GOOD NIGHT, LADIES: THE UNAUTHORIZED HAGIOGRAPHY OF EDWARD W. HAWKINS

A Thesis
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the Faculty of the College of English
Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in English

by
William Randolph Dozier
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Master's Committee:  

Date 5/3/97

Director of Thesis
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William Randolph Dozier, M.A.
Morehead State University, 1997

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100% appropriated texts have been aligned to form an author-free narrative-whole of rising and falling action which details the hanging of the outlaw Edward W. Hawkins in Estill County, Kentucky, on 29 May 1857. Spanning 140 years, the various documents, news accounts, ballads, and excerpts reconstitute Hawkins, a creature of dream, myth, and history. Hawkins is a type of Byronic hero, and the narrative traces his evolution from wanted fugitive to condemned prisoner to redeemed sinner. The competing texts of this assemblage differ in tone and particulars, thus creating a dynamic tension that pushes the narrative forward. The "hagiography" is an assault on the authority of the text, sacred and profane, and its message is simple: words arise from words.

Accepted by: 

Chair
invocation

Oh, young reader, suffer me to exhort you to read the following pages with care and attention; they may serve you as a beacon by which you may escape the wretched condition which I am now in--incarcerated in the walls of a dungeon, loaded with chains and fetters, with the grim images of my murdered fellow-men haunting me day and night; and soon, oh! very soon, to be taken to the gallows, and there, in the spring season of my life, to be hurled into the presence of an offended God, who cannot look upon sin with the least allowance.

--Edward William Hawkins, 1857
chorus one

"I mind the time when we lived in Estill County hearin' talk about a feller named Ed Hawkins. Ed was promised to seven women, married four, killed seven men and was scarce twenty-one when he died on the scaffold. Whilst he was in the jail-house he made up two pieces. Shows, does this one, that Hawkins was sorryful for his deeds."

In a melancholy voice Bart, like the "gleeman" of old who took up the songs of others' making, chanted the penitent words of Ed Hawkins, the murderer:

If I was but innocent and free
Away from this dungeon I'd go;
My friends and connections to see,
I'd never be guilty no more.

But alas, it's forever too late,
The beautiful sun I can't see.
The stars with their glittering sparks,
Can no longer shine upon me.

"This all taken place," Bart wanted it understood, "around fifty years ago. It was even printed, this ballad, and Old Tivis Alfrey had the writin's of it in Ed's own hand, but his house burned down long ago over in Harlan County and the printin', writin's and all went with it. But if it hadn't been for Tivis' havin' a recollection like he's got,
Hawkins' pieces would have been lost forever. The other piece is sorryful too." He sang in a most desolate tone:

1. Come stand around me young and old
   And see me welcome death so bold.
   My youthful heart it is so brave,
   I do not fear to meet the grave.

2. Young me, young lads come learn of me,
   A sad and mournful history;
   And may you not forgetful be
   Of the story I relate to thee.

3. My sins are great, I do admit,
   Our Saviour's power is greater yet;
   And on His mercy I rely,
   For pardon when I come to die.

4. For murder I am now arraigned,
   In the dark dungeon bound in chains;
   I have twenty-eight days yet to mourn,
   Bound in my gloomy, dungeon home.

5. Then my soul must fly away
   To darkest nights or brighter days;
   My youthful heart it is so brave,
I do not fear to meet the grave.

"Bold, he was, and un-afeared!" Bart exulted on the courage of Ed Hawkins in the shadow of the gallows.

As I trudged slowly along the road to the village the words of Hawkins' song kept running through my mind—

Come stand around me young and old
And see me welcome death so bold;
My youthful heart it is so brave,
I do not fear to meet the grave.

How like his Anglo-Saxon ancestors, thought I, Hawkins' love of self glory. And though he, like Beowulf, met his death, others coming after him recall with pride his "bold" "un-afeared" nature.

--Jean Thomas, 1939
She said--she told us--that she had heard that story that he said the only thing he ever done that he was sorry was, was throwing his baby off of a bridge, where it looked up at him and laughed just as it left his hands. "But now," she says, "I don't know if that's true or not;" says, "I don't think anybody could kill a baby." I can remember the old lady a-saying that, and she was seventy-five year old, she said.

--Nellie Ross, 22 November 1994
His taste for art evinced itself in a skillful drawing, which he made in his cell the Sabbath day preceding his trial. The picture delineated a beautiful female expiring beneath the blow of a hatchet, in the hands of a seducer—doubtless a scene in which he has himself played an active part. As if to lend a horrible contrast to the view, he added the design of two graceful doves—those images of innocence and peace—upon the same canvas.
admonition one

My young friends, suffer me to exhort you to be obedient to your parents, particularly to your mother who gave you existence, and who watches over your infantile helplessness, and whose soul is intensely wrapped up in your present and future destiny. My young reader, just for a moment, look upon my deplorable condition, then look back at the agony of a bereaved mother, who has given you existence, and who has, all her life, given you the best of counsel, and who does not participate in your guilt, be it what it may, would you then be willing to bring her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? You will say no, as a matter of course. Then suffer me to caution you as to the company you keep. Shun the gambler, the tippler, the profane swearer, and the idle and dissolute of every description.

--Edward William Hawkins, 1857
A MURDER.—We learn a murder was committed in Estill county, on Monday, under the following circumstances: A man by the name of Hawkins had been suspected of horse stealing. Deputy Sheriff Land and Mr. Irvine arrested him, and while passing a place known as Stepping Stones they were fired upon by some unknown person. They were shot in the head. Land was instantly killed and Irvine was mortally wounded. Hawkins escaped.

[Richmond Messenger.]
Impossible Murder in Estill. — We were
recently told by a young man of Estill, a few days
ago, the circumstances of one of the most
cold-blooded murders by a young and
practical criminal, that has come within
our notice for a long time. A young man
by the name of Edward Hawkins, and who,
by-the-bye, was in this town some weeks
ago and passed himself off as an officer in a
regiment of soldiers in Kinkaid, stole
money in Estill last week. Constable James
Land and a Mr. J. Irwin gave him pursuit
and caught him before he was out of the
county. He gave himself up to the officer
without resistance, and was placed up be-
hind Mr. Land on his horse, to be taken to
the county jail. They had not proceeded
far when Hawkins, having opened a revolver
in the breast pocket of the officer, thrust
his hand in, drew it forth, and at the same
time discharged the contents of a barrel in
the head of Mr. Land killing him instantly,
and he discharged another barrel and kill-
ing him also. The ambushed murderers then
ran to the fields and woods. He was short-
ly afterwards pursued by the now excited
people in the neighborhood of the murder,
but without success. At one time they trad-
him in a large cave and were within
several feet of where he was concealed, but
did not detect him. He left the cave at
night and went to his brother, who, as he
confessed himself afterwards, took him as
far as Red River, and left him from where,
there is but little doubt, he struck for Ohio
through the mountains. He is but twenty-
one years of age, and has already served a
term in the penitentiary for stealing. Mr.
Sterling Whip:

This young man was arrested a few
days ago in Virginia, and passed through
our town this week on his way to Estill.

—Ed Coll.

The F. L. Rice has been expelled.
Double Murder.

The Mt. Sterling Whig gives the particulars of an atrocious murder in Estill County last week. A young man by the name of Edward Hawkins stole a horse in Estill last week, when Constable James Land and a Mr. J. Irwin gave him pursuit, and caught him before he was out of the county. He gave himself up to the officers without resistance, and was placed on behind Mr. Land on his horse, to be taken to the county jail. They had not proceeded far, when Hawkins, having espied a revolver in the breast pocket of the officer, thrust his hand in, drew it forth, and at the same time discharged the contents of a barrel in the head of Mr. Land, killing him instantly; then leveled the revolver at the head of Mr. Irwin, discharging another barrel, and killing him also. The audacious murderer then took to the fields and woods, and escaped, it is supposed, to Ohio.
Estac Co
ED. W. Hawkins
Fig. or chang Munro
$500 Reward

His Excellency 1st March
Governor of Ky
of Frankfort
by
Seneca Estill County
Mar 25th 1817

To His Excellency & I Hen. Bledsoe, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

In accordance with the duty of my office, as Judge of the Estill County Court, and at the request and request of the citizens of Estill County, I now inform your excellency of the following cases of murder, to-wit in the county of Estill, the facts are about these (as found by a coroner's inquest), about the 15th inst., a horse was stolen in Jackson County, by a man named Edward W. Hawkins, and a reward of 50 offered for the apprehension of the said, it was ascertained that he had passed through Estill County towards the upper Mountain Counties, and James H. Land (constable of Estill), & Judge Brown went in pursuit of him. A sentinel was captured him... The fact of this, it undertaken to bring him back without any other difficulties. Each of them was armed with a gun. Shorty soon, but Land incalculably took the prisoner on his horse behind him, with his revolver in an open pocket of his breeches, & the prisoner taking the advantage of a narrow path in the road, (when the parties must have been crowded together) shot the pistol from Shorty's pocket & shot him through the head. Mr. Land turned him that time in the 2d eye. The bullet passing through to the back part of his head, & thus, his time, is conjecture as there was no one in company but the three.
& this seems to be the only rational conclusion that the body could come to in as much as the pistols of Sanford were missing, & the balls extracted from the lips of each hand, moss beard correspondence exactly with the kind of Samuel pistol & being fitted snug in his pocket with all the barrels touched. They were found in a few minutes after the murder a person who was in hearing of the report of the pistol, when the murder was committed.

The case on the crime has young men of high moral worth & integrity; it isreported by the citizens of Steele that your Excellency will offer a reward commensurate with the seriousness of the crime, which will be largely augmented by the private subscriptions of the citizens of the county, and if the county court will go to the height of its 1000 dollars in approaching earnest and for the apprehension of said Hawkins.

Yours very respectfully

A M Twenty

Discription.

Said Hawkins is about 37 years old about 5 feet 6 inches high, weighs about 140 pounds, blue eyes, red complexion, prominent cheeks, bears a small beard on one cheek, rather dark hair, excessively spoken & active... his motion, it is said to be a recentee liberated convict convict & of

[The murder was committed the 23rd day of March 1857]
admonition two

Now my young readers, suffer me to again to say to you, idleness is the parent of vice.

