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Confronting Traumatic Anxiety: William Manchester's *Goodbye, Darkness*

Beginning his memoir, *Goodbye, Darkness* (1987), with a description of a dream in which he records his first war-time kill, William Manchester sets the tone for a book in which—through dreams, rigorous self-analysis, and revisiting sites of prior trauma—he explores and attempts to overcome the lingering traumatic anxiety¹ he developed as a Marine during World War II. More complex and problematic than an obligatory war memoir, Manchester's book constitutes a loose history of the war in the Pacific, as well as a riveting exploration of one man's psychological profile both during combat and in postwar America—the psychological dynamics of being a wartime soldier who takes lives and a veteran struggling to live with and accept that experience. Manchester's book reads not unlike one of Freud's case histories and conveniently includes significant pre-war traumas from his latent² and adolescent stages of development, providing the reader with a better understanding of the traumatic anxiety from which he suffers as a mature adult. Considering Manchester's collective experiences in the text (his childhood trauma, child-parent relationships, and war-time trauma) from a perspective centering around psychological trauma, provides a unique and unusual understanding of the author, the memoir's central figure (the portrayed William Manchester), and the book itself—which, in turn, constitutes a unique and noteworthy personal as well as archetypal, memoir of war.

Before examining Manchester's episodes of traumatic anxiety, it is important to make a fundamental interpretive distinction between Manchester "the man" and Manchester "the writer." Although *Goodbye, Darkness* is in many respects an autobiography³, a significant difference exists between the textually portrayed autobiographer and the living, breathing person who writes. Manchester, for example, claims to have exorcized his traumatic anxiety and resolved his recurrent dream after physically revisiting Sugar Loaf Hill during his return trip to Okinawa in 1978 (*Goodbye* 453-454). Thus, his primary traumatic anxiety—his need to accept and make peace with an event from the past—would have been resolved (at least according to him) long before he began any therapeutic writing process and the development of his textual persona. In other words, the

writing itself would not be a working out of his anxieties since Manchester “the man” claims to have resolved them beforehand. Charles Hanly addresses the theoretical problem of the writer and the written in a portion of his discussion on applied psychoanalysis:

Studies in applied psychoanalysis can take several forms. The study of the relation of the life of the creator to his creation is essentially psychoanalytically informed biography, although the emphasis may be placed primarily on the work [. . .] there is the problem of the intentional fallacy—that of basing the interpretation of a text on what its author intended its meaning to be. (Hanly 46)

The primary concern of this study being an analysis of the Manchester presented in the text of *Goodbye, Darkness*, biographical information on Manchester “the man” will be brought in only in places where it interacts with the content of the text and serves an interpretive purpose. As Hanly notes, “A knowledge of the life of the artist may be useful in shedding light upon [. . .] unconscious intentions, which form the deepest source of the artist’s inspiration” (Hanly 46). Though not artistic in the traditional literary sense, Manchester’s historical memoir contains highly personal psychological dynamics which often are illuminated through biographical information.

Turning from the question of the autobiographer and the portrayed autobiographer to the text, it is important initially to consider the rough organization of the work. Reviewing the book, Marvin Fletcher complained, “The various elements of this ‘memoir’ when brought together do not constitute a cohesive whole” (96). Fletcher’s general comment—in addition to addressing the book’s confusing chronological shifts between dreams, personal experiences, and historical events from Manchester’s life—intuitively reflects the historical circumstances under which the work was composed; for *Goodbye, Darkness* is actually a byproduct of several other projects. Manchester described how the memoir was developed while speaking at the University of South Carolina’s World War II Writers’ Symposium:

I read that my chances of surviving the war would have been much better under MacArthur, so I wrote about MacArthur and then having finished that I wanted to go back to the islands. *Life* magazine agreed to pay my expenses and I got back from visiting all the islands, mine and the other battlefields, and wrote the piece for *Life* and I wrote 150 pages. *Life* took what they wanted, but I

kept writing, and the result became *Goodbye, Darkness*.
("World" 177-178)

