A NIETZSCHEAN AND LACANIAN EXAMINATION OF CAIN'S CREATIVE FAILURE AND THE DETERMINED FALL IN BYRON'S *CAIN*

By

GREGORY SULLIVAN

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East Central University

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Thesis Approved:

Thesis Advisor

Robert Mayer

Linda M. Austin

Wayne B. Powell

Dean of the Graduate College

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Introduction

Paul Elledge indicts the philosophical stances in Byron's *Cain: A Mystery* as "bland" (50). Yet, the manner in which these stances operate, interact, and shift, is particularly sophisticated, and points to important issues concerning systems,[1] not taken up thoroughly until Nietzsche and then twentieth-century thinkers.[2] Byron remains an important literary figure partly because his work, along with certain of his characters, stands somewhat apart from Romantic tradition and from other characters in his texts. Harold Bloom asserts that "the theme of a quest away from alienation and toward an unknown good is recurrent in the Romantics" (233). Byron's work, however, and *Cain* specifically, takes Romantic individuality to the extreme of alienation, rather than towards a sort of integration. Alienation, however, is merely an implicit issue.[3] The more important issues in the current endeavor involve the scrutiny the drama places on systems and their inability to accommodate unique individuals. In addition, this drama significantly opens the way for, suggests, and begins to flesh out, methods for maneuvering among systems and creating expression beyond them. With the utilization of the more recent literary and philosophical theory of Nietzsche and Lacan, we can attain a better view not only of the events of the drama and their implications, but also of the important early insight this work provides into questions which would only be examined rigorously by later thinkers.

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[1] Political or religious systems, for example. But more specifically, throughout this study I indicate by "systems" linguistic or discursive structures which articulate and grant being to such political and religious institutions.

[2] Elledge's "Imagery and Theme in Byron's *Cain*," as the title and remark suggests, concentrates on the poetry of the drama rather than philosophical issues.

[3] On alienation in *Cain*, see, for example, Mervyn Nicholson.

This study will demonstrate that *Cain* is an exercise in perspectivism where dominant orders are scrutinized, and where attempts at alteration of system fail. Cain, dissatisfied with his positioning within God's rigid system, rebelliously questions and makes transgressive demands of that order. He makes attempts to construct a new system of valuation based on knowledge, but ultimately concludes that all valuation involved in human existence is worthless. When he slays Abel in his attempts to demand God's direct address, Cain paradoxically implicates himself in the order he has fervently repudiated. Contrary to other critics' views on the character of Lucifer, this study will argue that the "devil" figure in *Cain* is no tempter or debaser of life, but a creative, unbound being who provides Cain with an opportunity to escape God's oppressive system. Lucifer's vista of the universe and conversations with Cain offer to him a method by which he might create his own expression in the vast battery of potential signification. However, Cain is stuck in an essentialism which disallows him the movement required to construct an order outside the very view of existence he has rebelled against. This failure seems the most prominent failure, and the most prominent irony, of *Cain: A Mystery*.

Over the years, criticism on *Cain* has involved several important trends. First, there has been a tendency to view *Cain* as an attack by Byron on Orthodox religion. This approach is, in one form or another, nearly universal.[4] There are a few notable variations on this common theme. Stopford Brooke sees *Cain* as an attack on religion, yet perceives a message emphasizing the possibility of salvation at the end of the drama. A more recent exception is found in Bernard Beatty's "Cain's Legacy and *Cain*'s Tradition," a study of conflicting literary modes which finds *Cain* "profoundly Christian" (8). While notions of *Cain* as an attack constitute the norm in *Cain* criticism, they seem far too concerned with Byron and his motives rather than with the events of the text.

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[4] For examples, see, especially for nineteenth century criticism, Truman Guy Steffan, who provides in his book, *Lord Byron's* Cain, the only thorough survey of *Cain* scholarship for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Such a tendency to view *Cain* as Byron's personal attack relates closely to another important trend in Byron criticism, which is biographical in nature. Critics early and late, in terms of religious attacks and the characterization of Cain and Lucifer, tend to approach *Cain* in a context which sees Byron's own passions, emotions, lifestyles, as written thoroughly into his characters and as represented in the characters' actions.[5] While the review of *Cain* as an attack on orthodoxy may be apt, and while Byron's characters may indeed be interpreted as driven by passions similar to his own, these concerns are not of importance here. Attempts to explain philosophical and emotional stances of works, based on Byron's own beliefs and temperaments, ultimately remove emphasis from the work and place it on Byron's personality. In the present case, where my methodology involves psychoanalytical theory, emphasis on biography would lead to a psychoanalysis of Byron. Concerns of more importance here involve the positioning of particular characters and orders within Byron's work, not his own religious feelings or personality.

Another important trend in *Cain* criticism involves viewing Cain as a tragically ironic figure. In some cases, critics who take this view regard Cain as a benevolent, loving man who hates violence and fears death, yet who nevertheless ends up killing Abel, thereby bringing death into the world. In other cases, Cain represents a rebel, who ultimately fulfills the destiny of the power he rebels against. Stopford Brooke seems the chief purveyor of the notion that Cain is originally benevolent, "lov[ing] life . . . . [and] all that is beautiful" (275). Chew also takes up the notion that Cain's "love is always apparent" (130). Many critics observe the irony in the fact that Cain, so concerned with and afraid of death, brings it into the world. The notion of Cain as rebel represents, in many cases, an extension of the idea that *Cain* attacks orthodox religion. Without recourse to Byron's motivations, it seems clear from the events of the text that Cain is in open rebellion from the beginning of the text. Gingerich provides an important twentieth century example of the notion that irony results from Cain's "fulfill[ing] his destiny[, which] Cain so passionately wished might *not* come through him" (269-70). This notion has generally been accepted as a statement of the prominent irony in *Cain*.

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[5] This trend is present in criticism on all of Byron's works. For *Cain*, see, for example, Stopford Brooke, Samuel Chew, Ernest De Selincourt, Solomon Gingerich, M.K. Joseph, Jerome McGann, and Daniel McVeigh.

To see *Cain* as tragically ironic is proper, but not only for reasons given above. First, Cain is a rebel throughout the play. Though he does seem benevolent toward his loving wife, he still seeks out death, and he clearly questions God from the beginning of the play. Cain's search for death and his persistence in questioning God are non-violent and carry on the tradition of his parents' plucking of fruit, but still openly defy God and the prescriptive system he has forced upon Cain's family. While Cain's tradition is one of rebellion, those who have rebelled before him no longer embrace that tradition, an embrace which must exist if Cain's rebellious actions are to fall within that system's realm of benevolence. When Cain does become violent, his ironic departure is not that of a removal from benevolence. Rather, the irony of Cain's murder of Abel involves the fact that, in slaying Abel, Cain accomplishes and embodies the fate of the system he has so vehemently railed against. More specifically, Cain's killing of Abel paradoxically accomplishes a departure from rebellion. As Bloom comments on Cain's actions, "[g]enius breaks not only with conventional virtue but with conventional vice as well" (248). However, the most important irony results from such a departure before the murder, specifically, when Cain refuses the possibilities which Lucifer offers him, in favor of the essentialism he had hated before. This instance of Cain's tragic failure precipitates other ironies; Cain experiences a moral vertigo on his journey as a result of his prejudice for the system he hates. Returning to earth, Cain clings to the order, murdering his brother and thus insuring a permanent placement in God's system.

Another important element in *Cain* criticism involves the role of Lucifer, and centers around Byron's letter to Murray where the poet declares that

> the object of the demon [Lucifer] is to *depress* [Cain] . . . till he falls into the frame of mind--that leads to Catastrophe--from mere internal irritation-- . . . from rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his Conceptions--& which discharges itself rather against Life--and the author of Life--than the mere living. (*L&J* 9: 53-54)

Referencing this passage, Elledge asserts: "Byron articulated the philosophical theme of his tragedy more coherently than have many of his critics" (50). While Elledge disparages a particular critical position, he also makes the point that Byron's explanation of his "bland philosoph[y]" adequately accounts for a matter to which we need no longer tend (50). The majority of criticism on *Cain* indeed conceives of Lucifer as a character trying to tempt or debase Cain to the point of accomplishing a second fall. Despite the fact that, as Steffan notes, "[m]ost thoughtful readers have . . . accepted the interpretation . . . that Byron had equated Lucifer not with evil but with intellect and knowledge" (458), even those, such as Peter Schock, who see Lucifer offering Cain intellectual freedom, nevertheless see Lucifer as one who "breaks [Cain] down" (182). Chew's general survey of sources for *Cain* presents Lucifer as a deceiver, and Cain as one who chooses and implicitly gains intellectual freedom (133).[6] However, a more compelling view of Lucifer sees him as one who offers Cain a real opportunity to escape God's system and to create and destroy his own orders as required for more appropriate expression. Rather than a systematic tempter or deceiver, Lucifer represents an example of the creative being, who requires no single established system for reference. He has no interest in accomplishing the goal of God's order; rather, he attempts to show to Cain the opportunity that is presented by an endless battery of signifiers with no entrenched form of reference.

Peter A. Schock has offered an illuminating study of Lucifer in "The 'Satanism' of *Cain* in Context: Byron's Lucifer and the War Against Blasphemy," where he presents Lucifer as a "radically ambiguous figure . . . [whose] shifting identity does not readily resolve" (182-83). Schock's examination of the influences which produced Byron's Lucifer figure, and of that character's stance in the drama, can be particularly illuminating.

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[6] See also Paul Cantor, Joseph, McGann, McVeigh, and Nicholson for conceptions of Lucifer as tempter or deceiver.

Lucifer represents a unique being who can move among discursive worlds at will, and who can thus shift identity, and so in these terms Schock presents a more thoroughgoing examination of this particular character, though in a more literary-historical, rather than discursive, manner. However, while Schock argues well that Lucifer "instructs [Cain] in the values of autonomy, defiance, and metaphysical rebellion" (182), this critic's argument falls short and remains in the realm of easy cause/effect relationships when he asserts that Lucifer "breaks [Cain] down" (182), or in other words, debases Cain in order to bring about the fall. Schock's argument, despite its insight, still purports to hold Lucifer up as a tempter, thus confining him within God's system and thereby fixing his identity. Only as a being outside God's established order, among a variety of worlds, can Lucifer remain an identity in flux.

In more recent years, some critics have begun to look more closely at discursive structures in *Cain*. Bernard Beatty, for example, in his "Cain's Legacy and *Cain*'s Tradition," has made an examination of conflicting literary modes in the drama, which disrupt one another but eventually leave the drama "profoundly Christian" (8). Beatty also extends these discourses to religious views outside the text, and asserts that Byron both controls and is controlled by "the traditions" (5). Beatty's study represents important movement in a new direction in *Cain* criticism. Yet, while Beatty makes the significant point that the "pious proto-novel of Adam and Eve is disrupted in *Cain* by sceptical history and science" (7), his examination tends toward a study of the traditions and influences which produces *Cain*, rather than the more specific positioning of Cain and other characters in and out of relationship to the order of the God of the text. Further, any assertion of a Christian resolution in *Cain* seems extremely tenuous. Such an assertion represents the equivalent of embracing Brooke's notion that the play offers a vision of salvation. God's order in the text is presented as despotic from beginning to end. Cain never desires salvation in such a system, despite the fact that he has become fully enveloped by it at the end of the drama.

No extensive psychoanalytical approach to Byron or *Cain* appeared until 1992, when Laura Claridge published her *Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire*. Her main concerns, in the Lacanian readings she presents, involve the examination of desire and its particular implications as it manifests itself in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron. Her main interest in Byron involves mostly longer works, and she gives a mere glance to *Cain*. While her conceptualization of Lacanian desire does not conflict with that employed here, neither does it inform the readings. Specifically, the current study requires closer attention not only to the manifestation of desire in *Cain*, but also to the implications of desire, and what can be done about it. Other Lacanian elements, involving linguistic structures, also work prominently here. Further, Nietzschean formulations inform my analysis, and for these latter two reasons my study differs not only in scope but also in method.

