable examples are John Henry Brown's "A Mad Philosopher" (1892) and George Arthur Hammond's Jassoket and Anemon (1896). Lampman's poem has been chosen because the scriptural story is the central thematic and structural device. In addition, it represents an aspect of the Saul and David story with which Heavysege does not deal and, hence, it provides opportunities for enlightening comparisons with the earlier text.

Chapter 1

Criticism, Resistance, and Melodrama

The first two sections of this chapter examine in detail how the humanist assumptions and interests found in much traditional criticism of melodrama promote a pro-masculine gender politics. The third and final section shows how the assumptions and interests at work in melodrama, when placed in the context of nineteenth-century protestantism, differ from those of traditional criticism and substantiate an alternative analysis of melodrama as a discourse of the feminine. The following brief introduction provides an outline of one possible relationship between humanism, as interpreted in the Introduction, and much traditional criticism.

Critical consideration of melodrama in an academic context is a relatively recent development.¹ The first studies to look extensively at melodrama as a theatrical and literary form were written in the 1940s and '50s. A second generation of studies expanded this new critical direction in the 1960s and '70s.² For the purposes of this study, critical work on melodrama is

considered to include two kinds: theatre histories and literary analyses. Theatre histories tend to make use of traditional historical methodologies and to present fact-based accounts of the theatrical activity of a period.³ Literary analyses, on the other hand, mainly focus on the principles of aesthetics and on the interpretation of dramatic texts as literary objects. The work of these two kinds of criticism overlaps to the extent that they both tend to rely upon what I have called in the Introduction an Aristotelian standard measure of aesthetic worth.

Because of Man's centrality in humanism, much traditional criticism to date considers the (usually implicitly male) author central to the aesthetic product and the key to its meaning and worth.⁴ These two main traditional approaches to melodrama tend to take for granted that the (usually implicitly male) playwright is working within an Aristotelian aesthetic, and that this is evident in his work. Therefore if traditional criticism is to find the playwright a "genius" and his works "masterpieces," evidence of an Aristotelian aesthetic must be present. Paradoxically, much traditional criticism also seems to demand that the playwright, through his works (as performance or text), must demonstrate originality and individuality

(Preziosi 2). Evidence of these qualities is often determined, in effect, by measuring the playwright as (usually implicitly male) author against what we might call the standard of Man as ideal Author. The playwright, as an entity distilled from his work alone or as a product of biobibliography, is seen to be the Subject of his own work insofar as much traditional criticism sees the author configured therein as a unique representation of Man. The conflation of the playwright and his work thus affirms, paradoxically, both the work's individuality and its universality. Further, since much traditional criticism of drama locates its Aristotelian ideal in tragedy as the best representation of Man, the degree of the playwright's originality and individuality is measured according to whether or not he configures a unique representation of Man within the parameters of tragic dramaturgy. Critical measurement of the extent of conformity in the playwright's work to these parameters determines, in essence, its aesthetic success or failure. Thus originality and individuality in the playwright's work, far from being assessed on the basis of difference, is in fact assessed on the basis of sameness, of "new" ways to articulate the accepted aesthetic tradition.

Unlike the playwrights named to the canon as exemplary practitioners and advocates of humanist aesthetic concepts and values, however, melodramatists are treated in most traditional criticism as if they were nameless. This treatment follows from the fact that such criticism tends to find (rightly) that the presence of the Aristotelian ideal of Man in melodramatic dramaturgy is almost non-existent.⁵ In general, this kind of criticism's interest in melodrama recognises the fact that nineteenth-century melodrama exhibits a dramaturgy that is primarily non-classical (non-tragic) in its aesthetic parameters and tends to derive its values from quite another conceptual context. But rather than seek merit in these different concepts and values, what I have been calling traditional criticism tends to place them in a hierarchical relation to Aristotelian concepts and values--thereby implicitly recognising, I will suggest, the different gendering of tragedy and melodrama as well. Such criticism's pro-masculine politics, by articulating drama in terms of the same, I would argue, necessarily defines melodrama as a feminized Other, belonging on the outer edge of the Western canonical tradition of dramaturgy at best.⁶

The means by which melodrama's difference has been thus minimised or dissolved altogether has changed slightly in methodology over time. The first generation of theatre histories often provides factual chronicles of various theatrical activities concerning the production and performance of melodrama, while the second generation tends towards a smooth narrative which develops a tightly-argued causal, explanatory theme. Much first-generation criticism of melodrama as a literary object develops a generalised psychology of the genre. Much second-generation criticism adapts this approach either to a more explicitly theoretical framework or to readings of specific dramatic texts, or both. Despite the varied approaches, each tends to conclude that melodrama's non-conformity to the Aristotelian aesthetic is only superficial and that, indeed, melodrama aspires towards that ideal in vain. Because of its framework of humanist concepts and values, most traditional criticism of melodrama fails to identify melodrama's protestant framework.⁷ In order to provide a detailed analysis of the gendered relations of domination involved here, the first two sections of this chapter trace key assumptions and interests found in traditional criticism's two main approaches to melodrama.

The first section deals with theatre histories. The work of Allardyce Nicoll first marshalled a vast quantity of documentary detail into a chronology of theatrical activity in nineteenth-century England, providing a starting point for later studies such as Michael Booth's. In establishing a relation between lower social classes and melodrama, many theatre histories tend to see melodrama's difference as the failed conformist product of a socio-historically produced aesthetic vacuum, ostensibly demonstrating that the critical marginalisation of melodrama has been and will continue to be a justified one. The second part of this chapter focuses on literary analyses of melodrama. Eric Bentley's first-generation study presents an ahistorical psychological framework within which melodrama is defined as all drama's essential Other. Both Bentley's and Robert Heilman's works rely, in fact, upon a psychology of consciousness, as we shall see. A more recent literary analysis is that of Peter Brooks which has re-oriented and expanded the psychological parameters of Bentley's and Heilman's work and combined them with many of the socio-historical features of theatre history. Brooks's influential work suggests that melodrama's aesthetic peculiarities should not be seen as the failure to

attain the past's formal purity but rather as an early attempt at the future themes of modernism, a notion which will be returned to in Chapter Four. The third part of the Chapter sets forth new groundwork for establishing that melodrama is a differently conceptualized and gendered aesthetic form, as substantiated by an analysis of Anna Jameson's works.

I

melodrama, like the poor, will no doubt
always be with us (Nicol 1966, 100)

Theatre histories examining English, French, and American forms of melodrama tend to present an extensive array of documentary evidence relevant to theatrical activity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In keeping with an adherence to the empiricist methodologies of traditional history,⁸ theatrical activity is considered in many theatre histories to be delimited by specific political and economic factors,⁹ especially insofar as these factors are seen to determine the composition of a socio-historically unique audience. Indeed, the evidence most frequently presented as particularly relevant to the theatre history of melodrama is that which deals with audience composition and behaviour. The audience is frequently seen as capable of

determining the kind of theatrical activity that characterises any given period.¹⁰ Many theatre histories focus on the democratic movements in the United States and France as the most important feature of the last quarter of the eighteenth century with regard to audience formation. The argument is frequently advanced, therefore, that the composition of the audience of the day reflects political and economic democratization processes. Consequently, the audience with the power to influence dramatic writing during this period is considered to be populated by the classes favoured by these processes. Melodrama, then, is presented most often as a unique product of, and as subject to, the rise and/or fall in power of the popular audience. Democratization has often been presented, then, as the most significant factor leading to the collapse of traditional dramatic genres and the subsequent rise of melodrama as the dominant theatrical form of the time.

The alignment of a crumbling aristocratic audience with the collapse of traditionally privileged genres--specifically the demise of tragedy--and that of the rising popular audience with melodrama provide that structural and conceptual bridge between historical and aesthetic discourses. The collapse of traditional

genre distinctions, many theatre histories find, culminates in the emergence of melodrama as a hybrid, and then conglomerate, theatrical form. Indeed, the term melodrama itself is considered to denote a new dramaturgical concept, which in turn indicates the new conditions dominating mainstream theatre. Most often Rousseau is credited with first using the term "mélodrame" in 1774 or 1775 to describe a new dramatic form, which theatre histories accept as providing the structural basis for the nineteenth-century genre (Brooks 217).¹¹ Rousseau has been cited as claiming that in his Pygmalion he "had created a new genre midway between simple declamation" and opera (Smith 2).

By the turn of the century in England, however, the term "melodrama" is seen to indicate any mixture of forms of dramatic and musical representation (Tetzeli von Rosador 1977, 93).¹² In addition, English and American kinds of melodrama are seen as beginning to emerge as distinct variations in the 1790s (Booth 13; Grimsted 2). Theatre histories consistently concur that all forms of melodrama developed over this twenty-five year period in Europe, England, and the United States contain basic structural similarities (Rahill xiii-xviii). Hence, the influence of democratic revolution on audience composition and behaviour is

presented in most theatre histories as explaining both the moment of melodrama's emergence, its widespread presence, and its specific theatrical form (Bargainnier 730).

Much evidence is brought forward to establish this connection between changes seen in dramaturgy and changes seen in audience formation. René-Charles Guilbert de Pixierécourt¹³ (1773-1844), playwright of the Parisian Boulevard theatres, is credited in most theatre histories with inventing the standard formula for nineteenth-century melodrama (Brooks xii; Smith 3; Hyslop 65), for he "declared that he wrote plays for those who could not read, and developed a melodramatic artistry aimed entirely at an unlettered populace" (Booth 44-45; see too Hyslop 65; Brooks 89; Rahill 20). Although Frank Rahill's study suggests that Pixierécourt's dramaturgy demonstrates that, to some degree, the playwright chose and cultivated such an audience, most theatre histories attribute the collapse of genre distinctions, not to authorial choice, but to "mob rule" of the theatres (Smith 17; Nicoll 1966, 20).¹⁴ The predominant view that melodrama was caused by the impact of an ignorant, illiterate "mob" on a cultural discourse--theatrical production and performance--vacated by a deposed aristocracy educated

in the aesthetics of the Aristotelian tradition is common to theatre historical descriptions of French, English, and American melodrama.

The following analysis of theatre history's problematic attempts to align the idea of the "mob" with one devalued class or another--and thereby to disarm and control it--is intended, ultimately, to demonstrate that, despite being negatively configured as feminized, the idea of the "mob" alternatively can be seen--from a post-structuralist position--to constitute a pro-feminine place of resistance because of its truly effective disruption of the theatre historical discourse on melodrama.

Three general positions with regard to the impact which democratization and the popular audience are considered to have had on aesthetics can be discerned in this body of theatre historical criticism concerned with melodrama. For the purposes of this study, these positions have been labelled "conservative," "liberal," and "leftist." These categories are quite general, however, and a single historian's argument may occupy more than one category, as we shall see in David Grimsted's work particularly. What I am calling the "conservative" position tends to undermine any alignment of true aesthetic power with a

lower-class popular audience by arguing for the resurgence of an *élite* upper-middle-class, even aristocratic, audience in the latter half of the century. The "liberal" position tends to allow the genuine--if unfortunate--aesthetic empowerment of a lower-class popular audience, seeing its values as conforming essentially to middle-class norms. The "leftist" position tends to consider melodrama mainly as a middle-class aesthetic, and aligns itself with the concerns of a specifically working-class popular audience oppressed by the middle-class values of melodrama. Both the liberal and the leftist positions, in their equation of melodrama with middle-class aesthetic mediocrity, paradoxically effectively marginalise melodrama as a discourse, even while purporting to describe its exercise of power. For most conservative and some liberal positions, melodrama constitutes merely a manifestation of a necessarily inferior earlier period which precedes a later period of greatness, in this case, modernism.

Regardless of variations in the way theatre histories constitute the relation between democratization and the advent of a popular audience and the impact of this relation on aesthetics, each of these positions articulates the humanist rhetorical

strategies shared by what I have called traditional criticism. Using a different--feminist--focus, each position's more or less implicit imposition of hierarchical power relations can be seen to articulate a gender politics as well. On the one hand, the devalued class/aesthetic--and the audience it constitutes/entertains--is feminized (by which I mean here, as always, discursively disempowered) and the privileged class/aesthetic--and the audience it constitutes/entertains--retains its pro-masculine place of privilege. As we shall see, this gender politics of classism and aestheticism is also aligned with genre: the dramaturgical centrality of a female character in much melodrama, in the first case, and that of a male character in much tragedy, in the second case. Conservative attempts will be considered here first because they, along with the leftist positions, seem to have been most influential. The liberal position is in many ways the most unstable of the theatre historical treatments of melodrama.

Conservative theatre histories such as Nicoll's or Booth's can be seen to present the position that democratization--and the "lower" social groups it ostensibly privileged--was effectively checked by mid-century and its power nullified by the emergence of a

pre-modernist dramaturgy. This position articulates humanist power relations, as described in the Introduction: that a group of men of lesser rational capacity, comprising in this case melodramatists, popular audiences, and the democratic "mob" generally, can prevail--be genuinely empowered--either in class politics or in aesthetics is a reversal of the natural order of things. Hence the rhetorical strategies of conservative theatre histories show, first, that such melodramatists, audiences, and classes somehow deserve to be disenfranchised and, second, that revolutionary democratization was, therefore, curtailed and its chaos ordered and made to conform politically and aesthetically to upper-middle and aristocratic class values. Democratic revolution is implicitly represented as having failed because of the (natural and thus inevitable) reassertion of upper-class empowerment.

The revolutionary classes seen to constitute the popular audience are narrowly defined in conservative theatre histories as the new and impoverished working classes of the Industrial Revolution. Booth observes that audiences "lived very much in the world of factory, slum, dirty crowded streets, hunger, and cold. Dramatists were quick to

offer them . . . thrills and happy endings" (120). Thus traditional theatre history's concept of Man as the Subject of his works locates a lesser class of Man as the Subject of melodrama near the lowest end (from an élitist position) of both human nature and aesthetic discourse. Consequently, melodrama is considered not to be in the same theatrical class as the canonical Aristotelian genres, but rather to be merely a marginal escapist entertainment structured by, about, and for, these (eventually and inevitably) disempowered masses.¹⁵

Conservative theatre histories suggest further that, just as the revolutionary social power of the popular audience evaporates as industrialization progresses, melodrama loses discursive power as well. Indeed, the time span in which the popular audience's power is considered to be most in evidence is rather narrowly circumscribed. Most theatre histories refer to the general idea of a "heroic" melodrama, of a "classic" period, and, ultimately, of melodrama's early decadence and death as a specific, dominant theatrical form, with Brooks being the first to assign and define these categories explicitly. Whether the plays are mainly part of a French, English, or an American repertoire, theatre histories generally agree that

"heroic" melodrama and the power of the popular audience dominated theatres only between 1800 and 1830 in France and 1800 and 1850 in England and the United States.

This relatively narrow time frame notwithstanding, however, more liberal theatre histories of English melodrama trace manifestations of "heroic" melodrama until, and Brooks sees this as a revival of the "classically" melodramatic (108), the advent in London of the Independent Theatre Society in the 1890s and the "robust" melodrama of Ibsen (Nicoll 1959, 60-61). Also, histories of American theatre see the melodrama of the 1880s and the work of James A. Herne, for example, in the same progressive context (Eaton 20-21). The implicit aim of the more extended liberal genealogies is to establish a connection, based on middle-class values, between theatrical forms of the mid-eighteenth and late-nineteenth centuries, and thus to trace an aesthetic continuity between neo-classical and modernist theatrical forms--undermining melodrama's specificity in the process. Conservative theatre histories, on the other hand, argue that modernism constitutes a break from, rather than a continuity with, the "classic" period of melodrama.¹⁶

Booth's study, apparently following Nicoll's documentation, finds social and material causes for what is seen as a distinct movement away from melodrama in dramatic writing toward the end of the century in England. Like Nicoll's, Booth's work notes a rise of realist domestic drama and a decline of "heroic" melodrama in London in the second half of the century and suggests that the cause may be found both in the building of smaller West End theatres in the 1860s and in the dissolution of the legal distinction between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" repertoire in 1843 (163-164).¹⁷ These smaller theatres, considered by both Nicoll and Booth to be producing a more sophisticated (that is, a recognisably Aristotelian) form of drama, are represented as a major factor in luring a higher (classically educated) class of audience back to the theatre.¹⁸

With regard to ostensible changes in audience, Nicoll's study was the first to attempt to show that the middle and aristocratic classes--and hence their aesthetic concepts and values--were absent from the theatres during melodrama's "classic" period (1959, 9-10). Indeed, Nicoll's study finds the improvement it sees in drama in England from the mid-century mark to be an effect of the patronage of Queen Victoria, seen

as single-handedly legitimising theatre-going for propriety-conscious upper and middle classes (1959, 5-10). Nicoll also observes that the theatre building spree of 1860-1870 stemmed from improved transportation, making West End theatres available to suburban middle classes for the first time.¹⁹ Further, the more localized Music Halls are seen to offer the form of entertainment ultimately preferred by the working classes (1959, 28-29). In Nicoll's work, then, the argument is made that a new upper middle-class audience emerged in tandem with repertoires and theatres that reflected their taste and that the increased theatre-going of this audience displaced the popular audience, along with its repertoire and theatres. The ouster of the popular audience both from its apparent position as arbiter of taste and from proper theatres thus is seen in Nicoll's and Booth's studies to signal the death of melodrama as a mainstream theatrical form and the end of the lower classes' cultural reign.²⁰

But while Nicoll's and Booth's studies generally are considered to be of central importance in theatre histories concerned with melodrama, their work has not gone uncontested. It often seems to be the case, however, that disagreement with their theories

tends to focus on relatively superficial aspects of interpretation only and not to identify or question to any significant degree the interests informing their critical methodologies. Clive Barker's essay on melodrama, for example, argues from a leftist position against Nicoll's and Booth's work with regard to the audience's class content, but he does not attack their presentation of the class politics of melodrama in England generally. Barker's essay suggests that the establishment of a causal connection in these studies between theatrical change and a rather sudden advent of an upper middle-class audience in the latter half of the century is based on a mistaken reading of the historical evidence. Barker's revised reading finds that any change is only one of degree and can be attributed not to the sudden emergence of a middle-class audience, but rather to its solidification as a cultural, social, and political power in industrialised England.

Barker's study seeks to define more precisely the class content of the popular audience and thereby to redefine its relationship with theatrical production and performance of the period. Barker's argument seeks to identify a specifically working-class popular audience and this endeavour has two consequences:

first, this audience is dissociated from melodrama, considered here to be predominantly a middle-class genre, and, second, working-class audiences are shown to appreciate and support traditional (Shakespearean) aesthetic concepts and values (22-23). Barker's work posits, instead, that the actual class conflict took place between the licensed middle-class Patents and Minors on one hand and the illegal working-class "Saloon" theatres on the other (20), and was based mainly on economic rather than dramaturgical grounds (17).²¹ Thus Barker's leftist study to some extent shares the conservative position that the theatre historical period dominated by melodrama ended with the restoration of an aesthetically empowered class. In Barker's argument, however, this group is constituted by the middle classes rather than by an upper class élite. Like the liberal position, Barker's study also suggests that in fact melodrama, precisely because of its middle-class values, does not constitute an aesthetic disruption of any significance.

Barker's leftist revisionist articulation of a humanist position concerning the empirical methodology and aesthetics shared by most theatre histories of melodrama addresses, to a limited extent, some of the more problematic features of theatre historical

approaches to melodrama. Regardless of the disagreement evident in these histories, there is virtually no disagreement at all that, for whatever reasons, melodrama is to be dismissed as an aesthetic form. This agreement on result in the face of disagreements in argument effectively demonstrates that pre-existing concepts and values, informing both historical and aesthetic discourses, serve to determine the selection and interpretation of the available documentation.

The dismissal of melodrama predicated on the assumed existence of a homogeneous and socio-historically unique audience, for example, is virtually unaffected by the disagreement as to what group, exactly, populated this audience. Melodrama is marginalised regardless of--even despite--the particulars of audience demographics. Barker's work suggests that the classes occupying the theatres during the first half of the nineteenth century are not so easily categorized as Nicoll's and Booth's studies, among others, seem to imply. Indeed, the popular audience, the so-called lower-class "mob," credited in theatre histories generally with bringing melodrama into existence, seems actually to have been constituted to some degree by every class, if we pool the evidence

of most of the studies. Taken collectively, most theatre historical studies generally serve to verify--perhaps unintentionally--that melodrama, in all its forms, viewed by a large and varied audience, was being performed in and written for a great number of different kinds of theatrical venue in France, England, and the United States (and Canada) throughout the century. The view that melodrama declined at the mid-century point thus can no longer be attributed unproblematically to the loss of power of a uniquely popular, that is, lower- and/or working-class audience, for the actual audience seems not to have been composed of a single, increasingly disenfranchised class as conservative studies, particularly, tend to suggest. Class analysis, which seems both to require and to presuppose clear lines of social and cultural demarcation between groups thus shows itself to be a distinctly problematic approach to melodrama.

David Grimsted's work, which focuses on American theatre history, also participates in the discipline's problematic search for causal explanations for the presence of melodrama. In its early chapters Grimsted's study contains documentary evidence similar in scope to Nicoll's and in the final two chapters he suggests an overarching conceptual framework similar to

Booth's. In the first part, the argument is distinctly liberal in its examination of popular influence, but the second part is just as distinctly conservative. Seeming to empower American melodrama, Grimsted's general argument stems from the liberal view that it should be studied in conjunction with cultural and intellectual history (xvi). But in the early part of his study, Grimsted finds that the historical evidence of wholesale democratization in the United States in the first half of the century can be seen to support only what are called popular theatrical forms. Thus the liberal aim of Grimsted's social history methodology immediately is placed in conflict with the implicit conservatism of his traditional aesthetic concepts and values, which represent melodrama as a disenfranchised discourse.

Even when a theatre historical study endeavours to pay close attention to melodrama as an aesthetic text, as Grimsted's does, the text of melodrama can be seen to resist appropriation by traditional aesthetic analysis and to be marginalised in terms similar to those used to describe the popular audience. In most theatre histories, in fact, the concepts and values of Aristotelian aesthetics effectively--if implicitly--dominate historical analysis. Consequently, the

historical, social, cultural, and intellectual factors, which seem to supply a liberal empowerment of the popular audience in early nineteenth-century American theatre history, are displaced. Sharing in a conservative critical approach to traditional aesthetics, Grimsted's work represents melodrama as "that most banal of dramatic forms" (xv), as entirely without literary value, and as of interest only as a socio-historical phenomenon of the first half of the nineteenth century.²² In fact it is precisely the representation of the aesthetic poverty of melodrama in Grimsted's work that undermines the value of the socio-historical factors. Humanist assumptions and interests, informing the aesthetics of most theatre histories, inevitably assess the aesthetic worth of both melodrama and its audience's response negatively, even in the most determined of apologetics.

While Booth's and Grimsted's book-length studies generally elaborate Nicoll's conservative arguments with regard to the probable constitution and function of melodrama's popular audience, more recent liberal and leftist theatre historical studies tend to develop Barker's position. Many of these article-length studies dealing with melodrama assume that the "mob" in the theatres of the day was already

essentially middle class in its values, if not in its manners. These histories go beyond the descriptive summaries of melodrama's typical plot and characters given in Nicoll's, Booth's, and Grimsted's work. Instead, they look at what Tetzeli von Rosador has called the "ideology of melodrama," seen to be conveyed mainly in melodrama's moral themes, as an articulation of specifically middle-class values (1977, 89). Often such studies also consider melodrama to be still active in the form of television and film soap and horse operas. This seeming continuity itself is taken as conclusive evidence that melodrama always has been a discourse of the middle classes. The leftist approach presents the socio-historical argument that the middle, not the lower, classes emerged empowered toward the close of the French revolutionary period, and that the oppression of the working classes is a consequence of this counter-revolutionary phenomenon.

Hence conservative arguments such as Nicoll's regarding melodrama's revolutionary, if temporary, impact on traditional genre distinctions are argued to be problematic. Most recent leftist theatre histories view melodrama's moral values specifically as reactionary, and counter to true democratization. In her analysis of the class and gender politics of

Pixerécourt's plays, Gabrielle Hyslop sees his prolific production of melodramas as meeting the need "to re-establish and maintain law and order" in the midst of an era of great social upheaval (64). Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador also considers the melodrama of the period as a counter-revolutionary "safety-valve." He argues that, through "this corrupted version of the theory of the legislating artist and arts," melodrama led to a "lasting reconciliation of the spectator to social injustice" (1977, 112). In this view, the oppressive discursive practices of the aristocracy have simply been replaced by the similarly oppressive discursive practices of the middle classes. The impact of the volatile "mob" on dramatic writing of the time, then, is seen in these works as having forced the dramatist to become an influence on behalf of the emerging new rulers, the middle classes, in an effort to stabilize society in relations of domination advantageous to these classes. A dramatist like Pixérécourt, then, may speak the language of an illiterate peasant/working class "mob," only so that he may then inculcate essentially middle-class values and thus ensure the participation of the lower classes in their own oppression.

From a liberal point of view, however, Brooks's study interprets the middle-class moral values attributed to melodrama as a psychological framework needed by all classes in a disintegrating society: "Melodrama starts from and expresses the anxiety brought by a frightening new world in which the traditional patterns of moral order no longer provide the necessary social glue" (20). Far from being a radically democratic venue (melodrama as theatre "of the people"), melodrama is seen in leftist theatre histories as a social palliative (melodrama as theatre "for the people") (Hyslop 75). Here, the perceived goal of melodrama is to turn the lower/working classes away from the struggle for liberty. By generating a nostalgia for values reminiscent of feudalism, the leftist theatre historical approach suggests, melodrama allows the middle classes to replace the aristocracy, while at the same time maintaining comparable relations of domination over the lower classes (Booth 121-123; Brooks 44; Hyslop 75).

The selection and arrangement of documentary data in theatre historical studies structures, and is structured by, that humanist conceptual framework as outlined in the Introduction. And these pre-conceived notions are likely inevitable for, as Donald Preziosi,

among others, has pointed out, "there is no history which is not fictive or not ideologically invested" (22). Specifically, the "ideological investment" implicit and explicit in the rhetorical strategies of all three theatre historical positions lies in the privileging of Aristotelian aesthetics and the humanist power relations it articulates.

The conservatism of Nicoll's, Booth's, and Grimsted's works lies, in effect, in the implicit conviction that the democratization of the theatre resulted in an audience comprised of lesser men. These lesser men constitute the (deservedly) anonymous groups of melodramatists and their audiences. The aesthetic poverty (measured on an Aristotelian scale of standard values) of their favourite theatrical form is taken to prove this argument to be true. Melodrama, many of these studies essentially imply, provides evidence that--in defiance of their attempts to affix class labels--the theatre of this time was dominated by those occupying the lower end of the social scale established by the naturally-caused distribution of degrees of reason between groups of men. Hence, it is necessary for Grimsted's, Booth's, and Nicoll's works to bring forward extensive evidence to show that those better men who judged theatre--the theatre reviewers--were

bitterly critical of the theatre of the time (Tetzeli von Rosador; Grimsted; Nicoll),²³ and further, that still better men (those from the upper middle and aristocratic classes) stayed away completely.

Of natural necessity, groups of men possessing lesser degrees of reason are deemed to occupy what I earlier called more chaotic, feminized places-- feminized because their defining characteristics, and thus the rationale for their discursive disempowerment, are drawn from assumptions about female/feminine nature. These places are marked by lack of decorum in manners and taste, by the preference for intuition over explanation, emotion over argument, morality over psychology, the everyday over the universal, and heroines over heroes (female central characters over male ones), especially. In the late eighteenth century in France and the United States, the disordered condition of both politics and aesthetics is seen as having expanded to revolutionary dimensions. Consequently, as we have seen, most theatre histories suggest that the lower classes invaded the orderly place of neo-classical theatre and made it the place of some of the most chaotic theatrical events documented to date. Several elements recorded in documentary evidence in Nicoll's, Booth's, and Grimsted's work

especially validate the association of melodrama and its audience with chaos and--as we shall see--a specifically feminized aesthetic position.

First, in many cases the authorial ownership of texts cannot be assigned unproblematically to any one playwright, for wholesale translating, copying, and formulaic reworking of plays was endemic in the theatrical enterprises of France, England, and the United States at this time (see Stephens). Because individual authorship is a central tenet of traditional humanist criticism, this fact alone justifies such criticism in its immediate dismissal of any sustained consideration of the melodramatist as Author, as uniquely representing humanist Man's genius. Further, Nicoll's study notes that casting and rehearsal methods fragmented productions, and that only after the middle of the century do "we begin to encounter the directorial principle and, with it, the conception of a unified performance" (1959, 5).²⁴ The chaotic condition of the text is considered to be amplified, then, by the chaos in staging. But most conspicuous in most theatre historical arguments is the documentary evidence put forward regarding the behaviour of the audience itself. The characteristic presence in the theatre of the day of food, noise, stink, direct

interference with the performance, the presence of women nursing infants, prostitutes, blacks, and apprentices all are summoned in most theatre histories to demonstrate that melodrama was the theatre of the mob.²⁵ The mob's delineation as a feminized group--as it might be interpreted from a feminist approach--here reveals the gender politics at work in much traditional theatre history.

Nicoll's, Booth's, and Grimsted's arguments imply, moreover, that melodrama's aesthetic peculiarities arose from the illiterate popular audience's imperfect understanding of humanist aesthetic requirements for theatrical production. This incapacity attributed to the popular audience further indicates--as I shall argue--the gender politics of feminization implicitly at work in the descriptions of both audience and genre. This imperfect understanding is seen to be evident, for example, in melodrama's dramaturgical combination of some Aristotelian elements with other extra-dramatic aspects taken from popular culture. These aspects, as Grimsted's tirade (see Note 20 above) and Hyslop's argument point out, are associated with the emphasis in melodrama on moral themes which are almost exclusively associated in much

theatre historical work with the attributes and actions of a female central character.

Of especial interest to many theatre histories is the increased demands these themes are seen to have made on the prominence of stage machinery and elaborate performance technique. In turn, the position is taken that the moral demands which the popular audience brought to the theatre required a dramaturgy almost entirely given over to both spectacular effect and female presence (Tetzeli von Rosador 1979, 112). But spectacle, one of the elements of drama least prized in Aristotle's Poetics and the aesthetics ostensibly derived from this treatise, has been frequently targeted as pointing to the elementary level of comprehension, low taste and, hence, class of audiences. For many theatre historical studies, therefore, melodrama moves beyond the pale of Aristotelian aesthetic standards, but not beyond the discursive control of a negatively judging humanism.

Indeed, it is an important part of the humanist theatre historical project to establish a naturally caused, all-inclusive, aesthetic genealogy of theatrical forms. In order to do this (despite what the present study intends to show to be its fundamental difference) melodrama is given importance, in liberal

and conservative views, not primarily for what it is but for what it becomes. As with Ibsen's domestic drama, Strindberg's problem play, Shaw's drama of ideas, or even as Wilde's society comedies, it is suggested that melodrama emerged transformed, with its chaff of spectacle and explicit moral conventions removed, into the ordered, "authored" repose of a newly traditional aesthetics, reconfiguring the feminine as an emergent pro-masculine modernism at the other end of the nineteenth century. And the newer, smaller theatres in Paris, London, and New York, with their impoverished social chaff removed to cabarets, music halls, and to burlesque and vaudeville theatres, are seen as newly occupied by an orderly, discriminating, well-to-do upper-middle-class audience.²⁶

But this progressive, yet polarized, genealogy is consistent not only with Nicoll's, Booth's, and Grimsted's identification of melodrama mainly as the theatre of a poor, stymied, and disenfranchised populace which eventually gives way to an élitist dramaturgy. Much of the leftist aspect of the work of Barker, Brooks, Tetzeli von Rosador, and Hyslop also traces a conservative aesthetic operating consistently from neo-classical through to modernist dramaturgy. However, the leftist view suggests that this

conservatism is manifest in melodrama less as a structural presence and more as part of the oppressive moral themes of the middle classes, making it a "'drama of reassurance'" aimed at the lower/working classes (Goodlad, qtd. in Hyslop 75). In addition, Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador's work provides an example of how leftist criticism's view of melodrama's oppressive functioning implicitly connects this functioning with values consistent with protestantism: "By demonstrating both the equality of all men in suffering and the timeless sameness of human nature, independent of birth or class, melodrama reconciles the spectator to his lot, social or otherwise, thus keeping the social system intact" (1977 113). Far from being a discourse of resistance (let alone of the ultimate triumph of the sacred), it is represented here as entirely supportive of hegemonic power relations, largely because of its moral and spiritual (pro-masculine feminine) values. In attempting to bring melodrama under humanist aesthetic control, theatre historical apologetics do not tend to empower or raise the worth of melodrama as an aesthetic discourse. On the contrary, the implicitly gendered power relations currently operative between much melodrama and much theatre history tend to maintain the dominance of pro-masculine humanist

aesthetic values. Nevertheless, I would argue that the relations of domination between them, specifically with regard to the problematics of class analysis as a theatre historical methodology, also show the great degree to which pro-masculine feminine rhetorical strategies continue to effect resistance.

II

If . . . we take the most rudimentary form of melodrama, the popular Victorian variety, what do we find but the most crass of immature fantasies? (Bentley 217)

Whether discussing the psychological function or aesthetic merit of melodrama and tragedy as genres, as sets of themes, or as defined by their protagonists, critical rhetorical strategies have also worked consistently to privilege humanist values. As a result, melodrama is appropriated and reconfigured for the purposes of this one discourse. Declaring that "[m]elodrama is not a special or marginal kind of drama, let alone an eccentric or decadent one; it is drama in its elemental form; it is the quintessence of drama" (216), Eric Bentley outlines the strategy whereby melodrama's potentially disruptive power is to be nullified.

Bentley finds that melodrama's relation to tragedy represents the maturation process of an

individual psychology, insofar as "there is a child in every adult" (218). He finds, moreover, that the Aristotelian psychological values of pity and fear support this relation between the two genres. He suggests that self-pity, evoked by the audience's identification with the hero of melodrama, is fundamental to Aristotle's idea of pity for the tragic hero as outlined in the Rhetoric (200). Bentley suggests that fear in melodrama and tragedy offers two aspects of the same emotion as well. While the fear felt on behalf of the tragic protagonist is rational and "belongs to the common-sense world" of probable cause and effect, the fear of the melodramatic villain felt by the audience and shared with the hero is "irrational," beyond "the bounds of common sense" (201). Bentley's inclusion of melodrama within the boundaries of an Aristotelian aesthetic is made possible by the assumption that all dramatic literature expresses psychological truths. Since these truths are assumed to be empirically demonstrated and consciously known, the degree of truth value discerned in an aesthetic work--as noted at the beginning of this chapter--determines its position on the scale of aesthetic worth. Nevertheless, as with theatre history, we shall see that the gender politics involved

in the determination of such truth value undermines this methodology's assumptions concerning its own disinterestedness.

Taking up the qualitative distinctions implied by Bentley, other commentators, however, prefer to use parallel terms to show, and emphasise, melodrama's psychological and aesthetic inferiority with regard to the Aristotelian criteria. Heilman's reference to Victorian melodrama as "'gripping'" and "'poignant'" (76) and Brooks's observation that the melodramatic theatre at its best evoked "horror and admiration" (108) coincide with Bentley's observation that "[t]he tears shed by the audience at a Victorian melodrama . . . might be called the poor man's catharsis" (198). Such observations prefigure Booth's view that the melodramatic aesthetic assuages the psychological need for escapist entertainment of the impoverished, disenfranchised urban working classes of Victorian England (120).²⁷ Although consistently emphasising psychological and aesthetic similarities between tragedy and melodrama, Bentley concludes that melodrama is "the quintessence of drama." In fact, he finds melodrama's lesser status a necessary part of its quintessential nature: the "primitive" melodramatic imagination of the child, the savage, or the dreamer

"is where theatre comes from, not necessarily where it remains" (217).

Unlike theatre histories which concentrate on locating and examining melodrama mainly as a uniquely delimited socio-historical phenomenon, literary analyses tend to focus on melodrama less as a specifically nineteenth-century theatrical form and more as an expression of an essentially timeless and universal mode of imagination. This ahistorical tendency in much literary criticism of melodrama combines Aristotelian aesthetics and Freudian psychology: melodrama is seen to articulate basic timeless and universal truths about what traditionally has been called the human condition. Thus melodrama has worth, according to some literary analyses, only in the integral psychological and aesthetic relation seen to exist between melodrama and tragedy. Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador observes that the relation established in criticism between melodrama and tragedy is a longstanding tradition: "this concept of melodrama as corrupted tragedy is almost as old as the English version of the genre itself--an anonymous vademecum for actors of the year 1811 calls melodramas 'these half or third part tragedies'" (1977 87).

Two positions with regard to the relation between melodrama and tragedy have emerged in criticism of melodrama. One contends that melodramatic and tragic modes of imagination have co-existed from the time of the earliest known dramatic literature (Bentley 218; Smith 65; Heilman ix). Bentley and Heilman's studies stretch the parameters of the term melodrama to include any serious non-tragic dramaturgy, considering specifically nineteenth-century melodrama, the primary focus of theatre history, to be the least noteworthy corpus. The other position holds that a chronology of modes of imagination exists, and suggests that the co-evolution of epistemological and dramatic frameworks has led to the displacement of the tragic mode by the melodramatic mode as a specifically nineteenth-century phase in this process (Brooks 15). In this case, melodrama is seen as a transitional mode, prefiguring the modern mode of imagination (Brooks xi).

Both these points of view, however, are concerned to discover complementary psychological features between melodrama and tragedy upon which aesthetic valuations can then be made. As a result, criticism can configure melodrama as a mode of imagination which, although of a lesser kind, conforms in its own unique way to Aristotelian concepts and

values (Bentley 200; Heilman 91). In Bentley's work, for example, melodrama signifies the "primitive, neurotic, childish mind," while tragedy signifies the "sophisticated, scientific, adult mind" (204). From a feminist approach, this hierarchical categorization of the two genres can also be read as gendered. Its implicit gender politics, like that of much theatre history, effectively define the popular audience/melodrama pair negatively so as to constitute the *élite* audience/tragedy's Other. Melodrama's feminized position, based on assumptions about female/feminine nature, is here represented psychologically as a diseased (hysterical, childish) Lack-state, whereas tragedy is here represented psychologically as a healthy (sane, adult) site of empowerment, based on assumptions about male/masculine nature. Key aspects of this gendered dualistic dynamic found in much literary criticism's representation of the aesthetic relationship between melodrama and tragedy are developed below and looked at again in Chapter Three.

Because humanist Man (male/masculine) is in fact the Subject of both the discourses of literary criticism and psychology, many literary analyses of melodrama assume that aspects of Freudian psychology

and Aristotelian aesthetics can be linked in fundamental ways. This position gains considerable support since both Aristotle's and Freud's works offer psychological profiles which seem readily amenable to the aims of traditional aesthetic discourse on drama (Bentley 200).²⁸ Indeed, most literary analyses of the relation between melodrama and tragedy, implicitly assuming humanist Man to be the Subject of all drama, tend to construct a psychological profile of that humanist Man which is then posited as explaining the basic features of both genres. Most criticism renders maleness as a basic feature of the psychological profile of the Subject of drama. Qualities of a melodramatic hero, such as emotion and spirituality, are thereby transformed--and thus feminized--into primitive elements buried within humanist Man's more highly evolved rational and orderly conscious. Thus melodrama is seen to provide a wholly conformist, although "immature" (lacking the phallus) articulation of the same aesthetics within which tragedy is seen to provide the mature ideal (possession of the phallus).

Just as most theatre histories tend to neutralize the gendering of their own power relations by configuring melodramatic phenomena as historical facts, much literary criticism tends to neutralize the

gendering of its power relations by configuring the melodramatic text according to the facts of psychology. Thus, as in most theatre histories, melodrama is inscribed by the pro-masculine rhetorical strategies of humanist aesthetic discourse, paradoxically becoming in the process a "neutral term" (Heilman 75; Bentley 216; Brooks 15). Eric Bentley's work can be seen as the main model of the psychological and aesthetic relations between tragedy and melodrama for later commentators (Brooks 12; Heilman 84n). Following Bentley's lead, most literary analyses establish a "continuous scale with the crudest melodrama at one end and the highest tragedy at the other" (Bentley 218; Brooks 12; Booth 47, 64). Holding melodrama's place on this scale of aesthetic worth as a basic premise, most literary analyses are concerned to show how melodrama itself necessitates this evaluation and thus maintain the aesthetic status quo.

Most literary analyses suggest that repression, a function of the reality principle and concerned with ethical responsibility in the waking world, is supplanted in melodrama by the narcissistic and irresponsible pleasure principle satisfied by dreaming (Bentley 212). Most literary analyses associate the function of repression positively with

the tragic "adult mind" and, hence, characterise melodrama negatively as a "victory over repression" (Brooks 41; Bentley 216; Heilman 85). Whether textual or contextual, evidence of a primitive lack of psychological inhibition is seen to support the consequent consideration of melodrama in much criticism as a naively allegorical "dream world" (Bentley 205; Booth 14).

This interpretation of melodrama as dream should not be equated with the unconscious, a truly powerful force in Freudian psychology, for the psychology of humanist Man offered in most of these studies is ultimately a psychology of consciousness. Hence melodrama's linked (through lack of the phallus) qualities of infantilisation and feminization are understood in most of these studies to be part of the ego, of the sense of Self, as we shall see. Melodrama, then, is seen not to articulate that which is repressed (the material which constitutes the unconscious), but that condition of non-consciousness or unself-consciousness which is transcended by means of repression. The more successful the repression, the closer the Self comes to its ideal in humanist Man. Therefore, the more melodrama is shown to be an inferior dramatic form due to its lack of repression,

the more tragedy is confirmed in its superiority:
"[t]he higher forms--tragedy and comedy--are distinguished from the lower--melodrama and farce--by their respect for reality. 'Higher,' in this context, signifies adult, civilized, healthy; lower signifies childish, savage, sick. By this token, the lower forms are not excluded by the higher; they are transcended by them" (Bentley 257). Melodrama, then, as the "spontaneous, uninhibited way of seeing things," as an "irresponsible narcissistic" fantasy, is brought into the discussion on drama so that its difference may be explained away in such a manner that power relations already in place in humanist literary discourse are re-enforced as a consequence.

Booth's position with regard to the popular audience is explicitly informed by the psychological framework offered in Bentley's study: melodrama is seen as a magical realm of wish-fulfilment in which "the larger reality has not been given diplomatic recognition" (Bentley 217). As noted in part one, however, Booth's study ultimately finds that, although it addresses the "elemental feelings" and "instinctive desires" (38) of the popular audience, melodrama ultimately only serves as escapist entertainment. Its escapist nature, Booth finds, is determined in part by

the stock casting prevalent in acting companies in nineteenth-century England. He suggests that this theatrical practice had a negative aesthetic effect, tending to encourage formulaic dramaturgy (65). Thus Booth's study seems to locate in theatre practice a cause for the limited condition of the aesthetic and psychological nature of melodrama. The dream analogy defining the nature of melodrama, then, affirms melodrama's low place on the scale of aesthetic worth.