--Edward William Hawkins, 1857
A Bold Thief and Murderer.

The Mt. Sterling (Ky.) Whig contains an article giving the particulars of the killing of the two men, referred to in our last. The substance of its account of this terrible affair is: Edward Hawkins, aged 21 years, stole a horse in Estill county, Ky. Constable James Land and a Mr. J. Irwin pursued and caught him. He gave himself up without resistance, and was placed on a horse behind Mr. Land to be taken to the county jail. Hawkins seeing a revolver in the breast pocket of the officer, drew it forth, and discharged the contents of a barrel in the head of Mr. Land, killing him instantly; then leveled the revolver at the head of Mr. Irwin, discharged another barrel and killed him also. Hawkins then fled, and was accompanied by his brother to Red river, and is supposed to have made his way to the Ohio.

As we last week stated, Hawkins was arrested in Green township, in this county. He was taken, in the custody of his captors, to Cincinnati, on Monday, the 6th inst., on the Steamer Boston, and immediately started off for Estill county. Since our last, handbills have been received here, offering one thousand dollars for his delivery at the Estill county jail—$500 by the Governor of Kentucky, and $500 by citizens of Estill county.
IN JAIL.—Our Police yesterday placed in the County Jail, to await a requisition, Edward Hawkins, charged with killing the Sheriff and Constable of Estell county, Ky., who were about to arrest him to answer a charge against him. He was taken in Rome, up the river, in this State, and brought to this city in the steamboat Boston.
HAWKINS; THE MURDERER.—This desperate character has been captured, and is now confined in the Estill jail. He was examined on Saturday last, and committed for the murder of Messrs. Land and Arvine. He was captured near Rome, Ohio, at the house of his father, where he was traced by Marshal Storme, of Winchester, who has laid the citizens of Estill county under lasting obligations for his activity in tracing and finally securing one who had so deeply offended the law, and caused so much misery in their midst. We learn that an express was sent to Judge Pearl, by the citizens of Estill, asking him to hold an extra term, for the purpose of trying Hawkins, and we have no doubt he will comply with their request. Hawkins denies the murder of Land and Arvine, but the circumstances are so strong against him as to hardly leave a doubt of his guilt.—Mountain Democrat.

New York, April 16
LYNCH LAW.—Edward Hawkins, who last
month shot and killed James M. Land and
Jesse Arvine, Sheriff and Constable of Estill
county, Ky., was taken at his father's, in Adams
county, in this State, and lodged in the jail of
Estill county, Kentucky. On Sunday the sur-
rounding inhabitants assembled together, broke
into the jail, carried off Hawkins, conveyed
him to the spot of the murder, and there hung
him.

Supreme Court of Ohio.
Reported Hanging of Hawkins.

It is reported, and published in the papers, that Hawkins, the murderer of Hand and Arrine, whose arrest in this county, and removal to Kentucky, we have heretofore published, was, on his return to Estill county, seized and hung up, according to the "Lynch code," by the citizens of that county. As no date is given in any of the accounts of this transaction, which we have seen, when it should have occurred; and as the Mountain Democrat, published in the neighboring county of Madison, announces the arrival of Hawkins, in Estill, but says nothing of this reported lynching; we doubt the correctness of the report. For the honor of the State, we hope the report is false. It would appear to us to indicate a most wanton thirst for blood, to Lynch such a creature as Hawkins, for whatever may be the enormity of the offense he is alleged to have perpetrated, inasmuch as he does not belong to the "First Families" of Kentucky, and does not enjoy "high social position," there is not the slightest danger, if there be even a reasonable probability of his guilt, but what he would be compelled to pull hamp by due course of law.
A Correction.

We think we have already corrected the erroneous statement (which we copied from one of our exchanges,) referred to in the following letter:

IRVINE, ESTILL CO., APRIL 28, 1857.

Editor Louisville Courier,—I see an extract from your paper in the Kentucky Yeoman, of the 24th April, 1857, in which you say Edward Hawkins (who was accused of the murder of James M. Land and Jesse Arvin) was taken from the jail of Estill county, and executed by the surrounding citizens. This is not the fact. E. W. Hawkins was brought to the jail of Estill county on the 16th of April, 1857, and on the 18th day of said month, was tried before myself and others, as an Inquiring Court, and sent to further trial, for the offense of murder in the first degree, and through much exertion by the citizens, mob law was restrained, and Hawkins has this day been tried and convicted of murder in the first degree, in two separate indictments, and is to be executed on the 29th day of May, 1857.

I hope for the credit of the citizens of Estill county, as law abiding people, you will correct the error in your last issue.

Very respectfully,

A. W. QUINN,
Judge of Estill County.
Convicted.—Hawkins who murdered Constable Land and Mr. Arvine, in Estill county, has been convicted, at a special term of the court, held for the purpose of trying him, and sentenced to be hung. Hawkins heard the verdict with perfect composure, bowing smilingly to the jury when it was announced.

Dunlop River Place, W. Va., March 1.
To be Hanged.—Hawkins, accused of the murder of J. M. Land and Jesse Arvin, has been tried at Irvine, Estill co., Ky., and sentenced to be executed on the 29th of the present month. We killed off the wretch once by a mob, but it is better that he should expiate his crime in the usual way. It is said that although scarce twenty-one the scamp has five wives and entertained ideas of soon accomplishing the sixth, as an engagement existed. He is likely to enter a noose of another kind.
chorus two

ORIGINAL POETRY

BY E. W. HAWKINS.

Composed in the Jail of Estill County, Kentucky, while
under Sentence of Death, May, 1857.

Young men, young men, come learn of me
A sad and mournful history;
And may you not forgetful be
Of the story I'll relate to thee.

For murder I am now arraigned,
In the dark dungeon bound and chained,
Where I am yet compelled to stay
Until the twenty-ninth of May.

And then I leave my dungeon home,
And be consigned to the cold tomb,
And there I must forgotten lie;
Then come, young men, and see me die.

Come, see me meet a youthful grave,
To trouble, then, no more a slave.
My friends, I do not fear to die,
Or meet my Maker in the sky.
My sins are great, I do admit,
My Savior's power is greater yet,
Then on his mercy I rely
For pardon when I come to die.

O welcome, death, how sweet the sound
When I no longer shall be bound.
I've twenty-eight days yet to mourn,
Bound in my gloomy dungeon home.

And then my soul must fly away
To darkest night or brightest day,
And there it must forever be
Through fearful, vast eternity.

Come, stand around me, young and old,
And see me welcome death so bold;
My youthful heart, it is so brave,
I do not fear to meet the grave.

Young men, young men, be warned by me,
And always shun bad company.
Now, I must bid you all adieu,
Remember, my advice is true.

E.W.H.
ANOTHER.
If I was but innocent and free,
   And once more from this dungeon could go,
My friends and connections to see,
   I'd never be guilty no more.

But alas! it's forever to late;
   I can never again be free;
Oh, horrible now is my fate,
   When I think that it never can be.

Confined in this dungeon so dark,
   The beautiful sun I can't see;
The stars with their glittering spark,
   Can no longer shine upon me.

The pleasures of earth are all gone,
   That once were so dear unto me;
But now I'm an object of scorn,
   These pleasures no more can I see.

Oh, death is my only relief,
   The sweetest that I can enjoy;
Till then I must bear with grief,
   And make these few days but a toy.
And now to my kindred and friends,
   I bid you my last sad adieu,
For my anguish can make no amends,
   Or anything else I can do.                     E.W.H.
May Term 1857 7th day

The following claims were produced to the Court and Proven examined and allowed and ordered to be certified to the Auditor of Public accounts for payment as follows to wit:

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<td>for guarding hawkins one day</td>
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<td>Joseph Dosier</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
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<td>Robt B Craven</td>
<td>for guarding EW hawkins 58 days</td>
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<td>Wm ALB Sharp</td>
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<td>Wm Bush</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
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Now my young female readers, I hope you will pardon me for offering you a few words of caution (unworthy and hell-deserving as I am.) My experience in perfidious villainy with your sex makes me the more competent to point out to you the dangers of an over-confidence in the flatteries of a smooth-tongued, fine dressed young man. I know it is a characteristic trait in your unsuspecting, innocent and lovely sex; therefore be extremely cautious how you receive the flatteries of a handsome, finely dressed, eloquent young man, and more especially a stranger, whose history and character you are not well acquainted with. Remember, that while you are giving heed to his flatteries, and ardent profession of honorable and uncontaminate love, you may be standing upon the brink of everlasting destruction.

--Edward William Hawkins, 1857
This is to certify that I joined together in an solemn celebration the rite of Holy Matrimony between the following viz:


This 5th day of June 1852

Josephus Davis, Eld.
Wee will seal with these presents, that we, Edward W. Hawkins and Rebecca Elder, are held and firmly bound unto the Commonwealth of Kentucky, in the sum of $100, to the payment, whereof, well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators firmly, by these presents, sealed with our seals and dated the 19 day of April, 1867. The condition of the above obligation is such, that whereas, a marriage is shortly intended to be solemnized between the above bound Edward W. Hawkins and Mary Jane Elder of this county. And if there be no lawful cause to obstruct the same, then the above obligation to be void, else to remain in full force and virtue.

