a novella which closely followed the "Door in Darkness," is a somewhat extended short story and for this reason has suffered almost total neglect. Critics have tended to bypass it as a mere filling-in between Styron's two major novels. Peter Hays, Eugene Hickamara, and August Hogro alone have taken the novella seriously. Numerous critics have tended to dismiss it as a "small book . . . a kind of existential exercise."  

Jonathan Baumbach calls it a "novelette," really a long short story, and disposes it off in exactly two sentences. William Van O'Connor calls it an "extended short story . . . a pleasure to read . . . excellently paced and exciting. But on the morning after, one wonders what it all adds up to."  


reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, acidly, if somewhat unfairly, comments: "Mr. Alan Jillitoe achieved success with his 'long distance runner'; but it is not the inevitable recipe for a work of art."  

Eugene McNamara, writing in *Western Humanities Review*, views the work as "uniquely itself, and strangely of its time." He starts out with the assumption that "all works of art reflect and echo the tenor of their time." McNamara analyses first of all the plot movement, then the narrative structure, and finally the pattern of metaphor to underscore his understanding of Jtyron's intention viz., to force us through the ritual of the march and shatter our dreams of innocence and peace.

Peter Hays, writing in *Critique*, and in sharp contrast to McNamara, asserts that to say all works of art reflect and echo the tenor of their time "is only part of the truth . . . Jtyron is obviously concerned with the eternal as well as the temporal." Both McNamara and Peter Hays

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5 Eugene McNamara, "William Jtyron's Long March: Absurdity and Authority," *Western Humanities Review*, 25 (Summer 1961), 266-278.

6 Ibid., p. 267.

point out the various resemblances and parallels between Mannix, the central figure and a symbol of rebellion, and various classical and mythic heroes of old. He is likened to Prometheus, to Moses and lastly, perhaps, to Christ. But here their analyses end. They do not see any overt intention on the part of the author to establish a deeper relationship between his protagonist and the use of the mythic hero.

August Higro, in his penetrating and brilliant early study of technique in this novella, takes a further step. His is a three-pronged analysis. The novella, according to Higro, is a fable which is not only a comment on military life which "corrupts," as it were, but is also an evocation of the dreams of childhood. Higro suggests that in our times individual revolt is fruitless and, therefore, meaningless.

I

Viewed from the periphery, The Long March, resembles any other routine tale about the Korean War. But the underlying symbol and metaphor and strength to the narrative, thereby making it a work of art.

Moving away from the merely pathetic, as in The Down

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In darkness, the novella projects a world which is almost "absurd," devoid of meaning like an "existential" canvass. The world of the Corps, filtered through the consciousness of Culver, is disordered. The universe is distorted and unreal, "in a scattered, disordered riot, like a movie film pieced together by an idiot," (p. 32). The observer Culver at various points feels "suddenly unreal and disoriented" (p. 34), shifted into another dimension of space and time. Life, a child, home seem "to have existed in the infinite past or, dreamlike again, never at all" (p. 35). The Long March tells of a time in modern America, between the wars. The threat of the cold war sets the tone of the novel—ominous and disquieting. The universe, as projected in the novella, is bleak and comfortless. The opening scene, a masterpiece in tight narrative control, sets the tone, "turns the screw" as it were, relentlessly suggesting the aftermath:

One noon, in the blaze of a cloudless Carolina summer, what was left of eight dead boys lay strewn about the landscape, among the poison ivy and the pine needles and loblolly saplings. It was not so much as if they had departed this life but as if, sprayed from a hose, they were only shreds of bone, gut, and dangling tissue to which it would have been impossible ever to impute the quality of life, ... they lay now, alive but stricken in a welter of blood and brain. (pp. 3-4)

The picture is of death, shattered youth and futile waste, with the threat of the cold war ominously looming large over
the deceptive peacetime. Effective use of contrast further underscores the intrusion of disorder into a stable and orderly cosmos. Styron's evocation of a peaceful existence, or "that Old world calm" is achieved through Culver's vision of the girls on the lawn, which appears exactly three times in the course of the novel—at climactic moments in the unfolding of the story.

