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## Expulsion from Eden in Gregorio Brillantes

L. M. G R O W

We were young and invincible, your uncle and I, and we would never grow old, never know grief and die.

In 1967, Locsin astutely remarked that *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories* remains a landmark in the field of contemporary Filipino literature even if only as the chronicle of the growth of a young artist's mind.<sup>1</sup> This achievement, Locsin feels, has been attained in spite of a formidable list of defects: "limited subject matter," "his thematic preoccupation which leads him to sacrifice characterization to such an extent that his characters fail to attain dimension, in the sense that they are not well-rounded," and in concurrence with Leonard Casper's opinion, "if a charge could be made against Brillantes, it is that his stories have a *deus ex machina*, whose presence involves the reader in a theological view of man."<sup>2</sup>

All this is true, yet, as Locsin concedes, "certain Brillantes stories are sure to endure."<sup>3</sup> This is not because of Brillantes' handling of

I have used Gregorio Brillantes, *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories* (Manila: National Book Store, 1980) for all references to the text. Subsequent references will only include page references in the text.

1. Maria Cecilia V. Locsin, "The Exiles: A Reading of Gregorio Brillantes' *The Distance to Andromeda*," *Philippine Studies* 15 (1967): 408.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 407, 408, 416.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 408. Brillantes, "a consistent literary prize-winner" (Lydia Castillo, *Foreign Influences on the Filipino Short Stories in English, 1948-68* [Ann Arbor: UMI, 1976], p. 128; the same conclusion is expressed in Leonard Casper, *New Writing from the Philippines: A Critique and Anthology* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966], p. 383), achieved success early: "When Gregorio Brillantes graduated from the Ateneo de Manila in 1952, he won almost immediately some measure of literary recognition. He received in 1953 the one-thousand peso first prize for the short story given by the *Free Press*. He won the first prize in 1954 and 1956. In 1960 he received the second

what Locsin sees as the predominant motif in *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories* (hereafter referred to as DAOS) "Brillantes writes of barriers, both natural and unnatural, separating individuals," for this alone would consign Brillantes to the fate anticipated by Locsin: "There would certainly be no place for Brillantes if one were to base an estimation of the writer solely on his collection of short stories entitled *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories*."<sup>4</sup> Rather, it is Brillantes' exposition of humanity's tragic, but inevitable, self-expulsion from the Edenic garden of earth which assures his place in Philippine literature.

Immediately striking in these stories is the quantity of sensuous detail, affecting all five senses, which cannot be explained by any narrative, symbolic, or atmospheric need of a particular tale. We are sometimes taken to the point of surfeit with imagery of color, texture, odor, taste, and sound. The result is to juxtapose the physical attractions of our garden-like earth with the corruptions and resultant degradations of the humans who, ironically, continue to live in its context but no longer inhabit it. In this way, Brillantes cleverly reworks the motif of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. "Expulsion" no longer involves a physical removal; instead it takes the form of alienation from all the succulent, savoury delights which the earth offers. And this is the worse alternative, since humans are constantly tantalized by the grapes dangling forever out of their grasp.<sup>5</sup> The settings of these stories then really are externalizations of interior phenomena.

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prize in both the *Free Press* and the Palanca contests" (Miguel Bernad, *Bamboo and the Greenwood Tree: Essays on Filipino Literature in English* [Manila: Bookmark, 1961], p. 68). Elsewhere (Bernad, "Philippine Short Stories 1957: The Palanca Awards," *Philippine Studies* 5 [1957]: 452), Bernad avers that, considering the stories in contention for the 1957 Palanca Memorial Awards, "the one that I would have picked as the best was 'The Years' by Gregorio C. Brillantes" (*Philippine Free Press*, 8 December 1956). In addition, he was awarded third prize in the *Free Press* competition in 1958 (Florentino Valeros and Estrellita Valeros-Gruenberg, *Filipino Writers in English: A Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary* [Quezon City: New Day, 1987], p. 41). Subsequently, "In the CPMAL, short story category (English), he won first prize with 'The Cries of Children on an April Afternoon in the Year 1957' (1973-74)" and second prize in both 1961-62 and 1971-72 (Valeros and Valeros-Gruenberg, *Filipino Writers*, p. 41), as well as first prize in 1966-67 (Castillo, *Foreign Influences*, p. 229).

4. Locsin, "The Exiles," pp. 409, 407.

5. One might be tempted to draw an analogy with Michael Levin's proposal that particularly vicious criminals be denied death, rather than receive capital punishment, so that their suffering would more nearly approximate what they inflicted on their victims. Such criminals, in Levin's view, deserve a lifetime of torture.

## LOSS OF EDEN

The expulsion from Eden is directly mentioned by the title character in "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro:" "There's disease, suffering, death, because Adam ate the apple" (p. 50). Dr. Lazaro's immediate reference is to the patient whom he has been called to examine: a baby with tetanus, born to an impoverished couple. The mother does bear the child in pain, the father does eke out a meager existence by the sweat of his brow, and all the other ravages of mutability, most notably death, are present here. It might be tempting to find a ray of hope in the atheist doctor's name: Lazaro. But in fact the name is savagely ironic. He cannot, like Lazarus, bring the child back to life, and, of course, "lazarus" means "lazar" as well, which intensifies the disease imagery. That Dr. Lazaro is a figure of annihilation rather than rejuvenation is deducible from a tell-tale phrase in the Preface: "... families being unhappy in different ways that have to do with faith, love, and death" (p. 13). Here "death" is substituted for "Dr. Lazaro," clearly suggesting the interchangeability of the verbal entities. The same ironic thrust to the rebirth theme applies to "The Living and the Dead." Castillo claims that "The recurrent external detail of the crucified Christ and the recurrent imagery of the light of the sun and the moon function to embody and suggest Grace of God through the mediation of the blessed Virgin of the Apocalypse<sup>6</sup>—"A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet."<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of the story "with the sun like a huge, dazzling eye in the sky,"<sup>8</sup> when Romano ponders his problem, he has a vindictive attitude towards the man who threatens his exposure. With his mild heart attack, he dies symbolically. And symbolically again, he is resurrected by the glorious moonlight, the reflected light of the sun."

But this interpretation is implausible. In the first place, in Brillantes moonlight is a highly-ambiguous symbol. No better example exists than "The World of the Moon." In the early going, the moon seems to be associated with tranquility and clarity:

And the moon was rising above the houses, swollen and yellow in the young evening. Darkness rose like a mist from the yard. But already beyond the light of the porch, the acacia leaves had caught the first moonlight; a radiance was spreading in the sky. (p. 290)

6. Castillo, *Foreign Influences*, p. 138.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 204

8. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

The perfect globe of the moon floated in the east, over the town. And he wondered how it could hang there in the heavens, large and graceful, exact in its measured orbit like a being with a mind of its own . . . (p. 291).

But in the latter portion of the story, the boys climb over the graveyard wall. Lito cautions Ben about the madman who inhabits the cemetery and then remarks, "We'll ask him to sing his funny songs to the moon!" This bit of bravado, however, is a prelude to the story's suddenly darkened tone. In the cemetery, the unnamed protagonist loses his bearings: "Where was his father's tomb? In the moonlight, suddenly, he could not recall the exact location of his father's grave: in daylight, he thought, he would surely know. Which way was north, where was the south? He had lost his sense of direction" (pp. 296-97). He is then attacked; released, "He ran back across the cemetery, clambering blindly over the wall, his chest heaving as he ran through the moonlight alone" (p. 297). The moon is just as luminous in the context of violence and death as it is in the context of boyish sportiveness, and this realization has been foreshadowed in the drug agent's story earlier: "You see this scar here—" and he traced it on his balding scalp—"I got that from a bolo one moonlit night. There was this girl, her father hated the sight of me, almost hacked the life out of me. If I hadn't jumped out of the window—I was fast on my feet then, not the way I am now—"and he laughed, patting his distended stomach, facing the ascending moon (p. 292). I cannot understand how moonlight here could conceivably be construed to represent the grace of God.

Even if such a construct were reasonable, it would make a mockery out of the Resurrection. The Resurrection is to Life Eternal. Carlos de Leon is favored with only a temporary reprieve, as the text emphasizes: "But he did not die that night, that year" (p. 35). Instead, he dies another night, another year. Obviously, this is neither salvation nor resurrection. In her discussion of Dr. Lazaro, Locsin has hit the mark:

His name is ironic and symbolic, because in contrast to his biblical namesake, Lazarus the brother of Martha and Mary, he negates rather than affirms life. Like the other Lazarus he does not rise from the dead, but he is a living dead . . .