My own endeavor involves the utilization of a methodology comprised of several key Nietzschean and Lacanian formulations. Specifically, this work offers examinations of *Cain* based upon Nietzschean and Lacanian ideas on linguistic systems. These ideas include factors which result from the imposition of such systems, like desire and the bad conscience. Other concepts, namely Nietzschean perspectivism, the mask, and the idea of the unique, creating being, allow for maneuvering among and beyond systems; these Lacan theoretical conceptions I explore in the first section, "The Limits of Determinism: Looking Into and Out of the Systems of Nietzsche and Lacan." Such a methodology is particularly fitting for *Cain*, because the drama provides an excellent model of many of the key ideas involved in the method, as I demonstrate in the second section of the essay. *Cain*'s most general irony involves Cain's return to the world he hates. However, up to now critics have halted at this general assessment, not realizing the complexity with which such an irony plays out. Specifically, the chief irony of *Cain* lays in the fact that, before his re-entrenchment in God's world, he has witnessed the possibility of new worlds, and new creative freedom. Lucifer, no tempter or debaser, offers such possibility. Finally, the manner of Cain's rejoining God's world proves particularly important, in that his rampant desire persists towards re-imposition to the extent that he forges the new mask of the killer. Such newness, however, is innovation wholly encompassed by God's oppressive world. Cain's only creativity consists in rearticulation.

The Limits of Determinism: Looking Into and Out of the Systems of Nietzsche and Lacan

Despite Lacan's concentration on and allegiance to Freudian conceptions, elements of his thought nonetheless re-articulate certain aspects of Nietzschean thought. With Nietzsche, the subject begins to shift in position from a seemingly autonomous, defined, and delimited concept towards an increasingly changeable, even fluid, entity which is determined in and by discourse; concern with the potency of the will also increases, specifically in terms of possibilities for responding to discourse and transforming it. Nietzsche repudiates the idea of the free and autonomous will, but certainly the determinism sometimes implied in his thinking is not complete and total, as a biological determinism which precludes all choice. Indeed, in order for persons to order themselves towards a sublimation of drives, there must remain some agency for self-creativity. And if subjects in Lacan's thinking are to avoid a constitution limited to the discourses they are exposed to at a given moment, there must likewise exist some similar self-assertion. By recasting Nietzsche's important conceptions in light of Lacanian thinking, and vice-versa, we can better view, analyze, and employ elements from both systems. Nietzsche's conceptions and schematizations have a perpetual sort of bearing, lending insight by their own merit, and taking on accent through certain encounters with Lacanian thought.

There are three important divisions in my treatment of these thinkers. The first consists of an examination of important correlations between Nietzsche's "first, provisional statement of [his] own hypothesis concerning the origin of the 'bad conscience'" (*GM* II 16: 84), Lacan's assertion that "[s]ymbols in fact envelop the life of man" ("Function" 68), and the functioning of the signifier as seen by the latter thinker.[1] Nietzsche's "bad conscience" is occasioned by the imposition of structures; Lacanian desire emerges within similar meaningful systems of enveloping signifiers. My treatment concerns the manner in which these sorts of structures articulate subjects. Specifically, Nietzsche's and Lacan's larger structures constitute macrocosms of the more particular structuring in which we find the signifier involved. Second, I investigate the effects and by-products which such structuring imposes, in relation to the subject. This section includes a treatment of Lacanian desire and its accompanying structure, in relation to Nietzsche's "bad conscience." These conceptions share certain important implications related to the lacks inherent in systematization. Finally, I treat the possibilities for maneuvering within, among, and beyond systems. These possibilities all involve, to different extents, concerns with the living, creative being as opposed to the passive subject of discourse. Nietzschean thought on perspectivist methods of objective inquiry, along with that concerning masks, is the prominent element in this final section, as these formulations specifically propose the means and the methods for working among, altering, and creating orders. Through my examination of these matters I construct an interpretive apparatus that will guide my reading in the remainder of this endeavor, the examination of Byron's *Cain*.

Nietzsche discusses the origin of the bad conscience in *On the Genealogy of*

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[1] All passages from Nietzsche are translated by Walter Kaufman, except for "On Truth and Lies," translated by Daniel Breazeale. I provide section and, where applicable, essay numbers in citations, along with page numbers. All passages from Lacan are from translations by Alan Sheridan.

Morals. He comments on the imposition of system, effecting the change from primitive to civilized humans, as a basic factor in forming the bad conscience:

> I regard the bad conscience as the serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced--that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace. The situation that faced sea animals when they were compelled to become land animals or perish was the same as that which faced these semi-animals, well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure: suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and "suspended" . . . . In this new world they no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their "consciousness," their weakest and most fallible organ! (*GM* II 16: 84)

The walls in which Nietzsche says man finds himself enclosed are not mere city walls--though they are these too--but are also lines of thinking, lines of law which make fundamentally unique, particular, unequal subjects equally accountable, and which impose responsibility and guiding principles onto all participants. Nietzsche "employ[s] the word 'state'" (17: 86) in his description of the conquering entity which imposes such ordering, and he expands the concept, using terminology such as "some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror or master race" (17: 86). This state, then, designates the entity which has conquered, as well as the locus, and the encompassing nature of, the guiding principles which have been imposed. The state is the forceful entity and also the determining basis of the system.

Such a "creation and imposition of forms" (17: 86), as outlined here, is of particular import for discursive concerns. Consider, for example, the passage above concerning the reduction to consciousness; when Nietzsche refers to "inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect" (16: 84), he describes actions which depend upon language. Clearly, Nietzsche is speaking of language when he explains "a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a "meaning" in relation to the whole" (17: 86-7). Language structures subjectivity through such an assignment of systematization. Subjects of a political ruler or of a verbal construction are determined and given meaning in and through language. They find a place only because that place, "in relation to the whole," has been predetermined by the linguistic system of valuation which constitutes the subject's world.

Nietzsche's schema for this structure which assigns meaning correlates with the linguistic systematization that Lacan identifies. I pursue this relationship by applying Lacan's idea of the Other, and his own deterministic structure, to Nietzsche's systematization above. Nietzsche's state is an Other for those subjected. This does not mean the state is merely different, or foreign--it is, but this Other takes on another role as that which articulates and gives structure to subjects in and through language. Consider by way of comparison the formulation Lacan gives concerning the role of this Other as language:

> Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him "by flesh and blood," so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they give the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he *is* not yet and even beyond his death. ("Function" 68)

Through their speech, a subject's parents have formed a bond, which is also a particular linguistic order already present when the newborn subject emerges. The place and destiny of the newborn, like the subject of Nietzsche's state, are bound in such order, which determines beforehand the subject's positioning in relation to its world. A child entering the world, like a people coming under subjection, is given structure, and thus a place and a meaning, only through the discourse of Others. These include the parents of the newborn, who give it language, and the state, which imposes placement upon political or discursive subjects. In either case, a positioning and system of valuation are prearranged. Thus, the subject can only appeal to that system of symbols already established for communication, no matter how unfitting the system. The language within which human beings must operate, and which structures them, is that of the Other. The symbolic order, or the Other of language, "envelop[s] the life of man" (68).

Even more than Nietzsche's "state," Lacan's "Other" can be duplicitous. Both designate not only the entity which gives language, but also the systematization itself, or in other words, a particular discourse. "Other" is the appellation for both the entity which has given language, and for the language, as system, given or imposed. Language is Other because the subject has not had a hand in its creation. Neither does the Other as language reach to individual particularity: this Other as language retains its foreign or estranged quality. The otherness in Nietzsche's formulation is occasioned by the imposition of the structure inherent in language. The language and structuring agent (the state) are inherently foreign to their subjects, but an appeal to these agents for placement and expression is inevitable. Such is also the case with Lacan's Other; a person is given a system of expression by some foreign Other and must appeal to this Other in order to approximate and communicate personal identity and history.

Lacan at all times asserts the primacy of the signifier. In a discussion concerning the importance of understanding the manner of language's functioning, Lacan comments: "in its symbolizing function speech is moving towards nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link that it establishes with the one who emits it--in other words, by introducing the effects of the signifier" ("Function" 83). The signifier brings about a transformation in the subject because signifiers determine the paths of discourse. Through interrelationships among subjects and signifiers, based on the positioning of the subject, the signifier articulates the possibilities for the subject's expression. Lacan comments further, on this determination, in his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" that

> the displacement of the signifier determines the subjects in their acts, in their destiny, in their refusals, in their blindnesses, in their end and in their fate, their innate gifts and social acquisitions notwithstanding, without

> regard for character or sex, and that, willingly or not, everything that might be considered the stuff of psychology, kit and caboodle, will follow the path of the signifier. (698)

This passage gives a better idea about the far-reaching implications of the signifier--because of signifiers' presence and alignment in a given field, a subject cannot choose without their consideration. Signifiers inescapably compel the subject to articulate meaning through interaction with a determined set of linguistic circumstances. But what of "displacement"? For Lacan, there is only meaning through difference. As he comments in the same piece, "[t]he signifier is not functional" (696). In other words, there is no meaning inherent in the signifier, but when involved in intersubjective relationships, such as that between parents and children, or state and subjects, the signifier articulates meaning. Through relationships with subjects and other signifiers, signifiers structure meaning in language through forcing the subject to evaluate its situation relative to them. Such situation among signifiers determines the subject--who it can be, what it might say, where it might go in discourse. With the signifier as its Other, the subject is determined against the signifier; the signifier summons the alignment of the subject's discourse in relationship to itself, along the lines of its own imposition. The signifier articulates so forcefully because of its presence: the subject has no choice but to recognize it as an immovable horizon, and to place him/herself in relation to it.

Lacan's idea of the "master signifier" can also shed more light on the deterministic formation of the subject. In his "On the Psychological and Social Functions of Language," Mark Bracher gives a clear and definitive explanation of the functioning of this discursive componenet:

> A master signifier is any signifier that a subject has invested his or her identity in--any signifier that the subject has identified with (or against) and that thus constitutes a powerful positive or negative value. Master signifiers are thus the factors that give the articulated system of signifiers (S_2)--that is knowledge, belief, language--purchase on a subject: they are what make a message meaningful. (111)

A master signifier is slightly different from "ordinary" signifiers among which a subject is aligned in the functioning of discourse. This signifier is particularly important for individual subjects, as it possesses much more force of imposition. Since subjects form particularly strong allegiances with master signifiers, there are hierarchies among a mass of signifiers which without the intervention of the subject (with particular allegiances) could not exist. Take, for instance, the way subjects align with nations, religions, careers, ways of life. Bracher argues:

> the subject can . . . be deduced from the relation between S_1, the master signifier that represents it, and S_2, knowledge, or the system of all the other signifiers in relation to which S_1 represents the subject. The subject, that is, is what must be assumed in order to explain why certain signifiers function as master signifiers and others don't. At the origin, S_1 is to be seen as intervening in S_2, the battery of signifiers, the network of knowledge. From this intervention of S_1 in S_2, the subject is established as the *hypokeimenon* of this intervention. (113)

Bracher's description of the master signifier explains both the manner in which the concept of the subject provides a point of reference for discourse, and of the manner in which particular signifiers, inescapably present, determine the articulation of meaning and valuation. Bracher's use of the Heideggerian *hypokeimenon* refers to the ground which underlies discourse, that which "always already lies present at the *basis* of all relevant speech and discussion" (Heidegger 30). Thus the subject, as *hypokeimenon*, and its relation to the signifier, represent elements imperative for meaningful interactions in discourse. The subject constitutes a necessary presence which aligns, through its interrelations, the battery of signifiers, determining their formation. Particular subjects take on an imposing presence, as do signifiers, and in fact provide a grounding basis for such imposition. While the subject is dependent on discourse and is caught in a position where it has no choice but to communicate based on the system of valuation which surrounds it, the subject nevertheless articulates the signifying chain. Signification and subjectivity, signifier and subject, are thus bound up in an inextricable relationship of mutual dependence. Although the subject cannot escape the force of the elements in a field of discourse, and is thus determined, activities of meaning nevertheless depend upon the intervention of the subject.