For Brooks melodrama is a "text of muteness" wherein the theatrical devices of gesture, pantomime, and tableau are analogous to the "plastic" mode of Freudian dream rhetoric (79). He goes further with the dream analogy than either Bentley or Booth, identifying stock characters specifically with the primary roles of "father, mother, child" (4). Brooks identifies the melodramatic ego with the representation of virtue, mitigating Bentley's and Booth's optimistic views of the melodramatic dream: "melodrama regularly simulates the experience of nightmare, where virtue, representative of the ego, lies supine, helpless, while menace plays out its occult designs" (Brooks 204). For Brooks this nightmarish aspect of melodrama, where the (male/masculine) ego finds itself in a castrated, and thus arguably feminized position, is connected to the

working of a "spiritualist imagination" (11). We are reminded here of Bentley's observation that "[s]uperstition and religion, neurosis and infantility are in the same boat" (201). The pervasive Freudian psychological framework enables much criticism to characterise melodrama as the indulgent fantasy through which a childish, savage, feminized mind (often identifying with a female central character, moreover) seeks in the supernatural an escape from reality. In other words, many literary analyses construct melodrama so as to suggest that it configures itself as Lack-state, as itself supplying the inferior condition against which the "clearsightedness and authenticity" of pro-masculine psychology and aesthetics may be privileged (Brooks 206).

The question arises in criticism, then, as to whether, as a form dedicated to the pleasure principle, melodrama has the capacity to articulate a moral framework; for, if melodrama is indeed a victory over repression, then "the threat of moral chaos" must be imminent (Brooks 20). Most commentators find, however, a moral framework in place in melodrama which is articulated in the "dream rhetoric" itself (Brooks 79). But opinion is divided with regard to the spiritual reference of this moral framework. Grimsted finds in

early American melodrama "an emotionally valid attempt to dramatize an era's faith . . . in and doubts about progress and providence" (xvi-xvii). He (rightly) suggests that, as a form in which "any realistic detail is subordinated to a basic world view," all melodrama may well qualify as "'religious'" (234). In addition, he finds that sin is a product of character rather than of incident or social forces, countering the more prevalent view of melodramatic moral conflict as entirely externally motivated (222). Unfortunately, Grimsted is alone among what I have called traditional commentators in explicitly (but very briefly) arguing that melodrama is founded in faith, pointing out its essentially Christian nature. Most literary analyses of melodrama find that faith, especially Christian faith, is absent from the genre.

Frequently melodramatic morality is viewed as "straightforward conflict," informed and limited by "ideas and emotions widely accepted at the time" (Heilman 78). Hence its moral framework often is mentioned only to be dismissed. Heilman's study is one such almost entirely secular reconfiguration of melodrama. For Heilman the hero, occupying the center of drama's moral framework, is the most significant feature of both melodramatic and tragic dramaturgy, for

within this (male) character lies the psychological truth of drama. Nevertheless, he concurs with more general perspectives insofar as he finds the tragic hero to represent Man as a whole, if tragically divided, being. But Heilman's main contribution to criticism on melodrama is his argument that characterisation in melodrama is not a superficial or inept copying of other dramatic models, but the necessary reduction and unification of character to solidify identity so that the character may become an agent in the world (97-98). The melodramatic hero represents Man only partially, embodying one or other of his traits. However, this fundamental psychological incompleteness in the hero of melodrama also demonstrates that he is a lesser man (16-17).

According to this view, the hero of melodrama fulfills his moral function in "the realm of social action," while the hero of tragedy finds moral fulfilment in "the realm of private action, action in the soul" (97). Heilman finds that melodramatic morality is "concerned with making right prevail in the world and between persons, or with observing that it does not prevail" (97). In tragedy no external force or authority determines the hero's moral alternatives or the choices he makes; he is exclusively concerned

"with the problem of right in the self" (97). Heilman suggests that, since the morality of the Self (being the highest reality) is the only true morality, "it is tragedy that interprets that nature is always suspended between damnation and salvation and that places primary value upon, and indeed serves to heighten, man's knowledge of his own being" (92). Tragedy alone, he suggests, deals with the universal ethics of good and evil, of power and weakness in the human condition (28). The "understanding of moral reality" is the function of the tragic hero (99-100). Hence topical, not moral issues at all are the material of melodrama. Melodrama represents the mundane polemics of protest and dissent in which good and evil, power and weakness are entirely circumscribed by historical event (92-93, 96). For Heilman, ultimately, melodrama is not concerned with debating moral choice, but with depicting habits of behaviour. The psychological and aesthetic conflicts characteristic of humanist Man as tragic hero are found to be reduced in melodrama to polar oppositions which are acted out separately by the hero and villain (Heilman 91). In melodrama the hero does not have the capacity to know "what it is all about" (Heilman 15). Agreeing with Bentley, Heilman suggests that the hero of melodrama is motivated

neither by unconscious forces nor by conscious decisions, but is simply naive and unknowing (Heilman 15; Bentley 217).

Although Grimsted observes that the hero occupies the pivotal place between the heroine and the villain (179), most analyses prefer to describe his function in such a way as to emphasise his inferiority to the tragic representation of heroism. Booth finds him "confused, muddled[,] . . . gullible," and "insipid" (17, 180). Rahill observes that "the virtue of the virtuous [hero and heroine] has that ironclad invincibility which in life is nature's bounty to the stupid" (66). He also finds in "nature's bounty," paradoxically, the moral motivation of the "virtuous": "benevolence, duty, obedience, self-sacrifice, and pure love" (66). As Rahill's commentary in particular shows us, the (male) hero's invincibility is seen as co-extensive with, or even as a product of his naïveté because a morality based unproblematically on faith is untenable from a humanist critical perspective.

In the "sentimental" genre of "naturalistic tragedy," Heilman finds an example of the hero representing a condition of non-consciousness. Heilman calls this genre "drama of the victim," where the hero is overwhelmed by circumstance rather than by his own

errors or failings. This is the drama of weakness, whereas tragedy, the drama of choice, is that of strength: "in tragedy, we make victims" (28). Heilman here re-enforces the distinction between tragic strength and reality and melodramatic weakness and fantasy, especially as formulated by Brooks. Indeed, this distinction is significant for the analysis of gender politics in literary criticism of melodrama. Bentley's view suggests that the audience's pity for the hero (often a female central character: a heroine, in fact) is "the less impressive half," "the weaker side of melodrama" (200). Fear of the villain (almost always male), on the other hand, is "the other and more impressive half," the "stronger" side of melodrama, where Bentley sees its "potential universality" (200-201).

Because he embodies the characteristics traditionally associated with (male) heroism--rebellion, egotism, and power over others--the villain receives a higher psychological and, hence, aesthetic valuation than the hero in most criticism of melodrama. Booth suggests that "[f]rom the point of view of ability the villain should certainly be the hero" (18, 80). Indeed, in keeping with Heilman's idea of the tragic hero, it should be noted that the character who

makes victims in melodrama is the villain. Most criticism fails to take seriously, however, the fact that melodrama parodically renders such heroism precisely as villainous, as morally suspect--as we shall see demonstrated in Chapter Two's analysis of Charles Heavyside's Saul. Traditional literary analyses, then, implicitly acknowledge what I will argue to be the gender politics operative in melodrama. Here the role of the "weak" hero is frequently performed--as we shall see--by a female, representing the moral world of the protestant feminine, and the "strong" villain, usually male, represents the secular values against which the female central character struggles and either triumphs or is martyred.

In terms of heroic values, however, many literary analyses of melodrama make a distinction between tragic destiny and melodramatic coincidence. This distinction is rendered problematic, however, by a critical view that takes the Christian, spiritual aspects of melodrama seriously as informing the moral framework of the genre. Heilman's Aristotelian view of destiny seems to refer to mythic patterns that both constitute, and are constituted by, the condition of being Man (4). In the psychological framework he presents to us, Heilman is concerned mainly with Man's

Self as both object and instrument of the tragic hero's conscious knowledge. He finds that tragedy offers us valuable insights with regard to the dynamics of the Self, adding to knowledge of the human condition.

Melodrama, however, even in the broad definition of the term Heilman adopts (the drama of disaster), does not add to knowledge, offering us only representations of survival, of maintenance of the Self, bringing melodrama closer to animal and vegetable than to human being (86).

The prevalence of coincidence in the plots of melodrama is seen to indicate random incidents that, at their source, have nothing to do with the human condition. However, an analysis of what I will argue to be melodrama's inherent protestantism would suggest that coincidence becomes the visible proof of patterns larger than those perceived and acted out by Man, patterns of true transcendence. Thus traditional criticism's victim may become protestantism's hero. A victim, from a humanist viewpoint, is one who is a lesser man, one who wishes to experience forces beyond the Self, indulging in "gross . . . immature fantasies" in order to do so, or, in ultimate fulfilment of the pleasure principle in death or madness, ceasing to be a man at all. From the protestant perspective, however,

to resign one's sense of Self is, in fact, to transcend Self and become part of the larger pattern, whether in life or in death. We have seen that it is precisely this incomplete Self of the melodramatic hero which allows Heilman to find him to be an incomplete version of the larger pattern of Man, rather than of that of God. But, in terms of protestant ethics, even a representation of humanist Man considered by traditional criticism to be aesthetically perfect, must remain psychologically incomplete without faith.

Aristotelian elements of critical formulations of tragedy form a large part of the rhetorical strategies deployed to explain away (heroic) melodrama's difference. Often these elements are articulated within a specifically Romantic aesthetic. In this version, Man is posited not only as a universal psychologically, but also as a transcendental configuring power. The power relations operative in a Romanticist formulation of Man are especially relevant since they are coextensive historically with the development of a discourse (melodrama) which I see as largely informed by both feminism and protestantism. We also find in later criticism of melodrama, most notably that of Brooks, a concerted attempt to show that melodrama is indeed a Romantic discourse.

In his analysis of what he calls "the melodramatic imagination," Brooks implies that heroic melodrama, in effect, represents the elements of Romantic drama in a popular form (79). In so doing, heroic melodrama reduces and polarizes Romantic drama's psychological complexity. Indeed, the manichaeian framework in which Brooks places heroic melodrama is a fundamentally Romantic conception of the psychology of dramatic conflict.

Although he does not name such conflict as manichaeian the way Brooks does, Alan Richardson notes Hazlitt's view of Macbeth as "'a war of opposite natures'" (7). Also, Richardson emphasises the centrality of "Milton's variations on Shakespearean psychodrama," especially Satan's character as a "'hateful siege / Of contraries'" (8), in the Romantic "exploration of an intensified and critically isolated consciousness" (6). Ultimately echoing Heilman, Richardson finds Byron's idea of dramatic poetry to be a representative Romantic view: "a 'mental theatre' [should take] as its subject the human mind in all its complexity, exploring not only its outward manifestation in character but its 'inner structure and workings' as well" (2). Brooks implies that heroic melodrama's manichaeism expresses, through the

representation of externalized forces of Good and Evil, the inner spiritual workings of the human mind attempting to come to terms with a post-revolutionary vision of a desacralized universe. Thus Brooks aligns heroic melodrama with Romantic drama historically, aesthetically, and psychologically.

Several aspects of Romanticism, however, render suspect such criticism's position regarding the appropriateness of this aesthetic as an interpretive framework for heroic and domestic melodrama. Its pro-masculine gendering and concepts of transcendence and the Self are especially problematic. As Marlon B. Ross suggests in the following passage, implicit and explicit pro-masculine gender politics inform the relations of domination constructing, and constructed by, Romanticism:

The Romantic poet, then, bestows upon himself the mantle of the medieval romance quester not only because he writes internalized romances but also, and more importantly, because he has taken the virile role of the chivalric savior. . . . He attempts to stand out as the best, as the strongest, for the sake of all who are weak and need protection; medieval peasants and ladies are replaced with the lower classes, orphans, beggars, widows, idiots, virgins, and those particular women in the poets' lives who inspire them to greater heights of self-possession. (32)

The (male) Romantic hero is equated with strength, activity, and, most importantly, self-determination.

Ross goes on to point out that such gender politics support, and are supported by, the Romantic myth of "poetic divinity," that is, "the myth that the poet, a little self-engendering god, transcends place and time" (41). The poet's transcendence, however, is achieved through his solipsistic internalization of the romance quest motif. Indeed, the Romantic poet's reformulation of this quest motif finds a parallel in the humanist universalization of Man into Man-in-general, for the Romantic poet universalizes his own Self-identity into Self-in-general.

This universal Self makes possible the transcendent meaning of the poetic quest and location of the poet/quester's power. Ross tells us, moreover, that the poet's quest for transcendent power rests upon a distinctly secular view of empowerment through, and as, discourse:

Romanticism is not so much a reaction against the Enlightenment spirit, but a culmination of it. More than any poets before them, the Romantics believe that power is constituted by ideas--whether the knowledge is scientific, historical, political, philosophical, or narrowly technological. And they believe that to govern these ideas--to wrestle them in an organic whole that seems to make sense in universal terms--is to govern the world itself. (31)

The humanist privileging of mind, then, is manifest in the Romantic conception of Self. Thus the lyric

expression of feeling, inspired by Nature or other presence associated with the feminine, is feminized and seen as being of lesser value in this schema. Indeed, subjective feeling is of value only insofar as Self can be transformed into Self-in-general. Ross points out, moreover, that this schema has remained powerful insofar as Romantic concepts and values still inform the rhetorical strategies of much traditional criticism (30-31).

While Brooks's point of view is identified as essentially Romantic in part because his argument is focused historically on what criticism has called the Romantic period, Heilman's study presents Romantic concepts and values as timeless, universal and, ultimately, of tragic stature. Heilman's argument implies that the Romantic model of the divided, yet transcendent Self is the ideal of tragic heroism and suggests, in effect, that this model is fundamental to, if only implicit in, the best dramatic literature (7, 15-16). Such a Self-questing tragic hero, furthermore, articulates the humanist principle of rational doubt. And although such doubt entails unhappiness and guilt, the process ultimately leads to self-knowledge and, thus, to a fleeting perception of truth (Bentley 293).

Through psychological dividedness, Heilman argues, the tragic (Romantic) hero self-consciously gains knowledge of the ambiguities inherent in the human condition and transcends them, attaining wisdom (14-15, 76). For Heilman the tragic hero is rational, he has "intelligence" (16), and the divided self is a self-conscious Self aware of both its unique individuality, its universality, and its transcendence. Tragedy, then, connotes the profound, mythic, and permanent (92). Indeed, Heilman considers tragic wisdom and spiritual growth to be the same thing (87), suggesting, therefore, that in value and function the Romantic tragic hero's knowledge of himself as a universal, transcendent Self has displaced almost completely the concept of transcendence once associated with God.

Richardson also observes a connection between Romanticism and tragedy. He finds that Romantic dramatic poetry attempts "to recapture the psychological depth which had been missing from tragedy since the Restoration" (4). Indeed, he points out that Charles Lamb contended that the stage representation of his day "had 'materialised' tragedy and 'brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood'" (qtd. in Richardson 2-3). The latter "standard" of Lamb's

observation most clearly refers to the theatricality and morality of heroic melodrama. Brooks, among others, points out the importance of tableaux, pantomime, inarticulate cries, and other static, non-discursive performance and staging techniques intended to convey and impress the emotional features of the play (47-49, 61, 65-79; Booth 37-39; Rahill 182). The fine vision of tragic dramaturgy has become in heroic melodrama visual, corporeal, dependent on the body rather than on the word for articulation.

Selflessness in melodrama is inextricably connected to the Christian ideal of Man represented by the selflessness and self-sacrifice of Christ. Yet, because Christ is accepted as having occupied a human form and worked from within human society, the power of the moral value of Christian Good must be proved in melodrama in social action. Hence, in the five nineteenth-century English-Canadian religious melodramas to be examined in this study, Old Testament stories are filtered through a Christian perspective which locates and emphasises patterns which are considered to foreshadow the advent of Christ. Old Testament stories provide many models of the good "man," embodied either by a hero or a heroine, which can be seen to prefigure and to be prophetic of the

Christian and specifically protestant moral ideal. Most important, these stories are reconfigured as melodrama to show how society can be transformed by the acceptance, or endangered by the lack of, Christian moral values. To re-empower melodrama, then, I will argue here that its protestant feminine must be located, identified, and analysed by means of gender-conscious strategies. As we shall see, such strategies demonstrate that the disruptive function of the protestant feminine is part of a larger, and ultimately feminist project gaining impetus at the time of melodrama's emergence as a genre.

III

Concepts like 'salvation' and 'redemption' were often affixed to the heroine's role: 'angel woman' was a guardian angel, meant to guide, protect, and solace erring man.
(Grimsted 173)

Grimsted's statement points to a number of essential elements of the protestant feminine configuring, and configured by, melodrama. Far from being artificially or superficially "affixed," however, melodrama's protestant tenets of Christian faith can be seen to be essential to the conceptualization of the heroine. The idea of "'angel woman'" acting as a near-divine mediator for "erring man" points to two central

images of the protestant feminine: the ministering angel and the Madonna. Adele Holcomb, remarking on the ubiquity of the motif of ministering angels in Victorian culture and, indeed, as a longstanding popular article of faith, notes that the "sympathetic character of these beings, their rapport with human needs and suffering, were profoundly congenial to a mid-nineteenth century audience in the Christian ethos" (1981, 111). Holcomb's view of this motif offers us a point of entry into a powerful protestant tradition countering secular humanism.

We have already seen that Anna Jameson's influential *Sacred and Legendary Art* series also documents and theorises this tradition, finding that the protestant feminine articulating this ethos is embodied specifically as female through the Madonna:

the most beautiful and precious productions of human genius and human skill which the Middle Ages and the renaissance have bequeathed to us . . . [are those] of an impersonation in the feminine character of beneficence, purity, and power, standing between an offended Deity and poor, sinning, suffering humanity, and clothed in the visible form of Mary, the Mother of our Lord. (SLA, xvii Jameson's emphasis)

Holcomb, herself an art historian, considers the six volumes comprising this series to be "the first systematic study of Christian iconography in English"

(1981, 95). Further, Holcomb points out that the third title in the series, Legends of the Madonna, a study of Marian iconography, seems "to be the first extensive study of the imagery of the Virgin in the literature of art" (1981, 113).²⁹ The challenge Jameson's work offers traditional criticism of melodrama is examined more closely later in this section. So that the extent of this challenge may be appreciated, it is necessary first to look at some ways in which traditional theatre historical and literary approaches to domestic melodrama, in particular, articulate a problematic gender politics.

We have seen that most criticism represents melodrama as a unified oeuvre comprised of works fundamentally similar to each other. However, we have also seen that many theatre histories and literary analyses have consistently divided melodrama into two kinds: heroic and domestic, implicitly representing them as masculine and feminine, as early and late, and as best and worst melodrama, respectively. Most criticism we have looked at so far here speaks of melodrama generally, but in fact refers mainly to heroic melodrama.

Booth notes that in London domestic melodrama "became the most commonly performed and written of all

types of melodrama" in the latter half of the century (117). Brooks interprets such a trend in Paris in the 1830s as the decline of heroic melodrama and the end of the classic period. Such decadence is due, he finds, to the "tendency for some melodrama to become more 'domestic'" (88-89). Rahill notes similar changes occurring at the same time in American melodrama (xv). But the confusion which exists as to which criteria differentiate domestic from heroic melodrama is part of a general problem of terminology in much criticism of the genre.

While generally agreeing that the first half of the nineteenth century was dominated by melodrama in readily distinguishable varieties, criticism on melodrama has not standardized its terminology for describing the various kinds of drama that emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. The terms most problematic for the purposes of this study are domestic melodrama, domestic drama, and Romantic drama. Issues arising from the confusion of heroic melodrama and Romantic drama are dealt with in section four of this chapter; those concerning domesticity are of interest here. Nicoll suggests that most drama of this period did not take the form of melodrama at all (1959, 84).³⁰ But other commentators refer, virtually

interchangeably, to melodrama, domestic melodrama, and domestic drama. The most frequent distinction made between domestic drama and domestic melodrama concerns realism. Both domestic melodrama and domestic drama are associated with realist staging and reduced emphasis on the spectacular effects associated with earlier (heroic) melodrama (Rahill 170). However, domestic drama is seen to add realist characterization and plot, while domestic melodrama retains many elements of earlier melodramatic characterization and plot (Booth 120). But apart from analyses of differences between two kinds of melodrama and two ways of representing domesticity, another difference suggests itself.³¹ Whatever other changes in melodrama are enumerated, in most criticism, one way or another, the increased prominence of the heroine is often identified as the cause of the decline of melodrama from the heroic to the domestic.

The key importance of the female central character in heroic melodrama has been readily acknowledged in most criticism. Grimsted notes that "virtue and the heroine [are] almost indistinguishable at the center of the melodrama, the one the personification of the other" (172). Indeed, he remarks that melodrama "urged men to purity,

patriotism, and faith in providence, and it promised them earthly happiness from God, home, and country; but the greatest of these was home with its cornerstone of female purity" (229). Booth also finds that the heroine is the "heart of melodrama," its "emotional core" (24, 30). Moreover, he observes that the "necessary sentimentalism and pathos" of melodrama arise from her presence (30). Nevertheless, her increased centrality toward the mid-point of the century creates problems for much traditional criticism.

Domestic melodrama brings to the fore the protestant feminine partially visible in heroic melodrama. The heroine is not an issue in traditional criticism of heroic melodrama, for from this perspective the heroine appears simply to occupy the role of the hero. In domestic melodrama, however, mainly because of the centrality of the family and home, the fact that the heroine is female and that her role is gender-defined cannot be ignored or explained away by analogy to dramatic tradition. The heroine is of central importance not because she is representing a hero, but because she is representing a woman in her own familiar sphere. In domestic melodrama generic Woman, who in heroic melodrama may be disguised as the

'hero,' is increasingly confused with a direct representation specifically of a woman. Indeed, gender slippage of the Subject--who is speaking and who is being spoken of--behind the mask is a key feature of domestic melodrama. The techniques of stage realism, depicting the "home" (whether drawing room or slum attic) with the illusion of accurate detail, work to blur the conceptual line between Woman and woman.

In the context of melodramatic emplotment, this Woman/woman still performs as the central figure in the working out of protestant providence, but not as in heroic melodrama which renders the role of the hero explicitly Christian and feminine. For the purposes of this study, then, the term domestic melodrama signifies that form of melodrama found in the latter half of the nineteenth century in which the female central character represents the protestant feminine as active in order to transform this changed role of the hero to the extent that it can only be occupied by Woman/woman.

We have noted commentators' remarks that the hero of melodrama is frequently vestigial, even in the form that promotes him as a tragic hero's counterpart. And although the heroine's centrality in heroic melodrama has been acknowledged readily, most criticism works to undermine her configurative power by showing

how her femininity generates conflict within the role of the 'hero' she has been delegated to perform. Brooks and Grimsted dwell upon her unheroic passivity, for example (31; 181-182). Booth remarks upon her "feminine weakness and fears" as much as upon her "pluck and courage . . . in defying and resisting the villain" (26). Noting her "vulnerability and a kind of passivity," Grimsted ridicules the heroine's fierce chastity "in physical, specifically sexual terms," noting that the "frail vessel of woman became an iron virgin" (174, 175, 176).³² To undermine the heroine, then, much criticism finds it necessary to construct the heroine's function as that of a sexual prize contested for by the hero and villain (Vicinus 147). Hence, she may be represented as pure and virtuous in terms of the moral framework of melodrama, but outside of that protestant context she becomes the Object of Man.

Brooks's argument, however, attempts to fix the gender of the melodramatic hero within explicitly pro-masculine parameters. Since Pixérécourt was known as the "Corneille of the Boulevards," Brooks concludes that his melodramas must be heroic in much the same way as Corneille's tragedies, giving an analysis of the male hero of Hugo's Hernani as an example (102).

However, although most of the other plays Brooks describes involve a female character in the central role, often named in the title, he does not draw our attention to the shift in gender of the central character; that is, a shift from Corneille's tragic heroes to Pixérécourt's melodramatic heroines (also subsuming Corneille's heroines such as Phaedra). Consequently, Brooks is able to find that the melodramatic "hero," like the Corneillian hero, is capable of "self-mastery and self-renunciation" (26). "He" too has "générosité: that nobility of soul, self-knowledge and self-fulfillment, that allows a moral triumph over the pettiness of ambition, calculation, worldly victories" (102). Thus Brooks argues for the near identical values of melodrama and tragedy. By considering melodrama virtually as a form of Romantic tragedy here, Brooks's argument overlooks the elements making melodrama, and its heroine, quite distinct from this model of heroism.³³

Heroic melodrama is the form of melodrama examined most often by much traditional criticism because it is more accessible to the Aristotelian aesthetic concepts and values criticism seeks to ascribe. Domestic melodrama, however, is more difficult to alienate from its conceptual roots as

articulated in the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century. Booth and Rahill, among others, acknowledge the connection between sentimental drama and melodrama. Booth, for example, briefly outlines this relation but in such a way as to establish the aesthetic poverty of both forms. He notes that "the sentimental dramatist . . . is chiefly concerned to wring tears from his audience . . . [and] deals in purely domestic agonies and blisses, and honours love, marriage, and true morality above all things" (41). Indeed, much criticism considers that domesticity feminizes dramaturgy, reducing its scope and cheapening its effect by placing in the foreground not only feminine values but the feminine sphere as well. The heroine of heroic melodrama is seen to occupy a (male) public realm of action, which criticism finds to be similar to that of tragedy. In domestic melodrama, however, she is relocated to the (female) private realm, feminizing the form and bringing it closer to what is seen to be a sentimental, decadent dramaturgy.

In his influential study of sentimental drama, Ernest Bernbaum has noted several elements which also are found in melodrama. It was in sentimental drama, for instance, that coincidence or "improbability of plot became henceforth a frequent, though not a

constant, attribute" (136). A certain "fatalism" in domestic tragedies is described as well (173), reminding us of Heilman's "drama of the victim." Bernbaum also observes the presence of breeches roles for female central characters in sentimental drama, a presence which Hyslop briefly notes in Pixierécourt's melodramas (105, 170-171). Further, Theophilus Cibber is credited with inventing the type of the villain in The Lover in 1731 (145-147). Bernbaum finds the first female villain, Millwood, in Lillo's The London Merchant, produced in the same year (155-156). Bernbaum suggests that these elements of dramaturgy were brought together for the first time in order to articulate a new way of conceptualizing Man, a way which, in effect, made such dramaturgical changes necessary.

Bernbaum explains that the sentimental view of human nature does away with the possibility of an autonomous "evil principle" in the world, for "though the blind prejudices of our unenlightened minds delude us with the apparent existence of sin, the human heart is as beautiful and good as the great Spirit of Nature which animates it" (116). The "human heart" is not a metaphysical, but a truly physical location of moral perception, of the "beautiful and good." The "great

Spirit of Nature" which makes this heart beat is, then, likewise beautiful and good. Thus sentimentalism articulates a protestant optimism, countering the pessimism of much secular philosophy (117).

Bernbaum points out that the work of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, who formulated what became known as sentimentalism into a relatively coherent group of concepts, placed him in a position to be considered the arbiter of sentimental dramaturgy, offering a different and powerful aesthetic basis for a dramaturgy other than that determined by the Aristotelian rules of neo-classicism (118). Moreover, Shaftesbury's work put a name to the intuitive, yet physical perception of the beautiful and good: the "moral sense." By means of this concept, sentimentalism promotes feminine values such as emotion, intuition, faith, spirituality, and charity as essential to Man.

Bernbaum tells us that Shaftesbury sharply differentiates the function of this sense from any conscious application of Reason: "[w]ithout any formal instruction, religious or philosophical, [Man] immediately recognizes the fair and harmonious in conduct" (117). The moral sense both configures, and is configured by, the Christian Soul, which itself becomes both a living and a moral entity in the

sentimentalist view. Further, Bernbaum notes that the moral sense differs from the theologic concept of conscience: "this was not a dread monitor checking and reproving our evil propensities, but an aesthetic feeling sympathetically encouraging our naturally good impulses" (117). The sentimentalist moral sense can be seen to be central conceptually to the reconfiguration and empowerment of protestantism.

Exercising his "benevolent and altruistic emotions" as "the source of all virtuous conduct," sentimental Man offers individuals and groups a protestant mode of self-identity and agency as an alternative to that offered by humanist concepts of Man. Shaftesbury's view that "'the order of the moral world equals that of the natural'" suggests the existence of a tripartite harmony comprised of God, Man, and Nature. The moral sense enables sentimental Man to understand that "[t]he same emotion that he has when he beholds the balanced design of the physical world arises in him when he perceives the true character of the human soul" (Bernbaum 116-117). The divine design which orders a harmonious natural world also orders an equally harmonious human nature. In this state of essential harmony, the necessity for dualistic conflict--Man against God or Man against

Nature--as well as for the concept of unredeemed original sin is rendered illusory. As Heilman tells us, "[t]he unified and harmonious dissolve the world of alternatives and render the customary strivings of self-understanding irrelevant" (16). From a sentimental perspective, the strivings of the Self, then, become the least important, and the moral framework the most important aspect of tragedy. Indeed, Lillo argues that a new dramaturgy is required, one which is able to make, as Bernbaum observes, "the moral power of tragedy more widely effective by representing ordinary life" (155).

The "common man" of ordinary life is not heroic (Bernbaum 6), however, and to label him as such leads to the conceptual difficulties we have noted when traditional criticism attempts to deal with the melodramatic hero and heroine. But although Bernbaum argues that sentimentalism was a powerful force, effective in its resistance to neo-classical concepts and values, he concedes that it met in the "primacy of conscience" and in the "classical, intellectual, and satiric" spirit of philosophy and literature a powerful opposing force (115-120, 269). We have seen that this very force is still at work in traditional criticism of melodrama. Just as eighteenth-century drama is often

ignored in favour of the works of Swift, Pope, and Defoe (120), most literary criticism tends not to consider drama to be the most worthy literary work of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the view held by some criticism, that dramatic decadence can be noted over two centuries instead of one, is largely based on a negative appraisal of the influence of (and implicit acknowledgement of the power of) the sentimental aesthetic (Sherbo; Otten). Sentimentalism and domesticity have not only proven troublesome for traditional criticism, but also for some feminist approaches to melodrama as well.

The materialist feminist critiques of Martha Vicinus and Gabrielle Hyslop examine the gender politics of some socio-economic aspects of melodrama. Presenting a general overview of the genre, Vicinus is especially interested in domestic melodrama; Hyslop, however, concentrates on Pixérécourt's melodramas. Vicinus emphasises the importance of the family and the home in melodrama as places dedicated to buffering "the economic and social assault of industrialization" (128, 131) and agrees with Hyslop that, in doing so, melodrama "expresses the conservative, patriarchal ideas of the middle class" (Hyslop 66).³⁴ Vicinus finds aesthetic merit in melodrama generally, while

Hyslop bypasses aesthetic issues altogether, focusing instead on connecting Pixérécourt's representations of women and oppressive bourgeois values. Despite divergences in focus and methodology, Vicinus and Hyslop agree that melodrama, as an expression of patriarchal, middle-class socio-economic values, reproduces an ideology which victimizes women. Most important, both commentators treat melodrama as if it were a historical discourse, a more literal than literary description of nineteenth-century domesticity. Melodrama is seen simultaneously as an expression of ideology and as the factual documentation of socio-cultural practice.

Vicinus argues, for example, that domestic melodrama is a potentially powerful location for positive images of women because it centralises the domestic sphere and, hence, social and personal issues of special concern to women at the time. She finds that domestic melodrama especially articulates women's resistance to the cult of domesticity. Vicinus finds that melodrama's portrayal of domesticity and women's role documents oppressive practices: "[a]s the angel in the house, she was expected to sacrifice all for the emotional, moral, and physical well-being of her husband and children" (133).³⁵ Such oppressive

practices, she suggests, are the negative corollary to the ideology of women's moral centrality. Vicinus observes that "[i]n melodrama weakness is strength" (135) and that the frail heroine's "strength under adversity confirmed the moral superiority of women over men" (133). But she implies that this superiority, expressed in the ideology of domesticity, necessitated the continued powerlessness of women that is presupposed to be documented historically. Hence the moral aspect in melodrama, despite appearances to the contrary, ultimately serves patriarchal ends exclusively.

Hyslop agrees with Vicinus's position with regard to melodramatic heroines, who "may lack strength but . . . are morally invincible" (69). In her summary of the implications of melodrama for women, Hyslop analyses the role domesticity plays in maintaining patriarchal power relations: the "moral adhesive power given to women by Pixérécourt is a means by which the male-dominated society aims to keep women happy in an oppressed position" (75). Examining the "dangerous and deviant behavior" of some of Pixérécourt's heroines, she briefly refers to Michelene Wandor's valuable insights remarks regarding the connection between transvestite heroines on the stage and periods of

crisis in the role of women in society. Hyslop finds, however, that transvestite heroines in Pixérécourt's melodramas work to re-enforce woman's role as merely ornamental, outlined at the time by Rousseau, among others (68). For Hyslop domesticity, far from either expressing or documenting women's centrality, sought to meet the "crisis" by marginalising women both ideologically and in lived reality.

Vicinus and Hyslop tend not to differentiate between the articulation of ideology in figurative and factual discourses, and to find ideology at work in some discourses and not others. The latter case renders Vicinus's aesthetic argument problematic. The feminist aspects of Vicinus's study seem to consist mainly of the addition of a commentary on images of women to a synthesis of traditional views of melodrama, with their assumptions about gender remaining unexamined. She follows Brooks's and Tetzeli von Rosador's views that melodrama is "mythic," representing "a combination of archetypal, mythic beliefs and time specific responses to particular cultural and historical conditions" (128). The archetypal and mythic elements contribute to melodrama's "ongoing power" to be meaningful, while the "time-bound elements" such as history and culture

"limit its appeal" aesthetically (128). Informed by the humanist values of traditional critical views of melodrama, Vicinus's discussion, because it confines melodrama's apparent anti-feminism to historical forces, in effect suggests that the archetypes and myths are gender neutral.

Because the rhetorical strategies informing their critiques of the representation of women and femininity in melodrama promote the concepts and values of humanism, Hyslop's and Vicinus's arguments at times actually work to support the values they associate with the gender politics of patriarchy. They accept, along with traditional criticism of melodrama, that the representation of domesticity necessarily means that both melodramatic heroines and nineteenth-century women are powerless and victimized, physically and emotionally weak. Thus they articulate a patriarchal contempt for the main location wherein women found themselves configured as powerful and were enable to construct a feminist identity. Moreover, the oppression of women is defined in their arguments mainly as lack of access to the institutions of pro-masculine power. Indeed, such traditional concepts of power as public action, politics, archetypes, and Self are maintained in these arguments as superior

explanatory modes. Thus their analyses work to confirm from a different perspective the view implicit in most criticism that the centrality of women is the main reason to condemn melodrama.

One instance of unexamined acceptance of a critical view is demonstrated in Vicinus's adoption of the view that melodramatic conflict takes place between forces of Good and Evil, represented by the hero and heroine and by the villain, respectively (see Heilman 80; Rahill 66). In adopting this view feminist commentaries, among others, inherit an exceedingly problematic line of argument. Vicinus agrees with Booth, who describes melodrama as "a world of absolutes where virtue and vice coexist in pure whiteness and pure blackness; and a world of justice where after immense struggle and torment good triumphs over and punishes evil" (Booth 14). But Brooks's, rather than Booth's, formulation of this conflict is most in evidence in her overview. As we have seen, Brooks explicitly describes such conflict as manichaeian: melodrama is "an intense emotional and ethical drama based on the manichaeistic struggle of good and evil" (12-13). In a manichaeian universe separately created and equally empowered principles of Good and Evil are opposed in an eternal battle for human souls. That the

moral conflict in melodrama is fundamentally manichaeian is essential to Brooks's argument that French melodrama located and configured "operative spiritual values" (5) in a "post-Sacred era" (15).

Although Brooks grounds melodramatic manichaeism in the Christian concept of Man as "double," as both Good and Evil (92), he differs from Grimsted, finding that Christian concepts such as mercy, atonement, and redemption have no place "in melodramatic justice" (204). Indeed, except for this brief use of the term "Christian," he does not distinguish between different doctrines of transcendence but subsumes all under a general concept of the Sacred (107).³⁶ Because of the revolutionary overthrow of Church and Monarch in France (15), furthermore, Brooks finds that the nineteenth century is "voided of its traditional Sacred" (11). And indeed the fact that "melodramatists refuse to allow that the world has been completely drained of transcendence" (22) proves not only that melodrama is in retreat from reality, but also that it articulates dreams and wishes for a world centred in and by the supernatural. This last attempt at "an ethical recentering" opens the way, Brooks suggests, for a new aesthetic founded on the reality principle which acknowledges the loss of both

the tragic vision and the unified Sacred that made it possible: modernism (200).

But manichaeism is doctrinally opposed to accepted Christian tenets of faith and, indeed, was considered by the early Christian Church as heretical (Eco 1988, 21). Placing a manichaean structure in the foreground of his discussion of the melodramatic imagination, Brooks's argument is arguably not only non-Christian, but also fundamentally anti-Christian. Like Heilman, Brooks equates tragedy with religion, but religion secularized into the ancient archetypes of myth (Heilman 93; Brooks 82). Brooks, like Heilman, considers it possible to consider religion apart from its "metaphysical dimension" (Heilman 91). From this perspective, tragedy is viewed in much criticism as paradoxically both entirely secular and entirely religious. Melodrama, then, as non-tragic drama must be also non-religious. Because Brooks emphasises its historical provenance, including the overthrow of the Catholic Church, melodrama also must be seen as non-religious in a specifically non-Christian way.

Most critical approaches, including the materialist feminism of Vicinus and Hyslop, constitute, and are constituted by, humanist ways of knowing. This study has argued that such humanist criticism, in

defense of its notion of its own universality, transforms through interpretation the object it scrutinizes into a reflection of its own concepts and values. When material such as melodrama differs widely from the critical perspective, however, the politics of this interpretive process become visible, problematic, and even suspect. Any critical approach which hopes to explain, rather than explain away, melodrama must address melodrama's aesthetic difference from a perspective which assumes, as a political position, the fundamental worth of the concepts and values constructing, and constructed by, this difference. To assist in articulating a feminist post-structuralist politics and to substantiate the assumption upon which such politics are based, the work of Anna Jameson is invaluable. Jameson theorises a view of protestant Christianity which challenges "'Hebrew and classical prejudices concerning'" women (qtd. in Holcomb 1981, 114). Her view of the feminine is distinctly feminist, moreover, for she finds that the presence of women is fundamental to protestant concepts and values and, indeed, to the civilisation based upon them. Thus Jameson's theoretical framework can offer insights into the presence of Woman/woman, of the protestant feminine and morality in heroic and domestic melodrama.

Jameson's work was undertaken during the time period in which we are told domestic melodrama emerged and flourished. Her encyclopedic first study, Sacred and Legendary Art, was published in 1848. Legends of the Madonna as Represented in the Fine Arts (1852), the third study in the series, is of especial relevance to domestic melodrama. Suggesting that, conceptually, the feminine operated extensively as a configuring power in early Christianity, her work has important implications for our understanding not only of melodrama as a specific instance, but of the development of protestant discourse as a system of knowing.

As noted in the Introduction, Jameson appropriates the three key features of protestantism--the feminine, morality, and power--to propose an alternative, feminist history of medieval signification. For feminist political purposes, Jameson places her own social, cultural, and historical parameters over against what she saw as the dominant ahistorical, acontextual, and formalist academic art criticism. Jameson's critique of formalist methodology resists the dismemberment of the image into "draperies," "tints," "heads," "fine compositions," and so on (SLA 5). Making explicit the secularity of this mode of critical practice, Jameson

notes: "it is a sort of atheism to look upon [images] reckless of their significance" (SLA lxviii). Her argument implies that this dismembering process is, in fact, political violence done to the image so as to inhibit its feminine signifying power.

For Jameson, the specifically feminist significance of early Christian images lies in their representation of an actual woman documented in Scripture. It is also this feminine character--I suggest--which provides the model for the heroine of domestic melodrama, and for which the heroine of heroic melodrama can be seen as a form of prototype. She locates the true character of Mary, "the Christian ideal of womanhood in its purity and its power" (LMO xviii), in the Gospel of Saint Luke. From Saint Luke's "portrait" Jameson finds Mary to be "the most perfect moral type of the intellectual, tender, simple, and heroic woman" (LM xxxix-xl). Of great importance as well is the "popular portrait of her mind; the gentleness, the purity, the intellect, power, and fortitude; the gifts of the poetess and prophetess; the humility in which she exceeded all womankind" (xli). It is in these terms that Jameson characterizes the Christian feminine beyond its conventional attributes of passive receptivity. Intellect, courage, poetic

capacity are all part of Mary's "maternal organisation" and therefore possible characteristics of the melodramatic heroine. Jameson thus suggests that Woman was the Subject of early Christian discourse. Noting the function of intercessor ascribed to the Madonna, Jameson observes that Christ was not known as a merciful comforter until a later period and that, until that time, Mary occupied this role (SLA 2).

Jameson promotes domestic representations of Mary over divine representations of her (LM 249). Holy Family images depict "the domestic life of the Virgin and the infancy of the Saviour . . . in all their endless variety" (LM 249) or several personages "in direct relation to each other . . . which expresses the family connection between them" (LM 250). She finds in these domestic groupings the representation of Christianity as "the apotheosis of the moral sentiments" (SLA 3-4). And it is family relations, based on sacred models and the moral sentiments ascribed to them, that provide the structural framework for domestic melodrama. Indeed Jameson's work offers us important insights regarding aspects of melodrama specifically and traditional criticism generally.

Jameson describes the development of early Christianity in terms that are reminiscent of theatre

historical perspectives on the influence of
 democratisation on the development of melodramatic
 dramaturgy:

The first great object to which reviving Art was destined, was to render the Christian places of worship a theatre of instruction and improvement for the people, to attract and to interest them by representations of scenes, events, and personages, already so familiar as to require no explanation, appealing at once to their intelligence and their sympathies; embodying in beautiful shapes (beautiful at least in their eyes) associations and feelings and memories deep-rooted in their very hearts, and which had influenced, in no slight degree, the progress of civilisation, the development of mind.
 (SLA 4)

Spectacle, enticing the senses through beauty and edifying the mind through example, serves a similar purpose in the early Christian church and in the theatre of melodrama. Distinctly different from most theatre historical arguments, however, is Jameson's respectful terms of address with regard to "the people" and morality. Unlike most criticism of melodrama, acknowledging not only the temporal but the cultural distance between the aesthetic view of her commentary and that of which she speaks, Jameson assumes the intelligence and worth of both the popular early Christian congregation and the art work intended for their "edification and example" (LM xl).

Jameson's argument is built upon distinctly sentimental concepts of the relation between mind and heart and the basic goodness of humanity. The spectacular images in the early Christian church achieve their moral purpose by simultaneously entering the mind ("intelligence") and the heart ("sympathies") and thus penetrating to spiritual associations "deep-rooted" in the Soul. The perfect parallelism of mind and heart is spanned by the visual sense. Indeed, the visual sense activated by sacred or legendary images is in every way a moral sense. In this way Jameson connects the process of "reading" images with the protestant feminine and the morality based upon it.

For Jameson a "balance between male and female influences [is] essential to social harmony" (Holcomb 1981, 99). Jameson's argument shows the feminist potential of sentimentalism, suggesting that mind and heart, as masculine and feminine entities, respectively, occur not separately but in combination in men and women. Difference between men and women, therefore, is not based on a Lack-state, but on gender-specific configurations of the same capacities. Consequently, two models of virtue and of Christian heroism are available: for men, Christ; for women, Mary. Jameson emphasises the disjunction between

women's lived reality and the domestic ideal and argues that women disfranchised by secularised custom and law are thus not allowed to exercise their true capacities, the capacities of the "maternal organisation" necessary to achieve this ideal. By emphasising Mary's humanity rather than her theologically-imposed divinity, Jameson offers a model of the good woman in essential harmony with that of the good man.