His lack of compassion is brought to the fore by an allusion to the gospel of St. Luke (Chapter 10, verses 23-37) sparked by his mocking query to Ben: "Father Lazaro, what must I do to gain eternal life?" an echo of a tempter's question to Christ: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" Jesus answers the question: "Thou shalt love the Lord

thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Understandably, though a doctor, his touch brings death, not life. Esteban's child does not respond to his ministrations and he fails to heal her. He cannot give life because he himself is without life.<sup>9</sup>

Eden has been lost irrevocably; nothing can restore us to the primal state. To make matters worse, the garden lost is cosmic in its dimensions: "He thought of light years, black space, infinite distances; in the unmeasured universe, man's life flared briefly and was gone, traceless in the void" (p. 52). This vastness is neatly suggested by the title *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories*. The book is to the setting of the individual story what the universe is to the garden. As the prefatory paragraph to "The Distance to Andromeda" has it, "The nearest galaxy, Andromeda, is two million light years away" (p. 124). This closest galaxy is hopelessly distant. The significance of the cosmic sweep of the garden is to dramatize the separation of object from object, human from human. Expulsion from Eden meant alienation from nature. How total this separation is the extent of the universe makes clear: "The sun is a star, one among approximately a hundred billion stars that compose the Milky Way, a galaxy a thousand light years in diameter. There are probably a million galaxies within the range of the most powerful telescopes, each star system containing billions of suns" (p. 124). The title story has as its central motif a movie which the twelve-year old protagonist mulls over periodically. The movie centers around space travellers who "search the night for another world of air and greenness, remembering the end of Earth, the Final War, the flickering radioactive fires upon the lifeless continents. Beyond the dead seas of Mars, and beyond the ice-bound tomb of Neptune, past the orbit of Pluto and out into the immeasurable depths, the rocket flashes onward, through years of space and time: a moving speck among the untwinkling stars" (pp. 124-25). But though the movie ends happily for the travellers, who find "a globe of shining water and green-shadowed land" (p. 125), we know that they have left behind an Eden despoiled: "the ruined, poisoned countries of man" (p. 139). Were we to assume that this is a rebirth of sorts, a recovery of Eden, we might recall the outcome of "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro," which unmistakably demonstrates that we can never revert to the pristine conditions which our own follies have forever deprived us of; the space travellers have escaped an earth reduced to a cinder, but they have not escaped themselves. War will come again.

9. Locsin, "The Exiles," pp. 417, 419-20.

## EXPULSION BY WAR

Perhaps this is the implication of the war-time or immediately prewar-time or postwar-time for so many of the stories, the "placement of event after event within war's shadow."<sup>10</sup> In "The Years," at Chabeng's party the guests speculate on the possibility of another war. The reader is reminded of the postwar setting of "The Young Man" by a series of passing allusions to it, such as "A war and a time of manhood later" (p. 39). "Lost" includes in passing the memory "Before the war and the ugliness and the fire and his brother Pepe's death in the prison camp" (p. 119).

"The Last December" is a nostalgic reverie which comes to an abrupt halt as the family hears on the radio the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor (p. 149). David, the central protagonist of "A Wilderness," sees a movie newsreel which reports, among other developments, "the courage of soldiers scaling one more hill under mortarfire" (p. 154). As early as the fifth paragraph of the "The Beautiful Gerrls," the second-person narrator recalls that "There were the three of you in the jeep, a loose rusting hulk that ought to have been scrapped the day the war ended" (p. 163). A bit later, we are informed that "Remedios' mother . . . died during the war" (p. 164). A parenthetical note in "A Wind Over the Earth" is that "the black, obsolescent Buick was commandeered by the army in the last war" (pp. 178-79). "The Rice Fields" is exclusively devoted to reminiscences of the protagonist's combat injury and loss of an arm.

"The Sound of Distant Thunder" concerns revolutionaries, not soldiers. But this is war; their leader is called "commander"; they carry "carbines and rifles" (p. 219); and their actions will result in bloody death, as Andres, the chief protagonist, foresees: "he was . . . thinking of . . . rice and death . . . remembering the shallow grave of the *teniente del barrio*, and the unshaven men with the restless eyes and guns . . ." (p. 222). He sees his present locale as "this place of death and dying" (p. 224), and the story ends with his vision of "himself sprawled on his back in some abandoned field, his eyes staring sightlessly up into the falling rain" (pp. 228-29).

In "The Rain," Flora reflects, "how long ago was that time of make-believe and fable? When they lived in her father's town, safe from the war?" (p. 231). In the course of conversing with her fellow protagonist, Eddie, she remembers seeing "a newsreel once, showing warplanes aflame in the sky, and pilots bearded and haggard, looking defeated and dangerous and hopeless. She imagined Eddie

10. Casper, *New Writing*, p. 148.

in a pilot's flying togs, broken and bloody and perhaps dying" (p. 238). This image returns to her after Eddie and her brother leave: "Young men going to war, dying alone in the burning sky" (p. 240).

"The Conquerors," like "The Rice Fields," is entirely focused on a wartime incident, the evacuation of a makeshift hospital, tended by nuns, and the subsequent conflagration of the city they have vacated. War in "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves" is a backdrop to the fond memories of the narrator and thus contrapuntal: "the war was in North Africa and in the barrage-ballooned skies of London—a world away, abstract and remote." (p. 310). War, however, is not the only vehicle for violence. In "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?" the nine-year-old boy's schooldays are at first idyllic:

Grade Three was Miss Castillo, the ruler in her hand pointing, rapping on the table, tapping on the blackboard, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, her voice sometimes tired, sometimes harsh, but often happy, even laughing and leading the class in song, a warm and vibrant voice; and the year, too, was the typhoon skies of July and August, the thick greenness of the plaza, new friends, Vic, Junior, Kiko, Doming, matchboxes of spiders, marbles, airplane model cut-outs, Batman, the Human Torch, Captain America, color prints of cowboy stars, the twin flags fluttering over the schoolhouse, and the hot lemon sun between the long rains. (p. 270).

But as soon as the boy has the fight at recess, his path to destruction opens before him. The Sixth Grader who pushed him into the other boy to start the fight extorts ₱.50 from him and then escorts him to a black pit of decadence under the schoolhouse, where he is imprisoned by boys smoking and drinking. Symbolically, "He had dropped his books and he could not find them" (p. 277). The "pit" is the stew of corruption as much as it is the physical hole. "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?," then, has a plot parallel to that of "The World of the Moon." In the latter story, before the boys enter the realm of death (corruption of the flesh) by climbing the cemetery wall, their existence is pre-Lapsarian in its innocence: "He passed a group of young men singing around a guitar; a car turned a corner, girls were laughing in the car; and the sweet bloom of flowers flowed to him from a garden" (p. 294).

And they hurried down the three blocks to the river, placid molten silver except where it was dark under the bridge. Shouting for the sake of hearing their voices carry across the water, they splashed around and gamboled on the sand and raced each other to the opposite bank, water spraying, until they began to shiver from staying too long in the water. (p. 295)



## EXPULSION BY CUPIDITY

Violence is not the only means by which humans have evicted themselves from Eden. Shallow selfishness, cupidity, lust—the entire array of human foibles, in fact, have done their damage. The culmination of the lives of Chabeng and Carlos de Leon in “The Years” is Chabeng’s meaningless birthday party. The next generation’s equally frivolous existence is nowhere better displayed than in the intolerably trivial conversation of Alice and Marilu, which, to enhance its impact, is excruciatingly prolonged:

“And Eddie’s the genuine article. That necklace he gave you for Christmas, you ought to wear it Naman, it’ll break his heart if you don’t. My hair o.k.? What’s holding that zipper, it’s stuck, there, thanks, darling. You know, Eddie’s a different sort—dependable, that’s what I’d call him. Unlike that guy from Ateneo—the one with the funny crew cut—what’s his name? Romy, that’s it—oh Alice. I’m so sorry, *really* I am, for awhile I forgot he was an old flame, tell me you’ll forgive me.”

“That’s ancient history,” Alice said, “over and done with.”

“The heart breaks and the million pieces go on beating, strong as ever,” Marilu declaimed, waving a hair brush at Alice in the mirror. “Mine’s made out of asbestos. There was this fellow from Basa—have I already told you about this one? Squadron leader or something, a big shot. Cute na cute, but when I was through with him he wasn’t worth the price of his tin wings. Are you going back to Manila for New York’s Eve? We could do the clubs again, like last year, I’ll never forget that night. We had a flat right in the middle of Dewey, what a way to start off the year, and this George Martinez . . .” (p. 24).

The idle distaff chatter, however, does not have a monopoly on the soporific, as an exchange between Pepe and Manoling reveals:

“Play basketball tomorrow?” Pepe asked.

“Sure,” Manoling said.