Explaining the evolution of his idea for a personal history, Manchester's inception of the memoir is linked to three seemingly unrelated projects. However, having moved from the MacArthur biography⁴ and the *Life* article (both dealing with aspects of the war) to the memoir, it seems probable that Manchester had been slowly, though perhaps unconsciously, working his way toward writing about the war from a personal perspective. In fact, this process had begun long before he ever decided to write about MacArthur, as demonstrated by the sections of the memoir (and particularly the historical chapters) drawn from Manchester's previous writings. For example, many of the specific battle histories in *Goodbye, Darkness* come from *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* and "The Island War" chapter of *Controversy*, a book-length collection of previously published essays.⁵ Furthermore, in a more personal example from *Controversy*, the "Corps d'Elite" chapter contains a memorable sentiment regarding the Marine Corps that also appears in *Goodbye, Darkness*: the passage in *Controversy* that reads, "The Corps is like the memory of an old affair" (147) becomes, "[The Corps] is like recalling a broken marriage" (*Goodbye* 148) in the memoir. Consisting of numerous elements drawn from different periods of Manchester's writing career, the memoir's organization might come across as bewildering at times. More importantly though, the previous writings reflect both Manchester's ever-present interest in the war and his gradual evolution from writing about the war as a scholar and through the lenses of others, toward being able to address it in relation to his personal experiences.

Having established the memoir's organization and developmental history, it is essential to consider the Manchester persona presented in the text—the projected man who is interpreting both history and himself. Introducing his central problem in the memoir's "Prelude," Manchester relates that following the assassination of Robert Kennedy and the disposal of his World War II Colt .45 his repetitive "nightmares began" (*Goodbye* 19). As Lenore Terr argues, in her brief discussion of *Goodbye, Darkness*, "Manchester [. . .] developed a repeated World War II dream shortly after his friend, President John F. Kennedy, was assassinated. The dream was stimulated by the sudden, unexpected stress of a national and personal tragedy" (*Too Scared* 215). Terr associates the stress of Robert's death with the anxiety-tinged beginning of Manchester's recurring World War II dream. In addition, Terr's general theoretical observation that "once [traumatic] anxiety is set in motion, it may recur with new life stresses" (*Too Scared* 214), is applicable to the "triggering" relationship between Kennedy's death and the beginning of Manchester's dreams. Although Terr accurately establishes the death of Kennedy as the central "triggering" mechanism for Manchester's recurring dream, an

important aspect of the text she overlooks is his abandonment of his wartime sidearm. This seems significant in the context of William Rivers's antiquated but applicable observation regarding World War I trauma: "New symptoms often arise [. . .] at home which are not the immediate and necessary consequence of war experience, but are due to repression of painful memories and thoughts, or of unpleasant affective states arising out of reflection concerning this experience" (Rivers 173). With Kennedy's death, Manchester immediately thinks of and "reflects" upon his pistol—the weapon he used to record his first kill. In discarding his Colt .45, he seems to be both repressing and rejecting an instrument of his wartime past. Faced with a new episode of anxiety, he connects the gun—which, with the exception of the "Raider" cap, is his last remaining possession from the war—to a similar trauma he experienced during the war and throws it away. Thus, the symbolic disposal of the pistol and the assassination play major roles in provoking the development of Manchester's recurring dream.