Most importantly, Jameson's protestantism shows us how it can work against the idea pervasive in criticism that the moral framework of melodrama is fundamentally manichaeian. "This legendary literature, . . . which had worked itself into the life of the people," Jameson observes, "became, like the antique mythology, as a living soul diffused through the loveliest forms of Art, still vivid and vivifying, even when the old faith in its mystical significance was lost or forgotten" (SLA 2). Unlike Brooks, Jameson does not equate the Christian Sacred with that of any other. Legendary literature alone, that is, the lives of saints, martyrs, and popular figures of virtue, is equated with classical mythology. The mystical significance of legendary and mythological art alone can be lost. Sacred art in which "the object of sense remain[s] in subjection to the moral idea," art thus

depicting scenes, situations, and personages from Scripture, can never lose its transcendence because its subject can never be separated from Christian truth. Nor is the art of depicting the Christian Sacred lost in the modern world. Jameson trusts that "the progressive spirit of Christianity [will] furnish us with new impersonations of the good--new combinations of the beautiful" (SLA 4).

With Jameson's nineteenth-century view of a continuous, and continuously revivifying Christianity as a comprehensive system of knowing operative in the modern world, the validity of Brooks's view of post-revolutionary times as "desacralized" may be called into question as a conceptual framework explaining melodrama. Moreover, the specific and specifically feminine values of Christianity which are emphasised consistently in Jameson's work (charity, mercy, salvation, redemption) undermine Brooks's view of polarized elements of Good and Evil in favour of the view of spiritual relations mediated by Christ's sacrifice. Therefore Jameson's work can be said to articulate the system of knowing which configures, and is configured by, heroic and domestic melodrama.

Specifically protestant Christian discourse, based generally speaking on ideas of progress through

activist social reform, is theorised by Jameson as an inversion of Romantic solipsistic transcendence. The view of personal agency and identity constructed in and by this other discourse, although focused on the individual and material world, is saved from solipsism and secularity through its empowerment as a conceptual imitation of Christ's ministry. Jameson's feminist theory models women's personal agency and identity after that of Mary in her domestic character, "for she was to be to us an example of all that a woman could endure, as well as all that a woman could be and act out in her earthly life" (LM xl). Like her concept of the "maternal organisation," Jameson's concept of domesticity, a form of "maternal feminism," is enlarged beyond its conventional connotations.³⁷

Jameson's argument suggests that the social responsibilities of women arose from moral ones. Holcomb points out that Jameson associates "the ethically crucial status of charity and the pacific virtues . . . with a female point of view" (1983, 184). In other words, the performance of Christian ministry has become largely the responsibility of women. Further, this performance is essentially feminist, for it will ensure

the coming moral regeneration, and complete and harmonious development of the whole human race, by the establishment, on a higher basis, of what has been called the 'feminine element' in society. . . . In the perpetual iteration of that beautiful image of THE WOMAN highly blessed--there, where others saw only pictures and statues, I have seen this great hope standing like a spirit beside the visible form; in the fervent worship once universally given to that gracious presence, I have beheld an acknowledgement of a higher as well as gentler power than that of the strong hand and the might that makes the right. . . . (LM xix)

The re-emergence of Christianity as a moral and spiritual force is bound up inextricably with the re-empowerment of women. Hence, domesticity cannot be limited to narrow definitions of "home" or of "women's sphere," for those terms denote a global space wherein and wherever feminist re-empowerment strategies are deployed.

In heroic and domestic melodrama as well, the representation of moral crises in which women, or the concepts and values associated with women, figure most centrally are not limited to merely topical or historical significance as many commentators suggest. The pattern of conflict in heroic and domestic melodrama, generally speaking, can be seen to enact both the empowerment of, and the resistance to the empowerment of, a protestant feminist discourse. Transcendence in melodrama is to subsume Self in

selflessness so as to experience "love of life under all its aspects" in an egalitarian relationship among all created things and with the divine Creator" (LM 127). Thus we see that, in a number of ways, the protestant pro-masculine feminine and pro-feminist feminine concepts and values informing melodramatic discourse distinctly differ from, and in no way rely upon, a Romantic perspective.

Jameson traces a movement from verbal vision to corporeal visual in the translation of the legendary literature of the early medieval period into legendary art. "The Legendary Art of the Middle Ages," Anna Jameson tells us, "sprang out of the legendary literature of the preceding ages," a literature which had "formed the sole mental and moral nourishment of the people" (SLA 1), for "[t]he Gospel was not then the heritage of the poor: Christ, as a comforter, walked not among men. His own blessed teaching was inaccessible except to the learned . . ." (SLA 2). Jameson argues that this early legendary literature "asserted and kept alive in the hearts of men those pure principles of Christianity" during a time of social, political, and spiritual barbarism. The lessons of Christianity obtained from this literature, moreover, offered a different vision from the severe

theologism of "Schoolmen": "[t]he world was divided between those who sought to comfort the afflictions, and those who aspired to expiate the sins, of humanity" (SLA xxi). Pure Christianity, then, triumphed over a "perverted and sophisticated" theology. Indeed, the legends were a popular literature

in which peace was represented as better than war, and sufferance more dignified than resistance; which exhibited poverty and toil as honourable, and charity as the first of virtues; which held up to imitation and emulation, self-sacrifice in the cause of good, and contempt of death for conscience' sake. (SLA 3)

Most important, she goes on to claim, in this legendary literature "the tenderness, the chastity, the heroism of woman, played a conspicuous part."

Jameson dismisses the later chivalric romances partly because of the narrow limits of their influence at the time: romances "were confined to particular classes, and left no impress on Art" (SLA 2). In the introduction to Legends of the Monastic Orders (1850), Jameson notes the role, if limited, medieval monasticism played in empowering women. Anticipating her protestant readers' prejudice against monasticism, Jameson argues that this role has a strong "claim on our respect and moral sympathies" for these reasons:

The protection and the better education given to women in these early communities; the

venerable and distinguished rank assigned to them when, as governesses of their Order, they became in a manner dignitaries of the Church; the introduction of their beautiful and saintly effigies, clothed with all the insignia of sanctity and authority, into the decoration of places of worship and books of devotion,--did more, perhaps, for the general cause of womanhood than all the boasted institutions of chivalry. (SLA xx)

Again we see Jameson ground feminism and protestantism in shared domestic images of empowerment and spirituality.

Jameson's fine vision of the Madonna as the impersonation (not the symbol [SLA 203]) of protestant virtue privileges the historical character of Mary outlined above. Thus Jameson dismisses both chivalric and theologic reconfigurations of the Madonna as a symbolic sign of a pro-masculine idea, rather than a pro-feminist feminine idea in practice in women's lived reality:

another character was, from the fifth century, assigned to her, out of which grew the theological type, very beautiful and exalted, but absorbing to a great degree the scriptural and moral type, and substituting for the merely human attributes others borrowed from her relation to the great scheme of redemption. . . . According to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, her tender women's wisdom became supernatural gifts; the beautiful humility was changed into a knowledge of her own predestined glory. . . . [A]nd thus step by step the woman was transmuted into the divinity. (LM xl)

For Jameson, Mary's role in the scheme of redemption has been superimposed upon her scriptural and moral existence for pro-masculine purposes. Mary as angel, as merciful intercessor belongs to the legends, not to sacred scripture, to a masculine, not a feminist discourse.

The Madonna, it is vital to note, does not support an angel/demon view of woman such as that presupposed by Vicinus and Hyslop, a view which, in its construction of absolutely polarized oppositions, reveals itself as essentially unChristian. In her discussion of images of the Magdalene, Jameson is careful to emphasise that the Magdalene is "the impersonation of the penitent sinner absolved through faith and love" (SLA 202). For Jameson, the concept of sin is inconceivable apart from the possibility of redemption. Similarly, Eve cannot be considered without Mary: "the pendant to Eve holding the apple is Mary crushing the head of the fiend; and thus the 'bane and antidote are both before us'" (LM 51). Taken together these three female figures impersonate the Christian spiritual journey, with Eve's fall and Mary's virtue mediated by the Magdalene's repentance. Most important, because Jameson's Madonna is a moral model based on the life, recounted in scripture, of a real

woman, this image does not figure an angelic perfection beyond the limits of women's capability to attain.

In domestic melodrama, representation of the heroine's steadfast virtue as grounded in the details of her domestic existence performs a similar function. The heroine is less an angel than a Madonna, with a Madonna's virtues and all the capacities of the "maternal organisation" to empower her. Domestic melodrama, in representing the heroine as a Madonna in whatever form (orphan, beggar, widow, idiot, virgin) places her beyond the grasp of the chivalric knight. The hero's romantic strength is unnecessary, for domestic melodrama calibrates strength on a different-- a "higher" and "gentler" scale. Hence, the Romantic self-quester, seeking self-possession through consumption of the feminine, supplies neither motif nor model for the positive empowerment strategies most closely associated with domestic melodrama. Instead, the "fine vision" of Romanticism is limited in melodrama generally to the character of villainy.

Jameson asks why, when we look at Sacred or Legendary works of art, "the moment we refer to their ancient religious signification and influence, must it be with disdain or pity?" (SLA 6). This is one question which the feminist poststructuralist analysis of

the power relations between forms of melodrama and criticism has attempted to address in this chapter. With Jameson, this analysis concludes by pointing to the privileging of humanist concepts and values which inform "every liberal education." Criticism of melodrama has followed patterns of argument which are supposed to be based on universal standards, only to find, time and again, that melodrama evades definition within these patterns. In addition to rendering problematic critical discourse on melodrama, this chapter has sought to put forward an alternative discourse in which melodrama's concepts and values are reconfigured positively. Anna Jameson's work on Christian and Marian iconography offers a substantial basis for the development of the hypothesis that the feminist rhetorical strategies and arguments she deploys are also to be found in heroic and, especially, domestic melodrama. As we have seen, most criticism of melodrama is informed by humanism which privilege Man as a universal standard of worth--aesthetically, psychologically, and physiologically. Melodrama, on the other hand, when informed by protestantism, changes from a discourse implicitly privileging Man, to a discourse explicitly privileging Woman, as I have argued using Jameson's work. But although the

centrality of the Madonna in the sacred models allows Jameson to establish a feminist position, the centrality of the female character in domestic melodrama does not necessarily indicate a feminist configuration. Resistance occupies the same place as such empowerment strategies and, in the readings of five English-Canadian religious melodramas that constitute the following chapters, we will look closely at this power/resistance dynamic.

Notes

¹ In the Canadian context, Anton Wagner has observed:

Although knowledge of Canada's theatre history is based chiefly on thousands of reviews from the mid-eighteenth century to the present, dramatic criticism remains one of the most neglected areas of Canadian theatre studies. The belief persists that before the mid-1940s Canada had no competent theatre critics. (120)

Wagner's point is well-taken that this body of reviews needs to be looked at from the point of view of aesthetic paradigm(s), rather than just to discover who did what when. In terms of published academic criticism of Canadian drama, by far the greatest emphasis in both articles (almost all to be found in Canadian Drama) and books, such as Alan Filewod's Collective Encounters, is on post-1950s material. A key exception is found in two articles in Canadian Drama by Mark Blagrove dealing with nineteenth-century texts.

² In the 1980s and '90s, consideration of film and television rather than stage melodrama appears to predominate in the critical literature. This critique of melodrama is not taken into consideration in this study.

³ Some of the activities of interest to theatre historians include theatre architecture and construction, design and decoration of the auditorium, costuming, make-up substances and techniques including wigs and disguises, stage settings and furnishings, machinery for special effects, playbills and posters and other publicity devices, acting methods, theatre administration, compartmentalisation and professionalisation of backstage technical and artistic personnel, audience composition and behaviour, admission fee scales, concession stand sales, performance reviews and descriptions of all kinds. Documents examined by theatre historians include everything from archaeological data, to memoirs, to accounts ledgers. The focus of the theatre historical project, generally speaking, is the recovery and reconstruction of a broad range of the theatrical event(s) of an evening or an era. Studies, such as

Tracy C. Davis's and Bruce McConachie's, have begun to apply the theories and methodologies of semiotics to establish more complex connections between these kinds of data and the culture(s) that produce them.

⁴ John Russell Stephens, in his 1990 study The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800 to 1914, continues to use the pronoun "he" as a generic: "The dramatist's sense of himself as a professional and of his chosen career as a profession is largely dependent upon the respect which he feels for his work and the respect which his work inspires in others . . ." (xi). Even though the careers of playwrights such as Fanny Kemble, Susanna Centlivre, and Elizabeth Inchbald, among others, are detailed the use of the generic is--somewhat self-consciously, if implicitly--justified by Stephens in his observation that, although "[a]fter 1850 there was no shortage of female dramatic authors, . . . the majority were amateurs and few achieved any special distinction" (3). Sympathy is given to the (male) "hacks" of the East end and minor theatres who were unable to make a living from their work, however, and the blame ascribed to economic pressures and managerial greed rather than, implicitly, to their gender.

⁵ In his study English Melodrama, Michael Booth explicitly illustrates this view: "Neither have I considered . . . authors distinctly, for the reason that melodramatic stereotypes were so universal, no matter who presented them, that there was very little difference between the work of different dramatists" (5).

⁶ In the Canadian context, Michael Tait has observed:

Of all the branches of Canadian literature, nineteenth-century drama has received least attention for reasons that are entirely understandable. Formlessness, ineffective characterization, pretentious moral attitudes, lack of stylistic distinction, stupefying prolixity, together with other unfortunate qualities vitiate most of the serious attempts at drama in Canada between 1860 and 1914. . . . However, if none of these plays qualifies for close analysis as an autonomous work of art, they nevertheless hold a measure of interest. For one thing,

although unsuccessful in their entirety, a few of them show a degree of skill, poetic if not dramatic, in isolated sections. For another they reflect, in an oblique and singular way, the temper of the period. (5)

⁷ An interesting near-miss can be found in Robertson Davies' article:

The teaching of the Wesleys, which created nothing short of a revolution in the way in which the working and middle classes of society regarded themselves, was romantic in spirit, because of its insistence on individual spiritual responsibility, as opposed to the ministrations of the church. . . . Romanticism, the cult of the individual, expressed itself in the theatre in the form of melodrama, which concentrates on individual suffering, individual redemption, and the belief in an ultimate righting of individual wrongs best described as poetic justice. Melodrama is more 'moral' in the popular sense of the word than either comedy or tragedy. (93)

Wesleyan protestantism is interpreted here in terms of the romantic "cult of the individual," basing the connection not on a direct submission of the individual self to God, as indicated above, but rather on a celebration of self for its own sake. As we noted in the Introduction and shall discuss in detail in Chapter Two, romanticism, precisely because of this emphasis on the self, is fundamentally anti-thetical to melodrama's religious and moral goals.

⁸ In addition to Foucault's works cited above, especially The Archaeology of Knowledge, I am also indebted to the following works which inform my position: Hayden White's Metahistory and his articles "Historical Pluralism" and "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," Lionel Gossman's article "History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification," H. Aram Veesser's (editor) collection of articles on The New Historicism, especially Judith Lowder Newton's "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism'" on feminist methodological challenges to traditional history, and Linda Hutcheon's article "The Postmodern Problematizing of History." Hayden White's observation that ". . . a specifically historical inquiry is born less of the necessity to establish that

certain events occurred than of the desire to determine what certain events might mean for a given group, society, or culture's conception of its present tasks and future prospects" (1986, 487; White's emphasis) has been especially helpful.

⁹ Noting that "[t]he myth of our creation is a decidedly materialistic one, with the days of Canada's genesis reckoned in lines of boxcars and acres of wheat," William Westfall sees in our motto, A mare usque ad mare, the

bring[ing] together [of] a material vision and a spiritual vision that point in two very different directions. On the surface the words speak to the physical growth of Canada itself, to the well-known historical narrative of politics, railways, and tariffs, but buried beneath this materialistic ethos rests a deeply spiritual vision. The biblical passages [in which the motto is found] foretell a new type of society on the earth when the wilderness of sin and injustice will become the dominion of the Lord. (3-4)

It is this adherence to a strictly "material vision" of history as a discipline, which--I suggest below--has led to the theatre and literary historical displacement of nineteenth-century culture's "spiritual vision," which I see as fundamental to melodrama.

¹⁰ In the Canadian case, Davies' article suggests that the Canadian audience was also drawn "from the masses" (93), and that this audience preferred melodrama because the genre constituted "a prevailing spirit that influenced the way in which the nineteenth century looked at life and desired to see life presented in art" (93). Edwards, however, finds "reason to suspect that Canadians preferred to assume the role of passive observers" (3). Edwards' view is contested by Mary M. Brown, who finds that

[a]llthough touring companies from the United States regularly visited Ontario, its theatre managers and audiences were not the unwilling victims of American entrepreneurs and syndicates who dictated theatrical taste. Aside from the fact that it has never been possible to force audiences to see a show they did not wish to see, most Ontario theatres in the nineteenth century were

locally financed, owned, and operated. . . . Moreover, although the cause of imperial federation had a significant measure of support in the latter part of the century, theatre-goers were more interested in the product than in its point of origin, and Canadians accepted British, Canadian, American, or European plays and companies on their merits. (127)

While Edwards' study explicitly seeks out and fails to find a specifically Canadian drama (3), Davies' study--as literary criticism--and Brown's--as theatre history--both acknowledge the trans-national nature of the dramatic and theatrical enterprise for much of the century. Unlike either Edwards or Davies, Brown argues most convincingly for the discernment some kind of Canadian aesthetic from the selectivity of its theatre managers. An examination of the possible offerings and the selections actually made would make a fascinating and valuable study of nineteenth-century English-Canadian cultural practice.

¹¹ Rahill notes that the term was "borrowed from the Italians, who applied an equivalent term to opera" (121). James L. Smith in his Melodrama (1973) translates Rousseau's own definition of mélodrame as "'a type of drama in which words and music, instead of going together, are heard alternately, and where the spoken phrase is, as it were, announced and prepared by the musical phrase'" (1). The attempt to restrict, by means of the various material features of performance, what can be called melodrama serves a number of functions. The more reductively melodrama can be defined the more readily its origins can be fixed, its parts described, its influence traced, its demise confirmed and eulogized--in short, the more firmly both reader and critic can be assured that melodrama has been "done." The lack of book-length studies on stage melodrama after Peter Brooks's The Melodramatic Imagination suggests that the critical community in general concurs that the last word has indeed been said.

¹² Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador, for example, quotes George Daniels's introduction to Milner's The Hut of the Red Mountain: "'In Italy and France, wherever music without recitative is introduced to enforce passion, it is called Melodrame, as in the Pygmalion of Rousseau; but in England the term is common to all dramas of a mixed kind, in which are

frequently found tragedy, comedy, farce, and pantomime; singing, dancing, and combatting! [sic]"

¹³ I have seen this name spelled "Pixérécourt", most notably in Nicoll (1966, 81), but, although I have not kept a tally, I believe that the spelling which I have given in the study is the one most frequently used by scholars. This is the spelling used by Peter Brooks and Gabrielle Hyslop who concentrate on Pixérécourt's work exclusively.

¹⁴ While Pixérécourt seems to have reformulated Rousseau's idea of melodrama with the pleasure of the revolutionary classes in mind (Rahill 20, 42), evidence has been presented that melodrama attracted an audience composed of all classes. Peter Brooks observes that "the classic examples of French melodrama were written for a public that extended from the lower classes, especially artisans and shopkeepers, through all sectors of the middle class, and even embraced members of the aristocracy--including the Empress Josephine herself" (xii). However, Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador contradicts Brooks's view that "in England, melodrama seems quickly to have become exclusively entertainment for the lower orders, indeed, . . . for the mob" (xii) by arguing that English audiences "contained all the layers of society--from Queen Victoria herself to rowdy members of the industrial proletariat" (1979, 100). Booth offers a compromise position in his assertion that, for English melodrama, "its audiences came from all social strata, although its greatest popularity and support lay among the urban working classes" (13).

However, class labelling/distinction has been shown to be problematic, as Clive Barker's recent essay on English popular theatre observes: "the middle class audience is . . . an extremely diverse grouping of people of widely differing backgrounds, incomes, and tastes" (14). Only Barker attempts to describe in detail whom he means to indicate, however problematically, by a certain class label. Booth, especially, tends to oversimplify the class issue. Regardless of contradictory evidence and the vagueness of the class distinctions made, theatre historians tend to concentrate narrowly on the lower and, later, working class component of the "popular" audience and take for granted its negative impact on theatre as a cultural form. Some of the key issues raised by these various elements are discussed as the conclusion to

Part One.

¹⁵ Michael Booth argues that "sub-literate metropolitan audiences[']" psychological need for escape is the structuring principle of the dramatic writing of the period in London:

Their existence was monotonous, drab, and squalid; each person was only one of thousands like himself in ugly cities that were daily growing bigger. Condemned to anonymity in life and work, struggling on the borderline of poverty and starvation, it is not surprising that they sought excitement, forgetfulness, and a better world in their entertainment. . . . No matter how crude their work [the melodramatists] at least drew from the world around them. . . . " (60-61)

Additional aspects, including the implications, of Booth's psychological framework are discussed in Part Two of this chapter.

Robert Heilman also agrees that melodrama, as proper to mass entertainment, is constituted by "subliterary plays" (83). However, Barker points out that literature of various kinds, aimed at the so-called "sub-literate" working classes of the early nineteenth century, was widely available, including two journals exclusively devoted to the theatre (18-19). Further, Nicoll refers to the "democratisation of literature" (1966, 56). And, similarly, Rahill indicates the importance of "the printed word" as an influence informing Pixierécourt's development of the melodramatic formula (15). However, unlike Barker, Nicoll and Rahill do not connect literacy and the spread of informed opinion regarding issues of taste among the audiences of the time.

¹⁶ Davies' article implicitly attributes to a colonial mentality the continuing prevalence of melodrama on the Canadian stage into the twentieth century, effectively characterizing the entire populace of the nation as Lesser Men:

Changes in taste came slowly, and it would be difficult to discover any strong move towards the newer drama. . . . It was not until after the First World War that Canada made any perceptible move towards the newer sort of theatre, and even then the taste of an earlier day remained strong. Whatever we may read about nineteenth-century riots in

European theatres during plays of revolutionary tendency, the playhouse in Canada was a place of entertainment, little troubled by ideas but rich in feeling. (121) Davies' statement reveals the fact that while both theatre historical and literary approaches to melodrama focusing on British, French, and American examples illuminate English-Canadian examples, as well, there may be features of the genre's connection to the Canadian cultural context which remain unexplained.

¹⁷ Nicoll, however, points out that the distinction between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" repertoire was, in effect, a legal fiction long before these categories were formally abolished in 1843.

¹⁸ J.M.S. Careless brings some of these notions to the Canadian scene. In his reference to repertoire toward the end of the century, he implicitly invokes the notion of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" theatre, finding that Toronto's "Grand Opera House could and did offer professional drama of sound quality, if regularly copying that on the New York and London stage. . . . And if the audiences--and the Grand's competitors--frequently preferred minstrel shows and melodrama, these too were essential parts of the active contemporary theatre" (43). Further, Careless notes that "the process of technological and industrial change massed large working forces in the leading towns, people who had both the time and the need for organized public recreation: for the collective regular kinds of entertainment that theatre could provide," and also "mounting wealth for some and increased amenities of life and leisure for many more" (18). Providing royal patronage in the dominion, moreover, "from 1907 to 1911 the first national amateur dramatic festivals under the auspices of the governor-general, Earl Grey, gave widespread stimulus towards excellence and attempts at innovation. By 1914, at any rate, various modern drama--not just current superficial hits--was receiving growing attention, and a transition to a more sophisticated and venturesome theatre was under way" (49). Like the conservative position, both Davies and Careless share assumptions connecting poverty, lower/working-class status, and urbanization with melodrama and relative wealth, upper-class status, and suburbanization with "modern" drama. As part of the explicitly Canadian context, this progression is linked implicitly to Canada's transformation from colonial

backwater to fully realised nationhood.

¹⁹ Interestingly, reflecting the emphasis on touring in Canada during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Careless observes that "[t]he rise of major urban centres . . . supplied the prime focuses for theatrical audiences and enterprises, while the coming of steamboats, canals, and above all railways made those places increasingly accessible to American road companies or transatlantic stars--and in due course also to indigenous touring groups" (19). Unlike the London scene, the transportation issue here was to get theatre to the people, rather than people to the theatre.

²⁰ In the Canadian case, however, Edwards laments:

But in Canada there was no experimentation, nor was there any consistent attempt to give direction to the theatre. . . .

Unfortunately there were not a sufficient number of sophisticated and well-educated theatre supporters to create a demand for what the bourgeois considered questionable. There were too few people willing to accept the theatre as art. (170)

²¹ Barker's and Brooks's studies differ (as does Gerald-Lenton Young's work in the Canadian context) from the work of Nicoll, Booth, Bentley, and Heilman in that they broaden the basis of what may be considered theatre and drama in the nineteenth century for the purposes of academic analysis (street theatre and revues, for example). These additional forms are usually grouped, confusingly, under the heading "popular theatre."

²² Grimsted's apparent position at the end of his book, that melodrama is entirely valueless and meaningless, is stated in no uncertain terms:

The melodrama as a dramatic form was shot through with flaws. Its language lacked either honesty or poetry or purposive ambiguity. Its characters were devoid of either originality or complexity. Its plot threads formed a Gordian knot of ridiculous complexity which the dramatist finally cut by near miracle. Its structure was seldom thoughtfully worked out. Its ideals were

truisms, the more commonplace and widely accepted the better. Its avowed purpose was moral; and to abet this it set up ridiculous opposites of purity and pollution, innocence and guilt, with providence, in accordance with natural and poetic justice, granting the victory to the righteous. . . . [T]he world view that the melodrama supported, particularly when translated into personal terms, denied any complexity in man's character and situation. The power of the melodrama came from the tension it suggested between a threatening common reality and the perfect structure it upheld as a morally transcendent reality. (234)

The aesthetic assumptions evidently at work in this tirade are revealing. In fact this provides a catalogue in the negative of the primary features of Aristotelian aesthetics and presents the key ways in which melodrama can be seen explicitly to transgress this aesthetic. Additionally, as we shall see, this transgression can be seen to a great extent as primarily against Romantic configurations of Aristotelian aesthetics. Chapter Three develops this possibility in detail in considering Charles Heavysege's Saul.

²³ Grimsted devotes an entire chapter in his study to a description of the nearly universal denunciation of the early nineteenth-century American theatre. The reviewers, represented in his study as rational men of education and aesthetic taste, are considered, apparently both by themselves and by Grimsted, to be the natural aristocrats of American culture.

A similar case can be posited with regard to English melodrama, according to Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador's apparently comprehensive study of "Victorian theories" of melodrama. The reviewers represented unsurprisingly seem to have favoured a distinctly Aristotelian position that certain absolute standards of dramaturgy were in existence and that these were being flagrantly violated in the theatre of the day. Canadian reviewers of the period, on the other hand, have been accused of cheerleading:

foreign commercial interests . . . were interested in financial profit and, as melodrama appealed to most theatre patrons, it became the staple commodity. Canadians

became the receivers of some of the best and most of the worst American and English successes. The Golden Age of theatre in Canada, often referred to by reviewers, was therefore an artificial one: fool's gold, with little value. There was no substantial base. (Edwards 166)

This observation provides the complement of Wagner's note above. Like Grimsted's, Tetzeli von Rosador's conclusions about "the ideology of melodrama" seem to be singularly oblivious to the possibility that there also may be an "ideology" of criticism to be taken into account.

²⁴ Paradoxically, the need for "the directorial principle" would seem to have been necessary to order the production of melodrama, but not to order previous (neo-classical) forms. The implicit assumption here apparently is that for these earlier forms Aristotelian "Rules" of generic decorum were in themselves sufficient to guide the production and performance of a presumably well-established and conventional dramaturgy.

²⁵ Barker rather ironically notes that, contrary to Nicoll's and Booth's positions, this is, in fact, a portrait of the emerging middle classes.

²⁶ As we saw in Careless's comments above, in the Canadian case this repose was to be found in Earl Grey's "Little" theatre movement.

²⁷ Although he does not cite either Bentley or Booth, Davies observes that "the hopes and the fears and the unfocused terrors of our forebears show through the lace curtains of their plays . . ." (91) and that the drama "offered on the stage not what was observable fact, but a dream of what the audiences wished were true, spiced with enough contemporary fun to give it a spurious air of reality" (107).

²⁸ Of especial pertinence for application specifically to theatre and drama is Freud's article "Psychopathological Characters on the Stage." Freud sketches the spectator psychologically in much the same way that we have seen theatre histories formulate "him" sociologically: "The spectator is a person who experiences too little, who feels that he is a 'poor wretch to whom nothing of importance can happen',...he longs to feel and to act and to arrange things

according to his desires--in short to be a hero" (305). The (male) spectator desires personal power and identifies with the (male) "hero" who is in possession of such power and is, consequently, central to "world affairs." The powerless spectator "has long been obliged to damp down, or rather displace, his ambition to stand in his own person at the hub of world affairs" (305).

While for Freud the essence of all drama is the archetypal pairing of suffering and struggle, equally essential is that the spectator gain pleasure from his identification with the suffering and struggling hero: "[s]uffering of every kind is thus the subject-matter of drama, and from this suffering it promises to give the audience pleasure. Thus we arrive at a first precondition of this form of art: that it should not cause suffering to the audience" (307). Freud has formulated suffering in drama into a number of categories of conflict. One type of conflict, religious drama, Freud finds to be the earliest in man's dramatic chronology, that of a man against a divine force. The second, social drama, the result of skepticism, is the conflict of a man against society in general. The third category, which Freud calls character drama, finds a man in conflict with one other man (1942, 307-308). In literary analyses, these three categories are ascribed to melodrama as lesser, "externalised," forms of struggle.

Freud delineates two other categories. The fourth form of conflict, "psychological drama," is associated in literary criticism with an Aristotelian concept of the tragic hero: a man in conflict with himself, specifically with a flawed self that is recognized (Brooks 53; Heilman 90)). The fifth, and final, category, "psychopathological drama," characterises the "hero" as neurotic. This is the case when a man's ego struggles against repressed material. Freud is careful to indicate that the psychopathological character can only be dramatically viable if he becomes neurotic after the play begins so that the process and progress of neurosis can be perceived from its "cause" by the spectator (1942, 308-310). In this conflict, the "flawed," the true self, is recognized only by a spectator who is himself neurotic. Freud finds this latter type to be most characteristic of the modern hero.

29 Adele Holcomb's excellent work on Anna Jameson's career as an art historian demonstrates the extent of Jameson's influence. Specifically, apart from her books Jameson published extensively in periodicals, such as the Penny Magazine which was read by various social classes. Her work had a much higher circulation and, therefore, the potential for a much wider influence than specialist art periodicals. Holcomb states that:

Her 1853 review of Tom Taylor's Life of Haydon in the Edinburgh Review went to about 7,000 subscribers. Among the groups of periodical readers she addressed, this was one of the least numerous. An article titled 'Some Thoughts on Art. Addressed to the Uninitiated' in 1849 reached 15,000 subscribers to the Art Journal (which had grown hugely in the previous decade), the first long-lived specialist art periodical in England. The influential Athenaeum was a journal in which Jameson published fairly often; excerpts from Sacred and Legendary Art appeared in its pages, beginning in January 1845, to introduce the subject of a major publication before the appearance of the book. As was noted in another connection, the Athenaeum had some 20,000 subscribers in 1855. But by far the most widely read periodical for which she wrote was the Penny Magazine. Charles Knight, the editor, affirmed that this publication had 200,000 purchasers in 1832, but that the actual number of readers was around a million. If so, this amounted--astonishingly--to 6 per cent of the population of Britain at the time (16 and a half millions according to the census of 1831). . . . Jameson's books remained in print on both sides of the Atlantic for three-quarters of a century. . . [A]ll of Jameson's works would have been known to readers with any interest in the visual arts throughout the English-speaking world. (1983, 181-182)

Holcomb's research demonstrates that Jameson's ideas articulated in her studies not only were received, but also were accepted by a wide public.

³⁰ In his historical study, Nicoll separates English drama in the nineteenth century into two volumes, 1800-1850 and 1850-1900. His terminology in these two studies completely separates "melodrama" in the first half from "domestic drama" in the second half of the century. The dominant "domestic" trend, dissociated from melodrama, is then traced through the work of Jerrold, Robertson, Pinero, Jones, and Shaw as an organic movement toward the modern English drama of ideas and alienation (1959, 109-214).

³¹ A central difference between domestic melodrama and domestic drama implicit in traditional criticism is that, by means of the re-psychologizing of character in domestic drama, secular pro-masculine values have successfully invaded the domestic sphere. The impact of this dynamic is examined in Chapter Four.

³² The tone of such commentary aside, Grimsted's work proves again to contain some remarkably acute observations of the feminine in melodrama. Although the ambivalent attitude of the Church in the United States to drama and to theatre-going during this period is presented in his work in detail, nowhere is there an analysis of the connection between the heroine's femininity and its Christian and religious context.

³³ The argument could be made here (rightly) that, by ignoring Corneille's heroines, Brooks is performing a similar disservice to eighteenth-century French tragedy. The difference in impact--I suggest--is that heroines of the neo-Aristotelian stage represent unproblematically the pro-masculine humanist gender politics of this aesthetic. It is not enough simply to have a female central character on stage, as we shall see in Chapter Two. What makes the heroine of melodrama different from most previous--and subsequent--heroines is her centrality in a different aesthetic, one which promotes different values from neo-classicism, values not associated primarily with men because of their association with both domesticity and (protestant) Christianity.

³⁴ In much feminist criticism which uses the term, "patriarchy" has a range of possible references: the concept of God the Father; the patriarchs and scribes of Judeo-Christian religion; Church laws degrading women's relation to God; socio-economic structures which allow men control over women through

the laws of marriage, property, and the marketplace; cultural practice privileging the father/husband role in the family, and others. Generally speaking, the feminist concept of patriarchy assumes dualistic power relations where the Fathers dominate and women are oppressed accordingly. In this context, women's resistance is difficult to articulate in terms other than those of transgression, anger, futility, and victimization. Moreover, the alignment of power with the institutional discourses constructing, and constructed by, patriarchy often seems to be viewed as implicitly natural and necessary. Consequently, women tend to be characterised as have-nots in a system that is otherwise unproblematic. Women are seen as being liberated once these institutional discourses of power are available to them. In other words, such a view of the liberation of women from the oppression of patriarchy often does not necessarily presuppose radical systemic change.

³⁵ Recent feminist biblical scholars such as Mary Daly and Elizabeth Clark have pointed out the pro-masculine rhetoric in scriptural text and in Church theology. Nevertheless, the feminist attempt to work within Christian faith in the nineteenth century was historically necessary and a valuable phase of feminist theoretical work. On the other hand, feminist scriptural critique is not a uniquely twentieth-century phenomenon. In the 1880s, during and after the preparation of "The Women's Bible," a collective feminist critique of the representation of women in the Bible, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the first feminists to point out explicitly and radically the sexual/textual functioning of scripture (Kraditor 78-80). But Sylvia Wynter holds a view closer to that of Anna Jameson: "it is not, as Marx thought, the Earthly Family that holds the secret of the projection of the Holy Family. It is, rather, the reverse" (33).

³⁶ Brooks explicitly counters George Steiner's argument that the rise of Christianity since the seventeenth century culminated in a "fall" from tragic vision (Brooks 107). Brooks argues that Christianity during this period was overthrown as a "sense-making" system (16). Without debating the niceties of Steiner's argument or the conclusions he reaches, this study agrees with his assessment of the power relations between Christian and tragic dramaturgy.

37 The term "maternal feminism" has been developed specifically with regard to late nineteenth-century women's movements in English Canada. As we can see from Linda Kealey's definition of the term, its application has a wider potential:

'maternal feminism' refers to the conviction that women's special role as mother gives her the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere. It is not her position as wife that qualifies her for the task of reform, but the special nurturing qualities which are common to all women, married or not. In some senses maternal feminism de-emphasizes or subordinates personal autonomy in favour of a (relatively) wider social role. (8)

Implicit in this definition are Christian values, especially self-sacrifice. Christian feminist values are implicit in the view that women have a special, independent mission that is not marginal, but central to the Christian project. It should be noted that in the English-Canadian context, the concept was attacked by the invention of a derogatory term for the efforts of women to articulate and carry out this project: "national housekeeping."

Chapter 2

Feminism and Melodrama: Women Take Centre Stage

Have you ever stopped to think that the demand for the vote is only one little part of the great feminist movement that is sweeping the world today? Every woman in the world wants . . . her legitimate place in the universe which is only the family grown large. The walls of home have widened and widened until they include the city and the state and the world. It is her place in this big new home and family that woman is fighting for. You must help to win that place. You do every woman in the world an injury when you meekly submit to a slavery that belongs to the past. (Owen Cumulative Justice 3.1, 18)¹

The publication dates of Elizabeth Lanesford Cushing's verse drama Esther (1838, 1840), the only one of the texts studied authored by a woman, show that feminist adoption of the conventions of melodrama occurred relatively early in the genre's era of influence. These dates also show that women's own recognition that the conventions of melodrama could readily be made to serve a feminist agenda in fact precedes Clement Scott's sympathetic observations (noted in the Introduction) by more than half a century. We shall see also that the specifically protestant feminist agenda represented in Esther intersects in many ways with that theorized by Anna Jameson, especially in the privileging of female

presence in the representation of the protestant feminine.

The protestant feminist agenda drew upon customary gender divisions (noted in the Introduction) and highlighted them in ways that promoted the empowerment of women as part a fundamental aspect of the protestant project in general. William Westfall describes this project and its adoption in nineteenth-century Upper Canada/Ontario in the following terms:

As older cultures broke down, they were replaced by a new culture, which divided reality into secular and sacred worlds, held out the vision that the secular would eventually be transformed into the sacred, and called on the power of a strong set of moral norms and values to bring about this transformation. These elements formed the basis of the common Protestantism that impressed its authority upon Ontario society in the mid-nineteenth century. As always the new culture drew upon the old. The emotionalism of the sectarian tradition gave energy to the great Protestant crusade, and moral earnestness became one of the most distinguishing features of Ontario religious life. The establishment tradition also made an important contribution to the new culture. Central to the concept of an established church was the ideal of the Christian commonwealth. . . . Although the secularization of the state destroyed the institutional and financial foundations of this ideal, it did not destroy the ideal of a living Christendom. . . . Perhaps the new Protestant consensus itself held the power to transform Upper Canada into the garden of the Lord. . . . [I]t might be possible to forge a powerful religious world that could counterbalance the growing materialism of the Victorian age. Out of this union of church

and dissent was born the new forms of the Protestant culture of Ontario. . . . Born out of the failure of older patterns to explain the world, it had to define for Ontario Protestants a sense of place and time that would allow them to participate in both the secular and the sacred worlds. (124-125)

Because of the cultural assignment of moral regeneration and spiritual values to women, in large part through the Edenic/New Jerusalem connotations associated with domesticity, women such as Cushing were able to envision the agents of the sacred as embodied by women almost exclusively and thus the secular agents to be domesticated embodied by men almost exclusively. The achievement of the protestant project and the empowerment of women appeared, from a woman's point of view, as one and the same.

In Chapter Three, however, we will see how Heavyside's Saul specifically dissociates the protestant feminine from the female characters. Thus we will see that melodrama's deployment of the feminine as a key aspect of its empowerment as a protestant counter-aesthetic does not necessarily result in a feminist effect--the empowerment of women characters and/or spectators. In order to resist effectively the secular tradition's displacement and devaluation (feminization) of spirituality and the feminine, much of melodrama's protestantism tends to configure

spirituality in terms of a feminine which retains Man as its Subject in ways that often conflate the symbol of discursive empowerment--the phallus--with the penis. Consequently, for Man to be melodrama's Subject, men must be melodrama's central characters, a dynamic we shall see at work in Saul. •

Although other aspects of their agendas differ, as we shall see both Saul and The Crowning Test explicitly claim the discourse of spirituality for men only. This claim, supported by a corollary gendered separation of (and even conflict between) heroic (male) and domestic (female) spaces effectively disempowers the female characters to the point that they are represented as almost beyond discourse itself, as we have seen. Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite and "David and Abigail," along with Heavyside's characterization of David and Hammond's characterization of Sarah, moreover, will also show us that, according to these works, while men's spirituality either mediates or transcends worldly concerns, worldly concerns actually constitute the only site where women's spirituality may be found. As we shall see here, Cushing's Esther clears a space for women's discursive empowerment by disputing this hierarchical distinction not only between men's and

women's spirituality, but between men's heroic (public) and women's domestic (private) spheres of moral action. By retaining the Jamesonian notion of gynandrous models (Christ and Mary) of pacific virtue for men and women, respectively, and by noting that these models have the same moral goals to achieve in this world Cushing's drama questions the key assumption which makes the establishment of a hierarchy possible: that the spheres have mutually exclusive boundaries. Thus we shall see that Esther represents the notion of separate spheres more as a discourse of gendered difference rather than of opposition--much as Jameson does.

In so doing, Esther makes use of three characterizations which are considered by Michael Booth, among others, to be definitive of melodramatic structure. Aspects of these characterizations listed below will be returned to and examined in detail later on. Three main stock character types of melodrama--the heroine, the good old man, and the villain--can be identified in the drama. Esther's status as both heroine and orphan is also a typical feature of the genre (see Vicinus "Orphaned and Unfriended"). Speaking to her uncle, Mordecai, Esther remarks:

When I was left
A helpless infant on the world's cold breast,
Then was it thou, who with a father's love

Nurtured my orphan years--soothed all my
 griefs,
 And never let me feel what 't was to want
 A tender parent's care. (2.2, 42)

Mordecai portrays the "good old man" (Booth 30) who
 justly or unjustly initiates the action in much
 melodrama by sending the central female character out
 of the home and into the world:

My child, for years
 Thy smile has been the sunlight of my heart,
 Thy voice, the music I best loved to hear,--

. . .
 But duty often prompts us to forego
 Our cherished hopes, and yield to her
 control,--

. . .
 Full well thou knowest
 The edict is abroad through the wide realm,
 For the ingathering of its fairest maids.
 Fast are they thronging in,--but go thou
 forth,
 Bright in the peerless lustre of thy charms,
 Strong in thy purpose, and the prize is won;
 The crown is thine, thy people are redeemed,
 And songs of grateful joy shall greet thine
 ears,
 And blessings wafted from a thousand tongues,
 Make thy full cup of happiness o'erflow.
 (1.6, 22-23)

In addition to the orphaned heroine and the good old
 man, Haman, described by Memucan as "that dark
 Amalekite" (2.3, 48), is shown to be the "black"
 villain of Booth's description (20), revealing many of
 the characteristics of the villain as subversion of the
 tragic hero we shall see in Saul:

May the gods
 Aid my aspiring steps to climb that height,

Whence I may look on all who move below
 As creatures of my will, the passive tools
 Of my unbridled power.

I know my game, nor fear to lose the stake--
 The goal's in view,--ambition spurs me on
 To grasp the prize, nor rest I til 't is
 mine.

But yet I feel that neither earth nor heaven
 Can mar my purpose now; no living power
 Can check my bold career, that upward leads
 To that proud eminence where glory dwells.
 (2.1, 39-40)

As part of the contrast between the sumptuous palace (wherein the villain seeks absolute power) and the humble home (wherein the heroine has been schooled in virtue), Esther is first seen in a flowery bower--a feature typical of domestic melodrama's emphasis on village settings (Booth 120-121): "The court of an eastern house, filled with shrubs and flowers. A fountain in the centre, beside which sits Esther, a Jewish maiden" (1.6, 19).² As we shall see, each of these key features of melodrama is modified here so that their moral functioning is highlighted in ways that explicitly promote a protestant feminist agenda.