When we align the signifier with a particular subject, or say that each subject or signifier potentially systematizes meaning particularly, it becomes evident that this structuring pervades all activities of meaning, and is not only widespread but indeed omnipresent. What Nietzsche has given us in his state-structure represents a macrocosm of the effect of the signifier, where meaning comes about only when subjects are defined based on relationships with some determining Other. This making of a world, which correlates with the systematization of the state, the Other, and the signifier, lends insight into the determination of the subject in language. The subject, as defined against signifiers, raises meaning towards itself and delineates it, determining meaning according to the possibilities which signifiers and their systems present. Where lines of meaning are summoned, this structure proliferates operations of language, a constant process of reordering valuation, based always on the presence or absence of particular signifiers, and on the activity of some subject.

Having developed the correlation among linguistic schemas of Nietzsche and Lacan, we can move now into a discussion of the ways in which such structuring affects its participants. The process involving the imposition of valuation affects its participants in several ways. As I note above, the language a child or a subjected people receives is the language of an Other, is itself an Other. In an explanation of Lacan's Other as language, Bruce Fink comments: "the words [subjects] are obliged to use are not their own and do not necessarily correspond to their own particular demands" (6). The signification given through language cannot approximate the particular situation of the unique being. Lacan comments:

> the child does not always fall asleep in this way [i.e., in simple dreams] in the bosom of being, especially if the Other, which has its own ideas about his needs, interferes, and in place of that which it does not have, stuffs him with the choking pap of what it has, that is to say, confuses his needs with the gift of its love. ("Direction" 263)

The Other as language always retains a foreign, estranged quality, and no articulation in such a removed medium can fully embody the unique situations of particular individuals. Inevitably, language as communicative medium overshoots intended meanings and does violence to a demand in this way, or it falls short, always leaving, in its inability to meet particularity head-on, something in the lurch. This something is desire.

Lacan posits desire as "that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the compliment from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want, or lack" ("Direction" 263). This want-to-be, or lack, which occasions and makes room for the emergence of desire, is the difference between the subject's wish, which language cannot fully communicate, and the extent to which the Other as language might articulate such a communication. In this split, or interval, desire emerges, "[that which] is evoked by any demand beyond the need that is articulated in it" (263). The subject's demand exceeding need and making "an unconditional demand of presence and absence" (265), makes manifest desire in the split between need and demand. The Other can never fulfill such a demand for the unconditional inasmuch as it is Other, or foreign, and can never provide or possess language to express the particularity of a being fully. This is the case, whether we see the Other as language or as another subject or signifier.

Lacan develops these ideas concerning the manifestation of desire further, arguing "[t]hat which is thus given to the Other to fill, and which is strictly that which it does not have, since it, too, lacks being, is what is called love, but it is also hate and ignorance"

(263). Some may assume that language can unconditionally approximate and formulate being. But the Other as language has no being, despite its materiality, particularly because it cannot unconditionally formulate actual being. Language, as a constantly shifting system of arbitrary signs, retains in its movement no constant or consistent valuation, and no inherent meaning which might amount to wholeness. Neither is a language a totalizing or totalizable system. Language cannot embody particularity fully, because such language could no longer function as system or structure--there could be no common ground between speakers. The Other, as other potential subject or signifier, lacks being for the same reason: there is a split between need and demand, or in other words, between what can be expressed and satisfied through language and what cannot. This is the same "split (*Spaltung*) which the subject undergoes by virtue of being a subject insofar as he speaks" ("Direction" 269). "Subject," as a unit of language, supposes a being, a completion, and a unity. However, insofar as the subject must appeal to a linguistic system for expression, it lacks being and wholeness, in that language cannot help but be other and apart from the inexpressible uniqueness of individuals. When the subject says "this is who I am," it inevitably says, with Lacan, "I is an other" ("Aggressivity" 23).

Desire plays a disruptive role here. We find evidence of this influence where Lacan posits that the "living being would be annihilated [within the deterministic system], if desire did not preserve its part in the interferences and pulsations that the cycles of language cause to converge on him" ("Function" 68). Desire is the product of the inability to express uniqueness and is itself unique; this unique by-product emerges and tattoos itself into discourse, disrupting the deterministic order. Desire maps the area between what can be expressed and what cannot, and continually reasserts this lack in discourse where it becomes tangled and disruptive in the process of making and hearing replies. Thus, a system cannot remain static, nor destiny be completely determined.

Desire, this force which emerges in the split between need and demand, between subject and system, makes evident the impossibility of wholeness and fuels all discourse. Discourse, thus driven, moves always in attempts to have demand met, to meet demand, to articulate something closer to particularity--aims which language cannot meet and which inevitably spawn further desire. It is only by virtue of a lack, an absence of being, that any meaning can be communicated through language: a signifier only has meaning when it comes into contact with subjects and other signifiers. The split between subject and system insures both an absence where desire can emerge, and the continuation of desire's moving the chain along in its play between absence and presence.

Nietzsche's structure insinuates a splitting which bears certain affinities to that splitting that Lacan develops between need and demand, where desire emerges. Nietzsche approaches the split from another direction. There is an evident split between what Nietzsche calls instincts or drives, which when verbalized take the forms of demands, and the system or enveloping Other that is unable to fully express or realize these unique characteristics and forces. He speaks of the "instinct for freedom [being] pushed back and repressed" and this process resulting in the bad conscience (*GM* II 17: 87). This statement suggests that the conquerors' imposed language cannot meet the demands of the conquered, especially if they involve a demand for freedom, but also if they make any demand in excess of prescribed need. The bad conscience arises in this split between subject and system because no matter how fitting an assigned place may seem, that predetermined and deterministic meaning can never fully accord with the particularity of and in "former guides, [the] regulating unconscious and infallible drives" (16: 84). Nietzsche thus sees this inability to express particular meaning, occasioned by the imposition of a language, bringing about the bad conscience.

Nietzsche's bad conscience arises in the same lack, or split, where Lacanian desire emerges. When we think of Lacan's account of desire as that which drives discourse, we can discern the correspondence between the two conceptions. The lack which occasions the bad conscience is the same lack of ability to communicate meaning where we see Lacanian desire emerging, where demand overshoots need. Desire occasions further desire, while Nietzsche's lack occasions the bad conscience. What does this bad conscience occasion? Provoking further attempts by the subject at expression, the bad conscience also sets up a further lack, a perpetual lack, like that where desire manifests itself. In conjunction with a repressed instinct for freedom, the bad conscience influences further attempts to approximate meaning closer to particularity, as does ever shifting and unquenchable desire.

Having discussed the configuration of systems and their effects upon subjects, namely desire, the bad conscience, and their relation to one another, we can now move on to a discussion of the ways in which, given these prior factors, subjects might find room to move between and beyond single systems. The primary means for maneuvering in such ways involve both thinkers' recognition of the particularity of the unique, living being, Nietzschean ideas on perspectivism and the mask, and Nietzsche's "*artistically creating* *subject*" ("Truth" 86). We will deal with these concepts in this sequence, then bring them into relationship with one another. Lacan, in his statement concerning "[s]ymbols . . . envelop[ing] the life of man" ("Function" 68), speaks of destiny as being prearranged from beginning to end. When units such as Nietzsche's macrocosmic power structure involving the state, and Lacan's microcosmic but proliferating structure of the signifier come into contact with subjects and other signifiers, they order and impose a structure on them. These structures determine meaning, and in so doing inevitably pull subjects into such determination, sealing their fate. We should, however, be very careful to remember that the Lacanian subject is always a divided subject; while it is true that when the subject participates in speech it is a subject of discourse, there still remains the unique, living being.

In his "The Subject of Discourse," Marshall Alcorn examines the way that "[p]oststructuralist theory posits the subject as a passive entity constituted by participation in social language" (29). "Lacan," Alcorn goes on, "is very much attentive to the *singular* and *particular* nature of the subject" (31). Linguistic systems, while "envelop[ing] the life of man" (Lacan, "Function" 68), are nevertheless not all-encompassing. As discourse is shifting and fluid, a single static model of universally placed subjectivity cannot be deduced. Just as signifiers and subjects in their interrelationships create valuation, or structure language, and thus construct worlds of meaning--these worlds, in their constant reordering due to changes in relationship, cannot become all-encompassing and completely deterministic as the subject moves among them. Though a subject might put particular stock in a given system which seems static and holds the subject in its thrall, there can exist, nevertheless, other linguistic worlds which the subject might move among. Lacan deals with such a situation when he speaks of "the confusion of tongues tak[ing] a hand and . . . orders contradict[ing] one another in the tearing apart of the universal work" ("Function" 68). In other words, there exists no universal system of meaning, but rather a proliferation of conflicting and irregular worlds of meaning, articulated upon the intervention of a particular subject in a particular battery of signifiers. What has been viewed as a "universal work" can indeed be disrupted, even "[torn] apart," which is to say that though there is a definite determinism in the way language imposes a prepared way on subjects, this fact does not necessarily make all linguistic existence a blind determinism. This disruption of determinism becomes especially apparent when we consider the continuous demands of desire and the bad conscience on language. Determinisms, like sea currents, mix, breaking up the flow of seemingly complete discourses. Thus, the unique, living being moves beyond the determined paths of one fixed determination.

Nietzsche likewise emphasizes the particular individual, as opposed to the discursive identity dependent on an expressive means "in common." He expresses this in the following passage on consciousness, from the *Gay Science*:

> My idea is . . . that consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature; that, as follows from this, it has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by the social or herd utility. Consequently, given the best will in the world to understand ourselves as individually as possible, 'to know ourselves', each of us will always succeed in becoming conscious only of what is not

> individual but 'average'. Our thoughts themselves are continually governed by the character of consciousness--by the 'genius of the species' that commands it--and translated back into the perspective of the herd. Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*. (354: 299)

Nietzsche's account of the language we receive is analogous to Lacan's language of the Other. Nietzsche's/Lacan's language is in common, and, as soon as it is appealed to for purposes of communication and definition, we describe not ourselves but some Other, and particularity is lost. "I," as Lacan comments, "is an other" ("Aggressivity" 23). Yet, there still exists the "infinitely individual" human, and this existence can, in its affectation by the bad conscience and desire, disrupt systems which seek self-containment. Such disruption comes about as a result of the inevitable presence of elements in the individual which the system cannot account for, presenting inconsistencies to the unity of the structure.

Besides recognizing the importance of the individual being, Nietzsche also sets forth other, more specific methods for the disruption of systems and movement among them. The most important of these is perspectivism, but the mask also plays an important role in its relation to perspectivism. Nietzsche speaks of perspectivism in his *Genealogy* as a model for a thorough objective method; the adoption of differing perspectives also involves constructing an unlimited number of linguistic articulations. Such structuring, based, as it is, on a lack, leaves a lack. Hence the efficacy of adopting various perspectives. Another perspective or guiding principle, while still limited by its own lacks, can impinge upon this former. The problem remains that each lack engenders more, but with this in mind we realize that, as Nietzsche says, "the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be" (*GM* III 12: 119). Considering the shifting nature of valuation, a perspectivism, which assumes such constant shifting as part of its method, can allow an observer better points of vantage in approximating the situations of particular valuations. Nietzschean perspectivism offers possibilities for moving beyond the confines of a single, fixed linguistic positioning. Such possibility allows the subject room to transform and work around the restrictions of an imposed system of valuation.

Nietzsche comes at the mask, as with all that his thinking touches, from various perspectives, sometimes viewing it as an instrument or herald of bad taste, sometimes more positively expressing it as a means to protect one's profundity. Always, however, the mask seems an inevitability. Consider the following oft quoted passage from Nietzsche's preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*: "It seems that all great things first have to bestride the earth in monstrous and frightening masks in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands" (2). Even in a context dealing with bad taste, Nietzsche considers the mask as completely justifiable: "Bad taste has its rights no less than good taste, and even a prior right if it corresponds to a great need, provides certain satisfaction and, as it were, a universal language, an absolutely intelligible mask and gesture" (*GS* 77: 132). Like the rights of bad taste, the mask is given a value apart from taste. The mask is given as a necessity, like a language. The linguistic semblance in masking gives the appearance that a given stance possesses a particular type of importance, or is situated in a given place in a discursive world. Such is the case with any use of masks, whether attempts are being made to comply with or subvert orders.