“With Tony, and Al, and Bert, we can take on any team those Don Bosco guys can whip up. We’ll teach that bunch a thing or two.”

“Sure thing,” he said.

“There isn’t much else a fellow can do in this town, is there?” Pepe said. “Basketball can get real corny. Hey, how about a drive down Angeles tonight? Bert’s been raving about a hostess he’s found down there. A real classy mestiza. How about it, huh, your folks won’t miss you.”

“No! No,” he said, and across his mind flitted an image of the woman, anonymous in the dim dirty forlorn twilight of a bar. “You and your lousy ideas.” He gripped the wheel, as if he wanted to tear it off, force it into another shape.

"What's eating you?" said Pepe. "Aaah, you in the Legion of Mary or something?"

"Shut up," Manoling said. (pp. 27-28)

"The Exiles" features a daughter unconcerned about her father's impending death: "She remained by the door, her hand still on the switch, watching her father's tortured face with a careful but unfeeling curiosity; she was like a doctor studying the climax of a strange and hopeless disease. Is he dead at last? She asked herself, aware, though only fleetingly, of the meaning in her question" (p. 67). She rues "a father who refuses to die and a brother who talks of sacrifice and love and the peace of Christ and the glory of heaven: a brother who wants to be a priest. The voice reached her in the dark and she shuddered with hatred and longing" (p. 69). The corrosive qualities of envy and hatred are combined with those of withering self-doubt about her lover: "A sob caught in her throat like a splinter of ice. Does he really love me? Does he boast of the kisses I have given him?" (p. 69).

"The Radio and the Green Meadows" is a depiction of squalor. Alma clearly blames Jorge for their predicament, perhaps because he discontinued his study of law or perhaps because of his escapism. For Jorge, "reality is a ledger of dead sums and Quiapo on a Friday afternoon"—failure, in sum, and Alma is unforgiving about it: "She looked up at Jorge, the hard glint in her eyes scolding him for having made the baby cry" (p. 91). But either Jorge is to be faulted for their being in such reduced circumstances or Alma is to be faulted for not being more loving and compassionate, regardless of their lifestyle.

There is something of a *Riders to the Sea* atmosphere about "The Girl Elena," with the death of Carding a backdropped reminder of the hazardous life fishermen lead. But the only explanation Elen provides for her dismissal of Fred, who obviously loves her, is "We are poor" (p. 97). This looks very like resentment and envy on the part of this seamstress toward the wealthy Fred who, after returning to his chauffeur-driven car, "Wondered indifferently if his father's guests, the governor and his party, had gone" (p. 98).

"Blue Piano," situationally is something of an amalgam of *Casablanca* and Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." So striking are the similarities to Hemingway's story that it is difficult not to consider "Blue Piano" derivative. Not only do we have an old man who does not want to risk sleeping at night, for fear that death will creep up on him, but we also have the Philippine equivalent to the

*bodega*, complete with sympathetic younger "waiter" (i.e., Joe), and we have a "cool clean dawn" (p. 110). How can a dawn be "clean," except in the Hemingway mode of using the word as a generalized term of approval? *Casablanca's* visage emerges in the form of a barkeep who returns the price of the last drink: "Last one's on the house, Paeng said" (p. 108) and a piano rendition of a sentimental favorite: "Rony was playing *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* when he entered the dim blue room of the club" (p. 100). So homey is this atmosphere that "Rony joined them at the bar and asked Paeng for another beer" (p. 107).

"Blue Piano" spotlights several characters, beginning with Joe, a young man who says to himself, "You need a drink, a real stiff one, because tonight you are getting lousy with memories, and that's bad, an old young man lousy with memories" (p. 99). So sentimental is he that, no sooner is he situated in Paeng's bar, than he hits on Linda, the singer, who is the *querida* of a "Big old businessman with a big black Cadillac" (p. 102). Linda, however, rejects his advances, asserting that "I know what I am doing" (p. 107). Of course she does, as does the boozy doctor who rather than using his skills to relieve pain and prolong life, drinks the night away, sharing the pleasant thought that "In my dreams, it's night always" (p. 103) and offering highly constructive advice: "if you aren't married, don't ever be so foolish as to try it" (p. 107). No; surely it is preferable to scrounge for bar girls and drink one's self into oblivion. These degenerates are victimized by their own vices.<sup>11</sup>

In "A Wilderness," David is a lout who offends his aunt, "his heart thudding in hate and bewilderment" (p. 153). He leaves the house and primes himself for jilting his girlfriend by quaffing a beer at a cafe. When he reaches Angela's residence, "The resentment that had flared before her mother smouldered within him" (p. 157). When he returns home, he is confronted by a cockroach

11. Elsewhere as well there are Hemingwayisms. For example, in "Sunday," "the wind was cool and clean" (p. 198), and the famed Hemingway "and" connectiveness are employed:

They went to a bakery on the main street and it was pleasant in the store of the bakery, after the sun in the plaza, and there were the warm fragrant odors of flour and fresh baked bread and biscuits. While they ate ensaymada and hopia and drank sarsaparilla sitting on the bench by the door, the radio behind the counter played *Tennessee Waltz* and a bus from the city arrived at the terminal shed across the street, and they watched the passengers coming out after their long trip and the cocheros carrying their luggage to the carromatas. (pp. 204-5)

(a symbol for himself, perhaps?). Here is the mirror image of "The Girl Elena."

The very rendering of "girls" in the title "The Beautiful Gerrls" is an indication of the degree of sophistication achieved by the male protagonists. The gracious Remedios conducts herself impeccably in the company of Chito and Raul, whose "brought-upsies," as the Bahamianism has it, are transparent in this dialogue:

"Well . . ." Chito said. "That was quite a scene at the gate, eh, Raul? Like in the movies, eh?"

"You shut up," Raul said, but without heat, tiredly.

"You're going to see her again, I suppose?" Chito said. "One more time before the final curtain. Vacation time's over, boys. Back to the salt mines. It's been fun, though, knowing the most beautiful girl—"

"You talk too much," you said.

"Now, look here—"

"Shut your big trap," Raul said. (pp. 169-70)

Though colloquial coarseness is not a vice, it does reflect a reduction in stature for the human condition.

"A Wind Over the Earth" opens with Teresa and Tony enroute to Tarlac, where Tony's father has suffered a heart attack precipitated by a confrontation with a Mr. Ramos: "Papa almost killed him. With a revolver. They had a fight. Something about money, and honor . . ." (p. 176). But this is only the degradation within the degradation. Tony is rude to the priest who comes to administer the Last Rites, curses in the presence of his wife, and then tries to make love to her. Horrified, with "loud ferocity," though in a whisper, she denominates him "a beast" (p. 184).

"The Mountains" concerns the arrangements for a double date. This is inconsequential enough but is made even more so by the interlarded colloquialisms; e.g., "You'll like her, guy, I know you will. Real class. . . . loaded with culture. Baytooven and Shakespeare and El Grayco"; "Why don't you ask Mon?" "That bum will just louse up things," Tony said (p. 189). Though Ben and Tony are not uncultured—they listen to a program of classical music while they talk, and they do allude to Delmore Schwartz and Graham Greene—their interests are the typically frivolous pursuits of college undergraduates: girls and sports. Ben is preparing for a hunting excursion and briefly weighs the alternative of playing intramural or varsity basketball in the coming year. As in the case of the preceding story, there is no sin (except insofar as the boys' military terminology seems to suggest serious designs on Lilian's virginity), but the ordi-

nariness of these people is evidence enough of an unexalted human state. The same can be said of the placid family outing in town described in "Sunday" and the encounter between the awkward adolescent Flora and Eddie in "The Rain."

"The Living and the Dead" is nearly paradigmatic of the sullied human state. Jose Romano has a mistress and pays hush money. The Romanos' daughter Sylvia is fine, but their son Chito is a mess. He has impregnated his *enamorada*, Helen, and is either unwilling or unable to supply the money for which she pleads in order to pay for an abortion. Helen, in turn, is described by the boorish Nita Romano—whose interests are shouting abuse at the workmen preparing her daughter's party, playing mahjong, and gossiping with others of her ilk—as "a tramp, a *bastarda*" (p. 246). Nita's crudeness surfaces in remarks of the sort she makes about the child-bearing traits of one of her acquaintances: "She delivers so easily—like a cow" (p. 251). That the Romanos are only the centerpieces in this seamy tableaux we see in descriptive asides such as "A group of girls crossed the street to the shade of the acacia trees, their veils folded and gold-edged missals in their slender hands; the young men paused in their swaggering talk to watch the trim white legs below the swaying skirts, their eyes malicious and arrogant with desire" (p. 243).