Although viewed today as somewhat less enlightened in his understanding of trauma, Freud nonetheless has a useful passage which speaks to the setting of Manchester's dream and its connection to Kennedy's death: "Dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident" ("Beyond" 598). Faced with a new source of anxiety (the Kennedy assassination), Manchester projects back, in his dream, to the time and physical site of his most powerful experience with traumatic anxiety—Sugar Loaf Hill. Relating, near the end of the memoir, that Sugar Loaf Hill is "the hill in my dreams" (*Goodbye* 450) and that the overpowering events there resulted in a "traumatic amnesia" (*Goodbye* 436), the mound serves as the Freudian "accident" which stands out from all others; and thus appears in every dream as the geographic barrier upon which the two dream Manchesters (the young Sergeant and the old man) ascend from opposite slopes. In addition, the figures, as well as the hill, seem to be manifestations of what Manchester claims is "a lost past." Influenced by his recurring dream, the chief reason he returns to the Pacific is to "find what I had lost out there and retrieve it" (*Goodbye* 22). "Like Merlin in *The Once and Future King*, the old man in my dreams knows the future; it is the past that is unrevealed to him" (*Goodbye* 56). With the old man's interest in the past supplemented by objects from it (the Sergeant and the hill itself), it is clear that Manchester's answers (and the reader's)—the ability to cope with "what was"—rest in an understanding of his life's earlier experiences.

In his "Dora" case history, Freud writes, "If [. . .] trauma theory is not to be abandoned, we must go back to her [Dora's] childhood and look about there for any influences or impressions which might have had an effect analogous to that of a trauma" ("Fragment" 183). Freud's general theoretical observation here, problematic as it may be, constitutes an effective approach for linking the older Manchester's condition with earlier childhood experiences; and an examination

of Manchester's early childhood must necessarily address his father. Strong, stern, and demanding, the elder Manchester, a decorated war veteran himself, served as the shaping force in young William's life. However, the father's very "manliness"—his courage, idealism, and "war hero" status—also seems to have served as a catalyst in undercutting his son's strength; for, compared to the decisive force of the father, the young William is portrayed as a weakling, frequently experiencing feelings of inferiority. This father/son relationship and the implications of it are initially observed in Manchester's chagrin at being referred to as "Little Bill," the ex-Marine's diminutive son: "I hated being called Junior—I have always regarded 'Jr.' as a sly boast of legitimacy—and throughout my life I was mortified by people telephoning our house who had to be asked whether they wanted 'Big Bill' or 'Little Bill'" (*Goodbye* 33-34). Furthermore, as a result of a debilitating bout with pneumonia, Little Bill physically remains "a feeble Bill" (*Goodbye* 35) and a "sissy" (*Goodbye* 36). In addition, Little Bill's "lesser" status is often accompanied by humiliating events which stand out in stark contrast to his father's pride and honor. In *Controversy*, for example, while describing a Memorial Day on which his father and other Marines are being honored, Manchester recounts his own embarrassing miscue: "The column appears [. . .] led by my father [. . .] everyone was cheering, but I saw only him [. . .] blinded by what was later called Gung ho I took off at high port, tripped, and fell into a patch of dense shrubbery" (*Controversy* 147). The son of a man who seemed unreachable in his idealized stature, the younger Manchester repeatedly found himself wallowing in fear, shame, and embarrassment—the absolute opposite of his decorated sire.

Despite his childhood inability to live up to his father's standards, Manchester's writings do not seem to harbor any bitterness or resentment toward him. One reason for this may be cultural. Discussing the role of the American patriarch at the World War II Writers' Symposium, Manchester maintained, "In the 1930s the man, the father, was the head of the household. He was obeyed and he was respected" ("World" 139). With the idea of questioning his father prohibited, Manchester probably also felt a great deal of inhibition about expressing any feelings of bitterness and insubordination. Furthermore, this "obedience" and "respect" also seems to have caused Manchester to sympathize with many of his father's feelings. For example, based on his father's experiences, he could probably not help but develop a love/hate view of the Marine Corps. Having been reduced to his pre-combat rank, designated "unfit for service" (*Goodbye* 29), and deprived of any compensation for his World War I injury, the elder Manchester could never fully appreciate the Corps without some feelings of resentment. This relationship seems to transfer over to his son when, as the father is dying, the younger Manchester projects⁶ onto his father's eyes the message, "*Avenge Me!* [Manchester's italics]" (*Goodbye* 45). Guided by this self-imposed crusade, Manchester believes he is doing just that (attempting to avenge his

