A TOTAL LANGUAGE OF POETRY THEORY TO
"BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT"

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ABSTRACT FOR A MONOGRAPH

ON A TOTAL LANGUAGE OF POETRY THEORY TO

"BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT"

Seymour Chatman, in his The Language of Poetry states that the analysis of a poem is best derived through a series of steps in the order of senses-of-words, grammar, persona and addressee, paraphrase, explication of metaphor, connotations of words, drawing inferences, and interpretation. It is seen that a weakness of the Chatman approach comes in viewing the language from the semantic limitation to the word, thereby limiting a view of the total image and thereby also making such an analysis exhaustive and affectively unrewarding.

In this monograph an approach is made through using the same Chatman step-by-step approach to Dylan Thomas's "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait," with the modification of working only through the successive images which must be revealed by major punctuation. Each step is taken not line-by-line but image by image. Each image is defined as that set of words made explicit because of the semicolon, the colon, the question, or the period. The central intent is to determine the effectiveness of the approach as leading to the meanings carried by the images. A distinction is made in the monograph to the effect that words carry meanings, and, contrary to Chatman's statements, words do not, in themselves, mean.

A quite faithful approach to interpretation by the step-
by-step approach does force intense concentration on senses of words, but also seems to involve some repetition that takes away the freshness of the impact of the metaphor and other figures of speech or ornaments of poetry.

It is true that the inevitable re-examination caused by the repetition innately a part of the step-by-step approach demands an intense attention to what constitutes the aesthetic object, the words of the poem, itself. It is also true that focusing on complete images rather than or the individual word may demand that in drawing inferences and reaching interpretations come earlier than must be the case in the line-by-line approach by Chatman.

However, it does seem that the Chatman-approach could be further modified by omitting persona and addressee, and connotations of words, and drawing of inferences. Those omissions can be justified by the completeness of earlier steps.

A conclusion is made that too many steps involving repetition may make the reader or listener a critic of the experience rather than a sharer of the poetic experience.
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Chapter 1

NATURE OF THE MONOGRAPH, PURPOSES AND SPECIFIC ELEMENTS TO BE PROVEN, PROCEDURE, AND DEFINITIONS

NATURE OF THE MONOGRAPH

There is poetry and there is also the language of poetry. Poetry works through words, whether the presentation is an oral or written one. For the purpose of the monograph, the statements shall be confined to words as represented in the graphic form. One of the positions taken in this monograph is that words do not have a completely independent life of their own as entirely divorced from a poem in which they find themselves. Nor, on the other hand, do words have a single meaning revealing one absolute meaning or interpretation of a poem.

It would be less than logical to believe that words do not serve the purpose of the poet, and it would be even less logical to assume that the poem as created by the poet is received in precisely the same way or manner by the reader. Words do carry meanings. In context they have meanings on the primary level of assertion, but they may also have meanings on the secondary levels where interpretation of affective responses operate.

Because words carry a limited number of meanings, and since this limited number of meanings operates as a common denominator to the readers of poetry, it is always possible
for the poet to have a certain number of readers comprehending and equally possible for the reader to expect the poet to have a finite number of meanings for any expression.

However the poet responds to his imaginative urge and drive, the process and the results must be through words as carriers. Certainly, the presence of words as written symbols indicates that the poet has composed. It must be granted that the flow of words as syntactically-organized must reveal the experience of the poet, or, at the least, must indicate that some experience has taken place.

Since the poet is seldom accessible for discussion, it must be granted that the words, as the reader commonly understands them, must reveal some poet's response to human experience. Because nearly all conversations, poetic or otherwise, operate through a rhetoric or through a greater-than-sentence context, the totality of the poetic experience must be gleaned or intuited through a total composition.

This total composition, revealed through the topic, is to be read, appreciated, and analyzed through attention paid to the words, from beginning to the end. Now, it will be useful to describe "rhetoric" for the purpose of this monograph as composition which is best suited for the purpose at hand. In poetry the rhetoric or composition best suited for the purpose at hand is that which involves metaphor, simile, or oxymoron, on the one hand, or flat imagery, on the other.

If the rhetoric employed is that of flat imagery, the poet simply serves up a series of images on the plain physical level, trusting that each evokes a set of associations, both
physical and affective. All the images, or clues, fuse toward a central set of meanings.

If the rhetoric employed is that of metaphor, a reservation is made on the primary level of fact to the extent that no one-to-one physical identity is meant. That having been made, the assertion is now put forth that "A" is "B." In the statement that "Maggie is a crow," the reservation made is that "Maggie" is not physically the crow known as a crow. However, admitting that Maggie is not, in fact, a crow, on the secondary level the critic then asserts that in terms a human behavior expressed metaphorically, "Maggie is a crow."

In simile, as opposed to metaphor, the two objects are always kept in view and separate. In the sentence "Maggie is like a crow," Maggie is separate from the crow. In the sentence "Maggie is a crow," the first reservation having been made, then "Maggie is a crow," the subject "Maggie" becomes identical to the verb completer "crow."

In oxymoron, the concepts of appearance and reality are fused through opposites: "He is nasty-nice." "The experience was bittersweet." The opposites are fused to indicate that there is never some of "A" without having, actually present, some of "B."

Other figures of speech or ornaments of poetry to be considered include personification, oxymoron, and synecdoche. In personification the sentence patterning reveals the same order of the basic positions but also reveals a contradiction with the logical elements of the positions. For example,
in the sentence "The hills sing forth the glory of the lord," there is a basic sentence pattern with the transitive verb structure. However, the patterning is forced to accommodate a false assertion. On the physical level, the hills cannot "sing."

In oxymoron, opposites are fused within a set of words. The contradiction is an opposite one, as in "He is a yellow Chinaman." Then, in synecdoche, the poet allows the part to stand for the whole. It would seem as though all these statements are truisms, truisms which, perhaps, need not be urged since they can well be the common knowledge of the reader.

But sentence patterning, as well, intervenes. On the level of the "to be" sentence pattern where it is found that the verb "to be" can be completed only by a nounal, adjectival, or locational, there are complications.

Whether the verb completer is nounal, adjectival, or locational, a more profound consideration arises. Consider the following sentences:

a. He is a soldier.
b. He is a man.
c. He is a monster.

The first sentence (a) is completed by a nounal, but that nounal can only be a whole-part completer since there is more to being a man than being a soldier. The second sentence (b) is a sentence of equality since the fullness of "He" is man. The third sentence (c) is metaphor in that "He" is not a monster, if the "He" is a man on the primary level. Further, the sentences, for all patterns, must operate on at least two levels, the literary and the non-literary.
If the "literary" is defined as the sentence having meanings on two levels, one of them being the affective then (c) in all conditions would be literary. Of course, if "He is a soldier" is uttered on the level of "wit" or "irony," then that sentence must be literary.

Thus, in looking at poetry, in this instance, the composition of the sentences, at least, is of critical importance. Seymour Chatman in The Language of Poetry has nine approaches to the language. For the purposes of this monograph, the first seven will be considered: senses of words, grammar, persona and addressee, paraphrase, explication of metaphor, the connotations of words, and drawing inferences. These will be considered together with the patterns of sentences, the patterns with respect to the three sentences discussed.

At this point, it might be indicated that the view of metaphor, simile, and tautology taken in this monograph come from Beardsley's Aesthetics. Some of the terms critical to Chatman's approach to the language of poetry are defined in this opening chapter.

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In this approach, it is considered that the poet does not merely write, he writes about something. The something is the poem. Even were there to be no title, the something written about must appear, and it is considered for this monograph that what is written about comes in the opening lines.

In his *The Structure of Literature*, Goodman indicates that a lyrical poem has seriousness of purpose. That is, the poem has a problem and the problem is solved. The problem is stated in the opening lines, and the problem is resolved by the close. (It follows, that an epic would not be such a composition since there is no solution, as such.) Thus, the title of the poem should be a problem, or subject. The lines following should carry the solution or solutions. The solution of the poem or the resolution of the problem terminates the poem.

In any approach, the writer would consider that all statements should go back to the title as either support or rejection. That is, the lines of the poem should support the title in tragedy or contradict the title, as in comedy. In a composition "A Pleasant Weekend" there would be two possibilities. The weekend would indeed be pleasant, or through irony, just the opposite.

Then, it is further suggested that each word that appears in sequential order in a poem should be set up or justified by words or utterances appearing earlier. If the words do go back to the title and if the words that follow are

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in consequence of earlier words, then the poem is well written. By "good one," the writer means that there is internal consistency and validity. Through the application of Chatman's methodology, it is believed that some useful analysis of the language of a poem may be made. In making such an analysis of the language of the poem it is believed that the meanings of the poem itself may be more clearly resolved.

It must be pointed out that the resolution involves the critical as well as the creative approach. On an aesthetic level of experience, the poem speaks to the total personality of the reader. On another approach, the poem speaks to the experience of the reader. On still another level, the poem arouses in the reader a consideration of what is urged and the means—words—employed in its being urged. At some point, readers evaluate not only what is said but also the way of saying. On the highest level of appreciation, understanding, and composition, what is said and the way of its being uttered fuse into poetic elegance. In this monograph an effort will be made to look to the meanings of a poem and to discover whether the language structures and their modes of utterance bring out richer meanings or clearer meanings, or both.

The poem considered is Dylan Thomas's "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait." This poem on the simplest level indicates the romantic and ironic concept that the fisherman is caught as often as he does the catching. Woman pursues as much as she is pursued. The wild winds of freedom roll on the funnels where they are caught and ordered as they lose their force.
Age, leading to death, is the remorseless force that eventually lands man.

It must be cautioned that a total analysis of this poem on any level would be a more formidable task than can be accomplished in this monograph. Thomas devoted nearly one hundred and fifty worksheets to the poem. One can see only the result of his composition, not the complete explanation of the process. This monograph, then, can go no further than to show the process used through Chatman.

PURPOSE AND SPECIFIC ELEMENTS TO BE PROVEN

The purpose of this monograph is to apply a methodology to Dylan Thomas's "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait." The methodology, that of Chatman, is a systematic survey of the language utterances, taking in primary and secondary levels of meaning. It is further assumed that any composition in any methodology works to some kind of a resolution, even where the resolution is simply that of description. Through applying the seven steps leading from sound to senses as found in Chatman to "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait" and through looking as a result, to the sequence leading from statement to concrete assertion, it is believed that the apparent lack of order in Dylan Thomas's poem may be shown to be an order where a problem is resolved through a closer look at language structuring.

It is admitted that part of the approach must be
semantic. Where interpretations approach higher levels of human feeling and understanding, the language structures can only lead the human mind to a solid point from which there must be a leap to total intuition.

At the very minimal level of expectation, it is hoped that his approach will lead to a sensitivity to the ultimate ordering of language as a servant of man's personality of mind, volitions, and senses.

PROCEDURE

This monograph is developed in eleven chapters. Chapter 1 reveals the nature of the monograph, the purpose in mind, the procedure, work done, and definitions. Chapter 2 furnishes a model of the approaches, using the methodology of Chatman. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters carry the application of Chatman's techniques to "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait," with the tenth chapter asserting a final interpretation. The eleventh chapter closes the monograph with a summary.

PREVIOUS WORK IN THE FIELD

Bibliographical materials on Dylan Thomas are extensive and intensive. Louise Baughan Murdy's bibliography in her Sound and Sense on Dylan Thomas's Poetry gives indications of the scope of the work done. There is no question that sound

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and sense dominate all critical considerations.

Many critics consider, overall, that Dylan Thomas, in his art, sacrifices sense for sound. However, this monograph and its approaches may leave the reader with a stronger appreciation of the sense ratio to the alleged sound ratios.

The reader is referred to the bibliographical items which have been considered in whole or in part in research for this monograph. Not one article or book was found where an approach in the light of Chatman's methodology is applied.

Consideration was given to discover whether some of the following authors and their views might be applied for consideration of the approach to this monograph. This consideration includes books, monographs, and articles by C. Day-Lewis,\(^5\)

Godfrey Dewey,\(^6\) G. S. Fraser,\(^7\) Frederick Hoffman,\(^8\) Josephine Miles,\(^9\) Ernest Robson,\(^10\)


\(^7\)George Sutherland Fraser, *Dylan Thomas* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1957).


DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this monograph. Metaphor is considered an indirect self-contradictory attribution, not true on the primary level. Oxymoron is considered a direct self-contradiction. The latter is intended to indicate the difference between what is real and what is apparent in the sense of being "done in a certain way." In "nasty-nice," one is nasty in a nice way. In "bittersweet" one is bitter in a sweet way.

In metaphor, two items are made identical, after it is assumed that the two are not the same on the primary level. The intent is to become explicit for affective or emotive purposes.

Chatman's "senses" refer to two elements. First, words carry more than one meaning. Second, on the semantic level the words carry not only more than one meaning; they also operate in terms of parts or wholes. For example, "Cat" also enters into sequence with other felines, and, thus, must be considered sequentially in terms of higher classes.

Grammar is defined as the number of ways in which a statement may be made in any language, with the emphasis that grammar must be subsumed through sound to sense, as going through phonology, morphology, and syntax—or through sound, word change, and word order. In "Persona and Addressee" it is considered not that the poet is speaking but that the characters in the poem are speaking through words, and the meanings are carried by the words, not by the poet or by the reader.

Paraphrase refers to restating a meaning or meanings on the purely primary level. At times this restating is difficult to do because words carry connotations. In paraphrase, one at least indicates where literature and non-literature begin and where one moves to secondary meanings. In explication of metaphor, the metaphor is considered to discover where the identity is asserted. Further, metaphor can embrace an entire poem, and if there is a total metaphor, single metaphors occurring in phrases or clauses must relate to the total metaphor for solution.
Connotations refer not only to affective meanings taken on by words outside the physical level of reality, but also refer to the intensity of a word and to the sounds perceived as good, bad, and ugly, or as pleasant or unpleasant, or as eulogistic or dyslogistic. The connotative aspect of words comes from the surprise that they give to an ordinary word which one expects to remain ordinary: for example, one is aware of the nature of rain, but when there is such a statement as "misfortunes fell as heavy rains beating down the fragile flower stems," one is in the area of connotation.

Finally, "Drawing inferences" refers to the fact that "ROPE" finally intervenes. Using "ROPE" to stand for "the range of possibilities existing", the writer suggests that within this total an individual accepts one line of thought or feeling rather than another. He does so by inferring, usually, that one choice is more likely than another. However, diction often induces the reader to adopt one inference rather than another. The tone of words or their learned association usually takes care of the inference. The next or second chapter contains a short poetic passage and the application of the methodology to the passage.
Chapter 2

THE CHATMAN APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE’S
"WHO IS SYLVIA?"

In this chapter the methodology for Chatman\textsuperscript{20} will be applied to the relatively short poem Shakespeare’s "Who is Sylvia":

\textbf{From Two Gentlemen from Verona}

Who is Sylvia? what is she
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Sylvia let us sing
That Sylvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling;
To her let us garlands bring.

In An Introduction to the Language of Poetry, Seymour Chatman lays out a procedure for understanding and interpreting poetry. Although Chatman points out that no certain order of procedure is necessary, he follows the logical order of first finding the senses or meanings of words. He then examines the

\textsuperscript{20}Seymour Chatman, op.cit., passim.

\textsuperscript{21}Shakespeare, Two Gentlemen from Verona, IV,ii, (ll.39-53).
syntax of sentences, determines the persona and addressee, offers a paraphrase for the statements, explains the figurative language, grasps the connotations of words, and draws inferences. A convenient cover term for all these procedures is "interpretation." In order to show Chatman's processes of interpreting the language of poetry, his approach will be applied to the poem "Who is Sylvia?"

In the poem there are simple and quite understandable uses of language. Some words that might need further explanation in Stanza One are "swains," "commend," "holy," "fair," "wise," "grace," and "admired." Nearly all readers would know today's meaning of "swains" as being male suitors or admirers. The next term to consider is the verb "commend." The word carries an intellectual tone as being worthy of regard. Considering the terms "holy," "fair," and "wise," we find that "holy" refers to that which is spiritually perfect; "fair" refers to that which is physically beautiful, and "wise" refers to that which is intellectually keen. These three terms then point up the perfection of Sylvia spiritually, physically, and intellectually. The word "grace" refers to virtue or moral excellence regarded as coming from God. To be "admired" is to be regarded with elevated feelings of pleasure.

After having determined the senses of the words in the first stanza, it is essential to determine the reference point of every pronoun. In each instance the reference point for the pronouns "she" and "her" is Sylvia. Having completed the word meanings used in the stanza, consider the use of grammar.
The first stanza opens with three questions: Who? What? Purpose? The middle line is that of $3N = lN$. The fourth and fifth lines are the transitive and the passive, where the past tense opens the way to the timelessness of the fifth line.

The "persona" in the poem is the speaker, while the "addressee" is the reader of the poem.

To understand better the meaning carried by the words in the poem, the reader should paraphrase the lines. To paraphrase the first stanza, the reader might say: "Who is Sylvia? What is Sylvia? That all our male admirers regard her so highly? She is spiritually whole, physically beautiful, and intellectually endowed. Heaven gave Sylvia moral excellence so that she might be regarded with feelings of pleasure."

Next move to what Chatman calls the "explication of metaphor." In the first stanza there is one instance of figurative language: "The heaven such grace did lend her." Chatman suggests that the reader ask if the attribution is literally possible or not? If not, then proceed on the assumption that is is a metaphor.

In following the same procedure in Stanza Two followed in Stanza One, it is essential to clarify first the meanings or senses of words. Some words that might need further clarification are "kind," "repair," and "inhabit." The word "kind" denotes a sympathetic, friendly, generous manner. The verb "repair" means "to go to." "Inhabit" means "to dwell or live in." It is now wise to find the reference point of the pronouns. As in the first stanza the pronouns "she" and "her" refer to Sylvia.
In the fourth line "him" and "his" refer back to the subject "love."

A grammatical break-down of the second stanza follows: The first line of Stanza Two asks an equation for the degree of spiritual love and physical love on the grounds that beauty must live with kindness or spirituality, a transitive statement.

The whole-part movement of the third line is syntactically clever as the fourth line is another explanation of purpose. Then comes the intransitive statement of the fifth line, with its sense of permanent completeness in "And, being helped, inhabits there."

A convenient paraphrase for the second stanza is "Is Sylvia as generous as she is beautiful? For beauty lives with kindness. Love goes to Sylvia’s eyes to be helped of his blindness, and finding help, remains there."

In the second stanza the figurative use of language is employed by means of personification. The qualities of beauty, kindness, and love are given human attributes. Literally the assertion is impossible, for "beauty" could not "live with" "kindness." In the same manner "love" could not literally "go to" someone’s eyes to be helped of blindness. "Love" then is given human attributes.

In the third stanza words that need further explanation are "excelling," "mortal," "dull," and "garlands." To "excel" or "be excelling" denotes superiority. "Mortal" refers to man
who must eventually die. "Dull" could refer to that which lacks physical, mental, or spiritual brilliance. "Garlands" are wreaths used to praise gods and goddesses. The pronouns "she" and "her" in the last stanza refer to Sylvia. The "us" refers to the speaker of the poem. To paraphrase the poem one must say: "Then let us sing to Sylvia that she is superior; Sylvia surpasses each human being that lives on the earth. Let us praise Sylvia with garlands."

The grammatical break-down for the third stanza is: the grammar of the third stanza combines the progressive sense of the permanent for Sylvia in "excelling" and the permanent sense of a lesser dull earth "dwelling."

Following a concern with senses of words, an examination of grammar, a determination of the persona and addressee, and a paraphrase of the work, the writer might begin a study of figurative language.

The poem begins with two questions: "Who is Sylvia? What is she, That all our swains commend?" The speaker asks not only the identity of the girl, but also what qualities she possesses. The reference to "all our swains" indicates that she is highly esteemed by all male admirers. The use of the term "commend" leads the reader to infer that Sylvia is highly regarded on a higher level than on the purely physical level. "Commend" carries intellectual consideration with it. The next statement, "Holy, fair, and wise is she" is a flat assertion
that Sylvia possesses these qualities that synthesize completeness or perfection. She is spiritually sound, physically beautiful, and intellectually endowed. This reason then, is why the young men "Commend" her. They are aware of her perfection in all facets of her personality.

From the next statement: "The heaven such grace did lend her/That she might admired be." The reader might infer that Sylvia indeed has some close association with that which is supernatural; for it was from that source that she obtained her perfecting qualities so that she might be highly esteemed by those around her. From the question in the second stanza "Is she kind as she is fair?", the reader might infer that if she is indeed as generous and sympathetic toward mankind as she is beautiful then her kindness is boundless.

The next statement: "For beauty lives with kindness" is a flat assertion that she must be "kind as she is fair." Beauty connotes not only that which is physically attractive, but more the totality of perfection. It would be unthinkable for Sylvia to be totally perfect without expressing that perfection through acts of kindness.

The next statement reinforces this thought. A specific act of kindness on Sylvia's part is revealed to the reader: "Love doth to her eyes repair,/ To help him of his blindness,/ and, being helped, inhabits there." Sylvia was kind enough to help "love" of his blindness. "Love" was unable to realize or "see" Sylvia's perfection.
"Love" then sought help for his blindness in Sylvia's eyes. There he found relief and recognized her perfection. It is significant also that he found help for his blindness in her eyes, that which stands for physical apprehension of the universe. After finding help and recognizing her perfecting qualities, "love" remains with or becomes a part of Sylvia's nature. In addition to holiness, beauty, and intelligence, Sylvia possesses love.

The reader now knows the qualities that Sylvia possesses. In Stanza Three the speaker encourages everyone to offer songs of praise to Sylvia: "Then to Sylvia let us sing/That Sylvia is excelling;". The speaker states that Sylvia is superior. The use of the present tense "is" indicates a timeless tense. In the next lines the reason for the speaker's call to praise is stated: "She excells each mortal thing/Upon the dull earth dwelling;". For Sylvia to surpass all other human beings she must be more than human. She must be immortal or supra-mortal. The use of "dull earth" calls even more attention to Sylvia's radiance. Her perfecting and excelling qualities are even more spectacular in relation to the "dullness" of the earth. The last line "To her let us garlands bring" verifies the assumption that Sylvia is supra-mortal. The gift of a garland suggests that Sylvia is worthy of the same high praise as was given gods and goddesses.

The reader now knows who and what Sylvia is. She is of that great world of perfect forms. She is the synthesis of physical, intellectual, and spiritual perfection. Sylvia
possesses qualities of spiritual perfection, physical beauty, and intellectual capacity. Heaven has given her the needed grace to display these qualities through acts of kindness. Love abounds within Sylvia for the reason that she is perfect. Sylvia is indeed supra-mortal—the timeless essence of total perfection.
Chapter 3

WORD SENSES IN
"BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT"

Dylan Thomas's "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait" is a fifty-four stanza poem with the traditional ballad stanza of four lines. However, there is considerable variety as to the rhyme scheme. It is sufficient to note that Thomas did not tie himself to the inflexibility of the abcb quatrain. While there are examples of the abcb quatrain, there are other examples of other combinations.

The use of the prepositional phrasing prevents the iambic metre from dominating the verse. Yet there is enough allowance for iambic measure to take care of the choppiness of the water, with its crests and troughs. The poem tends to present fifty-four pictures sufficiently endstopped to prevent a rapid blending of the images from one stanza to another. However, as the reader can discern for himself, there is much room left for activity within each stanza.

Other than to indicate the basic form of the poem, no effort will be made at this point to go into the content of the poem before setting the poem out in its full detail.

Because it is the starting point of the analysis that poems are best handled when looked at in terms of
statements made to each major punctuation, the lines will be arbitrarily handled through numbering according to major punctuation. Since the first three lines end with a semicolon in the first stanza, the number "1" will be given to this first set of three lines. The fourth line, an independent clause in itself is numbered "2." The numbers will be cumulative, as can be seen through reading through the poem.

It will be noted that there are fifty-five units to discuss. It seems more than reasonable that when the poet comes to the end of a main image or set of images, he will adjust his rhythm accordingly. It must be assumed that the punctuation is the written way of indicating to the reader the rhythm.

Where several lines develop before any major punctuation, the reader should prepare himself for that kind of an extended movement through words.