Enhancing the universalizability of this story is the much-discussed "revolving point of view." As Castillo observes,<sup>12</sup> "The revolving point of view employed in the story serves thematic and structural purposes." Certainly one thematic purpose is, as Castillo says next, that "it reinforces the alienation between the different members of the family," and it also does, as Casper asserts,<sup>13</sup> "dramatize the irony of individuals' similarities which they conceal behind assumed separateness," but it also stresses the widespread corruption of human life.<sup>14</sup>

12. Castillo, *Foreign Influences*, p. 134.

13. Casper, *New Writing*, p. 145.

14. Brillantes, however, downplays the use of revolving point of view. In "The Writers Talk Back," he takes exception to Fr. Bernad's comment that "The Years" follows the pattern often used by Brillantes, that of the "revolving viewpoint" (p. 74) with the curt rejoinder, "The revolving point of view I have used in only four of the twenty stories in the collection" (p. 123). This may be analogous to Hamlet's tendency to compress the time interval between his father's death and his mother's remarriage, however, for, like Casper (*New Writing*, p. 145), I find revolving point of view in five, not four, of the stories.

## EXPULSION BY LACK OF FAITH

In four of the stories, lack of faith is a corrupting force. In both "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro" and "A Wind Over the Earth," a cynical character assumes that the performance of the Last Rites has been inefficacious. Unquestionably they will be so if they are thought to be so, since in this case the sin of unbelief is uncommitted. In "The Strangers," one of the reasons for Linda's rejection of Tony is that "You don't believe. . . . You don't believe in anything" (p. 267), and in "The Living and the Dead," Jose Romano's woes are compounded by his lack of faith: "God, if He exists at all, is too far away, like a sun whose light does not reach the earth. He is not the God of the medieval churches and the mad saints that fanatic men proclaim from the pulpits. . . . What is the religion of the dead? The opium of the crowds in Quiapo. . . . Enough, enough of this superstitious nonsense!" (p. 256).

The result of the Brillantes' characters' corruptions is separation, from each other, from nature, and from God, the bitter aftertaste of the fruit of Eden. As Casper has resoundingly put the matter in the opening sentence of his discussion of Brillantes, "cosmic alienation—the incommensurability of God and man—is implied not only in Joaquin's novel but also in most of the stories in Gregorio Brillantes' collection, *The Distance to Andromeda and Other Stories* (1960)."<sup>15</sup> Castillo concurs and Locsin is encyclopaedic about the forms the 'cosmic alienation' can take.<sup>16</sup>

Brillantes' characters, then, are in a state of alienation in their post-Lapsarian world. Locsin astutely notes that, as a result, "Brillantes conceives of man as a pilgrim"; "Man's destination is heaven, his real home. He is therefore only a stranger in this world. Because of the fall of Adam, man begins life in this world as an exile marked by what Brillantes calls "an innate listlessness stamped on mortality";<sup>17</sup> "Since man is an exile from heaven he naturally longs for the haven of his real home. Thus Brillantes' characters continually dream of a 'lost country,' a place where they feel much more at home."<sup>18</sup> This latter observation, about a dream of a lost country, can be extended to explain the evocative, reminiscing, even nostalgic tone in many of these stories. The characters both dream and daydream, long for and recall fondly, the Utopian past, in an effort to reclaim

15. Casper, *New Writing*, p. 145.

16. Castillo, *Foreign Influences*, p. 128; Locsin, "The Exiles," pp. 409, 410, 412-13.

17. Locsin, "The Exiles," p. 415.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 416.

a pre-Lapsarian state. The plangency of the stories is generated by our recognition that *Le temps perdue ne se retrouve point*.

#### RETROSPECTION

"The Years," by its very title an invitation to retrospection, contains clues to its setting in the past; e.g., "The De Leon residence on Makabulos Street in Tarlac was [my emphasis] a two-story house" (p. 17); "Now on the morning of December 28 of that year" [my emphasis]; "But he did not die that night, that year" (p. 35). "The Young Man" hearkens back to the time "in the photograph taken on Christmas Eve he was nine and a boy safe in his father's house" (p. 47). "My Cousin Ramon" has two tiers of memory, one signaled by "He started to write when I was a boy, and Father was still alive, and we lived in our old house, on Rizal Street, in Camiling, in the province of Tarlac" (p. 71) and "I remember the afternoon I went to see Manong Ramos in Sampaloc, in the city" (p. 74). "The Radio and the Green Meadows," though set in the present, contains flashbacks: "Jorge listened while Tony talked of their days in college" (p. 84). Likewise, "Lost," after its opening paragraph, devotes three and a half pages to recollection; as Laura says, "The rain makes one remember many things" (p. 113). "The Last December" is set in 1941 but has a postwar narrative stance. "The Beautiful Gerrls" is not pinpointed in time but "It was the second to the last day of May, in the full blaze of afternoon, in the year of your wandering unrest" (p. 163). Most of "The Rice Fields" is concerned with the wartime maiming of the protagonist. And "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves" opens in May 1923 (p. 299).

Similar in function to the retrospection is the "concern of many of these stories with adolescence, a time of trial, of trying on"<sup>19</sup> since adolescence is the threshold between the innocence of childhood (symbolically, the pre-Lapsarian condition) and adulthood (symbolically, the post-Lapsarian condition). But childhood's pristineness can come to an abrupt conclusion prior to adolescence, as we see so vividly, if excruciatingly, in "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?" and "The World of the Moon." In the former, the boy is only nine when he is rudely removed from his joyous playground world and thrust into Hell, which is symbolically what the pit beneath the schoolhouse is, inhabited by the demoniacal boys who are smoking and drinking. That it is directly beneath the schoolhouse, symbolic

19. Casper, *New Writing*, p. 148.

of order and rationality, is as much an indicator of its significance as the location of Madeline's sarcophagus directly below Roderick's room in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" is. In the Brillantes story, the entry into the graveyard means more than a translation from the immutability of Eden to the world of change that is adult human life; when, in the shadow of the mausoleum, he is slammed to the ground, he is made aware of the fragility and corruptibility of the flesh. The "pit of pure terror" he falls into is the hellish acquaintance with *nada*: "A faint ancient smell surrounded them, a compound of all the rains and suns of the town, a long decaying nothingness" (p. 297).

#### ODOR

In their alienated, fallen state, Brillantes' characters are excluded from the unwithered Eden which physically encompasses them. We immediately remark the odoriferousness of these stories of DAOS. In "The Years," Alice recognizes "a pine-fragrant night" (p. 23) and "he smelled the clean dryness of the yard and the thick overhanging leaves" (p. 28). "Lost" opens with Fred's reminiscence of, among other details, how "He breathed her fragrance and he recalled the flowers, the sampaguitas and roses at her aunt's home in San Juan, how almost intolerably sweet their scent in evenings after rain" (p. 112). Again, "the wind, cool as ever, was the breath of the pines and the rain-wet earth" (p. 116). In "The Distance to Andromeda," the narrator's brother Pol works, and "the smoke from his pipe is blue and fragrant under the shaded lamp," while "The kitchen is bright and intimate with its rich cooking smells" (p. 131). The "sweetish gasoline odor drifts across the yard, a good warm smell to the boy: it is of the same order as the smoke of his father's cigar and his brother's pipe" (p. 133); "the aroma of Pining's cooking reminds Ben that he is hungry" (p. 135); and "Pining brings in the rice smoking off the stove" (p. 136).

In "The Last December," "The day was beautiful . . . with the smells of the earth and the harvest fields" (p. 141). In "The Beautiful Gerrls," "you remembered the scent of flowers in her hair" (p. 166) and "The fields exhaled the odors of released heat" (p. 170). "A Wind Over the Earth" mentions "the almost palpable smell of earth and leaves pressed against him" (p. 175); "From the Earth rose the smell of rain and decaying leaves" (p. 181). The protagonists in "Sunday" visit a bakery where "there were warm fragrant odors of flour and fresh baked bread and biscuits" (p. 205). In the cinema, "the air was thick and sour" (p. 205), but outside "the wind was



familiar with the smells of sun-warmed earth and leaves cooling in the evening" (p. 207). Later, Juan "smelled the earth and the leaves" (p. 209).

"The Rice Fields" has the protagonist's vision of "his father coming home from the fields in the night, his face glistening in the light of the kerosene lamp, smelling of the rain and the wet earth," and he imagines "the smells of *iniroban* and *patupat* cooking on the open fires in the fields at night (p. 211) and that "he smelled the rice grains" (p. 212) and "the wetness of earth in the dark" (p. 213). Of course, when the protagonist mulls over his wartime experience, he recalls that "he smelled the stench of the plowed-up fields" (p. 215). After the explosion of the mortar shell which maims his arm, "the wind blew away the cordite fumes" (p. 216).