[Signatures]
Edward W. Hawkins
Rebecca Elder
It is said that Hawkins, the man recently apprehended for murder in Estill county, Kentucky has five living wives, and was engaged to be married to another at the time of his arrest. He is not twenty-one.
interlude

Too Bad I'm Not In Kansas Anymore

(A Groatsworth of Goethe's Wit)

One day I got very drunk. Champagne no less. Champagne for a wedding. And not mine. One of the few weddings that was not mine. Well, after all, I married only four times in Kansas. Only four times. So every wedding wasn't, alas, mine. Oh, if only I could have played droit de seigneur for all the brides in Kansas. Maybe that's why I got drunk. Drunk on Champagne on the Missouri border, a stone's throw from Kansas, drunk in the middle of a violent thunderstorm, a twister. Blew upon me, it did, the whirlwind, suddenly, blew me away. All the way back to Kentucky I blew. Whoosh! And I was gone. Blew all the cards off the table. Ended my game in Kansas. How sad! Too bad! I held a royal fuck in my hand and it took a tornado to blow it away. I held four queens in my hand, I king of hearts in their midst. What a hand I held. Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore. How sad I'm not in Kansas anymore. What I like especially about Kansas and Missouri was my four wives. Four queens! And I was king enscounced between them. Four of them. Four royal fucks. And a royal fuck immensely superior to a royal flush. I'll take a royal fuck any day. Or any night. Love a royal fuck! In less that a year! Never before or since such a spree.
What a game that was. Four queens, I held in my hand. Four queens and a king of hearts, and that hand is called a royal fuck. Best hand of all. Beats any other combination. Till someone opened the door, I suspect the Stranger in Black, and the whirlwind swirled through, blew away my lovely hand of cards. Alas, my four queens! Gone! And I, King of Hearts, soon, alas, to die. Dig my grave with the Ace of Spades. But please throw onto my coffin, before the first spadeful of dark dirt, please drop onto my coffin, or, even better, open it to place it inside, over my still heart, a hand of cards, a royal fuck. Because this man loved. Yes, this man, when he was in Kansas, was a true lover. And write this on my gravestone. How sad I'm not in Kansas anymore. Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore.

"May I have this dance?" I asked her, the demure young damsel. The man in black (we are at the wedding dance) led her to me, introduced us. I had watched her ride up on her broomstick, blown to me out of the whirlwind. She arrived on her broomstick, dismounted, walked up to me with a lovely smile on her bewitching face. This, he said, is the Queen of Clubs. And this, turning to me, is the King of Hearts. What a beauty. Modest. I like modesty allied with beauty. Don't you? Tempers the sharp edge of beauty, modesty does, like tempering iron in water to hear it sizzle. Modesty makes beauty sizzle. Can you think of
anything more charming that modesty that modesty allied with beauty? Yes, Kansas was a dance, a masquerade, a wedding ball, and I was always changing my disguise, changing my love.

"Yes, kind sir, you certainly may."

I took her in my arms and we danced away.

"And what is your name?" I said.

"Susan, kind sir."

"Oh, what a lovely name. Oh, what a lovely face. Oh, what a lovely . . . ."

Sometime along the way I decided to go home to Kentucky. Back to my old Kentucky home. Where the sun shines bright. Towards the end of July, 1856, I felt that my Kansas spree should forthwith conclude, that I should cease and desist my Kansas escapades. I had never been a Ruffian, crossing into Kansas to kill people for a noble cause, for I truly knew no noble causes except the beauty of woman, but I had been a Rogue, perhaps the biggest Rogue in Kansas. I had stolen horses, robbed stores, lied and cheated everyone I could, married four wives, deceived, alas, four beauties. I had deceived so many that I knew my days were numbered. You can be a ruffian and get away with it. All they do to ruffians is hang them. But people both love and hate a rogue. Rogues they hang, draw, and quarter, sometimes even castrate. Whack off your balls. Take your
manhood away. Oh! One day I was asked to deliver twelve of champagne from Wellington to Independence, Missouri. For a wedding, no less. Dr. John Poston sent them to Mr. Hemek. Not that the names matter to anyone in the least, but I'll throw them in for authenticity. Because some of what I tell is true. I was driving a mule and a buggy. The mule's name was Jem. That's for authenticity too. Must keep my facts straight. It was July 4, 1856, the eightieth anniversary of our Declaration of Independence. Hey, how do you like these facts? So I decided to celebrate. Along the way I drank champagne, one bottle after another. Hurrah for good old USA! Hurrah for Missouri and Kansas! Hurrah for my four lovely wives, for Susan and Mary and whoever and Constance. That day it was third wife whose name I could not remember. I knew she was Queen of Hearts, bonafide member of my royal fuck, but could not remember her name. But if you are Queen of Hearts, what matters the silly name? So I drank one bottle especially dedicated to her. I kept thinking that if I got drunk enough, I would remember her name. Everything is always clearer when you're drunk. I never did. I drank a bottle for the USA, a bottle for Kansas and Missouri, a bottle for each of my wives, six bottles of champagne, and I was, of course, quite inebriated. Most intoxicated. Hurrah for everyone! Especially for me! Hurrah mostly for
me! For I am a very, very charming fellow. Don't you find me utterly charming?

Life, I sometimes think, when I wax metaphorical, as I sometimes do, as is, as they say, my wont, life is a game of cards. Except it never stops, goes on incessantly, till, of course, it's over. And that's death. Someone keeps dealing you a hand and you keep playing and the players keep changing on you, old ones leaving, new ones arriving, but you keep playing, picking up the cards off the table, arranging them into a meaningful pattern, and the game keeps changing too, and you try to keep up with what game it is, what the rules are, who the players are, except, of course, it's all very confusing, and all you know is that you have to keep playing regardless, because the cards keep falling on the table and the players coming and going, and sometimes even someone will open the door and a whirlwind sweeps through, blows all the cards onto the floor, even the ones in your hand, the whirlwind so powerful you can't even hold the ones in your hand, not even if it's a royal fuck, and so you pick up the cards and someone says that was God who blew through the room, and someone else says no, just Fate, anyway you pick up the cards, start the game again, because something compels you to keep playing, keep playing, keep playing, you're a compulsive gambler, only you don't know if you are winning
of losing, not that it really matters, the winning or the losing, because even if you win a pile, you couldn't do anything with it, couldn't spend it on anything or anyone, have to put it back into the game, and when the whirlwind comes through it blows all the money away too and you have to pick it up, divvy it up again, and you have no idea how much you had before, so you just share it out equal. But sometimes you hold four queens in your hand, four lovely queens, and you the King of Hearts in their midst, keep moving the four queens around in your hand so that now one and now the other is next to you, and you don't want to play then, you want to look at them, forever, to hold them close to your excited heart, so they, the four queens can hear the excited beating of the heart of the King of Hearts, the heart of hearts, as it were, but you can't, because they are part of the game, and you have to play, even if you can always remember, say to yourself, sometimes even boast to others, as I am doing now, once upon a time I held in my hand a royal fuck. And so you play on and on and on, the cards falling, the bets made, the players coming and going, and God the Whirlwind keeps blowing through the room, or else it's Fate, so the winning and the losing, and you don't know the difference, just keep reaching for a new card, keep slapping the cards on the table, keep gathering in or giving out your pile of chips, and then one day,
although you don't know it, suddenly you're not there anymore, one day the whirlwind blows through and when it's gone you're not there. God or Fate, disguised as the Ace of Spades--remember we are at a masquerade ball, where nothing is what it seems--snatches you away. Nonetheless the game proceeds as well as without you. And someone else, for a brief moment, holds in his hands a royal fuck--nothing like a royal fuck!

Anyway, once upon a time in Missouri, just across the border from Kansas, the Promised Land in sight, I got drunk, on champagne no less, in the middle of a violent thunderstorm, featuring, no less, a tornado, a real, live twister. Some more excitement! And that's when I danced across Kansas, danced across Missouri, danced it all again, what I call the Dance of Dionysus. For surely, even though at the time I could not remember who I was, surely I was Dionysus and all those lovely women were my Maenads. Yes, Dionysus danced across Missouri and Kansas with his Maenads in tow, danced like a whirlwind across Bloody Kansas and never bled a drop. Yes, the only blood shed was the few drops of a fantastic, fabled maidenhead. Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore. How sad I'm not in Kansas anymore. How sad! Too bad!

So my text for today is Hosea 8:7. "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath
no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the stranger shall swallow it up." Fuck the Stranger!
That last phrase, by the way, is not Biblical.

I swept over Kansas and Missouri like a whirlwind. I was a twister. And all the strangers swallowed it up while I blew them away. Well, I suppose that I too went to and fro in the earth, walked up and down it. Rather, and my metaphor is perhaps melodramatic, because I tend to be, when boasting of my own exploits, a mite excessive, rather I roared across it like a whirlwind, and what I devoured was not evil but folly. God—or Fate—put me in the world to make a fool of fools. My divine duty. And I certainly did not walk when I could steal a horse. Nor did I sleep alone when I could find a wife. I don't know how many horses I stole, couldn't keep count. But since I had only four wives, I remember them well. I made it a point never to forget a piece of ass. Yes, true, perhaps that's why I stole so many horses, because riding a woman is a lot like riding a horse, like riding a spirited horse, especially if she buckles and thrashes beneath you, as she will if you touch the magic spot with your magic staff, and she buckles and thrashes beneath you like a spirited mare. And, of course, it was a spirited mare who got me into this final mess, but that's another story. Now I'm talking about Kansas. Too bad. How sad. Too bad God couldn't have
Military Service.—We call the attention of our readers to the case of
Captain Thos. J. Wood, of the United States Army, which appears in our paper
of to-day. Captain Wood, who is a highly accomplished gentleman, visits this sec-
tion of the State, for the purpose of forming a company of Cavalry in one of the
new Regiments ordered to be raised by the last Congress, and in the card to
which we refer, sets forth, clearly and ex-
plicitly, the advantages offered to adven-
turous young men to embark in the en-
treprise. The pay of the army has re-
sently been increased, and by the sched-
ule to be found in the advertisement, it
will be seen that a young man, who is
disposed to be economical, will be ena-
tabled, at the end of five years, should he
then desire to quit the service, to leave
it with a sum sufficient to enable him to
enter upon any other pursuit with ample
means. The pay in moncy p. m. month
is in addition to his board, clothing, &c.,
dall of which is furnished to him by
the government. We have no doubt that
Captain Wood will be enabled to obtain in
this and the surrounding counties his
complement of men without delay.
Young men desirous of further infor-
mation will find Capt. Wood at the Broad-
way Hotel in this city.
looked down on my exploits, pronounced those magnificent words, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Yes, what he should have said every time I mounted a stolen horse, mounted a stolen woman. Because the women, the wives, were also stolen. I stole them too, stole upon them, lied to them, whispered sweet nothings into their ears, mounted them, rode away into absolute bliss—oh, oh, oh! Because most of what I did was most deserving of praise. I sewed the wind and I reaped the whirlwind. And I had a stalk and they had buds, and the Stranger, he in black, swallowed it up. I don't exactly remember the bargain I made with him, must have been drunk on champagne when I did so, but he must have promised me that he would give me a hand composed of a royal fuck to play in the game of life, in exchange for something. I would say my soul, but I promised to quit being so damned melodramatic, and, besides, I'm not sure I have a soul. Regardless rode on a rampage like a tornado, through Missouri and Kansas. Stole horses and fucked women. Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Anyway, too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore. I tried to get back there. Asked her to go with me. Said she would. Dear, darling Daphne. Would have made her wife number seven. And seven is heaven. Oh, how heavenly she would have been. Seven times we would have done it the first night. Or maybe, yes, why not, seventy times seven, and
she would have forgiven me every single fuck. But I didn't make it. To Kansas. Nor Daphne. Didn't get to her either. My stalk never in her bud to sew the whirlwind. Some Stranger in Black will get Daphne's maidenhead. Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore. How sad I'm not in Kansas anymore.