Nietzsche's conceptions of perspective and the mask bear distinct and important correlations to one another. Each perspective, like the systems in language, has its own guiding principles, its own master signifier which articulates signification in particular ways. These signifying structures make language meaningful, articulate meaning in language, and indeed proliferate language. Masks communicate the contours of particular perspectives. The use of a mask involves the ability to take a cross section, as it were, of a particular perspective or power structure, to recognize the directions of its articulations, and to adopt a stance, a linguistic position, which accords with that particular "world." The ability to don different masks relates directly to this same ability to shift perspectives. Yet, just as perspectivism subverts single or entrenched perspectives, an understanding of the implications of masking subverts specific masks. When one recognizes that there is no one perspective or linguistic structure, or in other words, that identity is fluid, the boundaries among structures, and the requirement that one adhere to one positioning, are obliterated. We can make an important distinction here: while perspectivism and the mask relate to one another in that one mask corresponds to one perspective, at the same time we must conclude that a fixed masking is a limited perspectivism. Perspectivism exceeds the limits of any finite mask or number of masks, in that it requires a constant shifting. Perspectivism is more than the donning and putting off of masks--it understands the need to recognize the lack of any single entrenched structure.

Nevertheless, while an authentic perspectivism exceeds the limits of masking, the concept of the mask holds important implications in dealing with subjects and placing them based on their relative ability to constantly shift perspectives. Some subjects, as Nietzsche points out in the following passage from *Gay Science*, are stuck in their masks:

> *The hermit speaks once more*--We, too, associate with 'people'; we, too, modestly don the dress in which (*as* which) others know us, respect us, look for us--and then we appear in company, meaning among people who are disguised without wanting to admit it. We, too, do what all prudent masks do, and in response to every curiosity that does not concern our 'dress' we politely place a chair against the door. But there are also other ways when it comes to associating with or passing among men--for example, as a ghost, which is altogether advisable if one wants to get rid of them quickly and make them afraid. Example: One reaches out for us but gets no hold on us. That is frightening. Or we enter through a closed door. Or after all lights have been extinguished. Or after we have died. (365: 321)

In order to go among people and to communicate with them, one must take on the guise of inherent assumptions in a common linguistic order, which is Other. Those whom one encounters are disguised the same way, but do not want to admit it because they put particular stock, or more likely, faith, in that dominant order/Other to which they conform. It takes great pains, or is even impossible for these people to adopt new perspectives, or new relationships with or within another order. Further, trying to approximate another in a given order, and failing to recognize their positioning within the directions the order has set out, can lead to an experience of the uncanny. Such a presence may be uncanny because it presents features which the fixed order cannot account for, has no place for. If one did not quickly turn away from this foreign, undefinable entity, one's faith in the order would be severely shaken, resulting in a sort of moral vertigo, a lack of supporting reference point. Here we see the way that all orders have blind spots, and differences in masks, or more importantly, the presence of a fluid perspectivist identity, makes these blind spots (forcibly, violently, uncannily) evident. The same holds with a situation where something "enter[s] through a closed door": one, through shifting perspective, makes apparent a lack in an order, which a member of the company cannot see because of the blind spots in that order. However, those who understand perspective pass around and under ("*um unter*") subjects and the structures they inhabit with ease, "as a ghost," because with such understanding, boundaries become non-existent (*GS* 365n: 321; 365: 321). Such does not constitute a leap into an extra-linguistic realm, but rather the comprehension of the arbitrariness inherent in the parameters of given orders. This elaboration of the mask implicitly proposes a method for placing subjects with respect to their relative achievement of perspectivism. The fixed masking of "company" stifles the possibility for the constant shifts in vantage required by perspectivism. The "ghost," however, characterizes the activity of the perspectivist, who moves beyond and might disregard the strict alignments of totalities of beings.

While we have seen that masking is a limited perspectivism, there remains an important aspect of masking which should further be considered: its inevitable creation of signification. To Nietzsche, one is profound who "encounters his destinies and delicate decisions . . . on paths which few ever reach and of whose mere existence his closest intimates must not know[; whose] mortal danger is concealed from their eyes, . . . [as] is his regained sureness of life" (*BG&E* 40: 51). Of this profound spirit Nietzsche posits the following:

> such a concealed man who instinctively needs speech for silence and for burial in silence and who is inexhaustible in his evasion of communication, *wants* and sees to it that a mask of him roams in his place through the hearts and heads of his friends. . . . Every profound spirit needs a mask: even more, around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow*, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives. (*BG&E* 40: 51)

This perspective on masking demonstrates the way in which this process, an inevitable ascription of identity, creates. We see here a process involved in the evolution of a signifier. This is not simply an evolution of mere adaptation and self-preservation--it is these things too--but also something asserted, at least perceived as such. This "profound spirit" calls upon the ordering principles of working discourse structures as it passes among them, and in this way shields these structures and their participants from the dangerous upheaval that might occur with a glimpse into a new paradigm--and as it is in the interest of the exceptional that there remain a stable common body, a herd, it also protects itself in this way. But this is not nearly all. Passing among these worlds, leaving as it does "word[s] and sign[s]" that provide the inhabitants of those worlds with a mapping of its "being" and its particular articulation of meaning, this spirit forges into the realm of discourse through its own perspectivism, and becomes for those who have read its signs a signifier which summons a perceived stance, towards a positioning between and among structures. This is a point at which we can tie such an ability to shift perspective to the individual being. The unique, creative being might disregard the lines of deterministic systematization so much as to be capable not only of making the boundaries of identities and perspectives fluid, but also of creating new discursive worlds and perspectives out of the vast non-graduated field of unaligned signifiers.

To examine further this creative being, we should look to Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." In this piece on language, Nietzsche posits entrenched orders, "the great edifice of concepts," as possessing "the rigid regularity of a Roman columbarium" (85). This structure of the dead here corresponds to Nietzsche's state and Lacan's Other as language. Such a structure becomes rigidified because people "forget . . . that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and take . . . them to be the things themselves" (86). The "things themselves," like living beings, are singular events and beings, and the expression of them in the metaphor-play of language cannot apply fittingly to other events and beings. More importantly here, the creative being, or as Nietzsche puts it, the "*artistically creating* subject" (86), subverts such rigid ordering. The creating being does not forget that language metaphorizes being, and does not rely on past metaphors, whose metaphoricity is concealed, in order to describe the world or express identity. Rather, the artistically creating subject allows the flow "of a mass of images . . .

[to] stream . . . from the primal faculty of imagination like a fiery liquid" (86). Equipped with such an understanding, the creative being continually creates, through an endless play, its own metaphors for events and beings, as required for the expression of particular identity.

The interpretations of such unique structuring, however, cannot reach to a clear understanding of the unique individual leaving signals behind: we have only to point to the misunderstanding of Nietzsche as proto-Nazi to see how a too-quick glance can lead to dangerous misunderstanding of such a new structure, which cuts across existing structures in ways that unsettle, in ways that push many towards a strong urge to find some easy settlement. Understanding this point is important not only because it shows us the way a perspective, a new signification, makes room for itself and its development, but also because it shows how new perspectives (which by condition of being new are also foreign) can be too easily misunderstood towards unfortunate ends, towards ends that seek too quickly to position the new perspective within an already existing, and perhaps completely inappropriate order. But this development is also important in that it demonstrates another way in which the determinism of "self-contained" or dominant discourse structures might be altered, and broken up--how they are, of necessity, altered and broken up.

Ultimately, all linguistic structures involve a masking insofar as language that comes from an Other, which is language in common, cannot reach to individual particularity. Words and the ways they are used become masks whether we like it or not. Considering this, Nietzsche's and Lacan's concerns with style seem apt. If identity depends upon an interpretation of the words we use and how we use them, we can, with style, shape the contours of our identity. However, the more subtle the shifting of perspective, the easier it is to misunderstand, to misconstrue, to mistake one for something he/she is not, and thereby to obliterate distinction. Care must also be taken to keep in mind the singular nature of living beings. Since identity and its perception depend upon the way language is used, linguistic distinction becomes a matter of discursive, and potentially, actual life and death: if we allow ourselves to be enveloped wholly in some Other structure, or if we assume that actual people can be wholly subjects of discourse, identities can be obliterated and actual human lives become interchangeable tokens in a constantly shifting game of valuation. Since identity is based on the interactions of our distinctive positionings, and therefore is a construction, putting together identity becomes a matter of developing, in an open-ended process, a particular, unique perspectivism for oneself. As Nietzsche comments, "We . . . *want to become those we are*--human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves" (*GS* 335: 266). Who we become, who we create, is a matter of bringing about new, incomparable perspectives, discourses, and valuations, and remaining aware of such creativity.

Nietzschean and Lacanian discursive structures bear certain correlations in the way they see subjects' envelopment within them and subjects' necessity to appeal to such structures for meaningful expression. Further, such systems occasion Lacanian desire and the Nietzschean bad conscience, by-products of imposition which emerge in the system's lack of ability to fully articulate, account for, or express the living being. The Lacanian living being, and likewise Nietzsche's creating subject, present in their uniqueness opportunities for the disruption of rigid systems. Finally, Nietzschean perspectivism offers the means for maneuvering and creating beyond the confines of such systems, and the mask presents a way in which subjects might be understood in terms of their relative stasis, perspectival movement, and profundity in creating new meaning.

Such a relationship among these thinkers' conceptions offers an illuminating interpretive method for a study of *Cain* because that drama's situations correlate with the several divisions of conceptions set out here. Specifically, Cain is caught in the rigid discursive world of a punishing God, and desires change. In such a situation we witness the imposition of system and its effects upon the subject who realizes that the law of God does not suit him in his particularity. Such imposition occasions extreme desire in Cain, who experiments with a limited perspectivism and fails, proving incapable of shifting in the fluid manner which that way of existence requires. Cain forges a mask; yet this is not the constantly shifting, creative mask which attends perspectivism, but instead a fixing mask, a cipher. The Lucifer character, however, is the ultimate perspectivist, representative of the living, creating being, ever-shifting in his world-views and dancing among the endless possible signification represented in the abyss of space.

Cain and the Propagation of Failure in the Line of Adam

> Nine parts in ten of a man's sense or his nonsense, his successes and miscarriages in this world, depend upon their notions and their activity, and the different tracks and trains we put them into, so that when they are once set a-going, whether right or wrong . . . --away they go clattering like hey-go-mad; and by treading the same steps over and over again, they presently make a road of it, as plain and as smooth as a garden walk which when they are once used to, the devil himself shall not be able to drive him off it. (Sterne *Tristram Shandy* 9)

An analysis of Byron's *Cain* bears out the Nietzschean and Lacanian formulations dealt with in the previous section. In the beginning of the drama, we find God, who Adam lauds as "the Eternal! Infinite! All-Wise- / Who out of darkness on the deep didst make / Light on the waters with a word" (I.1-3), situated as master signifier in an enveloping linguistic system. This system corresponds to the structure Nietzsche explains in regard to the bad conscience, and that Lacan deals with in relation to the linguistic system which "envelop[s] the life of man" ("Function" 68). The characters have been accorded meaning and value within this system, through their interrelationships involving the presence of God. This linguistic systematization is Other to the subjects within it. Like the systems Nietzsche and Lacan deal with, God's order in *Cain* is not comprehensive and cannot reach to the particularity of the unique needs of his subjects.

Cain is an example of the split subject seeking wholeness. Unlike his parents, who have chosen to quench their erratic desire by God's prescribed means, Cain is driven by his desire to find a more fitting perspective. Ultimately, his search implicates him in as nihilist, since he cannot recognize the possibility for any world outside of God's static creation. Nietzsche's ideas on perspective are important here because Cain tries to shift his pros and cons, to find a new outlook on existence. In considering the inherent inconsistencies in

God's lacking order, Cain enables himself to take a new look, but the only insight he gains is that this lack is inherent, predetermined, and purposeful. The disillusionment enacted by Cain's realization that there has been and always will be such a lack in God's order, that even knowledge does not lead to wholeness, is ironic, in that God's is the very order to which Cain clings.