Andres of "The Sound of Distant Thunder" is "aware of the dry reek that rose from the sun-whipped ground" (p. 219). He recalls a visit to the Señora's house when "the smell of heated earth hung in the still air" (p. 223). "The Rain" notes that "The wind smelled of grass and leaves and asphalt drenched with rain" (p. 230). When Eddie lights a cigarette, "She found herself liking the cigarette-smell, warm and intimate in the room" (p. 238).<sup>20</sup> As Flora reminisces, toward the end of the story, she "opened the window wide to let in the evening air, cool and clean with the smell of leaves and grass and earth after rain. . . . her memory of Baguio was of. . . . the fragrance of pine trees in the wind" (pp. 241-42).

In "The Strangers," Linda goes to church, where "A mist of incense and candlesmoke hung above the dimmed altar" (p. 262); after church, she accompanies "the thick shabby rigodon of pedestrians crossing the avenue, wrinkling her finely-modeled nose against the gasoline odors of the jeepneys" (pp. 263-64). As Linda rides home in the bus, "a wind flipped away the stale scent of human sweat" (p. 265). In the second sentence of "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?," there is "the fresh mud smell of the corridor" (p. 269). The protagonist's "favorite subject was geography, for in the large blue-covered book was the tang of oceans, the mists of valleys" (p. 272). In the pit beneath the schoolhouse, the protagonist is thrust into the "half-light"; and "with the dank rotting smell of sunless earth rose the fumes of alcohol" (p. 277).

A similar acidity punctuates "The World of the Moon": "A faint ancient smell surrounded them, a compound of all the rains and suns of the town, a long decaying nothingness" (p. 297). Likewise, in "The

20. It is noteworthy that virtually every Brillantes protagonist smokes, usually heavily. This indulgence of the senses is occasionally supplemented by beer drinking.

Light and the Shadow of Leaves" the protagonist says that "the pungent tobacco made me a trifle dizzy" (p. 300). But, upon arrival at the town, he is treated to "an aroma of rice cakes" (p. 302). Finally, in "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves," "the acacia stump glows redly in the yard, its slightly acrid smoke lingering in the air" (p. 315). Pepe awakens at dawn to "the slow burning smell rising from the yard" (p. 317) and "closes the window against the smoke drifting into all the rooms of the house" (p. 318).

### COLOR

Though not all of these odors are pleasant, the unpalatable ones simply counterpoint the delectability of the others and, simultaneously, supply sensuous stimulation across the spectrum of available olfactory experience. The same holds true for the undesirability of some of the data supplied by the other senses.

For this reason I disagree with Castillo about the association of the color yellow with "paralysis and decay."<sup>21</sup> Castillo uses as an example "The Exiles," in which "the evening setting which sets the mood of "The Exiles" is described as "a spray of yellow light" flickering on the ceiling " and in which "the yellowing photograph of a priest who was her father's school friend catches her eyes."<sup>22</sup> But it is very doubtful that yellow does in fact set the mood of "The Exiles," much less that it is symbolic of paralysis and decay. Two pages later the daughter "opened the western window; above the trees the evening was violet in the sky" (p. 67), and at this point the father is one day closer to death. And in his dream

he explored the streets and byways of the ancient metropolis, driven by a fierce hunger to see, to know in his heart forever, the entire sweep of his father's city from mountainside to seashore: the texture of the tile-roofed houses, the sounds of traffic on the boulevards; the quality of evening and sunlight on the terraced palaces, the statues of the noble conquerors. (p. 64).

Here the evening and the condition of the light are simply part of the "texture," the ambiance which the old man so vividly envisions. Again, "The cathedral bells of Our Lady of Victory soared into the bright sky and scattered in flakes of light" (pp. 64-65). "Scattered in flakes" is cognate with "spray of light," and clearly the former is used in an entirely favorable context. The point to the yellowing is

21. Castillo, *Foreign Influences*, p. 131.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

that it is a softened condition of golden, and this is the point to the many references, albeit in different formulations, to "filtered light" (p. 66) throughout *DAOS*. A case in point is the opening of "The Young Man," where yellow connotes mellowing, even to the point of a twinge of nostalgia: "Everyone is smiling in the photograph; his father and mother, his sisters Lisa and Belen, and the other girls in the row of chairs; and the young men seated on the floor, smiling into the present through the pale yellowish tone of years in the high-ceilinged sala of the house in Tarlac" (p. 37). What perhaps has led Castillo to assume a symbolic function for yellow is its frequent conjunction with artificial lighting, but this is only because incandescent lights in use during the eras in which the stories were set produced yellow light, and thus yellow is a literal, not a symbolic, presence.

Color enhances the richly-burnished substance of the stories, as we can appreciate in a passage like this from "The Young Man": "he sensed the December sky above the town, the enormous clusters of stars burning coldly, their light falling like the softest powder of snow, he imagined, like the whiteness in the cards his sisters sent to their friends, falling in silence on the roof and the trees, on the plaza and the church and all the houses, raining down upon the town through the vast Christmas night while he lay warmly in the dark and listened to the singing and the year moving closer to its end" (p. 39).

Although "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro" is relatively spare descriptively, it does have one passage in which color contributes to the overall effect: "a late moon had risen, edging over the tops of the trees, and in the faint wash of its light, Esteban guided them back to the boat. A glimmering rippled on the surface of the water as they paddled across; the white moonlight spread in the sky, and a sudden wind sprang rain-like and was lost in the trees massed on the riverbank" (pp. 58-59). The sense of color here is enhanced if we recognize that "wash" is a zeugma, referring to "a thin coat of paint" as well as to "cleansing" (cf., "the landscape was bathed by faint moonlight"). Though not conspicuous, the moonlight's color is precisely rendered: "The crickets chirped peacefully in the moon-pale darkness beneath the trees" (p. 59). Similarly, "The Radio and the Green Meadows," in spite of the second half of its title, contains only one significant depiction of color: "He closed his eyes, and once more he saw with his heart a vision of the green meadows, and beyond, veiled in the mist, were the pine trees and the white and blue house by the sea" (p. 90). But this only accentuates the difference between the zest of Jorge's color-splashed dream and the lethargic drabness

of his life as "the same undistinguished clerk, bent over ledgers of dead sums in a neon-lighted room of typewriters and resigned, mask-like faces" (p. 82).

"Blue Piano" is another story with a colorful title and with zeugma at work. "Blue" is both a color and a state of mind, and blues music is also part of its packet of suggestions. "Blue" is used here, as it is elsewhere, to suggest dissolution of sharp definition: "The music melted into the blue dusk of the bar" (p. 105); "something hard and defiant . . . glinted in her eyes, even in the blue twilight" (p. 106). Yet even used to mute, color is finely-calibrated: "he saw the outlines of rooftops against the pearl-grey sky" (p. 110). "Lost" opens "In the early dusk," "with the west burning redly like a wound" (p. 112). Then Laura recalls her time as an *interna*, "with the leaves yellow and green on the ground" (p. 114). Fred, too, recalls his childhood, including excursions to swim in the nearby river, "with the bamboos arching over the deep green water" (p. 119). "The Distance to Andromeda" refers simply to "green-yellow mornings of sun after a long rain" (p. 133); other colors apply to Mars and the new, earth-like planet found by the nuclear holocaust refugees in the movie.

"The Last December" has a fair number of color references: e.g., "The morning was cool, the sun pale yellow on the tiled roofs and stone walls of Intramuros" (p. 140).

"The Beautiful Gerrls" starts in searing heat accentuated by color: "the fields were yellow-brown from the long dry season" (p. 162); "A cliff of cloud in the west shone white with sun" (p. 163); "the mountains were dark blue, a miracle of color in the vast glare" (p. 165), but soon more temperate conditions prevail: "there rose before you . . . a fountain in the center of the town, raining its shining water in the green-gold shadows of trees"; "a blue mist drifted over mountains forested with pine" (p. 165); "Enough of . . . the green lingering twilights over Madrid" (p. 168); "the fountain rained in the green-gold dusk of the trees. . . . You drank deeply of the wine of the town, red as blood" (p. 171); "Bells rang in a tower, the circles of silver sound flying over the tile-roofed houses" (p. 172).

Only "the green-yellow fields of rice" (p. 175) come to the fore in "A Wind Over the Earth." In "The Mountains," however, color figures more: "he sat on the porch steps and watched the blue smoke rising away to get lost in the trees" (p. 186); "he remembered . . . swimming across the river with Raul late in the afternoon, the water deep and green" (p. 191); "the sun slanted goldenly through the leaves (p. 192); "Dawn, with the headlights cutting through the greyness, and early morning, with . . . the sky turning a deeper blue"

(p. 193); "The late sun was yellow-gold upon the houses and the sky was clear and high, gradually losing color" (p. 195).