The highlighting process at work in Cushing's Esther can be revealed partly through comparison with the four dramas examined in the ensuing two chapters. At the outset, comparison with Saul proves most illuminating. While in Heavysege's trilogy the

power/resistance relations between tragic and melodramatic models of heroism are paramount and are carried through to the end, in Esther the tragic model is exposed as morally suspect and removed from the scene of action by the end of 1.5, allowing the remainder of the three act drama to be devoted to the explication of Esther's specifically feminist model of protestant heroism, as we shall see. While the tragic figure of Saul follows the male tradition set out, for example, in classical and Shakespearean models of heroism, in Esther the tragic figure represented is Queen Vashti. The model of tragic heroism Cushing briefly offers in the portrayal of Vashti illustrates that the qualities to be seen in Saul--pride, self-absorption, paranoia, obsession with status--are specific to the model itself and integral to the model's representation, whether by a male or a female character, and equally damaging to both. However, as seen in the portrayal of Clytemnestra in Aeschylus's Agamemnon, for example, Vashti's heroic status is represented as hierarchically subject to men's laws first, rather than to God's. This feature reveals a certain complicity between the tragic model for women and the secularization of melodrama's representation of the female central character to be outlined in Chapter

Four. It is important to note that while Vashti's character, actions, and fate represent in five scenes the cycle of a five act tragedy, in the beginning we are led to expect this cycle to be carried out by the male character (according to prevailing gendered convention), Ahasuerus (Xerxes), Vashti's husband, who initiates the tragic emplotment in miniature.

At the opening of the drama Ahasuerus ostensibly appears to be at the height of his power and has gathered together "the princes and nobles of his empire" to display the "pomp, and wealth, and majesty, at which / Earth's kings, ay, e'en its proudest ones, might bow / The knee, and sicken with pale envy" (1.1, 7). Considering his wife to be the most prized object in his possession, he summons her to appear before the banqueting guests:

. . . to reward your loyalty and your love,
This moment will I summon to our feast,
My peerless queen. Yes, valiant peers,
 princes,
And subjects all, you shall behold her
 charms,
Shall gaze with wonder on that priceless gem,
That lends its glory to my kingly crown,
And then confess how the great gods have
 blessed. (1.1, 9)

Here Ahasuerus exhibits the tragic heroic complement to the melodramatic qualities of villainy displayed in Haman's speech above: overweening pride, ambition, and

obsession with the material emblems of power. Just as Haman dismisses the resistance of any "living power," so Ahasuerus, dehumanizing Vashti by objectifying her through metaphor, remains oblivious to the possibility of resistance. The High Chamberlain, Harbona, reminds Ahasuerus that "the queen a banquet holds / E'en at this hour, within the palace walls, / Where all the ladies of thy royal house / Sit with her at the feast . . ." (1.1, 9), thus establishing a degree of equivalence between Ahasuerus's and Vashti's tragic heroic emplotments. Harbona exclaims aside to heaven that:

As soon wilt thou send down thy starry host
To grace this gorgeous banquet, as the queen,
The proud and scornful queen, with willing
feet,
Haste at the bidding of her royal lord,
To swell the triumph of his earth-born
pride. (1.1, 10)

The tragic heroic model applies to both king and queen. Yet, while Ahasuerus's flaw in judgement is the result of his own actions, Vashti's choices are drastically reduced by the constraints of a situation not of her own making: the subjection of women to men, queen to king.

Ahasuerus's prideful summons is met by Vashti's equally prideful refusal to obey. Calling the High Chamberlain a slave, Vashti muses on his report:

Unto the banquet hall, he said,
 Ye gods, forbid it! shame and pride forbid!
 A woman's shame! a woman's queenly pride!
 A queen, said I? Ay; yes, by right of birth,
 Of high unmixed descent . . . (1.2, 11)

Upon receiving the full report of Ahasuerus's request,

Vashti remarks:

Preposterous request!
 I did not dream that one on earth there
 lived,
 Who held his safety at so light a price,
 As thus to offer insult to my name!
 And can he think Vashti will heed his word,
 Who reckless of her fame, has summoned her
 To stand unveil'd before a gaping crowd
 Heated with wine, and let their jests profane
 Pollute her ear ne'er jarred by vulgar sound?
 No, Persia's queen stoops not to such
 disgrace!
 Depart, my lords, and bear my answer back,--
 Go, tell your king, that Vashti did not wed
 To swell the pomp and triumph of her lord;
 She has a spirit, that will not be chain'd
 E'en to the chariot-wheels of Persia's king,
 All-powerful as he is. Her free-born soul
 Was formed for rule,--great Cyrus was her
 sire,
 And no low thought, no act unworthy of him,
 Shall sully her proud name! (1.3, 13)

Vashti's role as a tragic heroine is confirmed by this evidence that her status is not borrowed but hers in her own right. It has not been attained by marriage but by lineage. Her possession of separate nobility and wealth is a key feature enabling the full achievement of the tragic emplotment, as we shall see.

Having publicly made his command to Vashti, Ahasuerus's loss of status at her resistance is public

as well. Concerned to reaffirm his position of absolute singularity in power, he seeks the guidance of his closest advisor, Memucan, who belies Vashti's expectation that:

The ruddy nectar of the purple grape
Has sent its fumes into thy monarch's head,
And when soft sleep has cooled its feverish
heat,
He will rejoice that his command was spurned,
Unworthy him, and insolent to me.
(1.3, 13-14)

Fearing that Vashti's response will become a model for rebellion, Memucan tells the king:

Nay, all his peopled provinces shall groan,
If her rebellious act unpunished goes.
Far, far abroad, its evil fame shall spread,
Till to the utmost verge of thy broad realm,
It shall be told by peasant, lord, and
slave;--
The shameful tale, which all might blush
to hear,
Shall be familiar as a household word,
And rouse up idle women, weak, and vain,
To grasp at rule, to spurn their wedded laws,
And brave defiance of their rightful lords.
(1.4, 14-15)

Unwilling to recognize that the origin of shame here is in Ahasuerus's initiating act of summons not in Vashti's resistance, Memucan plays upon the paranoia typical of the tragic hero, and constructs an analogy between a head of state and a husband on the one hand, and a subject and a wife on the other, advising:

That she be banished from his heart and
throne,
Since she has forfeited his royal grace,

And openly rebelled against his power.

Let this decree,
Be written in our law, that changeless law,
Which ever stands immutable and firm.
Thus may it best be known throughout the
land,
Teaching rebellious wives 't were wise to
give
Honor where honor 's due, and meek submission
To their wedded lords. (1.4, 15)

The suspect motives driving Memucan's manipulation of
Ahasuerus are clearly identified by the king the
following day:

Thou fearedst lest I should change;
Lest in a cooler hour, my angry mood
Should pass, and love return. Full well thou
knowest
That the inebriate wine had fired my blood,
And paralyzed my brain,--else had thy words
Fallen powerless to the ground, as they
deserved;
Thou didst not well to chafe me in such sort.
Because at home thou hast an angry wife,
Thou fain wouldst wreak the wrongs which she
inflicts,
On all of woman-kind. (1.5, 16)

Memucan's personal grievance, fully known by the king,
has clouded the political judgement of both. Not only
is Ahasuerus's key advisor shown to be less than wise,
but the king himself tries to blame the tragic sequence
of events on drink and bad advice. Upon learning from
Memucan that "She has departed, whither none can tell.
/ Soon as she learned thy will, with fierce disdain, /
And brow of angry pride, she called her slaves, / And
bid them quick prepare to follow her" (1.5, 16),

Ahasuerus still remains reluctant to take responsibility: "Ye gods, forgive my sin! But as for thee, / False, cruel man! 't is thou has wrought this deed . . ." (1.5, 17). Not until 1.8 is an acknowledgement by Ahasuerus that the initial error was his even implied: "My kingdom's wealth, my honors and renown, / I would resign,--all, all without a sigh, / Could I recall that act, that cruel act / Which drove her from my side" (32).

Although he is the key speaker at centre stage for the majority of these five scenes, it is Vashti, not Ahasuerus, who completes the cycle of tragic action. Vashti's departure can be seen as equivalent to the death of the tragic hero and Ahasuerus mourns her as if she were dead. By highlighting the traditional features of tragic emplotment through its simultaneous enactment by both a male and a female character, the five opening scenes of the drama demonstrate that it is an inappropriate model of heroism for both men and women. Thematically, these scenes show that the feminist project of equality cannot be achieved simply by women gaining the status and/or enacting the roles customarily held by men, whether in drama--by the female central character--or in life--by the female spectator. Furthermore, not

only are hierarchical power relations between men's and women's spheres of action shown to be reinforced by the tragic model, but the separation between the spheres is shown metaphorically to be irrevocably widened in mutual banishment/exile.

Most importantly, Ahasuerus and Memucan appear to have learned nothing from the incident, showing that the tragic model cannot work for the moral improvement of humanity. Memucan asks Ahasuerus to:

. . . mourn no more for her
 Who spurned thy love, and with such rash
 disdain
 Defied the power she was most bound to obey.
 All praise the act which drove the aggressor
 forth,
 And call it wise, expedient, and most just.
 Then in a nation's loud approving voice
 Find comfort for thy loss, and let my lord,
 Take to his bosom soon another queen,
 Whose beauty shall delight, whose gentler
 soul
 Shall soothe his cares and hush his vain
 regrets. (1.5, 18)

Memucan still sees Vashti as the aggressor and the king's shameful summons as a gesture of love arbitrarily spurned, and Ahasuerus offers no objection to this interpretation of the night's events. Further, both advisor and king see queenly duty as little more than a maternal role of care-taking. The perpetual maternal role implied here also implies the perpetual infantilism of the king, however, effectively equating

the portrait of tragic heroism with that of a spoiled brat caught in a gendered dynamic in which he is not allowed to grow up and become fully responsible morally. Although Vashti's independent social and economic status allows her to define herself apart from her husband and to remove herself from what she perceives to be an abusive situation, ultimately she is trapped by the excessive demands of this infant's discourse and is unable to assert herself in any guise except that as a mother who must supply that which is desired. The moment she refuses this role and claims a separate humanity she disappears from (tragic) discourse. Contrary to the position of contemporary criticism, as we saw in Chapter One, it is tragedy not melodrama that is shown to keep humanity in its infancy and, in the process, to excuse men from taking moral responsibility for their actions, and to entrap women in a dehumanizing model of perpetual maternity. The remainder of the drama presents a melodramatic emplotment which offers the equal achievement of adulthood--full humanity--and moral responsibility to both Esther and Ahasuerus who, to stave off disaster, must work side by side to do God's will.

Unlike Ahasuerus and Memucan who unself-consciously enact the pro-masculine gender politics

implicit in tragedy, Esther renders this dynamic explicit in three key speeches by reinterpreting the events from a point of view sympathetic to Vashti rather than to Ahasuerus. Esther's first speech in the drama refers to the events of the first five scenes by means of an analogy to the sportive boyish aggression exhibited by the lad Azor, who has just shot an arrow into a twig:

I marked it well, and thought 't were pity
 sure
 In wanton play to smite so proud a thing,
 That stood rejoicing in its airy height,
 Giving its resinous odors to the breeze,
 And quaffing from the sun's refulgent urn,
 Full draughts of light and life; while
 heaven's own dews
 Nurtured its growing beauty day by day,
 Till it became of yon majestic tree
 The very topmost glory and delight,
 The diadem that lent it regal grace,--
 And thou hast wrought its fall--in idle
 sport . . . (1:6, 19)

By likening the action of the boy Azor to that of the king Ahasuerus, Esther's speech both reinforces the concept of the king's infantilism and notes the perpetuation of this condition from generation to generation, from boys to men as a seemingly necessary component of masculinity. Further, the analogy of the twig alludes both to Vashti's fate in the recent past and prefigures Esther's crisis in the court of Ahasuerus in the future. As we shall see, the

analogy's dual function initiates the drama's representation of Vashti as a type of Eve and Esther as a type of Mary, conventionally considered to be the "second Eve, because through her came the promised redemption" (Jameson LM, xlviii).

In another speech, eschewing analogy, Esther correctly apportions blame:

Yea, cheerfully lie down as on a couch,
And there bare my bosom to the sacred knife,
If so my God ordains. Ah! rather far
Would I do this than scale that giddy height,
Whence I so late beheld one, bright and fair
As ever wore earth's proudest diadem,
Dashed headlong down, without one warning
word,--
The sport and victim of a tyrant's will!
(1.6, 22)

Esther's noting of the tyranny of the act suggests an acknowledgement that Vashti's independent status, her possession of a "diadem," did not empower her to keep her place but only to abandon it in the face of the absolute power of the king and the law of the Medes and the Persians. Just as such public trappings of power are empty for women, Esther's speeches also suggest that, devoid of its proper moral framework, private privilege through domestic bliss is a hollow refuge as well:

Remember her
Who like the morning star so lately shone
The very cynosure of happiness
And joy! Remember beauteous Vashti,

Queenly and gracious--oh, remember her,
 And for thy daughter dread such fearful doom!
 (1.6, 24)

In their sympathy with Vashti, these speeches serve to qualify Memucan's assertion that "All praise the act which drove the aggressor forth, / And call it wise, expedient, and most just," which may signify that, if women along with men constitute "a nation's loud approving voice," then women are complicitous in the performance of the unjust act which led to the exile of Vashti. Thus the suggestion may be present that tragedy is a discourse in which feminist action is impossible. After all, it is Esther, a woman from another "nation" having a differing moral framework (articulated within a different genre), who alone shows solidarity with the wronged Vashti.

Memucan's advice to the king seeks to perpetuate the tragic dynamic of the infantilised king/maternal queen and yet also to avoid the repetition of a tragic emplotment by finding a "gentler soul" who will not rebel against her role. This soul is to be selected according to the needs of the ever-desiring "eye" of the infant:

. . . each shall be brought to thee,
 That thou mayest choose from out the
 assembled throng,
 The maiden fair who pleases most thine eye,
 And seems by nature formed to fill the place

Once graced by the fallen Vashti. (1.5, 18)

Once again we see Memucan's fundamental inability to see that Vashti did not fall as much as she was pushed. The characterisation of Vashti's tragic emplotment as a "fall" is a traditional metaphor, however. When this metaphor is placed within a Christian rather than a secular framework it offers an interpretative context which illuminates the protestant feminist agenda of the drama. The first is a metaphoric reference to the fall from the Garden of Eden. Unlike traditional Miltonic interpretations of the fall, which Eve is seen to cause through inherent female weakness, Cushing's representation shows that Vashti and Ahasuerus partake equally of the sin of pride which leads to their mutual downfall. Indeed, as Esther's speeches imply, Ahasuerus is represented as having been first deceived into sin by the cunning Memucan:

Weak that I was,
To list thy cunning arts;--they've wrought me
wo,
And desolation dire. My sun has set,
My bright resplendent sun, that shed its rays
Benignant o'er my path, and lighted up
My world with love, and hope, and ecstasy.--
(1.5, 16)

Reflecting their mutual fallen state, the king notes that Vashti has "Gone forth to exile, lonely and uncheered!" (1.5, 17), while he himself soon goes to

war and returns with "o'er-wearied ear / Deafened with jarring sounds of bloody war" (1.8, 32). Further, like Adam, Ahasuerus can be seen to enact the role of a representative of wandering mankind before the coming of the Messiah: the king makes an error in judgement, finding the villain Haman "wise, and brave, and good" (2.3, 49), leading to an error of action:

But for these Jews,--I scarce can bring my
heart
To work them harm--and yet, thou sayest
there's need.
Thou wouldst not urge me to an unjust act,
For thou hast ever shown an earnest wish
That my fair fame should suffer from no deed
Unworthy of a king. Therefore, I fear,
I must decree the fall of this strange race.
Long have I viewed them with a lenient eye
And yielded them protection . . .
(2.4, 52)

Thus he has supplanted a flawed advisor, Memucan, with a villainous one, Haman, who leads Ahasuerus (against his better nature) to decree "an unjust act" of proportionately greater evil: the extermination of God's chosen people. Lacking a proper moral framework to which to affix his judgement and action, the king becomes increasingly a dupe to the self-interested, even vicious agendas of his advisors. The establishment of a parallel between tragic emplotment and a Christian interpretation of the flaw suggests that heroic pride can be seen as an original sin, the

fall from power as a fall from grace, and the vacuum generated by the death of the tragic figure as the wandering in the wilderness of a people in search of a truer spiritual guide. But while the tragic emplotment can only repeat the fall in perpetuum, the protestant alternative of melodrama allows the cycle of suffering to end when a figure is found that can lead the people back to grace: a messiah. In Esther, as in much melodrama, the heroine--the second Eve--is this figure.

Unlike Heavyside's Ahinoam and Michal, Lampman's Abigail, and Hammond's Sarah, as we shall see, Esther has power in her own right, derived from her moral framework, which mediates the duty she owes to her husband and household. Her status in the drama is not dependent upon that of Ahasuerus or Mordecai; unlike Vashti's it is not derived from either any material wealth or bloodline but from her personal spiritual purity which is her own achievement and responsibility, a fundamental tenet of protestantism (Westfall 76-77). Unlike the Jael we shall see in Booth's drama but like Jael of the biblical story, moreover, Cushing's play--against received interpretation of the Book of Esther--suggests that Esther's role as the deliverer of her people is the direct fulfilment of prophecy, thus establishing an

unmediated personal link between God and believer.³

Mordecai tells Esther that:

This heathen king is lenient to our race,
And many favors may be wrought for us,
Perchance, deliverance from our irksome
bonds,
By a most weak and humble instrument,
Whom God shall raise, and station near the
throne.
Nay, Esther, start not--by that changeful
look,
I see thou read'st my purpose. Say'st thou,
yea?
Or dost thou with a maiden's timid fears,
Shrink from fulfilling the high destiny
To which by Heaven thou'rt called?
(1.6, 23)

Jameson notes that Esther, unlike Jael in either case, is conventionally considered to be a type of Mary (LM xlviii), as mentioned above. The importance of Esther as a type of Mary cannot be overestimated, for it is through the deployment of this connection that Esther--the female central character, the heroine of much melodrama--is rendered into an explicitly feminist portrait.

The function of prophecy here can be seen to parallel a key event in the life of Mary: the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel of God's choice of Mary. Thus Mordecai's role as the "good old man" of melodrama is inscribed on that of the prophet. In sending her out into the world he assures Esther that:

Thy bliss made up of love and innocence,

Shall change to holy triumph, to delight
 Pure and exalted as the angels know.
 Deem not I lightly sever from my side
 The cherished flower so long my pride and
 care,--

That I can calmly see it borne away,
 Nor feel the glory of my garden gone.
 But self must yield to duty's higher call--
 And in the silence of the midnight hour,
 Such visions dawned upon my dazzled sight,

 . . .
 Mine too were full of promise and high hope,
 Which none can e'er fulfil--save only thou!
 Do then my bidding--yield thee to thy fate,--
 God's fingerpoints the way as visibly
 As did the fiery pillar, when it led
 Through the dark wilderness our wandering
 sires. (1.6, 25-26)

Jameson tells us that "flowers were consecrated to the Virgin" and that "[t]he ENCLOSED GARDEN . . . I have seen . . . very significantly placed in the background of the Annunciation, and in pictures of the Immaculate Conception" (LM xlvii). Midnight is the conventional hour assigned to the birth of Christ (Jameson LM 204) and the "fiery pillar" is akin to the image of the burning bush, which Jameson notes, was "introduced, with a mystical significance, into an Annunciation by Titian" (LM xlvi). While Cushing's rendering of Mordecai's arguments and Esther's responses may remind us, as we shall see, of Heavyside's representation of the initial encounter between Samuel and David, the imagery is strictly Marian and thus the gender politics distinctly pro-feminist feminine.

Similarly, matching David's reverence for Jesse, yet also connoting "[t]he STEM of Jesse, figured as a green branch entwined with flowers" often in found in representations of the Virgin (LM xlvi), Esther responds that:

. . . my father's heart!
 That is the only empire which I crave.
 For there I can maintain my queenly state,
 Without a cumbrous crown to press my brow,
 Within whose jewelled circlet lurk sharp
 thorns
 That pierce the maddening brain--wear such
 who will--
 I ask no richer diadem than this
 Which crowns me now, woven by Azor's hand,
 Of buds and simple bells that drink the dew,
 And cool my temples with their balmy breath.
 (1.6, 21)

Preferred over the crucifying crown, the "simple bells" here may refer to the bells of the lily of the valley: "[a]s the general emblem of purity, the lily is introduced into the Annunciation, where it ought to be without stamens" (LM xlv). As David himself comes to realize, Mordecai reminds Esther that: "The God who reigns above oft chooses weak, / The weakest even, and humblest instruments / To work his will" (1.6, 24). Here the material weakness often ascribed to women in both religious and secular contexts is appropriated to justify women's empowerment within a protestant feminist framework.

Mordecai's worthy arguments notwithstanding,
ultimately Esther seeks direct spiritual solace and
affirmation from God:

My father, this doth ask for deeper thought,
Earnest and high, and commune with my God.
I go to seek his aid, his grace implore,
And when the conflict of my soul is past,
I will come forth and tell thee my resolves.
(1.6, 28)

This deliberate and private act of meditation and
prayer distinctly differs from Heavyside's David's
public statements of his understanding of God's will.

It is important to bear in mind as well that
Esther is herself a deliverer and a redeemer and David
is not: it is the line of David which will provide a
redeemer. Esther and David's paths diverge in the
nature of their appointed tasks. In fact, in the
imagery used by Mordecai, Esther's is represented as
closer to that of Christ's than David's, which reminds
us of Jameson's gynandrous models of Christ and Mary:

All wear the chains, the galling chains of
slaves,--
And thou alone canst free them. Thou, the
chosen,
The appointed one, the ordained of heaven,
And raised to greatness for this work alone!
(1.6, 24)

Like both Christ in Gethsemane and Mary consulting
Elizabeth, Esther undergoes a trial of faith when she
learns that in order to intercede in the decree against

the Jews, advised by Haman, she must approach Ahasuerus unbidden and risk her life, according to a decree advised by Memucan:

But 'tis not death I fear, that thus I shrink
From Mordecai's behest. It is the dread
Lest, by fatal risk, I forfeit power
To aid him in worse need at future time,
Should need again occur. (2.7, 58)

Upon learning of Esther's decision Mordecai questions her faith and thus helps to recall her to her duty, and its prophetic origins:

My people shall not die, if Esther's prayers
May aught avail to save them from such
fate,--
Nor shall proud Haman triumph in his
schemes;
The pent up whirlwind soon will burst in
might,
To hurl him to the earth. (2.10, 66)

As part of a number of parallels in the emplotment, Esther consults Zobeida, her companion (just as Ahasuerus consults Memucan regarding Vashti and Haman regarding the Jews), who gives her bad advice: "Abide in safety here." Having regained her steadfastness, Esther later remarks to the fearful Zobeida:

This all-sufficient, all-enduring faith,
Sustains me in this hour, and gives me
strength
To go where duty points; content to die,
If God ordains, yet with a lowly heart,
Looking for aid, whence only it can come.
Yea, in this moment when he hides His face,
I will implore one little ray of light,
To chase the gloom which lowers above my
path. (2.10, 68)

The characterization of Esther through her own words resists any attempt to render her a type of Mary as a divinity to be worshipped (associated by Jameson with Catholicism [LM xvii]) and favours instead a type of Mary as a historical woman, whose life (because it was really lived) provides an achievable model for protestant womanhood. Marian iconography, constantly deployed, reinforces the connection between the female central character of melodrama and a pro-feminist feminine protestant discourse.

We have already noted that Esther is first seen in a flowery bower and that such a setting is typical of the village settings of much domestic melodrama. These settings connote the symbol of the enclosed garden, "an image borrowed . . . from the Song of Solomon" (Jameson LM xlv), as mentioned above. In lieu of the material reminder of a stage setting, Esther must constantly invoke verbally the customary visual imagery:

I praise Him ever, when the rising morn
Sends light and beauty through the wakening
 earth,
And when the evening dews gently distil,
And the fair moon with all her host of stars
Come forth to keep their silent watch above.
And dearest father, 'mid the temple's pomp
My prayers and thankful songs ascend to Him.
But in the quiet of my own dear home,
My purest offerings on his altar rest,--
For there my cup o'erflows, and my full heart

Pours forth its grateful tribute for the love
Which in a thousand forms blesses my life,
And crowns each day with joy. (1.6, 25)

Not only is there a reference here to Mary's early life in the temple (Jameson LM 154-156), but the key Marian symbols--sun, moon, and stars--are present. Jameson points out that "'Electa ut Sol, pulchra ut Luna,' is one of the texts of the Canticles applied to Mary; and also in a passage of the Revelation, 'A woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars'" (LM xlv). Others see her in Marian terms as well. The lad Azor feels her absence:

. . . oft at twilight's hour, as here I sat
On meditation deep, the fountain's flow
Seemed like the murmurs of her gentle voice,
And all that ministered to sense or soul,
All objects and all thoughts,--the perfumed
 flowers,
The evening song of birds, the insects' hum,
The gorgeous clouds of heaven, the starry
 hosts,
The rosy beam of yonder planet fair,
And the unrivalled beauty of the moon,--
Have whispered to my inmost heart of her,
Who once in happier days blest with her
 smiles
Our home, and shed around a beaming light
On all that since is dark! (1:9, 35)

Jameson notes that the rose "is the rose of Sharon . . . and as an emblem of love and beauty, the rose is especially dedicated to her" (LM xlv). Two other important images connoted above are "The WELL ways

full; the FOUNTAIN for ever sealed; . . . these are attributes borrowed from the Canticles . . ." (LM xlv). Azor's description of the departed Esther reminds us of this description of the heroine of melodrama by Grimsted:

The heroine was always a fair woman, though this "was the least of her attractions," the outward sign of an even greater inner beauty. "Soul, sense, sentiment, sensibility, and a noble mind" all rendered her "an object too dazzling bright for men to look upon with aught but mental adoration." Such a "vision of blessedness" had a definite social role: "angelic woman" was to be a "mansion of peace," "the greatest happiness of man," and "an influence strong of virtue." (173)

These terms are virtually identical to those used by Westfall to characterise the protestant sphere of women and the home. Both Grimsted's heroine and Westfall's sacred sphere provide the context for Mordecai's description of Esther:

She has gone forth strong in her heart's pure
faith,
Invincible in virgin innocence,
And guarded by the arm of Israel's God.
.
.
.
in God's pure eye,
She is a stainless and a holy thing--
By her renouncement of each selfish thought,
Her singleness of heart, that to one end,
One noble purpose, led her forth to dare
The obloquy or plaudits of the world,
Indifferent to each, so she achieved
Her nation's safety from besetting foes,--
She is so purged from every taint of earth,
So spotless white, that naught dare e'er
assail
Her heaven-born purity. Whate'er her fate,

Untouched she stands . . . (1.9, 35-36)

Thus the heroine of melodrama is rendered virtually as a portrait of the Marian immaculate conception. Jameson notes that:

[i]n the eleventh century it was proposed to celebrate the Conception of the Virgin Mother of the Redeemer. . . . It was contended, that having been predestined from the beginning as the Woman through whom the divine nature was made manifest on earth, she must be presumed to be exempt from all sin, even from that original taint inherited from Adam. Through the first Eve, we had all died; through the second Eve, we had all been 'made alive.' It was argued that God had never suffered his earthly temple to be profaned. (LM 43)

Supporting this interpretation, Esther's central point of resistance to her duty as Mordecai outlines it to her is that it robs her of her chance to be Mary in fact:

And wilt thou give me to a heathen prince?
 . . .
 And rob me of that dear and cherished hope
 Precious to all of David's royal line,
 To whom the promise came,--that from his seed
 Should spring the Saviour destined to redeem,
 And lead to glory our enfranchised race--
 Ah! canst thou crush this hope? Canst thou
 endure
 With cruel hands to rend the tender bonds
 Which knit me to my kind, and cast me forth
 An alien from my people and my home?
 (1.6, 26)

Not only does Esther here contribute to a succession of prophecies, including that of the "Cumean Sibyl" (Jameson LM xlix), which the reader knows to have been

fulfilled, she confirms her status as a type of Mary and, hence, as a type of the second Eve with the power to redeem the first Eve, the fallen Vashti.

Thus the qualities of virtue exhibited by the heroine of melodrama which are considered ridiculous by virtually every commentator on the genre can be seen to be not only justifiable but inevitable when seen within the religious context to which they clearly belong. Further, from Westfall's description of the (gendered) protestant project, the function of melodrama's heroine--to re-affirm the sacred rather than the secular as the world's prevailing configurative power--the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are tied to the re-affirmation of the domestic sphere as the site of the sacred. The pairing of Esther as heroine and Haman as villain can be seen above in both Haman's and Mordecai's use of the word "prize" to describe the ultimate goal of each. The content of Haman's prize, secular power and material wealth, and that of Esther's prize, continuance of her lowly estate rich in spiritual blessings, define their relationship as analogous to the project of the sacred to transform the secular.

Haman, as villain, deceives and betrays both Ahasuerus, his dupe, and the Jews, the undeserving

targets of his thwarted pride. He receives an appropriate end, dying on "that fatal tree" originally erected by him to hang Mordecai (3.6, 97). Importantly here, as in much melodrama, the heroine does not directly kill the villain. Esther commands Ahasuerus:

Ah, stay thy hand, my lord!
 Stain not the victor's sword with the foul
 blood
 Of such a cruel heart! He plead for life.
 All guilty as he is, he did but ask
 For mercy at my hands. Return that blade,
 Bright and unsullied to its golden sheath,
 To reap a conquest worthier of its renown.
 (3.6, 96)

The secular sphere is required to recognize and punish its own, by law. Ahasuerus commands: "Slaves bear him hence, and on that gibbet black, / Prepared for one wh[o] shall assume his state / See that he meets a traitor's just reward . . ." (3.6, 97).

Esther's only request to Ahasuerus is: "wilt thou not reverse that stern decree / Sent forth against my race? dooming them all / To the relentless sword of their fell foe" (3.6, 100). Unable to do this, Ahasuerus decrees that the Jews are to be warned about the imminent attack and to be allowed to arm (3.6, 97). Celebrating their victory, Esther says to Mordecai: "Low let us bow, and ever dedicate / To him alone this glad victorious day. / In praise, and prayer, and humble thankfulness, / Let it be kept" (3.7, 101).

This last speech by Esther in the play, initiating the on-going festival of Purim, may also remind us of the coronation of the Madonna, the last event in the life of Mary, represented by Jameson as "the lowly woman lifted into immortality" (LM 328). The replacement of the mother of sinning humanity--Vashti/Eve--by the mother of redeemed humanity--Esther/Mary--results not only in the redemption of God's chosen people--the Jews, though ultimately the Christians--but in the release of Ahasuerus from bondage of another kind. In achieving moral responsibility and thus adulthood, he adheres to his final advisor, Esther.

The epigraph to this chapter offers important insights into a feminist positioning of the heroine in much melodrama, including Esther. The speaking character, Mrs. Sutton, takes for granted that women's sphere of the home is the larger, more significant, and more powerful space. Its power is evident in that it has expanded to global proportions and now everything--all other (men's) sites of power--are within its borders. The past and current notion that women must leave their tiny impotent sphere of the home and enter the wider world of male-dominated and male-defined power relations is countered by this women-centred statement. What Mrs. Sutton sees, however, is that the

power relations of this otherwise superceded world now threatens women within women's own domain. As the sphere of home has expanded, breaking down boundaries, its function as a base for women's empowerment has been weakened. The gendered power relations outlined in Esther offer a strategy to counter this threat.

Esther's domestication of Ahasuerus's values, courtly protocols, and laws is an enactment not only of an adamant refusal to submit to the obsolescent slavery imposed on women by men's self-serving notions of domesticity (which would come to be exemplified by Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House"), but also of an evangelical determination to reinscribe individual men, along with their institutionalized identities, according to the terms of a pro-feminist feminine discourse. In the drama the pagan condition can be equated with the masculine condition, both of which must be reinscribed by the sacred. Thus the religious conversion process performed here is distinctly feminist insofar as it is predicated on a protestant feminine fundamentally informed by female presence. In loving the person of Esther, the pagan Ahasuerus comes to love the virtue she embodies: "thy noble love / Above all jealous thought, that overlooks / The trival [sic] circumstance of sect and clime, / And virtue

loves for its pure sake alone" (3.7, 100). Esther, in effect, treats the individual man as a mission field in miniature. Through the deployment of this strategy, Esther expands the boundaries of home not only to envelope the man, but also the state and the world and, at the same time, throws off slavery by claiming her rightful place of empowerment in this newly defined home, a feminist Christian commonwealth.

In Chapter Four I will argue that late in the nineteenth century much of the structure of melodrama was appropriated, emptying the genre of its protestant investment so that a reactionary pro-masculine gender politics could receive the sanction of its shell. The revitalisation of a secular tradition in drama at this time arguably can be seen to form a gendered response less to protestantism's pro-masculine feminine gender politics and more to its pro-feminist feminine gender politics, especially that at work in much domestic melodrama, the century's dominant dramatic form. In Chapter One we saw that both contemporary criticism and reviews of the period acknowledge, implicitly or explicitly, that both heroic and domestic melodrama's female central character often offered a potentially empowering model of womanhood to the female spectator of the time. We will also see, however, that some

melodramatic forms, such as that found in Heavyside's Saul, resisted this feminist effect. By way of contrast to both early modernist and melodramatic resistances, this chapter has presented an analysis of what I see as an explicit articulation by a woman playwright of the feminist potential of much melodrama's protestant assumptions, interests, and values.

Notes

¹ Here in the third act of Martha Owen's four act play Cumulative Justice copyrighted in 1913 Mrs. Sutton exhorts her daughter Louise to attend a suffrage march against her husband's wishes. The "slavery" Mrs. Sutton refers to in the passage quoted is that of a wife submitting to a tyrannical husband.

² Booth cites John Howard Payne's Clari, the Maid of Milan (1823) as an example of the contrast between the village setting and the urban setting in domestic melodramas having exotic settings. The song "Home, Sweet Home" written for this play emphasises the theme, and "Clari sings it sadly at the palace" where she has been detained by Duke Vivaldi (120-121). In Esther a similar contrast is presented.

³ Esther herself mentions the fact that the events of both the biblical story and the play take place when the God of Israel "hides His face" (2.10, 68). Nevertheless, the idea of the fulfilment of God's word, as revealed directly to Mordecai in visions and confirmed in Esther's meditations, is fundamental to the play's feminist project in establishing Esther as a type of Mary, the second Eve, as we shall see below. Further, the notion of direct communication with God (see Westfall's chapter on Revivalism) and of prophecy were important aspects of protestantism:

In the early nineteenth century, interpreting prophecy was a popular Protestant practice. The Rev. William Paley, for example, argued that prophecy was one of the most important evidences of Christianity because the fact that all prop[hecies] were always and completely fulfilled proved beyond doubt the reality of God and the truth of scripture. People often read the meaning of everyday events in prophetic terms. "There is a moral meaning," said The Church, "in the day's minutest event." (170)

Esther's reference to God's absence after the lengthy establishment of the direct intervention of God in the life of Esther, ordaining her deliverer of her people, serves to highlight her special status in the story and its protestant context in the play.

Chapter 3

Alternative Heroism in Charles Heavysege's Saul¹

What of the Past remains to bless the
Present?
The memory of good deeds.
But what of great ones? Ambition to
ambition leads,
And, each step higher, but cries,
'Aspire,'
And restless step to restless step
succeeds.
What is the boasted bubble, reputation?
To-day it is the world's loud cry,
Which may to-morrow die,
Or roll from generation unto generation,
And magnify, and grow to fame,--
That quenchless glory round a great man's
name.
What is the good man's adequate reward?
Sense of his rectitude, and felt beatitude
Of God's regard.
--Charles Heavysege, "Sonnet XX"²

Charles Heavysege's trilogy Saul offers us the opportunity to trace melodrama's reconceptualisation of the hero away from a humanist and toward a protestant model.³ These three dramas represent the main events concerning Saul's kingship and David's emergence as a leader narrated in 1 Samuel. The conventional protestant acceptance of David as a type of Christ authorises Heavysege's representation of him as a

distinctly protestant model of heroism privileged above the model of Romantic tragic heroism typified by Saul.

While the physical setting of Saul is rarely literally domestic as it is in domestic melodrama, the trilogy's promotion of protestant heroism relies upon the concepts and values of domesticity, characterised by David, in rendering problematic the humanist model of Romantic tragic heroism.⁴ As we shall see, the power relations articulated by domesticity, and within which the two representations of heroism function, undermine tragic heroism through parody. Saul's rationality, wilfulness, and self-consciousness simultaneously are highlighted and subverted in the trilogy, along with other conventional characteristics of the tragic hero. Through parody the protestant moral framework of the trilogy reveals that the transcendental status of the Romantic Self is illusory.⁵ Deprived of transcendent meaning--and thus power--the authority of tragic heroism and its humanist concepts and values are displaced.

Promoted instead is the moral framework of the protestant model of heroism. David's alternative heroism--I would suggest--disrupts and fragments all aspects of the trilogy's tragic discourse. As we shall see, David is represented consistently within the

domestic framework of the protestant feminine. He is shown to be a beautiful, angelic, home-loving, beardless youth, who excels in musical arts and whose faith is utterly passive in its humility and complete surrender of will and self to God's purposes. To privilege the feminine elements desirable in protestant Man, David's emotions--providing a contrast to Saul's passions--are highlighted: he weeps without shame and expresses his feelings openly. He forgives and spares Saul repeatedly. However, as discussed in the Introduction, the presence of the protestant feminine does not necessarily indicate a feminist gender politics. Indeed, we shall see that any potential feminist effect is entirely displaced in Saul. One key feature of this displacement is David's usurpation of the central place usually occupied in melodramatic discourse by a female character--the heroine; another is the use of images and metaphors of the female body to signify a power associated with women which seems to threaten humanist and protestant discourses alike.

The trilogy generally promotes the gendered power politics of the protestant feminine over those of the tragic tradition, yet seems to resist any possible feminist interaction between the representation of the feminine and the woman reader/spectator. As we shall

see, because it is separated from its conventional representation by the female central character, the protestant feminine is limited to its pro-masculine function. The gender politics at work in the trilogy seems to enact the struggle, outlined in the Introduction, between protestantism's pro-masculine feminine and feminist feminine within the genre of melodrama itself in its heroic and domestic manifestations, respectively. Heavysege's trilogy, privileging conventions more closely associated with heroic melodrama, but written in the second half of the nineteenth century when domestic melodrama was prevalent, resists the feminist effect available in domestic melodrama.

Because of these interpretive challenges, this study considers Heavysege's Saul a most rewarding example of nineteenth-century verse drama. Most traditional criticism, however, has left largely unrecognized the work's complex articulation of its genre's gendered power politics. While the work received a generally positive critical response during its author's lifetime, twentieth-century criticism has tended to be harsh. Sandra Djwa's overview of previous criticism and her own commentary, by way of an introduction to the University of Toronto reprint of

Saul, encapsulate some of the tensions between melodrama and traditional criticism which we examined in the previous chapter. In her commentary, Djwa emphasises the influence of the Bible, Shakespeare's Macbeth, Milton's Paradise Lost, Alfieri's Saul, and Byron's Cain on the rhetoric and themes of Heavysage's Saul, which she considers to be a single work (xiv-xxv). As a result, she aligns Saul not with melodrama, but with "the Romantic revival of heroic drama." The trilogy's strategies of resistance to this tradition, I suggest, force Djwa to conclude negatively that instead of adding to this tradition, Saul rarely emerges from the derivative (xv). Because the provenance of Djwa's commentary is the "Literature in Canada: Poetry and Prose in Reprint" series, moreover, we find that it is also part of an apologetics, this time of nineteenth-century English-Canadian literature generally. She notes that "Heavysage was limited . . . not only by defects in taste occasioned by temperament and by a constricted intellectual background, but also by the absence of a supportive cultural milieu" (xxxix). We see the position of the author of melodrama described here in terms similar to those used of hack "theatre writers" (Nicol 1930, 74, 81) by Nicol, Booth, and Grimsted. Because of the author's alleged limited

access to the cultural institutions of humanist aesthetics, from the point of view of traditional criticism his work cannot articulate such an aesthetics adequately enough to be considered 'great' dramatic literature.

Specifically, Djwa finds that Saul represents the conventional Romantic conflict between good and evil. Saul's character, she argues, "ultimately becomes satanic" (xxiii). The reader may be reminded here of De Quincey's formulation of the evil protagonist: "'there must be raging some great storm of passion . . . which will create a hell . . . within him; and into this hell we are to look'" (qtd. in Richardson: 6-7). Djwa's use of Aristotelian tragic terminology, "hubris" (xx), to describe Saul's "spiritual pride" (xi) specifically defines this view of the protagonist as tragic. That Heavyssege attempts to fit the "Luciferian sin of disobedience" into a "traditional religious cosmos" (xi), therefore, is seen to undermine the coherence of the work's aesthetic framework both as Romantic dramatic poetry and as tragedy. Thus Djwa's commentary implicitly suggests (rightly) that the protestant moral framework, in which God [is] an active and interventionist power who continually transform[s] people and the affairs of the

world" (Westfall 41), is a central cause of Saul's inability to articulate fully the Romantic model of tragedy (xxv).

In privileging the Romantic model of the tragic hero as an evil satanic rebel, the mainly pro-Romantic framework of Djwa's argument is evident. But the good side of the manichaeian dualism her argument infers remains largely unexamined and, hence, may be presumed by the reader to be much less important. David's role in particular is mentioned briefly, and then only as adjunctive to that of the Prophets (xxiii), or parenthetically (xxv). Djwa's position that the work fails in originality and universality in articulating Romantic concepts and values, to which it is perceived as being heavily indebted, actually identifies not the trilogy's weakness, but its strength.

Coventry Patmore observed that Heavysege "takes not virtue and morality, and their opposites generally, . . . but these under the single aspect of their dependence upon spiritual influences.'" He notes, in addition, that "'[l]ike most of Shakespeare's plays, this drama has the appearance of being strangely chaotic . . . until the moral clue is found'" (qtd. in Djwa: xi). His analysis of Saul would seem to be consistent with a protestant perspective. Unlike the

Romantics, he finds morality, and not psychology, to be the most important structuring principle in Shakespeare's work. Consequently, undermining Romantic manichaeism, he is able to perceive that "the spiritual" mediates good and evil thus placing Saul in a moral framework in which the concepts and values of the protestant feminine, such as faith, emotion, intuition, and penitence, have worth and power.

Largely because of seeming similarities between Saul and Romantic dramatic poetry, traditional criticism seems uncertain about the trilogy's relation to theatrical performance. Heavysse's work usually is considered to be a single, and singularly unworthy, "closet" drama. Historical and biographical evidence, however, suggests an alternative point of view.⁶ The theatrical viability of Saul was recognised at the time of its publication, for there is evidence that Heavysse was preparing an acting version as early as 1860 (Djwa xlvi). In 1876 a script was being planned in which Charlotte Cushman was to play Malzah (Djwa xxxviii). In March of 1862, Heavysse gave a public reading of Saul in Montreal's Nordheimer Hall (Djwa xxxviii). As recently as 1973 Peter Haworth prepared for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation a two-hour condensed version for a radio performance, which, Djwa

notes, "not only succeeds dramatically but has undeniable rhetorical power" (xxvi). The drama's potential on the stage as well as textual evidence suggest that Saul fits within the genre of melodrama.