Lucifer, an example of Nietzsche's "*artistically creating*" being ("Truth" 86), shows Cain the opportunity to step out of God's essentialist system, giving information which Cain misinterprets as a deprecation of all existence. The infinite heaven which Lucifer presents resembles a vast, unaligned field of potential symbols which have been assigned no value. Cain takes the unexplainable field as a void; but Lucifer in fact presents Cain with a chance to step wholly outside God's created system, along with the potential to arrange and rearrange value and meaning as he sees fit. Despite the opportunity, Cain adheres to the tenets and prejudices of God's world, and ultimately his reactions result in another fall. Cain abandons his pursuit of another perspective, where knowledge, as he envisions it, is of key importance, in favor of a position within the original structure, which he nevertheless rails against. Cain's protest against a fallen state, against an inconsistency, only enacts further falling, only broadens the scope of inconsistency in the structure and the chasm separating him from direct access to bliss.

The linguistic structures of Nietzsche and Lacan, along with that accompanying desire, aid in an examination of the orders and history *Cain*. Nietzschean perspectivism, in terms of arrangements of Cain's valuations, is important as we look to his attempts to find a new arrangement, especially his "quest for knowledge" (II.ii.230). Lucifer presents the point of view of the unique, creative being, outside linguistic worlds and unbound by the essentialist prejudices of restrictive systems. Cain's rejection of Lucifer's freer view and his excessive demands and actions, taken together, demonstrate Cain's clinging to and implication within God's world. While Lacanian desire is disruptive and can alter determinism, it also serves as a stimulus which, when at a high enough pitch, can provoke the force of an established system, which reimposes its arrangement more thoroughly. Nietzsche's emphasis on the creative capacity of the mask, is of particular import here. Despite Cain's failure in perspectivism, he shapes contours of a particular mask, through interaction with Abel and action towards God, in the region between his questioning, and his ultimate reliance upon system. Given these considerations, I begin by presenting a history and prehistory of *Cain*, move on to Cain's "quest for knowledge" and its implications, including Lucifer's role in that search, and finally review Cain's extreme demands as he implicates himself, ironically, more and more thoroughly in God's systematization.

We should first examine briefly the enveloping linguistic structure in *Cain*. In relation to the ordering imposed upon the humans, God represents the Other of language. He has given the people their place and meaning in language. Thus, although "the earth is young, and yields . . . kindly / Her fruits with little labor" (I.49-50), Adam recognizes the rule that "[e]ach [has] his task and toil" (I.48). Adam's place, and those of his family, involves working for food. More generally, God has given them a language that he and not they created. God is the master signifier in this language--all its placements and meanings are articulated through relationships with him. As the praying Eve exclaims early in the drama, God "didst name the day, and separate / Morning from night, till then divided never-- / . . . [And] didst divide the wave from wave, and call / Part of thy work the firmament" (I.5-8). Eve's hail acknowledges God's suprmeacy in all things, and roots her discourse in ideas of God's "nam[ing" and call[ing]," or in other words his speech, which has set up relational situations through such faculties. Against this Godly signifier, differentiation and meaning comes about, and along with these comes an order of rank. All things are given their place within this linguistic order. Against the positioning of God, Abel finds his place as "humble first of shepherd[s]" (III.237), and Cain his as "a tiller of the ground" (III.216).

An examination of the original Edenic structure, which predates the action of the play, reveals the way in which this structure determines much of the action of the drama. It would seem that God, in placing humans in their place of Edenic bliss, might satisfy all needs and preclude demands in excess of need. To put it another way, an omnipotent God might have constructed an order which could indeed approximate the unique individual. This is not the case. With this original structure, we are not dealing with a special sort of closed system where all approximations in language are exact. Insofar as we are dealing with actual human beings, as opposed to simply subjects of discourse, such exacting approximations are precluded. The implications of this situation are fairly evident: God created creatures whose wishes even his language cannot fully realize. Further, his forbidding the trees already offers a route to the satisfaction of undisclosed desires. God's forbidding the fruit, his announcing its importance, makes it that much more viable an object of desire. He introduces the unlawful trees as signifiers into the field of discourse.

The humans know, because of this prescriptive introduction, that an open route to an articulation of some sort is available, advertised through a Godly nomination and notable placement. In their curiosity about the fruit and experimentation with it, Adam and Eve take on the desire of the Other.

In short, God sets the people up to fail without any necessity of intervention by serpent or devil. Lucifer points this out shortly after meeting Cain:

> Did *I* bid her pluck [the fruits] not?
> Did *I* plant things prohibited within
> The reach of beings innocent, and curious
> By their own innocence? (I 199-202)

By the very nature of the trees' prohibition, Lucifer argues, the humans were bound already, by God's arrangement, to transgress. God chose to deal with and satisfy the needs of his subjects in his own way, which might not fit the need, but which results in desire. Why would God choose to allow potentially disruptive desire into the system? God included the trees in the garden, or, in other words, included inconsistency in his order, because of a certain need on his own part. The prohibition of the fruit serves God's wish to retain his place and disallow too great a disruption in his order. Consider a passage from Genesis, which Byron looked to as a source: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and how, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22). If Adam and Eve become as Gods, or even if they merely rearrange their intersubjective relationships, God's place, at the very least, loses value. God has shown them something which he forbids them to desire, which is also a demonstration of his own wish to retain his position of power where all look to him for meaning. God ultimately wants his subjects to fail so that he might bind them closer to himself through punishing them with more restrictive precepts. Paul Cantor posits Lucifer's stance on God as involving the notion that "the defects in creation are to be traced to a fundamental lack in the Creator" (51). As we see here, we can as safely say that this is indeed the stance of the drama itself, as its facts are presented. This lack consists of an insecurity on God's part; he needs the safety of a rigid edifice in order to maintain his all-important position, and creativity on the part of his subjects compromises that security.

Thus, with the eating of the fruit, the desire-driven cycle of falling begins. In Eden, God imparts to Adam and Eve that all their needs are satisfied there. With the eating of the fruit, the humans make a demand, and insofar as this demand overshoots need, it opens a place for erratic desire. Because of the transgression of God's law, because Adam and Eve find a gap in his order, God banishes them from Eden. This removal denies not only access to objects of desire such as the forbidden fruit and the lost ease of Eden, but, most importantly, the proximity to God. Adam, who "has beheld the God himself" (I.503), now "[a]dores the invisible only" (I.499). Adam's offspring only see God "in his works" (I.505). Adah sees God "in [her] father, who is God's own image; / Or in his angels" (I.506-07). God's removal disallows a direct reassurance against doubt about his nature and identity, and, as God certainly knows, makes the opportunity for doubt and desire greater. The humans are thus forced to rely much more on the linguistic order, the embodiment of God, which has already failed them, to support their scheme of reference. Such a reliance is pervasive, as we find in the humans' constant attention to God's "nam[ing]," "call[ing]," and "mak[ing] / . . . with a word" (I.5; 7; 1-2), or in other words, attention to God's language rather than his presence. In addition, Adam, and implicitly the others (besides Cain) "trust" that God will hear their "fervent[,] . . . loud" prayers, another indication of their reliance upon the language as the entity most proximate to God (I.25; 24).

God reestablishes his order with certain more thorough restrictions. Knowledge is in the world, now the object of a need made manifest through the preceding ordeal. Rather than prescribing some method for the pursuit of knowledge, or even trying to account for its presence in his system more fully, God makes his system more restrictive and decrees that humans must now work for food. A statement from Nietzsche on physical labor illuminates the reasoning behind such restriction: "It is beyond doubt that . . . . mechanical activity . . . alleviates an existence of suffering to a not inconsiderable degree: this fact is today called, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings of work." The alleviation consists in this, that the interest of the sufferer is directed entirely away from his suffering" (*GM* III 18: 134). God needs a certain level of desire so that he may continue to bind his subjects through punishment; but he does not want a continuation of open rebellion, and so he redirects such desire with work, in the manner Nietzsche describes here. Adam and Eve accept the bad conscience associated with the unfitting system, which has been imposed upon them, and find alleviation from their internalized ordeal through physical labor. While Cain's family seems to accept this redirecting work ethic, Cain cannot follow in such a glaring, self-abnegating, contradiction.

The erratic desire of Adam and Eve passes to their son, whose desire is the desire of the Other, namely his mother, but also of God and Adam. It is little wonder that their son, who acquired his language from them and "heard [God's words] from those who heard them" (I.206), should desire the same things they had, along with the things newly forbidden them after the fall. Eden, along with the trees of Cain's parents, is notably advertised to Cain by angels and humans. For example, the "fiery-sworded cherubim" (I.173) that guard Eden rearticulate the original prohibition of the fruit and at the same time point Cain's way to that realm which he desires. Also, though it avails neither Adam and Eve nor their offspring to speak of the Eden they cannot regain, they "talk to [Cain] / Of serpents, and of fruits and trees" (I.170-71), passing their desire for that place on to their son. Cain, like his parents, is split due to the fact that a certain order imposes upon him which cannot approximate his unique needs, being, or identity. As Cain comments regarding the contrast between discourse and his own experience, "I never could / Reconcile what I saw with what I heard" (I.168-69). Cain does not know the bliss of Eden--he sees only the toil of his own life, split off from his parents' description--but he has been taught to desire it.

The lack Cain perceives in God's order consists of several factors. For one, Cain did not commit the original sin, and he wonders why he too suffers for it: "Toil! And wherefore should I toil?--because / My father could not keep his place in Eden. / What had *I* done in this?--I was unborn" (I.65-67). Cain's punishment is misplaced. The "I" of Cain's subject "had . . . done" nothing in the Edenic transgressions of his parents, yet he is placed in a system where he takes on the guilt of those crimes. Cain's questioning is a demand that language, and God as Other of language, accommodate Cain in his particularity. He is not the same man who sinned, but the imposition of structure implicates him as such. Another factor in Cain's critique of God, as good, is Cain's recognition of inconsistency in valuation. Cain comments: "Because / He is all-powerful must all-good, too, follow?" (I.77-79). God, supposedly "all-good," is only "all-powerful" in his imposition, and also "didst permit the serpent to creep in" (I.19). God permits or even fosters evil--the evil of the snake, of the discomfort of toil, and of imposing the parents' guilt on the children.

Cain experiments with a perspectivism resembling that which Nietzsche describes, but falls short. This experimentation demonstrates Cain's desire to rearrange God's world so that it might align better with his own subjectivity. Cain, the only character willing and able to rearrange his pro's and con's in order to design a new, more apt perspective, is bound to fail. For one reason, any demand of God's system is transgressive. God's order, which wants to be the only order, would not have another signifier arrange meaning towards itself, or "become gods as we" (I.105). Cain himself can never forsake God's world enough to realize that 1) other linguistic worlds wholly outside God's world might be articulated, and that 2) the absence of an entrenched, created world, is not necessarily the equivalent of a void as absence of all possible worth. Cain's desire to create a new perspective closes off any perspectivism in that the latter involves a constant shifting, not merely a switch to a single perspective, even if new. I treat first Cain's failing search for knowledge, and move into a discussion of Lucifer and the information with which he provides Cain.

The route Cain pursues to arrange a new perspective involves a "quest for knowledge" (II.ii.230). Cain wants to set up a perspective which emphasizes knowledge as opposed to an "all-good" God and work. Knowledge has in fact become the object of Cain's desire. After his questioning of the need for toil, cited above, Cain continues:

> Toil! and wherefore should I toil?--because
> My father could not keep his place in Eden.
> What had *I* done in this?--I was unborn,
> I sought not to be born; nor love the state
> To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
> Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
> Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this?
> The tree was planted, and why not for him?
> If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
> The fairest in the centre? (I.65-74)

Here we see Cain's fervor for knowledge, which he believes will help him understand the split imposed upon him. As Cain points out that God's imposed order is more fitting for his father than for himself, he endeavors to question and search out the nature of things. Cain questions not only his parents' motivations, but more importantly, those of God. When he asks "why place him near it . . . / The fairest in the centre?" (I.73-74), Cain comes close to discovering that God has in fact set his father's race up to fail.