And somewhere along the way--back to my drunken spree, my six bottles of champagne, my wedding dance, featuring my four queens and I the King of Hearts, all introduced to me by the Stranger in Black, whom I have since identified as the Ace of Spades, and that's what got me in trouble in the game of life, because you can hold only five cards in your hand, and I held six. Only if only I could have had seven, that would be heaven. Dearest, darling Daphne! Anyway, regardless, somewhere along the way a violent thunderstorm arose, July 4, I do believe, 1856, and that's when I saw the twister. Way off in the distance, a dark funnel of massing, swirling clouds that spiraled into the heavens and then dipped back again to earth. Like a swarm of hornets. I had heard of Kansas tornadoes, but had never till now seen one. And I was in Missouri, of course, but I knew the tornado came from Kansas. I was, in my drunken ebullience, in a state of absolute wonder. Everything grew simple, and so profound. An eerie silence as if the twisting tornado had sucked away all sound. I stopped my mule, whoa, Jem,
climbed down, staggered, fell rather, out of my carriage, stood to watch the wonder of the whirlwind. That dark, swelling, surging mass on the horizon. So far away, but I felt its savage, violent force surging in my own heaving breast, swirling in my own tizzy brain. And then i knew I was the whirlwind. I had sewn it and reaped it. So I started to run towards it. As if my very soul had spun loose from my body, was trying to escape me. I knew that twister was my soul. That's what I had bargained away. I have no idea precisely how distant it was, but it seemed to be coming towards me. The most magnificent sight I do believe I ever beheld. Even more exciting than my first glimpse of Constance's marvelous legs. Have I told you about Constance's legs? And I do wish I could remember my third wife's name? What was her name? The Queen of Hearts. Oh, how could the King of Hearts forget his Queen? I can see her lovely face. But I cannot recall her name. What swirls most in my breast, most like the twister, is the lovely image of beautiful woman. Oh, I am dizzy with the bewitching image of beauty. Thus it rose and dipped, that dark, swirling funnel of clouds, rode across the earth in absolutely sublime splendor, riding, galloping across the earth with the gay abandon of some dark god come to visit earth. You could call that the moment of apotheosis. Here was not my home. I too was for elsewhere. I was a dark
god, who whirled and swirled upon the face of the earth, wild, uncontrolled, feral, turbulent, ravaging the countryside in my frenzied fury, gone berserk, unbridled, untrammeled, free. Yes, I was free! So I broke into a run, stumbling, falling, for I was most intoxicated, quite inebriated, almost dead drunk, running, chasing, pursuing the whirlwind which came to meet me. I was like a drunken fool who goes to sleep on a railroad track, wakes to the hooting of the whistle, rises, runs to meet the onrushing engine. I knew that when I met it, I would be taken up, blown free, hoisted to the heavens, borne again to wherever it was from which I had come. I was a god descended to earth and the power that had sent me here had come to hie me home. And I rushed to meet my fate. To find again my lost soul. The wind blew strong in my face, my hair, as if electrified, standing on end. I could almost feel myself soar free in the great dark mass of whirling, swirling, sweeping clouds that rose above the earth and dipped again to touch ever so gently, ever so violently. For the passion of a god, even when gentle, is most destructive. That's why I am such a gently violent man. I ran, stumbled, fell, rose again, myself both soaring and dipping, rising and falling, pleading with tears streaming down my face for the force to come take me home. Too long I had wandered to and fro on the face of the earth. I was within a week of
my twentieth birthday, and I was ready to transcend earth, return to whatever paradise from which I had unwilling descended. Did you know that I was born a week too late? Should have been born on the Fourth of July. For I am the best fireworks I know. The dark sky glowered, the lightning flashed, the thunder rumbled, rolled across the land as if admonishing me for my betrayal, and then the rain, heavy, hard, began to pelt my upturned face, even hail, large pieces of hail flailing at my fragile flesh. I could not even keep my eyes open, shielded my face with my hands, peeped through spread fingers, fearful that if I lost sight of the swirling mass of dark clouds, that whatever god it was seeking me would abandon me forever to earth. Lightning flashed in my brain, thunder rolled in my breast. I knew this was my one and only chance to be free, to soar, to return from whence I came. So I held my hand to my face against the beating rain, pelting hail, stumbled against the violent wind that drove me back, as if all the forces of nature fused to prevent my passage. I turned my body sideways, leaned desperately into the rushing, roaring wind, tried even to yell, here I am, here I am, over here, over here. Yes, my body, my mortal body, heavy and earthy, was trying to hold my spirit back. I struggled and shrieked and stumbled and rose again. Here I am. Over here. Don't you see me? Don't you know me?
Here. Edward Hawkins. A god in disguise. Don't you know a god in disguise? I tried to think of my name. Who could I be? What god was I? If only I could remember who I was, pronounce the magic word. Yes, that was it. The final test. I must announce myself. I was drunk. I was the god of wine. What was his name? I was confused. Bacchus? Dionysus? Which was it? In my drunken stupor, I could not remember that he was one and the same. Perhaps I did not even know he was the same, for later, my last wife, dear Helen, she who loved to read, who knew so much, when I told her the story, she it was who told me that Bacchus and Dionysus were the same. Fool! So, fool, I said nothing, did not shout my name, fearful I would be wrong. The only time in my life when my aplomb, boldness, audacity, temerity, failed me—fool! But I had to be humble in face of my divine self. And I kept looking into the dark clouds to discern the shape of my face, as if, like looking into a clouded mirror, if I could but see my true face I would know who I was, would be saved. Saved! Now we see through a glass darkly. And then, alas, I saw that the twister, whirlwind, was veering away from me. Then I knew that I must wander forever to and fro on the face of the earth, an abandoned god. Yes, I was an abandoned god lost among mortal men and women. And they would never believe who I was. I could never convince them I was a lost,
abandoned god. So I fell to the earth, beat the ground with my clenched fist, pulled at my hair, howled my frenzied curses to the dark heavens. Betrayed! Wept till the tears coursing my face washed away the pelting rain, beat the ground, wept, cursed, howled like a savage, finally curled into a ball upon the earth, abandoned, betrayed, forlorn.

Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore. How sad I'm not in Kansas anymore.

It was the place, I tell you. Kansas in 1856. Takes a while for a time and a place to coalesce, to take its place in time as one of the great human experiences. You need something of what they call perspective. Well, Kansas in 1856 is on its way there. That's what corrupted me. True, I had already done my share of cheating and stealing. I had warmed up for Kansas. As perhaps you have some experience with a few virgins, before you climb into bed with a whore. Yes, some people say start with the whores before you go to virgins. But I say no. Virgins first. Whores later. Kansas was a whore! Place where I seduced the virgins. Everything goes in circles. I had never done anything dreadfully wrong heretofore. Even my wife I had deserted because she had deserted me, betrayed me by her distrust. I was, remember, only nineteen years old in September, 1855, when we arrived in Kansas. I had joined
the army. I was prepared to be a good soldier. Determined to redeem myself, to join up with the good guys. Please, good guys, let me in. But Kansas was a brutally honest place. Brutally honest. And I do appreciate honesty. I do have a few virtues. In Kansas the facade of civilization, the veneer of humanity was stripped away, and in Kansas people behaved very naturally and very honestly. I've always appreciated that stark simplicity of life in Kansas in 1856. Stark simplicity. Because there I was free to do what everyone was doing, being brutally honest. Because all of society, all of civilized behavior is based upon lies, lies about human nature. Civilization, I have come to believe, is one great lie. And if people are looking for the one reason why civilizations decline, then I have news for them. Historians, I hear, students of civilization, have searched to find why civilizations decline, why, oh why, did Rome bite the dust, and the reason is so very simple that they have always overlooked it. Simple things always get over looked. Well, here it is. The one and only reason for the decline of civilization is that people get very, very weary of living a lie, the necessary lie on which civilization is founded. Because people ultimately, in spite of all seeming, apparent evil, people are ultimately decent, believe in truth. See what an eternal optimist I am. That lie, of
course, is that we are civilized human beings who can live for the good of all, that social virtues should therefore take precedence over individual desires. That is a lie. We can perhaps do it for a while, compelled to do so by civilized restraints, but sooner or later we grow weary of that great lie, revert to honesty again, become, in short, our honest, natural, real self. In Kansas, stripped momentarily of the veneer of civilized behavior, they were honest, and honest men have only two goals in life—to rape women and to kill men. Those are, rape and murder, the only two honest responses to life. All else is a great lie. Most people will be appalled by what I say, for most people hate and far nothing so much as truth. Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall horrify you! Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. My Stranger in Black just whispered those words into my ear. I suspect he plagiarized them from someone. He is the least honest person I've ever known, loves lies.

So given the nature of the stark simplicity and the brutal honesty of life in Kansas, I am amazed at my good behavior, marvelous restraint, for I killed only one man and had only four wives. And so help me, the only woman I fucked were my wives. I never did, so help me, take to whores. Kansas itself was whore enough to me. I am indeed a model of proper behavior. As for the stealing I did,
well thievery is but a trifle. Altogether I would say that I was among the best behaved men in Kansas and Missouri, a model of civilized restraint, a paragon, almost, of virtue. For which I apologize. I shall always rue that I was true, behaved so well.