In terms of textual evidence, the three dramas which comprise Saul frequently indicate theatrical practices associated specifically with the early origins of melodrama. "First Part" stage directions indicate that Saul, while prophesying, is to speak in "recitative" (1; 1.1, 11) and that the Prophets, responding, are to chant "in chorus," as do the demons observing them (1; 1.1, 12, 13). Saul also sings a four-verse "air" (1; 1.1, 14-15). These stage directions bring to mind theatre historical references to Rousseau's use of the term "mélodrame" to indicate the alternation of music and speech in his Pygmalion (Smith 2) and, indeed, to the importance of music generally in melodrama (Brooks 48; Booth 36-38). In addition, the convention of the interrupted fete, found in both nineteenth-century opera and ballet (Brooks 48), is evident in the opening scene of the "First Part." The dancing and singing of the demons is interrupted by the prophesying sequence (1; 1.1, 9-16). The type of theatrical conventions specified early in the first drama seem to suggest that the trilogy's

theatrical framework corresponds fairly closely to that of early melodrama, identified in criticism as heroic.

In addition to these references in the stage directions to theatrical conventions of early heroic melodrama, in the "First Part" reference is made to some Aristotelian aesthetic concepts and values rendered problematic by heroic melodrama. When Saul and the Prophets approach, Zaph advises his fellow demons to "be decorous: / There seems a pretty farce before us" (1; 1.1, 11). The use of the word "decorous" here may be a reference to the dramaturgical conventions proper to the various 'legitimate' genres, for the concept of decorum is central to neo-classical aesthetics (Cuddon 179-180). The authority of the concept is undermined, however, because the demons are untrustworthy critics: they refer to the solemn procession of Saul and the prophets as a "farce." Thus the demons' remarks both invoke and subvert Aristotelian rules governing genre distinctions.

In addition to elements of melodramatic theatricality, sentimental concepts informing the protestantism of the trilogy appear early in the "First Part." The Third Demon sarcastically refers to the conventional signs of sentimental sensibility: "This is doleful"; the fourth Demon concurs: "I'm in tears" (1;

1.1, 11). By aligning sentimental aesthetics with "farce" the demons are not only indecorous but also incapable of comprehending the morality informing sentimental sensibility. The term "sentiment" is established in its proper genre and moral contexts, however, later in the same scene by the angel Gloriel. Gloriel's "sentiment" indicates right judgment divinely empowered through the "moral sense." Remarking "If my sentiment be true," Gloriel detects "the fallen crew" (1; 1.1, 16). Gloriel, an agent of the protestant moral framework of the trilogy, is a trustworthy commentator who is invested with power over the demons (1; 3.1, 54-55).

These are some of the structural and rhetorical strategies that seem to substantiate critical consideration of Saul as a form of heroic melodrama rather than as a Romantic tragedy. The presentation of these strategies to the reader/spectator in the opening scenes of the trilogy signify their central importance to the interpretation of the trilogy as a whole. Patmore's notion of a "moral clue" helps to identify in Heavysege's work--as the moral fable does in Lillo's--the configuring centrality here of what I have been calling melodrama's protestant counter-aesthetic. As part of melodrama's aesthetic politics, the

characterisation of Saul can be seen to be not that of Romantic tragedy's hero, but that of this hero's parodic other--melodrama's villain.⁷ The following discussion of the various elements of Saul's characterisation develop this interpretation. Because of this doubled framework of melodrama's representation of villainy as a parody of Romantic tragic heroism, moreover, we shall see that the trilogy is indeed an "'exceedingly artistic'" (Patmore qtd. in Djwa xi) work.

The parodic transformation of the Romantic tragic hero into the melodramatic villain traceable in Saul's character is achieved through the sharp delineation of those attributes conventionally presumed to be essential to the 'great man' as tragic hero. Structurally Saul occupies the central place in the trilogy: he has the most lines and his actions shape the plot. His impressive physical presence may denote that, in theatrical terms, he is to be central visually as well. While these conventional aesthetic attributes of Aristotelian tragedy are rendered problematic in the trilogy because they turn out to be morally deceptive, the main subversive feature of the characterisation of Saul simultaneously as tragic hero/melodramatic villain is Saul's own psychological adherence to Romantic

concepts of will, Self, and the power relations between individuals, and between the individual and God.

Saul not only articulates but embodies the interdependent secular concepts of power, masculinity, and the Self. Physically Saul's presence is majestic and is appropriate to the conventional tragic concept of the hero/king. The First Hebrew observes that "Taller by th' shoulders and upwards than the crowd, / He moved; . . . / From every point he was conspicuous" (1; 1.4, 23). The demon Zepho, initiating the interrogation in the trilogy of the value of such physical impressiveness, describes Saul as "one whose height and port / Declare him of superior sort" (1; 1.1, 9). Because physical excellence and moral excellence are equated by the untrustworthy demons, we perceive, even this early in the "First Part," that the main function of the demons is to play 'devil's advocate' by inverting protestant values in favour of traditionally Aristotelian/humanist ones.

Saul is described by Hebrew onlookers as a "towering stranger," a "tall stranger," a "gigantic figure," as "eminent o'er all, with haughty port," and "Like some great purpose" (1; 1.1, 10, 16, 17). Both the demons and the Hebrews are impressed by the external signs of kingliness and, hence, do not

question his moral fitness. However, his body is a key site upon which Saul builds his Romantic illusion of masculine self-possession. Saul's body becomes a male icon of the power of individual self-consciousness. The identification of the Self with the male body works subversively, as we shall see, to depict Romantic transcendence as moral vanity.

Such vanity and its distortion of the moral sense are shown to be especially significant in the relation between Saul and Goliath in the "Second Part." Heavysage's Goliath is gigantic, boastfully proud, fiercely combative, and convinced that he is invincible (2; 2.2, 3, 4 142-158). The character of Goliath can be seen to be an image of Saul's true Self, a Self nearer to Goliath's pagan concepts and values than to those befitting a king serving the Hebrew God. Saul's view of Goliath reminds us of his exclamation in the "First Part": "Oh, that I had myself been a Philistine!" (1; 2.7, 49). Goliath is described by a Hebrew soldier as a "rhinoceros," a "hyena," and a "wolf" (2; 2.2, 145), building a parallel with the increasingly brutalised nature of Saul. Contemplating the head of Goliath which David presents him, Saul finds that "Pity now moves within me, and I feel / A solemn reverence at the sight of that / Fine relic" (2; 2.6, 163). Saul identifies

with Goliath to the extent that, in effect, he excuses Goliath's paganism, thus implicitly excusing his own disobedience: "We all are evil-doers; and should justice, / Vindictive follow us to the courts of death, / All entering them would certainly be cast" (2; 2.6, 164). Further, Saul remarks that "It were wise, nay just, / To strike with men a balance; to forgive, / If not forget, their evil for their good's sake" (2; 2.6, 164). Hence Saul sees God as responsible both for the creation of an inherently evil humanity and a corrupt notion of justice, which would absolutely condemn Goliath, a mighty warrior, as evil. Through the juxtaposition of these passages, we can see how Saul appears to speak from a position compatible with both tragic wisdom and the protestant moral framework of the trilogy: he speaks of mercy, forgiveness of one's enemy, of essential goodness, and he speaks of himself as an essentially good man. Yet implicit in his lament over Goliath is the suggestion that for Saul, as we shall see, humanist concepts and values alone are capable of reconfiguring humanity and justice as good and merciful, respectively.

As Patmore notes, however, the idea Saul presents to us, that he is a good man unjustly displaced by the treasonous David, is potentially

confusing until we identify the moral clue. Saul is a good man only in secular terms. In these terms, moreover, Malzah the demon and Goliath are also good men. Saul's concept of the good man is universalised to the degree that it is morally meaningless. With humanist Man's reason and will elevated to the level of a configuring power, concepts of good and evil paradoxically become relative to whatever men wish them to be with the result that good is equated with whatever enables self-empowerment.

Saul's elevation to kingship is achieved when he is anointed by Samuel immediately prior to the opening of the "First Part." The conventional celebratory status of this event is subverted as various onlookers reveal that Saul's kingship is cause for sorrow and fear rather than joy. Such feelings stem from the promise that Saul will conform absolutely to secular concepts and values traditionally associated with kingly power. The Elder reports "That our king should be / Exacting and despotic" and that "hard prerogatives" outlined by Samuel "were rather / Foretold by the grieved prophet, than ordained; / As though the king should don them with his crown, / And wear them as his true and natural garment" (1; 1.3, 19-20). Fulfilling Samuel's words in claiming his kingly

rights, Saul demands: "Shall I forego the pomp and state wherewith / A king is ever surrounded?" (1; 2.1, 37). Although Saul is anointed by divine directive, his actions as king, including his concern with the material trappings of worldly power, are represented explicitly as conforming to human ideas of kingship not God's.⁸ The Third Hebrew observes that "Samuel told us that we had rejected / God's rule in asking for ourselves a king" (1; 1.4, 23). The Elder recalls the wishes of the Hebrews: "'Let us be governed like to other peoples; / Let a king rule us in the days of peace, / And lead us to battle in the hour of war.'" He then laments that "Heaven has granted our inordinate wishes" (1; 1.3, 20, 22). The burden of tyranny is shifted early in the "First Part" from God to the people. Consequently, the Romantic view of God as an amoral tyrant found in Byron's Cain, for example--and the pessimistic determinism of much tragedy--is subverted early in the dramas (Djwa xxv) by the revelation that tyranny is a strictly secular concept applicable only to human society. The Hebrews are indeed being ruled "like to other peoples." Instead of being oppressed by a capricious God, the people are oppressed by their own impetus towards a secular world view.

Despite Malzah's invasion of him, Saul represents kingship as properly signifying the power of the Self: "I am but a puppet, not a king. / Kings are supreme and uncontrolled, but I / Am under horrid slavery to a being / That I despise and loathe" (2; 3.2, 188). Resisting such "harsh subjection" to "the possession of a demon," Saul exclaims: "it is not these corporeal pains-- / Though they are past description-- that unman me; / But 'tis the horrid o'erthrow of my mind, / My will's harsh subjection, that doth humble me" (1; 5.7, 111). Malzah's possession of Saul's mind and will and consequent disruption of Saul's mental processes, while making strivings after self-possession impossible, nevertheless do not inhibit Saul's self-consciousness. The curtailment of Saul's self-delusion of autonomy, by showing the power of a force beyond the Self, effectively reveals that the idea of a transcendent Self is fallacious.

It is important to note that, even in these passages where Saul exclaims against the horror of the effect of Malzah's possession and shadowy presence, little fear of Malzah himself is shown either by Saul or by other characters who are with Saul at such times: Abner, Ahinoam (his wife), David, and the Physician. We are introduced to Malzah before Saul specifically so

that, having been entertained by his comic antics and forewarned by the angel Zeletha's command to him to possess Saul (1; 5.6, 108), the supernatural element is made familiar and both the moral issues at stake⁹ and the aesthetic parody remain the proper foci in these passages. The demon possession of Saul establishes the parodic relations between the Aristotelian aesthetic and melodrama's counter-aesthetic, and this is shown in the "First Part" of the drama.

Before his first possession by Malzah, Saul leads the people into war, acting on his own initiative. Here the specifically secular model of Saul's tragic heroism--and, hence, the source of his villainy--is made explicit: "Not now enquiring of the Lord. Say, Abner, / Say, art thou not afraid to follow one / Who leads you in his own unaided might?" Abner's reply shows that Saul's villainy in large part constitutes and is constituted by the transformation of the Hebrews into a nation that promotes secular concepts of power:

. . . full many a field we've won
Under thy banners since no sacrifice
Them consecrated, or divine assurance
Gave to our people courage not their own,-
People, not soldiers; for thou art the first
Who made in Israel soldiers, and hast bidden
Them follow war and learn it as a trade.
(2; 1.3, 136)

Saul agrees with Abner that the Hebrews' military inadequacy is a result of dependence upon religious ceremony rather than on gaining not only military skills but the concepts and values which will benefit the people--Saul argues--by making them independent of the priesthood and self-reliant as a nation.

Until the status of secular nationhood is achieved, for Saul the Hebrews remain:

The vulgar to whom courage is not native,
And who have not acquired, by proud
 traditions,
The fear of shame and dainty sense of honor,
Must by religion's rites obtain the valor
Which best is carried ready in the heart.
 (1; 2.3, 41)

Conventional images of heroism, such as the sense of tradition, fear of shame, and sense of honour, displace spirituality from the "heart." Both Saul and Abner deny spirituality by denying the divine referentiality of "religion's rites" and thereby denying the reality of the "valor" obtained by the Hebrews by means of these rites.

In the chronology of the trilogy, as an aspect of both his heroic downfall and supreme villainy, Saul increasingly becomes like the pagan Philistines and the rebellious demons who value perceived material images of power over felt spiritual forces. This materialisation of power is one function of the gender

politics operating between the humanist and protestant positions in the trilogy. The attributes of character and culture which Saul finds to be worthy in Goliath and the Philistines constitute, and are constituted by, distinctly pro-masculine concepts and values. Saul seeks to transform the Hebrews, characterised as feminine, into a masculine, military nation; war will give the Hebrews "scope to prove you men" (1; 1.4, 24). In addition, Saul declares that God shares his gender politics: "He shall assist me to transform the Hebrews / Into men, they who, till recently, were children" (1; 2.1, 36), reminding us of the link between infantilism and feminization in the rhetoric of disempowerment. Saul's view of masculinity does not include qualities of the protestant feminine such as emotion, spirituality, and domesticity.

Such qualities are equated by Saul and Abner with weakness. Told of his army's defection and reluctance to fight during a major campaign, Saul remarks to Abner: "thy words do half unman me, / . . . I never deemed them heroes, but so soon / To fall a-trembling doth indeed enrage me" (1; 2.4, 43). The Third Officer tells Saul that "Some have e'en over Jordan beat retreat / To Gad and Gilead, and the remainder / Tremble like women" (1; 2.5, 44). For Saul

and Abner, then, material empowerment is both explicitly secular and pro-masculine. Indeed, the spiritual and feminine attributes of religion are perceived by Saul and Abner not as benignly other, but as potentially emasculating.

Because Saul's self-empowerment is connected inextricably to his masculinity, he cannot regain his faith without losing these fundamental aspects of his sense of Self. He fears that any subjection of his will will "unman" him. Hence, faith means not only loss of power, of masculinity, but also the death of the Self. Near the end of the "Third Part" we find that Saul is unrepentant of his decision not to seek the priests' sanction of his campaigns, even though he attempts the language of repentance:

I fear to fight this last and greatest host,
Without some sacred sanction; and repent
Now, more than with my old and fixed remorse,
The slaughter of Nob's prophets, though they
were
Fomenters of rebellion to a man.
(3; 6.3, 297)

His "old and fixed remorse" continuing to be inadequate, the priests, having anointed David as Saul's successor, still are considered by Saul, despite his spiritual anguish, not as performing God's wishes but as treasonous plotters seeking to dispossess him of his kingship and all it signifies to him.

Thus Saul's wish for "sacred sanction" is more superstitious than religious, for he does not really believe that the priests are God's spokesmen: "what I am, I am because I've scorned, / Not God himself, but the haughtiest hierarchy / That ever sought to be paramount i'th' world" (2; 1.3, 137).¹⁰ Saul has reached this conclusion "by fearless thinking. It is magic; / 'Tis Samuel leagued with the remnant of the sorcerers" (2; 3.2, 189). Such "fearless thinking" leads him only to superstition and paranoia.

Saul's continuing spiritual blindness--his adherence to secular concepts of power, masculinity, and the Self--reveals that tragic wisdom, constituting and constituted by these concepts, is essentially fallacious and fundamentally villainous. Elevating Man's capacity for reason and will to an equivalent position with the mind of God and the product of reason and will to the position of truth shows that tragic wisdom is little more than vanity from a protestant aesthetic point of view. To its close with the death of Saul, Heavysege's trilogy continues to represent, by means of a subversive interrogation of the tragic model of heroic kingship, that the Romantic view of the relation between the Self and transcendent power articulates a false moral vision.

For instance, Saul attempts to define death solely within the humanist model of tragic heroism. With life characterised as total consciousness, death becomes its opposite. Thus Saul declares that "death is but unconsciousness" and asks:

What is there in this life, that men so love
it?
What afterwards, that men should so fear
death;
For we have conscience here, and what can we
Have worse hereafter? (3; 5.8, 282)

For Saul, however, conscience is not the means by which we discover moral error, but simply an instrument whereby a malicious God mercilessly goads his creature. A villain to the end, Saul does not receive that moment of guilty enlightenment often associated with the death of a tragic hero. He uses the passive tense, disclaiming moral responsibility for his actions: "How am I changed!--how am I turned, at last, / Into a monster at itself aghast!" (3; 6.10, 325). Saul's recognition of his monstrousness is not connected with repentance, or the acceptance of God's will, or with an idea of how his life has participated in the working out of a divine plan. Thus it would seem that it is precisely because he dies a tragic hero in a protestant framework that he remains unenlightened. Within the

framework of protestantism, Saul's last statements have the sound of wisdom, but not the substance.

Theatrically Saul's death is typical of that of an embattled tragic hero/king: he "[f]alls on the sword and expires" (3; 6.12, 328). It is atypical in that no eulogy is given over the body; there is no praise of Saul. Except for the Armour-Bearer's one line and death, the final text given is a stage direction: "The Philistine cavalry sweep across the scene, and carry off the corpse of Saul" (3; 6.12, 328). Thus the final theatrical image is of Saul as one of the Philistines. This lack of any summation and the disruption of the sense of closure by the stage direction adds to the position that the trilogy only appears to fulfil the tragic aesthetic, while actually providing a critique of it and suggesting--through the characterisation of David interwoven with it--an alternative model of heroism.

Saul's tragic career is a corollary less of abstract ambition than of lack of faith in God's goodness--the measure of his villainy. Once such faith is lost, the secular Self must devise its own morality, the self-reflexivity of which seems to guarantee self-empowerment. Zoe, Saul's guardian angel, indicates this is the case with Saul:

On Saul himself be all the blame.
 Saul could not more attention claim:
 A stronger influence from me
 Would have destroyed his liberty.
 His fault was found in his own heart:
 Faith lacking, all his works fell short.
 (1; 4.6, 96)

Instead of faith, which he sees as requiring the surrender of power, masculinity, and Self, Saul prefers to carry the "valor" of heroic tradition in his heart. With a moral system based on faith displaced from his heart in favour of a moral system based on secular values, Saul's choice renders all his other choices morally problematic.

Saul's vanity ascribes to God a moral framework based on values that are in fact Saul's own. Finding that God's actions do not support this moral framework, Saul feels shaken in his faith in God's, not his own motives: "my strong heart, that gladdeth to endure, /
 Faltereth 'neath its misgivings . . . when it thinks /
 That the Almighty greater is than good" (2; 1.3, 138). Saul's lack of faith is atheistic insofar as he turns away from what he perceives to be an amoral God. Consequently, since Saul has determined that it is he who is good, the obstruction of his ambitions is blamed upon God's amorality, not on his own morally flawed choices.

To preserve his idea of the transcendence of his self-conscious Self, Saul cannot accept that another moral system exists that does not have him and his interests at its centre, even though Samuel tells him that "by thyself discrowned, / Dethroned, thy throne now given unto another / Whom God hath chosen, a man after his own heart" (1; 2.7, 48). Here Heavysage explicitly sets the two moral systems--humanist and protestant--at work in the trilogy side by side, with their relative worth clearly indicated. Saul's fulfilment of the humanist model of the tragic hero as king is not the model of heroism which God carries in "his own heart" for its villainy is clear. The next phase of God's plan for the Christian redemption of humanity is seen by Saul as God's treasonous disloyalty. Within his own system, Saul takes the place of God, while God is assigned a Luciferian role, seeming thus to tempt the Hebrews to weakness and self-destruction in the wars against the Philistines. In the subversive commentary on the humanist model of tragic heroism articulated in Saul, the metaphor that a king's position with regard to his people is like God's with regard to humanity is revealed to serve the interests of humanism. In Saul the king who is most

conventionally king-like is the one most outside a protestant system of concepts and values.

Saul views human society as desacralized, in the sense Brooks uses, insofar as secular concepts and values are represented in the trilogy as having infiltrated and undermined the previous cohesiveness of universal piety. However, in Saul this desacralized condition leads the secular group not only into conflict with other Hebrew individuals, but to alienation from God, and from nature as well. Saul finds that, without "Godward leanings," increasingly he is unable to differentiate human society from the natural world of animals, which for him reflects the chaos of bestial passions rather than the order of a divine plan. Consequently, instead of elevating humanity to the enlightened level of humanist Man, Saul's secular values ultimately reduce humanity to brutishness, for reason and will no longer serving faith become like passions. Saul, in military defeat, can only characterise the plight of the Hebrews in terms of an animal nature:

Will they allow us, like to a breathed hare,
Spent, to return and repossess our form?
 . . . must we
Discover some dark den on Lebanon,
And dwell with lions? or must we with foxes
Burrow, and depend on cunning for our food?
 (1; 2.8, 50)

As the dramas work through the chronology of biblical events, Saul's view of human nature, voided of the spirituality which would allow him to identify its essential orderliness and goodness, becomes increasingly pessimistic: "To hunt and be hunted make existence; / For we are all or chasers or the chased" (2; 2.5, 160). Saul's view indicates that his moral sense has been displaced absolutely by a specifically Darwinian rationalism.

While Malzah does not cause, but only exacerbates Saul's condition, his occupation of Saul's mind and the consequent disruption of Saul's thinking reveal Saul to be vulnerable where he thought himself to be most strong: the self-possession of his own will and reason. Early in the "First Part" his condition is foreshadowed in that Saul's character is described by onlookers as that of a "tiger" and a "lion." But in the "Second Part" these terms are no longer indicative of qualities of strength and power but of Saul's own brutalised condition. The Second Officer observes of Saul that: "He looks more cruel than a tiger / When it hath couched it for the fatal spring" (2; 2.7, 171). During Saul's main bout of demonic possession, David says to Ahinoam, Saul's wife: "Fear not for me, although his majesty / Is even as a chafed and

senseless beast; / Should he again his lance against me wield, / Again the Lord will be to me a shield" (2; 3.2, 185). Malzah's possession proves Saul's self-possession to be illusory. Hence, such self-possession's power to configure a valid moral system is rendered suspect.

Saul's reliance upon reason and will means that, when these are undermined, alternatives, such as those denoted by domesticity, are not available to him. Early in the "First Part" the humanist model of tragic heroism is represented as a set of power relations suppressing the domestic sphere, wherein the configuring power of the protestant feminine is privileged. In the "First Part" Saul's antagonism to domesticity is established. Unlike David, Saul sees his "unprofitable" "herdsman's life" as a "rural dull routine" and as a "servile round / Of household duties, same from year to year" (1; 1.2, 17-18). He leaves this realm gladly: "Now herds and flocks, a last adieu: / Men are, henceforth, my flock, my pasture Canaan." Associations with the conventional view of Christ as a good shepherd are subverted, however, by Saul's restless impatience with the humble life and eagerness to abandon it for military and political power. The paradoxical comparison is reinforced by the First

Messenger from the beseiged Jabesh Gilead who declares that Saul is "our deliverer that shall be." Saul reassures him that "I will succour you" from his position of newly seized power (1; 1.5, 26).

Saul's spiritual blindness allows him to remain oblivious to the significance of differences between himself and David. Because Saul is unable to perceive David's essentially spiritual nature, he makes his comparison upon external evidence only. Near the end of the "Second Part," Saul thinks that his position and David's are equivalent and that the threat he poses is strictly political:

I once was but a herdsman, as he lately
Was but a shepherd. The several distances
Between our first conditions and the throne,
Are equal; and Samuel hath withdrawn from me
Disloyally, whilst half the people's hearts
Go with him wheresoever he doth lead them.
May he not lead them to this martial
shepherd? (2; 3.5, 196)

That Saul was a reluctant herdsman and David a contented shepherd, that Saul is the king of the people's choice and David that of God's choice, that Saul's disobedience caused Samuel's withdrawal, and that David's martial engagements have been fought on Saul's command--these are all elements that undermine Saul's summation of their power relations. Because of these differences the reader/spectator perceives that

Saul's reason continually leads him to false conclusions, not to the truth.

Although the portrait of Saul is central structurally, I would suggest that conceptually the dominant portrait of heroism in the trilogy is that of David. We have seen that the portrait of Saul as villain parodically reveals--from the point of view of protestantism--the limitations of humanist Man as represented by the Romantic tragic hero. We shall see that David represents protestant Man as an empowered melodramatic hero, a type of Christ constructed largely by means of the discourse of domesticity.

In contrast to the introduction of Saul by the demons, David is introduced to us by The Voice of the Lord, described by "softly chanting" angels as "low and clear" and its presence signalled by "A mild radiance." The Voice of the Lord commands Samuel to

. . . go
To Jesse the Beth-lehemite;
For I have from amongst his sons
Provided to myself a king.
One after mine own heart is he;
And from out his line shall spring
A greater than himself to be. (1; 5.3, 102)

When David stands before him, angels tell Samuel "'tis he, / Who, though now unprized, unknown, / Famous shall hereafter be" (1; 5.5, 105). While Saul's entrance is announced by prophets and disrupted by demons, David's

is announced by The Voice of the Lord and celebrated by angels. Furthering the contrast, Saul, once he is anointed by Samuel, is self-confident and impatient to seize and shape the power made available to him. David, on the other hand, finds that "Fear mingles with my joy. This is the Lord; / And I must wait till He shall make that clear, / Which is left dark by his departed seer" (1; 5.5, 106). Unlike Saul, David recognises that the power made available to him is not his own but God's. David acknowledges Samuel's position as a "seer," moreover, and accepts that his own fate is "left dark." Thus the characterisation of David is informed by the conventional passivity associated with the feminine. Unlike traditional non-melodramatic representations, however, David's passivity is not shown as feminized powerlessness, but rather as the prerequisite of empowerment. Unlike Saul, David does not confuse God's purpose with the purpose of the Self. David accepts that he is the instrument, not the originator of destiny.

These elements of David's introduction in the trilogy may remind the reader/spectator of the angel Gabriel's first speech to Mary (Luke 1:28-30) and of the angel's speech to shepherds announcing the birth of Christ "in the city of David" (Luke 2:9-11). The

introduction of David seems to interweave associations of Christ, Mary, the feminine, and domesticity within a protestant framework, especially that of the "feelings" (Westfall 39) as noted in the Introduction, which in every way countermands the humanist values portrayed by Saul. The humility David shows in his first scene, moreover, also may call to mind Anna Jameson's distinction between the theological divine Mary and the scriptural historical Mary, as outlined in Chapter One. We saw that these two Marys are represented as self-consciously a central part of the redemptive project and as selflessly--but not less central--the mother who "dwells lowly on earth" (LM 114). We shall see that Heavyside's portrait of David is more consistent with Jameson's historical, domestic--and "more vigorous"--role of Mary than with that of Christ. Unlike Christ, David is not sacrificed, but endures and survives his trials at the hands of Saul much as Mary endures and survives (Jameson LM xl). Such emphasis on pragmatic and living virtue--I would suggest--articulates the distinctly optimistic tone associated with most melodrama wherein virtue is rewarded and vice punished.

Another feature of David's introduction is that our first sight of him is within the virtuous domestic context of his father's house (1; 5.5, 105-106). The

second appearance of David is within a domestic context as well--Saul's palace--but this time negatively valued due to the contrast between the humble dwelling and the ostentatious one. Here we see a blend of Marian associations with the redemptive power of David as a type of Christ. Saul's Physician advises Ahinoam, Saul's wife, that David's music could provide a cure for her husband's state of demon possession:

I have seen a son
Of Jesse the Beth-lehemite; an excellent
player;
Handsome and prudent, and religious also.
He keeps his father's sheep. . . .
(1; 5.8, 115)

Taking his place in Saul's household, David plays for Saul and his music effects a cure insofar as Malzah is thus induced to take a break from the performance of his duties. When Malzah returns in the "Second Part," Ahinoam exclaims "David, happy that / Thou, his physician, art come with his disease. . . . / Hie after him and be once more his healer" (2; 3.2, 178). In his early relation with Saul, David is considered a healer of physical, psychological, and spiritual ills. In addition, the First Domestic observes that the sound of David's music "'Twould lift that back to hope, / This back to peace" (1; 5.9, 118). Thus David's music is empowered to overcome chaos and restore order,

demonstrating David's place within and articulation of the Christian redemptive project.

But Malzah's departure from Saul at the end of the "First Part" is only temporary. Implicitly, Saul is presented at this point with the choice of two influences: Malzah or David. Both are sent from and serve God. While Malzah is in a fallen state, David is in a state of grace. Malzah offers Saul escape through madness, while David offers redemption through abdication. These alternatives are unacceptable to Saul because they both involve the death of the Romantic Self and all it represents to him: masculinity, power, transcendence. Hence Saul himself generates a third choice: to fulfil self-consciously the tragic role of a Romantic hero/king. Thus it cannot be said that Saul chooses between the manichaeian alternatives of good and evil, rather Saul's villainy is precisely his inability to identify them correctly. Manichaeism, as Brooks sees it, is undermined here in another way in that David's music is not characterised as an assault against Malzah. For Malzah observes: "To be the vassals and the slaves of music, / Is weakness that afflicts all heaven-born spirits. . . . I'll begone [sic]" (1; 5.11, 125). David is not brought into a situation of conflict with either Malzah or

Saul. Like Mary and Christ who endure conflict imposed by others, David passively endures and does not cause Saul's rage.

While the demons and Hebrew onlookers rate Saul's worth by his impressive physical attributes, angels instruct Samuel, when looking for the one who is to embody God's idea of a king, to ignore such morally deceptive external signs in David's brothers:¹¹ "Rate not Eliab by thine eye, / Tall of stature, stern of mein; / Worth by outer show's unseen,-- / God the heart sees; pass him by" (1; 5.5, 105). David's physical attractiveness and strength are to be considered an articulation of his moral perfection. His beauty and stature are not evidence of personal power, but of his spirituality and of his worthiness to act as a medium of God's power. This spirituality is evident, for upon first hearing David's music, the Second Domestic describes David as an angel: "It is the harp / Of the stripling David. . . . See where he sits, / Like to a youthful angel" (1; 5.9, 117). Introduced by angels and characterised as angelic, early representations of David provide an ordered and harmonious alternative to the demons' chaotic dancing immediately prior to Saul's entrance in the first scene of the "First Part."

But the Second Domestic also presents another image of David: "The queen hath set him / Hard by the lattice of the royal chamber, / So that the king may hear him and be taken / In his own lure" (1; 5.9, 117). David's feminine characteristics of spirituality, domesticity, and passivity inevitably place him in a woman's position and Saul's wife, Ahinoam, repeatedly is displaced by David in the domestic sphere of the palace. He takes over her wifely role, ensuring domestic peace and repose. Like Saul, Ahinoam is portrayed within the same humanist context as her husband and is subject to the same commentary. David alone represents the protestant feminine and its domestic concepts and values. David thus takes over the place conventionally assigned to the female central character, the heroine, in his relationship both to the villain, Saul, whom he virtuously resists, and to the (typically less central) hero, Jonathan, by whom he is courted, as we shall see.

That David's domesticity is not only in a paradoxical relation with that of Ahinoam, but with that represented by court life in general is manifest in the courtier Jokiel's bawdy interpretation of the effect of David's presence on the female population of the palace: "the fat, smuttred slut," "the maid / O'th'

chamber," "the ladies of the court," "antique maids,"
and

The youthful damsels I have caught--ha, ha!--
Peering from lattice corners at him, and
Each other pulling thence, that each might
view
The Adolescent, and, with wanton image,
Tenant the empty chamber of her mind;
Or the desire-scorched desert of her soul
Invade with Ishmaelites of unlawful thoughts,
To rove at leisure o'er her virgin rock,
And love unwatered fancy.
. . . well indeed men were not fairer
formed,
Or, by the ark, the world's work had stood
still,--
Yea, the whole garden of our State run wild;
Our household flower-beds gone untrimmed,
whilst women
Had on us hung like bees on honeyed flowers.

This David hath been to us key and mirror
To unlock the nature of woman, and to show
it
Uplighted to our eyes. (2; 1.1, 130-131)

Jokiel views the nature of women exposed by David as fallen, carnal, earthy, and arrested at the time of Eve. This cynical view of women as utterly devoid of spiritual or moral capacity gains in significance when considered within the protestant moral context of the trilogy.

It is precisely because of such cynicism in the humanist concepts and values of Saul's court with regard to the association between the feminine and the female that a new configuration of the feminine is made necessary. Within a humanist system of knowing, there

is no justification for the promotion of the model of femininity provided by Mary over that of Eve. Unless the protestant representation of Mary is empowered, the aspects of the feminine privileged as distinguishing protestant Man from humanist Man become a physically degrading rather than a spiritually and morally enhancing feature of protestant masculinity. Instead of absorbing the feminine into a new masculinity, as we see occurring in the portrait of David, protestant Man becomes feminized. The attraction Jokiel notes, but misunderstands, cannot be women's desire for David as a male. Since David's beauty is evidence of his spiritual perfection, it does not serve as a physical, but as a spiritual lure, as we have seen it so serve Saul. The women's attraction to David's spiritual perfection is the first step in the Christian transformation of the fallen femininity of Eve into the penitent femininity of the Magdalene. Mary represents femininity fully redeemed and articulated wholly within Christian concepts and values. Marian femininity, co-extensive with the harmony of David's music, acts as a lure to the women's unawakened spirituality. Thus the sluttishness Jokiel observes is not a product of women's essential nature, as humanism implies, but a product of humanist discourse itself.

Like Jokiel, Saul is blind to David's spiritual context and reconfigures his angelic image in secular terms:

'Tis not a heavenly spirit, though so like
 one,
 With hovering arms poised ruddy o'er the
 harp,
 As o'er the landscape the aerial bow:
 It is the minstrel youth from Bethlehem;
 In form, indeed, surpassing beautiful.
 . . . I love him as he sits
 Rapt, like a statue conjured from the air.
 (1; 5.10, 120)

By means of the initial negative statement, Saul reduces the spiritual significance of the angel image to its strictly rhetorical dimensions. Contrary to conventional melodramatic characterisation, he adds the realistic, and unangelic, detail of the shepherd David's "ruddy" arms to the image. As a villain, Saul is attracted by the heroine's--David's--virtue, but he also sullies it by objectifying it. He takes note of David's beautiful form and, finally, renders the airy feminine image of an angel, a living being, into the much more concrete and here a masculine image of a statue--perhaps like that of Michelangelo's David, an inanimate object.

Just as Jokiel is blind to the true nature of femininity unlocked by David, Saul is blind to evidence of David's spirituality. Early in the "Second Part"

David persuades Saul to let him fight Goliath by describing how he killed a lion and a bear to protect his flock. He acknowledges that "It was God / Who made the strength of each as nothing to me." Lack of faith informs Saul's response: "may God too go with thee; but / I trow that I shall see thy face no more!" (2; 2.3, 150-151). Saul doubts that a single faith can claim God's attention and urges all who are able to pray to do so on David's behalf: "Now each retire to solitude and pray / For that heroic boy" (2; 2.3, 151). For Saul David's heroism consists of an act of personal courage, whereas for David any success depends upon an essentially selfless act of faith for the preservation of God's chosen people.

Saul's spiritual blindness is a product of his superior regard for himself over and above a regard for God. Heavysege's representation of the encounter with Goliath emphasises that the key difference between Saul and David constitutes, and is constituted by, the status of faith. The Third Soldier reports:

None dare except the king, and all the army
 Excepteth him from entering the lists.
 'Tis said that he with Abner quarelled[sic]
 because
 The latter did withstand him, even to force;
 Holding him when he would have straight gone
 down
 Into the valley to the huge Philistine.
 (2; 2.2, 143)

The Fifth Soldier offers his opinion that "It was madness in the king to think / Contend with one, excelling him even more, / In size and strength, than he therein doth others" (2; 2.2, 144).¹² Saul's personal courage, uninformed by faith, is interpreted correctly as negatively inspired, as madness.

Saul sees the conflict with Goliath in terms of physical strength alone, while David, in his warning to Goliath, shows that for him it is solely a spiritual battle:

Nor scorn me for my youth and seeming
weakness. . . .
I come unto thee
In the name of Him who is the Lord of
Hosts,
He will deliver thee this day
Into my hand; and I will take from thee
Thy head . . .
. . . that all may know
That there is certainly a God in Israel,
And that this is His battle.
(2; 2.4, 154)

By means of the juxtaposition of two differing views of courage, courage being a fundamental feature of most heroic conventions, Heavysege's representation of the encounter with Goliath clarifies the respective positions of Saul and David with regard to the relation between faith and heroism. Saul wishes to fight Goliath, finding courage and his heroic identity in his own physical strength, his position as king, and in the

challenge to his skill in combat. David, on the other hand, is assigned heroic status, first by Saul, then by witnesses of the defeat of Goliath. David finds no merit in physical strength or the kind of courage it fosters. David's righteousness is not the self-righteousness of a self-designated hero; he has faith in God's plan for the Hebrew people rather than a self-conscious perception of his own destiny within this plan. According to a protestant view, then, David is given courage by means of his faith and for David this is the only kind of courage worth having.

David's view of the power of faith to protect him is foreshadowed by the faith of the soldiers which shields them from anguish during the slaughter of the Amalekites (1; 4, 72-97). Early in the "Third Part," David explains the success of his numerous campaigns against the Philistines:

. . . Jehovah never fails
To succour me; for in mine own strength
never
Do I contend, but, mailed in faith and
prayer,
Meet those grim warriors from the ocean
marge,
Expecting ever thus to overcome them.
(3; 1.2, 210)

David's view comments subversively on Saul's response: "Thou'rt lucky." Saul translates the guarantee of David's faith into superstitious accident. When David

manages to elude Saul's murderous plots, Saul contends that "witchcraft saves" David (3; 5.8, 283, 286). In contrast to Saul's wilfulness, David tells us: "I will nothing" (3; 5.8, 285). But David's passive humility does not go untested.

David is placed in a position to be tempted into taking the role of the hero of a revenge tragedy. Saul allows Doeg the Edomite to lead a band against the priests of Nob. Abiathar, the sole survivor of the slaughter, urges David to be their "Blood-Avenger" and hunt down Saul (3; 5.8, 284). But unlike Saul, who is vengefully seeking to murder David, David rejects the role of avenger and questions the secular values that could find such a model of heroism admirable:

. . . who can take the life of God's
Anointed,
And yet be guiltless? There requires no
haste:
For, sure as God rules kings, who rule the
world,
God's self shall visit him; or else his
time
Shall come that he must die like other men;
Or his gigantic figure shall descend
And perish, yet, in battle. God forbid
That I should lift my hand against the
Lord's
Anointed, and tonight, unbidden,
Finish his reign! (3; 5:12, 292)

For David, Saul's life is sacred and it is not his place to judge him. Thus David considers his own destiny and that of Saul to be independent of each

other, for like his own Saul's end is a matter solely between Saul and God.

Heavysege's portrait of David at least partly explains how traditional criticism came to see the hero of heroic and domestic melodrama as weak and ineffectual. While David acts (he kills Goliath, leads successful campaigns against the Philistines, and marries Michal), his actions do not lead directly to conventional dramatic conflict. David's music frees Saul from Malzah's goading for a time, thus ending conflict. After Saul begins to consider him in the light of a traitor, David continually attempts to prove his loyalty and forestall conflict. Any impetus in the trilogy towards conventional dramatic conflict, then, is a function of Saul's character not David's. Such conflict is a focus of critique by the protestant concepts and values informing the moral context of the trilogy. Thus empowered conceptually, David's passivity becomes active pacifism. Through the character of David, Heavysege's work seems to explore the dramatic possibilities of a model of heroism which relies upon Marian "pacific virtues" rather than on either psychological or physical conflict. This new model of heroism demonstrates its attractiveness in the love--rather than pity and fear--it inspires. While

Saul is pitied and feared, David is loved, most notably by Michal and Jonathan, the children of the tragic hero. Thus the Hebrews are shown to be evolving toward the new kind of heroism represented by David. Michal's love represents the domestic concepts and values conventionally associated with marriage. While Saul increasingly alienates Ahinoam, implicitly causing her death through his brutal behaviour, David and Michal are mutually loving. Jonathan and David's mutual love is much more complex, however.

In the character of Jonathan Heavysege provides a protestant model of heroism which differs from David's. Jonathan represents positively certain aspects of heroism which are associated negatively with Saul. For example, Saul observes that "there is no virtue left / In mortal man" (1; 2.8, 51). Malzah echoes, and points to the irony in Saul's statement: "There's no essential honor nor good i'th' world; / But a pure selfishness is all in all" (3; 4.4, 252). Whereas Saul implicitly exempts himself from his own observation, in effect viewing himself as the sole virtuous "mortal man," Malzah's remark reveals that what constitutes Saul's concept of "virtue" is actually "selfishness." Bluntly contradicting Saul's view of humanity as irretrievably fallen, however, Jonathan

finds that "Men are not cattle" (1; 3.2, 59). Jonathan considers not only that Man is essentially good but that "honor hath that cleaving quality, / It sticks upon us and none may remove it, / Except ourselves by future deeds of baseness" (1; 2.8, 51). Jonathan does not accept Saul's fatalistic pessimism and shows that a man's degradation is the consequence of his own actions. While Saul's view of honour is rendered problematic, Jonathan forms a concept of honour in which the honour of the battlefield is ennobled through faith in its sacred righteousness.

Jonathan portrays a transitional model of heroism, which reconciles secular and Christian heroisms into an early-Christian form. Jonathan defines honour as "noble deeds, and noble natural powers, / That give the stamp and value unto man" (2; 2.6, 167). While Saul's view of kingship finds nobility displayed in the pomp and splendour of aristocratic privilege, Jonathan recognizes that true nobility of character is not manifest in external signs of rank and power. As a "Prince," Jonathan has both the status of nobility and the essentially spiritual nobility which characterise the chivalric knight. Jonathan does not represent the Romantic quester pursuing the ideal of the self-conscious Self, however,

but rather the medieval romance quester, whose specifically Christian spiritual and moral perspective is translated into the material form of a crusade. Acting while inspired, Jonathan's penetration of the Philistine fortress at Michmash, with only the assistance of his armour-bearer, is a distinctly chivalric feat of arms (1; 3.2, 57-61).

Jonathan's participation in both the military reality of his father and the spiritual reality of David allows him to translate Saul's perspective for David: "David, pity Saul; / For as thou risest, 'tis his doom to fall: / But let Heaven's will be done, that orders all" (3; 5.3, 270). As a characteristic of a medieval romance quester, Jonathan's virtue is notable for its selflessness and unconcern with the exercise of power. He tells David: "I / Feel that the fortune of our house is cast, / And that I never can be king in Israel" (3; 4.3 247-248). Jonathan's understanding of this "fortune" is not brought about by perceiving the reversals in the balance of power which favour David over Saul, but by feeling the spiritual forces which are guiding the destiny of the Hebrew people. Hence, Jonathan accepts his disenfranchisement honourably and with optimism, feeling that a higher purpose is being served. Nevertheless, while Jonathan is a faithful son

to Saul, he--like his sister Michal--is aware of his father's moral errors. During such times of moral confusion, however, Saul in effect abdicates his paternal role, releasing Jonathan and Michal from filial responsibilities. Hence Jonathan is able to be dutiful both to his father and to God; he fights along with Saul in his battles against the Philistines, but protects David from Saul's vengeance.