father's dishonorable treatment) when he joins the Corps. However, keeping in mind the fact that the father's message is projected, it seems just as likely (meaning both arguments appear sound) that the "me" in "avenge me" is the younger Manchester, seeking to avenge himself of his childhood inferiority to his father. This is evident in his constant self-comparisons to the patriarch once he joins the Marines. For example, when Manchester is dismissed from OCS training, he nonetheless takes pleasure in at least having "outranked my father" (*Goodbye* 159). Furthermore, when injured in battle, the most significant issue Manchester ponders is if he will, like his father, receive the Purple Heart: "Three days later, on Saturday, June 2, I suffered my superficial gunshot wound. I remember asking a corpsman, 'Will I get a Purple Heart?' He nodded, and I thought of my father: '*We're Even* [Manchester's italics]" (*Goodbye* 441). It is also significant to note, in the context of this passage and the one in which he projects "avenge me," that the words "we're even" and "avenge me" are in italics. This seems important since Manchester hardly ever uses italics for narrative purposes throughout the entire memoir. Furthermore, "we're even" attempts to answer the command, "avenge me," pointing to the fact that Manchester has—in addition to achieving all that his father achieved—satisfied his own personal desire to rise up from his childhood humiliations and match the man of war and honor his father had been. Finally, "we're even" also answers the question of Manchester's lack of bitterness and resentment toward his father. Having equaled and even surpassed his accomplishments, Manchester has no motive, conscious or unconscious, to resent the father's former superiority.

Although Manchester does eventually "even" the score between himself and his father, as a weak, prewar adolescent he remains in worshipful awe of the patriarch. This is all too evident in the self-described "traumatic amnesia" that follows the elder Manchester's death:

The others were weeping but I just stared down at the grave. I wondered: *Where has he gone?* [Manchester's italics]. Then a curtain falls over my memory. It is all a dark place in my mind. I recall nothing that happened in the next four months. It was my first experience of traumatic amnesia, or fugue. I was in deep shock. [. . .] . None of it has ever come back to me. (*Goodbye* 46)

Having lost the dominating force of order in his life, it is too much for Manchester to try and define a world in which he no longer has his father as an overarching reference point. This overwhelmed state of traumatic amnesia closely echoes the association Lenore Terr draws between the death of Virginia Woolf's mother and her subsequent problems: "Virginia seems to have been a bipolar

patient—and ‘patient’ she indeed was, seeing doctors, nervous and mental specialists, and breaking down into several hospitalizable illnesses beginning at the age of 13 after her mother suddenly died” (“Who’s Afraid” 535). Although there are important cultural and gender differences between the Woolfs (Virginia and her mother) and the Manchesters (the boy and the father), there does appear to be a shared sense of trauma in the two adolescents’ loss of powerful parental figures. In fact, Woolf would go on to memorialize her mother—just as Manchester honors his father in the memoir—most notably in her highly autobiographical work, *To the Lighthouse*.

Woolf comparisons aside, Manchester’s use of italics in asking “where has he gone?” underscores—as it does in his other italicized narrative dialogue regarding his father—the importance of the exclamation. Furthermore, the loss of his father also results in a desire to replace the patriarch’s most prominent characteristic—discipline. As a consequence, Manchester “adores” (*Goodbye* 145) Marine boot camp since it calls to mind the authority of the father: “I wanted to surrender my individuality, curbing my neck beneath the yoke of petty tyranny. Since my father’s death I had yearned for stern discipline, and Parris Island, where he himself had learned discipline a quarter century earlier, gave it to me in spades” (*Goodbye* 147). Without the forceful guidance of his father, Manchester simply replaces his lost enforcer of tyranny with the original essence of his father’s discipline—the Marine Corps. Once in the arms of this abstracted step-parent, Manchester is able to temporarily escape his debilitating amnesia before being confronted with the powerful traumas that await him in the Pacific.