Reading the lines aloud and keeping the poet's rhythm will serve to develop both content and form for the reader or listener.

BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

1 The bows glided down, and the coast
1 Blackened with birds took a last look
1 At his thrashing hair and whale-blue eye;
2 The trodden town rang its cobbles for luck.

3 Then good-bye to the fisherman's
3 Boat with its anchor free and fast
3 As a bird hooking over the sea,
3 High and dry by the top of the mast,
3 Whispered the affectionate sand
3 And the bulwarks of the dazzled quay.
4 For my sake sail, and never look back,
4 Said the looking land.

5 Sails drank the wind, and white as milk
5 He sped into the drinking dark;
6 The sun shipwrecked west on a pearl
6 And the moon swam out of its hulk.

7 Funnels and masts went by in a whirl.
8 Good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck
8 To the gold gut that sings on his reel
8 To the bait that stalked out of the sack,
8 For we saw him throw to the swift flood
8 A girl alive with his hooks through her lips;
9 All the fishes were rayed in blood,
9 Said the dwindling ships.

10 Good-bye to chimneys and funnels,
10 Old wives that spin in the smoke,
10 He was blind to the eyes of candles
10 In the praying windows of waves
10 But heard his bait buck in the wake
10 And tussle in a shoal of loves.
11 Now cast down your rod, for the whole
11 Of the sea is hilly with whales,
11 She longs among horses and angels,
11 The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,
11 Floated the lost cathedral
11 Chimes of the rocked buoys.

12 Where the anchor rode like a gull
12 Miles over the moonstruck boat
12 A squall of birds bellowed and fell,
12 A cloud blew the rain from its throat;
13 He saw the storm smoke out to kill
13 With fuming bows and ram of ice,
13 Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's stream;
14 And nothing shone on the water's face
14 But the oil and bubble of the moon,
14 Plunging and piercing in his course
14 The lured fish under the foam
14 Witnessed with a kiss.
Whales in the wake like capes and Alps
Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep,
Deep the great bushed bait with raining lips
Slipped the fins of those humpbacked tons

And fled their love in a weaving dip.
Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs!
She nipped and dived in the nick of love,
Spun on a spout like a long-legged ball

Till every beast blared down in a swerve
Till every turtle crushed from his shell
Till every bone in the rushing grave
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,
There is thunder under its thumbs;
Gold gut is a lightning thread,
His fiery reel sings off its flames,

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood
Is crying from nets to knives,
Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

Are making under the green, laid veil
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives.
Break the black news and paint on a sail
Huge weddings in the waves,

Over the wakeward-flashing spray
Over the gardens of the floor
Clash out the mounting dolphin's day,
My mast is a bell-spire.

Strike and smooth, for my decks are drums,
Sing through the water-spoken prow
The octopus walking into her limbs
The polar eagle with his tread of snow.

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of the stern
Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!
The long, laid minute's bride drifts on
Old in her cruel bed.

Over the graveyard in the water
Mountains and galleries beneath
Nightingale and hyena
Rejoicing for that drifting death
Sing and howl through sand and anemone
Valley and sahara in a shell,
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a girl

Is old as water and plain as an eel;
Always good-bye to the long-legged bread
Scattered in the paths of his heels
For the salty birds fluttered and fed

And the tall grains foamed in their bills;
Always good-bye to the fires of the face,
For the crab-backed dead on the sea-bed rose
And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as sleet.
The tempter under the eyelid
Who shows to the selves asleep
Mast-high moon-white women naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for shame
Is dumb and gone with his flame of brides.
Sussanah's drowned in the bearded stream
And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;
Sin who had a woman's shape
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud
And all the lifted waters walk and leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping
Out of the sides of the north
Has melted away and is lost
Is always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound
And the sensual ruins make
Seasons over the liquid world,
White springs in the dark.

Always good-bye, cried the voices through the shell,
Good-bye always for the flesh is cast
And the fisherman winds his reel
With no more desire than a ghost.

Always good luck, praised the finned in the feather
Bird after dark and the laughing fish
As the sails drank up the hail of thunder
And the long-tailed lightning lit his catch.
33 The boat swims into the six-year weather,
33 A wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast.
34 See what the gold gut drags from under
34 Mountains and galleries to the crest!
35 See what clings to hair and skull
35 As the boat skims on with drinking wings!
36 The statues of great rain stand still,
36 And the flakes fall like hills.
37 Sing and strike his heavy haul
37 Toppling up the boatside in a snow of light!
38 His decks are drenched with miracles.
39 Oh miracle of fishes! The long dead bite!
40 Out of the urn the size of a man
40 Out of the room the weight of his trouble
40 Out of the house that holds a town
40 In the continent of a fossil.
41 One by one in dust and shawl,
41 Dry as echoes and insect-faced,
41 His fathers cling to the hand of the girl
41 And the dead hand leads the past,
41 Leads them as children and as air
41 On to the blindly tossing tops;
42 The centuries throw back their hair
42 And the old men sing from newborn lips:
43 Time is bearing another son.
44 Kill Time! She turns in her pain!
45 The oak is felled in the acorn
45 And the hawk in the egg kills the wren.
46 He who blew the great fire in
46 And died on a hiss of flames
46 Or walked on the earth in the evening
46 Counting the denials of the grains
46 Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs:
47 And he who taught their lips to sing
47 Weeps like the risen sun among
47 The liquid choirs of his tribes.
48 The rod bends low, divining land,
48 And through the sundered water crawls
48 A garden holding to her hand
48 With birds and animals
With men and women and waterfalls
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships
And stunned and still on the green, laid veil
Sand with legends in its virgin laps

And prophets loud on the burned dunes;
Insects and valleys hold her thighs hard,
Time and places grip her breast bone,
She is breaking with seasons and clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water weaves,
With moving fish and rounded stones
Up and down the greater waves
A separate river breathes and runs;

Strike and sing his catch of fields
For the surge is sown with barley,
The cattle graze on the covered foam,
The hills have footed the waves away,

With wild sea fillies and soaking bridles
With salty colts and gales in their limbs
All the horses of his haul of miracles
Gallop through the arched, green farms,

Trot and gallop with gulls upon them
And thunderbolts in their manes.
O Rome and Sodom To-morrow and London
The country tide is cobbled with towns,

And steeples pierce the cloud on her shoulder
And the streets that the fisherman combed
When his long-legged flesh was a wind on fire
And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her hair
And terribly lead him home alive
Lead her prodigal home to his terror,
The furious ox-killing house of love.

Down, down, down, under the ground,
Under the floating villages,
Turns the moon-chained and water-wound
Metropolis of fishes,

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,
Under the earth the loud sea walks,
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down
And the bait is drowned among hayricks,
53 Land, land, land, nothing remains
53 Of the pacing, famous sea but its speech,
53 And into its talkative seven tombs
53 The anchor dives through the floors of a church.

54 Good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon,
54 To the fisherman lost on the land.
55 He stands alone at the door of his home,
55 With his long-legged heart in his hand.

The words are considered within the context of
the statements leading to major punctuation. There are
fifty-five clusters of clauses, with each cluster ending
with major punctuation.

Image 1, ending with a semicolon after "eye,"
has the following words for definition: "bows" and
"threshing." "Bows" can carry two meanings here: first,
bows can represent the front of the ships, or nodding before
external force. "Threshing" indicates either physical punish-
ment, or fighting into the wind. Image 2 offers two words
for concern: "trodden" and "cobbles." The passive form of
"trodden" and "cobbles" each refers to being beaten down, or
worn.

Image 3 has six lines ending as a sentence with
"quay." "Fishermanned" is a critical word since the boat
itself is "manned," or controlled by external forces made
evident from the beginning lines. "Free" and "fast" carry
a contradiction in that although the free anchor reinforces
"free" and "fast," "fast" also carries a "held-down" con-
notation, as well as a "speedy" one. "Hooking" refers not
only to an over-reaching but also to the baiting or catching.

Image 4, with its two-line statement, offers "looking land." Here, as before, physical nature is personified. In this instance, the land is acted upon in a passive sense, since it only "looks," seeing what goes on, but does not act.

Image 5 has two lines, ending with "drinking dark" before a semicolon. There is the taking in as sails "drank," and as the "dark" also "drank." There is a sucking up or absorbing. (It must be noted that in the images, the entire tale is narrative, rather than descriptive. The elements of the past tense keep a non-universal note in the statements.)

Image 6, another two-line image, parallels the absorption from one element "light" to its opposite "dark." First, the "sun" is "shipwrecked" or acted upon. "Hulk" offers two possibilities: first, there is the ship reduced to a stationary grotesque item as a hulk, or the moon as light streams from its own static shapelessness. The "he" in this image refers to the fisherman (ned) element.

In Image 7 "Funnels" and "masts" are put in a context whereby "in a whirl" points out their being driven, thwarted, or dominated by external elements.

Image 8 with its five-lined statements ending with "through her lips" before the semicolon has a few words or phrases for consideration within themselves and with respect to previous items. "Sea-legged" indicates the ability to
keep balance, but also indicates a rolling gait that cannot be altered. "Bait" and "gut" refer to fishing items: that offered to the victim and the cord used in fishing tackle. The word "lips" refers to female lips as such, to part of the female sexual organs, or to the speaking elements of a person.

The "he" in Image 5 and the "him" in Image 8 refer to "man." The "her" in Image 8 refers to "girl."

Then there is the shorter Image 9. Again, there is a reliance on the passive voice: the fishes are acted upon, objects of violence as in "rayed in blood." "Dwindling" refers not only to decrease in number or size, but also to what is seen less of as it moves from the light to the dark.

Image 10, composed of six lines, parallels the six lines of Image 3 where each commences with "good-bye." "Spinning" refers to that which "old wives" do, but also refers to creating or fabricating something new. Whatever is spun is carried off as unimportant. "Blind" refers to not being able to see physically. As well, it refers to not being able to be in control of himself through reason. The foam and upward surge of "praying windows of waves" are represented by "eyes of candles." "Tussle" indicates a grounding or levelling, or even falling from the upward areas where prayer would direct a person. The shallowness of "shoal" carries a double-meaning for love. The love is shallow, or the love is tenderly-quiet and protected. The plurality of "loves" must indicate a relationship between his love and hers, whether quiet or violent; whether active or spent.
Image 11 carries through in six lines with a quiet and nonstruggling spell. "Cast down" offers the possibility of lowering the fishing rod where there is much to fish for, or of throwing away the rod where the object is not the whale. "Whales" can be the fish, or can be the verb form of "beating." "Horses" and "angles" indicate the conflict between that which no longer climbs, but flattens out in horizontal flight, or that which has a supernatural or uplifting force. The joy of the sea as horizontal but the dimensions of the shoals as cathedral-like give out chimes as the buoy proclaims its presence through bells attached. There is a spiritual cradling possible in the movement or sound of the buoy, or a more violent tolling for the satisfaction of desire.

Image 12 is reduced to four lines. "Gull" carries the meaning of a sea bird somewhat graceful in the distance but awkward at close hand. "Gull" also carries the meaning of fooling or being fooled. Again there is the passive in "moonstruck." That term can refer to the rays given out by the moon, or being caught in a romantic glow, or being made a fool of. "Squall" is a sudden noise or outburst, a complaint, or an outburst of passion.

The trio of lines in Image 13 breaks into violence. "Fuming bows," "ram of ice," offer opposition through coldness of feeling or passion to "fire on starlight" and "Jesu's stream" as hotly passionate, leaving the concept of destruction by coldness or by passion as equally consuming as when hot and cold blend together. The "he" in Image 13 refers to the fisherman.
Image 14 has five lines. "Plunging and piercing" refer to the downward and oblique movement of the moon. "Lured" is another example of the possessed as indicated by the passive. The "his" in this image also refers back to the fisher.

Image 15 concentrates on heaving and weaving denotations and connotations. None of the terms are other than ordinary words, with "Whales" taking on the complexities of both physical phenomena or human phenomena. The word to focus on is "sick." "Sick" carries all of the possible meanings, with one being menstruation. "Capes," "Alps," "snouted deep," and "raining lips" parallel the physical transports of nature or those of sexual gratification.

Image 16 offers one line, with one word for examination: "Jericho." "Jericho" refers to a town in Palestine, but the significance is that of tarrying for a while prior to destruction.