Jonathan's respect for David's military leadership becomes love for David as a spiritual leader. Jonathan echoes his father's words to David:

. . . thou must no more return to Beth-
lehem.
Farewell, now finally, to tending sheep,
The shepherd's crook, and to the pastoral
pipe:
The martial sword and spear, the post of
trust,
And this well-won alliance, now await thee.
(2; 2.6, 165)

Here Jonathan refers to David's homesickness and return to Jesse's house after beguiling Malzah from Saul. After the encounter with Goliath, however, David's destiny as a military and spiritual leader is clear. Encouraging David to accept the "alliance" through marriage with the House of Saul, Jonathan reveals that for David the victory over Goliath is the moment in which David passes from youth to manhood. He exchanges one domestic site, his father's house and flocks, for

another, marriage and the domestic context of the court and palace. In addition, Jonathan makes clear to David that his private exercise of virtue must extend itself into a public model.

The chivalric model of Christian heroism, in its medieval rather than Romantic form, is adjunctive to the more purely protestant model represented by David. The compatibility of the two models is demonstrated by the spontaneous friendship between Jonathan and David. The model of the chivalric quester represented by Jonathan thus reveals in its sociability that it differs fundamentally from the Romantic model with its isolated, and isolating, quest for self-possession. Jonathan urges David:

Say that we are henceforth in friendship
joined;
That in the lists of amity, henceforwards,
With offices of kindness we will vie.
Say, wilt thou cope with me in friendship,
brother?
Wilt thou not now accept of my love-
challenge? (2: 2.6, 167)

Jonathan does not represent the concept of brotherly love as a universalised abstraction, but as a particularised bond. This bond, moreover, is made possible by the moral attractiveness of the protestant feminine. For the image of jousting between brothers transforms itself into an image of courtly love in

which Jonathan represents the knightly lover and David the beloved Lady.

This relation between two Christian models of heroism is gendered so as to promote the protestant feminine and the domestic concepts and values which articulate it. David and Jonathan swear their mutual love in a manner which reminds us of the conventions of courtly love wherein the knight, seeking a spiritual and moral ideal, finds its embodiment in his Lady, a Madonna figure (Warner 134-136, 146). David's representation of the protestant feminine partakes both of the scriptural portrait of Mary's humility and selflessness and of the devotional image of the Madonna's purity and especial blessedness: "Too generous Prince, I do believe thou lov'st me; / And I love thee, / . . . I am not thine equal: / I'm but a shepherd though I've slain the giant" (2; 2.6, 167). Jonathan points out to David the illusory nature of social inequality and that their "true likeness" is constituted by spiritual and moral nobility. Thus Jonathan demonstrates the egalitarian nature of Christian love. Further, inspired by David, Jonathan finds himself capable of a new kind of love:

Then vow to me, (for with a vow I'd bind
thee,
Even as fondest lovers bind each other,)

David, I offer thee perpetual friendship,
 And, therewith, such large measures of my
 love
 As I have never given before to man.
 (2; 2.6, 168)

Attracted by the protestant feminine, Jonathan is represented as the first to convert to the new spiritual, rather than political, model of relations among men.

David's representation of the beloved Lady, an embodiment of the protestant feminine, brings forward the virtues of the Madonna. David responds to Jonathan's suit by giving him an entirely chaste love: "I accept; and offer in return, / What you have always had, fidelity; / And add thereunto, by your free gift laid, / A love not given before to man or maid" (2; 2.6, 168). David and Jonathan represent a new form of power relation between divinity and believer. As an essentially feminine divinity, with the nature of the feminine established by the scriptural portrait of Mary, as a type of Christ David does not actively command worship of his transcendent reality but passively inspires belief in it, the "free gift." The spiritual awakening, hence empowerment, of the believer is thus a vital part of this new power relation.

But the love between David and Jonathan, articulated as the courtly love between a Lady and a knight and representing the love between a feminine divinity and an inspired believer, is ended by Jonathan's death in battle against the Philistines. The last meeting between David and Jonathan takes place when Jonathan wanders into the wilderness from his father's army, which is deployed to find and kill David:

How silent all is here! Here is, at least,
Peace; and methinks that peace is likest
 heaven.
Now could I, too, become a fugitive,
Ne'er to review the turmoil of the city,
The court's intrigue, and distuned passion's
 jar
That frets so this sweet world; for I am ill
Composed for earth. Methinks the radiant
 ether
Should be my world; and all my intercourse
Should be with heroes that resemble David.
Where art thou, David, much abused
 brother? . . .
Approach to me behind night's shady shield;
Come catch me in thine arms thy prisoner.-
How gain with him but one hour's
 intercourse?
I will invade these boughs, and, in the
 glades
O'th' forest standing, woo him with my
 voice.
He hath not yet forgot the air I'll warble.
 (3; 5.3, 268-269)

Jonathan's military diction ("shield," "prisoner," "invade") has been domesticated by love. We see here that Jonathan has reversed his position concerning the

relative merits of rural and court life. It is the rural setting which offers him the spiritual peace he has learned to desire through David. Indeed, Jonathan's "air" is a brief love lyric which is in effect a hymn to David as Christ figure.

We see here also that, as the time of Jonathan's death in battle draws nearer, the gendering of David and Jonathan's roles reverses. Desiring the peace of heaven Jonathan is characterised increasingly as angelic, thus taking on the conventionally feminine aspects of angels along with their spirituality. On hearing Jonathan's singing David emerges from the wood:

. . . joy breaks in myself,
 Like sudden morning, at your highness'
 presence
 Angels of old have visited mankind;
 And now your highness' visit unto me
 Seems even as one from heaven's hierarchy.
 (3; 5.3, 270)

Jonathan's response indicates the degree to which now he, rather than David, occupies the role of the female character:

As the maid longs for tryste, I've longed
 for this!
 But deeper tempt this thick, involving shade,
 And there, in brief, recount thy late
 adventures;
 For should this night my jealous father miss
 me,
 It might detain him here. . . .
 (3; 5.3, 270)

Indeed, Jonathan echoes here his sister Michal's words to her husband David on his return from a campaign (3; 3.3, 224-225). Jonathan's spiritual growth is indicated by the increasing femininity of the chivalric knight, the blending of the virtues of knight and Lady.

As Jonathan's friendship with David progresses, and he senses that the destiny of the Hebrew people lies with the House of David rather than with the House of Saul, Jonathan becomes less like the militaristic model of the secular warrior/king associated with Saul and more like the pacifist model of the protestant hero associated with David. The transformation of Jonathan seems to be parallel to that of the women of Saul's household and court noticed but misinterpreted by Jokiel. The spiritual and moral attractiveness of the protestant model of heroism is felt equally by men and women.

While Jonathan's transformation is articulated as another form of protestant heroism, that of the household and court women and even the bravery of Michal, is not articulated as heroic. Thus Heavysege's representation of the protestant feminine does not transcend sexual difference, as some of these parallels seem to suggest, but in the end promotes the interests of protestant Man by subsuming the feminine as part of

a masculine/male subjectivity, curtailing the trilogy's potential to have a feminist effect by displacing women from their key place of empowerment in melodrama.

Moreover, while conventional melodramatic gender relations are evoked in the extensive use of imagery associated with the natural world and the cycle of the seasons, the more extreme aspects of the trilogy's gendered power politics are evident in imagery concerning the female body. The following analysis of imagery in Saul is intended to illustrate this study's view that, while the feminist feminine aspects of much melodrama should not be under-rated--as we saw in Chapter Two--as a genre, melodrama's representation of the feminine is not unproblematic from a feminist perspective.

Booth, among others, has noted the frequent association of an idealized natural world, represented both in imagery and in stage settings, with the virtue of the hero and--especially--the heroine of melodrama (121-123). This natural world often is depicted as an idealized countryside and village life in the manner of a pastoral literary tradition. The pastoral element in melodrama combines Edenic and paradisal imagery into a representation of the Christian redemptive project. The Christian pastoral tradition establishes parallels

between classical idealized representations of the shepherd's life in the countryside "as a paradigm of tranquillity and harmonious love" and imagery of Christ as a shepherd in a pre-lapsarian world (Cuddon 486-492). Within the framework of melodrama, though, the metaphorical association of an ideal natural world with Woman seems to connote the regulation of the fertility of a female body by a feminine morality. These associations are substantiated by Anna Jameson's study of Marian iconography, which suggests that a pastoral element is a significant aspect of many medieval devotional treatments of the scene known as a "Sacra Conversazione," in which "[t]he Virgin, seen at full length, reclines on a verdant bank, or is seated under a tree" (LM 126-127). Suggested here is the complementary equivalence, configured within the natural world, of Mary's chaste/nurturing spirit and her virgin/fertile body. This interdependence of female body and feminine spiritual values also seems to connote domesticity. Considered within a specifically Christian religious iconographical context, the pastoral setting in melodrama can be seen as a domestic scene presided over by a Madonna figure where Christ, the good shepherd, is present only as an infant. Hence this realm is most properly the preserve of the female

central character, as Booth's alignment of rural settings almost exclusively with domestic melodrama suggests.

In Heavysege's Saul, however, the pastoral element is represented extensively by the unreliable demons and is separated rhetorically from its conventional female conceptual complement. We shall see that the corollary of this latter strategy is the key site of resistance to the trilogy's potential feminist effect. The association of pastoral imagery with the demons will be considered first, followed by a look at the metaphorical representation of the cycle of the seasons, and concluding with an analysis of the gendered power politics in terms of imagery and metaphor and the Witch of Endor scene near the end of the "Third Part."

In rendering pre-lapsarian pastoral values problematic, the trilogy displaces Marian values often articulated in a Christian context by such imagery, which can effectively establish the complementary dynamic between the feminine and the female elements of much melodrama's domesticity, as we saw in Chapter Two. In Saul the representation of earth as an Edenic paradise is effected primarily by the demons, who seem to speak from the shepherd's rustic point of view.

Malzah often uses such imagery with reference to his beloved, Peyona: "The scents of heaven yet hover round thy lips, / That are a garden of well-watered sweets; / Which I must leave now for the arid desert / Of vexing Saul" (1; 4.6, 96). Displacing the Madonna as a figure of fully redeemed womanhood in melodrama's version of Arcadia, the demons' focus on the fall of Eve from Eden both subverts and reinforces pastoral tradition by reference to Peyona's fall from a garden-like heaven. Malzah's exile to the "arid desert" of Saul furthers this process by connoting not only Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden but also the expulsion of Lucifer's band of rebellious angels from heaven. The demons' subversion of pastoral tradition's apparent privileging of earthly above heavenly beauty stresses that the ideal world of pastoral tradition is not to be found in the past or present, but in the world's future redemption by the Good Shepherd, who will emerge from the House of David.

Zepho's transition speech in the "Third Part" seems to evoke the calm serenity conventionally associated with the pastoral mood: "At eve / How happy in these upland shades, / To mark the sun through vista glades!-- / To mark the sun set o'er the sea" (3; 6.7,

306). Zepho's speech combines Edenic and paradisaal imagery, as Zaph's response points out:

. . . in this halcyon retreat,
 By trance possessed, imagine may
 We couch in heaven's night-argent ray:
 For fond 't were not to make this earth
 All that to us it can be worth;
 Which is (from out the major driven)
 To appear to us a minor heaven.
 (3; 6.7, 307)

Malzah, "trolling merrily," disturbs this mood with subversive vulgarity:

I'm in the odour of sanctity;
 And to stay therein I've sought each bloom
 Whose saintly mouth doth vomit perfume.
 A holy, holy, holy rent
 Mine own mouth is, that thus gives vent:
 I'm purged with sun and washed with dew,
 And girt with woodbine, coming to you
 (3; 6.7, 307)

Satirically rendering their high poetic diction almost into that of a bawdy song by irreverently alluding to the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy" and by conflating the incense of religious ritual with perfume "vomit," Malzah's song breaks the traditional pastoral mood Zepho's and Zaph's speeches have established and undermines the value of the "saintly" garden in its Edenic purity as a "minor heaven." In this last major appearance by the demons the reader/spectator receives a final caution against idealising the natural world, forming a parallel between the nostalgia of pastoral tradition and the narcissism of tragedy. If we, like

the demons, make a "minor heaven" out of earth--and see ourselves as the shepherds in it--then we might not strive after the true paradise and follow the example of the one true shepherd, as Saul's career confirms. As we shall see, however, the gendered power relations thus set in place undermine melodrama's protestant feminine as potentially a feminine/female Subject by configuring such a Subject as virtually demonic and unredeemed. Consequently the protestant feminine configured as feminine/male Subject, embodied by Jonathan and David, is represented exclusively as redemptive. In the gendered rhetorical strategies of the trilogy's pastoral imagery, the place of the Madonna--and the heroine--in melodrama's domestic scene is invaded by Eve, on the one hand, and by a mature Christ, on the other.

Malzah's extended final speech in the "First Part" further undermines the Madonna's implicit centrality in melodrama's pastoral scene. Malzah considers the flowers he has picked from Saul's garden: "I spread my arms / And closed them like two scythes. I have crushed many; / I have sadly mangled my lilies" (1; 5.11, 126). The lily, a conventional symbol of the Madonna, connoting physical and spiritual purity, is "mangled" by Malzah and ultimately rejected in favour

of the "matchless rose." While the rose is also associated with the Madonna and with spirituality, unlike the lily, it has significance as an emblem of carnal desire and worldly love (Lehner 33, 78; Beals 126, 133). Emblematic of Saul's narcissism, Malzah's choices mirror both Peyona's sin and Adam and Eve's: loving God's creature before God. Near the end of the "Third Part," upon being released from his duty of occupying Saul, Malzah exclaims that "the wide world will now seem new to me, / And as romantic as at first did heaven" (3; 6.6, 305). Since Malzah's pleasure in the world is enhanced by its association with Peyona, the term "romantic" here may connote romantic love, again reflecting the indecorousness of the demons' values shown throughout the trilogy. Because of the demons' pervasive paradoxical pairing of the idealized natural world of pastoral tradition with a doubly fallen world, the Madonna figure is doubly displaced: by a fallen female--Eve--and by a demonic female--Peyona.

Imagery of the seasonal cycles also functions as a thematic guide to the gendered power relations of the trilogy, metaphorically articulating the trilogy's various physical, spiritual, and moral cycles. These cycles are disrupted and their conventional association

in melodrama with fertility is entirely subverted by Saul, but (provisionally) supported by David and Jonathan. Structurally the trilogy progresses appropriately from autumn to spring, pointing to the spiritual renewal associated with the coming reign of the House of David. In the "First Part" the season is autumn harvest. The coming of winter in the "Second Part" is foreshadowed by an abundant use of snow and ice imagery early in the "First Part." Imagery of winter is most prevalent in the "Second Part," while the "Third Part" ends in April. Thematically, this cycle is challenged by Saul's rhetoric. The "unnaturalness" of the secular model of tragic heroism, as well as of the function of the melodramatic villain as disruptor of domestic order, is represented through his distorted imagery.

In the context of pastoral tradition, for example, Saul is made restless, rather than comforted by the predictability of the cycle of the seasons, finds "the rural dull routine" tedious:

The blade starts through the clod in spring;
 the leaf
 Then on the bough sits in its pride of green:
 The blossom, punctual to its season, comes,
 Milk-white or ruddy; and the perfect fruit
 Appears with autumn; nor the snow doth fail
 The hoary winter. (1; 1.2, 18)

While Saul's career does not materially alter the seasons, he alters seasonal imagery to describe the phases of his career. Unlike David, who associates the seasonal cycle with both spiritual and domestic values ("As after winter cometh spring, / May joy unto his soul return;-- / And me, in thy good pleasure, bring / To tend my flocks where I was born" [1; 5.10, 121]), Saul separates and opposes natural and human worlds: "And nature shows no great consent with man, / Curtailing not the slumber of the clouds, / Nor rising with the clarion of the wind / To blow his signals" (1; 1.7, 28). From his Darwinian perspective, Saul, seeing the natural world beyond his power, either dismisses it or considers it evil. Pessimistically, he aligns the natural world with arbitrariness: "Like waving ears / Of lusty corn, upright we are to-day; / To-morrow we are laid low by the sickle / Of something unforeseen" (1; 1.8, 31). The potential fertility of nature is made subject here not to order and plenty, but to chaos and waste.

Consistent with his blind narcissism, Saul sees the natural world as accidentally variable and chaotic when actually these are features of his own wilful character. The Elder describes Saul: "Even as the headstrong wind, when, having blown / Strongly out of

one quarter, on a sudden, / As if uncertain of its next direction, / It restless veers, travelling nor east nor west, / Nor north nor south" (1; 1.3, 19). Referring to Samuel's miracle, the Second Hebrew confirms the Elder's view: "we had committed a great sin / In asking for a king; so Samuel told us, / And, to confirm his saying, called on God / To send down rain and thunder, though 'twas harvest" (1; 1.9, 33). Thus Saul is confirmed as the source rather than the victim of chaos.

The distortion of images of fertility associated with the cycle of the seasons is effected in large part through Saul's association of war's death and killing with peacetime harvesting: "I will in peace raise all the means for war; / As doth the husbandman in summer raise / The crops that are to be his food for winter. / I will have soldiers plenty, ready made;-- / No rabble from their fields and city crafts" (1; 2.6, 45-46). Paradoxically, shortly after this Saul blames God for his inability to reap a harvest of anything but violence and bloodshed:

Surely there is a blight within the ear
 Forbidding me a harvest. Jonathan
 May reap when I am dead; but I shall never
 Garner within my bosom sheaves of peace.
 Heaven hath a quarrel with me. Heaven
 Surely denies perfection to my deeds.
 (1; 3.6, 70-71)

The association of harvest and war imagery is made by others without paradox, providing a contrast between David and Jonathan's sacred battles, on one hand, and Saul's secular campaigns on the other. When David refuses to kill Saul vengefully, Abiather asks:

Hast thou forgot
 The story of the day when all my kindred
 Perished before his bidding? As the leaves,
 Green and all juicy, and the boughs, still
 waxing
 Lustier, of some brave tree, on sudden
 smitten,
 Even in the verdant summer of its glory,
 By the red bolt of heaven, their massacre.
 (3; 5.8, 283)

Abiather's image of an unseasonal harvest is as inappropriate as that of Saul's prematurely felled corn and fails to persuade David, since David rightly believes that taking Saul's life would also be a harvest out of season. Images of war's harvest are used of Jonathan and the Armour-Bearer whose attack on a Philistine fortification is inspired by God. The First Hebrew observes them "Mowing the foe down like two mighty scythes; / Naught leaving unto those who follow them, / Except to stumble o'er the swathes of dead" (1; 3.4, 63). Also, the First Soldier describes the righteous slaughter of the Amalekites as a timely harvest: "for not a blade / Seems standing on the Amalekites' wide mead, / So ruthlessly have we mown

down life thereon, / And, with the sudden sickle of our coming, / Reaped red, prodigious harvest of old hate" (1; 4.4, 79). In the war/harvest associations of David's, Jonathan's, and Saul's righteous battles, the blade and blood images may also allude to the blood sacrifices in honour of God often described in the Old Testament as well as to husbandry. Saul's self-righteous bloody defeats alone are represented within the context of waste or debasement of life.

Even when Saul is most assured and optimistic he can only describe his condition from a distorted perspective on the natural world's fertility. In the "Second Part," Saul remarks that "Our land this year receives a second spring, / So rife it is with gay and bird-like carol, / Proceeding yet from out our victory's grove" (2; 2.7, 168). A short time later, during Malzah's most extended occupation, Saul not only distorts the measured passage of the seasons, but connects imagery of spring and summer's fertility with the image of his spirit as a rotting corpse and with the earth as a barren hell:

Methought that spring
Was only just returning to my soul;
And here I pant in sultry summer air,
Wherein I feel the fiend wild floating round
me,
Like a huge blowfly, and upon my spirit
Seeking to sow new horrors. (2; 3.2, 176)

We saw above, however, that Malzah characterizes Saul as a waste land--an "arid desert"--before he undertakes his task of possession. Thus we see that Heavysege consistently represents Saul himself, not Malzah, as solely responsible for what David calls his "hot, unnatural rage" (3; 4.5, 254), which proves, in the ultimate harvest of Saul's battlefield suicide, to be self-consuming.

When connected with David the winter of the "Second Part" retains its conventional associations with the natural--and redemptive--cycle of death and renewal, but only in terms of the feminine and not the female as we shall see. Here David kills Goliath early in the winter, indicating the destined spiritual and moral renewal. Also, later in the winter, Michal says: "David, thou art welcomer . . . / Than sunbeams in a dull November day" (3; 1.2, 210). While the placement of winter within the cycle of renewal is achieved by David, for Saul, winter is taken out of cycle as an absolute end. In the "Third Part," making his decision to hunt David to the death, Saul declares that nothing can "freeze my will, / 'Midst a cold winter of anxiety" (3; 5.9, 288). Redemptive imagery resists the spiritual barrenness of Saul though, for good Ahimelech refers to Saul's pursuit of David as "such unparalleled

exertions . . . like the month of March astride the
 wind, / Driving before it winter's gloomy reign" (3;
 5.11, 290). In addition, telling David of Saul's
 implacable hatred, Jonathan describes Saul's extremity
 by bracketing winter with the months of late fall and
 early spring: "a cold, March-like blast of speech, and
 frown / Worse than November's on the brow, must cow
 him" (3; 4.5, 254). The adage of March coming in like
 a lion and going out like a lamb may be alluded to
 here, for throughout the trilogy Saul has been
 characterised as a lion and David as a lamb. The image
 of the lamb triumphing over the lion associates David
 not only with Christ as shepherd, but also with Christ
 as sacrifice and--especially--as the victorious Lamb of
 the Second Coming. The closing of the trilogy in the
 month of Easter indicates, on a thematic level, the
 ultimate Christian triumph signified by the
 establishment of the House of David. Structurally
 outside of this cycle is the sacrifice of Saul by his
 own hand and on his own responsibility. He muses: ". .
 . how all / Like to a dream seems my career now
 closing! / How like a troubled April day it seems! /
 How like a famine-smit, disastrous year!" (3; 6.8,
 320). April is significant here also as the beginning
 of the nine months' cycle ending with the traditional

dating of the birth of Christ in December. Thus Saul's demise seems to allow the cycles of fertility and redemption to re-establish themselves. As we shall see, while the triumph of the protestant feminine is assured rhetorically through David as both Marian and Christ figure, any material association with the female through the Madonna is undermined by the disempowerment of women--Ahinoam and Michal--in the trilogy and the explicit association of female reproductive organs with spiritual disease.

Seeming to cite her role in the fertility cycle of the family's domestic context, Saul speaks to his wife Ahinoam, praising her through seasonal imagery: "More fair than in thy fairest flush of youth, / Now in thy ripened womanhood, that bears / To me such duteous harvest!" (1; 5.10, 123). Restored by David's music Saul seems to regain a proper appreciation of his wife. This restoration of domestic harmony is only temporary, however, and Ahinoam acknowledges the fundamental misogyny of Saul's possessed condition which comes to define their relationship: "I'll fly, for he doth hate me in these fits" (2; 3.2, 186). But her perspective on Saul's struggle is delimited by his notion of the supremacy of will. As does he, she seems to believe that Saul could 'just say no' to demonic possession:

Awaken Saul, and be your proper self:
 Return, return, from this wild wandering.
 Come home; your Troubler's gone: come
 home.--
 Oh, fill that horrid blank upon your face;
 Oh, put your soul into that emptied frame!
 You stand upon the threshold of yourself,
 Enter, and you shall find its furnishing
 Is, even yet, such as becomes a king.
 (2; 3.2, 187-188)

Ahinoam is cast in the supporting role of a dutiful wife, who believes that Saul is a proper king. As such she, unlike Michal, neither helps nor hinders the progress of the sacred crisis at hand, and the structural and thematic effect of the role, even as an instrument of pathos, is almost irrelevant. The marginalization of Ahinoam within the tragic framework of Saul's career is paralleled by that of Michal within the melodramatic framework of David's. Although Michal assists David's escape and mirrors her brother Jonathan's filial distance from Saul (3; 2-3, 209-236), her role can be seen virtually to be that of a foil to any potential homoerotic interpretation of the discourse of love taking place between David and Jonathan.

As Saul becomes more brutalized, his view of women reflects his increasing despair. In the "First Part" Saul seems to see men and women as sharing

qualities of tenderness and bravery (1; 4.6, 85), but when his daughter Michal refuses to reveal her husband David's hiding place he exclaims: "These women are the marplots of our lives, / For when we will they will not. Are all wives / Of such a kidney?" (3; 2.5, 234). Supporting Saul's view, upon discovery of Michal's successful strategem allowing David's escape, the Third Soldier observes: "Oh, these women, / They are the very devil for cunning!" (3; 2.5, 231). Ultimately Saul considers women's nature to have the power to taint the blood of his unborn children, thus explaining Jonathan's protection of David: "Oh, to have thrown such base fool from my loins! / . . . Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman, / . . . Thou fool begotten of a wicked woman" (3; 4.4, 251). Saul's reference here may well be as much to Eve, the mother of humankind, as to Ahinoam. Saul exclaims that David "is encouraged / By my besotted and unnatural son, / . . . Jonathan, thou mother-counselled weakling" (3; 5.4, 271). In his connection of mothering with rebellion and weakness rather than with redemption and strength, Saul, like the demons, privileges conventions associated with Eve over those of Mary. Structurally, moreover, the potential Madonna figures of Ahinoam and Michal are marginalised further by the brief but

riveting appearance of the unholy Witch of Endor, the most theatrically striking and memorable female character in the trilogy. As we noted with the demons' pastoral imagery, the subversion of the authority of the Madonna performed by Saul's rhetoric is extended by many other images which undermine her redemptive influence as a specifically female representative of divine, human, or natural grace.

Consistent with melodramatic villainy, throughout the trilogy Saul is represented as antagonistic to the interdependent feminine/female cycles of nature and domesticity. Just as the melodramatic villain's attack upon the feminine/female pair embodied by the heroine is explicit, Saul's attack on the female is implicit in his rhetoric and that on the feminine is explicit in his campaign against David. Saul's rhetoric is instrumental in effecting the separation between the feminine (and its associations with fertility) and its female referent conventional in much melodrama. Illustrating his increasingly brutalized view of women, Saul conflates elements of domesticity, social regression and, ultimately, witchcraft. Considering Hebrew civilisation to be in decline, after his first defeat by the Philistines, Saul remarks "Alas, thy mother;--she / The silent

critic on my life. Thy mother / And sisters may be forced ere long, to dwell / In some dank cave" (1; 2.8, 50). He uses a similar image of decline to describe his blasphemous grief over the slaughter of the Amalekites: ". . . let our hearts / (Like smoky rooms) blacken with their down-pent grief" (1; 4.3, 79). The claustrophobic interiority of the dank cave and blackened room connotes for Saul both a primitivist domesticity and a barren--or perversely fertile--womb. These images introduced early in the "First Part" culminate in those of the Witch of Endor scene, which takes place in a room within a room, near the end of the "Third Part." As we shall now see, Heavysege's Saul renders melodrama's potential feminine/female Subject into the image of a heretical female, transforming feminine spiritual values into a spiritual void and a specifically female space. In terms of a gender politics working to displace the female, Saul's and David's discourses operate together.

For Saul, mental and emotional disorders seem to be caused by the metaphorical invasion of the male body by female organs. Reflecting the literal origins of the term hysteria as a neurological disease caused by the presumed malfunctioning of women's reproductive organs (Ehrenreich 143; Showalter 130), extreme mental

and emotional states often are represented in the trilogy by means of perverse images of conception, pregnancy, and birth. For example, Saul questions God's judgment of the Amalekites:

I dare not let my thoughts have birth,
 Much less array those embryo thoughts in
 words,
 I should deliver me of such conception
 As would appall the reverent ear of men,
 And make me seem, even what I fear I am,
 The Omnipotent's accuser. (1; 4.3, 79)

In addition, Saul considers Malzah's penetration of his mind against his will as a form of rape, resulting in an unwanted pregnancy: "Oh, Spleen, Spleen, Spleen, unnatural embryo, / That gnawest the womb that doth engender thee! / Wolf, out of me! . . . / Grow, foetus, grow; rack violated Saul / With pangs more dire than woman's in her travail!" (2; 3.2, 177). Images of impregnation are paired with those of castration, both effectively "unmanning" Saul. Just as Saul perceives his will to be violated by Malzah, he also sees his kingship violated by David: ". . . oh, for no young sharks of Davids / To swallow down my glory" (2; 3.2, 177). Thus Saul represents David's destined triumph over the House of Saul as the effect of a feminization process in which his powerlessness is articulated by means of imagery of a distorted female reproductivity.

These associations are reinforced, moreover, by the use of similar images of hysteria not only by Malzah, but by Jonathan and David as well. Referring to Saul's intention to kill David, Malzah observes: "Again he's pregnant / Of an intent pernicious; and a throe / Again I'll give him, in a double sense, / To hasten his delivery" (2; 3.2, 183). Possessing Saul Malzah sees himself as a labouring womb housing an "unnatural embryo." But while only the "throe" is produced by Malzah, the product is not Saul's alone. Jonathan begs Saul to abandon his murderous pursuit of David: "Oh, father, / Let us not do that which we dare not mention, / And, for our future days, beget a monster / Of which the embryo merely and foreshadow / Already horrifies us" (3; 1.5, 218). Unable to divert his father's purpose, Jonathan reveals to David the necessity of exile. David's grief shocks Jonathan into comparing it with the feminized extremity of Saul's unmanly passions: "Oh, cease, dear friend, these bosom-rifting sighs, / These horrible convulsions that so shake thee: / I cannot loose, yet cannot bear to feel thee / Thus sob and agonise on me like a woman" (3; 4.5, 253). David responds with an image connotative of the condition of globus hystericus, "a sensation of choking" (Showalter 130): "Oh, for a woman's shriek, to

cut the cord / That binds my woe down on my swelling heart / Until I suffocate! Oh, let me weep!" (3; 4.5, 253). Jonathan urges David to "Check this salt inundation, and each speak / As man to man his sorrow" (3; 4.5, 253). Rhetorically such speeches by Malzah, David, and Jonathan work with Saul's to separate the feminine from the female. The threat of the female here may lead the reader/spectator to consider Saul's passions as less a tragic psychological conflict, than as an almost physical dysfunction showing the base appetitiveness of the melodramatic villain. By turning from tears to words, Jonathan and David successfully resist any further incursion of the female. As we shall see, however, Saul's metaphorical internalization of femaleness ultimately is externalized materially in his encounter with the Witch of Endor.

Further to Saul's disempowering association with the female, the moon, one of the most important elements in the Madonna's iconographic system (Jameson LM xliii) is presented as his emblem.¹³ At the end of the "Second Part," Saul sees that "I, like the moon, / Before the presence of the rising sun, / Shall wane and fade before this last deed done" (2; 4.4, 205). At the end of the "Third Part," reviving from his faint after the vision at the Witch of Endor's hovel, Saul observes

"Poor moon, / She is old, and so am I" and that "I shall behold her this last time when she's / An emblem of myself. Yet she'll return / And rule the night; but I shall from my shade / Come up no more" (3; 6.8, 319). But as the term "shade" suggests--as used, for example, in Virgil's *Aeneid* (*umbra*) to denote the dead in the Underworld, Saul's metaphor is not taken from a Christian but a classical/pagan iconographic context. Hence his diction indicates that he is distanced effectively from the protestant spiritual values the imagery of the moon seems to invoke. Indeed, the reference to lunar cycles connotes the interconnected notions of lunacy and hysteria associated with women's reproductive cycles and implicit in Michal's view of the "lunacy of love" and of her father as a "Miserable lunatic" (3; 2.3, 224, 226). Each of these associations, especially that of the moon and night, have about them not only the elements of chaos and disorder, but a distinct atmosphere of evil. Moreover, it would seem that, if we were to construct a hierarchy of evil in *Saul*, the female--rhetorically configured as the moon and aspects of the reproductive cycle she governs--is to be feared much more than the Evil Spirit from the Lord, Malzah.

Just as the demons err in rendering the natural world as an image of a minor paradise, Saul errs in rendering the natural world as an image of a minor hell: a waste land and a source of superstitious terror. For example, describing "A wooded part near Aijalon," Ahiah the priest, seemingly appropriately, juxtaposes images of the natural world and the moon:

Low in the west
Even now she is, and from her lighted censer
Gives but a weak though sacred beam: same
time,
The fragrance born of yon adjacent wood,
Along the dewy air diffusing incense,
Both ministers seem at this great
sacrifice
And wonderful oblation of our foes,
Who, by miraculous power, this day have been
Discomfited and wasted. (1; 3.6, 66)

Reversing this interconnected imagery of triumph, the scented wood, and the moon, just before his visit to the witch prior to his final battle, Saul exclaims: "in the middle of this grove of men, / I'm bare and barren, waste and bitter hungry" (3; 4.9, 261). Prefiguring the association of the moon, the Witch, and Saul's errors explicitly set out in the "Third Part," in the earlier scene the Second Officer goes on to transform Ahiah's sacred imagery into that of superstition and paganism:

Witchcraft now seems to hand
Between the horns o'the moon, that cannot
shine

Through the vast, darksome chamber of the
 night,
 Which now appears, to my imagination,
 Upgiven to magic and the spells profane
 Of sorcerors, and the hags whose bodies bend
 Everforward, from their long-continued
 gazing
 Into caldrons of incantation.
 (1; 3.6, 66-67)

The association of the moon with witchcraft--here also with the Philistine horned goddess Ashtoreth (Graves 275)--developed throughout the trilogy culminates in the Witch of Endor's adjuration of Saul: "Swear to me by the moon, / That is the witch's workshop and arcanum, / From whence they cast on those who persecute them / All woes that body and that mind can bear, / Pain, horror. Swear, then, to me by the moon" (3; 6.8, 312). That Ahiah's ascription of sacred status, however weak, to the moon is problematic is suggested by his use of pastoral diction to describe the natural world. Parallel to the Hebrews' and the demons' mistaken valuation of externals such as stature and the beauty of the natural world, respectively, the Second Officer's and the Witch of Endor's speeches explicitly link Saul's villainy with a female image of an inherently evil spirituality, providing a contrast with Jonathan and David's articulation of a protestant feminine which remains independent of any external emblems of the female.

Even though previously Saul spurns Samuel's blessing--and, hence, the guarantee of success--of his military endeavours (1; 2.7, 47), at the end of the "Third Part" Saul seeks to learn from the Witch of Endor the outcome of the imminent battle with the Philistines. While earlier in his career Saul suppresses witches and sorcerors (1 Samuel 28:3)--"Nor demons nor the stars consult shall any" (1; 2.1, 36)--both apparently remain covertly active among the Hebrews. Moreover, in the biblical account the Witch's powers are neither questioned nor qualified; she does indeed have power over spirits and prophecies through them (1 Samuel 28:7-25). In response to her invocation, the ghost of Samuel appears to Saul and tells him that he and three of his sons will die in the next morning's battle as a final punishment for his disobedience. It should be noted that Heavysege alters this important scene in that in the trilogy--unlike the biblical account--Abner specifically links the Witch's powers with evil: "it is said that all familiar spirits / Are spirits of evil" (3; 6.5, 303). The Witch herself is made to substantiate this view:

Full well ye know all three, what Saul
 hath done,--
 How he hath put to death all female kind
 Who had familiar spirits, also male
 That dared commune with goblin, or foul

fiend,
 Spirit, or power of the invisible world,
 'Till not a wizard is left in all the land.
 (3; 6.8, 312)

Just as female reproductive organs metaphorically undermine both the masculine/male and the feminine/male Subject, heretical female spiritual power materially undermines both secular and protestant values. The ability of the Witch to summon the ghost of Samuel stands in an inverse relation to the power of the angel Gloriel to summon Malzah to do God's bidding--evil summons good and good summons evil, respectively--thus implicitly suggesting that the Witch (as summoner) may be a more powerful force of evil than Malzah (as summoned).

Malzah is explicitly represented in the trilogy as a male entity. That the Witch can be seen to be more powerful than Malzah thus stems in large part from the trilogy's gender politics which represents the (human) female as having a greater capacity for evil even than the (demonic) male. This dynamic is doubly reinforced in that the Witch of Endor is represented not only as materially female but as metaphorically female as well, connecting her with the trilogy's rhetoric of the castrating feminization of the male characters--real (Saul) and potential (David and

Jonathan). The Witch's hovel has two rooms, each significant metaphorically. One, a vaginal space, has both exterior and interior doorways, and one window; the other, a uterine space, has only the one doorway leading to the outer room, and no windows:

By the description, this must be the
dwelling.
It stands alone, is ample, yet a hovel;
With only one small window, that can
scarcely
Admit sufficient light, even at noonday,
To chase thence darkness. Doubtless 'tis
the place:
It seems fit habitation for dark rites.
Decay [s]eems to possess it, and around
Mute in the dimness looms dilapidation.
(3; 6.8, 309-310)

Almost entirely enclosed by this inversely valued representation of domestic space--"the door is slowly and partially opened by the WITCH, who stands timorously within, with her hand upon the latch" (3; 6.8, 310)--the Witch is introduced to us in the guise of a deceptively weak and passive womanhood.

Appropriately, Heavysege stages the "dark rites" of the vision scene, not in the outer room, but in the inner room:

Enter this inner room; for I to none
Give entertainment in the outer one,
That rude winds do enter, and, for aught
I know, where stands now at the door a wolf,
Which may to-morrow howl among the hills
That I to-night was hospitable to you.
(3; 6.8, 312)

This inner room serves as the womb in which the Witch's labour produces what can be seen as the "unnatural embryo" of Samuel's ghost. In contrast to our first impression of her, the Witch is fully aware of her power. Just before summoning her familiar spirit, Adramuel, she remarks:

I'll knock with thunder at his [Samuel's]
resting-place,
And send my piercing spirit (who, like frost,
Can penetrate a rocky sepulchre)
To project molten lightning through his
bones.
Prostrate yourselves; nor, till I bid you,
look
At what shall lie before you soon agape,
The yawn of hades, the dark mouth of hell.
(3; 6.8, 313-314)

The image of the Witch's powerful yet perverse maternity is sustained after the vision scene by her solicitous provision of food for Saul and his attendants (3; 6.8, 317-322; 1 Samuel 28:22-25). Moreover, Heavysege ends the scene with Saul's advice to the Witch that she "Live and repent of thy black arts . . ." and that "She may still live and bleach by pious sighs, / And showers of tears, and dews of holy deeds" (3; 6.8, 322), suggesting not the image of the Madonna but that of the Magdalene. Saul's brief sermon serves virtually to instruct the Witch to denounce her female power--and thus its organic source--in favour of an abstracted feminine. The gender politics of Saul's

rhetoric of redemption here effectively works to deny the power which has restored, however briefly, a female character to centre stage. Without this power the Witch must leave centrality for marginality, the space occupied by Ahinoam and Michal, as we have seen. Thus the trilogy's rhetorical and material representation of the female as aggressively evil works against the feminine/female subject position informing the potentially feminist gender politics of much domestic melodrama in favour of the feminine/male subject position of much heroic melodrama.

For Saul, David, and Jonathan, however, degree of moral worth--that is, the relative position of each to a protestant model of heroism--is measured by the degree of compatibility with or alienation from the domestic space. As we have seen, David occupies the domestic space conventionally assigned to the central female character in most domestic melodramas. Indicating his status as villainous interloper in the domestic scene, Saul is perversely most at home in the Witch of Endor's hovel--rather than in either the palace or his childhood home in Gibeah. A reluctant herdsman at best, Saul feels "like / A taper that is left to burn to waste / Within an empty house" (1; 1.2, 17). Yet, when about to die at the end of the "Third

Part," Saul nostalgically yearns for the domestic scene he has persistently reviled: "Cannot the spirit live again in clay, / E'en as old tenants to old homes return?" (3; 6.8, 321), even though he has recently conceded that there can be "no going back / To youth, and health, and herd-keeping in Gibeah" (3; 6.5, 303). Much earlier the Armour-Bearer also presents an image of a blighted domestic space with regard to Jonathan's crisis of faith soon to have a positive resolution: "as a deserted mansion, / He dwells absorbed in cold and stately grief, / And half against me shut. . . . / And I return--if not for shelter . . ." (1; 3.2, 57). As perpetually with Saul, for the moment Jonathan is inhospitable to those who would love him and assist him to redemption. For Saul this inhospitableness is shown most clearly to David, but encompasses Ahinoam as well. Saul's spirit, an "empty house," mistakenly seeks in Ahinoam's literal domesticity a spiritual nourishment that can only truly be satisfied by faith: "My morning star, . . . / Ahinoam, far dearer than that star / Is to the hour of dawn, art thou to me / Now, when home coming gloomy though successful. / Lift up thine eyes upon me, love, and drive / From out of me my darkness" (1; 4.6, 83). Thus Saul seeks in his "home coming" to Ahinoam fulfilment of one who is herself emptied of

value because she becomes disempowered and displaced in the domestic scene by David.

In the palace, the domestic scene in which Ahinoam should be empowered, Saul suffers most from demon possession. Saul likens his possession to "an after-dinner dream" (2; 2.7, 173). The "Second Part" of Saul opens in the palace with Saul apparently recovered and recommencing his wars against Israel's enemies. But Saul's "madness" increasingly overtakes him as he becomes ever more defensive of his status, the condition of his reason, and his family's legacy. Malzah articulates this constraint, reflecting the paradoxical sympathy he shows concerning Saul throughout the trilogy:

If I were mortal I should now expire,
From rumination and forced solitude.
To be restricted to these palace walls,
Is nearly as intolerably dull
As to lie hunched i'th' compass of Saul's
skull,
(As late I did,) like chicks within their
eggs:--
'Tis more; for 'tween each moon's new birth
and full,
I could abandon it to stretch my legs.
(3; 6.2, 296)

Tellingly, Malzah here uses a simile of birth--likening Saul's skull to an eggshell--and reinforces it with a reference to the phases of the moon. Saul recognizes that the domestic scene, in its literal aspect, is

unable to shield him from Malzah: "I deemed that I again was snugly housed; / When from the wilderness there comes a blast, / That casts my cabin of assurance down, / And leaves me in the tempest" (2; 3.2, 176). At the height of his rage Saul says "hell or spleen / Hath made my skull a hall to riot in" (2; 3.2, 179). Malzah chafes in domestic confinement much as Saul did as a herdsman in Gibeah. Now when Saul seeks shelter in domesticity, the palace cannot provide it since Saul himself has caused it to be voided of both the female (Ahinoam) and the feminine (Jonathan and David).

When considering the gendered power relations constituting and constituted by the representation of domesticity in Heavyside's Saul, it is necessary to note the great degree to which the trilogy's articulation of melodrama's counter-aesthetic is qualified by its relentlessly pro-masculine feminine. Even while the trilogy explicitly and dynamically parodies the humanist model of Romantic tragic heroism and thus promotes what I have argued to be the protestant heroism of melodrama, the most radical element found in the genre itself--the centrality of the heroine--is consistently undermined. In emplotment, characterisation and imagery, the model of alternative heroism represented by David, even while

borrowing freely from a Marian iconographic repertoire, is clearly that of a feminine/male Subject. Because the three editions of Saul span the late 1850s to the late 1870s, it is possible to consider the work, in fact, as articulating a reaction against the feminist effect of much melodrama, heroic and domestic alike. That melodrama's discursive framework was appropriated for explicitly feminist purposes in Canada as early as 1838 we saw in Chapter Two. And just as Clement Scott observed melodrama's feminist effect near the end of the century, so the reaction against it persisted as well. In many ways both the parodic and reactionary strategies set in place by Heavysege's Saul can be traced also in the three dramas analysed in the following chapter.

Notes

¹ The 1976 University of Toronto reprint of the 1859 second edition published by John Lovell is the text cited in this study. The first edition was published in 1857 and a third in 1869 and 1876 (Djwa xlix-1).