Turning from Manchester’s father to his mother, it is significant to note that his idealization of the paternal figure is not accompanied by a low opinion of the maternal one. This seems all the more important in that Manchester appears to feel that his childhood relationship with his mother was largely responsible for his boyhood weakness:

The mother-child dyad is central to any man’s development, and this was especially true of me, for I had always been more anima than animus, more ‘feminine’ in the Jungian sense—sensitive, poetic, creative, warm—than ‘masculine’: direct, orderly, logical, assertive. I had begun to change since putting on a uniform but my mother was still the sun around whom I orbited. (*Goodbye* 175)

Effeminate throughout latency and early adolescence, Manchester’s gender transition coincides not only with “putting on a uniform,” but with his simultaneous need for sexual relations. On page 176, Manchester ends the paragraph

on his mother relating, "In many ways I was still a boy." However, the following paragraph begins:

But I wanted to be a man, and an essential step in the process—one my mother wouldn't have understood—was the forfeiture of my own virginity. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven [. . .] . There is also a time to get laid, and I was due [. . .] . I was surer of myself, readier to take charge [. . .] . (*Goodbye* 176)

Thus, Manchester's farewell to his mother and the transition toward maleness he describes are approximate to his need to "get laid." Eugene Kaplan's discussion of the male adolescent's initiation into dating is useful in conjunction with Manchester's developmental transition: "As boys became more at ease in the dating relationship, the ambivalence in their relationship to their mothers is diminished significantly" ("Adolescents" 220). Manchester's shift, therefore—the decline of his shared feminine association with his mother—is linked to his impending sexual experiences with Taffy Meredith and Mae. Yet, in the midst of his transition, Manchester's gradual rejection of femininity should not be confused with a complete rejection of the maternal figure; for, as Kaplan also notes, "Although this regressive tendency [the need for the mother's presence] diminishes with age, the regressive wish for reunion with the mother of early childhood is never fully outgrown" ("Development" 140). Thus, while Manchester rejects his identification with the mother during late adolescence, he still maintains a strong, though distanced, connection with her. Finally, the simple fact that Manchester mentions his mother so little with the memoir—as opposed to the numerous digressions on the father—points to the fact that he had few, if any, negative conflicts to overcome with regard to her.

Although Manchester appears to possess a positive—though perhaps unusually strong—relationship with his mother, his early experiences with other members of the female sex are far from beneficial. During advanced latency and early adolescence Manchester's femininity and physical weakness result in constant schoolyard beatings and his most humiliating childhood experience—a pummeling at the hands of a girl named Betty Zimmerman: "To inflict the ultimate humiliation upon me, one gang decided to let a girl beat me up [. . .]. Flattening me with a single blow, she straddled me in what Masters and Johnson call the female-superior position, swatting away until she had given me two shiners. I recall with amazement that I felt aroused" (*Goodbye* 37). Interestingly, Manchester's most traumatic and memorable scene of humiliation—and his first significant

non-maternal experience with the female sex—also serves as his first instance of sexual arousal.

The paradoxical relationship of physical abuse and sexual stimulation in the Betty Zimmerman beating is reflected later in Manchester's life during the war, when he has his brush with the imaginary Whore of Death. As Freud states, "If the memory which we have uncovered does not answer our expectations, it may be that we ought to pursue the same path a little further; perhaps behind the first traumatic scene there may be concealed the memory of a second" ("The Aetiology" 100). Although Manchester's hallucination of the Whore of Death and his ensuing masturbation may simply be a release of his survivor's guilt—a soothing of his "overstimulation"—after having his entire squad wiped out, it is also likely that the paradoxical elements of the Whore of Death—her erotic sexuality and physical threat—mirror the traits of the young girl who had aroused young Manchester with her flailing fists and "toiling loins" (*Goodbye* 37). In further support of this reading, the Whore is "somehow familiar" (*Goodbye* 87), "dressed like the girls I remembered at Smythe and Mount Holyoke" (*Goodbye* 88). Therefore, the hallucinatory vixen is also connected to the earlier experience through both its indescribable familiarity and its association with school. Haunted by two experiences in which he was victimized by females, Manchester's mature view of women calls for an authority he never had. Accordingly, in his foreword to *Chronicle of 20th Century Conflict*, he laments, "In time the prospect of nuclear war altered the balance between the sexes. The image of man as protector and defender of the home had been destroyed, and that thought eventually led women to re-examine their own role in society" (Foreword 9). Shaped by experiences long since past, these are the words of a man who feels that the masculine sphere of his society has been compromised, violated, and subordinated by femininity just as he was once subjected and humiliated by Betty Zimmerman.