"... One happy and ascending bar that he remembered, a dozen bright notes through which he passed in memory to an earlier, untroubled day at the end of childhood. There, like tumbling flowers against the sunny grass, their motions as nimble as the music itself, two lovely little girls played tennis, called to him voicelessly, as in a dream, and waved their arms..." (p. 10)

Each time, the vision effectively contrasts with time "present". The present is ominous and full of gloom: the threat of war, the exacting and enervating routine of the corps, the Carolina swamp raging with "marine" life, where futile, meaningless exercises in military science are carried out. The picture of the dead boy etched against the landscape of broken shells, shattered mess kits and puddles of melting ice cream, is a trenchant, if objective, comment on "futility".

One boy's eyes lay gently closed, and his long dark lashes were washed in tears, as though he had cried himself to sleep...
gawky, tousled grace, as if preserving even in that blank and mindless repose some gesture proper to his years, a callow charm. . . . Below, beneath the slumbering eyes, his face had been blasted out of sight.

(p. 63)

Styron's technique of using the "present" and "past" is seen at its best here. He juxtaposes the present, the exacting, mechanical, almost absurd world of the Marine Corps, and the past consisting of the experiences of the principal characters—Culver and Mannix. Styron uses third person narrative to tell this tale of rebellion, filtered of course through the consciousness of Culver, who is the equivalent of a Greek chorus.

The novella (in which the central episode is the forced thirtysix-mile march, ordered by Colonel Templeton to toughen up his reserves, to make the marines, and to inculcate group esprit), is divided roughly into five parts. Each part shoots off from the principal event, viz., the narration of the march—fetid and prolonged—through marsh and sand and swamp.

The horror inherent in the scene depicting futile death—"eight dead marines lying as if sprayed from a house, they were shreds of bone, gut and dangling tissue"—this surrealistical image of human bone and gut littered amidst the spoons and forks and mess-kits, is evoked in
different forms throughout the novel. Always, it contrasts with the peaceful dream of Culver, who has been brutally recalled from the security of peacetime to the surrealistic terror of war.

The scene shifts to Colonel Templeton, who accepts this death without any outward demonstration of emotion. He is indeed "stooky Templeton" for whom every individual must be expendable. To him his men are "marines first and foremost. He is the perpetrator of and a stern adherent to the "System," which is indifferent to human suffering. Mannix's reaction, however, is diametrically opposite. Regarding the faceless marine, who seems to retain even in death a "stooky tousled grace," he is shocked and tormented. His is a cry of outrage: "Won't they ever let us alone, the sons of bitches . . . Won't they ever let us alone?" (p. 63). Thus the theme of rebellion is evoked when the humane Mannix stares out at the spectacle of shattered youth and is roused to anger and hatred against the system.

When Templeton orders the forced march, partly to toughen up his marines (flabby men recalled from an idyllic existence), and partly to inculcate an esprit de corps, Mannix, the heretic, rebels. Mannix's protest, however, is overtly expressed by what Maxwell Geismar has called
"Rebellion in reverse." He completes the march, not because he believes in its efficacy, but literally out of spite. He lashes out against his men, to drag them if he could, to their destination.

On the evening before the march, Mannix discovers a nail in his shoe. It is too late to get another pair of shoes and this exposes him to the "sharp pinpoint of torture" (p. 64). The march begins in a "bloody wasteland," pushing the marines into a world bristling with disorder and absurdity.

For six years they had slept a cataleptic sleep, dreaming blissfully of peace, awakened in horror to find that, after all, they were only marines, responding anew to the old commands. They were marines.