² In his introduction to the trilogy, Heavysege notes the "matchless elegy beginning 'How are the mighty fallen!'" spoken by David in 2 Samuel 1:19-27 upon hearing of the death of Saul and Jonathan. Djwa rightly sees this reference as denoting Saul's status as a tragic hero. I think that insight into this status can be gained by considering Heavysege's notion of "mightiness" in the context of his Sonnet XX, the epigraph of this chapter. In the Sonnet Heavysege virtually brackets his consideration of "a great man's" deeds, ambition, reputation, and fame with the privileged idea of "good deeds" and the "good man." Greatness is distinctly grounded in the world and finds its being in the secular, historical record and subject to its vagaries. Goodness, however, is not found in the public realm of "the world's loud cry" but rather in the private realm of personal reflection: "The memory of good deeds." The sense of personal value, of "rectitude" is not given by others, but by oneself alone. It seems to me that Heavysege's notion of mightiness, as represented by Saul, is very much that of the Sonnet's idea of "greatness": it is historical and material. His notion of goodness, as represented by David, is eternal and spiritual. Similarly, while Saul seeks his satisfactions in the world, David will receive his "adequate reward" through "beatitude" in another world.

³ While finding that Saul is permeated with "moral earnestnes . . . a dominant characteristic of the age" (90), Murray Edwards considers that the praise lavished on it by the English critic Coventry Patmore and other "literary reviewers" "has since been recognized as reaching far beyond the play's actual worth" (89). Similarly, while noting that the play "gained the respect of both John A. Macdonald and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, among others," Richard Plant finds that "this bulky, sententious piece has fallen into a well-deserved obscurity" (620). Michael Tait, deploring Heavysege's style, "vigorous, macabre, indecorous, an improbable mixture of Miltonic echoes

and Edgar Allan Poe," finds him "typical of the immigrant author whose work bears no organic relation to the new society in which he finds himself, and as a consequence, is of little value as a measure of that society" (8). Edwards and Plant's views choose to override the concurrence of nineteenth-century American, British, and Canadian opinions of Saul in favour of their own unself-consciously anachronistic evaluations. As William Westfall points out in the early pages of his study, the religious life of the colony has not been considered a significant part of its culture, as demonstrated by Michael Tait's obliviousness to the religious grounding of Heavyssege's work which in fact provides the key link between "the immigrant's" old and new countries. I consider the work an important Canadian example of its form precisely because of the opinion in which it was held at the time by a wide range of commentators and view its religious grounding as the bridge that made such agreement possible.

⁴ Alan Richardson defines a conflict motif in Romantic drama based on temptation:

A tempter figure . . . impelled by his own restlessly tormented consciousness, leads a naive counterpart into an act of transgression, by means of a dramatic rhetorical struggle, in an atmosphere of violently mingling contraries. The crime . . . engenders the same intolerable restlessness in the mind of its perpetrator, and a potential repetition, or series of repetitions, of the same events. (9)

On one level this Romantic motif seems to be resisted in Heavyssege's Saul for neither David nor Saul is naive. Nor are the "contraries" represented by Saul and David ever truly engaged in violent struggle, for David is ever mindful to avoid conflict with Saul, rhetorical or physical. As a protestant hero, David's virtue is unassailable not because of naivete, but because he is God's agent. However, in conventional Romantic fashion each of these elements are manifest in some way and to some degree in Saul's own internal psychology.

⁵ The notion of the transcendental Romantic Self used in this chapter is based on Marlon B. Ross's description of the Romantic "struggle for self-possession" as

a state in which the individual has mastered his genealogy, his internal contradictions, his doubts about his power of mastery and the world that seems to obstruct its sway; a state in which the self has managed to . . . assemble all conflicting aspects of the self and put them to creative use, and by doing so to assert the power of the self to engender itself. (26-27)

⁶ Based on biographical evidence, Djwa makes the reasonable assumption that Heavysege probably attended the theatre in Liverpool during the 1830s and '40s. Both melodrama and Romantic drama, she suggests, could well have provided theatrical models for Saul (xv). This study takes Djwa's assumption further, adding that these theatrical models were probably at least as--if not more--influential as strictly literary models such as Milton, or the dramatic poems of the English Romantics.

⁷ Djwa observes that "Heavysege presents [Saul] as the 'noble villain' of Romantic heroic tragedy" (xix). It seems that the notion of villainy is used here simply to denote a certain category of heroism. To my mind this vague overlapping can only serve to blur the boundaries of what I consider to be two very different modes of dramatic characterization, leading to bizarre notions such as the critical view of Lucifer as the "hero" of Paradise Lost. To reduce villainy to the status of merely a type of heroism seems to me to put in place another strategy whereby traditional criticism seeks to subsume aesthetic elements at work beyond its borders.

⁸ Emphasised here for its subversive commentary on the view of kingship as a humanist model of heroism, Saul's anointing is a choice made by the people to end theocracy. The biblical text tells us: "your king which ye shall have chosen you" (I Samuel 8:18).

⁹ The demon Malzah is characterized as an optimistic individualist. Like Saul, he interprets God's justice as tyranny and takes it upon himself to decide where mercy is justified:

Nay, nay; I'll brave Zaph's uttermost
displeasure.

What hath Saul done to me that I should
plague him?

It goes against my heart and conscience,
 thus
 To rack his body and deprave his mind.
 Oh, how he groans, and sighs, and swears,
 and reasons!
 Nay, by the pith of goodness yet left in me,
 It me unfiends to see and listen to him.
 Give me a ground of quarrel with him; let
 Me know that he habitually derides us,
 Or that he charges us with the corruption
 Of his own heart, as many do with theirs,
 And I will trouble him to Zaph's desire.
 Or pit me against a standing enemy,
 An angel; bid me to insult the Dreadest.
 And I will do it: but for this poor king,
 I have no provocation to sustain me
 I'th' process of his injuring.
 (1; 5.6, 107-108)

Differing here from Djwa's view, I suggest that neither Malzah nor Saul offers us a conventional satanic figure. The work also undermines Bentley's view that "the success of a melodramatist will always depend primarily upon his power to feel and project fear" (200-201). Although billed as an "Evil Spirit," in Heavysege's work Malzah redefines "Evil" less in terms of easily perceived conflict between Manichaeian opposites of absolute vice or virtue than as an over-confidence in the morality of the self-conscious self in which the "moral sense" comes to mean not the perception of God's good in men but the self-referential construction of that good. A clownish figure, Malzah is an appealing character, but the tendency to enjoy this demon shows the seductiveness of an evil which portrays itself as not so bad after all. Heavysege's representation of evil gains in subtlety in that it is identified not by the emotion of fear but by the confusion of the moral sense.

¹⁰ Djwa emphasizes this conflict between Saul and the priests as an aspect of Heavysege's indebtedness to Alfieri (xix). However, in Alfieri's Saul the conflict is central to the entire drama, whereas in Heavysege's work it is subsumed in the larger context of Saul's relationships with God and with David. In Alfieri's work, the conflict is part of the machinations of Abner, a vicious Iago figure who plays upon Saul's fears of usurpation. In Heavysege's drama, on the contrary, Abner is consistent with the portrait of the loyal general and kinsman represented

in the Bible.

11 When Samuel travels to the house of Jesse to anoint David, Heavysege's approach serves to emphasise the distinction recorded in 1 Samuel 16:7: "the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

12 In the Pilgrim edition, the rubric added at the commencement of the Goliath verses is "Saul's cowardice and David's courage" (397), a translation of the scriptural statement that "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (1 Samuel 17:11). I tend to agree with Heavysege's interpretation which does not equate fear with cowardice.

13 Jameson's observation that "the favourite symbols of the Virgin--the moon, the star, the 'terribilis ut castorum acies' (Cant. vi 10), and the mirror" may seem at first glance to be appropriate to Saul when we look at the translation of the cited verse in the Song of Solomon: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" But the gendering of the passage--a Queen speaking of Solomon's Beloved--confirms that in the trilogy the moon, rather than empowering Saul, actually prefigures his fatal hysteria.

Chapter 4 and Conclusion

Re-patriating the Feminine: Some Theoretical Views on Melodrama in the Twentieth Century

Although melodrama's historical boundaries are constituted by its core century of empowerment as a counter-aesthetic (1790-1890), the term has achieved widespread usage in contemporary film and television criticism, as noted briefly in the Introduction. Film studies such as Laura Mulvey's tend to consider the term strictly ahistorically as a structural formula, and do not consider or account for the important differences in values between melodrama as a nineteenth-century aesthetic and melodrama as, for example, a twentieth-century film genre. Such usage is often misleading, for in its various later forms, the genre exhibits certain fundamental changes, which I will argue here to be attributable to the influence of early modernism (1880s-1910s), as represented by the works of Ibsen, for example.¹ This chapter focuses mainly on one key difference between earlier and later melodrama seen to arise from modernist influence: the

reversal of the genre's gender politics. The three texts discussed in this chapter were selected because, as we shall see, they exhibit three different strategies by which this reversal was effected within the context of religious melodrama generally and domestic melodrama in particular. As we shall also see, these three texts cannot be considered melodramas within the conventions of nineteenth-century dramaturgy as discussed in the previous two chapters. I shall argue, however, that they rely upon the structural and thematic conventions of melodrama that they "quote," implicitly and explicitly, to legitimise their alternative agendas. The tone of melodrama's moral earnestness, for example, can be found in each of these texts, but the content of the morality presented is drastically different from that presented in most melodramas.

This chapter specifically traces the transformation of domestic melodrama's female central character from potentially Woman as Subject of a pro-feminist feminine discourse into Man as Subject disguised as Woman not even of a discourse offering a pro-masculine feminine resistance, but of a discourse articulating a pro-masculine power politics almost exclusively. As each text is analysed in turn--first

Archibald Lampman's "David and Abigail: A Poem in Dialogue" (1892)², then Oliver J. Booth's Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite: A Dramatic Monologue (1901)³, followed by George Arthur Hammond's verse drama The Crowning Test (1901)⁴, we shall see that even though these dramas retain certain key features of domestic melodrama, the gendered power relations signified by these features are effectively subverted. Specifically, in each drama we shall see that the female central character is rendered subordinate to men's socio-cultural laws and thus the unmediated relationship between the heroine and God characteristic of much domestic melodrama's protestantism is undermined. That the female central character is now subject to men rather than to God, substantiates Brooks's notion of a desacralised aesthetic of melodrama, outlined in Chapter One, but shows that it in fact belongs not to melodrama proper, but to the appropriation of melodramatic conventions as part of the formation of a modernist aesthetic for drama.

The more than thirty years separating the second edition of Charles Heavysege's Saul and the final draft version of Archibald Lampman's "David and Abigail" also separates Heavysege's protestantism from Lampman's secularist early modernism. This separation

is evident partly in their differing approaches to Romanticism. Unlike the implicitly articulated resistance to this aesthetic we have seen in Heavysege's work, Lampman's appropriation of Romanticism is complicitous with its values. His views are available through a series of commentaries he wrote for The Globe newspaper's column entitled "At the Mermaid's Inn." In his revision of Keats's statement that "'Beauty is truth; truth beauty; that is all ye know and all ye need to know' [sic]" into "The love of beauty is the love of truth and goodness" (Davies 125), it might appear that the moral imperative found to be inherent in melodrama is fundamental to Lampman's work as well. For example, Lampman's replacement of the rational connotations of knowledge with the emotional connotations of love might seem to signify a privileging of a version of the "theology of feelings" (Westfall 39), or even the sentimental notion of the moral sense. This interpretation might be considered to be substantiated by the addition of "goodness," seen perhaps to undermine the Romantic ideal of sublimity in Keats's statement and to replace it with protestantism's pragmatic virtue. But whereas in Heavysege's portrait of David the protestant ideal of love finds its ultimate articulation in the love of God

before everything, in Lampman's "David and Abigail" romantic love between the two title characters is the sole focus. As a result, we shall see that the Romantic notion of the transcendent power of the Self, disguised as the melodramatic sacred, is reinstalled by the poem as a key 'spiritual' goal. As we have seen, goodness is represented by Heavysege's David as the submission of the Self to God's will and the active advocacy of pacific virtues, as Jameson has described them. For Lampman's Abigail, however, goodness is rearticulated as the merely passive observance of men's laws and customs. We shall see that the 'melodramatic' reward of such virtue and the punishment of vice in the poem is less the materialisation of a divine pattern than the almost accidental result of personal choices by individuals. Thus the poem seems to seek aesthetic legitimacy for a desacralised modernist notion of melodramatic virtue paradoxically by invoking divine affirmation of this notion through the appropriation of the story told in 1 Samuel 25. Unlike Heavysege's resistance, Lampman's modernist melodramatic revisionism is more often than not actually aligned with core assumptions, interests, and values of Romanticism as it is traditionally understood.

"David and Abigail" consists of three Scenes. Scene One is entitled "Abigail," Scene Two: "Nabal," and Scene Three: "David." These headings do not refer to the character who is most prominent in the scene, but rather to the character who enters the scene and effects a change in the direction of the story. But generally speaking, structurally the focus of Lampman's poem is on the female central character, Abigail. She has the greatest number of lines and her actions constitute the plot. We shall see that these and other elements appear to invoke the sacred moral framework of melodrama as it is articulated in domestic melodrama especially. But the structural presence of Abigail as an embodiment of the feminine situated in the home performs none of the transformative thematic functions found in much domestic melodrama, including Esther examined in Chapter Two. Moreover, while at first glance David's presence seems to be marginalised, merely framing the emplotment of the relationship between Abigail and her husband Nabal, Abigail's character development, and some comic business between the minor characters Caleb and Miriam, we shall see that Abigail's thoughts and actions are permeated throughout by David's influence.

Comparisons with Heavyssege's Saul provide important insights into Lampman's poem, insofar as the characterisation of Lampman's David represents a fundamentally pro-masculine resistance to the feminine. Specifically, Lampman's David is introduced in terms similar to those used by Heavyssege to characterise Saul but without parodic effect resulting from melodramatic resistance. Thus he is portrayed solely within the pro-masculine values of traditional heroism. In Scene One, speaking to his advisor Abimael, David overreacts to Abigail's husband Nabal's inhospitable response to David's request for food in remembrance of David's past help and protection: "I have borne much, but now my wrath is fixed, / Goaded beyond all measure of restraint; / No word of thine, nor any man's shall move me" (1, 361). Taking Nabal as an example, David also articulates a paranoia similar to Saul's: "It maddens me / To find within, without, and everywhere / Enemies open or concealed" (1, 362). Disempowered by rage, the image of hysteria is found in David's opening speeches as well: "My soul is like a fierce and smouldering fire / Even the harp within my hand hath grown / A shrieking shrew, and all its quivering strength / Can scarcely cry the anger of my soul" (1, 366). Emptied of pacific and domestic values, Lampman's portrait of David in

effect is rendered into that which David purports to resist--as Abigail eventually points out: "Let not thine hand-maid come at last to know / That the great David of her burning thought / Is but a dream, and less than other men, / A like successor to the son of Kish, / Another Saul" (1, 374). As we shall see, while Abigail explicitly appears to enact melodramatic resistance to the tragic, as Heavysege's David does, this politics is implicitly subverted.

Abigail's warning seems to imply that David's intended actions may set in motion a tragic emplotment. Indeed, duplicating Saul's fomenting of internal strife among the Hebrews and desiring vengeance, David intends to effect a complete slaughter of Nabal's household: "I will make of Nabal's house / A [h]ouse of desolation and of silence . . ." (1, 364). Just as Heavysege's Saul ignores Samuel's wise counsel, Lampman's David ignores the advice of his aged and virtuous companion, Abimael. Stating "Methinks the sword of David should be kept / Sacred and stainless for the public foe; / This old man Nabal is an Israelite," Abimael notes that "Young Blood is dangerous, takes fire at little, / And one mad stroke hath made a life's regret. / The Sons of Israel are one house together" (1, 362). Abimael urges David to "turn away his patient soul from wrath, / And

yield his footsteps to the way of peace" (1, 365). The figure of the wise advisor is balanced by that of the evil (Malzah), or foolish (Abner) advisor: here Joab finds that "This old man's words are like the sting of gnats / Whetting my soul to uncontrollable fury" (1, 365). Just as Malzah spurs on Saul's pursuit of David, Joab encourages David's wrathfulness, observing: "These days are for the lion, not the lamb" (1, 362). Both advisors reveal different sides of the interconnected notions of honour and pride inherent in many traditional characterisations of tragic heroism, allowing David, as hero, to make his choice.

In addition, the notion of proper kingship effects in David a confusion between his own will and God's similar to Saul's. David counters Abimeael's arguments by referring to his status: ". . . I, whom God by Samuel's sacred hand / Gave for their shelter and protecting strength . . .", concluding that ". . . as the Lord liveth, he and all his house / Shall feel my strength, and know me who I am, / And his place be as a seared mark for ever / Of the Lord's might and David's heavy wrath" (1, 365-366). Eschewing ". . . gentle words and gentle deeds . . .", David's desire for vengeance, like Saul's, is a response to a challenge to his perception of his rights and

privileges as king. Such parallels to the characterisation of Heavysege's Saul, insofar as they are devoid of parodic effect, show that Lampman's portrait of David is established from the outset in terms implicitly complicitous with the rhetorical strategies of tragic heroism. The fact that a tragic emplotment does not take place--as the reader may already know through familiarity with the biblical story--does not displace the pro-masculinism of these rhetorical strategies, but serves to disguise it effectively.

Seeming to highlight their different destinies, Heavysege's Saul's wrath is fixed and fomented by Malzah while Lampman's David's is apparently dispelled successfully by Abigail. Yet David remains in a pro-masculine place beyond domesticity just as Saul does, for the values protestantism tends to associate with the portrait of David as a type of Christ are not to be found here. Indeed, traces of the interdependent protestant values of the moral, the feminine, and the domestic are found in the portrait of Abigail exclusively. But, as we shall see, Lampman's emphasis in the opening portion of the poem on the representation of David primarily as a traditionally heroic warrior/lover establishes a hierarchy of power

relations which effectively disempowers (feminizes) Abigail and the domestic values--somewhat tenuously--ascribed to her, regardless of the poem's ultimately non-tragic structure. As we observed of Heavysage's Saul, Lampman's David is characterised as a masculine/male Subject. But unlike Heavysage's portrait, this gendering of the Subject is not explicitly rendered problematic in Lampman's work. Thus while from a mainly structural perspective--such as that used in Booth's and Rahill's studies--the poem may appear to be a form of domestic melodrama, in fact a consideration of the poem's gendered power relations makes visible both its occupation and subversion of this aesthetic.

The key deployment of the occupation and subversion of domestic melodrama in the poem is effected primarily in the representation of the female central character, Abigail. In her attempt to persuade David from vengeance, Abigail seems to be empowered only insofar as she transgresses rather than transforms the boundary between masculine and feminine realms, as they have been defined traditionally as noted in the Introduction. Abigail's function as transgressor is perceived, yet mistakenly evaluated (and over-valued) by David, who initially sees her rhetorical power as

similar in kind and purpose to that of Eve's over Adam,
and of Delilah's over Sampson:

Women have ever laboured to unnerve
The souls of men and turn their strength
to weakness.
Have we not cause, then, to restrain our
ears
From drinking of that smooth and pleasant
poison
That wells so deftly from a woman's lips,
And shield our eyes, whose blindness
cannot see
The chain that hangs within her fragrant
tresses.

O! shall I be another Samson, bond
To every woman whose sheer beauty wears
The power of spells to weaken and besot
us? (1, 371, 368)

David is adamant that "This woman shall not turn me
from my will" (1, 368). Since his "will" is madness
another seemingly compatible parallel with Heavysege's
Saul is suggested, for here especially Abigail appears
to be to David as David is to Saul in the "Second Part"
of Heavysege's trilogy--the healer of his mind, if not
his soul.

While Abigail's influence over David, as in
David's over Saul in Saul, seems to indicate the
triumph of the sacred over the secular, the domestic
over the heroic and of the feminine over the masculine,
this dynamic may be seen as merely quoted structurally
in Lampman's poem and not fulfilled thematically. Her
speech appears to be having its necessary effect, for

David finds his senses opened: "Mine ears are greedy of thy voice; my soul / Drinketh the grace and music of thy words / More gladly than the sun-baked earth absorbs / The summer rain" (1, 374). The association we have seen elsewhere privileged by Lampman between truth, beauty, and goodness is evoked here, seemingly effecting a moral suasion of the mind through the senses, as with David's music in Heavysege's work:

My purpose melts away. In all my soul
Only the magic of thy voice remains,
O radiant queen and milk-white rose of
 women;
Justice and wrath and the most fixed wish,
And every fact, and every uttered oath
Gives way before thy beauty as the night
Gives way to morn. (1, 376)

Unlike Heavysege's representation of David's healing of Saul, however, Abigail's healing of David actually extends no further than to the material preservation of her husband's household. Furthermore, while Jokiel, because of his own appetitiveness, may be seen to misread the nature of David's influence on the women of Saul's court, here no ironic element is found: Abigail has seduced David in fact, and may be seen simply to have changed his passion from rage into desire, rather than to have expelled it altogether.

Abigail's seduction of David not only displaces his advisors' function, for Abigail asks David to "draw

away / Yon dark-browed multitude of dangerous men, / In
 whom the fiery lust of blood and prey / Yet burns" (1,
 377)--to which David responds "The words of Abigail are
 wise and good" (1, 377)--but also displaces God's
 function as David's chief spiritual guide and solace:

. . . when my soul is troubled most, my
 path
 Most broken, most perplexed, I will
 remember
 Thy beauty and the goodness of thy words:
 Thy name shall be as honey to my lips,
 And like strong wine unto my fainting
 soul.
 Thy voice recalled and thy remembered
 presence. (1, 377)

Furthermore, David's exit lines in Scene One show that
 he wishes to effect a similar displacement for Abigail:

Should'st thou be hurt by any evil change,
 And need befall thee of the succouring
 hand,
 Send thou to me, and whatsoever toil
 Or want or sickness pin me to the earth,
 Be it death's hour or even the battle's
 height
 I will arise and surely come to thee.
 (1, 377)

Because of this vision of complete reciprocity of
 spiritual and material need and succouring, the
 transcendent Self--as articulated here within the
 narcissistic and self-sufficient conventions of
 romantic love--effectively displaces God as the
 transcendental signified of the poem's rhetorical
 strategies. This displacement provides the key to the

thematic subversion of the seemingly melodramatic structure of the poem; without an unmediated relation between the central characters and God, the moral fable based on faith fundamental to much melodrama's protestant counter-aesthetic is rendered superfluous. Indeed, I would suggest that no moral fable exists in the poem and that its sacred context, the biblical story, is effectively desacralized by its reduction to a mere love story.

Once her transgression has served its purpose-- the restoration of David to his proper Self (which is merely a return to a pre-existing condition and not a transformation at all)--Abigail's return to passivity is complete. (We saw this notion of the female central character's transgression of gendered spheres treated very differently in Cushing's Esther, where the feminist potential of transformation of the masculine/secular by the feminine/sacred is fully realised.) Referring to herself within the rhetoric of seduction as "O, I am happy, but withal undone!", Abigail observes to Abimael:

That we poor women oft in darkest hours
Have such quiet wills to battle with our
 hearts,
Even in the stormy face of manful passion,
Such settled skill to aim our shafts
 aright;
Yet when the foe hath fallen and the field

Rings with the cry of bloodless victory,
 No longer calm, no longer strong we stand,
 But helpless, thus, pale delicate
 conquerors,
 Smitten with our own efforts nigh to
 death.

But this one thing, Abimael, I say
 With joy: by no means hurtless or in vain
 My mother bore me woman, weaker-limbed
 And softer-thewed than men are, but more
 fair

To look upon, and with the woman's heart
 By nature given to read the minds of men,
 More quick than wind or water to give
 motion

With winged thoughts, and with the
 piercing skill
 Of lips true-noted turned to flute-like
 use

Make music of them sweet and magical:

 . . .
 And Blessed be His hand that He hath given
 That gift of gifts, that woman's power, to
 me,
 Who never wished to use it save for good.
 (1, 378-379)

Whereas in the characterisation of David the heroic role of warrior/lover is sustained regardless of the re-direction of the dramatic emplotment from that of tragedy to that of romantic love story, this passage suggests that, unlike melodrama generally, here only one configuration of heroism is possible: masculine/male. The heroic features of Abigail's transgression of the boundaries between spheres are represented as a triumph despite her femininity and as normally beyond the scope of "[us] poor women." Thus we can see that, unlike melodrama generally, "David and

Abigail," while seeming to represent Abigail's moral transformation of David, does not in fact represent heroism as fundamentally transformed in any way by the text's alternative emplotment, or its focus on a female central character, or its biblical context.

Sustaining this (re)establishment of traditional hierarchical pro-masculine power relations, Abimael and David construct Abigail as an Object of discourse for the reader's contemplation before her first entrance. Whereas most female central characters of melodrama articulate their virtue themselves in speech, gesture, and action (as Michal does in Saul and Esther in Esther), in Scene One of "David and Abigail" the characterisation of Abigail is virtually complete before she even enters the scene. Unlike the melodramatic heroine she is made to resemble, Abigail's virtue does not seem to be inherently hers. Also functioning subversively, Abimael's and David's speeches appear to invoke the conventions of domestic melodrama involving pastoral and Marian fertility imagery. Thematically, however, such imagery is almost completely dissociated from domesticity and seems to serve mainly as a poetic gesture toward the blazon tradition, in which the beloved's beauties are catalogued. Indeed, the night after the encounter with

David, Abigail finds that "the house oppressed me with its cold gray walls" (1, 383) and, except for when her husband Nabal falls unconscious and dies, she is never represented within doors. In the poem, furthermore, pastoral and fertility imagery evocative of the outdoors setting are associated without irony with witchcraft. Abimael constructs this portrait of Abigail for David and the reader:

The young men say that in her voice and
 mein
 Are witcheries beyond the natural gift
 Of all the loveliest of earthly women;
 The sun-baked by-ways and the sterile
 rocks
 Grow green beneath the treading of her
 feet.
 The very air is perfumed with her
 presence.
 Soft are her brows as roses, and her eyes
 Deeper than midnight with its wreath of
 stars.
 . . .
 Yet is her beauty but the garb of truth,
 The symbol of the wisdom of her soul.
 The promise of the goodness of her hands
 The poor, the sick, the blind, and they
 that suffer
 From any hurt or any grief or madness
 Have found in her the cure for every ill.
 . . .
 And I who gave my best of speech in vain
 May see thy violence melt like snow in
 Hermon
 Before the spring-tide charm of Abigail.
 (1, 367)

Here pastoral and Marian fertility imagery is not rendered perverse as in Heavysege's Saul, but seems to be descriptive decoration without a moral thematic

function, and merely foreshadows Abigail's dissipation of David's rage. Agreeing with Abimael's portrait of the approaching Abigail, David can only consider Abigail's "outward virtues" self-reflexively as "The potent beauty of a matchless woman" (1, 368), with no reference to any inherent God-given virtue of soul. Abigail is thus rendered through imagery not merely as an Object of contemplation by both men and women, but also as a representative of and a model for women generally in which women are to be the Objects, not Subjects of discourse, obviating any potential feminist effect of its quotation of the structural conventions of domestic melodrama.

I would suggest that the poem's use of Marian imagery serves no clear moral thematic purpose precisely because this imagery is separated from the only discursive field within which it may find its meaning, protestantism, and its preferred dramatic structure, domestic melodrama. Thus instead of helping to effect the empowerment of the female central character, Marian imagery here can only serve the representation of Abigail as a model of womanhood advocating women's submissiveness to men, rather than their moral transformation of them.

Such gestures toward the structural conventions of domestic melodrama but not to their legitimising foundation in protestantism subvert the Jamesonian Marian model, found in much melodrama, as one in which the female central character enacts a God-sanctioned empowerment to configure domestic space in terms beyond those socio-culturally constructed by men. In Scene Three, after Nabal's death, finding herself without a husband to give her life meaning Abigail exists in a vacuum: "My system with its vanished sun dissolves, / And duty, the sad governess, whose wand / In former times to some undoubted path / Bade me inexorably, now veils her face, / And leaves me masterless" (3, 402). The heroine of true domestic melodrama could never be masterless because she always serves God first. Miriam's speech concerning Abigail's impending marriage to David at the end of Scene Three indicates the degree of effacement of the character of Abigail--and thus the presence of God--through the text's rhetorical strategies. Miriam declares that even the passion Abigail has experienced since her first encounter with David has not been her own: "And all that strange desire, that wild unrest, / That swayed thy spirit from its narrow path / Is but the force of David in thy soul" (3, 405). Miriam views David's return as the

supreme moment in Abigail's life, moreover: "Never hath man beheld thee yet so fair, / So beautiful, so queenly, so inspired! / . . . This is thine hour, thy one great hour of life!" (3, 406). Abigail represents the position that the utter obliteration of Self--not to God, but to men--constitutes the perfection of the feminine/female Object/pseudo-Subject: "One answer only have I for my lord: / My heart, my strength, and all my life are his: / And where he bids me, thither I will go" (3, 407). Considering also that Abigail refers to herself as "thine handmaid" (1, 370; 1 Samuel 25:24-25), her submission to David here can be seen as a particularly nasty parody of Mary's submission to God: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

Articulating a phenomenon found in the eroticization of Madonna-figures in some of the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites, for example, Miriam observes to Rachel that:

This Abigail, whose gentle rectitude
Shines like a portent on our pettier
lives,
Is no mere block of precept and of plan,
No shape of painted wood, but a real
woman:
Think not because her eyes are like the
stars
That ever look on men with equal gaze,
There is no fire or passion in her blood.
. . . .

Oh, yesterday, I watched her as she stood
 Calm, glowing, with that sovereign port of
 hers,
 Before the royal David. Never yet
 Seemed she so beautiful, so warmly fair;
 And as the warrior yielded and his eyes
 Grew fixed upon her like two radiant
 stars,
 There came a subtle yearning in her voice;
 A mantling red glowed up in both her
 cheeks;
 A light, as of a soul that sees unveiled
 The distance of some unexplored joy,
 Broke from her lifted lids. I tell thee,
 Rachel,
 That David's strength hath touched her to
 the heart,
 And yonder on our well-loved mountain path
 She walks alone, and strives to crush the
 flame. (2, 382-383)

Miriam's portrait of Abigail as flesh rather a "shape
 of painted wood," can be seen to dissociate her not
 only from pagan idolatry, but from the medieval
 paintings, altarpieces for example, upon which Jameson
 founds her aesthetic of the feminine. The spiritual
 love of God enacted by the heroine in many domestic
 melodramatic emplotments, has thus been displaced by
 the carnal desire of a heroine bereft of her signifying
 history, and in this alone is she allowed an "equal
 gaze."

Further, instead of the sacred domestic site
 being all-powerful for the female central character,
 Abigail concedes that her "house", "head", and "hand"
 have been usurped and that during her walk she has

sought to "conquer back myself" (2, 383). And yet it is not for herself that she does this, but for her duty as a wife. Masochistically, she does not cherish her desire for David, but the pain of its futility. Further, Abigail perceives her domestic life as narrow and this notion of narrowness as proper to the site:

I struggled and cried out against my lot.
 I have learned already in my youth
 An iron truth that most men never reach;
 Our life is regular and bound by law,
 For God hath given to each his changeless
 word,
 Laid out his path and bade him walk
 therein.
 Our only happiness, our final joy,
 Is in persisting calmly to the goal,
 And he who struggles from his ordered way,
 How hard soe'er it be, even in thought,
 Reaps in the end but bitterness and shame.
 He can only be happy who is strong,
 Who bears above the crying tides of
 passion
 And movements of the blind restless soul
 A forehead smooth with purpose, and a will
 Spacious and limpid as the cloudless morn.
 (3, 386)

The image given here is of a distant and cold God quite unlike the continually intervening and merciful God we have seen Westfall describe and have found to be fundamental to the optimistic protestantism at work in most melodrama. Further, there is no sense of the protestant project here in which the secular is to be transformed by the sacred; the sense of order here is static, not progressive. For the female central

character of true domestic melodrama, as we have seen in Esther, all her struggles are progressive and the triumph of her virtue is the achievement in miniature of Heaven on earth.

Thus we may see that, as in Heavyside's Saul, the articulation of the feminine/female Subject is rhetorically disempowered consistently, leaving the masculine/male Subject embodied by Lampman's David to represent as ideal a secular notion of humanist Man. Two changes in the biblical story emphasise this dynamic: one, David's final courting of Abigail; and two, the death of Nabal. Whereas in 1 Samuel 25:40 we are told that "when the servants of David were come to Abigail in Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife," Lampman chooses to have David come in person to claim her. This is not the product of divine intervention, but only of comic business, conventional in much melodrama, whereby the comic man and woman conspire to aid the main plot's lovers' wooing. Abigail's "[c]ousin and companion" (t.p. 360), Miriam, sends the lad Caleb to tell David that Nabal is on his death bed (2, 392-393). Unlike the strictly romantic scenario here, however, similar business in melodrama is almost

always instrumental in furthering the progress of virtue as well.

While the invocation of the conventions of romantic love narratives undermines any sense of the presence of a divine force, another change effected by Lampman has a much more insidious outcome. In 1 Samuel 25:37-39 we are told that, following Nabal's drunken revelry when Abigail tells him of her appeasement of David's wrath, Nabal's "heart died within him, and he became as stone." Further, we are told that "about ten days after, . . . the LORD smote Nabal, and he died." Upon hearing of this event, David observes: "Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head." Because in Lampman's poem the pleading has been done by Abigail alone, the death of Nabal is represented as having been caused not by God, but by Abigail alone:

Nabal, I will no longer keep the tale,
For thou dost anger me beyond control!
From mine own tongue thou shalt be made aware
How terrible the son of Jesse is,
How stern, yet merciful--and thou, how base!
Whilst thou wert strutting in thy petty rage
Above thy gray unconscious head hath hung
A hand that glittered with a sword, and mine
Hath turned it from thee. (2, 388-389)

During the ensuing summary of the encounter, Nabal collapses. Abigail exclaims: "Oh, the cruel speech! The mad / Unthankful tongue! I never dreamed / My words had hurt thee so" (2, 390). Oblivious to the divine plan being worked out, she invokes the powers of healing ascribed to her by Abimael and, of course, they fail: "Some slight spark / Like seed in the deep earth may yet be left, / Which we with careful tillage may rear up / Till the full stature of his life return" (2, 390). Thus ambiguously (and with sado-masochistic undertones) Abigail rids herself of an unwanted husband, leaving her free to marry David.

The text presents the domestic scene in terms of the "real" world only and not as interwoven with the sacred elements seen to belong to it by nature. Hence the relationship between Abigail and Nabal is presented thematically in the poem as a woman's struggle against an oppressive marriage representative of the unfair confinement of women in the domestic sphere, which Abigail describes:

. . . for I have seldom known
That bouyant life, that free and natural joy;
Nor have I been unhappy, but my joy
Has been a serious ordered thing,
The satisfaction bred of wifely thoughts
And well-planned labours studiously
fulfilled,
To order thriftily my husband's house,

To keep myself a blameless wife, unstained
 By evil thoughts, the nurse of evil deeds,
 Single of heart, one-minded, dreamless, pure;
 (3, 400)

The sterility of Abigail's life is represented as the product of her achievement of an ideal wifeliness. This ideal is necessary, however, for her momentary lapse into shrewishness has fatal consequences! In the poem it seems that only the wifeliness required of ordinary women is oppressive, however. Despite the ostensible thematic goal of laying bare the domestic oppression of women in general, with the death of Nabal, "Abigail now rules / The fruitful valleys and this rich domain, / And all the houses and all the flocks are hers," as Miriam points out (2, 392). Yet the impending marriage to David, a king, which "rob[s] these mountains of their priceless queen" (3, 405), is seen to transcend wifeliness somehow. Reflecting the privileging of romantic love in the poem, 'marrying up' is shown to be preferable to either material or spiritual empowerment as goals for women.

The use here of the structural conventions of domestic melodrama to build a critique of domesticity as a site of the sacred has an antecedent in Ibsen's A Doll's House, wherein the female central character, Nora, "escapes" her oppressive domestic situation by

seeking the "freedom" of the paid labour force in which, somehow, male-dominated gender politics are presumed to be less hegemonic. While seeking legitimacy within the framework of domestic melodrama, Lampman's poem gestures toward the social protest of women's position found in Ibsen's play as well as to its early modernist aesthetic of naturalism, with its pessimistic determinist philosophy. Because the structural and thematic conventions of domestic melodrama are interpreted by both plays in strictly secular terms, the conflict we have seen between two incompatibly grounded aesthetic frameworks, one secular, the other sacred, ultimately results in the diminishment or utter obliteration of any feminist effect. As the confused state of Lampman's poem's gender politics reveals, in a nineteenth-century context, once the domestic scene is taken away from women as a possible site of empowerment, they really do not have anywhere else to go.

After the death of Nabal, seeking to regain a sense of balance, Abigail tells Miriam: "I thought of those great women praised of old / Whose presence mightier than rage and fear / Inured out fathers' hands to nobler deeds" (3, 401). Along with "Miriam / Who led her women in the dance of praise / With timbrels at

the passage of the sea," Abigail speaks of "Deborah / A spirit sharper than a two-edged sword / Whose word awoke in a sleeping Israel / The might of Barak, when the northern plain / And all the fields of Kishon to the hills / Were darkened with the hosts of Sisera" (3, 402). Significantly, the suggestion is given here that Barak was the one who defeated the hosts of Sisera, as narrated in Judges 4:15-16. In Judges 5:20-21, however, Deborah sings: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river of Kishon." Ignored is Deborah's statement in 4:9 that "the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" and her refrain in 5:24 that "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

Abigail's omission of Jael as one "of those great women praised of old" further enforces the poem's position that heroism is a male role and that of passive support a female role. While Lampman's choice of the David and Abigail story encourages the enforcement of this gender politics in many ways, we shall see that Oliver J. Booth attempts to explore the boundaries of the gendering of these roles in his monologue for solo performer, Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite.

Booth's play is prefaced by a "Note" in the copyright typescript in which he remarks that "[t]he story of Jael has probably provoked as much contention as any contained in the Old Testament. Infidelity has cited it to impugn a particular theory of inspiration; and some Christian scholars have attacked it as a gross breach of hospitality and an act of treachery and murder." Booth's remarks on Christian scholarship, in particular, are substantiated by Mieke Bal's recent painstaking study of the biblical text and scholarship of which she observes:

If the existence and the role of Deborah at least are not challenged, the same cannot be said for Jael. We have already seen that, according to Cundall, the attempts to eliminate her name from verse 5:6 of the poem have been numerous. The preeminence of the set of thematic values imposed by the historical code as soon as history is considered exclusively as politics leads the commentators to consider the episode of Jael as secondary (see Richter and Alonso Schokel), even at the expense of the literary qualities of the text. Failing the elimination or reduction of Jael's role in the text, still another option remains: to portray her as a criminal, and a notorious one at that. . . . Struggling to explain that Jael's act could not be in accord with the will of Yahweh, they conclude: "her heroic deed cannot be acquitted of the sins of lying, treachery and assassination.

(34-35)

Booth states further that his drama is "a defence of Jael's act" and that "it sets forth the idolatry and

barbaric cruelty of the canaanite [sic] rulers, and shows that Jael was by birth an Israelite in faith and worship. Hence she is moved by patriotism, religion[, faith, and love of liberty." Booth ultimately sees his drama as a representation "of Jael's devotion to her people" (721-4). As in Lampman's poem, we shall see that the structure of domestic melodrama, while proper in many ways for the depiction of "Jael's devotion to her people," is emptied of its protestant moral investment, ultimately drastically qualifying her empowerment: the domestic scene is mainly represented in secular terms. Further, as in Lampman's poem, a gendered hierarchy of female and male spheres is invoked, for the domestic scene is represented as circumscribed by the outer male world, which ultimately judges Jael's actions negatively. Public heroism effectively leads Jael to private martyrdom, as is suggested by the stage directions at the end of the play, as we shall see.

As in Lampman's work, Booth alters the biblical story in two important ways, and these provide the focus for the analysis given here. Among the motivations for Jael not listed by Booth in his "Note" but present in the play as a result of one of these changes is the notion of a certain solidarity among

women. While this feature may seem to be consistent with the feminist effect of much domestic melodrama, and is a feature of the genre found in Esther, in terms of gender politics it effectively subverts Jael's empowerment as an agent fulfilling Deborah's prophecy by bringing her action against Sisera into a secular rather than a sacred context. Booth invents a tale of Sisera's rape of Jethro's future wife--the mother of the little boy who is with Jael briefly in the play--and his murder of this woman by driving a tent peg through her temples. Of Sisera Jael tells the young boy:

He had as slave an Israelitish maid,
 And would have spoil'd her of far more
 than life;
 She fled, and refuge sought among the
 tents
 Of wandering Kenites; there she found a
 home,
 And love and happiness. Two years thus
 pass'd;
 Then heaven blessed her and she bore a
 son--

. . .
 She was alone--as I am, Heber gone--
 Alone with thee; and thou wast at her
 breast,
 And in thine ears she sang low lullaby,
 Some mother's song of ancient Israel,
 Till, conscious of a dark'ning of the
 door,
 She turn'd to greet her husband with a
 smile
 And saw--the captain, Sisera!-----

. . .
 . . . So he rested there
 . . .

But that same night he sent--or came
 himself----
 We found her there next morning--oh,
 alas!--
 A tent peg pinn'd her temple to the
 ground---
 And on the peg: "From Sisera!"
 (721-8-9)

Booth's invention of the rape of Jethro's wife,
 however,^{*} highlights Jael's action not only as one
 woman's avenging of another, but also as a rape in
 itself. The gendered dynamics of this inversion are
 complex and Lacan's notions of the phallus and the
 symbolic--as described in the Introduction--prove
 helpful in tracing the power relations at work in the
 play.

By means of this inversion, Jael is represented
 by the phallus while Sisera is represented by Lack.
 Since the play is a performance piece for solo actor,
 Jael alone has access to the symbolic realm of
 language; none of Sisera's requests of her, as given in
 the narrative and lyric chapters of the Bible, are even
 referred to, except the request for water. Jael's
 empowerment is thus conceptual as well as material and
 she may represent her sphere in her own terms. We
 shall see, however, that the content of this
 empowerment subversively sacrifices both the feminine
 and its protestant function of sacred transformation of

the secular which would otherwise render the monologue into a true domestic melodrama similar to Esther.

Partially outside the tent, on the edge where masculine and feminine spheres meet, Jael invites Sisera to enter (inverting the resistance of Jethro's wife): "Thou'rt with the Kenites. Rest, my lord, and sleep. / None will molest thee,--nay lie down again; / Thou'rt in my portion of the tent; no man / Dare enter it unless I bid him come" (721-11). After drinking a bowl of milk, he lies down and Jael covers him with a rug "soft and warm" (721-10-11). The ostensibly maternal actions of hospitality and care-giving are inverted by Jael's phallic empowerment. Instead, these actions become strategic manipulations whereby Jael places her enemy into a position of vulnerability, not least by virtue of the soporific effect of milk. As Bal has noted, the rules of hospitality may also be interpreted ironically because of Jael's excessive generosity: she solicits his entry into the tent and she supplies him with milk instead of water (60-63). Thus Sisera is effectively feminized by the inversion: Sisera was to Jethro's wife in the past as Jael is to Sisera now. Jethro's wife was vulnerable in her tent and Sisera empowered, an inversion in itself according to the gendering of the tent as domestic site of

women's empowerment, as Jael's speech rightly notes. That Sisera is vulnerable in Jael's tent seems to restore the gendered power relations appropriate to this site in accordance with their articulation in much domestic melodrama.