And I would have been a good soldier if they had let me. I would have been a very good soldier indeed.

Because on September 22, 1855, we rode out of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, just across the border from Missouri, on our way to Fort Laramie in Nebraska Territory. Hurray, on our way! Perhaps even to fight Indians. Certainly to make the way west safe for travelers going to Oregon or California. Yes, let humanity take the great lies of civilization all the way to the Pacific Ocean. And then not many miles out, they ordered us back. Things looked bad in Kansas. Things were dull instead. The boredom of army life drove me to petty chicanery. Drove me to it. And I discovered soon what I had already suspected but never put into theory, what utter fools the human race is. What utter fools. Why, a man who does not expose such folly is the biggest fool of all. I have no truck with those fatuous mortals who plead sympathy for human folly, kindness for fools. The best way, I say, to deal with fools is to abuse them until they either learn their lesson and grow wise or else despair and die. The easiest,
quickest way to eradicate folly is for the wise men of the earth--of which, thank my lucky star, I am a select member--to abuse and exploit the fools till by one means or another we eradicate them from the face of the earth. Those who preach that we should tolerate fools, treat them with kindness, are but perpetuating folly, are but themselves, these sententious, priggish moralists, the biggest fools of all. I did the human race a great service by abusing and exploiting every fool I met. I should be rewarded instead of hanged. How did the values of the world ever get so topsy-turvy? Well, I'm doing my damnest to set them aright.

First, a fool named Tankersley. Anyone with such a name is an obvious fool. All I had to do in a shooting contest was alter the sights of the rifle. He couldn't understand how his usual true eye went so astray. Fool! Then I went into the Quartermaster's supply house, helped myself to an abundance of uniforms, put them in a parcel, put the parcel on a packet called the Keystone, shipped them to myself in Wayne City, Missouri, a Christmas present to myself, the date being December 23, 1855, forthwith deserted my post, left the army, rode off to gather and sell my bounty. Fools! I mention these two examples just in passing, could do hundreds more, as tangible evidence of the irredeemable nature of human folly, but facts bore me
to tears. To hell with authenticity.

Left the army, did I say? Not really. Sold all the clothing I stole, except one officer's uniform, donned it myself, strutted like a peacock through the street of Liberty, Missouri. I was free. Free to exploit fools. Posed as a recruiting officer. Hear ye, hear ye, come serve your country. But in my pretense, my parody of folly, I also got down to basics. Back to brass tacks. Met at the masquerade dance and courted Miss SS, Miss Susan Smith. Oh, Susanna, oh don't you cry for me. But she did. Sighed for me, cried for me, would have died for me. I did not exact so extreme a penalty. She was a pretty little fool, and I did my duty, exploited her. What a handsome gallant in his uniform. She rode up to me out of the whirlwind on her broomstick, dismounted, and the Stranger in Black (whom I really suspect is just another version of self, me in masquerade) introduced her. This, said he, is Susan. Oh, Miss Susan, may I have this dance. Indeed you may. A blue-eyed beauty, she was. Looked into those eyes as we danced in the midst of a whirlwind across Missouri, and my heart melted. Oh, Miss Susan, will you marry me? Indeed she would. Did. The Queen of Clubs. Played her on the table and took the trick. Oh, what a lovely trick she had. I remember the date. Sometimes I have a difficult time recalling their faces, even their
names, but I always remember the dates of my marriages. If only they would let me live, I promise to sent all my ex-wives a letter every anniversary, refuse to be one of the callous asses who forgets his anniversary, will say, dear darling, oh, if only at this moment I was ensconced between your soft, warm thighs. Can't remember your face, but will never forget how good your cunt felt—oh, oh, oh! I'm better at numbers than at faces. Better at figures than at faces. I remember best the shape of their legs. Susan had lovely legs. And, by the way, the date was January 17, 1856. Midwinter. Cold. Oh, how the wind whistled around the corner of our house, rattled our window. Time to bundle. Lovely Susan trembled with both cold and excitement when I first fondled her naked breast, thumbed, strummed her taut nipple, played thereon a heavenly tune. Oh, oh, oh, said she, oh, oh, oh, said I. Beautiful duet. The people in old New England, someone once told me, used to practice what they called bundling, sticking an engaged couple in bed together, fully clothed, to see how well they took to bed together, fully clothed. As if you could learn anything about anyone fully clothed. Much better, I assure you, stark naked. Yes, let us get to the naked source of our humanity. So it was January. I mean the wind does blow cold on the prairie in midwinter. Time to bundle with a naked beauty. Spread your lovely legs, my
lovely, soft and warm, here I come! Oh, oh, oh! There I go. Took her on a ride one day, she going in that most feminine fashion of sidesaddle, decided just to ride off and leave her. Impulsive. Impromptu. Spur of the moment. I love to act on a whim. Don't ever let routine inhibit you. Spurred my horse. Rode away. Two weeks of her was enough. She thought I was just teasing. Tried to keep up with me for a while. Great sport. Racing alongside your gallant, dashing husband all decked out in his uniform. How handsome! How gallant! How dashing! Dashed away from her. Never forget the quizzical look on her lovely face when she began to have inklings that the sport was all too serious, the joke on her. And then that pleading look in her tear-brimming eyes. Just like a woman, to go and cry on you just because you're leaving her in the lurch. Just like a woman. But great sport. I do recommend it, gentlemen, as an excellent way to rid yourself of a wife. Take her for a ride and then just ride off and leave her behind forever. Women love it too. Give them a dramatic farewell to remember you by. Oh, Susanna, oh don't you cry for me. Goodbye, darling! I enjoyed being for a moment ensconced between your soft, warm thighs. Enjoyed best of all, of course, being anchored in that soft, warm, moist hole between those thighs. Oh, oh, oh! Thank you, my darling! Oh, Susanna, oh don't you cry for me, for I came
left this city on Monday with about thirty of the finest looking recruits for the cavalry regiment. They are from the Anti-slavery State of Ohio.
from old Kentucky for a lovely fucking spree. Hey, I should have been a songwriter. Better than Stephen Collins, right? Last I saw of her, looking over my shoulder as I rode away, was a tiny, dark spot on the horizon. I stopped for a moment, said to myself, Ned Hawkins, that small, dark spot on the distant horizon, I do believe that is your ex-wife. I do believe it is. I do believe she raised her hand, but whether to beckon me back or bid me farewell, I'll never know. I debated with myself for at least ten mile, was she trying desperately, one last effort, to call me back to her side, or had she resigned herself to her fate, was bidding me farewell. Finally decided on the latter. Yes, I wanted to believe, do believe, that Susan Smith was a good sport. I was so impressed with her sportsmanship that I almost turned around, rode back, almost myself played the fool. But I did not. The problem with fooling around with fools is that after a while you start acting like one yourself. So farewell, my beauty, a fond, fond farewell. I gave her my watch, this take, in remembrance of me, I told her, in homage to time, goodbye.

Let us, to be fair to the fair damsels, let us imagine how perhaps she felt, even at risk of turning her into a sentimental maid. Because, after all, that's precisely what she was, at least as I saw her, a very sentimental
maid. The world, believe me, does contain such creatures. Here's how I abandoned Susan-Gretchen, as seen, felt by Susan-Gretchen.

(Maybe for a moment you can hold love in balance, as on a scale, two pans equally weighed for a moment with love, two hearts beating and balancing together, thump, thump, thump, as one, but then one heart, the hurt one, grows heavy, and the lighter heart, the airy one, the flighty one, soars away, is gone. It is almost as though, at that sad moment, I looked into the blue sky, saw the scales balanced, then saw my own heart drop heavy. And so I saw him ride away, saying, so handsome in his uniform, a lieutenant, such a handsome face, laughing blue eyes, golden hair, saying, yes, so very handsome, and mine, my husband, my handsome husband. Mine! I wanted him too much. Looking back at me. Smiling. I rode after him. He turned his horse's head. Rode on. Rode away. Further. Stopped. Turned to look back. So handsome. The most handsome man I had ever seen. Could not keep up with him. Tried. He was such a splendid horseman. Whenever I got close, he turned, rode further away. A little game he was playing. Our hearts balancing. My own pumping so viciously, almost violently in my breast. Looking back at me. Smiling. Such a lovely face when he smiled. Even lovelier when he laughed. I could not keep up with him. I
tried. Somewhere my heart failed me. But I should not have stopped. If only I had not let it be hurt. Don't be hurt, I told myself, don't be hurt, smile, smile as bravely as he does. But my heart would not smile. My heart failed me, and I stopped. I should have kept going. Because every now and then he stopped to look back at me. Smiling. His handsome face. Each time a little further away. As he was going away. And if I had kept going, kept up the pursuit, showed him how determined I was, how gallant my heart was too, how my heart was smiling too, surely somewhere he would have waited for me. If only I had ridden on, into the night, into the dark, if I had pursued him all night long, at dawn I would have found him waiting for me. He would take lovingly in his arms. He was just testing my love. The problem, was, of course, that I loved him too much. I loved him more than he loved me. I knew that was true. From the beginning I knew it was so. I suppose there is nowhere a love that is absolutely equal. I suppose that is impossible. Someone has to love the most. And mostly, I do believe, that women love the most. I think that is our weakness. Unless it is our strength. And so, loving him as I did, feeling the hurt as he rode away, the heavy hurt in my heart, somehow my heart failed me. Too heavy. Heaving so heavily in my breast. Because of the aching hurt. He spurred his horse
and rode away. From afar, not more than a speck on the horizon, I think I saw him raise his hand. Waving farewell? Beckoning me to follow? My heart was too heavy with hurt. I could not move. I raised my hand. Goodbye!

What a good sport! Too bad I'm not in Kansas anymore, making love to the Queen of Clubs. Oh, she made my club feel so kingly.

--William Sutton, 1995
Hawkins, the Murderer.

Some weeks ago we published a brief account of the criminal career of Edward W. Hawkins, convicted of the murder of the two officers in Esill county. He paid the penalty of his high crime on Friday last, in the county where the murder was committed. The same day upon which the unfortunate man was hanged he wrote the following letter to the editors of this paper:

Sad Voices from a Dishonored Grave.

