

Ghostly Rhetoric: Ambivalence in M.G. Lewis' *The Monk*

ROBIN LYDENBERG

THE Gothic novel is rarely, if ever, celebrated for its stylistic or thematic subtlety, and Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* is usually considered one of the more exaggerated and crude examples of the genre. Such assessments, however, overlook a basic ambivalence shared by most Gothic novelists towards the supernatural and sexual extravagance associated with this mode of popular fiction.¹ The consistency with which a Gothic novelist of such major influence as Ann Radcliffe collapses her supernatural and superstitious fictions with rational explanations suggests that ambivalence towards the excesses of Gothic terror may be characteristic of the genre itself.²

This ambivalence is particularly interesting in Lewis' work because his discomfort with the sexual and fantastical elaborations of his own novel reflects a deeper uncertainty about his role as a writer. Lewis' repeated ironic undercutting of the trappings of Gothic fiction, which he nevertheless persists in employing to maximum effect, reveals the same tentativeness which leads him to affect a flippancy and indifference towards all literary activity. A close examination of the style and content of *The Monk* will show that Lewis is threatened not so much by the powers of sexual passion and the unbridled imagination as by the dangerously affective powers of literature and rhetoric.

Lewis' correspondence with his mother indicates that he undertook most of his early literary projects as business ventures that might supplement his allowance. The popular demand for Gothic romance in dramatic and fictional form encouraged him to persevere in what promised to be a

lucrative genre. Lewis demonstrates a shrewd sense of how to make money by pirating untranslated works for the stage and adding or expanding unnecessary roles in order to interest influential actresses. Indeed, he seems to have had hardly any literary pretensions, to the extent that he could remark casually to his mother, "If these projects do not make money, I am sure they will find amusement for *you*, who will be partial to every thing I either write or do."³

Lewis continues to disclaim any artistic commitment to his literary work, but his creative energy and ambition begin to grow in spite of himself. He finally admits that he is "horribly bit by the rage of writing."⁴ The intense burst of literary activity he experiences during the summer of 1794 may be attributed to his discovery of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which he describes as one of the most interesting books ever published. This novel inspires him to return to his own unfinished romance with a renewed, although still ambivalent, respect for the genre he had merely exploited in the past.

Because Lewis' ambivalence is focused ultimately on his authorial role, he can never reconcile it, as Radcliffe does, by a simple shift from a supernatural to a realistic fictional world. The pattern of ambivalence established by his parodying of the hyperbolic qualities of Gothic fiction is repeated in his reluctance to accept the role of moral authority demanded by the very conventional social satire that pervades *The Monk*. Lewis may be distinguished from other Gothic novelists by the extent of the ironic distance he establishes between himself and all aspects of his narrative.

Lewis makes his ambivalence evident even before his narrative opens, in the playful poem with which he prefaces *The Monk*. In this poem the author chastises his book for its "vain, ill-judging" decision to venture out onto the public market. He prophesies a terrible fate for his novel, in imagery which suggests the most gloomy Gothic tortures:

Soon as your novelty is o'er
And you are young and new no more,
In some dark dirty corner thrown,

Mouldy with damps, with cobwebs strown
 Your leaves shall be the book-worm's prey
 Or sent to chandler-shop away,
 And doomed to suffer public scandal,
 Shall line the trunk or wrap the candle.⁵

The graveyard atmosphere of decrepitude and suffering, already quite familiar by the end of the eighteenth century, is reduced here to a literary joke. Lewis evokes not a fate of despair and death, but a fate worse than being remaindered — being unread. Dissociating himself from his book, disclaiming any responsibility for its reception, he attempts to establish by satiric exaggeration his superiority to the very devices of Gothic terror he will use in his novel.

As I hope to demonstrate in this paper, despite this initial mockery of the machinery of dungeons, cobwebs and devouring worms, Lewis uses the same equipment quite seriously in the body of his novel, arousing the reader's indignation with scenes of human misery at the hands of merciless cruelty. The contradiction between Lewis' stance in the prefatory poem and in the novel which follows it reveals more than an ambivalence towards the sensational devices of the Gothic genre. We must recognize in this contradiction the author's fear of being identified and characterized by his novel: a fear of his reader's responses to the text and the assumptions about its creator.