(p. 69)

Subjugated by the system, crushed and depersonalized by its authority, Mannix, the rebel, turns tyrant. He admonishes his men with a voice almost hysterical with tension:

_all right, H 3 Company, saddle up, saddle up! You people get off your asses and straighten up! . . . All right, you people, we're gonna walk thirty-six miles tonight and I mean walk! First man I see drop out's gonna get police duty for two weeks, and that goes for everybody. You think I'm kidding you wait and see. There's

gonna be trucks going in for those that can't make it but I don't want to see anyone from H & J Company climbing on!

(pp. 71-72)

When the march begins, the pace that the Colonel sets—the pace of a trained hiker, "determined and inhesitant"—has these flabby men gasping in no time at all. Styron uses the thought processes of Culver to give an insight into the reactions of these men to this unexpected walk through the night. First he panics, thinking he would be unable to last more than an hour; but once he adjusts to the pace, he realizes "it would be all right." H & J Company sadly show the strains of this forced march. In the night, not unlike a sequence from a dream, Munnix's hoarse voice rings out at intervals, lashing at his men with renewed fury, "O.K. you people can grabass all you want but I'm telling you you'd better save your wind. If you want to talk all the way it's O.K. with me but you're gonna crap out if you do, and remember what I said . . ." (p. 77).

His tone had become terse and vicious, it could have been the sound of a satrap of Pharoah, a galley master. It had the forbidding quality of a strand of barbed wire or a lash made of thorns, and the voices, the song, abruptly ceased as if they had been strangled. (p. 77)

Thus, the voice, brutal and furious, dominates the night as the march continues its relentless way. Later, after the awareness of the tiredness is worn away by almost mechanical
marching, as in a dream, the march becomes a dull routine, an act in which the brain "played hardly any part at all" (p. 74).

After a time, Mannix limps. A rank and putrid odour漂流s itself in the darkness—not the swamp decay, Culver realizes, but Mannix's foot. The nail is embedded deep inside Mannix's heel, but he still marches on, teeth clenched, robot-like. Culver and Mannix do not realize that the Colonel has been a witness to this. Templeton orders Mannix, who is obviously unfit for the march, to board the bus. Mannix retaliates with such violence that he is condemned to face a court-martial for gross insubordination. Notwithstanding this, he completes the march, which he looks upon almost as a mission. With contorted face and gyrating limbs, he finally drags himself back to camp. Then, naked except for a towel round his waist, which also falls leaving him nude, he encounters a black maid in the hallway. With infinite sympathy she asks "Do it hurt?" Clutching his soap—Styron's symbol of purification—the exhausted Mannix who has so courageously endured can only mumble, "'Deed it does'."

Written in Paris after the war, *The Long March*, by Styron's own admission, is largely autobiographical. Speaking
about the theme of his novella, Styron has observed:

... my story's hero is also a rebellious soul, a young Marine reserve officer whose mutinous rage against authority in general, and his commanding officer in particular, leads to his downfall... He resists the system and it is his ruin. You cannot buck the system—I think that is what I was trying to say—for if you do you will pull disaster down upon your head... At the end of my story the captain, (who is not without his foolish and impulsive moments), having faced down his commanding officer at the conclusion of a senseless and brutal hike ordered by the same CO, stands to receive a court-martial. The tragedy is implicit here.10

When *The Long March* was being televised, Styron, disturbed by the mishandling the novella received, commented on the obvious philosophic overtones in the novel. Styron insisted that "divorced of its philosophic content the narrative becomes utterly routine."

*The Long March* is in many ways a fable, a sort of parable. Richard Eastman, writing in *College English*, has referred to the tales of Kafka as "open" parables where dreams, associations and memories border on the unreal, the theme being highly elusive: "Through such devices, the author of the open parable charges his material so that the reader, deliberately troubled, will begin to infer a series of

possible correspondences." As against this, Styron's re- atle is a "closed" one, the theme being more explicit, and the symbolism fairly comprehensible, denoting a message, or at least a comment on the human condition.