Image 17 is a six-line statement where the power of her feminine love, indicated by the feminine tones in "nipped and dived in the nick of love," conquers the fisherman in a power struggle indicated by "beast blared," "turtle crushed," and "rushing grave." It must be noted that the entire location is acted upon, shattered and almost fragmented.

Image 18 in its two lines offers no words for definition. However, Image 19 is a long one, with its eight lines.

The images are red and green. "Gold gut," "Fiery reel," and "flames" are in contrast to the "green" of the ocean. "Shearwater" birds are birds which stay on the horizontal levels, merely skimming.
The six lines in Image 20 have two terms for consideration: "wakeward-flashing" and "bell-spire." "Wakeward-flashing" indicates the light of crests set out as the apex of waves forced by moving vessels. This parallels the "bell-spire" where the greatest height indicates the top of the spire with its sounds or singing as it pushes through the air.

Image 21, in its four lines, introduces no difficult terms. "Octopus" is the creature with many arms for a horizontal reaching out in contrast to the "tread of snow" of the polar eagle. ("Octopus" also carries the meaning of unfolding of creation. The "dolphin" represents salvation. The "eagle" represents brutal male force.)

The pronouns need to be considered. In Image 18, "its" refers to "hand." In Image 19, "His" refers to fisherman. "Its" refers to "reel." "Their" refers to "bulls." In "their wives," "their" refers back to both "birds" and "bulls." "My" in Image 20 refers to the male sex organ as "mast." In Image 21, "his" refers to "eagle."

Image 22 has two lines: one statement "kick of the stern" indicates the movement of the boat, but also parallels the movement of a man's buttocks in the sex act. "Stern" is also a sea bird. "Kiss" carries the meaning of love, but also of caress for birds and sea life.

Image 23 offers "minute's bride" for analysis or definition. "Minute's" must be explained or viewed through "long laid" which indicates any sexual union wherein the woman is made horizontal in sexual union. "Cruel bed" personifies
"bed." There is no way for the bride to avoid the biological
timelessness—and thus cruel—determinism. It can be seen
that in many of the images one cannot focus on the word as such
for even denotative meanings, but must go the whole swell or
utterance.

Image 24 has nine lines with some items for definition.
"Nightingale" is best understood as a bird that cries out at
midnight, but does so through tones both sweet and sad. The
hyena cries out in rage all of the time at night. "Anemone"
as a word signifies a flower, but also fading or despairing
hope. "Sahara" is the grim parallel for "valley." The "old"
and "plain" and "eel" parallel the inevitability of the nature
of the physical male and female sex organs, as well as the
primary level statements.

Image 25 is to be noted for "long-legged bread" and
"foamed in their bills." The "long-legged" parallels "long-
legged bait," with the bread paralleling the bait. The dough
is kneaded, shaped, and allowed to rise. It exists as an
essential simple necessity. In "foamed in their bills," there
is the flowering result of sexuality.

Image 26, whose words complete the transition to the
coldness of death from the fire of passion, has a word carrying
two meanings. In addition to the movement indicated by "scuttle,"
there is the idea of rejection or abandoning now that the
purpose has been served.

Image 27 has "shame" and "dumb" for review. "Shame"
is either a painful emotion or a state or condition; if a state
or condition, then there is disgrace or loss of chastity. "Dumb" carries the meaning of not speaking, or of lacking intellectual or emotional comprehension or understanding.

Image 28, three lines, has two proper names for concern: "Sussanah" and "Sheba." "Sussanah," beautiful and virtuous, was accused of adultery by some when she resisted their advances when she was discovered in her bath. Daniel proved her innocence and convicted her accusers.

"Sheba" was a rich queen who found Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and wonder even greater than reputed.

Image 29 offers no problems when the reader understands that "Sin" and "Silence" are personified. The term "lifted" refers to holding up and also to elevating in position or stature.

Image 30 has a long eight-line sequence, with "Lucifer" and "Venus" for interpretation. "Lucifer"--devil and star--is to be considered with "Venus"--goddess, as well as planet. The linking of beauty with sexual desire and sin is "sensual" which always causes a problem because of its use and misuse. In one sense, "sensual" refers to appetite for sexual gratification. In another sense, "sensual" is used for "sensuous" which represents an appeal to the senses, as such.

Images 31, 32, 33, and 34 offer no words carrying more than one meaning. With a lull in the interaction between the seeker and the sought, the movement is purely physical and represents one of calm movement.
Image 35 opens with the statement "See what clings to hair and skull." "Hair" carries the normal meaning, but also carries the meanings of fertility and physical force. "Skull" carries the promise of death and the eventual nakedness of man when the spirit is gone.

Images 36, 37, and 38 have simple words calling for little excursion into multiple meanings within the context used.

In Image 38, the use of "miracle" in two instances is employed to indicate a physical phenomenon for which there is no rational or sensorial explanation. At the same time, the statement "Oh miracle of fishes!" in the following line forces the reader to the history of the statement.

Image 40, an image of exodus, has "urn" and "fossil" to look at. The urn generally denotes the holding of the ashes of the dead, that which is a sort of tomb. "Fossil" refers to the remains of past civilizations, but also refers to any emotional and spiritual deprivation.

Image 41, with its six-lines simply offers a picture of death and dust, with nature again personified. There are no words needing explication at this point. Image 42 closes with a hint of rebirth of life as the past speaks with determination through the newborn life, as symbolized through "lips."

Image 43 has but one line. Time is personified as meaning either producing another son, or as carrying one. Image 44, another single line, personifies Time through having her "turn in pain."
The terseness through the brevity of the last two images is carried out through Image 45, itself only two lines. "Oak" carries the meaning of being rugged and enduring. The hawk is that force which operates on life near the ground, or not high from the ground.

Image 46 is an expanded five lines with simple words which indicate that "blew the great fire in" indicates the one who gave the breath of life and was destroyed by that which he created. In this poem, then, fire refers to regeneration, transformation, and sexual vigor.

In Image 47 "choirs" and "tribes" carry additional meanings. "Choirs" refers to the nine orders of angels in the heavenly hierarchy. "Tribes" refers to the twelve divisions of the people of Israel. Image 47, with its detailed nine-line description, establishes a historical continuum from the time of the Jewish prophets. The words, as such, pose little difficulty. "Sundered" refers to being cut apart or opened like the opening of the waters in the Old Testament tale.

Image 49 offers no difficult words: "time" is again personified as the historical context of the situation develops. Such is also the case with the four-line sequence in Image 50: It is to be noted that references to "her" in each of the last few images point to the girl or to the bait.

An unusually long set of lines is evident in Image 51. The ten lines are rather specifically physical with respect to words functioning as adjectives before the nouns. "Surge" carries meanings of a fountain, stream, or source of a river.
The word also carries the idea of intellectual force and emotional force, or the movement of a drive, such as a sexual drive. These words tend to take on metaphysical meanings as in "horses of his haul of miracles." Again, the simple words carrying obvious meanings in themselves give a vigorous metaphor of idiom for the sentences.

Image 52 brings in nine lines with some words requiring a close look. Rome and Sodom pose paradoxes when set out in the same sentence. "Rome" carries the idea of power, discipline, order, and morality, with "Sodom" standing for the opposite. "Loin" carries the idea of a certain geographical location in the lower body, and also the idea of sexual drive and burning for satisfaction. "Prodigal" refers to one spending extravagantly. It also refers to the parable in Luke.

Image 53 moves to summary in the longest set of lines in the poem--twelve. "Moonchained" links water and moon as tides. "Water-wound Metropolis of fishes" points to the essential liquid and flowing environment containing the fish with the fisherman. The "seven tombs" are left open to interpret as perfect structure from the triangle and the square, as seven civilizations, as seven stages of life, or as seven wonders,--or as seven virtues or vices.

Image 54 has in its two lines no words carrying variant meanings. Image 55, the concluding two lines have the use of "he" and "his," each referring back to "fisherman." The term "long-legged" before "heart" extends the idea of youth,
the physical, and bait to emotive and spiritual levels.

The words, phrases, and clauses making up the fifty-five images in the poem have been considered. The next step is to look to any unique grammatical features. In Chapter Four attention is given to the grammatical structuring of the fifty-five images.
Chapter 4

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURING IN THE

"BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT"

The sentence structuring is in terms of images, with each image telling a story or painting a picture. In keeping with the traditionalism in the term "ballad," a story is told. The language is in the past tense.

However, as the reader or listener must note, much of the structuring takes the passive voice. There is much in the grammar of the utterances that reveals "acted upon." The narration is countered or subsumed with the descriptive elements always contained in the passive.

The combination of the passive in every image with the narrative past gives the impact of having an action stated and then held long enough for contemplation or description. From a technical point of view, more emotive impact is obtained through leaving out "that," from leaving out "there" structures, and from condensing. Some of the condensation is achieved by "tagging." "Tagging" refers to the phenomenon where an adjective or verb acting as an adjective appears after the noun, rather than the prenominal position.

In Image 1 "coast" is tagged with "blackened with birds." The tag avoids the use of "that" as a clause marker. The active "glided" is countered by the passive "blackened."
Image 2 relies on the passive "trodden" as a counter to the active "rang."

Impressive is the usage as technique of countering the active with movement for the passive with contemplation and of using the prepositional phrase with trigrams as words to give movement after a combination of two adjectives.

Image 3 has the combination of "free and fast" in combination with the prepositional "with its anchor" and "high and dry" with "by the top" and "of the mast."

The quick movement of the active voice, the following settling down and out, the quick union of adjectives, and the freer floating movement of the prepositional phrase accommodate the movement of the bait, of the fisherman, and of the one fished for.

In Image 5 "Sails drank the wind" gives a slow, chopping effect, one achieved by the tones of the words, rather than by any visual image. The movement of the sails with respect to the wind is as varied as the movement of bait in water.

The phonology of "sun shipwrecked west" and "moon swam out of its hulk" in Image 6 is slowed to the slowest of movement, with the prepositional phrasing stressing location.

The grammar of alliteration is in keeping with the paradoxical statements noted thus far. Image 8 shifts to a reliance on "s" sounds. The "si..." and "sa..." speed combinations are in contrast to the "sh..." and "st....." combinations. The passive voice is not used in this image cluster, but the personification is strong. The language of the poet
or speaker in the poem achieves a semantic richness through keeping all aspects of experience alive. The non-living elements are given life through personification. "Gold gut" sings, and "bait" stalks.

The grammatical shift in Image 10 for the first two-thirds of the image reflects a shift to the passive and to the compressed "thereness." Only the world outside is alive as reflected in the transitive employment of "buck" and "tussle."

The buck and swell of life and of the bait are equated in Image 11 by the verbs "longs," "bends," "floated," and "rocked." The horizontal length of these verbs, with the length ending in a fade-fall, keeps the tone and meaning level-and dropping--quite free from any fade-rise effects.

The reader, if not the listener, will profit from keeping himself aware of the fact that the poet's tagging often involves one line after another. In Image 12 "miles" tags "gull"; "a squall" tags "Miles over"; and, finally, "A cloud" tags a "squall." Through this technique nouns and location are fused. The prepositional phrases in association with the coupled adjectives and the tagging serve to fuse "what," "when," and "where."

The expressive imagery gets reinforcement in a NVNV construction, one often employed. A particularly effective example occurs in Image 13 with "He saw the storm smoke....." When this phenomenon occurs there is the NVNV followed by prepositional statements of location.
More than impressive is the almost unlimited variety of structures for furnishing effects.

The first shift to time in a concentrated effect develops through the grammar on the first two lines in Image 17 where the verbs "nipped," "dived," and "spun" are followed by three "till" tags giving the effect of three bites with a pulling up and down of the bait for three time durations. At the end of the image the three verbs "rose," "crowed," and "fell" complete the up-and-down time effect.

In Image 19 there is an example of the technique of holding a past action still by the use of the Th-transformation, by the use of the present progressive, and by the drawn-out phonology as in "There is thunder...," "fiery reel sings," "shearwater birds," and "boatsized brood." These, followed by "is making" tend to make time stand still and to move past images for sustained present reflection.