Just as he denied responsibility for the rash appearance of his "vain, ill-judging" book, Lewis disclaims himself as a creature of frailties, extremes and contradictions:

By few approved, and few approving,
 Extreme in hating and in loving;
 Abhorring all whom I dislike,
 Adoring who my fancy strike;
 In forming judgements never long,
 And for the most part judging wrong;
 In friendship firm but still believing
 Others are treacherous and deceiving . . .
 More passionate no creature living,
 Proud, obstinate, and unforgiving. (p. 34)

While this self-caricature stresses his moral failings, his unreliability and unpredictability, the actual voice which Lewis adopts in the narrative is one of moral authority

judiciously tempered by reason, tolerance and understanding. He is uncomfortably aware that not only his novel but his very character will be exposed to scrutiny, and by painting such a negative portrait of himself he may hope to anticipate and discourage public criticism. The eagerness with which Lewis assures the reader that when he wrote *The Monk* he "scarce had reached his twentieth year" betrays the discomforts of a young man with the responsibilities inherent in the authorial role of moral example or arbiter. In response to the scandal that followed the publication of his novel, he defends himself to his father on similar grounds: "Let me, however, observe that TWENTY is not the age at which prudence is most to be expected."⁶

The ambivalence established by the preface is reinforced by continual shifts of tone within the narrative. Lewis alternately traces the tragic consequences of superstition and romantic delusion and then undercuts his serious moral warnings with scenes of farcical exaggeration. In one scene, for example, he brings together the stock comic landlady Jacintha Zunega, whose superstition is merely ridiculous, with the young heroine who will be superstition's tragic victim. This innocent girl is herself "susceptible of terror" and "superstitious prejudice," but unlike Jacintha ("miserable slave to fear and superstition") Antonia attempts to master what she considers her weakness.

Lewis establishes his heroine, on the night following her mother's sudden death, in a setting guaranteed to excite her imagination:

It was the dead of night; she was alone, and in the chamber once occupied by her deceased mother. The weather was comfortless and stormy; the wind howled around the house, the doors rattled in their frames, and the heavy rain pattered against the windows. No other sound was heard. The taper, now burnt down to the socket, sometimes flaring upwards, shot a gleam of light through the room, then sinking again seemed upon the point of expiring. (p. 309)

Antonia unwisely seeks respite from her bereavement and this gloomy setting in a Gothic ballad which summons the worm-eaten spectre of Alonzo the Brave into the already macabre atmosphere of the darkened bedroom. Her mind

unsettled and her senses aroused, she first hears only "imaginary noises," but finally she sees a vision of her dead mother, who announces that she and her daughter will be reunited within three days. Because Lewis has established Antonia so explicitly in this scene as a reader of Gothic tales, the reader of *The Monk* may detect in this episode a gentle warning and mockery of his own imaginative susceptibility. However, not only is Elvira's ghost never clearly dismissed as Antonia's hallucination, but the prophecy she pronounces is proved tragically accurate.

The ambivalence which leads Lewis alternately to ridicule and nourish the superstitious imaginations of his characters and his readers seems carefully manipulated. Antonia's account of the apparition of her mother's ghost sends the terrified Jacintha to the Capuchin Church seeking protection. Her response quickly shifts the tone of the narrative from pathos and melodrama to farce. Jacintha's terror proves a source of unexpected imaginative invention; for although she has seen nothing, she is able to describe the spectre in detail as "a great tall figure at by elbow whose head touched the ceiling! The face was Donna Elvira's . . . but out of its mouth came clouds of fire; its arms were loaded with heavy chains which it rattled piteously, and every hair on its head was a serpent as big as my arm" (p. 316). In contrast to Antonia's painful and helpless convulsions after seeing the ghost, the presence of mind that enables Jacintha simultaneously to conjure this spirit and calculate mentally the possible economic repercussions of running a haunted guest-house renders the scene quite comic.

In a serious scene at the end of his novel, Lewis himself conjures a vision remarkably similar to Jacintha's description of Elvira's ghost. When Ambrosio has been tortured to the brink of death by the Inquisition and is only hours away from the final *Auto da Fe*, the monk calls upon the Devil in despair. Lewis indicates that Satan, no longer needing to seduce the monk with his benign beauty, appears stripped of his "romantic disguise." The description Lewis offers here seems

to be based on the same patchwork of dark conventions used by the ignorant Jacintha: "His blasted limbs still bore marks of the Almighty's thunder. A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: his hands and feet were armed with long talons. Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror. Over his huge shoulders waved two enormous wings: and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves around his brows with frightful hissings" (p. 412).