Exhibiting a fear of women he developed as a child in a foreword published in 1993, Manchester exhibits—in more than one respect—that, "The child within us never vanishes" (*Goodbye* 119). Yet, in both a conscious and unconscious manner, Manchester's 1978 journey through the Pacific does constitute a determined effort to "vanish" or banish the wartime trauma of his late adolescence. In fact, this is precisely what is depicted in the memoir as Manchester "island hops" his way toward a resolution of his recurring dream. His transition toward acceptance is first apparent on Guam, where, "My dreams of the Sergeant begin to change [. . .]. He,—himself, viewed now as through a prism,—is subtly altered. His self-assurance has begun to ebb [. . .]. He is becoming confused. He hesitates; his attention is divided; every third or fourth night I sleep through without any sign of him" (*Goodbye* 348-349). Interestingly, the confusion of the Sergeant and the occasional absence of the dream are approximate to a conscious event in which Manchester stands while the "Marines' Hymn" is played during a parade

on Guam. This appears significant in that part of the original “triggering” action for the dream was Manchester’s denial of an aspect of his past—the throwing away of his Colt .45. Thus, in opposition to his original rejection, Manchester, rather than disowning his past, is able—for the first time in the memoir—to accept and even feel “moved” (*Goodbye* 352) by the fact that he was once a Marine. Although he does not “understand why I did it” (*Goodbye* 352), the action appears to set off a reverse “triggering” of acceptance—an acceptance that works toward resolution rather than the perpetuation of his conflict.

As Manchester labors toward resolving his past while physically moving through the Pacific, the Sergeant in his dream continues to fade and weaken. In the Okinawa Hilton, he again dreams “of the Sergeant, the old man, and their hill. It is a shocking nightmare, the worst yet. I had expected irony, scorn, contempt, and sneers from him. Instead, he is almost catatonic” (*Goodbye* 447).⁷ As with the dream on Guam, the Sergeant’s deterioration seems to be connected to Manchester’s examination and resolution of his past; for, in the same paragraph that Manchester records his Okinawa dream, he also wonders, “I have, I think, done this to myself, I have been betrayed, or been a betrayer, and this fragile youth is paying the price” (*Goodbye* 447). Occurring simultaneously, the catatonia and simultaneous weakening of the sergeant and Manchester’s speculation upon his responsibility in the unconscious conflict he is experiencing appear to be linked. Earlier, when Robert Kennedy was shot, Manchester’s reaction had been to throw his gun—a physical symbol—away rather than to try and resolve his new trauma. As a result, unconscious conflict developed in the form of his recurring dream. Now, consciously facing his conflicts and their connection to himself, he finally encounters a means by which to lessen their presence in his dreams.

In the dreams Manchester experiences on Guam and Okinawa, conscious events—his standing at the “Marines’ Hymn” and his acceptance of responsibility for his trauma—clearly are linked to the changes that occur in his unconscious. This is also true for the conscious event that occurs on Okinawa just before his final dream in Hong Kong. Locating Sugar Loaf Hill on modern Okinawa, Manchester consciously realizes that it is “the hill in my dreams” (*Goodbye* 450). Contrasting the “healing mantle of turf” (450) he now sees against the naked rock it had been in 1944, Manchester invokes Carl Sandburg’s “I Am the Grass” (450) and asks Christ to take away his “*murdering bate* [Manchester’s italics]” (450) before realizing why he jumped hospital to be with his men all those years ago: “It was an act of love” (*Goodbye* 451). In a moment of conscious realization Manchester comes to an acceptance of why he returned to the front at the risk of additional danger and anxiety following his initial wound. In addition, through his religious invocation he subordinates the hatred and outrage that had fueled the unconscious persona of the young Sergeant in favor of the love he feels for

his comrades. In the context of the memoir, Manchester would have the reader believe that he has consciously made peace with his past.