Cain concentrates on the gaps in God's order, yet his analysis proves strictly limited. For example, he wants to know how, if "knowledge is good, / And life is good[,]

. . . how can both be evil?" (I.37-38). He wants to know why the humans should not have the trees' fruits if the fruit is essentially good. In his constant questioning, and in his sentiment that Lucifer "canst not / Speak aught of knowledge which [he] would not know" (I.247-48), Cain seeks to set knowledge up in an all-important position like that of God. Cain's concern, moreover, is not with knowledge in any relative sense, where it manifests itself to him differently according to situation, but in an essential sense, where knowledge is a quality in itself. Nietzsche posits, in "Truth and Lies," that "Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin" (83). Cain concerns himself with the concept of knowledge as a "good" (I.37) in itself, a concept which he has received through discourse and not through any "individual original experience" (Nietzsche 83). Cain's conception of knowledge comes from God's created system. This condition presents problems because, in the context of God's system, one can only see knowledge as a value in itself. God's world is an essentialism because its relationships and positionings are fixed, and are taken as possessing value in themselves. Knowledge occupies for Cain the same original positioning as something good in itself, thus precluding an escape from the essentialist world-view from which he originates. Cain merely seeks to rearrange qualities already present in God's discursive ordering, which because of such entrenched placement, are, like God, considered as essential qualities. Even when elements are moved around, the fixed system determines that the positionings will retain their original value. For example, if Cain moves knowledge into the position of God, he merely makes knowledge his God and oppressor--he will seek wholeness in knowledge rather than God, but this new God, in its predetermined position, can only keep Cain lacking wholeness. As Cain himself comes to believe, the tree of knowledge "was a lying tree" (II.ii.161); the tree's "*promised knowledge*" (162) proves as unfitting for Cain as God's ill placement of him and his family in the post-Eden world. This fact dooms to failure Cain's search for a more fitting order.

Cain's search itself implies his belief that through pursuit of essences he might be made whole. Here we find Cain's prejudice about essential qualities and the goals of his journey:

> LUCIFER. Was not thy quest for knowledge?
>
> CAIN. Yes: as being
>
> The road to happiness
>
> LUCIFER. If truth be so,
>
> Thou hast it.
>
> CAIN. Then my father's God did well
>
> When he prohibited the fatal tree. (II.ii.230-33)

Knowledge and happiness are equatable for Cain to an essential good, a completeness or wholeness. When Cain brings up happiness, like knowledge, he depends on that conception of happiness received in the confines of God's system. In other words, he seeks a return to Edenic bliss, through knowledge, since the only happiness he has heard of in his toiling life is "what [his parents] call their Paradise" (I.172). Cain has no experience of such bliss. In God's system, he might only figure his experience as "toil" (I.65). And, not realizing the value of "individual original experience" (Nietzsche "Truth"

83), he can only rely on an imprecise concept which he has received. If he questions far enough to realize that what God deems as good may not necessarily be so, he nevertheless is left believing that "happiness" has everything to do with a regained Eden and with an impossible renewed wholeness within that same inconsistent system. Such a quest is bound to fail, as wholeness is never a viable goal for an identity within the confines of systems: any system will always have its lacks. Cain's attempt at perspectivism fails because he has in fact never shifted his point of vantage. Upon Cain's return from space, he displays not some new perspectivist attitude, but rather "feel[s] / [His] littleness again" (III.67-68). And rather than a stance which redirects or negates the imposing placement of guilt which characterizes God's world, Cain continues to participate therein, condemning his parents for his own dissatisfaction: "they sinn'd, then *let them* die!" (III.76). Besides these problems, Cain sought to create a single perspective, rigid like that of God, rather than a shifting, creative perspectivism, which must persist in fluidity. He merely substitutes knowledge in the place of God, leaving the system and its positionings intact.

The main failure of *Cain* is not the murder of Abel. The roots of this failure lay in the more fundamental failure of relying on essentialist prejudices and misinterpreting and rejecting Lucifer. Despite his protest against God, Cain can only understand things, events, and beings, in terms of that one rigid discursive creation, as we have seen with his understanding of knowledge and happiness. Even his attempts to rearrange God's order merely maintain it, and these attempts clearly aim at some unattainable past, not any new creativity. In this way, in clinging to stasis, Cain is a nihilist. He is one "who [is] disguised without wanting to admit it" (Nietzsche *GS* 365: 321). Cain begins to show a more self-abnegating nihilism near the end of his journey: "It was a lying tree--for we *know* nothing. / At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price* / Of death--but *knowledge* still: but what *knows* man?" (II.ii.161-63). Lucifer's answer reasserts the authenticity of the tree's promise: "It may be death leads to the ***highest*** knowledge; / And being of all things the sole thing certain, / At least leads to the surest science: Therefore / The tree was true, though deadly" (II.ii.164-67). Cain, however, eventually takes his answer, along with his other comments about pointlessness, to indicate a nihilistic world-view on Lucifer's part. Despite Lucifer's exposition of a limitlessness of worlds, "such realms" (II.ii.167) merely prompt in Cain the conviction that "all / Seems dim and shadowy" (II.ii.175-76). Cain hears, in Lucifer's statement on death, that only actual death leads to knowledge, that the highest knowledge is only attainable after death. And if this is so, then what value has a life in pursuit of knowledge? Exclaiming "Alas, I seem / Nothing" (II.ii.420-21), Cain voices this latter sentiment. The message Cain gleans from Lucifer's journey convinces him that on either side of short painful human existence is an eternity. In light of this idea, Cain cannot see how mortal life should be worth anything, partly because he is so uncomfortable trying to orient himself within the vastness of eternity and endless space, a field of endless possibility but without the securely fixed valuation to which Cain is used.

Unlike Cain, Lucifer abhors the entrenchment of a system. Lucifer represents the living, creative being discussed by Nietzsche and Lacan. Lucifer begins the journey into "*The Abyss of Space*" with a critique of God's discursive world and the conviction which binds subjects there:

> Believe--and sink not! doubt--and perish! thus
> Would run the edict of the other God,
> Who names me demon to his angels; they
> Echo the sound to miserable things,
> Which knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
> Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
> Evil or good what is proclaimed to them
> In their abasement. (II.i.5-12)

Lucifer notes that the humans are bound by the system of "the word which strikes their ear" (II.i.10). The messages passed along through God and his angels have arranged the humans' subjectivities. The humans have emerged in a discursive world which orders them, holds them in check, and which they cannot see past. Lucifer clearly distances himself from such a need, and also suggests that the humans should refine their own experience of perception through paying more attention to their "shallow senses" (II.i.9), representing their own living being, as opposed to the words which order them, which hold them enthralled as passive subjects of discourse.

In giving Cain information about the essences he perceives, Lucifer further distances himself from created orders:

> CAIN. But one of you makes evil.
> LUCIFER. Which?
> CAIN. Thou! for

If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?
LUCIFER. And why not he who made? *I* made ye not;
Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine. (II.ii.393-96)

Cain remains under the assumption that since Lucifer is contrary to God, and that God is supposedly good, then Lucifer must be evil. However, Lucifer points out that this line of thought does not necessarily follow. "[H]e who made" (II.ii.95) also made evil, allowed it, and dealt with matters in a way where desire would inevitably spring up, leading to more evil. More importantly, Lucifer makes the point that he does not require the creation of subjects in order to retain a position within any world. He does not, as does God, feel the need to gratify or to flatter himself by creating a world of signification where he is the basis of constant and unchanging valuation. As Lucifer comments just before the interstellar journey, "I would be aught above--beneath-- / Aught save a servant or sharer of / His power. I dwell apart" (I.306-08). Further, Lucifer declares that he "[p]refer[s] an independency of torture / To the smooth agonies of adulation" (I.385-86). Since Lucifer has no need to create any binding "adulation," he need neither form alliance with any particular, much less essential, articulation or principle.

Lucifer presents an example of Nietzsche's creating subject, and markedly contrasts with God, who wishes to maintain a rigid edifice. Cain's early solution for mending the inconsistency between the two introduces a fitting opportunity to contrast them: "Would there were only one of ye! perchance / An unity of purpose might make union / In elements which seem now jarr'd in storms" (II.ii.377-79). While this passage suggests that Cain may want to merge God and Lucifer in order to create a more fitting order, Cain does not realize that the two entities are not at all compatible. This is not to say that they do represent good and evil, as essential qualities--this is only the view from within God's world--but that God requires his entrenched order, in order to maintain his position as master of created system. The independent Lucifer, on the other hand, could never be pinned down within any system, and could never exist as such in his always "dwell[ing] apart" (I.308). Cain's diametrical opposition of God and Lucifer, and good and evil, is prejudiced through its entrenchment in God's world, just as are his conceptions of knowledge and happiness. Lucifer neither has a hand in the creation of evil, nor in any creation of creature, system, or valuation whatsoever. He does not experience the same need to establish monolithic hierarchies of valuation which through their placement of subjects bind all who are involved in particular positions, including the supreme being. Lucifer who would always "[p]refer an independency of torture / To the smooth agonies of adulation" (I.385-86), does not desire wholeness or an unequivocal essence, unlike Cain--such a wholeness would be stifling for the energetic, creative being,.

Lucifer understands good and evil as relative concepts, a point which he drives home when saying "He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd / *Evil*; but what will be the *good* he gives? / Were I the victor, *his* works would be deem'd / The only evil ones" (II.ii.443-46). He claims that the meanings of good and evil are all in the deeming. A structure that has been imposed, to keep itself secure, says that the imposition is good. Lucifer also points out that all subjects can themselves deem things good or evil, despite the imposed prescriptions in a system: "Evil and good are things in their own essence, / And not made good or evil by the giver; / But if he gives you good--so call him; if / Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*" (II.ii.452-55). Lucifer's use of "essence" is misleading; he does not mean that good and evil are essential qualities, but that good and evil are not valued negatively or positively in themselves, but only in God's world. They exist, he implies, but apart from values. Lucifer's admonition to rely upon individual perception urges Cain to recognize the living, creative being with unique senses, perceptions, and drives. Even as the journey ends and Cain is oblivious to the opportunity Lucifer presents, the latter continues subtly to urge him toward the realization that he can create his own valuations.

Lucifer presents the possibility, which Cain is completely incapable of understanding, that Cain might wholly remove himself from God's world. In showing Cain the expanse of space, Lucifer symbolically presents him with a vast ungraduated field where there is infinite possibility for world-making, unbound by the essentialism implicit in God's already petrified order of symbols. As Lucifer imparts to Cain concerning the possibility he has shown the mortal, "Thou knowest that there is / A state, and many states beyond thine own" (II.ii.173-74). Lucifer offers Cain the possibility to become an artistically creative subject, a living being, who instead of moving within the circles of God's rigid edifice, might allow the "mass of images which originally streamed from the primal faculty of human imagination like a fiery liquid" (Nietzsche "Truth" 86) to stream forth, into new "states" once more. In other words, Lucifer urges Cain to create his own, more fitting metaphors for the particular events and identifications of his life. Cain must relativize his valuations of good an evil, as illustrated in Lucifer's instructions above. Furthermore, Lucifer urges Cain to "judge / Not by words, though of spirits" (II.ii.456-

57), or in other words, not to wholly invest himself in God's monolithic linguistic order. Rather, Cain should valuate based on "the fruits / Of [his] existence" (II.ii.457-58). When Lucifer speaks of death leading to knowledge (II.ii.164), he deals with a death to the "state" imposed by God. When that system of valuation can die for Cain, when "God is dead" (Nietzsche *GS*, 108: 167), then Cain can arrange meaning and identity for himself apart from, and not simply through a rearrangement of that scheme of values

Near the end of the journey, we find Lucifer deprecating the world Cain clings to. However, he also implicitly offers possibilities to Cain, as he does throughout the journey. As Lucifer nears his departure from Cain, he reiterates his offerings to the disoriented mortal:

> LUCIFER. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
> Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
> Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.
> CAIN. And to what end have I beheld these things
> Which thou hast shown me?
> LUCIFER. Didst thou not require
> Knowledge? And have I not, in what I show'd,
> Taught thee to know thyself?
> CAIN. Alas! I seem
> Nothing.
> LUCIFER. And this should be the human sum
> Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness;

> Bequeath that science to thy children, and
> ’Twill spare them many tortures (II.ii.414-25)

When Lucifer speaks of “convey[ing Cain] to [his own] world” (II.ii.414), he deals with God’s created order, a specific discursive world, and not existence altogether. The reduction of life within such an order to eight items should demonstrate to Cain the limitations of a habitation within that world, even where it is rearranged. So long as Cain resides within that order, he will continue to find himself restricted in such ways. Lucifer’s insistence that he has “taught [Cain] to know [him]self” (II.ii.420) is authentic in that he has indeed presented to Cain the limitations on expressions of individual identity, which God’s system imposes. Cain’s identity within that world is limited by certain precepts which control the ways in which he can arrange valuations in order to express meaning. It is natural that Cain should “seem [as n]othing” (II.ii.420-21), having realized the inherent problems with being subsumed by a system. There can be no uniqueness in systematization. Cain fails to realize, however, that in his critique of God’s world, Lucifer also celebrates the creative living being. Lucifer’s statement about “[n]othing” being the “human sum of knowledge” represents another critique of created system--systems deprive unique individuals of identity and so long as subjects operate within a system, cling to an order such as God’s, their identity is nil and their knowledge is limited to a bland, lifeless nihilism. If mortals knew and could accept this beforehand, as Lucifer suggests, it might save them the trouble of making excessive demands and receiving more recrimination from such a system. Cain, again, sees the information as deprecation of all existence. Cain fails in his search for knowledge due to his reliance upon essentialist principles and established system; we see this same sort of failure as Cain summarily misreads Lucifer and the information he presents.