Irvine, Ky., May 23, 1857.

Messrs. Editors: I see in your last issue a piece styled "Incidents in the Life of a Felon," and as there is a possibility of inaccuracies in it, I wish to point them out to you, and hope you will correct them. I am a felon, it is true, and am sentenced to death, which debt I imagine I shall this day pay. The 1st error is—that I am 22 years old; I will not be 31 years old until the 11th day of July next (1857). Your next error is—that all my wives are alive; alas! one of them, young, beautiful, and lovely as she was, committed suicide on account of the enormous deception I had practiced upon her. Your next error is—you say I am the grandson of Tom Harper; I have no connections of the name. Your next error is—that you say I killed a commanding officer in the regular army; this is not true. Your next error is—that I numbered my murdered victims by the half dozen; I have only murdered four persons in my life. I have married the six women, as stated in your article. I have committed the many other felonies—and more than alluded to by you. I hope you will correct the above-named errors, or give this piece a place in your paper. I have written out a full and complete history of my life, from the age of ten years to the present time, which I have this day delivered to Hon. A. W. Quinn and others for publication, which I imagine will be published, and which is a true and carefully prepared history of all my crimes and other incidents of my unfortunate life, from ten years old to the present time, and, alas! to my sorrow and deep mortification, will exhibit more numerous and a greater degree of crime than was ever committed by one so young. I will here take occasion (as my last effusion) to exhort the young and rising generation to read my awful history with care, and pray that it may be a warning beacon by which they may steer around a fate similar to my awful condition. Very respectfully, your dying countryman.

E. W. HAWKINS.
CERTIFICATES.

I do hereby assign the copyright of this history of my Life and Confessions to A. W. Quinn, John Wagle, John Barnes, Jas. H. Powell, and Andrew Wallace, and hereby vest them with the full right to publish the same, and receive any emoluments that may arise from said publication, this 28th day of May, 1857.

EDWARD WILLIAM HAWKINS.

Witness: Jordan Neal.
R. B. Craven, Capt. of the Guard.
ESTILL JAIL, May 28th, 1857.

This day Robert B. Craven and Jordan Neal came personally before me, Thomas H. Carson, Clerk of the Estill County Court, and made oath that the assignment of Edward W. Hawkins, of his History and Confession, to A. W. Quinn, John Wagle, John Barnes, Jas. H. Powell, and Andrew Wallace, is the act and deed of said Hawkins, that they saw him sign the same, at which time they signed the same as subscribing witnesses, and that the signature of said Hawkins is genuine.

Given under my hand, this 20th day of June, 1857.

THOS. H. CARSON,
Clerk of Estill County Court.
A Young Desperado Finished.—The Richmond (Ky.) Messenger, of the 5th instant, states that Edward Hawkins, who was hung on Friday, the 29th of May, at Irvine, Ky., met death boldly and fearlessly — thus showing that even in death he was the same reckless character that his short but eventful life had stamped him. He denied being related to little Harpe, of notorious memory — had only committed four murders — had six wives, five living, and the seventh in progress of courtship, and he was not twenty-one years old when he forfeited his life to the law.
admonition four

It seems hard that one so young should have to part with all his friends and playmates before passing the bloom of youth; but I hope my present condition will be a warning to the rising generation, and keep every one of them from having to meet a similar fate. And my young readers, the only way to avoid it is to shun bad company and bad examples, and act honestly towards all persons.

---Edward William Hawkins, 1857
The condemned man rode from Irvine to his place of execution in a wagon sitting on his casket. He was eating peaches along the way and as the wagon neared the place where he was to pay his debt to society he noticed that the accompanying crowd began to surge forward for choice places from which to view the proceedings, but they were rather abruptly informed by the condemned, "No use to hurry folks, there'll be no hanging until I get there."

--William T. Williams, 1956
He had a great bunch of people following behind him. What about that? That was surprising to me: That you'd be so calm going to see a man hung—that you'd think they'd be—but they said the sheriff and the deputy both sit with him on—Mom said—on the box that he was to be buried in, that they sat on it and he played the fiddle—played the fiddle.

John McKinney, Mother's brother, said that Ed rode on his own box, he called it (John said it was his casket maybe), but, anyway, said, "on his own box" to be hung, and the sheriff and all them was, you know, I guess, on there, too, but she said he rode on his coffin to be hung and he sang songs as he went and that's when, I guess, that they ate the persimmon, maybe, on the way, and that was the last thing he ate was the persimmons, but then after that Mom said—she said that her daddy would talk about it and he would sing this song about—he kind of made up his own song—about hanging Ed—Ned—Hawkins and Momma always called him "Ned Hawkins" but after later on in years I found out his name was "Edward Hawkins" and I told her, but she didn't live long enough for me to show her the grave where he was at.

—Ruth Witt, June 1995
Execution of Hawkins

Edward W. Hawkins, the murderer of Arvin and Land, some two months since, expiated his crime upon the gallows on Friday last in Estill county. A correspondent of the Winchester Chronicle says that until the day preceding the execution, he had spent his time in great frivolity and wickedness, talking light of his soul's immortality. His conduct was probably in part ascribable to the gay companions by whom he was surrounded. On Thursday morning, however, a great change of feeling was observed to take possession of him, and a flood of tears spoke of the anguish which was penetrating his inmost soul. Death, and after it the judgment, stared him in the face, and in tones the most affecting did he give vent to the most bitter remorse for the silly manner in which he had spent his precious hours.

The correspondent above referred to gives the annexed account of the execution:

"At about 12 o'clock, M., he came forth from the dismal dungeon in which he had been confined for about two months, took his seat upon his coffin with remarkable complacency, and was driven to the gallows about two miles from town, to satisfy a sentence of law which he pronounced just, and (as he expressed it) the desire of many people. Arriving at the place of execution, he arose and addressed the vast
concourse of people assembled for about ten minutes, very concisely and appropriately. His remarks consisted chiefly of advice to the youth, and of warnings against the allurements of wickedness, remarking that the beginning of his crimes was disobedience to his parents. His words impressed his audience with most awful solemnity; being not only very touching, but coming, as they did, as from one in the spiritland.

He is said to have expressed privately a hope of celestial felicity, though he did not allude to it in his public address.

Prayer and an exhortation were offered; then, shaking hands with those immediately around him, he took a last long look upon the vast multitude and all terrestrial objects surrounding, which look alone touched the hearts of all observers. He then assisted the sheriff to adjust the fatal knot with a smile upon his countenance, the cap was drawn over his face, shutting from his eyes all terrestrial things, and as the sheriff gave the signal he jumped from his position (desiring to break his neck) to a position between the heavens and the earth. He once raised his hands as if to implore mercy, folded them across his breast, trembled convulsively, and in about two minutes, without a struggle, he saw unveiled the mysteries of an awful eternity. Thus closed a scene which will remain ever
vividly portrayed upon the memory of many who will not seek to have it obliterated. It was not a scene of fright, but one grand, gloomy, and awfully sublime—one calculated to stir up emotions of the soul which they were unconscious of possessing.

Such an execution was probably never before witnessed in Kentucky. Hawkins was about twenty-one years of age, of prepossessing appearance, and very handsome in features. His courage and resolution were unparalleled; his manners so polished and winning; his dignity so noble, and the whole man so pleasing to look upon, that the sympathies of the whole multitude were enlisted for him. But alas! the blood of his fellow-man was upon him.

May God have mercy upon his soul.
My greatgrandfather remembered him. (I don't remember my greatgrandfather) They said, It was the largest crowd ever seen at Hawkins hanging most were happy that it was happening, some women fainted, some were crying. Others were laughing and jokeing. One woman said, he is the most handsome man I ever saw, I wish they would let him go and put my husband up there.

--Maryann Utz, 28 June 1995
My Grandmother and Grandfather Walters were courting-teenagers at the time of the hanging of Edward Hawkins and they were there. I have heard my grandmother tell about when he made his farewell speech and he jumped from the wagon he was standing on with the rope already placed around his neck. He did not wait for the wagon to be driven out from under him. He jumped from the wagon and broke his neck, and my grandmother fainted.

--Eva S. Witt
See that little mouse colored mule over there? That is the mule that your Uncle Robert allowed Dick Ward to ride to see Hawkins hung. Your Uncle told my pa that he wanted Ward to see Hawkins hung, said he was inclined to be a bad boy, and thought if I saw Hawkins hung, it might scare some of the meanness out of him, but he said when he came back, he told him he had rather die like Hawkins than any other way; that women gave him flowers, and he made a great big speech at the scaffold, and was the best looking man there. Mr. Chenault was mighty sorry he let him ride old Mouse after he talked the way he did.

--John Cabell Chenault, 1929
The old man told me that Hawkins was standing at the
gallows looking down at all the people there and said, "I
regret only two things in my life: killing my child--" and
pointing out a man in the crowd, says, "--and not killing
that son of a bitch!"

--anonymous, 1995
WRITES ABOUT NOTED HANGING

Number of Local People Saw Ed. Hawkins Executed—Thomas Adams Writes Interestingly

The article printed in The Sun a few days ago concerning the execution of Edward Hawkins in Estill County, in 1877, which stated that the execution was witnessed by Mr. Joe Reynolds, of Missouri, who is visiting Dr. J. A. Snodden, has excited quite a lot of interest, and The Sun is still finding persons who witnessed the gruesome affair.

The following interesting letter has been received from a subscriber:

The Letter

Having noticed in The Sun the statement of a man whose name I do not now remember, that he witnessed the execution of Edward Hawkins, in Estill County, I write to say that I too, witnessed the execution.

My wife was there also, as was my brother, George Adams, my cousin, A. H. Atchison, and R. M. Pulley, of Winchester, my wife’s brother.

I played with Hawkins when we were small boys, together, so of course, I felt badly when I saw him riding in a wagon to the gallows, on his coffin, seated between two preachers. W. Winters, a Methodist, and T. Wills, a Baptist. They sang and prayed with Hawkins, and then let the noose. Hawkins bade his friends goodbye and the rope was adjusted around his neck before his hands were tied behind him. Richard Benton was Sheriff and when he gave the order “Drive out” Hawkins jumped off the wagon, and his feet hit his coffin. I also attended Hawkins’ funeral, which was held at the Berney school house, on Woodford Creek, where he was raised. The execution took place near Irvine on Tuesday, May 29, 1877.