Taking in the commercialism and Japanese presence on modern Hawaii early in the memoir, Manchester says of his Sergeant, "I have begun to realize that it will take a great deal, a fire storm of passion, to exorcize him" (*Goodbye* 67). Though Manchester would have the reader think he is "redeemed" by love and purged of his hate on Okinawa, he must still resolve the unconscious conflict that has fueled his recurring dream. His physical tour completed, at the Ambassador Hotel in Hong Kong he experiences his final dream, in which the old man climbs the hill only to find that the Sergeant is gone: "He saw nothing, heard nothing" (*Goodbye* 453). Having consciously resolved his hate and unconsciously banished the Sergeant, Manchester finally experiences his "fire storm of passion" and the old man turns away, "blinded by tears" (*Goodbye* 454). Concluding the memoir with this final dream, Manchester wants to imply that his conscious and unconscious conflicts both finally have been resolved.

Summing up the book's multiple elements in a single sentence, N. Kent Goldsmith relates, "There is a great deal of ambivalence in *Goodbye, Darkness*" (Goldsmith 91). Among other things, Goldsmith's general statement is accurate in terms of Manchester's resolution; for, despite the tears shed at the end of the memoir by Manchester's textual persona, there is still the question of whether or not Manchester "the man"—to return to the interpretive distinction addressed earlier—has truly worked out his conflict. In conjunction with this problem, Lenore Terr relates her clinical opinion of Manchester "the man" in the following terms:

I would venture to guess that the dream, Manchester's travels to the Pacific islands, and the act of writing itself, each a kind of personal, post-traumatic repetition, would not have completely dissipated William Manchester's anxiety. The feelings stirred up by scary battles from the teen years would not necessarily disappear with ease. Time helps. But we know from examples like Alfred Hitchcock that time does not cure everything. If we dared to ask William Manchester today whether he still occasionally dreams his repeated dream, his answer might well be 'yes.' (*Too Scared* 215)

Although Terr does not go into great depth in arguing for the continuation of Manchester's conflict, her analysis seems to be supported by Manchester, himself. Reading from a letter during the World War II Writers Symposium, Manchester movingly explained, "The martyrs of World War II have been dead for half a century. Many, if not most, belong to my generation, and each year, my awareness of

them, and my sense of loss grow stronger” (“World” 168). Considering Terr’s analysis and Manchester’s ongoing and increasing sense of loss, it does in fact seem unlikely that Manchester “the man” would have completely resolved his wartime conflict through his respective conscious and unconscious “fire storms of passion.” This answer, however, does not make his written persona—the memoir’s healed Manchester—any less poignant or heroic in his tedious journey through a haunted past toward a dramatic conclusion. As a record of an evolution from volcanic rock to flourishing grass, debilitating repression to overdue tears, and “murderous” youth to the realization of love, *Goodbye, Darkness* provides the reader with a powerful and compelling representation of a life crippled by visceral and psychological conflict, yet redeemed in acceptance and resolution.