The novella functions as a tragedy of rebellion. As in his other novels, here too, it is a rebellious act that leads to the act of guilt or shame and suffering, so central to Styron's tragic vision of life. Mannix, like the tragic mythic hero comes to regeneration and enlightenment at the end of the story. He too acquires the painful insight that the great sinner-heroes of mythology do at the end of their deeds. Besides, in his impulse to rebel, Mannix also resembles Camus' rebel who asserts that rebellion in "its purest outburst, on each occasion, gives birth to existence." By drawing a parallel between the ancient and modern rebel-protagonists, Styron broadens the implications of the theme of rebellion. His intention in manipulating a "continuous parallel" between "contemporaneity and antiquity," is to give shape and significance to our existence which has become increasingly futile and absurd. The method that Styron employs is that of analogy. Rebellious souls from classical


and Biblical tradition are one by one likened to Mannix who takes on some of their rebellious authority, and thus transcends time "present". Msgro has also suggested that "through simile, analogy and allusion, Styron identifies Mannix with a series of heroes from the literature and myth of Western civilization, all of whom rebel against social and traditional authority." 13

The hero, Mannix, a symbol of rebellion in its most overt form, is projected not only as a Greek hero, but is also likened to all those heroes, mortal or godly, who have always spoken out against the tyranny of society. Like them, Mannix ventures forth into rebellion only to return, to be reintegrated with society, renewed and enlightened. However, Styron uses the classical rebel as analogous to his hero with some reservations. Unlike the victories won by ancient rebels, Mannix's triumph is microcosmic, limited to his awareness of a newer self within him which redefines his existence. Speaking of the problem of mankind today, Joseph Campbell has observed that "today no meaning is in the group—none in the world; all is in the individual." 14

Styron's fascination for the use of Greek myth, especially as embodied in tragic literature, is evident here as elsewhere. Overt references to classical Greek characters are numerous. Thus Styron describes the confrontation between Mannix and Templeton in almost classical terms:

In the morbid, comfortless light they were like classical Greek masks, made of chrome or tin, reflecting an almost theatrical disharmony.

(p. 29)

The story is told through a mediator, the observer-chorus Culver. The narrative is slowly filtered through his consciousness—his dreams, visions and memories, providing comment and contrast to the present, the actual movement. The protagonist Mannix's face has "a quick look of both fury and suffering like the tragic Greek mask . . ." (p. 29). It has been suggested that Mannix, like the hero Oedipus, not only has a swollen foot but also suffers from an almost "Oedipal madness." Mannix is afflicted with a passionate "hubris" and may thus be identified with various heroes of the classical Greek tradition. He is marred by flaws both internal and external. His love and sympathy for the reserves may be likened to the love Prometheus bore towards the human race:

And his own particular suffering . . . had given him an acute, if cynical, perception about their renewed bondage, and a keen nose for the winds that threatened to blow up out
of the oppressive weather of their surroundings and swept them all into violence.

(p. 45)

According to the Greek myth, Man finds a champion in the person of Prometheus the Titan. Templeton who is prefigured as Zeus has the same stern attitude towards his Marines that Zeus bore towards mankind. Zeus had little love for mankind and heaped upon them all manner of oppressions. It was Prometheus who sought to raise them from their slavish, brutish condition. Though Hannix does not achieve the tragic and superhuman dimensions of Prometheus, his fanatic love for the Marines in bondage, and his rebellion—"rocklike and intense"—have the same mythic quality.

The confrontation between Templeton and Hannix in the tent most readily brings to mind the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles during the Trojan war. Like Achilles in the tent during the war council, Hannix too rebels against the injustice of his superior. Thus does Achilles speak in the Iliad to Agamemnon:

You thick-skinned, shameless, greedy fool! Can any Akhian care for you, or obey you, after this on marches or in battle?. . . .