"The morning was pale blue before the sunrise" is how "Sunday" begins. After the sun is up, "the trees looked fresh and green, and the hills beyond the river were dark green, and the mountains were clear and high, the forests with purple streaks on the slopes facing the sun" (p. 199); "the late sunlight shining like gold" (p. 206). "The Rice Fields" opens with narration, but before long swatches of color are added: "Very clearly he saw the fields, pale green at first. . . . The rice growing into September, dark green now, the grain pods beginning to turn yellow, the stalks swaying in the wind. Then the time of harvest, the fields yellow-orange as egg-yolk in the sun" (p. 211).

In "The Sound of Distant Thunder," the colors are muted and only occasionally specified: "the brown, scorched land" (p. 221); "in his mind disordered thoughts whirled like brown bamboo leaves in a flurry of wind" (pp. 223-24); "The afternoon sun shone with a yellowish glare through the abrupt overcast" (p. 226). "The Rain" is notable for the sharp contrasts involving light and dark colors: "the room was still dark with the grey darkness of morning"; "In the dream . . . the air [was] resplendent with the singing and the gold" (p. 229); "on the wet foliage of the acacias that lined the street was spread a bluish mist like woodsmoke" (p. 230); "The sun shone whitely through the haze" (p. 231); "the glow of the wall lamps [was] orange in the early twilight" (p. 240).

"The Living and the Dead" locates its color references in a domestic setting: "the blue-green water of the swimming pool as the sun ascended the sky and trembled there like a huge and dazzling eye" (p. 244); "the lambent glow of the red and green and yellow lanterns" (p. 254). In something like the same way, the color notations in "The Strangers" are concentrated around religious objects: "She could see the high altar, golden with candle-light" (p. 260); "she could see a white cassock under the violet curtain" (p. 262); "the golden sun of the Blessed Sacrament, rising among clouds of incense at Benediction" (p. 265); "the priest elevated the Body of Christ encased in a golden sun"; "the girl she had once been, offering white flowers to the Mother of God, in a town between the mountains and the sea" (p. 268).

Not surprisingly, the colors of "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?" are concentrated in the first part of the story: "a railroad station on a day in June, with the rain falling and the steam breath of the train engine blue in the grey air. . . . Through the windows there was a view of mountains, dark-blue and infinitely far" (p. 269);

"the thick greenness of the plaza . . . the hot lemon sun" (p. 270); "His favorite subject was Geography, for in the large blue-covered book was the tang of the oceans"; "a photographer came with his black shrouded camera" (p. 272); "the mountains blue in the glare" (p. 276).

In spite of the understated foreboding of "The Conquerors," there is picturesque coloration: "Blue smoke curled above the street" (p. 280); "The sky was blue and empty" (p. 282); "the wind bent the branches and the remaining leaves twinkled like golden coins in the sun" (p. 284); "Sister Rosario thought of the chapel and the empty tabernacle and the shining green tiles of the corridors and the leaves like golden coins twinkling in the sun" (p. 287). The poor judgment of the boys who decide to visit the graveyard in "The World of the Moon" is subtly reflected in the distended, protean, imprecise colors of the story. The boys' distorted, fuzzy thinking (or impulse) is aptly rendered in: "And the moon was rising above the houses, swollen and yellow in the young evening" (p. 290); "the moon-colored grass" (p. 294); "the river, placid molten silver"; "They walked in the moon-white emptiness of a street. . . . comrades together, against the huge, deep, silver night" (p. 295).

The lengthy tale "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves" has its share of functional colors: "My first view of the town was a golden blur of trees and houses on the opposite bank. Rockets swished and banged in the clear sky, and high wind carried the white smoke-puffs into the sunset haze" (p. 301); "the acacias with the evening already blue and darkening among the leaves" (p. 302); "the sun warmed the new pale green leaves" (p. 310); "in the evening there was a dance, with green and red and golden lanterns hanging from the trees" (p. 311); "he peers as through a golden haze at the first unfolding view of houses and river" (p. 313); "the acacia stump glows redly in the yard" (p. 315).

Although we get maximum glare and full darkness, the lighting is frequently filtered—mottled or dappled—just as the colors into which it can be broken down are primary and otherwise, frequently shades and hues or color combinations. The effect is to soften, to dilute, in order to enhance the comfortable, cozy texture of a garden world without too many sharpnesses. Just as some odors must be pungent to set off the scents, so some colors must be glittering so that the less garish are more visible. The filtering is generally done by the leaves of trees, and the prominence of this mechanism is suggested by the careful placement of "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves" as the concluding entry of *DAOS* and by the quantity of filtration references early on in the opening story of *DAOS*, "The

Years." It is as though Brillantes has availed himself of the Law of Primacy and the Law of Recency in communication theory: "the leaves blended with the green paint of the house, looking cool and shadowed on the warmest summer day" (p. 18); "outside the windows the leaves brushed against each other and the night-sounds filtered into the room" (p. 19); "she glanced up at a patch of sky through the leaves" (p. 22); "the afternoon sun glimmered in the trees" (p. 24).<sup>23</sup>

Sunset is a time of slanting, shadowed light, as is sunrise, which accounts for the frequency of references to twilight, in particular. In "The Years," for example, twilight approaches: "He and Pepe sat in the jeep . . . in the cool darkening afternoon" (p. 26). Shortly thereafter, Manoling "imagined . . . the clean chill of dawn . . . and . . . the birds arched whitely, so beautifully, in the pearled light before the sun" (p. 29). Likewise, in "The Exiles," "It was late in the afternoon: a spray of yellow light flickered on the ceiling" (p. 65). Again, in "The Radio and the Green Meadows," "The late afternoon sun cast diagonals of light across the corrugated-iron sides of the buildings" (p. 86). When Jorge returns home, he observes that "His year-old son slept on in his crib, unmindful of the sounds of twilight in the city" (p. 88).

#### LEAF AND MUSIC IMAGERY

Leaves filter sounds as well as light, by providing a cushion on the ground where they have fallen.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in "The Years," when we realize that "the leaves had been swept cleanly off the yard, so that the flat pale earth showed strewn with pebbles as in a dry river-bed" (p. 19), we are far from heartened. Conversely, we are reassured when "in the night the wind moved like a spirit seeking rest and solace among the leaves" (p. 72) and when Laura of "Lost" recalls "the leafless trees and the nun crossing the ground strewn with leaves" (p. 114).

The leaf imagery at one point in "The Last December" might at first seem ominous, the insinuation of the cemetery: "The sunlight streamed through the trees and fell among the dead leaves on the dark loamy earth of the yard," but the immediately preceding sentence dispels this impression: "It was another world, safe and quiet; the old house made you remember things, like voices and a song one night when you were a child" (p. 143). And the warm evoca-

23. Intermittency is an equivalent effect to filtration.

24. Cf., Hopkins' "World of wanwood leafmeal lie" in "Spring and Fall."

tion of the opening paragraph of "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?" is enhanced by leaf imagery: "riding in a carretela with his father and mother through tunnels of leaves" (p. 269). The next leaf reference continues the nostalgic, wistful tone and cements the favorable connotations of leaves, even though the leaves are not on the ground: "from a comfortable perch secret among the leaves, he could see a bend of the river and a part of the main street" (p. 271).

Music's auditory appeal is another aspect of the total sensuousness of *DAOS*, and the appeal is enhanced by the same means that the ocular imagery is: distancing, often through filtration, frequently to the vanishing point. In "The Years," for instance, "the night-sounds filtered into the room" (p. 19). Music's appeal to the senses is stressed in the first *DAOS* story: "The music from the house tugged at him with the subtlety of a sensual temptation" (p. 28). In "The Radio and the Green Meadows," Tony and Jorge remember "the songs of the year . . . the songs about a rainbow when there was no rain, and a tree in the meadow. . . . How we loved to sing them, Tony, you and I and Nick and the gang" (p. 84). Back home after meeting with Tony, Jorge turns on the radio to hear his favorite program of classical music: "The music came as though from a great distance (where, or where?), low at first, like the echo of some lost, enchanted wind, then increasing in volume until it seemed to fill the room to bursting" (p. 90).