As with the opening line in Image 18, the opening lines in Images 20 and 21 are commands, leaving open the question as to whether the subject is the fisherman or the one fished for, or, more abstractly, a universal force. The opening line in Image 20 opens with "Break the black news and paint on a sail..."; the opening line of Image 21 is no less imperative: "Strike and smooth, for my decks are drums." The imperative direction continues in Image 22 with "Sing how the seal has kissed her dead." In the long expansion of Image 24, there is the command "Sing and howl through sand and anemone."

In Images 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, the poet shifts
to metaphor and historicity in which there are eclectic elements: "Mast-high moon-white women naked," "Sussanah's drowned in the bearded stream," "Sin...Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud," "Venus lies star-struck...," and "White springs in the dark." The poet uses the present perfect to approach the present, to establish a continuum. In a reliance on a continued historical sense, the present perfect blends into the timeless present.

The lines in Images 31 and 32 establish a pattern over the past through the adverbial shift to the beginning of the lines, as in "Always good-bye," "good-bye," "Always good luck."

The metaphorical sentence-patterning continues with complete personification through which animals equate human actions; birds equate human actions and thoughts; and, the world of inanimate things equates human thought, actions, and attitudes. There are such statements in Images 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 as "The boat swims...," "The statues...stand still," "gold gut drags," "long-tailed lightning lit his catch," and "A wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast."

Image 37 opens with a VV command, followed in Image 40 with a series of locations with three tags: "out of the urn," "out of the room," and "out of the house." All of the locations are countered by an opposing single one through location--in Image 40--as in "In the continent of a fossil."

The grammar literally bends, arches, drops, jigs, smites, and is smitten as the tagging, commanding, passive
voicing, and alternate location and time move from the fisherman to the bait to the victim and in alternate sequences. The grammar of the images reflects the possibilities of pursuer-bait-pursued, pursued-bait-pursuer, bait-pursuer-pursued, and bait-pursued and pursuer. The patterning is in fact complex, but the complex and complex-compound statements are fused or condensed through leaving out the clause markers.

The acting upon and the being acted upon are never more than in the grammar of Images 43, 44, and 45. The drawing out of time for the baiting to work through is achieved by a transitive: "Time is bearing another son." The intransitive "She turns in her pain" brings Time itself to human response. The contrast between passive and active--between the strong and weak--is highlighted in "The oak is felled in the acorn," and "And the hawk in the egg kills the wren." Of course, the free movement within the limitations of time and space is ensured by the liberal use of the prepositional phrasing.

Images 46 and 47 offer testimony to the fact that the three-word prepositional phrase does not always ensure speed. When the poet desires to hold time extended, the long phonology of the three-word prepositional phrase is achieved by verbs used as nouns and by phonologically-long nouns, themselves: "on a hiss," "in the evening," "of the grains," "among the liquid," and "of his tribes."

The Images 48, 49, and 50 mark a return to the use of doubling of adjectives, nouns, and verbs: "birds and animals," "men and women," and "breathes and runs." A new
grammatical technique is employed in these three images where doublings are used as associations: "insects and valleys," "seasons and clouds," and "fish and stones."

It can be seen that the poet has relied on the vigor of the verb, whether the verb is passive or active. This phenomenon is never more marked than in Images 51 and 52. After moving to close the poem with the realities of such nouns as "barley," "cattle," "hills," "waves," "bridles," "gulls and manes," the poet includes the power and incisive force of "strike and sing," "graze," "gallop," "trot and gallop," "pierce," and "lead."

From a grammatical point of view, the poet unwinds and drops the bait in an unwinding manner: in Image 53, there is the opening "Down, down, down, under the ground." Later in the same image comes "under the earth." The downward vertical is touched as in "in deathbeds of orchards" and "...bait is drowned..."

There is a bewildering diversity of syntactical forms. Such must be true because of the combinations of movements made by the bait. The grammatical structures rely on tagging more than on modification. It is clear that the poet fuses his sentence patterns so that at times they may seem unrelated. The semantic tones strain but do not break the syntax. It is helpful to keep in mind that any of the basic sentence patterns may be other than equal on the pure one-to-one physical level.
When there is a $V_{be}$ pattern, for example, the verb completer can be a noun equal to the noun in the first position: "Sodium sulphate = Na$_2$SO$_4$." The verb completer can be whole-part: "John is a soldier."

The whole-partness is evident in that John is more than a soldier: he may be a parent, student, baseball player, or reading addict. Then there is the metaphor in "John is a skunk." He is obviously not physically a skunk, but, that having been established, he is for all other purposes a skunk.

When one considers that the same observations are true of the transitive statement, the intransitive statement, and the whole-part construction, in addition to the $V_{be}$, it can be seen the poet's variety is considerable. The poet here has exercised the entire range. The use of the active to move the bait and the passive to view the movements have been commented upon.
Chapter 5

PERSONA AND ADDRESSEE

Who is speaking to whom in the poem? The first reaction is to state that the poet is speaking to the reader. But it is scarcely likely that Dylan Thomas is talking about his catching or being caught in terms of fish, life's problems in meeting bare necessities, political implications, or sex.

Apparently there is a young man who goes fishing. Since there is little in the poem that relates to bisexuality within the same individual, there is a "he." The "he" does the fishing, or is discussed as a fisherman. Whether the fisherman is himself caught or netted, the fisherman is the "he" throughout the poem.

The long-legged girl is the "her" or "she" as the fisherman is the "he" or "him." The 'you' stands for the reader or for the entire world of conscious beings involved with experience or inexperience. Other matters are addressed. The pronouns refer to other elements than the young man or the girl.

In Image 2, "its" refers to "town." In Image 5, "He" refers to the occupant of the boat, the fisherman. "Its" in that Image refers to "sun." In Images 5 and 8, "his" and "him" address the noun "man." One must be careful with other
pronouns not related to "him" or "her." "We" in Image 8 refers to the "ships."

Image 9 devotes itself to addressing the girl through the "she" and "her." There is a tendency to address in terms of both identification and possession.

In Image 10, "he" and "his" address the fisherman and his guiding of the boat.

The "their" in Image 15 refers to whales, but also refers to man, woman, and all the world of things and creatures, and people. The "she" in Image 17 refers to the bait, to the girl, to both as separate and to both as unity. The "his" in Image 17 addresses itself back to the "turtle."

The addressing with verbs takes on an interesting significance. The "break" in Image 20, the "clash" in the same Image and "strike" and "sing" in Image 21 can be dually the commands or invitations of either the fisherman or the girl or the bait, with the possibilities that fisherman and bait are identical at one time and bait and girl at another time. But the "My" in Image 20 is an address to the male sexual organ. "Her" in Image 21 and "his" in the same image address the octopus as the bait and the eagle as the fisherman. In Images 22 and 23 the usage of "her" differs as there is another addressee: in Image 22 the "her" refers to the girl; the addressee in Image 23's "her" is the bride, but we must soon equate bride with the girl.

In Images 23 and 24, the "his" addresses the fisherman who is sailing, not part of the fisherman who is baiting or
baited. The question is, of course, whether the fisherman here is pursuing or being pursued.

The presence of "their" in Image 25 is critical. The reference is "birds."

In Images 31-35, the language addresses a wide, almost universal audience. In Image 31, the "Always good-bye," and "Good-bye always," combined with "See what...clings," and "See what the gold gut..." in Image 35 direct the attention of the world to view the fishing experience narrated in time and place. There is almost the tone of "look here" "See what is going on."

Then in Image 46 there is the move to address in terms of a continual narration. It is as though the speaker tells a story transcending this particular narrative in giving a truth of which this narrative is a part: attention is focused on the introductory and narrative "He."

He who blew the great fire in
And died on a hiss of flames
Or walked on the earth in the evening
Counting the denial of the grains
Clings to her drifting hair and climbs:

The universal narration continues with

And he who taught their lips to sing
Weeps like the risen sun among
The liquid choirs of his tribes.

The "He" in both instances stands for a creator or definer behind all actions and conditions.

The speaker then moves back to the world of the specific narrative of the fisherman and the bait-girl. The specific referencing is noted in Image 48 with "her hand."
Then the speaker moves to the universality of that which sees all this seeking as a part of a greater whole of creation. The generalizing for "her" is reached in Images 49 and 50.

The addressing of attention to "her" is noted in "insects and valleys hold her thighs hard," and "Time and places grip her breast bone."

The point gets emphasis with the "she" before the semicolon in Image 49, where the darting and changing of both seasons and clouds are greater elements of change of which she is a part by analogy.

Images 47-51 have the command notes spoken about in the previous chapter concerned with meanings carried by words. But at this point the addressed must be all viewers or listeners. The words, themselves, point the attention of the viewer or listener to the instructions given to those playing the game of the epic that is the poem.

The attention of the total audience is gained and then the participants in the drama are given instructions: "Strike and catch..." "Gallop through..." "trot and gallop," and "Coil from the thoroughfares of her hair."

It is as though the fourth side of a wall has been broken down so that the outsiders are brought into the room to have pointed out together what has taken place. The actors within the three-walled room are directed to carry on their actions so that the greater audience can see what is going on.
The young man speaks. The fisherman speaks. The bait speaks. The girl speaks. Sometimes they are spoken to.

The universe of those who think and feel is spoken to. The problem is with the bait. The bait is the "fisherman," the object of the fishing, the man, the girl, and the world that is waiting there to be caught or trapped.
Chapter 6

PARAPHRASE

Paraphrase as a word carries the meaning of saying the same thing in other words. The sense of paraphrase used in this chapter is that of speaking as much as possible on the literal or non-connoteative level.

That task is not quite that "simple." Since much of the poem is stated in metaphorical language, it is rather a difficult task to restate a metaphor.

In this instance the result will often be taken from the metaphorical or secondary meanings in trying to divest them of their rich association. These meanings will be taken to the primary or physical level. Yet this step is a necessary step in reaching higher meanings.

The art of paraphrasing insists that one goes by steps since he must paraphrase each image, or--in poetry--go to the major punctuation. It is not conceivable that one can go without punctuation unless the speaker of the poem insists on one of two conditions: first, that everything is discrete; or, second, that all is continuous. Either position is impossible to justify.

The fisherman--in the first four images--lifts anchor, and the boat shoots into the ocean filled with black-birds skimming the waves. The birds and the town take a last
glimpse of his blue eyes and wind-driven hair. The whisper of the sand as the boat slips over it on its way to the water and the rest of the land apparatus seem to tell him to leave and not to come back.

The wind drives into the sail, taking the fisherman from the light of day to the approaching dusk, from the known to the unknown. The ships sailing into the sun give the appearance of being shipwrecked; the light of the moon completes the illusion.

Images 7, 8, and 9 are of the ships that stay in the harbour (Swansea) as this ship rushes by them. All that is on shore seems to tell the fisherman "farewell." He wastes no time getting ready to fish. The fisherman believes that he is fishing for the girl with the girl. However, the ships' crews see the bait stalking the fisherman. The fishes seem to be dyed with red, according to watchers from the ships.

Images 10 and 11 are in Quatrains 7, 8, and 9: the fisherman does not seem as steady on his legs as he thought he would be. He says his own "good-byes" to chimneys, to ships, and to the households left behind. He is aware of the tears of those he has left. He stops trolling--surface fishing--when he runs into the whales: he seeks the lower watery regions, below whale level. The sounds of the cathedral and the chimes of the buoys remind him that he is not completely free.

In Images 12, 13, and 14 the boat is anchored so
as to make it appear above the tilting ship. The fisherman appears under the spell of the moon. There is a sudden squall: a storm, cold, and ice. The water churns up by the screws of the craft. The squall subsides, leaving combinations of oil from the craft, with a greasiness on the surface of the calming waters.

Images 15-17 find the whales back in a hilly and rolling ocean: the whales give a "humpback" visual effect. It seems as though the rolling in turning sounds like the Jericho of Biblical note. It seems as though all sea life is being wrenched from whatever protection it has.

Images 18-20 find God entering the picture to calm the storm. There is peace. But black clouds and mutterings remain. The boat twists up and around, this way and that way. The waves seem to come together as individuals in weddings.

Images 20-23 find the ship stilled long enough so that the fisherman can note the spray and bits of flashing to the waveward of both sides of the ship. The mast overhead seems like a spire about to ring out. The fisherman now has control of the boat; the boat has control of the elements. It is as though a tremendous battle is subsiding. The combatants appear exhausted. The whole atmosphere seems one of contradictory elements of heat opposed to the elements of cold, with the contrast between the heat of union and the cooling after being separated.