McVeigh comments that Lucifer is most likely a sort of manifestation of "one part . . . of Cain's soul" which "shapes inchoate doubts and ambitions in Cain's own mind" (343).[1] He goes on to argue that Lucifer influences Cain in three ways: 1) by presenting him with a nihilistic world-view, 2) by "hasten[ing] Cain's own tendency toward emotional disorder," and 3) by "widen[ing] the rift between him and his family" (344-45). I see Cain being affected in these ways on his journey with Lucifer, just as Eve and Adam are affected by the serpent's presence, and by God's warning against the fruit. However, while Cain is influenced in ways that correspond to McVeigh's items, we cannot, because of this influence, deduce Lucifer's own stance. Lucifer eludes any particular situation. Cain's ultimate nihilism, associated with his eventual return to God's original system, should be seen in the context of his failed search for knowledge and complete misinterpretation of Lucifer. It is important to stress that even before the entry of Lucifer, Cain was already transgressing against God's order, simply in imploring, "wherefore should I toil" (I.65). In addition, Lucifer is in no way implicated in any temptation or deception simply because Cain has perceived his presence as uncanny. In fact, Lucifer has illuminated matters for Cain, who misunderstands the message. By emphasizing a temptation of Cain by Lucifer, critics such as McVeigh fall prey to the tendency to identify what accompanies Cain's journey as the *cause* for his fall.

Lucifer has no interest in bringing about another fall, which he implies in the following effort to distance himself from a personal implication in God's world: "*I* made ye not; / Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine" (II.ii. 395-96). He functions, rather, wholly outside of God's system. If he were concerned with attacking this system, he would indeed implicate himself as mischief maker, an agent of a God who seeks to bind his subjects closer to him through punishment. Rather, in his endless play, Lucifer cannot help but occasionally pass, on tangents, into and out of established worlds. This does not mean that he occupies or takes a hand in the operation of these worlds, though obviously, as in this case, his presence is at times unavoidably felt. Only insofar as Lucifer passes, ghost-like, among worlds, can he be mapped. As Nietzsche comments, such a singular being is inevitably misinterpreted (*BG&E* 40: 51). Without even engaging in systems, Lucifer's occasional presence around them poses a critique of God as a "supreme" being who nevertheless requires the creation of subjects and a subjecting structure in order to conserve a place of power. Lucifer clearly distances himself from those who "Echo the sound [of] . . . / / God['s] . . . edict" (II.ii.8; 6), and who "Worship the word which strikes their ear, . . . deem[ing] / Evil or good what is proclaimed to them" (II.ii.10-11): "I will have none such" (II.ii.12). He requires no such binding placement within the linguistic security of systems for solace. Rather, Lucifer's "flight" through space "show[s] . . . the history / Of past, and present, and of future worlds" (II.ii.23-25). While history of past and present may appear stable enough notions, Lucifer's notion of the history of "future worlds" radicalizes the entire endeavor, and demonstrates Lucifer's emphasis on creativity, open possibility, and a fluid perspectivism which seeks to examine and create from as many vantages as possible. In short, Lucifer dances among worlds.

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[1] And Steffan, pg. 365.

Due to his desire to find security and to right himself rather than to take advantage of the opportunity a lack of gravity can present, Cain, by contrast, clings to God's order, through forcing it to punish him, if necessary. He reacts to the moral vertigo brought about by his inability to place Lucifer by demanding that some world, namely God's, reassert itself so long as it provide him with a point of reference. Cain's final demand calls for the proximity of God's presence and favor. In his prayer over his offering of fruits, Cain exclaims "[i]f a shrine without victim, / And altar without gore, may win thy favor, / Look on it! And for him who dresseth it, / He is--such as thou made him; and seeks nothing / Which must be won by kneeling: If he's evil, / Strike him! . . . / . . . If he be good, / Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt!" (III.266-73). In the first two and a half lines Cain persists in seeing God as not only allowing evil, but encouraging it. The lines that follow, however, are of more importance. In demanding that God judge him, Cain calls on God to make an appearance in order to strike or spare him, again transgressing the divinely imposed limitations. God makes an appearance, not in response to Cain's demand or in proximity to Cain, but rather as a reception of Abel's offering and a divine visitation upon him, estranging Cain once more, splitting him off further from that which he desires. The stage direction notes that "*a whirlwind throws down the altar of Cain*" (III 279), but this serves as a sign that God will not be visiting Cain, will not address or be addressed through the given medium. When Cain's demands are not met or answered, he restates them more aggressively, trying a more direct access to God, to goad him into action. Either favorable or violently forceful visitation is acceptable to Cain; either, he believes, lifts the prohibition and brings God into proximity, making Cain whole.

While Cain claims to destroy Abel's altar in the name of the innocent "blood of lambs and kids / Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in blood" (III.292-93), he in fact continues to pursue direct access to God. Cain has little concern for animals: he has already decided that all mortal life is meaningless, and he is ultimately making one last effort to demand that God prove him wrong. When Cain purports to destroy the altar, he really seeks only to provoke God further and to seek access towards God through that altar, or through its destruction. Critics generally agree with this latter statement. As Cantor remarks, "[u]nfortunately for Abel, in his brother's eyes he becomes the mask or wall standing between Cain and his Creator" (59).[2] Cain seeks to provoke God, but when Abel defends his own altar, he stands between Cain and his only route to God and a possible satisfaction for demand. The fact that Cain warns Abel, along with his four calls to Abel to "give way" (III.303; 308; 310; 311) and his demand that Abel "give back" (III.305), points to the conclusion that Cain's aim is to provoke God through the altar.

Despite Abel's mere standing-between, the killing is not merely incidental and does accomplish certain ends, one being the creation, through linguistic means, of a mask. It is of particular import that Cain is the first to put together language in such a way, successfully enacting, with uncontrolled anger and bloodthirstiness as distinguishing features, the mask of the killer. In his stumbling roughshod among various erratic perspectives--a nihilistic stance, which nonetheless is quite concerned with a re-verification of imposed system; an attempt to align himself with his brother's appointed positioning; and an attempt to assert authority over God and his sacred rites--Cain slays Abel. In so doing he takes on as mask the blurred markings of his fitful shifting between perspectives. For example, Cain understands that he has taken on a new designation after the murder, realizing he has "become / The native of another and worse world" (III.342-43). Further, in her curse, Cain's mother refers to him as "yon incarnate spirit / Of death" (III.419-20), who should feel such designation through "all the curses / Of life . . . [up]on him" (III.421-22). Exclaiming "fratricide!" Eve also decrees that "henceforth that word is *Cain*" (III. 438), thus defining her son and his designation specifically in terms of the situation of this first killing. Cain also brings to bear his misreadings of Lucifer's message, in that he takes the suggestion that there may be infinite substitution of subjects and signifiers in the field of language to mean that he can make such substitutions with living beings as well. Cain has forgotten the creative living being, and sees people merely as subjects of discourse. This fact demonstrates that Cain has already become so completely integrated within God's order that he is willing to shape his own system along those same lines as the original structure. Cain dooms Abel to death, saying "Then take thy life unto thy God, / Since he loves lives" (III.316-17). Here, Cain makes a substitution of Abel's "life" for the "lives" of the animals which Abel has sacrificed. In this way, Cain creates language where the uniqueness of beings can be denied (ordered) so thoroughly that they are bereft of life and are wholly subjects of discourse. Thoroughly implicated in God's system, Cain now desires its structuring so strongly that he has occupied a position from which he means to operate the system, to enact its determinism through the subjection of others. Abel becomes in Cain's substitution no more than a sign passed among the pathways of discourse, and, bereft of individual existence, can be sacrificed with seemingly as little consequence.

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[2] And Elledge, pg. 51.

Cain's demand goes unanswered, and significantly, when the holy inquiry begins, it is "*the* ANGEL *of the Lord*" who comes to deal with Cain, and not God's voice, "[i]n thunder" (III.467; I.207). Even in punishing Cain, God makes no appearance and only answers Cain's demand insofar as he re-impresses his system upon him. There are several further ironic implications of this final situation. As Cantor comments, "in revolt, Cain plays right into the hands of the tyrannical Creator, accomplishing God's purposes in the very act of defying Him. . . . Seemingly against his will, Cain finds himself turning into a parody or mirror image of the God he hates: isolated, discontented, and destroying others to relieve his own frustration" (56). In sacrificing Abel on the altar, Cain dons a mask which he has valued as a sign or herald of God's way. In other words, in his railing against the order God has imposed, and through his metaphorizing of Abel's actual existence, Cain at the same time assumes the similarly discursive subjectivity of the killer within that order, and thus becomes subject to the full force of God's punishment. In this moment, where Cain rejoins God's world, he seals his fate--it is his defining moment, and through it he becomes inextricably bound up (as high priest) in a system he decries as unjust and inconsistent. He does not become whole, but becomes wholly encompassed and enveloped in that system. The manner in which he marks his place there implicates him in a way very similar to the way he implicates God--Cain becomes unjust and inconsistent. Finally, Cain aligns himself with the God he rails against.

While I agree when Cantor asserts that, "in the absence of a divinely imposed order, the Byronic hero must develop his own code to live by," and that, "for Cain the understanding that the world order is not moral comes as an epiphany" (61), it is difficult, in light of the evidence at hand, to accept that, "Murdering Abel becomes [Cain's] way of having himself driven out into the life of solitary wandering he secretly craves" (61). First of all, Cain openly craves a sort of solitary wandering--at least a wandering that involves pathways of meaning different from those of the established system. After his interstellar journey, during which he concludes that nothing earthly has any value or meaning, Cain's "secret craving" is more likely a desire for a reimposition of some--any--kind of meaning which will make existence seem less worthless. Though he has tried to "develop his own code," upon the failure of this venture, he desperately clings to any code which will give meaning. For all his railery against God and against making sacrifices, Cain nevertheless makes clear appeals that God favor his offering over that of Abel. For example, Cain argues that his

> blooming fruits of earth . . .
>
> . . . may seem \
>
> Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
>
> Suffer'd in life or limb, and rather form
>
> A sample of thy works, than supplication
>
> To look on ours! (III.259, 262-66)

Here Cain argues for God's disfavor of Abel's animal offering, which with its necessary burning, not to mention the rearing of the animals, emphasizes human effort rather than Godly. Further, he praises God's work which the fruit evinces, and at the same time values such Godly work as superior to that of humans. While Cain's more prevalent excess of demands seeks to provoke God (and in so doing still implicitly demands that God accommodate him within his world), Cain is seen in the example above to directly ask for the favor of the system he has hated. In this way, Cain differs from other Byronic heroes such as Manfred--Cain, unlike others, is broken and dependent.