What separates Lewis and Jacintha — both indulgers in the elaboration of fanciful fictions — is Lewis' superior style and greater familiarity with literary tradition. He has read Milton's *Paradise Lost* and gleaned from that poet's epic Satan a certain metaphorical power, but the essential gimmickry is the same: snakes, immensity, darkness, clouds and thunder. The affinity established between Jacintha and Lewis brings the author within the scope of the mockery of superstition which is directed against his characters and readers. As in the prefatory poem, Lewis seems anxious to disqualify himself as a possible model of the rational mind which resists the lure of the supernatural.

It is only through the character of the levelheaded and sympathetic Agnes that Lewis is able to express an unambiguous denunciation of popular superstition. Agnes' description to her lover of the family tradition of the ghost of the bleeding nun who haunts the Castle of Lindenberg is unhampered by any secret predilection on her part for such tales of terror. The legend, she explains, extends its influence from the ignorant to the educated, for even her noble aunt "would sooner doubt the veracity of the Bible than that of the bleeding nun." Agnes ridicules such misplaced faith by relating in a "tone of burlesqued gravity" the circumstances of the ghost's periodic appearance: "It was accompanied with shrieking, howling, groaning, swearing, and many other agreeable noises of the same kind . . . now she howled out the most horrible blasphemies, and then chaunted *De Profondis* as orderly as if still in the choir. In short, she seemed a mighty capricious thing" (p. 152-3).

Just as Lewis exposes the reader and even himself to the warnings within the narrative — both satiric and melodramatic — he does not allow even his “normative” model⁷ to stand aloof from the fiction. While Agnes treats with broad burlesque the ghost and its terrified spectators, this same laughable weakness of superstition has dangerous consequences in her own life. Because of a secret and “fatal vow” of her mother’s, Agnes lives as a virtual prisoner first in her aunt’s house and later in the convent of St. Clare. The extremes of suffering to which she eventually is subjected in the convent, and which can be traced directly to the “grossest superstition” of her parents, would seem to demand that Lewis adopt an unequivocal denunciation of superstition. Surprisingly, he continues to indulge his readers and himself in mystery and the supernatural, to the extreme of staging repeated appearances of the ghost of the bleeding nun.

Lewis’ ability to reflect his ambivalence in his narrative style allows him to venture into these dangerous areas. The ghostly conjurings in *The Monk* hover between terror and hilarity, their titillation is theatrical and mannered, self-consciously literary and aesthetically playful. Even one of Lewis’ most vicious critics recognized that his novel contained “diablerie and nonsense fitted only to frighten children.”⁸ A closer examination of the bleeding nun episode, which so captured the imagination of the popular audience that it was circulated separately as a chap-book, will reveal how Lewis safely indulges his readers in innocent terror.

When the unwelcome ghost materializes punctually at the bedside of Agnes’ lover, Raymond is petrified with horror — but the reader is not. As in several similar scenes in the novel, this supposed object of terror is presented to us as a composite of clichés: “Her countenance was long and haggard; her cheeks and lips were bloodless; the paleness of death was spread over her features; and her eye-balls fixed steadfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow. I gazed upon the spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid but the sound expired ere it could pass my lips . . . I remained in the same attitude

inanimate as a statue" (p. 170). Lewis is temporarily indulging his reader's taste for the supernatural only to dispel and discredit these "imaginary dangers" and "ideal terrors" with a more terrible reality. A narration of the *real* life of the bleeding nun, Beatrice de las Cisternas, immediately follows Lewis' rather ineffective conjuration of her ghost, and the account of her cruelty and depravity is all the more terrifying because it does not resort to the clichés and machinery of Gothic terror.