. . . . what a poltroon,
how lily-livered I should be called, if I knuckled under to all you do . . . .
give your commands to someone else, not me! 15

Hannix resembles Achilles not only in his confrontation with Templeton, but also on account of his bruised heel. The bruised heel is his most vulnerable point that ultimately leads to his downfall. The choice Hannix is confronted with is the kind of choice that Achilles is forced to make in the midst of war. He has the choice to accept the march as a routine procedure, or to rebel against it with all its tragic implications. According to David Lenson, "Achilles' choice is the archetype of the decision faced by every tragic hero."*16 In the Iliad, Homer speaks of the choice that ultimately will shape the destiny of Achilles:

For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me
I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either,
if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,
my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;
but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,
the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly.17

Hannix cannot hope for "everlasting glory," but his personal choice, his "insurrection," at least enables him to exist

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"absolutely" or fully in a world, which (quite unlike the world of *Achilles) is devoid of any absolutes.

In his prodigious strength, Mannix also resembles the Titan Atlas. He is a dark "heavy-set" Jew from Brooklyn, who "in his own fury, . . . held up, atlas-like, the burden of his great weariness" (p. 81). Lastly, from among the Greek mythic heroes, Mannix may be identified with Sisyphus, engaged in the futile task of rolling the stone uphill. In his essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus," Albert Camus gives a moving account of the condemned man:

The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour.\(^{18}\)

Thus is Mannix doomed to a march that is hopeless and futile, devoid of any tangible meaning. He is aware, even like Sisyphus that his gestures are absurd and meaningless:

Born into a generation of conformists, even Mannix (so Culver sensed) was aware that his gestures were not symbolic, but individual, therefore hopeless, may be even absurd, and that he was trapped like all of them in a

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Apart from his close resemblance with Greek mythical rebels, Mannix may also be likened to certain Biblical figures such as Satan, Adam, Moses and Christ. Mannix prefigures as Satan in his rebellion against God in Heaven. Styron skilfully invokes Mannix's act of rebellion, when in a drunken stupor, he insists on setting fire to "Heaven's Date, which was the name--no doubt ironically supplied at first by the enlisted men--of the pleasure-dome ingeniously erected amid a tangle of alluvial swampland, and for officers only" (p. 52). Here, "once, in a rare midnight moment when he allowed himself to get drunk, he got paper and wood together from his room and announced to Culver in an unsteady but determined voice that he was going to burn the place down" (p. 54).

Mannix epitomizes the end of innocence, and hence symbolizes Adam after his fall from grace. As one who rebels against the divine will and is subsequently cursed to work by the sweat of his brow, Mannix truly recalls Old Adam, the recalcitrant one, after his exit from Paradise. Among the Biblical figures, Mannix closely resembles Moses of the Old Testament. The reserves recall to mind the oppressed Israelites before the Exodus.
And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor; and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.

(Exodus 1: 13-14)

Mannix's voice, dominating the night, and pressing his people forward to their destiny, has the messianic quality of Moses.

In the intensity of his religious fervour, Mannix is also identified with Christ. He is branded a rebel, a heretic, a false prophet, even like Christ. He is not only physically disabled, but is also socially ostracized. Like Christ in the final days before the crucifixion, Mannix is badly lacerated and scarred. If Mannix prefigures as the heretic Christ, Templeton is prefigured as Pontius Pilate, who does his best to absolve Christ from guilt, but is at last goaded into condemning him. Styron also refers to his hero as "Christ on a Crutch."

The ancient heroes mentioned above are analogous to Styron's hero in yet another and as yet wholly unexplored aspect. The punishment of Mannix as of the ancient heroes is to some extent a wholly "contingent" one—contingent upon himself. At any time by cessation of their revolt, they can put a stop to their suffering and torment. In spite of the immensity of his suffering, the final and ultimate victory is
the rebel's, who maintains a scornful awareness of his situation and predicament. Mannix is aware of the absurdity and contingency of his situation, but rises above it all.