Cain delimits himself in such a way that he cannot elude identification along the lines of God's world. For one, he has already given up his failing attempt at perspectivism, which potentially could have led to new creativity, in favor of an enveloping essentialist nihilism. More importantly, he has refused the opportunity presented by Lucifer. In taking an innocent life, at the same moment as he protests the taking of innocent life (and that Edenic life of innocence), Cain implicates all that he is and can be in God's world. His exile may have been completely tolerable had he pursued knowledge, or the individualism of Lucifer. Cain realizes his new powerlessness, acquiescing that "I did not seek / For life, nor did I make myself" (III.509-10), a statement which suggests that Cain now understands that despite his unasked-for birth he might still have taken some hand in creating his identity. However, he is now inescapably in a world that God has imposed, a fact which the Angel verifies in saying "what is done is done" (III.516). Cain demonstrates an understanding of his newly fixed identity, acquiescing that "That which I am, I am" (III.509). He takes on the badge of the killer, realizing that designation as inescapable. Really he has two marks; by seeing him, people know he occupies the place of "the killer" in God's articulation of meaning. His identity is now comprised not of the potential he once possessed as creative being, but of the signs which have marked him within God's order. The other mark, the one which says "do not harm him" merely keeps that place well defined and delimited. Now that he is "the killer," he is completely bound in this system and can take no steps to remove himself.

In pointing out the gaps in God's system, Cain reinscribes those gaps within his own discourse. In defining the inconsistencies in the order, Cain also defines again the lines along which that order is arranged. In deprecating that order, he also puts it in a place of importance. Like the mark on his brow, the splits in the order are tattooed upon his discourse and all his movement through it. Short of stepping outside of God's order, Cain is destined both to enact another fall through his raillery against a split, a raillery which defines and arranges the split again, and to move constantly towards further splitting, more defined and more blatant splitting, and further falls. Indeed, with time, it must become more and more difficult not to fall; objects of desire become more numerous and more restricted; demand for them increases; needs become more difficult to satisfy; the distance between God and man becomes greater and greater. And as more and more becomes restricted, there is more and more potential for splitting, as humans will be constantly demanding what is just out of reach, a chance to reach what is still further out of reach, a chance to go back and try for oneself the things one knows he/she has already failed at, a chance to fail, like Cain, again.

The linguistic structures of Nietzsche's state and Lacan's Other provide methods for placement for the arrangement of God's rigid world and the subjects therein. Signifiers such as God, knowledge, and happiness, retain their value in itself, despite Cain's attempt at perspectivism, which merely seeks to rearrange them, not to make them manifest in any new creative interrelationships. While Nietzsche's perspectivism provides a reference for Cain's desire to shift perspective, such a shift falls short of the fluid creativity which a constantly shifting perspectivism requires. Lucifer, however, is the perspectivist *par excellence*, an example of Nietzsche's artistically creating subject, who offers possibilities which the severely restricted Cain misinterprets outright. Upon his return to earth, the omnipresence of Lacanian desire in Cain drives him more and more violently toward some complete envelopment within a system where love and hate are unconditional. Cain's repeated demands produce a desire so great that he loses himself in discourse, and sacrifices the life of his brother, Cain's final failure, to that same body.

Conclusion

Cain's failures ultimately re-articulate Romantic integration, though the drama critiques, to an extent, such an idea. Despite Cain's exile, God's system envelops him, fixing him in a position much more thoroughly and permanently than when he is a fitful rebel. Though Cain rebels openly for almost the entire drama, he consistently seeks the wholeness, which, despite the unfitting nature of God's world, he believes resides in integration with that world. Though finally the integration takes the form of a new imposition onto Cain and his descendants, his subjectivity nevertheless comes into an arrangement according with the transcendent, essentialist world which he prizes. Besides both the lack of free will on Cain's part, and the fact that what might have been a unique individualism in him is obliterated by the imposition, Cain still comes into an alignment which accords with the confines of God's realm. Lucifer, however, is not caught in such a way, and is a revolutionary figure in Romantic poetry, a figure which stands triumphantly outside the limits of rigid systematization and any need for integration. Lucifer remains beyond both the system and the requirement of integration for creativity, artistically forming the expression he requires fitting the moment and for the unique things and events which he encounters. An appeal to the Romantic literary theory of *Cain*'s time lays groundwork for a look at the drama's grounding in such theory, and comparisons as to its critiquing certain of these key ideas. Such a critique is implicit in most of *Cain*, but is presented chiefly by Lucifer's distance from such integration, and his presentation of the possibility for limitless revaluation, a revolutionary stance which looks ahead to the thought of Nietzsche and Lacan.

The Romantic literary theory of the era of *Cain* requires of the poet an integral alignment among elements or faculties. Samuel Coleridge argues in chapter 14 of his *Biographia Literaria*, that the "poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. . . . He diffuses a tone, a spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination" (319). One important implication is that all the various faculties of the human soul can be brought into a harmonious unity. When the faculties have been ordered along the lines of their proper articulation, then the poet or the "whole soul" has also found its place in relation to a particular articulation of meaning or being. The soul finds or is given its place in a world; through its relationship with a particular "higher being," the soul occupies a particular place and meaning within the order where "nature" or "God" is set up in a place of primacy. Coleridge's formulation describes the poet's soul, and by extension the idea that the poet's soul communicates itself through his work. Such an alignment of faculties or elements ideally applies to the work as well.

The Coleridgean schema which sees the subject "bring[ing] the whole soul . . . into activity," depends upon a free will in the subject to arrange itself in accordance with a transcendent model. Such a bringing and willing are precluded in the deterministic system working in *Cain*. The humans, like the subjects of Nietzsche's state, have no choice about the arrangement of their world, and nor, if they are to integrate with that world, can they arrange the alignment of their faculties or their system of expression. This situation does not, however, negate the implications of the Romantic integration. In fact, the nature of the deterministic, imposed world presented in *Cain* prescribes that those who integrate there, and whose souls are arranged accordingly, must be integrated and arranged not by their own will, which might challenge God's, but through the persistent reimposition of that rigid structure onto them. Indeed, as God's system, like Lacan's Other, includes lacks and is split, it follows that subjects enveloped therein will be split in their accord with that system. While integration does not necessarily lead to wholeness in a strict Coleridgean sense, the subjects in *Cain* come into accord with the higher ideal, bearing out the main thrust of Coleridge's formulation, and at the same time critiquing it by way of the noted absence or impotence of will.

While the integrative themes of *Cain* align with Romantic theory of the time, the drama presents, in its compliance, a pessimistic view of such integration. Part of the significance of *Cain* lies in the fact that the work stands out as an early evaluation of the problems with systems like, but by no means limited to, that of Romantic theory. The scrutiny is primarily religious in the context of the drama, but it also applies to all such impositions of order. The drama makes clear the fact that systems cannot approximate the particular needs of the unique individual, as the theory of Nietzsche and Lacan shows. Systems inevitably fall short of such accommodations, and in the interim emerges desire, the transgressive dynamo which always drives towards more fitting individual expression, and thus towards further transgressions of prescribed limits. Byron's formulation, "the *menace* of Hell makes as many devils as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains" (1016), proves particularly apt for *Cain*. The imposition of created systems produces aberration, like Lacanian desire and the Nietzschean bad conscience, because inevitably such imposition fails to account for unique elements in the individual subjected to its envelopment. Evil, in *Cain*, lies at the heart of God's order, which reduces uniqueness to conformity. Evil lies outside of order, villainy outside of codes, only insofar as one is within, a part of, and blinded by that order.

The treatment of masks in *Cain* presents another critique of Romantic sensibility. Through Coleridge's idea of the alignment of faculties, the essential being, the authentic character of the poet should be clearly recognizable. The Nietzschean idea of the mask, however, is bound up in semblance. Cain's mask is constructed of elements already present in God's system. The mask does not make his uniqueness more apparent, though he occupies a more distinct placement, but rather obliterates it completely. Through his striking out against God through Abel, Cain implicates himself fully in the world of the unreasonable and tyrannous God. The mask he wears as killer, a more distinct marker and signifier than had been associated with him as rebel, ties together God's entrenched order more fully, marking the progress of falling within that system more thoroughly. And when Cain is stamped with the mark of order, he finds a complete lack of discursive particularity in his integration. Cain becomes a cipher, completely alienated from any other situation in any world, besides that which he inhabits. Desiring a shift in value, Cain attains fixity. Integration in *Cain*, then, signifies conformity and loss of distinction, rather than the Romantic ideal of essential communication of character. The totalizing mask of Cain's integration succeeds in communicating only those elements of his subjectivity which are essential to the system.

Lucifer represents the real triumph of *Cain*. While Paul Cantor seems correct in his claim that "*Cain* . . . lay[s] bare the roots of what we often think of as twentieth-century concerns: metaphysical despair and nihilism" (51), at least in terms of the character of Cain, Lucifer nevertheless offers a more optimistic and adventurous view, as well. The character of Cain indispensably sets forth the idea of split subjectivity, and demonstrates the impossibility of systems approximating individuals. Lucifer, however, as the Nietzschean artistically creating being, offers an alternative manner of arranging meaning. This creative perspectivism only takes place outside of established worlds where one arranges, rearranges, and does away with meaning and valuation in a constantly shifting process which requires no permanent creation or imposition. While Cain fails repeatedly, Lucifer presents a method which looks ahead to the thought of Nietzsche and Lacan, where valuation is tenuous and shifting, meaning produced by difference and interrelationship rather than inhering as an essence in any single edifice of language. In this way, *Cain* marks the division between Romantic integration, seen pessimistically, and alternatives to such integration, where valuation, not fixed or transcendent, is rather arranged moment by moment, to fit particular needs and relational situations more appropriately. Lucifer creates in the Nietzschean sense beyond good and evil, beyond the limits of any rigid system, rather than integrated in the Coleridgean sense wholly within the world order which communicates its essence to the soul of the poet. Lucifer, no ordinary mischief-maker or representation of evil, is a revolutionary character in Romantic poetry, independent of needs for integration and free of the restraints of a restrictive alignment.

The factors explored here distinguish *Cain* as an important transitional work, still rooted in the Romanticism of its time, yet also looking beyond such a situation in its pessimistic view of alignment and in the character of Lucifer. Though its expounding of these ideas lacks the thoroughness and rigor of late nineteenth and twentieth-century thought, this drama nevertheless begins to introduce very important ideas not only as alternatives to Romantic integration and transcendence, but also as precursors to later thought. *Cain* is one of the first literary works to express such ideas as those explored here--such as the lack of wholeness in systems and subjects, the mask and conformity in identity, and the requirement of a perspectivism and creativity like that developed by Nietzsche in order to more aptly approximate particularity. This fact represents an important transition, within the integration of transcendental union, yet looking towards more existential thinking of people like Nietzsche and Lacan. While a work such as *Cain* could never have thought the thoughts of Nietzsche or Lacan, the drama serves to give rise to and open a place for such notions as thinkers like these would later explore so prominently.

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VITA

Gregory Sullivan

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: A NIETZSCHEAN AND LACANIAN EXAMINATION OF CAIN'S CREATIVE FAILURE AND THE DETERMINED FALL IN BYRON'S *CAIN*

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Ardmore, Oklahoma, on June 6, 1973, the son of Michael and Diana Sullivan.

Education: Graduated from Plainview High School, Ardmore, Oklahoma in May 1991; received Bachelor of Arts degree in History, with a minor in English, from East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma in May 1996. Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts degree with a major in English Literature at Oklahoma State University in May 2000.

Experience: Employed in offices of Samedan Oil during summers of high school; employed in oil field as roustabout during college summers; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of English as a graduate teaching assistant; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Athletics as tutor and writer for tutorial program; Oklahoma State University, Department of English, 1996 to present.

Professional Memberships: English Graduate Student Association.