Perhaps the most effective juxtaposition of the terror generated by artifice and superstition with the horror evoked by actual danger and evil occurs in the riot scene at the Convent of St. Clare. The violent response of the populace to Mother St. Ursula's revelation of the crimes of the Domina forces several nuns to seek shelter in the vaults. When the chivalrous Lorenzo discovers them they are more terrified of ghosts than of the murderous mob, and indeed he too soon hears a sepulchral moaning in the corridors. Determined to discover the real source of these sounds, Lorenzo examines the nearby statue of St. Clare, which rumbles threateningly at his touch. The superstitiousness of the nuns has been nurtured by the Domina with terrifying and "marvelous stories" about the power and sanctity of this statue, and they recoil from Lorenzo's transgression. The mysterious movements of the statue, however, are revealed to be no more than a mechanical device which uncovers the hidden entrance to a deeper vault. Here is entombed the evidence of a more horrifying reality of Agnes' long imprisonment and suffering. The Domina has used the gullibility of the novices to guarantee the secrecy of her ruthless discipline; and the imaginary ghosts who "complain and groan and wail in accents that make [one's] blood run cold" seem benign spectres beside the cruel nuns who have caused the sufferings of the starving and delirious Agnes.

While Lorenzo's skepticism about the supernatural enables him to uncover the truth and rescue Agnes, his refined youth leaves him exposed to a different kind of self-deception. As his lower classes are fed on the popular culture of folk magic,

Lewis' aristocratic young men perceive their world, anachronistically, through the distorted lenses of early Romanticism. The most explicit example Lewis offers of the dangers of nurturing romantic illusions is the story of Elvira's marriage to a man above her social station and the couple's subsequent exile from Spain. Elvira tells her story as a warning to the aristocrat Lorenzo against setting his heart on an "unequal alliance" with Antonia. The "fond romantic vision" of an *égoïsme à deux* which led Elvira's husband to imagine they could forsake country and parents, defy class conventions and still find happiness, seems to offend Lewis' sense of the necessarily social nature of man.

The fact that Lorenzo is not deterred by Elvira's warnings might seem to indicate that Lewis does believe in the steadfastness of romantic love. When Antonia is murdered and her lover despairs, however, the narrator assures us sarcastically that no one dies of a broken heart. Indeed we do witness in the course of the novel the miraculous recovery and subsequent marriage of several despairing lovers. Even Lewis' account of the multiple marriages which provide the happy ending of his novel is muted by a cynicism startling in a young man of twenty: "The remaining years of Raymond and Agnes, of Lorenzo and Virginia, were happy as can be those allotted to mortals, born to be the prey of grief, and sport of disappointment" (p. 400).

The recovery and marriage of disappointed lovers and the sober advice of characters like Elvira and Agnes serve as a check against the excesses of a romantic idealism in which, despite his skepticism, Lewis cannot refrain from indulging. Though he gently mocks the pleasures the young men find in romantic melancholy, Lewis himself clearly cannot resist the allure of these sentiments and the poetic freedom of style they permit. Temperamentally an Enlightenment conservative like Diderot, Lewis is impatient with the romantic misanthrope, the rousseauesque soulful solitary, but his descriptions of moments of sublime isolation are extended and polished. By allowing these romantic interludes only when the action of the novel has been temporarily suspended, Lewis

maintains the same separation of life and art which renders his ghosts harmless. The success of Lewis' use and abuse of Gothic and romance conventions depends on a very delicate balance of his readers' involvement in and detachment from the fiction.

The same delicate balance of reader response is necessary to the success of Lewis' social as well as his aesthetic pedagogy. Consistent with his alternation of comic and tragic treatments of terror and sentimentality, Lewis' social commentary falls within the tradition of the gentler satirists like Fielding and Sterne, who would temper ridicule with sympathy, chastisement with laughter. While the Gothic and romance genres pose certain dangers for the impressionable reader, the novel of social satire often poses more threatening difficulties for the author himself. Lewis shares with earlier satirists an uncertainty as to his ability to separate humane satire from heartless moralizing and vicious mockery.

In the opening scene of *The Monk* Lewis' characterization of the secular and fashionable piety of the people of Madrid is playful and generalized: "The audience now assembled in the Capuchin Church was collected by various causes, but all of them were foreign to the ostensible motive. The women came to show themselves, the men to see the women: some were attracted by curiosity to hear an orator so celebrated; some came, because they had no better means of employing their time till the play began . . . and one half of Madrid was brought thither by expecting to meet the other half" (p. 35). After this opening scene, however, the focus of the narrative moves inward, becoming personal rather than public, and Lewis' satiric style begins to deviate from that of his predecessors.