The point may be further illustrated by extending the analogy between Mannix and Prometheus. The Aeschylean Prometheus, for example cries out: "No misfortune can fall upon me that I have not myself already foreseen." Mannix, too, fully anticipates and even draws upon himself the consequences of his rebellious act. Like Prometheus, his punishment is of his own making, and his suffering may be ended if he so desires. Mannix could have ended his torture by boarding the bus, thus accepting failure; but he chooses to define his being through his act of defiance. Mannix may end his suffering by submitting to Templeton's command, just as Prometheus may put an end to his agony by submitting to the will of Zeus. In the play *Prometheus Bound*, Zeus sends an emissary, Power, who tells Prometheus that,

> His was the sin against God, and now the iron of retribution he must undergo. That so the lesson be learned with Zeus' absolute power. To be content and so give up the road that leads to love of man.  

Prometheus replies in a characteristically defiant manner:

> Do cringe and kiss authority and fall prostrate. To me Zeus matters not at all.

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20. [Ibid., p. 37.]
Mannix exhibits a similar attitude towards Templeton: "F*ck you and your information" (p. 112). And again, "you ordered this goddam hike and I'm going to walk it even if I haven't got one goddam man left" (p. 111). The nature of Mannix's defiance can be further explicated by focusing on the resemblance between him and Sisyphus once more. Like Sisyphus whose scorn of the gods sustained him even through the back-breaking and ceaseless toil up the hill, Mannix's contempt for the "system" is finally his sustaining force.

While speaking of Sisyphus, Camus observes:

If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step, the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works every day in his life at the same task, and this fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious. Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.21

Through myth Styron wishes to project a certain philosophical stance. By using juxtaposition and contrast, Styron underscores the futility of rebellion in our times. He

suggests that the concept of redemption through rebellion has lost its justification in the modern world. This is so because individual suffering is largely ineffectual as an instrument of social change. The old ideals of sacrifice and redemption through suffering have been impoverished of their meaning. Thus Templeton, symbolic of the social order, is impervious to any such sentiments regarding the forced march:

"That with him the hike had nothing to do with courage or sacrifice or suffering, but was only a task to be performed, . . ." (p. 111)

The only redeeming quality left to Mannix is the capacity to rebel and it is in rebellion that he asserts his true human dignity. The basic nature of his revolt is revolt qua revolt—rebellion not for effecting social, material or environmental change, but because it is impossible for the hero with his developing awareness to live without protest. It has been pointed out earlier that in Styron's tragic view, revolt necessarily springs from an awareness of the unjust and incomprehensible situation of man. Mannix revolts against an unjust system that is involved in a steady dehumanisation of the human personality. His revolt is futile—but futile only in the external or material aspect. Mannix ultimately comes to a complete recognition of his situation when he sheds the protective layers of
self-delusion, standing naked in the barrack washroom. Hannix, though physically damned and beaten, conquers intrinsically.

The picture that emerges is of man grappling against forces stronger than himself, searching for a soul, for an identity, and the ambivalence of such a struggle. The Long March indicates Styron's broadening vision towards evolving a concept of redemption.

As he rounded the corner he saw Hannix, naked except for a towel around his waist, making his slow and agonized way down the hall. He was hairy and enormous and as he inched his way toward the shower room, clawing at the wall for support, his face with its clenched eyes and taut, drawn-mouth was one of tortured and gigantic suffering. (Italics mine)

(p. 119)

Hannix chooses to suffer, and it is through this affirmation that he comes closer to grace.

Robert H. Fossun has observed that "Styron's book is about the necessity of rebellion and endurance in a world without God. And its central metaphor is that seemingly senseless and laborious "walk through the night" that all men must take until they finally disappear into the universal darkness."

Eugene McNamara has felt that the symbolism that Styron uses to give force to his narrative is intimately connected with the underlying philosophical content. He insists that that the Corps is a "kind of monastic order united in love, symbolized by the ritual which must be entered into unquestionably, with complete obedience."