In the world beneath the surface there is the
drifting bait. There is the world of the enclosed sea-life, locked in crustacean shells; there are the old battlegrounds, both stale and fertile. The water of the ocean is the locus for the fishing and for the fished. There is always the renewed time for battle and for rest, on water as on land. The joys of fishing advance and recede as the time for joy and boredom succeed each other: all this is quite literal in the light of the five good-byes in this sequence of images.

Images 26-29 are in Stanzas—or Quatrains—25-28. References to such abstractions as "Sin" and "Silence" are intermingled with Biblical references to Sheba and Sussanah to parallel a period of quiescence, one where all emotion and violence recede. The period of closing up fishing for a while is paralleled by the inactivity of Sin. Here the parallels point to a quiet which because of its utter deadliness indicates an amoral, rather than a moral, state.

It is, of course, difficult to paraphrase complete metaphor to a purely literal state in terms of fishing, bait and girl, and boy.

Yet, the physical ups and downs, squalls and quiet spells, and heat and cold underscore the secondary levels made overt in the poem itself.

Certainly, Lucifer and Venus stand for secondary meanings: but, in keeping with the speaker's literalness, each symbol has a concrete referent. The names stand for the same stellar meaning as morning star or evening star; they fuse or weld themselves. Lucifer ushers in light to warm
the coldness of the northern fastnesses. Venus herself cannot come to life until struck by Lucifer, as the lines go.

The good byes continue in Images 31 and 32, through the sixth good-bye and the seventh good-bye. At the end of the seventh, the tone of sadness is its deepest, for the fishing is over, and the reel is put to rest for a spell. There is left for contemplation at this point only the results of the "take" or the "catch."

The Images 33-35 come more rapidly in Quatrains 33-34. The movement of the boat is swift but quiet; there is no fishing, but the fisherman moves on. However, the catch is swung on board through its netting, and the fisherman and others relax to drink in a flush of satisfaction for having made the haul.

In Images 37, 38, and 39 in Quatrain 35 it is seen that the small amount of bait and the catch are equated with the miracle of the New Testament wherein the multitude was fed from a small source.

Quatrains 36-39, containing Images 40-45 state flatly that the hand of the past shows both life and death.

Because of genetics or heredity whatever is born must be the union of whatever is old: the blend of old age--youth as innocence is inevitable. Old men cannot sing of a future, but must recount the past. The bait seems to be dead or consumed through having given life to the catch or the haul. There can be no seed until something has given itself to death
so that life may come.

Images 46 and 47 in the next two quatrains usher in a dawn, a new season, a creation. The lines simply direct the observers to see a flushed dawn promising a new sequence to an inevitable cycle.

Quatrains 42-45 contain long images, Images 48, 49, and 50. The long but rugged trip out must be countered by a trip back, and the sailor finds himself at home; the fisherman finds himself back from fishing. The darkness of the sea is replaced by the brightness of land. What signalled the sea now points landward. Those who saw the ship embark now see the ship dock. The catch viewed on sea is now viewed on land. There is a turn from the salt of the sea to the freshwater of the land. One breaks off relationships with one season to enter into a union with another season. Each season has its own transportation arteries, a stream among other streams.

Image 51 works across the next three stanzas. The fields of land are paralleled with the fields of the ocean from whose shoals and other areas the fish were caught. The salt of the sea blends to the freshness of the land. The hills of the sea change to the cobblestones of the town. The land of the seacoast town must blend into the saltiness of the sea. One rubs off on the other. The town, however, is not as holy and good as the sea. There is an expansiveness and largeness about country and sea that is not present in the town of man. If the man and the girl do not bring themselves
back to land any better off—or worse off—than when they were at sea, at least land and sea as such have elements in common.

Image 52 runs across Quatrains 49 and 50. While the fisherman is happy to be home, he is still frightened. The steeples of the country promise the fisherman that there will be domestic squalls, as well as sea squalls. The symbol of the united families quarreling on land in contradistinction to the process leading toward this unity promises a sort of terror.

Image 53, a twelve-lined statement, encompasses Quatrains 51, 52, and 53. Whatever may happen to the boat at sea, it is certain that on land the boat must be dead—there is no movement into or away from the sea. The bait is inert, dead, non-producing. All is anchored to land institutions, with the anchor of the ship paralleling the anchoring of the church.

The fisherman must stand at his door. He will not go out; he cannot go out. There are two possibilities left. He can stand in the doorway, looking out or in; or he can go in. At any rate, he is alone from whatever is outside the door. He is alone with what is inside the door—his wife or family.

In the final set of images, Images 54 and 55, the sun and moon look in on him in the doorway, as he stands alone, lost on land—for he is a fisherman. He is at the door, but he is caught in emotion and feeling for the heart held in his hands may promise staying out, going out, or considering
or controlling one or the other.

The long stanzas state that the fisherman fishes because such is the nature of a fisherman. He fishes for fish, and he uses bait. But he is also baited by the very nature of what he does. He must go from the light through squalls to the dark, and back through squalls to calmness. In always pursuing the catch he is also caught. The long trip into the dark and adventure attended by his catching and being caught by what he does is also attended by his need to close the unclosed.

When he hooks the fish, he is himself hooked. The girl is not only the fished for, but the stalker. The one fished for becomes the bait itself. Which has hooked the other?

The surface development of the paraphrase must be literally enough stated to carry the meaning of a determinism, in which every catcher or netter must be caught or netted.
Chapter 7

THE EXPLICATION OF THE METAPHOR

The central question is whether metaphor can justify itself within the particular context. Will the metaphor hold? The position that metaphor--like homeopathic magic--asserts the utter explicit truth of everything except the initial equation is taken in this monograph.

In Image 8, the "gut" is not "gold" as metal, but in all other respects as to value, necessity, and brightness, the one is the other.

In Image 10, eyes are candles as they give forth tears, as they melt and as they close down or shut. Eyes are also candles in the equation which would have the rays bright and the eye of a needle equated.

In Image 12, an anchor is not a "hooking gull" on the primary level of meaning, but in its ability to hook into and out of the ocean the anchor equals a gull which can hook in and out of air and water. In Image 20, "mast" is not a "bell-spire" as such, but the mast, as the male sexual organ, is erect and sounds out or spells its coming to life through thrusting into the air, as a bell spire and mast do, and into the air of creation as the male sexual organ does.

There is a complete metaphorical development through Images 32 and 33 where there is an equation in which "long-
tailed" equals "light." Now the bait is "long-tailed lightning" in its explosive, quick, and paralyzing effect.

The catch is also the fisherman. The catch is the girl. The catch is the fish. In "catch" as noun or verb there is a total fusion in which the fisher and the fished and the bait become the one. Further, either is a "catch." The entire epic is a "catch." Hair and skull in Image 35 are the same as the past, of time gone by. The skull is the equivalent of past time: hair is the equivalent of the passing of time. Hair and skull are now equivalent or identical to "statues of great rain" which symbolize the fleeting or raining of seconds. Fleeting seconds must always be the past, must always merge the future with a non-identifiable present which is always a past in retrospect.

In Image 39 as the bite dies so does the fisher die. His desire is gone, dead. That which was dead to giving new life on the sexual side is not "long dead" any longer. The implications and ranges of meaning carried by making the bait itself the seeker and the sought-for extend the metaphor.

In Image 40 a continent is a fossil, for each continent is more of its revealable past than any harbinger of a present or future, and such is precisely the nature of the fossil.

In Image 41 the metaphor is not difficult where the "dead hand" is equivalent to the past. The impact of "leads," however, more than suggests a movement from the past in the direction of the present, as birth must lead to age and then age must itself, receding from the present, promise new life.
In Image 42, "Lips" must be equal to "newborn" because that which comes from the lips must spring into being. Even words or concepts formed by the lips in the same way at different times must be new or created or recreated as new-or as anew.

"Liquid choirs" must equal tribes where tribes consist of any human group or animal group singing in concert. Not all choirs are conscious of the nature of their own singing but sing in concert simply as choirs. The liquid can refer to the flowing of time, the fish within the water, the waters, or those singing about the fish or the waters.

The diving rod is the fishing rod, or is any rod seeking both information, or catch, or "pointing out." In this respect the rod is associated with both sea and land, for what is inherent in the rod is never apart from a land-based person, however the rod itself may be used—as on land, or as on the waters.

The metaphor in Image 48 "diving rod" is quite an intricate one: there is the fact that a fishing rod is not physically a diving rod. However, "divine" carries the meaning of being able to speak to, explain, point out, or get an insight into. Yet, divine also carries the meaning of the highest form of creation. Thus, in pointing to both sea, land, and sky, the fishing rod is, in a way, divinity itself.

The "green, laid veil," also in Image 48, is both sea and land. The fish and the fisherman are equally well-connected with both sea and land, and the fish operates on
both sea and land in the sense of dragging one from the other and back. Only in the sense of identity of sea and land in the light of the green can the question of eternal quest and the eternal green of temptation be universal.

In Image 48 the further metaphor "virgin laps" is equated with legends in sand. There is an inherent contradiction in sands with legends. It is of the nature of sand in its eternal shifting that legend as such has no meaning. A legend requires a real person, place, or event concerning which macrocosmic tales develop. There are no legends there at all. Thus, in the sense of virgin lap, nothing can develop from a shifting non-substantiality. The reality is not the sand, then, but the green of the ocean and the green of the lap, where the reality of the results of sexual union on all levels of life can be apparent.

The long Image 51 in Quatrains 46 and 47 is an extended or complete metaphor. Where is the metaphor? The fisherman left home from the streets of the village to go the streets of the ocean. The ocean has its ups and down as the streets of the cobbled town have their ups and down. There are squalls on sea as on land. The fact that the steeple pierces the cloud must bring down land squalls. The steeple piercing the clouds is not only an avenue, but an intrusion as every excursion to the ocean must be an intrusion.

It is not enough to say "as" by way of likeness for that would be a matter of simile, not metaphor. In simile both elements are seen as existing independently while being
compared. In metaphor, both items, beyond the physical identification, are identical. The element of identity is the critical one. One is the other, or there is no metaphor.

The voyage, then, must be a metaphor for the entire life. It is in this sense that the streets from the voyage are made identical in the light of the green veil that is both wave and green land, as noted in Image 48.

The long-legged bait is the long-legged flesh in 52 where the bait is reduced to a nothingness from which the reproductive member must spring. Whatever is caught at sea must be recreated on land, and from the metaphorical sea of life the fisherman is always refleshing.

Image 53 extends through Quatrains 51-53, in its long twelve lines, and in its reductions, the sea becomes its identity—land, showing another face. Before the identity of the sea as land can now be seen as land, the sea must dissolve out, taking away its physical distinctions. Thus the long metaphor is a slow submersion of watery notes where the "Down, down, down, under the ground......." moves through eight lines to come to the identity land, one most explicitly stated as "Land, land, land, nothing remains / Of the pacing famous sea............." Then there is the metaphorical statement within the total metaphor.

The inner metaphor "talkative seven tombs" is the dissolving metaphor which must leave entirely to have the other aspect of the land in the identity patent. The "seven tombs" are the so-called "seven seas." Tomb must be seen as
identical to womb: then the transference is evident for
tomb is the land, and womb is the sea. The sense of talk-
ative is taken as the sounds of the sea and those of land
become the same in that each defines by its nature. The sea
cries aloud with a fury that must die before the tomb speaks
out its nature, for something must be buried before life can
come about, or something must die to life.

Finally, as to the look at metaphor, there is
Image 55 in Quatrain 54, the image closing with "long-legged
heart." It would appear as though the long-legged bait and
the long-legged flesh are a matter of identity, with the one
fusing into the other.

They are to be seen as a final product of long-legged
heart. "Heart" means life, and life comes about through the
union of the two, with heart as such a visible symbol of the
spirit and flesh, if not of the mind. The "long-legged"
promises the coming and going that the heart must obey. The
heart promises the eventual movement back from the physical
adventures that the legs must take. The terms stand for an
eternal harmony not only allowing for moving away, but also
demanding a return on the same terms. There is the product
of the two with the resultant metaphor a lively and dynamic
set of movements always in eventual harmony, like centripetal
force and centrifugal forces.