When the object of ridicule shifts from vanity and affectation to human cruelty and evil, the satirist's balance is more difficult to maintain. Lewis' acute awareness that severe moral authority often produces an immovable and inhuman ethic is evident in his characterization of Ambrosio. The curse Agnes levels against her merciless judge may well serve as a

reminder to the censorious reader and to the author himself against such intolerance of human weakness. The severity of the crimes which accumulate with a vertiginous rapidity in the final chapters of the novel would seem to demand that Lewis accept and assert his role as moral judge. Even here, however, the author manages to introduce contradiction and equivocation, focusing more on the dangers inherent in the assertion of moral authority than on the repercussions of moral transgression itself.

With a novelist's instinctive aversion to direct moralizing, Lewis dramatizes his own dilemma as a social critic in the situation of one of his characters. Having learned from Mother St. Ursula of the death of his sister at the hands of the Domina and her confederates, Lorenzo resolves to use the public forum of the convent procession to "unmask the hypocrites" of the church, to convince his countrymen that "a sanctified exterior does not always hide a virtuous heart." Like Lewis, Lorenzo plans to achieve his moral goal indirectly through a narrative. Prepared with armed support to subdue the crowd's initial outrage at his charges against the Domina, Lorenzo sets the stage for the good nun's revelation of the truth. The "sanctified exterior" and "artificial glory" of the ostentatious procession give way to the ugly and detailed story of Agnes' imprisonment and murder. The narrative is extended but effective; and almost as if the length of its concentrated attention necessitates an equivalent and violent reaction, the indignant crowd explodes in a "moment of popular frenzy" even before Mother St. Ursula has finished her *récit*. The moral intentions which motivated the confrontation are swept away by the mob's mindless violence, and the unmasking of hypocrisy and revelation of truth produce only "barbarous vengeance" and "vindictive fury" (pp. 334-44).

Lorenzo's horror at having been the cause of this paroxysm of violence may reveal in exaggerated form Lewis' own fear of the responsibility of seizing moral authority in his narrative. With grotesque irony, the merciless murder of the Domina by the rioters, enraged by the account of *her* cruelty, is based on

a mistaken accusation: Agnes is still alive. Those who, in moral righteousness, seek to expose the contradiction between appearance and reality are unknowingly armed with a truth which is itself not what it seems. For in the world of *The Monk* even the truth is uncertain, and as Robert Kiely has pointed out, it is a world so filled with "uncontrollable energy" that one may "find [oneself] unexpectedly on the side of the flood."⁹ In the convent riot scene, the "uncontrollable energy" at work is the very rhetoric of moral authority which wields a frightening power over its audience, producing a force which can easily escape the control and intention of the orator.

Lewis' distrust of the power of rhetoric is further reflected in the essential part which eloquence plays in seduction and damnation in the novel. The unguarded innocence of Antonia and the degenerate and determined lust of Ambrosio, which make possible the grotesque rape and murder in the climactic scene, begin to develop within the innocent confines of the Capuchin Church during the monk's initial pious and moving oratory. In the precise language which he later reserves for Ambrosio's awakening sexuality, Lewis describes the effects of the monk's eloquence on his listeners as an invasion of sensations "till then unknown." While he is first endangered only by the arrogant pride which his oratorical success engenders, Ambrosio's exposure to his own sexuality, for which he is so ill prepared, proves far more threatening.

But the process of damnation in *The Monk* is neither swift nor simple; and it is not the demands of the body which ultimately enslave Ambrosio, but rather the ingenious casuistry of the seductive Mathilde — woman or daemon. One recent critic reasons that Ambrosio's damnation is the work of no earthly woman, for Mathilde's power is achieved through the traditional sexual possession practiced by witches: "For the demon intercourse was no end in itself but a means to the enslavement and subsequent damnation of the mortal."¹⁰ I would argue, however, that Mathilde's satanic ancestry is perhaps more clearly reflected in her insidious mastery of another traditional weapon of the devil — the rhetoric of

persuasion. The most urgent concern of Lewis' fiction, then, may not be violent sexuality or supernaturalism, but the power of eloquence.