Peter Hays similarly likens Templeton to a "temple," the seat of organized religion. He argues that the conformist Culver is the convert who unquestionably accepts the mores of his group. It is Hannix the heretic, the rebel, who is identified with "Man"; as one who always rebels against authority. By using the metaphor of the temple, Hays goes on to say, Styron seems to indicate that the system, and all it stands for, is always less painful to the adherent like Culver. The ritual of the "temple" must be strictly followed by its members.

Similarly, the ritual of the Marine Corps—the pass-words, the salutes and the fixed routine must be adhered to without doubting their validity. Hays further suggests that Styron envisages the Corps as a moral order headed by the priest Templeton, who in the novella has been cast in a religious mould.

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In men like Templeton all emotions—all smiles, all anger—emanated from a priest-like, religious fervor, throbbing inwardly with the cadence of parades and booted footfalls. By that passion rebels are ordered into quick damnation but simple doubters sometimes find indulgence—depending upon the priest, who may be one inclined toward mercy, or who is one ever rapt in some litany of punishment and court-martial.

(p. 30)

It has been pointed out that at different moments in the narrative, Jtyron variously refers to Templeton as a religious leader:

He was not yet forty-five, yet the adjective 'old' applied, for there was a gray sheen in his hair and a bemused, unshakable look in his tranquil eyes that made him seem, like certain young ecclesiastics, prematurely aged and perhaps even wise.

(p. 18)

He is always absorbed in some litany and is shown returning continually to that "devout ordered state of communion" (p. 29). His animosity towards Mannix is no sense personal. It is the attitude of the priest towards the heretic. Thus he "looked still not so much the soldier but the priest in whom passion and faith had made an alloy, at last, of only the purest good intentions; above meanness or petty spite" (p. 87). Mannix, by his gestures of rebellion, brings down upon himself the wrath of the righteous priest:

Mannix was no longer a simple doubter but the heretic, and was about to receive judgment.

(p. 109)
On one level therefore, Hays observes, *The Long March* illustrates the fundamental truth that for society to cohere, the heretic must be exorcised, that while society is benevolent towards the conformist, it is quite ruthless towards the rebel.

While agreeing with Hays' views on society, it must be affirmed that there is perhaps a touch of irony in Styron's presentation of Templeton as a religious leader. At various points in the novella, Styron underscores Templeton's lack of the Christian virtues of mercy and acceptance. The interpretation of Templeton and Hannix as religious leader and heretic respectively, therefore, needs to be further examined. In presenting Templeton in religious terms, Styron seems to suggest the way the ethos of the military world, with all its Darwinian connotations, has usurped the role of religion in shaping the values of modern life: "Our group destiny," he said, "amphibiously integrated, from any force thrown against us by aggressor enemy" (p. 48). Templeton, who is "hardly a man at all, but just a quantity of attitudes . . . to hate him would be like hating a cannibal," (p. 117), and who cannot "perform with grace a human act" (p. 89), is the very embodiment of the military ethos. The Christian virtues of sacrifice, suffering and "the tender miracle of pity" (p. 116), are being replaced by values predicated on "twisted pride." Against this
perversion of values Mannix rebels.

He had a violent contempt for the gibberish, the boy-scout passwords which replaced ordinary conversation in the military world. To Mannix they were all part of the secret language of a group of morons, morons who had been made irresponsibly and dangerously clever. (italics mine)

(pp. 42-43)

As one who has known the meaning of helplessness while dangling "upside-down buck naked in space" (p. 57), he protests against a philosophy which apotheosizes "toughness": "The swine. The little swine... He wants to be known as a tough guy, a boondocker" (p. 39) but in a world controlled by the "regulars," the rebellion of the "reserves" is a fruitless endeavour. Mannix's rage is "the baffled fury of some great bear cornered, bloody and torn by a foe whose tactics were no braver than his own, but simply more cunning" (p. 97). Frustrated at the fact that he was "not man enough to say, to hell with it and crap out himself" (p. 102), the rocklike and rebellious Mannix is forced to take on the "voice of a man wildly fanatic with one idea: to last" (p. 72). And Mannix lasts to measure himself ably against a condition which takes a full toll of his sense of humanity. It is worth observing here what Culver feels at the sight of Mannix after he has completed the march:

It was impossible to imagine such a distorted face; it was the painted, suffering face of a clown, and the heaving gait was a grotesque
and indecent parody of a hopeless cripple,
with shoulders gyrating like a seasaw and
with flapping, stricken arms. (p. 114)

It provides a sharp commentary on the corrupting influence
of a way of life which obviously marks "the degeneration of
the hero in western civilization, from a figure who personi-
ifies the aspiration of the common man and the values of
society to a grotesque anti-hero who makes a futile, but
necessary, attempt to assert his personal freedom and
identity." 25

Throughout Styron's fiction, there runs the constant
desire to return to the innocence and peace of childhood,
to the "Old world calm," to "serenity, a quality of repose,"
(p. 117) and to "that vanished simplicity and charm" (p. 9).
In his first novel, Styron ably evokes childhood through
the baby talk of Haudie, the crippled idiot. In this
novella, Styron uses Culver's vision of the girls on the
lawn. This image of the girls dancing to the music, also
serves the technical function of contrasting with and thereby
intensifying the feeling of horror at the agony of death in
peacetime. This vision also symbolizes those lost times
full of beatitude and harmony, which have become strangers

25Nigro, "The Long March: The Expansive Hero in a
Closed world," p. 104.
Sometimes in these reveries Culver thought that it was the music, more than anything, which provided the key, and he recalled himself at a time which already seemed dark ages ago, surrounded by beer cans and attuned, in the nostalgic air of a winter evening, to some passage from some forgotten Haydn.

(p. 10)

This contrasts diametrically with the present, which is associated with images of isolation.

The tent itself, in its tiny, momentary permanence, might have had all of the appeal of the home which he so desperately hungered for, had it not been so cold, and had it not seemed, as he sat there suddenly shivering with fear, so much more like a coffin instead. (italics mine)

(pp. 37-38)

Styron elsewhere in the novella, recalls a vessel lost at sea, amid "tropic seas, storm-swept distances and strange coasts" (p. 11).

To symbolize redemption, Styron uses the same images as used in his Down in Darkness. Like Peyton who indulges in a ritual stripping, thereby discarding everything material before her final ascent heavenward, Mannix at the end of the novella, appears "naked as the day he emerged from his mother's womb" (p. 127), with a cake of soap in his hands.

It has been pointed out earlier that the Negro in Styron's fiction symbolizes faith and a childlike, unquestioning
attitude towards matters spiritual. It is, therefore, a black maid who asks with infinite sympathy, "Do it hurt?" (p. 119). And Mannix—who has finally apprehended the true meaning of his condition, who has come to self-recognition through his rebellious, long march through the night, and who is now chastened and quelled—can answer with an equally sympathetic understanding—"Need it does." (p. 120)

The tragic pattern of Mannix's entire experience, then, as David Lenson said of Achilles, is the archetypal pattern of most tragedies. Through rebellion and suffering, Mannix moves towards self-awareness. The spark of enlightenment and understanding at the end of the novella makes for its tragic vision; it consists in the perception of the injustice inherent in human life and the rebel's deep urge to combat it. Styron's next novel, *Jet This House on Fire*, marks a progression from this position, by way of responding as it were, to Culver's sense of anguish:

Old Al, he thought tenderly. The man with the back unbreakable, the soul of pity—where was he now, great unshatterable vessel of longing, lost in the night, astray at mid-century in the never-endingness of war?

(pp. 117-18)
But Vincenti & Credenti, to him that believes aright, and overcomes all temptations to a wrong belief, God shall give the accomplishment of fulness, and fulness of joy, and joy rooted in glory, and glory established in eternity, and this eternity is God; to him that believes and overcomes, God shall give himself in an everlasting presence and fruition, Amen.

John Donne