THOMAS ADAMS.
To the Editor of The Sun:

Having read in The Sun the names of several men who are now living who saw Edward Hawkins hung at Irvine on Tuesday, May 29, 1887, my brother, Dr. J. T. Strade, now of Naysville, Ky., were there. We left home Monday afternoon and went to Mr. Tyree's on Miller's Creek for the night. The next morning in company with Mr. Wm. Tyree we left early for Irvine.

I wanted to tell of some things the others have left out. Hawkins had written out a story of his life while in jail. He told it for the finest bit of clothes that could be procured.

As he sat on his coffin going out to the gallows I thought he was the finest looking young man I had ever seen. He had a very intelligent look and a smile on his countenance. He was asked at the scaffold if he had anything to say and he replied yes. He began by telling of his downfall. After his first murder, how much easier the second; and so on until he was a hardened criminal, and then addressing the young men of the immense crowd he gave them much good advice and warned them not to live the life he had lived. I often think I should like to have his speech in printed form to be distributed among the young men of the community.

W. D. S.
This is the way, my readers, when confidence is once lost it cannot be regained. You may tell the truth and be ever so honest in your intentions, but having once forfeited your word and honor you can never be believed any more by those whom you have deceived. My readers, let this lesson sink deep in your hearts. You may think that a poor, manacled, condemned malefactor is a poor hand to give lessons of morality; but remember that it is said that experience is the best teachers. It is also said that experience keeps a dear school, and that fools will learn in no other, which is partially verified in my deplorable case. Therefore let me exhort you to learn by precept and good example, instead of by evil experience, as I have.

--Edward William Hawkins, 1857
A fact is related of him, which illustrates his coolness even in extremity, and exhibits his indifference in the contemplation of a felon's death. The sentence of the Judge was expressed in the usual form, concluding with the expression that the prisoner must be hanged by the neck until he is dead. When Hawkins was recommitted, after the sentence had been pronounced, in a tone and manner betokening the most careless levity, he said, "The Judge says I shall be hung by the neck! where in hell would a man be hung, if not by the neck?"
It was about 1928 when my grandmother and a neighbor were discussing some one in jail. Then they mentioned some one being Hung. I was not aware it was that long ago in the 1800's. I thought it was more recent. It sounded so awful I never forgot it. Grandmother said she did not go, many she knew went to town. The jailer hung Hawkins--"His tongue came out ten inches." They whispered "something else," I was so young, I had no idea.

--anonymous, 1996
Within the circuit of one mile from Irvine stands a gallows tree, erected for the hanging of a murderer away back in the fifties—1857, I believe. One Edward Hawkins having murdered in cold blood, near Beattyville, Ky., an entire family, was arrested, tried and convicted and sent to Irvine for safe keeping. The officers who were selected to bring him safely to Irvine were Messrs. Arvin and Land, and they, after tying his hands, put him up to ride behind one of them. This devil incarnate watched his opportunity at the Winding Stairs, a very difficult and dangerous place midway between Beattyville and Irvine, and after silently and successfully releasing his hands, jerked the officer's pistol out of his belt, killed the other on his right hand and then shot the one behind whom he rode, jumped to the ground and escaped. He was tracked by others who were determined to bring this fiend to justice, arrested, brought to Irvine, and this gallows, now standing for thirty-four years, was the one upon which he expiated his crimes. It being claimed that he first and last killed seven people—men, women and children. This gallows still stands as a silent monitor of justice as a warning to the wicked and preverse criminals even of this age.

Manyensible people are still at
I was nine years old at the time of his execution. My father often punished Ed. for his misdeeds, but his mother always tried to shield him. I can remember very clearly his mean and overbearing nature. Notwithstanding his criminal inclinations and his malicious and treacherous nature, he was a favorite with the entire family and all the neighbors. He had the reputation of being the handsomest man in the county, having a perfect physique. I now attribute his downfall, in great degree, to his excessive vanity.

--G.B. Hawkins, October 1906
epilogue

Thursday May Term 1857 9th day

Ordered that the following claims be allowed

This day came RT Benton and produced the following claims which sworn to by same Benton was examined by the Court and allowed and ordered to be certified to the auditor of Public accounts for payment which is as follows to wit

April 1857

The Commonwealth of Kentucky

To the Sheriff of Estill County

To executing spo on 7 witnesses agst Edward W hawkins

20 cents Each $1.40

Same to Executing the Sentence of the Court by

Executing the said Hawkins on the 29" May by hanging the same until he was dead $6.00

Same to summoning and attending Jury in

Said Cause . 1.50

RT Benton SEC $ 8.90

The Commonwealth to Same for the following expences for executing the Said E.W. hawkins & Burierial Expences

for Rope used in Executing the Said 1.00

For blk Cambrick for mask or cap for Said 25

coffin for Said made by John Wagle 6.00

For gallows Erected by Thos Bowman 5.00
For team wagon & driver to convey Said Hawkins from County Jail to gallows by Thos Bowman $5.00
amount of Buriall Expences RT Benton SEC 17.25
amount of Expences of SEC cost cost
and Burial Expences to gether $26.15
chorus three

THE ORIGINAL SONGS AS WRITTEN BY HAWKINS

Editors note—It has been a rather difficult matter for us to get the original songs as written by Hawkins but after trying several persons we were able to secure them. These are the only two songs Hawkins ever wrote and the only two he ever sang about himself while he was confined in the Estill County Jail. Many other songs have been published as having been written by him but none except these two were ever found in his own hand writing.

It is stated the following is the one he sang most and he sang it to the tune of "Should Old Acquaintance Be Forgot"

Young men, young men, come learn of me,
A sad and mournful history,
And may you not forget the tale,
Of the story I relate to thee.

For murder I am now arranged,
In the dark dungeon, bound and chained;
Where I am yet compelled to stay,
Until the twenty-ninth day of May.

And then I leave my dungeon home,
And be consigned to the cold tomb,
And there I must forgotten lie;
Then come, young man, and see me die.

Come see me meet a youthful grave,
To trouble, then, no more to slavish;
My friends, I do not fear to die,
Or meet my Maker in the sky.

My sins are great, I do admit,
My Savior's power is greater yet,
Then on his mercy I rely,
For pardon when I come to die.

O welcome, death, how sweet the sound,
When I shall no longer be bound;
I've twenty-eight days yet to mourn,
Bound in my gloomy dungeon home.

And then my soul must fly away
To darkest night or brightest day,
And there it must forever be
Through fearful, vast Eternity.
Come stand around me young and old,
And see me—welcome death so bold;
My youthful heart, it is so brave,
I do not fear to meet the grave.
Young men young men, be warned so me,
And always shun bad company;
Now I must bid you all adieu,
Remember, my advice is true.

Following is the song that has been sent in but eight different persons each of whom have the first and third verses just alike but the second verse was different in each case. The second verse as we give it is the best we could make out by taking parts of all those sent us.

Come all you good people, attention give to me;
While I describe a murder, that was horrible to see.
For killing of my fellow men I'm in this dungeon chained,
And I have lost my liberty which can never be regained.
As we were drawing up well nigh the Winding Stair,
Unconscious of all danger, without the least of care;
I drew James Land’s revolver, shot Josiah Arvine down;
In less than fifteen minutes both were dead upon the ground.

Then I fled to escape the law. I was sought for far and near.
But through it all I never flinched, nor did my heart know fear.
The excitement of the people, who were after me, was great,
And I found it was impossible to make my escape.
They hunted me both night and day and many traps they layed.
But they would not have caught me if I had not been betrayed.
They arrested me in Ohio, and back to Estill came.
They put me in this dungeon where yet I do remain.
My coffin sits before me in which I will be laid,
When I leave this gloomy dungeon my debt it will be paid.
Upon the dreadful scaffold my dreadful debt I'll pay;
On Friday, Eighteen fifteen seven, on the twenty ninth of May.

The price of these song sheets is 10 cents when sold without the book entitled "The Confession of Edward Hawkins.

SENT IN BY MRS. PEARL ALLEN, SOR IRVINE, KY
I have heard that they dug him up: This--again--this is, you know, hearsay, that they dug him up and got part of his garments or his shoes or maybe even some of his bones. I don't know if that's true or, you know, hearsay. It was--there--again, like I told you a while ago--there was nothing to do except to sit around and spin big yarns and tell big tales. They, the older people, that told these tales and stories and one thing and another just actually would tell you as matter-of-factly that they had been there and seen this digging going on, you know, and their dad came away from there with some part of his clothes, maybe, or his bones or something, you know, but I doubt--I doubt very seriously--if maybe a lot of it was just tall tales. I doubt if any of it was true, because I know my granddad--he could tell you some tall tales. I'm thinking that a lot of this tale of Ed Hawkins . . .

--Earl Barnes, 9 April 1995
afterword

As I went walking, I saw a sign there,
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

--Woody Guthrie,
"This Land Is Your Land"

Academe: What were your guiding principles or purposes in the choices you made as to the selection and organizing of texts in this assemblage?

Auteur: In generating the "hagiography" I organized the component texts around the hanging of the outlaw Ed Hawkins, which took place on 29 May 1857 in Estill County, Kentucky. The execution is the central event of the legend, for it is at the gallows that Hawkins redeems himself. His calm reserve and final words conferred upon him a kind of secular canonization, so that even today the sites and surviving relics associated with his life and times are held in steady reverence. For example, in earlier years, the purported bones of Hawkins were trafficked in Estill and surrounding counties; however, local historians Charles Vanhuss and Nevyle Shackelford believe these were actually pig bones. Facing imminent death on the gallows, Hawkins undertook the writing of his autobiographical Confession and his own ballads, the little book and songs
having been the principal means by which subsequent generations came to know the Hawkins story, thereby granting the outlaw the boon of immortality. Hawkins' crimes earned for him an entry alongside the likes of Jesse James and John Dillinger in the Encyclopedia of World Crime (1990); in 1988, the Ill-Mo Boys released their rendition of the "Death of Edward Hawkins," a cover of the ballad sung by Earl Barnes on Dr. Ginger Blue (1974).