The violence of much of the critical response that greeted the publication of *The Monk* testifies to the powers of realization and persuasion that Lewis himself achieved. For many of his contemporaries, the crimes described in the novel became so threatening and immediate that not only was the book denounced for its "libidinous minuteness" but the author himself was maligned as betraying a "species of brutality."¹¹ Even modern readers, less likely to confuse the author's fictions with his moral conduct, attest to the strength of Lewis' style by their continual appreciation of *The Monk* despite its unfashionable length.

The devilish art of rhetoric is M.G. Lewis' medium, and if we are to believe his assertion that the novel was written in ten weeks, he had an uncanny control of that medium for a youth of twenty. His success, however, proved rather frightening, for he only narrowly escaped the type of prosecution which crowned the publication of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* half a century later. Surprised and alarmed by the scandal incited by his book, Lewis wrote a letter of apology to his father in which he disclaims any intention to affect the moral conduct of his readers in the direction of good *or* evil:

[It] never struck me that the exhibition of vice, in her temporary triumph, might possibly do as much harm as her final exposure and punishment would do good. To do much good, indeed, was more than I expected of my book; having always believed that our conduct depends on our own hearts and characters, not upon the books we read or the sentiments we hear. But though I did not expect much benefit to arise from the perusal of a trifling romance, written by a youth of twenty, I was in my own mind quite certain that no harm could be produced by a work whose subject was furnished by one of our best moralists.¹²

It is difficult to believe that Lewis could have so grossly underestimated the power of his "trifling romance." If this letter is more than a mere gesture of filial diplomacy, it is further evidence of Lewis' ambivalence towards his authorial responsibility.

Lewis was well aware that he was living in a time in which art and life often collided; fiction, whether deliberately or innocently, was producing repercussions in personal, social and political reality. During a trip to Germany in 1792 he wrote to his mother: "Among other people to whom I have been introduced, are the sister of Schweter, the composer, and M. de Goethe, the celebrated author of *Werter*; so that you must not be surprised if I should shoot myself one of these fine mornings."¹³ Characteristically, Lewis dissolves the danger of eloquence with a witticism, but it is a joke grounded in the grim reality of the numerous suicides which were actually carried out in imitation of Goethe's romantic hero. This tragic repercussion of the widespread confusion of literature and life was perhaps one of the spectres haunting Lewis' own imagination as he composed with such convoluted ambivalence his Gothic fantasies.

NOTES

¹Two critical texts which do examine the ambivalence of Gothic fiction are Frederick Garber's "Meaning and Mode in Gothic Fiction," in *Racism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), and Robert Kiely's *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

²See Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the genre as based on the uncertainty of its characterization in *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970).

³Margaret Baron-Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of Matthew Gregory Lewis* (London: H. Colburn, 1839), p. 60.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁵Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 33. All subsequent references to *The Monk* cite this edition and will appear as page numbers in my text.

⁶*Life and Correspondence*, p. 157.

⁷This concept is elaborated on by Robert Hume in "Gothic vs. Romantic" *PMLA*, March 1969. Hume sees Lorenzo and Raymond as stabilizing personalities within the novel, characters whose perspective parallels the "everyday outlook" of the reader. It seems to me that Lewis' ridicule of their bouts of romantic melancholy and superstition would deny them such stature within the narrative. The more consistent nature of Agnes seems a more likely "normative" model, if there is one within the uncertain world of *The Monk*.

⁸T.J. Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 8th edition, (London, 1798). See pages 241-3 and 347-8.

⁹Robert Kiely, *op. cit.*

¹⁰Peter Grudin, "The Monk: Matilda and the Rhetoric of Deceit" in *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 5, no. 2 (May 1975), 140.

¹¹See Coleridge's *Miscellaneous Criticism* (Folcroft Press, 1936), pp. 370-72.

¹²*Life and Correspondence*, p. 156.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 72.

New Life

I am mudbound
 in memory
 moon's glow upon
 the bank
 the river halves us

I am in a myriad country
 it's different here
 facing the cold & storms
 land of no return

I pace the dim stars
 note how the evenings
 grow shorter —
 darker

all vestiges
 of the new life

I yearn still
 for the buttressed domain
 of silk cotton and mangrove

trade winds shouting
 familiar voices

echoes all around

Cyril Dabydeen