Some integration of the past chapters must now be
briefly made in looking at the "Connotations of Words."
Chapter 8

THE CONNOTATIONS OF WORDS

It is true that a word has a set of qualities or attributes that some aspect of experience must be tagged or labeled. To be a "cat," for example, the qualities of purring, the possession of claws, the size natural to cats, and other specific configurations are essential; otherwise, it would not be possible for one to call the animal a "cat."

Other qualities are associated with the cat, and the qualities associated depend upon the value judgments people make about experiences: the concept of "stealth," "independence," "amorality," and "sleekness"—among others—are also ascribed to cats. These attributes are connotations.

These are value judgments by way of being "purr" or "snarl" or "dyslogistic" or "eulogistic" that cats take on. Human beings project their views of vices and virtues—value judgments—one animals and on other phenomena. A stream can "meander." Clouds can "bump" each other playfully. Hail can "scream." Rain can "tinkle." The poet in the "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait" uses so many figures of speech and ornaments of poetry that is is not an easy task to take simple literal words and look to their connotations. The simple literal words are sometimes fused with complicated words. There is also some overlapping as to metaphor, paraphrase and persona and addressee.

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Yet, that is not necessarily a bad matter. The note of caution to be sounded is that the musicality of the poet's art tends to present a complete symphony of a human and natural epic. The resultant units make it difficult to fragment, as must sometimes be done in analysis.

It would appear easy, at first glance, to suggest that an epic is more leisurely than tragedy whose swift condensations make it difficult to separate the whole for even a moment's view. However, the calms, essentially a part of an epic, blend into the crests in such inevitable patterning that it is hard to break calms and crests into units small enough to contemplate on so small a microscopic level.

Further, the connotations for the words do not come about so much because of the words themselves as through the tagging, or modifying associated with them. However, the tagging or modifying has been discussed earlier, and will be left for the interpretation itself.

Consider the connotations of "fish." A "fish" is a fish as such. A fish is also experience. A fish is a trap because the one who fishes is caught by his desire to fish or because of his necessity to fish. A fish is a husband. A fish also symbolizes freedom within limits. The limits are set by the natural environment of the fish. The fish also carries religious notes or tones.

The fish also symbolizes fertility and also intellectuality. The sudden movements in all directions, the moments of peace and calm, and the endless variety of directions
and misdirections associated with the fish also connote sexual union with its pre-play, its play, and post-play. Fish is also a mystic ship of life. Sometimes the fish is a whale, sometimes a bird.

The fish has a phallic shape and connotation. The association with "mast" in the poem clothes mast with the fish connotation, giving both fish and mast the male member connotation. The "whale," in addition to carrying the more obvious fish-like notes, also stands for the embracing of opposites. Thus, in the poem, the whale connotes the union of male and female, of life and death, of evil and good, of sin and redemption.

The term "bait" has been discussed earlier. More specifically, "bait" is that which attracts, lures, harrasses, torments, and tempts: the term is entirely appropriate to the poem with the fisherman, the fish, and the girl being separately and together the trapped and the trapper, on land and on sea.

To go to "sea" is to return to the mother, to die. For to go to sea is adventure, and the end of adventure must be satiety, decay, or dwindling. In this sense seas must be "tombs." At the same time the embryo entombed in the womb is itself a promise of life. Thus the tombs of the sea and those on land are united in the sense of their being both maternal and paternal, or feminine or masculine.

The "candle" when alight speaks for the individual as opposed to universal existence. Sexual union and the individual acts of fish are personal affairs or matters. One does
not love, and one does not have sexual union as a group matter or mind. Waves carry more universal meanings.

The "wave" stands for purity but also stands for the abode of destruction. There is no tone of "clash" or a contradiction with the symbol of waves, because there is only a changing of position as in the matter of crests and troughs. There are the moments of passion and calm, as in sexual union.

The "spire" and other words of twisting and turning effect carry the connotations of the desire to join but also the desire to escape--the turning toward and the turning away from. There is the desire to be trapped and the desire to move away from entrapment.

The "turtle" also carries paradoxical meanings. There is the desire to contain life at the center, enclosed and hidden. The "turtle" signifies the female sex organ. Yet, at the same time, the concept of slowness is countered by the connotation of that which is stable and a matter of longevity.

The "dolphin" signifies both speed and caution. The dolphin also connotes up or down movements, erotic movements. It also indicates moving out and in. Like the fishing rod, the dolphin stands for movements in any direction.

"Octopus" is related to spires, dolphins and rods in the sense that movements in all directions and spiraling effects tend to a paradox in terms of up and down, here and there, in and out, or escape and freedom.

The "eagle," in opposition to the "turtle," stands for
speed, violence, passion, and quick unions and breaking away patterns. The eagle is often seen as carrying away a victim while still being a victim to that which brings him, because of his nature, to the low areas from higher regions.

"Venus" represents the world of spiritual love but also the world of mere sexual passion, with one almost interdependent on the other. "Lucifer" stands for birth but also for dissolution. The green of land and sea is often associated with Lucifer: green promises eternal temptation but also warmth and growth. There is both death and life with Lucifer. Thus Venus and Lucifer are not that far apart in connotation. Venus is normally free of the dark or nether regions of land and ocean.

In Image 45, "oak" stands for power which, however, attracts lightning. The power of the male, as oak, is subject to the blows of the sudden flash of lightning of the female and of her arousing-passion. Thus, the "acorn," fruit of the oak, is the reproduction that must take place at the expense of the male. He is trapped by his own power. On the other hand, the "wren," as female, because of her own biological needs and drives, is conquered and destroyed as to her freedom by the force of male power and sexual drive, as reflected in the "hawk."

Then, too, legs, have the same duality. They lead away from the heart and are ground-centered. They also lead to the heart. They join the loin area. They lead to or away from the baiting and the fishing. They represent that which is
forced to the realities of life but also that which is capable of carrying man away from the earth through leaps and bounds. They are in contradistinction to the direction of the mast which moves up, while the legs hang down. They represent the position before and after sexual stimulation.

It can be seen through the words chosen for critical connotation that they are not unrelated. In fact, they are quite interlocked in a way that points toward a useful interpretation. Finally, there is sequence for "cobbles." Both "cobbles" and "stones" are mentioned. The stone stands for unity, but paradoxically, also for disunity. For unity demands concentration.

Concentration wears out and wears down. Continual wearing away can lead to wearing out.

In the next brief chapter, the chapter before the interpretation of the poem as a whole, the "drawing of inferences" is treated. It must be noted that some inferences have already been drawn, and such is not without justification, for analysis through structure must lead to function. Function without meaning is a thankless and useless--if not impossible--chore. The inferences drawn are inevitable.
Chapter 9

DRAWING OF INFERENCES

The first inference comes from the title, itself. It is not of the nature of the literary artist to simply describe or narrate a situation on the purely physical or primary level—with its necessary literal meanings. For the purpose of this monograph it must be assumed that in poetry there is a vision of life which involves the complete personality of thinking, sensing, and feeling, or of sense, sensation, or sensibility.

The inference of "ballad" is its telling a story or recounting human experience in some lyrical or musical setting. A long ballad is almost epic by definition.

The word "the" in the title focuses on a specific bait. The term "long-legged" demands that an inference be made as to animal qualities, at the least, for legs are associated with living forms. The hyphenation of "long-legged" requires that the two terms be considered in a compound sense, with the resultant terms describing, signallyling, or pointing out something about the "bait." The word "bait" requires that some inference be drawn about its nature. Accepting the word for its purely physical denotation, it would appear that the legs could move in all directions if the bait related to fishing and to the sea. Further speculation suggests that the bait with its long legs down does not hang straight down
even when the bait is considered apart from water itself.

Since baiting and bait can be inferred to be a part of existence itself, landborne, airborne, or waterborne, the title must transcend, through inference, any one of land, sea, or air. Again "leg" forces the inferences that the poem will handle some of the human equation, and not be limited to the bait that the fisherman uses to catch real fish.

The opening Images 1 and 2 with the personification of town, birds, and coast force the reader to infer universal conversations with the animate and inanimate involved in adventure.

"Ship," "anchor," "sand," and "land" are involved in a conversation whose notes invite the inference that the universe is viewing and discussing the embarking and sailing of the fisherman.

Images 8, 9, 10 continue the conversation of ships with the goodbyes and observations. The fact that the bait can walk and stalk and that the girl and the bait are the same must invite the reader to infer that on the trip the fisherman and the bait and the girl fished for take turns in stalking and trapping one another.

Reference to "rod," "squalls," "cries," and "hooking" in Images 8-11 causes the reader to infer that there are parallels with the cries for passion and the movements of sexual union, squalls followed by the uneasy peace that must come later.

The unions of the fisherman and the girl through the
bait are symbolized in the very upheavals of physical nature itself, all detailed in Images 13-21. The feminine tones of the words in Images 15, 16, and 17 demand the inference that the girl or feminity is responding involuntarily to the signs and symptoms of physical passion, until the static and stagnant part of her nature—in the turtle—is itself invaded.

"Rod," "gut," "long-legged," "dolphin," "mast," and "bell-spire" allow no other inference than the equation of physical fishing to all the ups and downs, tensions, excitements, dull moments, anticipations, disappointments, and dying ecstacies of the sexual courtship and sexual act.

The moving toward and away in which both the victim and the fisherman torment each other must be inferred from the concentration of "drums," "prow," "mast," "bell-spire," "octopus" and "polar eagle" in Images 20 and 21. Her limbs in physical attraction equate the movements of the limbs of the octopus in whose grip the victim is made to thresh, causing some wonder about which is caught, the girl or the man, or the hooker or the hooked. The modern term "hooker" related to girl has some close analogy to the question of baiting and of bait.

Images 22-26 with the partially-quiescent mood, with the surface calms belied by uneasy undercurrents, and with dying and complaining tones suggest inferences of a sweet and sad condition. There is the peace following the crashing torments of the fishing in stormy waters. There is the blind, tempestuous drive of sexual union, its gale-like duration. The necessary subsiding of passion must be both sweet and sad, as
the song of the nightingale.

The "long-legged bread" in Image 25 indicates the fertility that results from sexual union. This life is necessarily born as the passion which gives birth to it has died.

The Images in Quatrains 26-30 consist of opposites which demand reconciliation, the kind which comes through inferring that that which leads to something may also lead from something. However, complete freedom cannot be obtained where the spiralling leads to an end, which, when reached, must lead back to the opposite end. The historicity involved in "Sussanah," "Sheba," "Lucifer," and "Venus" demands that the inference must be one of a deterministic nature since what has occurred in this instance must occur on all other instances. The reader or listener is again forced to look to the sexuality of the entire poem, a sexuality completely metaphorical. The association of "mast-high moon-white women naked" and "white springs in the dark" leave no other choice than inferring the facts of the male sexual member, the sperm, and its source and eventual depository.

Despite the variety of words, the basic symbols still operate. The words present in their sense of opposition and union center about the sexual implications so that no other situation is possible. The lack of words on any ascending plane grounds the meanings to the horizontal world or to the depths of the ocean. There is very little of the supranatural.

Reference to Images 31-38 must reveal a large number of terms on the horizontal level or on the falling level. The implication is that the solution for reader and speaker in the
poem must be concentrated on this worldly level, for there are no words which force any movement or jump to the supernatural. Even the reference to Biblical matters tends to demand an inference on this temporal level: as where, for example the miracles of fishes are deck-centered.

In Image 40 the inference is more man-centered than cosmic-centered, for the historical statements are related to "fossil," "continent," "town," and "man," all related through father and girl (Image 41) on a this world level.

Yet, the reader should infer there is a universality, for Image 42 returns to the cycle of youth and old age, with one giving birth to the other.

The use of "time," "oak," "hawk," "wren," and "acron" certainly have a falling set of effects. It would be impossible to infer a deep religious significance unless Time itself were to be so inferred. Yet, one must infer a spirituality inherent in the symbols used. It would appear, however, that this spirituality is one that centers on man's and woman's nature to crown these natures with more than just animal responses.