In "The Beautiful Gerrls," the tone is eloquently conveyed: "Enough the songs, the dances, the folk music, the green lingering twilights over Madrid, a *paseo* in the park" (p. 168). In a daydream, "The music of a guitar rose somewhere, harsh and infinitely tender, and behind a window a woman sang of the sadness and the glory of man's pilgrimage upon the earth" (p. 171). In "A Wind Over the Earth," "the final echo of her dream's music disappeared into the distance of an obscure landscape she could only sense and not understand" (p. 179). Ben, in "The Mountains," "sat smoking and listening to the Benny Goodman jazz" (p. 187). Tony then "heard a piano concerto through the loud whoosh of the shower". . . . Soon, however, "the classical program was over and now Harry James came on, his trumpet cool and sonorous and precise" (p. 191). Ben can imagine "languid, spellbinding music, and dancing close and warm in a crowded nightclub" (p. 195). In "The Rain," "From the house across the grilled fence tinkled a child's piano lesson, the notes clear and deliberate in the clean stillness of morning. . . . in the sighing of the wind like the sound of distant surf, she seemed to be listening—for music from a forgotten garden?" (p. 231).



The capstone of *DAOS*, "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves," however, makes much more extensive use of music:

When we heard the music, it seemed an extension of the dream, an echo rising out of the depths of his interrupted sleep; and he lay there knowing, although he could not phrase it in words, the immensity of the darkness, and his place in it, a corner encircled by trees and glimmering light.

From the plaza, made farther by the night, the music came in fragments on the wind; it said something about the vastness of night, and a going away, somewhere. . . . he was awake in the house with the moonlight and the music straying through the leaves. (p. 307)

#### WATER IMAGERY

Notable is the extent to which both ocular and auditory imagery is rendered in terms appropriate to water, such as "washing" and "flowing." In "The Years," "the party cascaded down to him" (p. 30). In "The Young Man," the protagonist "sensed . . . the enormous clusters of stars burning coldly, their light . . . raining down upon the town" (p. 39) and "Wind passed over the trees and the church and the high school washed pale in the moonlight" (p. 42). In "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro," "a late moon had risen, edging over the tops of the trees, and in the faint wash of its light, Esteban guided them back to the boat" (p. 58). In "The Exiles," "a spray of yellow light flickered on the ceiling" (p. 65). In "The Radio and the Green Meadows," "Debussy's *Claire de Lune* flowed softly like a starlit river of remembered dreams" (p. 90).

In "Blue Piano," "The music melted into the blue dusk of the bar" (p. 105). In "The Last December," "The sunlight streamed through the trees" (p. 143). In "The Beautiful Gerrls," "a blue mist drifted over mountains forested with pine" (p. 165); there is "dark fog boiling" (p. 170); "the women walked in the flowing light" and "The wind was clean, washed damp by the rain" (p. 172). In "A Wind Over the Earth," we have "the musical tones melting liquidly into the ancient wood of the walls" (p. 176). In "Sunday," "The church hung there above the roofs of the town like a boat sailing in the sky" (p. 207). In "The Sound of Distant Thunder," Andres sees "the dark clouds boiling down the slopes of Mt. Arayat" (p. 226). In "The Rain," Flora "wakened one night to strains of music floating from a house in the neighborhood" (p. 232). In "The Living and the Dead," "over it all, intimate and languid after the jarring mambo rhythms, drifted an old tune" (p. 251) and "the elegant waves of music

washed into the murmurous talk and the laughter" (p. 253). In "The Conquerors," "the sky was washed with moonlight" (p. 287) and "the voices flowed around her" (p. 288). In "The World of the Moon," "The perfect globe of the moon floated in the east, over the town" (p. 291); "The unpainted houses, drab in the sun, assumed a grace and loveliness in the wash of moonlight. . . . the sweet bloom of flowers flowed to him from a garden" (p. 294);<sup>25</sup> and "They walked in the moon-white emptiness of a street, past mute shuttered houses and trees standing in pools of pale speckled shadow" (p. 295). In "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves," we go "through the dappled pools of acacia shade" (p. 310) and "the burned wind washes past him" (p. 313).

The ocular and auditory aquifer which Brillantes taps is highly appropriate, granted the symbolic importance of water in *DAOS*. Whether in the form of the sea, a river, rain, mist, rain clouds, dew, fountains, well water, fog, a swimming pool, or thunder, water represents selfhood, refuge, and tranquility. The sea,<sup>26</sup> in fact, has an almost amniotic significance, a point made unmistakably in "The Radio and the Green Meadows": "Two years ago, he and Alma used to ride down to the Luneta after a movie, and in the park they would sit on a bench, and talk whisperingly, tenderly, conscious of the new life breathing within her. They would stay there long after the sun had set and the wind blew in from the sea" (p. 82). This bit of domestic tenderness is juxtaposed in Jorge's memory with other seaside doings: "That night at the beach, Tony . . . I got tipsy enough to stand on the seawall and orate on love and women, not caring about the years to come, only the now and the here mattered then, the being alive, the night sown with stars. . . . and a tree in the meadow (and beyond, the sea)" (p. 84). Jorge's fond memories conclude with "the pine trees and the white and blue house by the sea." (p. 90).

Though in "The Girl Elena" there is an acknowledgement of "Carding, lost in the sea" (p. 93), the extremely dense texture of references to the sea overrides any sense of ominousness which the

25. Since a "bloom" is seen, the image is ocular, though of course it is a synesthetic expression of "fragrance."

26. Only once referred to as "the ocean," perhaps because of the softly sibilant sound of "the sea." In only one case is the sea depicted in anything but a totally desirable way. In "The Beautiful Gerrls," we get "in the lightning flashes, the landscape was alien and abandoned; you felt submerged in the turbulent depths of the sea" (p. 170), but, as is true of the occasional reversal of values associated with other imagery, this seems to function as a control group rather than a contradiction.

death of Carding might otherwise have provoked: "Through the coconut grove he saw the sea and the dark shapes of the fishing boats and beyond, the horizon in the last light of the afterglow"; "We would walk as far as Nagsabong and then come back and sit on the pier in the moonlight"; "They had laughed together, teasing the girls, walking by the sea" (p. 93); "The palm fronds rustled in the wind from the sea" (pp. 93-94); "she turned to the window, to the evening and the sea" (p. 94); "He looked into her eyes, shining with deep secret silent things, like the sea on a moonlit night" (p. 95); "He could no longer see the sea beyond the coconut grove, but he heard the rush of the waves, stronger in the darkness"; "Her father was out at sea, and he would come back with the other men at dawn"; "He heard the sea. . . . All his hopes then changed into a single wish, a longing to walk with her by the sea, to know again the sea with her" (p. 96); "Through the coconut grove in the darkness, he walked away from the house, away from the sea and the sound of the sea" (p. 97); "it seemed that by keeping still he could hear, even here on the road, the heartbeat of the sea"; "he thought of Elena, young and pure and lovely, walking with him, their hands clasped, on the shoreline of the evening sea" (p. 98). Metaphors like "the heartbeat" of the sea, of course, strengthen the womb-like attractiveness of the sea.

The doctor's recurrent bad dream is of a dark, cold, lonely night when "you don't hear the waves any more" in "Blue Piano." It stands to reason that, if proximity to the ocean means reassurance and refuge, separation from the ocean means "the same endless night" and "people crying in the forest" (p. 108). The reassurance of refuge comes to the fore in "The Distance to Andromeda": "The little piano music, the voices of his mother and aunt talking in the soft light from the porch lap at him comfortingly as warm tides of a sea: he is safe, lying floating in the cove of home" (pp. 132-33). Likewise, in "A Wilderness," David fantasizes that "he walked into a morning sea, into the green silent depths, and the waters closed above him remotely and murmured peace . . ." (p. 152).

The ocean may be treated so rhapsodically because of its lack of edges and hardness or because it is, according to tradition, the cradle of human life. The likelihood of the former is increased by the large number of other aqueous references, particularly in the form of rainfall. "Lost" is in fact set against a backdrop of rainfall:

In the early dusk, it was raining again, the cold misty rain of the mountains, making him think of the first day when they had driven up the winding road through the rain and the skies had cleared when they

reached the city, with the west burning redly like a wound. She leaned quietly against him, sitting on the divan, and together they watched the rain through the French windows, the rain falling on the terrace and the pines along the street and the park beyond. He breathed her fragrance and he recalled the flowers, the sampaguitas and roses at her aunt's home in San Juan, how almost intolerably sweet their scent in evenings after rain; her shy and frightened eyes after he had kissed her for the first time in the garden dark and still with the bloom of flowers after rain . . . (p. 112).

"The rain makes one remember many things," she said. . . .

"The sound of rain," she said. (p. 113).

He waited and in their silence the rain fell on the pines and the grass in the park and on the lagoon and blurred the shapes of the mountains; his guilt faded away like blown smoke into the growing darkness, and the sound of the rain became again the peaceful background of their remembering. (pp. 113-14).

It was raining and the wind had stripped the acacias of their leaves. (p. 114)

. . . the wind, cool as ever, was the breath of the pines and the rain-wet earth (p. 116).