The variegated contents of the various editions of the Confession contain not only Hawkins' account of his criminal career--his narrative periodically ruptured by admonitory passages rendered in a second voice--but also: court documents, a half-brother's statement, a list of criminal confederates, poetry, songs, a photo of the gallows, a photo of Hawkins' headstone, anecdotal introductions, a last letter, his gallows speech, a certificate of authenticity. Following the format of other 19th Century criminal-narrative pamphlets, the Confession is an assemblage of competing texts, each possessing its own tone, level of diction, and purpose. The structural organization of my hagiography is a gesture paid towards this literary tradition.

The criminal-narrative You Can't Win by Jack Black provided characters, passages, and a sensibility that informs nearly all the major works of William S. Burroughs.
In utilizing the contents of the *Confession*, I suppose I was attempting to reproduce Burroughs' experience as well as carrying forward a family tradition of capitalizing on Hawkins' misery:

It is said that my great-something grandfather Judge A.W. Quinn traded Hawkins out of his rights to the narrative in exchange for a new suit for his hanging—to Quinn's credit, it was the custom of the day for the officers of the court to claim all rights to a criminal's narrative without compensating the criminal in any way. Eyewitness accounts report that on the day of his execution Hawkins was dressed in a fine suit, the best money could buy. A Cincinnati firm printed 10,000 copies of the *Confession*, and it first sold for 50¢ per copy; Quinn and his partners had a falling out and the little book's price dropped to 25¢. Lawrence Thompson, among others, speculated that Quinn—rather than Hawkins—actually wrote the *Confession*, and Quinn's name turns up on several of the pieces that make up the hagiography, suggesting that he was at least responsible for shaping the legend.

Much to my surprise, I've come to realize that the hagiography is patterned after the standard five-tiered essay, with an introduction, three illustrations, and a conclusion—a pretty pedestrian approach to fiction and a sore disappointment for me as I had thought I had overcome
the debilitating effects of my education. Believe me, I've resisted much and obeyed little, but apparently to no avail. A discovery like this can really shake you up, and I feel a long exile coming on.

So, the hagiography is divided into five sections, each of these introduced by an admonitory or evangelical passage culled from the text of Hawkins' Confession. On first reading, the admonitions might seem quite trivial; however, consider: Hawkins' narrative is merely the vehicle by which the message of the admonitions is delivered, for the Confession is a Victorian cautionary tale and has been a part of the moral education of many children growing up in Estill County. The Confession is, in addition to being a criminal-narrative, an antique anti-sex teen-advice book, similar in purpose and tone to the classics 'Twixt Twelve and Twenty by Pat Boone and Ann Landers Talks to Teen-Agers About Sex.

The five sections are supported by three choruses. These songs are known as "good night" ballads, songs (hence the title of the hagiography) in which the personae of the condemned recount the details of their crimes and plead for forgiveness, admonishing others not to follow their example. The choruses act not just as refrains but also demonstrate time's corruption of meaning.

The centerpiece of the work is the excerpt taken from
William Sutton's novel-in-progress about Ed Hawkins. Dr. Sutton has placed Hawkins in the dungeon of the Estill jail and replicated the mindscape Hawkins is travelling through, his days back in Missouri and Kansas, as described in the Confession. The text of the piece continuously loops back into itself, much like the tornado Hawkins imagines himself being, which produces a psychotronic effect in the reader. We are drawn into the vortex of Hawkins' personality. The humor and wordplay of the piece is a welcomed relief from the stilted prose of the 19th Century news accounts and the dry court records that make up the other sections.

Academe: Who were your literary influences or predecessors, and how do you see what you are doing fitting into literary history?

Auteur: For years now the novelist William Burroughs has exercised a vampiric hold over my psyche, clawing and kicking for room in there with the other vampires: Kurt Vonnegut, Phillip K. Dick, Gregory Rabassa's translations of Gabriel Garcia Marquez—or any of his translations of other Latin Writers, for that matter. Kathy Acker is a sister to me in that we both learned to write at the feet of Burroughs, taking his and Brion Gysin's The Third Mind and making it our own. The Third Mind is the postmodern Rosetta stone of contemporary culture, a manual for leaving behind the 19th Century and stepping into the 21st. I run
with a pretty dour bunch who produce what is often labelled transgressive fiction, although here lately I suspect I'm shifting into a neuvo traditionalist, leaving behind my situationist sympathies. As to what niche the hagiography occupies in literary history: Its pedigree extends back to the Qabbalah descending through MacBeth and the Restoration plays and on down through: Defoe's Moll Flanders, Sterne's Tristram Shandy, Hogg's Confessions of a Justified Sinner, Thackery's Barry Lyndon, Twain's Huckleberry Finn, Flaubert's Salammbo, Bierce's "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge," Jerry's Exploits & Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician, the poetry of Gertrude Stein, Master's Spoon River Anthology, Eliot's A Murder in the Cathedral, Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, Celine's Journey to the End of the Night, Williams' Paterson, Capote's In Cold Blood, McClure's The Beard, levy's youcanhaveyourfucking-cityback, Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse Five, Dick's The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Lesy's Wisconsin Death Trip, Taylor's Girty, Burroughs' The Place of Dead Roads, McCarthy's Blood Meridian, Acker's Empire of the Senseless, Ducornet's The Stain, plate's jauquin in the fog, Olds' Raising Holy Hell, and of course Melville's Moby-Dick. If you had to pigeonhole the hagiography, then you might call it historiographic metafiction, because the novelette is a
self-referential work that also points to other texts—or you could call it intertextual necromancy, because I have aligned a plurality of texts in order to resurrect Hawkins, not merely evoke his memory. That's right. I'm going beyond metaphor—going beyond metonymy . . . I'm a-calling up the dead. Most creation myths agree, "In the beginning was the Word." Writing was first employed for magickal purposes. The longevity of the Egyptian pharaohs were assured in the inscription of each ruler's cartouche, so long as the cartouche survived, so long as there lived one who could pronounce Pharaoh's name correctly. Even today, the power of the word is relied upon to propitiate angry skygods (eg., "IN GOD WE TRUST") and to ward off pesky daemons (Zondervan Family Bookstores offers Pigs in the Parlor, a handy household guide to casting out daemons of every stripe). My hagiography is a work of sympathetic magick and within its texts Hawkins abides, awaiting revivification.

Academe: In what sense is "appropriation" of copyrighted texts a creative act? A political act? A postmodern statement? A justifiable position?

Auteur: I quote Burroughs: "So who owns the words?" In response to the criticism Paul Bowles levelled at Burroughs after his use and appropriation of Bowles' work, Burroughs penned a short piece entitled "On the Back Porch of His
Farm" which aptly illustrates his justification--as well as mine--for the piracy of another's words. Burroughs cast himself as Martin, and Bowles in the role of Arch:

Five horsemen stopped just outside the gate. They sat there looking at him and not saying anything.

Martin walked slowly out and leaned on the gate post. "Hello, Arch," he said addressing the oldest man. "Something on your mind?"

"Well, yes, Martin, you might say so. Thought maybe some of my stock might have strayed up here?"

"Not that I know of, Arch, but this is free range country fellers say."

The scene ends with Martin acknowledging his theft and he faces down Arch and his boys. Word and image are free range country, plain and simple. If it's good enough to steal--it's good. So who owns the words?

In the mid-seventies, the Disney Corporation filed suit against San Franciscan underground cartoonist Dan O'Neil, claiming Disney had incurred one million dollars damages by O'Neil's appropriation of the Mickey Mouse character. In a black and white, small press comic book titled Air Pirate Funnies, O'Neil had placed a vintage Mickey Mouse in a series of erotic situations (eg., a lady
caterpillar spreads wide her many legs and a naked Mickey Mouse gets very busy). O'Neil defended his unauthorized use of the character by building a defense around his claim that over the years Mickey Mouse had evolved into a cultural icon and therefore had entered public domain. The court was not persuaded by his argument and Disney won the case. In the years since the trial, I've thought a lot about this case, wondering if Disney owns the mouse that's jumping around in my head—"What are they doing in there?" So who owns the words? Word begets word. If it's good enough to steal—it's good.

It seems to me the height of folly to rigidly adhere to a Eurocentric notion of property ownership when we live on a small, overpopulated ball of ever-dwindling resources spinning lonely through space. We're just cutting our own throats if we continue to throw up fences and walls, cutting ourselves off from early warnings and possible solutions, all in the name of property, patriarchy, and the corporation. Word and image are free range country, plain and simple.

Academe: Who is Ed Hawkins? In what sense can we "know" him?

Auteur: There's a little bit of Ed Hawkins in all of us, I'd say. Lawrence Thompson decribed Hawkins as a *picaro*, suggesting that Hawkins may have been invented in order to
sell copies of the *Confession*—or that the only Hawkins we can know is the one found in the *Confession*. I believe my hagiography disproves his contention. Ancillary texts, documentary evidence, and the oral traditions open up the possibility for a whole pantheon of Ed Hawkinses, each an equally valid interpretation: Folk stories feature a Hawkins as trickster-hero, emphasizing the outlaw's cunning and wit; the ballads portray a tragic figure, a bathetic Hawkins fallen from grace; elements of the *Confession* present a wandering jew-Hawkins, the isolated Byronic hero who carries the contagion of evil; Dr. Sutton has given us a Byronic Hawkins touched by Caligula's grandiose delusions of godhood; Jean Thomas compares Hawkins to Beowulf; Jesse Wilson saw Hawkins as a Roman gladiator; after reading Reynold's *Beneath the American Renaissance*, I see Hawkins as a good b'hoy gone bad. There's probably a little bit of Ed Hawkins in all of us, some more than others. You want to know Ed? Look in your heart.

**Academe:** What do you plan to do with this thesis?

**Auteur:** I'd like to expand the work into a big fat novel, interweaving the texts into a tight skein. I'd also like to see published an annotated edition of a restored *Confession*, something like *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Autobiography of George Appo*, which appeared in the 1993 crime number of the *Missouri Review*. That's it.