In this apparent restoration of the appropriate gendered power relations, however, the play's rhetorical strategies render Jael in terms of the phallus. In other words, like Lampman's Abigail's transgression of the spheres' boundaries in order to proffer hospitality, Jael ultimately is heroic despite her femininity not because of it. We should recall here the important difference, established in the Introduction, between the phallus as empowered signifier in the symbolic, and the penis with which it is often--justifiably--confused, as Jane Gallop has observed. As Bal points out, neither the tent peg nor the workman's hammer are men's tools, but those of women, for in this time and culture women put up the tents and thus both are as much domestic tools as are cooking implements (59-60). In other words, one inversion that cannot be made is Jael's tent peg/Sisera's penis. Sisera's rape and the tent peg driven through Jethro's wife's temples thus constitute separate abuses of a woman's domain: her domestic

space, body, and tools, and not an action and its symbolic parallel. As we shall see, in the play, however, by her appropriation of these elements of her domain to kill Sisera, Jael forfeits one empowering discourse--shown to be vulnerable through the case of Jethro's wife--for another into which she cannot wholly enter. Thus the realm of the symbolic is shown in the play's rhetorical strategies to be unstable for women precisely because they are without the culturally assigned referent of the phallus: the penis.

Jael's mimed action--maternal gestures--are interwoven with repeated references to Deborah's prophecy: "What said our Deborah the prophetess? / 'God shall deliver Sisera'----yes, yes! / Into a woman's hand!'" (721-10). Jael ponders the significance of this relative to women's natural function of nurturing, on the one hand, and protecting, on the other:

'A woman's hand?' so said the prophetess--

 'God shall deliver Sisera into a Woman's
 hand'---
 But why? To save his life?
 To nurse him back to strength? oh, no!
 that were
 To sharpen well this captive lion's claws
 Then loose him thirsting for more human
 blood!
 Were Barak here he'd slay him where he
 lies,
 And thus, with one stroke of his vengeful
 sword,
 Deliver Israel forever!

If Barak justly, why not Jael too?
(721-13)

In this last line we see that Jael, in attempting to place the prophecy in the realm of the possible, aligns the woman's hand with that of the warrior Barak's. But this is not the establishment of parallel action between the heroic and domestic realms, but rather a leaving behind of the latter. The fundamental "unnaturalness" of this process is represented in gestures: "looks at her hands and shudders" and "Shudders and buries her face in her hands" (721-13). Jael tries to persuade herself that she merely intends to keep Sisera there until the men return from battle: "When he wakes 'twill be to Barak's hand, / And chains of iron" (721-11). Only when her protectiveness is aroused by overhearing Sisera murmuring in his sleep: "'No mercy,'" does Jael decide to act: "he will have the lives / Of men, women, and of little ones!" (721-14). We can see, however, that this protectiveness is paternal rather than maternal because Sisera's killing will be done in the (political rather than familial) context of a war that has been ongoing for twenty years.

This inversion can best be seen through comparison of Jael's mimed actions associated with

maternity early in the drama with those at the end. In the opening of the drama Jael and the small boy are within the tent while a thunderstorm rages outside: "Jael is speaking to a little Hebrew boy. She is facing R. and holding out her arms to the child, and, as she speaks, sits and caresses him." When a lightning flash occurs she "utters a cry, starts to her feet and clasps the child to her side" (721-5). At this moment the portrayal connotes a madonna and child. In this opening visual statement the central inversion between Jael's feminine realm of womanhood as maternity and the masculine realm of politics in which she murders Sisera is set up. After the child leaves the tent, moreover, Jael takes the position Jameson finds characteristic of early Christian images found in the catacombs (LM xlv): she "spreads her arms in passionate prayer" (721-9). Jael's mimed actions with Sisera refer to and invert the earlier maternal gestures: she "Makes as if assisting him to lie down, then kneels beside him;" she "Rises and has action of bringing milk in a bowl. Kneels, supports his head;" she "Puts the bowl to his lips, then lowers his head and appears to put the bowl down" (721-10-11). After she has killed Sisera her gestures, when alone after the child first leaves the stage, are again connoted in her final

gestures to her husband: "Turning L. with a cry,"
 "Holding out her arms in entreaty," and, finally, "She
 staggers out wildly, her arms outstretched in
 supplication," saying:

Heber, my husband!
 Oh, blame me not,-----
 It was for Israel--a woman's hand----
 For Israel, for Liberty, for God!
 To save the people!--I slew this one----He
 turns from me!--Heber!--He's gone!
 Heber--my lord!--my love!-- (721-15)

In these last moments of the play we see Booth's second change from the biblical story. In the narrative chapter, Barak alone returns and is hailed by Jael to view the body of Sisera. In Booth's play, Heber not only returns but virtually displaces Barak in significance, for it is not Jael's transgression of the heroic boundary that is important in the end, but her transgression of the domestically inscribed boundary of the feminine. For her heroic act, Jael becomes, as Lady Macbeth wished to be, "unsex'd." Jael's heroic act as a daughter of Israel horrifies Heber, less politically because he had secured a truce with Sisera's ruler, Jabin, and more gender politically because he is shamed as a husband by his wife's phallic empowerment. In Booth's drama not only Jael's womanhood is compromised by her action but Deborah's as well. Her prophecy--her access to the Word of God the

Father--can be seen, by implication, to be as much a transgression of gendered boundaries as Jael's in the play. With the final element of the play being the rejection of Jael by her husband, the feasting and rejoicing recorded in Deborah's song (Judges 5:24-31) are effectively pre-empted.

In its examination of the motives of Jael's action the play constitutes a psychological anatomy and thus is more a feature of early modernism than of melodrama. Because the biblical context, the fulfilment of prophecy, is presumed in the play to legitimise Jael's action, this action's morality is presumed as well. Booth's revelation of her possible motives merely supplies the proof. Thus, like Lampman's "David and Abigail," moral fable arguably is absent from Booth's play. Furthermore, the protestant notion of the transformation of the secular/masculine/male realm by the sacred/feminine/female surely cannot be stretched to include murder. In the inversion of this dynamic, however, a fear of women's empowerment can be discerned and this fear of castration/annihilation is generated precisely because empowerment here is only conceived of in terms of a pro-masculine gender politics of dominators and dominated.

Whereas Booth's play is set in the domestic scene exclusively, George Arthur Hammond's The Crowning Test, A Drama in Twelve Scenes divides its represented settings into mutually exclusive spheres of the heroic, which focuses on the spiritual--God's test of Abraham, who has been commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac--and the domestic, which focuses on Sarah's historical narrative concerning the events in Genesis so far. Thematically, a conflict between the sacred and the secular ending with the triumph of the sacred is indeed presented. This conflict, however, takes as its only explicitly significant parameters not those of transformation which Westfall has set out for us as fundamental to the feminine sphere of protestantism, but rather simply adamantine steadfastness against which secular interests will eventually crumble. The feminine sphere here lacks empowerment to transform and can only endure, as we shall see, while steadfastness required especially in the masculine/male realm of activity in the world is represented as having spiritual meaning only for the masculine/male Subject. Thus, as we shall see, the play, while didactic in tone distinctly lacks a moral fable because, for both spheres, no action transformative or otherwise is required. The boundary separating the spheres here,

unlike in Esther, is not set up so as to be dismantled, but to be further reinforced.

The nearly absolute separation of the spheres thematically is enhanced by their nearly absolute separation structurally. Of the play's twelve scenes, Scenes Two, and Six to Eleven are exclusively devoted to the tests of faith experienced during Isaac and Abraham's three-day journey "to offer / Upon a mountain top which God will show me, / A sacrifice obedient to God's will" (1, 10). Scenes Three to Five are exclusively devoted to Sarah's narrative, which takes place entirely within her tent, to her maid servants, Seloma, Semis, and Keturah. Scene One presents Abraham's announcement of God's call and Sarah's attempts to dissuade him from taking Isaac on the journey, the only scene in which the two spheres interact. In a summary of the drama's "Argument" Hammond notes:

Abraham is presented holding in perfect secrecy the command of God concerning Isaac. No family consultation was held. . . . The old Dragon of Eden, is presumed to be actively engaged, to circumvent, hector and harass, Incites presentiment and oposition in Sarah. Meets with repulse and defeat.--The triumph is transcendent. Abraham stands confirmed. The Father of the Faithful end the Heir of the World. [sic all spelling and punctuation] (9)

The twelfth and final scene depicts a conversation between Adam and Eve in which she questions and he responds to the spectacle just seen and its significance with regard to the coming of Christ and the redemption of humanity. In her last speech Eve observes and asks: "Adam, a sabbath rest most rich and golden / When the grim bale that stalked before the flood / Shall sink in shame and nevermore be seen. / But why thus hidden from the saints on earth?" In his last speech Adam responds:

The tangible and spiritual worlds,
Long just in touch, must still distinct
 remain.
No intercourse, restricted or familiar,
No specious interspersion, can occur.
Both being kingdoms under special laws:
Fixt and unalterable will remain. (12, 91)

"The tangible" world, the legacy of Eve and the realm of women like Sarah, is as much a kingdom as the "spiritual world" assigned to men through Abraham's "transcendent" faith and establishment as the first Patriarch. Unlike the heroine of much melodrama who often has all the answers herself, Eve must seek answers to her questions only from Adam, who seems prophetically aware of God's plan to the end of time. Similarly, as we shall see, Sarah is kept not only from going on the journey, but from having any knowledge of its true spiritual purpose: the sacrifice of Isaac.

This robe for my dear Isaac. Being
 somewhat
 Under the shadow of a passing cloud,
 And needing one to talk with me, and
 listen
 To rambling thoughts and vague imaginings,
 And moods that vary. (3, 27)

The tone of Sarah's conversation in Scenes Three, Four, and Five verges on that of gossip. But while Heavysage's work separated the spheres so that the transformative action of the feminine as sacred can be achieved within a pro-masculine framework, Hammond's work discards the feminine altogether and with it the protestant project of transformation. We shall see that Hammond's work, mainly because of its pro-masculine framework, virtually represents the sacred so firmly in place and secular challenges to it so flimsy and transparent as to pose no serious threat. Both Abraham's and Isaac's virtue, within the context of an emplotment enacting a spiritual test, is as steadfast as that of most heroines and more centrally empowered than that of most heroes of melodrama, and this element of the testing of an unwavering virtue constitutes the main reference to melodramatic structure. Unlike Hammond's work, however, in melodrama threats to the heroine's virtue are truly dangerous both materially and spiritually. Indeed, the representation of the various secular challenges as intellectual problems as

much as problems of faith reveals the greatest structural innovation found in any of these three plays.

Such innovation can be found mainly in the representation of the forms of temptation undergone by Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah and perpetrated by Nakach, "The old Dragon of Eden" (9). Abraham and, to a lesser extent, Isaac are tempted by Nakach who opposes their intellectual as well as spiritual firmness of purpose with the material affections of the heart. The first trial occurs in the opening scene in which Sarah "unexpectedly" awakens and attempts to persuade Abraham and Isaac from going away (1, 12-13). She declares that there will be "no sunlight / No star in heaven, until my boy returns" (1, 14). Despite her fond protests Abraham prevails and the journey is begun. Throughout the drama, Nakach's main mode of temptation is to "personate" Abraham's thoughts and to bring them back constantly to the household and Sarah: "Why did I not tell Sarah my strange purpose? / Did I do well, do right? was it not weakness / To shut out from her sight the awful drama?" (2, 22). Nakach reveals himself as very much the "serpent of the peaceful Garden" (2, 24) when he continues to tempt Abraham in this vein: ". . . with all our faith and bravery, / We dare not give the

dear wife of our bosom, / One hint of our dread
 purpose. But must hide it / To ward off opposition.
 This perhaps / Was polite--was wise--but was it noble?
 / And just to her?" (2, 23). Nakach is tempting
 Abraham to follow Adam's example with Eve and defer to
 Sarah's wishes.

Both spheres are open to temptation from
 Nakach, but the intellectual/spiritual sphere seems to
 offer him more scope for virtuosity of technique.
 Unlike Heavysage's playful Malzah, Nakach is deadly
 serious. At the end of the first scene Nakach makes
 his appearance and states his purpose: ". . . I will
 whisper. / Will countercheck unbalance or impugn / A
 confidence more steady than the hills. / It is my
 office--absolutely chosen-- / To harass and perplex
 God's favorites" (1, 17). His function is "to quiz the
 emphatic Patriarch" in such a way that Abraham "shall
 imagine 'tis the yeast and scum / Of his own heart" (1
 16-17). Nakach, a satanic spirit, again unlike Malzah
 who is an "Evil Spirit From the Lord," is associated
 with Eve by Abraham, who recognizes him immediately:
 "Whence is this perturbation? Have we here / The
 specious serpent that deceived our mother, / Secreted
 cunningly, and whispering?" (2, 22). In answer to

Isaac's early questionings, prompted by exposure to one of Nakach's devices, Abraham responds:

My son, inscrutability is sealed
 In every act of God[.] The mig[h]tiest
 --least,
 Lapped in impenetrable glory rests.
 Thought cannot touch, nor boastful science
 gage.
 Yet vain imagination mocks the work
 With its fantastic structures. Pointing out
 Impos[s]ibilities. (6, 55)

Unlike Malzah whose excoriation of Saul is purely internal and as much physically as mentally deranging, Nakach's efforts are all external and aimed at spiritual temptation through the seduction of the intellect. Thus Nakach is represented as still relying on knowledge and humanity's hubris to effect a fall in Abraham.

The representation of knowledge anachronistically is Hammond's key structural innovation, one which may remind us of Thornton Wilder's experiments in the telescoping of time and the use of the terms of evolutionist discourse forty years later in plays such as The Skin of our Teeth. Nakach represents anachronism in the form of evolutionary science, philosophy, and magic. When Abraham and Isaac stop on the second night, an entertainment is proceeding in which magic events take place, seeming to question fundamentalist beliefs. Curious, Isaac asks

permission to go, saying "My Father, they are famous
 Memphian Wizards, / O whom you have told me." Abraham
 responds: "Go, my dear Son, Heman and Caleb also, /
 Acquaint yourselves with strategems and snares, / Laid
 by the wily Fowler in the ways" (8, 65). As we shall
 see with Sarah, Isaac--while marvelling--is impervious
 to their influence: "Dear Father, they were pictures
 marvellous / In every quality of form and action, / But
 wholly false, phantoms and only phantoms" (9, 68) and
 he gives Abraham a summary of what he has heard:

Drawn by the popular cry, we heard those men,
 Called Valter and Zebester, on the roll
 Of pure philosophy. They claim to be
 Fresh from the famous city of our sires.
 Bo[a]sting a proud intention to enlighten,
 Rambling from theme to theme[,] [b]ut
 touching nothing,
 Without some obscuration by crude thoughts.
 V[a]lter had closely studied the depression
 Of the dread desolate valley of the Jordan,
 Had catalogued it to a distant age
 In geologic time. Claimed that the Jordan
 Never passed onward to the Sea of Sulph,
 But ended always in that salt dead Lake.
 Then with a prism, in the sun's last rays,
 He illustrated the grand Bow of God.
 Said it was nothing new, but had been ever,
 Since the first straggling rudiments of
 light.
 Then he adverted to the stars, and claimed
 For them the cycles of unwritten ages.
 Educing natural proofs that they existed
 Myriads of years before the day of Adam.
 (6, 55)

Abraham responds with the tenets of faith set out in
 the discourse of philosophy itself to each of the

temptations of Isaac by science, philosophy, and magic experienced along the way to the site of the impending sacrifice.

Before Valter and Zebester lecture to the Canaanites and to Isaac, they had attempted to lecture to Sarah and her servants and set up a podium in the centre of the encampment. Sarah's encounter with the Evolutionist, Valter, and the Paleologist, Zebester, is represented in entirely different terms. Eliezer, the Steward, explains that "two strangers crave an audience. / My Master being absent . . .", and that Zebester and Valter are "Both men of eminence and in request, / As lecturers and teachers--so they state" (4, 34). Sarah is not tempted by their arguments, not because, like Abraham, she notes flaws and discrepancies apparent to fundamentalist doctrine, but because she apprehends their lack of explanatory power in this context strictly instinctually. A Boy enters, after having heard the evolutionist speak to a group outside:

He told a group of us, of boys and girls,
That origin of species was no fudge,
That spontaneity was every thing.
Development, the innate law of matter,
Was preached by all the bones of all the
ages,
That Abraham's God was neither proved nor
needed. (4, 38)

Sarah exclaims: "Seloma, oh how pitiable, to see / The fondness of the stupid heart for lies, / The imaginations that set God aside" (4, 38). Unlike Isaac's adventuresome encounter with the dual threat of magic and science, Sarah's encounter with science is the result of a gesture of hospitality to strangers. Where Isaac questions and learns, Sarah seems unable to question and thus seems to be preserved from temptation as much through ignorance as through faith.

In the themes and structure of Hammond's play, the absolute division of gendered spheres of action for men and women suggested by Adam's speech, is largely maintained. Abraham and Isaac, along with their two male servants, occupy the transcendent realm of spirituality almost exclusively. Sarah and her three female servants occupy the material realm of daily routine almost exclusively. This division is hierarchical, reaffirming the parameters of humanist discourse through its pro-masculine/male rhetorical strategies. In Hammond's work we can see how domestic melodrama's female central character can be undermined and marginalised through a strictly pro-masculine interpretation of the feminine sphere and women's role within it. What may be documented here is not only a countering of melodrama as a gendered discourse of

resistance, but an attack on the optimistic and progressive notion of protestantism that empowered it discursively in the first place. Set in its place, then, is a notion of protestantism as material and pessimistic in many ways as the fin de siècle secular context it seems designed to resist. Thus we can see in these turn-of-the-century dramas the beginning of the separation of the genre into its major twentieth-century forms: the action film and the Western, primarily for male spectators; and the "women's film" and soap operas primarily for female spectators. Further, we can see implicitly enacted in the dramas' rhetorical strategies the terms of negative evaluation and dismissal ultimately deployed by much academic criticism.

The pro-masculine gender politics at work in these three dramas are deployed by the rhetorical strategies of a reactionary counter-resistance designed to subvert both melodrama's and protestantism's potential feminist effect even while seeking legitimacy within a biblical framework. While many late nineteenth-century observers, such as Clement Scott, may have applauded the feminist effect of melodrama, we have seen here a consistent disempowerment and thus marginalisation of the female central character through

speech, action, and setting even while invoking both the structures and themes of domestic melodrama. In this process protestantism, as an empowered and transformative discourse for social progress toward the establishment of Heaven on earth, is undermined as well. In this way, Brooks's view of melodrama as desecularised and pre-modern is given new life, but at the end of the nineteenth, not the eighteenth century.

II

Since this study began with a discussion of apologetics of melodrama I would like to conclude by returning to this issue. By way of ad lib apology during her keynote speech in July of 1992, Laura Mulvey spoke of the "cringingness" she felt when viewing the 1940s films of Douglas Sirk which she has been studying for over a decade. The sympathetic laughter from the audience of over one hundred specialists in film and stage melodrama reminded me of the derisive laughter the night before during clips from D. W. Griffith's film Orphans of the Storm. When asked by Simon Sheppard to explain the meaning of her term, Mulvey was at a loss for words. Perhaps "cringingness" aptly denotes what I have been describing in critical literature in Chapter One and in late nineteenth-

century dramaturgy above: the sense of embarrassment effected by historical distance intruding between melodrama's moral earnestness and the genre's would-be critics and reformers. Despite Mulvey's complex and fruitful theorizing of film melodrama, her own position as 1980s and '90s female spectator of a 1940s genre, has remained outside of her own critical discourse. But even in a more self-reflexive critical framework, such as that used in this study, sub-conscious motivations must remain elusive by definition. Conscious ones, however, may be chased down, made to stand still for a moment, and examined.

In reading the wide variety of English-Canadian dramatic literature of the period while formulating the parameters of this study, I never once felt the cringingness of which Mulvey spoke. Since Sheppard also has not experienced it in his work on nineteenth-century English melodrama, this imperviousness cannot be ascribed simply either to gender or to nationalism. Further, since my reading of this corpus began over two years prior to my reading of Jameson, her work did not provide a sympathetic filter, nor did the sympathy of faith. Rather, I suggest that the notion of historical distance fundamental to post-structuralism made

possible an acceptance of melodrama's moral earnestness instead of an implicit or explicit judgement of it.

From a post-structuralist perspective, the critic's present is not placed in competition with the past, thus obviating any need to assert the superiority of that present. From a feminist post-structuralist perspective, the feminist critic's agenda need not be placed in competition with the sometimes quite different but still recognisably feminist agendas of women in the past. Further, thus enabled to find value in different past feminist agendas--and not just in those that support a contemporary feminist project--it becomes possible to begin to theorize subject positions for women in the past that may otherwise remain not only invisible but virtually unknowable to the contemporary critic.

Thus Anna Jameson's feminist studies, establishing an alternate medievalism to that of the chivalric tradition often associated with Romanticism and much Victorianism, provide an important conceptual link to the potential construction of a feminine/female Subject in melodrama. In words that recall Jameson's as quoted in Chapter One, William Westfall notes:

In the Gothic architecture that recalled religious ideals of the Middle Ages, in the stories set in a lost and more heroic age, in

the landscape paintings that tried to portray a fast disappearing rural life, indeed, in the primitive and spiritual qualities that artists and historians conferred upon the rivers and rocks of the Canadian landscape, there was the same passion for recreating a world which stood in marked contrast to the one that was coming to dominate the life of the Victorian age. If the real world was materialistic, the imaginative world was spiritual; if the real world was regular and predictable, the other world was spontaneous and magical; if the real world required the individual to conform to the new routines of life and work, the other world glorified the individual and invested in each person the possibilities of living a heroic life. But this attempt to recreate another world was not simply a nostalgic longing for a golden age. (139)

Westfall goes on to suggest that this "counterworld . . . served as the model for what the real world might become" (139).⁵ Westfall's general model of nineteenth-century protestantism, which is recognisably the one within which Jameson articulates her feminist agenda, supports a view of women's moral heroism on the stage in melodrama as one possible model for feminist activism in the transformation of the real world. Hence the world of much melodrama, far from being Michael Booth's escapist dream world, is closer to Lillo's project in which a pragmatic moral drama would set the pace for the progressive spiritual transformation of daily living.

Pertinent to the kind of melodrama chosen for study here is Westfall's observation that:

[i]n the early nineteenth century most Protestants agreed that the Bible was essentially a sacred book of history telling a story with a single theme that began at the beginning of time and concluded at the end of the world. . . . The Bible was not only a history text; it was the only history text.
(28-29)

Whereas much criticism sees biblical melodrama as a species of historical costume drama, notable mainly for its exotic and sumptuous visual effects (see Davies 96-99), the sacred context of what I have called religious melodrama instead is generally ignored. However, as we have seen in the analysis of Esther and Saul in Chapters Two and Three, respectively, this sacred context is in fact inextricable from the genre at the height of melodrama's empowerment. Only when both the sacred and melodrama come under attack by an emergent aesthetic grounded in secular assumptions, interests, and values can genre and context be separated, as we saw in the analysis of "David and Abigail," Jael, The Wife of Heber the Kenite, and The Crowning Test. Further, contrary to much contemporary feminist thought on the power relations at work between women and Christianity, this study suggests that it is with the disappearance of protestantism as a preconceptual

framework for drama that the elision of both heroine and female spectator takes on a manifestly anti-feminist agenda. Further, it may be that in religious melodrama by women writers⁶ women were offered one way to retain a place in historical discourse before the establishment of feminist historiography as an academic discipline. Indeed, within this framework, in her emphasis on Mary and other biblical women as historical personages, Jameson can perhaps be seen as an early contributor to this discipline.

Feminist post-structuralism provides one possible approach to the study of melodrama as a trans-national genre and of nineteenth-century English-Canadian dramatic literature generally. In the relatively new field of scholarly and critical inquiry into early Canadian theatre, drama, and criticism this approach offers a fruitful and challenging framework linking this field to both feminist and cultural studies.

Notes

¹ A thorough analysis of the impact of modernist aesthetics on melodrama would constitute a full-length study in itself. Modernism alone, as both a historical period and an aesthetic discourse, has been the focus of considerable academic debate. Generally speaking, modernism's period of development and influence has been agreed upon as extending from the 1890s to the 1950s. Maurice Beebe's "What Modernism Was" in the Journal of Modern Literature, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane's Modernism 1890-1930, Astradur Eysteinnsson's The Concept of Modernism, and Andreas Huyssens' "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other" are the key materials informing this chapter.

² In his study of Lampman's works, Len Early notes that "[i]n 1891-92 he reworked two early long pieces, 'Lisa' and 'David and Abigail'" (15). It remains unclear, however, whether the latter work was ever published prior to the collected edition, The Poems of Archibald Lampman, edited by Duncan Campbell Scott and published in 1900, a year after Lampman's death. The version of the poem used in this study is found in the University of Toronto Reprint Series volume The Poems of Archibald Lampman published in 1974. All parenthetical references are to the Scene number, of which there are three, and to the page numbers of the Reprint edition.

Four points in the text reveal errors, suggesting that the work is unfinished. In the opening speech of Scene Two Rachel is speaking and the next speaker is also called Rachel, whose speech indicates that the first speaker is in fact supposed to be Miriam (380-381). Near this point in the Scene Miriam tells Rachel to go to Abigail and Rachel does so although Abigail instantly enters the Scene (383). In the middle of the Scene, after citing her contempt for Nabal, Miriam says: "And Miriam shall drop on Nabal's grave / Such glittering tears as the warm hillside sheds / When winter leaves his last rude breath and dies" (391). From the context of the speech the name spoken here should be Abigail. Lastly, near the end of Scene Two Miriam and Abigail are conversing, but one of the headings is given as "Abimael", David's friend and advisor, instead of "Abigail".

Three divergences from the biblical story prove significant. Just as in Heavyside's Saul where David's

conflict with Nabal and espousal of Abigail is never mentioned, in "David and Abigail" Michal is never mentioned. Abigail once speaks of Saul's "child", "Micah", as having helped David escape from Saul. The reference to the incident indicates that this can only be Michal, but she is not explicitly identified as David's wife (1 371). The misspelling may be another indication that the poem is unfinished. Further, consolidating the emphasis on romantic love, Lampman does not acknowledge David's polygamy. In Heavysege's Saul, David is married to Michal, apparently his only wife before the conflict with Saul becomes overt. Then in 1 Samuel 25:44 we are told that "Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish. . . ." But in 1 Samuel 25:43, the chapter's last verse dealing with Abigail, we are told that "David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives." Explored in detail later in the section on Lampman's poem, is a much more important change from the biblical narrative found in Lampman's representation of the death of Nabal in Scene Two.

³ The text used in this study is an unpublished typescript submitted for copyright approval to the Library of Congress. The U.S. copyright was registered by Lucy Whitfield of New York in 1901. This copy was microfilmed by Dr. Patrick O'Neill and resides in his personal collection of early English-Canadian drama housed in Mount Saint Vincent University's library. My own copy is a photocopy of that in O'Neill's collection. All parenthetical references are to page numbers handwritten on the original typescript.

⁴ My text of this published work is a photocopy of the book held in the Canadian Drama Collection of the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library. The drama is presented in twelve scenes, and all parenthetical references are first to scene and then to page number.

⁵ Westfall proceeds from here to associate Gothic architecture and the religious ideals of the Middle Ages with a specifically romantic ideal based on conventional chivalric quest imagery. However, since he stresses that heroic possibility was available to "each person," and since we have seen that women's heroism cannot be achieved primarily through the chivalric model in the nineteenth-century context, the addition of Jameson's model for women remains true to Westfall's general premise.

⁶ In the Canadian context we may include Germaine Beaulieu's "The Passion: a Biblical Drama" (1906) and Alice Maude Smith's "Queen Esther" (1901), "Miriam" (1904), "Potiphar's Wife" (1904), "Queen Vashti" (1904), "Jael, Daughter of Israel" (1908), and "Lilleth [sic]" (1909).

Works Cited or Consulted

- Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 4th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.
- Alfieri, Vittorio. "Saul." The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri. 1876. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970.
- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Lenin and Philosophy. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review, 1971. 125-171.
- Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art. Trans. and notes S.H. Butcher. Introd. John Gassner. 4th ed. New York: Dover, 1951.
- Auerbach, Nina. "Incarnations of the Orphan." ELH 42 (1975): 395-419.
- Bacchi, Carol. "Divided Allegiances: The Response of Farm and Labour Women to Suffrage." In Kealey, 89-107.
- . Liberation Deferred?: The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1983.
- Bal, Mieke. Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre, and Scholarship on Sisera's Death. Trans. Matthew Gumpert. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988.
- Bank, Rosemarie K. "Melodrama as Social Document: Social Factors in the American Frontier Play." Theatre Studies 22 (1975/76): 42-49.
- Bargainnier, Earl F. "Melodrama as Formula." Journal of Popular Culture 9 (1975): 726-733.
- Barker, Clive. "A Theatre for the People." Nineteenth Century British Theatre. Ed. Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson. London: Methuen, 1971. 3-24.
- Barr, Jean F. ed. and introd. Women and a New Academy: Gender and Cultural Contexts. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.
- Beals, Katharine M. Flower Lore and Legend. 1917. Detroit: Gale, 1973.
- Beebe, Maurice. "What Modernism Was." Journal of Modern Literature 3 (1974): 1065-84.

- Belsey, Catherine. Critical Practice. New Accents Series. London: Methuen, 1980.
- . The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Benson, Eugene and L.W. Conolly. English-Canadian Theatre. Perspectives on Canadian Culture Series. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Bentley, Eric. The Life of the Drama. New York: Atheneum, 1964.
- Benveniste, Emile. "Subjectivity in Language." Problems in General Linguistics. Trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: U of Miami P, 1971. 223-230.
- Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. New York: Viking, 1973.
- Bernbaum, Ernest. The Drama of Sensibility. Boston: Ginn, 1915.
- Blagrove, Mark. "Ireland and the Irish in Three Early Canadian Plays (1882-1906)." Canadian Drama 16 (1990): 133-146.
- . "'O Brave New World': Colonialism in Hunter Duvar's De Roberval." Canadian Drama 13 (1987): 175-181.
- . "Tragical History and Historical Melodrama: Two Canadian Hildebrands." Canadian Drama 14 (1988): 1-11.
- Bogel, Frederick. "Fables of Knowing: Melodrama and Related Forms." Genre 11 (1978): 83-108.
- Booth, Michael R. English Melodrama. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965.
- Booth, Oliver J. Jael, The Wife of Heber, the Kenite: A Dramatic Monologue, ts. Library of Congress.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane, eds. Modernism 1890-1930. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- Brooks, Peter. The Melodramatic Imagination. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976.
- Brown, John Henry. "A Mad Philosopher." Poems: Lyrical and Dramatic. Ottawa, 1892.
- Brown, Mary M. "Entertainers of the Road." In Saddlemyer, 123-166.

- Browning, Robert. "Saul." The Poems of Robert Browning.
Ed. John Woolford and Daniel Karlin. Vol. 2. London:
Longman, 1991. 286-292.
- Lord Byron's Cain: Twelve Essays and a text with Variants
and Annotations. Ed. Truman Guy Steffan. Austin: U of
Texas P, 1968.
- Careless, J.M.S. "The Cultural Setting: Ontario Society to
1914." In Saddlemyer, 18-51.
- Case, Sue-Ellen. Feminism and Theatre. New York: Methuen,
1988.
- Clark, Elizabeth A. "Devil's Gateway and Bride of Christ:
Women in the Early Christian Church." In Barr, 81-102.
- Cuddon, J.A. A Dictionary of Literary Terms.
Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- Curran, Stuart. "The I Altered." In Mellor, 185-207.
- Cushing, Eliza Lanesford. "Esther." Esther, a Sacred
Drama; with Judith, a Poem. Boston, 1840. 5-103.
- Davies, Barrie ed and introd. At the Mermaid Inn: Wilfred
Campbell, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott in
The Globe 1892-5. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1979.
- Davies, Robertson. "The Nineteenth-Century Repertoire." In
Saddlemyer, 90-122.
- Davis, Tracy C. Actresses as Working Women: Their Social
Identity in Victorian Culture. Gender in Performance
Series. London: Routledge, 1991.
- . "Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theatre
History." Interpreting the Theatrical Past. Ed. and
introd. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie.
Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1989. 59-81.
- Daly, Mary. Gyn/Ecology. Boston: Beacon, 1978.
- Derrida, Jacques. "The Signifier and Truth." Of
Grammatology. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976. 10-
19.
- Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby, eds. Feminism and Foucault:
Reflections on Resistance. Boston: Northeastern UP,
1988.
- Djwa, Sandra. "Introduction." In Heavysege, ix-lxvii.

- Downer, Alan S., ed. and introd. American Drama and Its Critics. Patterns of Literary Criticism 4. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
- Eaton, Walter Prichard. "Our Infant Industry." In Downer 18-28.
- Edwards, Murray. A Stage in Our Past. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1968.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara and Deirdre English. For Her Own Good. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1979.
- Eysteinsson, Astradur. The Concept of Modernism. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Filewod, Alan. Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987.
- . "Melodrama and Patriotism; Charles Mair's Tecumseh." MA Diss. U of Alberta, 1978.
- Foucault, Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon, 1972.
- . Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- . History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1980.
- . I, Pierre Riviere, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister and My Brohter . . . A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century. Trans. F. Jellinek. New York: Pantheon, 1975.
- . Madness and Civilization. Trans. R. Howard. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- . Power/Knowledge. Trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- . The Use of Pleasure, Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- . "What is an Author?" Screen 20 (1979): 13-33.

- Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and Its Discontents. Trans. Joan Riviere. Rev. and ed. James Strachey. International Psycho-Analytical Library 17. London: Hogarth, 1975.
- . A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Trans. Joan Riviere. Prefaces Ernest Jones and G. Stanley Hall. New York: Washington Square, 1920.
- . "Psychopathic Characters on the Stage." The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Gen. ed. and trans. James Strachey. Vol. 7. London: Hogarth, 1953. 303-310.
- Furst, Lilian R. Romanticism. The Critical Idiom 2. London: Methuen, 1969.
- Gallop, Jane. The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.
- . Reading Lacan. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.
- Goldstein, Philip. "Humanism and the Politics of Truth." Boundary 2 12/13 (1984): 235-258.
- Gossman, Lionel. "History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification." The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding. Ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978. 3-39.
- Grimsted, David. Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture 1800-1850. New foreword by Lawrence Levine. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1968.
- Hammond, George Arthur. The Crowning Test. Kingsclear, NB, 1901.
- . Jassoket and Anemon. Kingsclear, 1896.
- Hawkes, Terence. Structuralism and Semiotics. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1977.
- Heath, Stephen. The Sexual Fix. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Heavysege, Charles. Saul. 1859. Saul and Selected Poems. University of Toronto Reprint Series. Introd. Sandra Djwa. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1976. 5-328.

- . Saul: A Drama, in Three Parts. 2nd ed. Montreal, 1859.
- . Saul: A Drama, in Three Parts. 3rd ed. Boston, 1868.
- Heilman, Robert. Tragedy and Melodrama: Versions of Experience. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1968.
- Holcomb, Adele. "Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian." Art History 6 (1983): 171-185.
- . "Anna Jameson on Women Artists." Women's Art Journal 8.2 (1988): 15-24.
- . "Anna Jameson (1794-1860): Sacred Art and Social Vision." Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820-1979. Ed. Claire R. Sherman and Adele Holcomb. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981. 93-121.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "The Postmodern Problematizing of History." English Studies in Canada 14 (1988): 365-382.
- . "Sigmund Freud." Guide to Literary Criticism and Theory. Eds. Martin Kreisworth and Michael Groden. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988.
- Huyssens, Andreas. "Mass Culture as Woman." Studies in Entertainment. Ed. and introd. Tania Modleski. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986. 188-207.
- Hyslop, Gabrielle. "Deviant and Dangerous Behavior: Women in Melodrama." Journal of Popular Culture 19 (1985): 65-77.
- Irigaray, Luce. Speculum of the Other Woman. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- . This Sex Which is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Jameson, Anna. Characteristics of Women. 1832, 1889. New York: AMS P, 1967.
- . Diary of an Ennuyee. London, 1826.
- . Legends of the Madonna as Represented in the Fine Arts. 6th ed. Sacred and Legendary Art 3. London, 1848, 1879.
- . Legends of the Monastic Orders as Represented in the Fine Arts. Sacred and Legendary Art Series 2. London, 1850.

- . Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie Von Goethe. Ed. G.H. Needler. London: Oxford UP, 1939.
- . Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters. Boston, nd.
- . Memoirs of the Loves of the Poets. 1829, 1857. Essay Index Reprint Series. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1972.
- . Sacred and Legendary Art. 2 vols. 3rd ed. London: Longmans, 1848.
- . Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada. 1838. Coles Reprint Series. 3 vols. Toronto: Coles, 1970.
- Janeway, Elizabeth. "Who is Sylvia? On the Loss of Sexual Paradigms." Signs 5 (1980): 573-589.
- Jardine, Alice. Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Jefferson, Mark. "What's Wrong With Sentimentality?" Mind 42 (1983): 519-529.
- Kealey, Linda ed. and introd. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada 1880s-1920s. Toronto: Women's Educational P, 1979.
- Kelley, Mary. "The Sentimentalists: Promise and Betrayal in the Home." Signs 4 (1979): 434-446.
- Kraditor, Aileen S. The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920. New York: Norton, 1981.
- Kuhn, Annette. "Women's Genres." Screen 25.1 (1984): 18-28.
- Lacan, Jacques. Ecrits: A Selection. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1977.
- . The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1977.
- LaCapra, Dominick. History and Criticism. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Lampman, Archibald. "David and Abigail." The Poems of Archibald Lampman (including At the Lond Sault). Introd. Margaret Coulby Whitridge. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1974. 360-407.

- Lenton-Young, Gerald. "Variety Theatre." In Saddlemyer, 166-213.
- Lehner, Ernst and Johanna. Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees. New York: Tudor, 1960.
- Lillo, George. The London Merchant. Ed. William H. McBurney. Regents Restoration Drama Series. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965.
- Lindenberger, Herbert. Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1975.
- MacPherson, Gerardine. Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson. London, 1878.
- Masson, Margaret W. "The Typology of the Female as a Model for the Regenerate: Puritan Preaching, 1690-1730." Signs 2 (1976): 304-315.
- Mayer, David. "The Ticket-of-Leave Man in Context." Essays in Theatre 6 (1987): 31-40.
- McConachie, Bruce A. Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870. Studies in Theatre and Culture Series. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1992.
- McGann, Jerome. "The Religious Poetry of Christina Rossetti." Critical Inquiry 10 (1983): 127-144.
- Mellor, Anne K. Romanticism and Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988.
- Meyers, Carol. "Recovering Eve: Biblical Woman Without Postbiblical Dogma." In Barr, 62-80.
- Mitchell, Sally. "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s." Victorian Studies 21 (1977): 29-45.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism." In Kealey, 151-167.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Boundary 2 12/13 (1984): 333-358.
- Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. New Accents Series. London: Methuen, 1985.

- Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by 'Dual in the Sun.'" Framework 15/16/17 (1981): 12-15.
- . "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama." Movie 25 (1977-78): 53-56, 77-78.
- . "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Screen 16.3 (1975): 6-18.
- Newton, Judith Lowder. "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism.'" In Veaser, 152-167.
- Nicoll, Allardyce. Early Nineteenth Century Drama: 1800-1850. A History of English Drama 1660-1900. Vol 4. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966.
- . Late Nineteenth Century Drama: 1850-1900. A History of English Drama 1660-1900. Vol. 5. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1959.
- Otten, Terry. The Deserted Stage: The Search for Dramatic Form in Nineteenth-Century England. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1972.
- Owen, Martha. Cumulative Justice, ts. Library of Congress.
- Pease, Donald. "Sublime Politics." Boundary 2 12/13 (1984): 259-280.
- Phillips, Henry. "'Vraisemblance' and Moral Instruction in Seventeenth-Century Dramatic Theory." Modern Language Review 73 (1978): 267-277.
- Plant, Richard. "Drama in English." The Canadian Encyclopedia. 2nd ed. 620-622.
- . "Leaving Home: A Thematic Study of Canadian Literature with Special Emphasis on Drama, 1606-1977." Diss. U of Toronto, 1979.
- Preziosi, Donald. "That Obscure Object of Desire: The Art of Art History." Boundary 2 13 (1985): 1-42.
- Rahill, Frank. The World of Melodrama. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1967.
- Richardson, Alan. A Mental Theater: Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age. State College: Pennsylvania State UP, 1988.

- . "Romanticism and the Colonization of the Feminine." In Mellor, 13-25.
- Roberts, Wayne. "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': the New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1814." In Kealey, 15-45.
- Rosenberg, James L. "Melodrama." The Context and Craft of Drama: Critical Essays on the Nature of Drama and Theatre. Eds. Robert W. Corrigan and James L. Rosenberg. San Francisco: Chandler, 1964. 170-213.
- Ross, Marlon B. "Romantic Quest and Conquest: Troping Masculine Power in the Crisis of Poetic Identity." In Mellor, 26-51.
- Rubin, Don. "Celebrating the Nation: History and the Canadian Theatre." Canadian Theatre Review. 34 (1982): 12-21.
- Saddlemeyer, Ann, ed. and introd. Early Stages: Theatre in Ontario 1800-1914. Ontario Historical Studies Series. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990.
- de Saussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. Trans., introd., and notes Wade Baskin. Ed. Charles Bally, et al. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.
- Showalter, Elaine. The Female Malady. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- Silverman, Kaja. The Subject of Semiotics. New York: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Smith, James. Melodrama. The Critical Idiom 28. London: Methuen, 1973.
- Smith, Paul. Discerning the Subject. Foreword John Mowitt. Theory and History of Literature Series 55. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988.
- Steiner, George. The Death of Tragedy. NY: Knopf, 1961.
- Stephens, John Russell. The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800 to 1914. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Strong-Boag, Veronica. "Canada's Women Doctors: Feminism Constrained." In Kealey, 109-129.

- Tait, Michael. "Playwrights in a Vacuum: English-Canadian Drama in the Nineteenth Century." Canadian Literature 16 (1963): 5-18.
- . "Studies in the Theatre and Drama of English Canada." MA diss. U of Toronto, 1963.
- Tetzeli von Rosador, Kurt. "Myth and Victorian Melodrama." Essays and Studies. N.S. 32 (1979): 97-114.
- . "Victorian Theories of Melodrama." Anglia 95 (1977): 87-114.
- Thomas, Clara. "Heroinism, Feminism and Humanism: Anna Jameson to Margaret Laurence." Atlantis 4 (1978): 19-29.
- Tompkins, Jane P. "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History." The New Feminist Criticism. Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon, 1985. 81-104.
- Veesser, H. Aram, ed. and introd. The New Historicism. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Vicinus, Martha. "'Helpless and Unfriended': Nineteenth-Century Domestic Melodrama." New Literary History (1981): 127-44.
- Vince, Ronald. "Theatre History as an Academic Discipline." Interpreting the Theatrical Past. Ed and introd. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1989. 1-18.
- Wagner, Anton. "Critics and Criticism." The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre. Ed. Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989. 120-125.
- Warner, Marina. Alone of All Her Sex. London: Pan, 1985.
- Weedon, Chris. Feminist Theory and Poststructuralist Practice. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Westfall, William. Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989.
- White, Hayden. "Historical Pluralism." Critical Enquiry 12 (1986): 480-493.
- . Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973.

Woodcock, George. "Charles Heavysege." The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre. Ed. Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989. 259.

Wynter, Sylvia. "The Ceremony Must Be Found: After Humanism." Boundary 2 12/13 (1984): 19-70.