The sun shone in a porcelain sky, although the mountains beyond the crests were veiled in fog and rain. (p. 117).

In "What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?," "At noon the day darkened and rained, and his father came and they left together, sharing a raincoat, walking down the cool raining streets of the town."<sup>27</sup>

Mist, dew, fog, lakes, well water, fountains, and swimming pools are also present to soften the texture of the landscape. In "The Years," "there was a mist curling over the reeds" (p. 29). The recurrent dream of the protagonist of "The Exiles" includes "silver fountains" (p. 65). Jorge of "The Radio and the Green Meadows" envisions "the green meadows, and beyond, veiled in mist, were the pine trees and the white and blue house by the sea" (p. 90). In "Lost," "the mountains beyond the crests across the valley were veiled in fog and rain" (p. 117). In "The Beautiful Gerrls," "there rose before you . . . a fountain in the center of town, raining its shining water in the green-gold shadows of trees. . . . you listened to the rain of the fountain. . . . a blue mist drifted over mountains forested with pine" (p. 165). In "Sunday," "The grass that grew on the trail in scattered clumps was cool under the feet, wet with dew" (p. 198); in "The Mountains," "rain came down in a mist" (p. 196). In "The

27. The two preceding passages show how permeating the rain is. The first, "the day rained," makes the rain ubiquitous, and the second, "raining streets," suggests that rain emanates from everywhere.

Sound of Distant Thunder," Andres "was very thirsty and he thought again of the shade of trees, and the cool sweet water of a well" (p. 220). In "The Living and the Dead," "Shadows wavered on the lawn and the blue-green water of the swimming pool" (p. 244), and "in the moonlight, the ground below seemed insubstantial, an illusion of transient mist. A distorted full moon floated in the swimming pool" (p. 254).

Rivers are another aqueous element of DAOS, but they produce not only a softening of the landscape, but refreshment, even regeneration, as well.<sup>28</sup> Certainly the most definitive association of the river with refreshment is in "The World of the Moon": "they hurried down the three blocks to the river, placid molten silver except where it was dark under the bridge. Shouting for the sake of hearing their voices carry across the water, they splashed around and gamboled on the sand and raced each other to the opposite bank, water spraying, sparkling in the moonlight, until they began to shiver from staying too long in the water. . . . Refreshed by their swim, they raised their voices to defy stillness and the late hour" (p. 295). In "The Light and the Shadow of Leaves," the river contributes to the complex of warm, fond memories: "Rain and sun and the train; the unbridged river, the lamp of a calesa swinging down a street, cicadas in the peaceful trees" (p. 306). Later, the narrator "peers as through a golden haze at the first unfolding view of houses and river" (p. 313).<sup>29</sup>

#### TACTILITY

The softened, muted landscape of DAOS, however, is not wispy or evanescent; it is palpable, fully realized, and this is due in large measure to the tactility of the imagery. Wind, for instance, is a constant presence. In "The Years," at the story's climax:

he remained on the bed and listened to the December wind and the late carolers singing joy to the world, the Lord had come. The wind's passage became the farewell of the year coming to an end: it sighed over

28. It is tempting to see a swim in a river as a baptism, but the regeneration of a dip is confined to the body; no spiritual improvement follows. In "The World of the Moon," for instance, it is after their sportiveness in the river that the protagonists make the ill-judged excursion to the cemetery.

29. The next paragraph expands this description to include details that may suggest deterioration. It is probably significant, therefore, that the river lacks its prewar depth: "Going over the concrete low-railed bridge that has replaced the steel-girded one destroyed in the war, he notices the shallowness of the river, the sandbars with children playing on them; the rice mill on the riverbank has dumped its chaff in a yellow mound that trails down to the water's edge" (p. 313).

the roof, pointing the arrow of the weather vane westward with the ending season; it carried away all the days and the nights now past like leaves. Three more days, and it would be another year; and it was as though he could hear on the wind the regretful tolling, and then the brave exultant pealing of the bells of New Year's Eve, awaited but somehow already a memory. (p. 35)

As Esteban transports Ben and Dr. Lazaro to shore in "Faith, Love, Time and Dr. Lazaro," "a sudden wind sprang rain-like and was lost in the trees massed on the riverbank" and "the moonlight had transformed the landscape, revealing a gentle, more familiar dimension, a luminous haze upon the trees stirring with a growing wind" (p. 59). In "The Radio and the Green Meadows," Jorge relaxes, listening to the program of classical music, which "came as though from a great distance (where, o where?), low at first, like the echo of some lost, enchanted wind" (p. 90). "The Sound of Distant Thunder" finds Andres, uncomfortable listening to revolutionary rhetoric, wishing that "he were in the dusk of trees, cool in a moist, shaded wind" (p. 219).

The principal vehicle for tactile sensations, however, is temperature designation, sometimes "hot" or "cold" but far more frequently "warm" or "cool."<sup>30</sup> "Cool" designates the idyllic, *a la* Hemingway, and "warm" is equally paradisaical, as we see in "The Young Man": "he was . . . a boy . . . listening to the voices downstairs singing along the warm, familiar boundary of sleep" (p. 47). Likewise, in "Blue Piano" Joe "drank some whiskey; the drink went down smoothly and then gave a soft warm loving kick" (p. 101); and "He strode toward the lighted door, thankful for the cool clean dawn" (p. 110). In "The Distance to Andromeda," "The little piano music, the voices of his mother and aunt talking in the soft light from the porch lap at him comfortingly as warm tides of a sea" (pp. 132-33). In a "A Wilderness," David "began to think of cool things, tranquil rain and the dark shade of trees" (p. 152). In "The Beautiful Gerrils," "You drank deeply of the wine of the town, red as blood and cool on the tongue and burning brightly into your heart . . . you kissed the warm vivid face of life" (pp. 171-72). In "A Wind Over the Earth," "the priest stopped beneath the shelter of a tree to light a cigarette, inhaling the warm soothing smoke gratefully" (p. 181). In "Sunday," "They went to the bakery on the main street . . . and there were the warm fragrant odors of flour and fresh baked bread and biscuits" (pp. 204-5); "the wind was familiar with the smells of sun-warmed earth and leaves cooling in the evening" (p. 207); and "he

30. "Hot" and "cold" serve as foils for "warm" and "cool."

remembered the coolness like the shade of a great spreading tree and the sound of the people kneeling like the rustling of leaves and the feeling that God was present among them" (p. 209).

The sum of these sensuous elements is an idyllic world, a cosmos gentle and tender: a green and well-groomed garden. Thus it is fitting that in a number of the *DAOS* stories a garden, a park, or an area with garden-like features (such as a meadow or an orchard) is part of the setting. In "The Exiles," the dying man dreams of a place where "Children played in a vast garden, their laughter miraculous and deathless among the sculptured swans and the silver fountains" (p. 65). In "Lost," "She leaned quietly against him, sitting on the divan, and together they watched the rain through the French windows, the rain falling on the terrace and the pines along the street and the park beyond. He breathed her fragrance and he recalled the flowers, the sampaguitas and roses of her aunt's home in San Juan, how almost intolerably sweet their scent in evenings after rain; her shy and frightened eyes after he had kissed her for the first time in the garden dark and still with the bloom of flowers after rain" (p. 112). When Laura asks what the rain reminds him of, Fred remarks, "The Gardens" (p. 113). In "The Last December," "There was an orchard behind the house, and beyond the wall you could see the fields and the blue line of the lake" (p. 144). In "The Beautiful Gerrls," "beyond the town, hills bloomed sweetly and a blue mist drifted over mountains forested with pine . . ." (p. 165). In "The Rain," the adolescent Flora blooms "in a meadow at the end of the dream" (p. 229). As she muses, "in the sighing of the wind like the sound of distant surf, she seemed to be listening—for music in a forgotten garden?" (p. 231).

Devoid of ideas or other abstractions, Brillantes' gardens are abloom with the flowers of sensuousness. Filtered light, cool wind, wafted odor, muted color, cushioning leaves, plangent melody, gentle mist, tangy rain—flowing, melding, sibilant and soft—these are the features of Eden, unwithered, unshrivelled. But it is Eden irretrievable for cupiditous, violent, slothful, indifferent, and infidel humanity. Noses pressed against the glass, we see the world replete with such a beauty that "The senses ache" for it:

any time of day was good, he decided. Dawn, with the headlights cutting through the greyness, and early morning, with the sun coming up over the mountains, the sky a deeper blue, and noon under the trees, and finally, the day going into the west, and suddenly the lights of the stars in the sky. Any time of day was good, and when it rained you could stay out from it and feel warm watching it falling darkly on the trees. (pp. 193-94).