Notes

1. The use of the terms “traumatic” and “traumatic anxiety” in this study are drawn from Sigmund Freud and Lenore Terr, respectively. Freud defined “traumatic” in the following manner: “We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli [. . .] the pleasure principle is for the moment put out of action. There is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus which have broken in and of binding them, in the physical sense, so that they can be disposed of” (“Beyond” 607). Lenore Terr builds upon Freud’s understanding of trauma and his idea of “neurotic anxiety”—which is developed in “Anxiety and Instinctual Life” (782-783)—in establishing her definition of a traumatic anxiety mechanism: “The anxiety stirred up by trauma is far too massive, far too intense, to be handled by one or two ordinary nightmares. Dreams, the ordinary coping devices for warding off internal emotional conflict, do not ‘work’ after massive horror, terror, and disgrace. Dreams are simply too weak a mental mechanism to handle this kind of intensity. The psyche will use its ordinary, old coping devices, dreams, but it cannot successfully work off a trauma in this way. The mechanism overworks. The dreams repeat and repeat. In many instances the mechanism fails to burn out on its own, however. The traumatized dreamer may be granted a month’s rest or even a year’s respite. But sooner or later the post-traumatic dream will come back. Traumatic anxiety apparently does not spontaneously dissipate during one’s lifetime. Once this anxiety has been set into motion, it may recur with new life stresses, especially those that carry echoes of the old helplessness and loss” (*Too Scared* 214).

2. The term “latent” is used in conjunction with Eugene Kaplan’s definition of the “latency” period of a child’s development: “Latency corresponds roughly to the grade school years, ages six to eleven. The designation of this period as the time for grade school is society’s institutionalized response to the child’s developmental advances in self-control, tractability, cognition, and socialization. The latency child is capable of functioning for hours away from home and parents, of sitting, listening, and learning, and is therefore considered educable” (“Development” 140). This period is significant for Manchester in that he suffers his most severe pre-war trauma—the pummeling at the hands of a young girl (*Goodbye* 37)—sometime between advanced latency and early adolescence.

3. The appropriate genre for *Goodbye, Darkness* is an issue that has been debated by reviewers of the text. Although the book frequently appears on military history course syllabi as secondary

reading, most reviewers—from retired military personnel to academic military historians—see the text as a riveting, successful personal narrative, which leaves much to be desired as a history book. As one reviewer explains, “The book cannot be considered a history of the war in the Pacific because the story presented is incomplete, inaccurate, and disjointed. A number of campaigns and battles, such as Midway, are almost totally ignored” (Fletcher 96).

4. Manchester’s biography of MacArthur is *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*. See the list of works cited for publication information.

5. The chapter “Counterattack” (263-287) in *The Glory and the Dream* addresses the major military campaigns of World War II. In *Controversy*, “The Island War” (129-146), “Corps d’Elite” (147-163), and “The Man Who Couldn’t Speak Japanese” (164-182) cover personal and historical episodes from World War II that appear in *Goodbye, Darkness*. Some portions of these chapters are quoted verbatim in the memoir.

6. The use of the term “projects” is based loosely on Freud’s description of projection in conjunction with his theory of paranoia: “The determining element of paranoia is the mechanism of projection involving the refusal of belief in the self-reproach. Hence the common characteristic features of the neurosis: the significance of the voices as the means by which other people affect us, and also of gestures [I call attention here to the look in the elder Manchester’s eyes], which reveal other people’s mental life to us; and the importance of the *tone* of remarks and *allusions* in them—since a direct reference from the *content* of remarks to the repressed memory is inadmissible to consciousness [Freud’s italics]” (“Draft K” 95). Although it does not appear likely that Manchester suffers from paranoia in regard to his father, it does seem probable that what he projects onto his father’s eyes is a manifestation of a repression pertaining to the inferiority he feels with regard to his father’s idealization and his own childhood humiliations. As I proceed to argue, the “me” in “avenge me” is a reference to Manchester as opposed to his father. His repressed urge to vindicate himself of his shame and humiliation takes the form of a meaningful message from his father’s eyes.

7. In using the term “catotonic” it seems that Manchester has in mind a state of catatonia (or “catatonic schizophrenia”) defined by “stupor” and “automatic obedience” (*A Supplement* 456) as opposed to “excitement” and “impulsive automatism” (*A Supplement* 456). This can be seen in the fact that the Sergeant does not exhibit the “irony, scorn, contempt, and sneers” (*Goodbye* 447) Manchester had expected. Instead, there is a decided lack of animation in his behavior.

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