There are fields and hills, but not mountains in the poem. There are no tidal waves. Therefore, it would seem that the inferences as to cosmic reality must be less than world-shattering.

Rome, Sodom, and London, while significant in themselves in Image 52, cannot afford the inferences that would be demanded by Jerusalem, Damascus, Constantinople, Athens, or other places suggestive of a greater religiosity.
Then the Images in 53-55 can scarcely allow inferences strong enough to place the whole matter of sexual adventure at the throne or site of God. "The Down, down......" cited before places the inferences on a falling note as far as the spiritual verities are involved.

That there is very little light in the poem, overall, limits the inferences to the dark, indistinct, yet powerful thrusts, forces, and movements in male and female relationships.

Yet, the inference must be, at the end, that there is something intensely human, as indicated in the "long-legged heart." "Long" must infer a considerable length and range, and "heart" removes all from the purely beastlike physical responses.
Chapter 10

INTERPRETATION OF THE
"BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT"

There is no one interpretation in the light of truth-falsity: But interpretation, as a tag, puts together all elements that have been specific analyses. How do these all fit together?

A man goes fishing. One does not know how young he is, but the fishing is not for money, politics, social acceptance, or philosophy. Nor does the man go to war in the physical and literal sense of war.

The ballad is certainly tied to fishing. The fishing is completely sex-oriented. The question is the significance of the fishing for the girl, the fisherman, and the bait.

It would be tempting to say as Tindall says that "Thomas meant this poem to be a narrative of the wantoning that leads to the sobrieties and responsibilities of marriage," and to consider the poem entirely in this light. It cannot be known entirely what Thomas meant the poem to be. The poem consists of the words in their various elements of syntax,

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morphology, and phonology from which the semantics or meanings must be distilled. Eventually the poem is what the words assert, and not the intention of the poet, as such.

That is not to state that Tindall's view cannot be supported. But the view cannot be supported through any oral conversation with the poet, nor through any specific critic's reliance on similarities to other poems. What do the words say?

Certainly, the words have said, again and again, that the catcher is caught. The fisherman catches more than what he seeks. He is caught with the search, with the bait, and with the results of the fishing. He is also caught in all of the implications of fishing for sexual love.

There is no question concerning the sexuality of the fishing trip. There is no question concerning the squalls and calms, concerning the opposite pulls of sea and land, concerning the contrarities of passion and satiety. They are both implicitly and explicitly asserted, as has been shown.

The long-legs must be subsumed in the light of running. The bait runs; the girl runs; and, the fisherman runs. Each runs to the others and away from the others. Man runs after experience, and the experience runs after him. He can have experience of the mind, the senses, and the spirit. The language of the poem fastens on the running to the sea of sexual experience and the retreat from the sea.

Sexual involvement is a part of the natural experience of man and woman, and there is no hint in the poem of the
non-natural or of the unnatural.

The man is hooked inevitably to the one sought as certainly as the girl is hooked by the nature of the fisherman, and as certainly as the fish is hooked.

The fisherman is as hooked by the fish he must play with as the young man is hooked by the girl he is using for his mating. The man and fish and bait are inextricably parts of the total process, as the man, his male member, and the sexual recesses of the girl are inextricably mingled.

There is no question that the idea of recreation comes into the poem, no doubt that the storm of sperm results in his cessation of fishery, but in the growth of life. He dies to life and birth. But there is no explicit statement nor implicit statement as to the man's being trapped into marriage and its sobering effect by sexual exploits. That one can point to the probability of such a development is one thing, but the specifics of marriage in a monogamous sense are lacking from the poem.

However, there is a dying from passion and a dying to life. The net result of the grabbing of the bait must be the transfer of the results of passion to the woman, to birth. The dying of one's sexual feeling results in birth to another. It is well to look to the specific story itself.

The story does not open with a suggestion that the way of life for this fisherman has been one of sexual exploits. The word "luck" would suggest that experience observes the hero stepping out into a sea of experience. It is certain that Image 6
details passion—through the sun—as being spent. Out of the 
wreck, however, will be life. Each physical spending of passion 
can be but the wreckage of the whole fishman, but the seeds 
will be left, those of newly-created life.

The woman as the bait is willing, even running to 
experience. Ironically, the fisherman, thinking he seeks, is 
also sought. He is caught on the horns of his humanity, 
an integral part of which is his sexuality.

Image 10 states that the surge of passion knows 
no family, prayer, or intellectual light. The eyes of candles 
and the praying windows of waves are no competition for the 
phallic drive. Whether the blood mentioned in Image 9 re-
presents the tearing away of virginity or the surge of 
passion is not important only insofar as one or both can 
come only from what he loses or spends in passion.

The transport of his passion again separates him 
from the realities of parents and town. He loses his per-
ception as he loses, by analogy, the confidence in his legs.

The fisherman finds in Image 11 that even the 
rod must rest, as the fisherman tires from fishing through 
sheer physical ennui. The phallic rod must rest. He also 
finds that he cannot escape from that which is caught. He 
is caught in all the emotional, ethical, or physical claims 
made on him through his sexual union with her. He cannot 
cast away his humanity.

In Image 14, the man finds himself as much under 
the influence of the girl with the ebb and flow of her femininity
in a physical and emotive sense as the seas under the pull of the moon. In Images 15, 16, and 17 the language that has earlier suggested the claim on the young man of the woman's physicality becomes more explicit as she teases, nips, bites, and sexually torments the baited and hooked fisherman or young man.

He becomes his own conqueror as he submits himself to a pleased, calm, self-contemplation of his masculinity in a paean culminating in "My mast is a bell-spire" —Image 20. The self-composed and self-played symphony continues in Image 21 where his "decks are drums."

But, at the end of Image 21, the images of octopus and polar eagle state the cooling of passion and the feminine blunting and spending of the male member.

Images 22 to 26 state explicitly that he has made the girl pregnant, that the caught fish has been netted only to show living and writhing forms. Without intending or without knowing that he must die through passion to life, he finds himself as having created life, but a life that now exists independently of himself.

In Image 25, he finds that the bread cast upon the waters has made a catch, and that the catch is life. He is related to the life he has created. Again, he is the catcher caught. But he is also the impregnator caught. Each good-bye has to be some kind of good-bye to freedom.

The fishing is over for a time, but he has caught a fish he cannot let go. The sense of history made explicit.
through "Sussanah," "Sheba," "Sin," and "Silence" make sexual union a matter that cannot be intellectualized, only endured and only known erotically. The movement toward the ensnarer and the ensnared and away from the ensnarer and the ensnared are indicated again. The period of reproduction inferred through Image 30 continues through 31 to 35.

The pure joy, conflict and violence of sexual union give way to the grim maturity noted in Images 32 to 35 where the fisherman finds himself caught by his own sense of power in a child conceived holding him to the end of a line or reel he would pull loose--to a force which must send him back to land again.

The Images from 31 to 35 carry the meaning, the deep meaning of the significance of the calm. On the physical level, the fisherman can fish no more; the man can engage in sexual satiation no more. There is the fatal if enlightening insight. There is a kafka-like realization of the nature of the sixth hour, as the boat sails "into the six-year weather," in Image 33. There is the time for recognition, but a recognition that can come only during moments of peace, moments when the emotions and flesh relax their claims.

Then, too, when the term "bite" is used, there must be the inevitable association with the Garden of Eden. The fisherman is caught with dead desire; he is bitten with dead desire and with the realization that desire can deaden. The bite can also refer to the beginning of life in the embryo. Life, ironically enough, can come only after spent or dead passion.
The "time" spoken of throughout and specifically in Images 43 and 44 can measure only the time of the birth of passion, its spending, and its inevitable result of life through sperm. Only the newborn can come about and sing through the death of the passion of the older.

The resurrection and the erection are paralleled in the low key sounded in Image 47. The physical analogy becomes more specific in Image 48 with "The rod bends low."

One simply cannot escape the ebb and flow, the rise and fall, the light and dark as the rhythm of dying to passion, dying through passion, and, in the dying, giving rise to life. The poet's language directs the listeners or readers to this truth through the specific notes of historical figures.

Like lighting from the inside, the girl invites the sexual passion from the outside male. That light is introduced into the female, into the dark. But the darkness, through birth, will be light for the long-legged bait is a two-directional thing. Life will come from within her, from the embryo, and the life will be light.

Having spent his passion, having cast the bait, having baited and having been baited, the man is now caught through procreation. He must go back to the land, back to the solidity of stones, grace, steeples, and home. The passion which drew him to the girl is followed by a later claim that removes him from the free casting of bread on the waters for other bait, with other bait, or for other fish.
The steeplest catch him as their phallic-like probes stay erect and in so staying erect point to a single obligation that takes the wanderer and adventurer for the many back to the claims of the one: this can be noted in Image 51 and 52.

In Images 53 and 54, the running of the ship has ceased; the running of the fisherman has ceased; the running of the bait has ceased, and, all, except the steeplest, must fall down or subside in terms of sexual prowess. The sexual member, equated through the anchor, is driven or held downward, caught in the claims of the church, or in the claims of the family, claims symbolized by the church and the steeple. The young man, like the fisherman, is now alone. He has been caught through his search, through his adventure.

The entire poem and its language carry a restless, driving, deterministic, inevitable, and fatalistic thrust of the young man into adventure. The only adventure he can know and know as a part of his very nature and being is that fishing for that which completes him--woman. Yet that completion, that catching is a biological booby trap for him.

Until his legs fail him, until his sexual drive fails him, he will have his heart in his hand. His firstlings of nature as a youth will be sex, and his emotions and member will always be at hand until age intervenes. For having been caught once, he will, as the very nature of nature runs, be caught again, only this time with the same one.
Chapter 11
The Summary

There is no reason to believe that the interpretation of Dylan Thomas's "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait" is not a sound one and one entirely justified through the words of the poem itself. Further, there has been little variation in interpretations from critics who have approached this poem. Their conclusions have been so generally uniform as to constitute general knowledge. It is unique and essential to a language approach that no biographical and no impressionistic approaches be taken to obtain the meaning or meanings of the aesthetic object, the poem itself.

These comments are not made to suggest that other approaches are not useful; nor is there any suggestion that other approaches are not of equal merit. In the Chatman approach, the approach is language-centered. The important reservation made, from the beginning, in this monograph is that words do not mean but carry meanings.

The Chatman approach was further modified by the assumption that when a poet writes, he writes through images, and that the images contain conceptual and attitudinal statements of the writer's art or of the speaker's art. Each image is terminated for both speaker and listener or writer and reader by graphic signals: semicolons, colons, or periods. A word-by-word approach or a line-by-line
approach is ruled out in this monograph insofar as the analysis of the poem "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait" is concerned.

It soon became apparent that a careful detailing of the meanings carried by words or the senses of the words force a leap to the inferential and connotative levels immediately. Working within the image-patterning set out by the major punctuation forced a leap to interpretative levels from the moment of application of the first step. The first new dimension offered was that of the grammatical approach. This approach differs from that employed by Chatman because working from a more structural approach forces an early focus on the meanings signalled by one syntactical structure rather than by another. The grammatical approach and its modification really made the question of persona and addressee superfluous or repetitive. Nevertheless, by the enforced overlapping, there was no possible distracting that could lead to any approach other than a language-oriented approach.

While the repetition as such did not lead to more insight, the language focus inherent in the overlapping did afford more opportunities for understanding the poem on both primary and secondary levels. It is true that the weight of the approach did give more mass to the "catching" and "being-caught" theses of the poem. Apart from the belief that the interpretation could have been arrived at earlier by leaving out the steps of persona and addressee, connotations of words, and drawing inferences, there was also the belief that the poem could have been richer from an affective point of view had these steps been omitted. There did
seem to be a point at which the sheer repetition and cognitive review lent itself more to the critical than to the creative process.

Of course, that leaves open the question as to a reader's or listener's response as being a critical or creative process. However, from an experiential point of view, the affective response was at its highest before going through the stages or steps that could have been omitted.

Of course, there is the ever-present possibility that more experiences with the entire set of steps would result in a continuity leading to a climax of affective and cognitive rewards at the final step. However, since there appeared to be no increasingly rich rewards after going through all steps, an equally rewarding experience might be that of working through the sense-of-words step, through the grammar step, through the explication of metaphor step, and through the concluding interpretative step.
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