

# THE VERY PICTURE OF GRIEF

## A Story

BY ELEANOR CARROLL CHILTON

PAUL SANDERS closed the door of his study and then stood with his head bent, listening. Emily, his sister-in-law, was still in the living room, pottering about. "That's what I can't bear about her," he thought. "She's a potterer. Never does anything she sets out to do without doing hundreds of little things on the way. My God, if the house were on fire and she was running to call the fire department, she'd stop on the way to straighten a picture, and pull some dead leaves off the flowers!"

Paul listened. Now what was she doing? He heard her cross the living room. Then he heard the crackling sound of cellophane. Of course — he told himself. She was opening a box of candy. He pictured her doing it. A look of mild ecstasy would flicker on the dull surface of her eyes as she took the lid off the box. She would turn back the lace paper flaps as carefully as if they were real lace on an old ball gown. Then her fingers would hover over the chocolates, she would touch one, pinch another, and then after several minutes of agonized indecision she would choose four pieces and close the box. Then she would put the box in the drawer of the desk and cover it with a page she had once torn out of a magazine, "to refer to." There was always a box of candy in that drawer, and there was always the same page covering it, Emily's theory being that candy was bad for servants, and her simple faith that the cook and the maid, who had been in the house as

long as she herself, would see nothing that had not especially been called to their attention.

Paul frowned as he heard his sister-in-law's irregular step through the hall. He frowned deeply when it hesitated at the foot of the stairs. If Emily spoke to him, what should he do? Refuse to answer? Swear at her? Open the door and say, "For God's sake, get out of this house and never speak to me again" . . . ? His face cleared a little. Emily was going up the stairs. She would go to her bedroom, eat her chocolates, and sleep for two hours. Blessed hours. The only hours of the day when he could enjoy his own house, even if he did have to stay in one room. And before she came down again he could go out and walk. So he wouldn't have to speak to her again, or hear her voice, for at least four hours. Paul Sanders, hearing the door of Emily's bedroom close, straightened up and crossed the room for his pipe.

As he picked it up from the table, his eyes rested on the picture of his dead wife. His eyes were so accustomed to her face, framed as it was in every room of the house, and always conspicuously flanked with fresh flowers, that he seldom saw it any longer. This realization struck him now, and shocked him to attention. He thought, "If I think about her — really think about her, the picture will help me see her." He frowned, stared hard at the photograph.

"Constance," he thought, "Constance." The pictured face stared back at him, and was still only a picture. His thoughts could not go further than the aimless repetition of a name. He pulled a chair up to the table, sat down, lighted his pipe, and then took the picture in his hands and looked at it. The smoke from his pipe drifted across the dead face, misting the glass on its way to the open window. But staring was of no use. All these photographs were slowly taking the place of what had once been a real person. Seven of them—seven faces which had once looked alike, which had once been recognizably Constance—and now they were seven different women, each living in a different room, with no more meaning to him than the color of the walls and the familiar outlines of the furniture.

This picture in his hand had once been his favorite. That was why he had put it here, in the room he used the most. So he could pretend she was with him. He had said to Emily, "I won't let her go. I'll have her with me every minute of the day and night. You know, Emily, if we have spirits, they must have some reality in other people's minds. I mean, if I keep Constance alive in my mind, I don't think she'll be able to get away. Part of her, I mean, will be here." And Emily's dull eyes had filled with tears and she had said, "I'm sure of it, Paul. And I'll help you. We two—we loved her the best. We'll keep her."

Constance's eyes looked straight at him out of the photograph. They were round eyes, set wide apart under dark, lovely brows, and Paul remembered saying to her when he had first seen this picture, "I like this the best because it's caught that laugh that gets into your eyes just before the rest of your face has heard about it. And it's got that slight tilt of your head that means you're feeling shy." Constance had said,

"Darling, that wasn't shyness, it was the photographer," but she had looked pleased as people always do when their peculiarities are mentioned.

And then, suddenly, Paul saw Constance looking pleased. Really saw her this time—with one side of her mouth smiling, the lids fallen over her eyes, and one lock of hair gone astray on her forehead. He closed his eyes, trying to hold the immediacy and warmth of that vision, but it was gone again at once. He opened his eyes and looked once more at the cold, set features behind glass. Then he took out a handkerchief, unfolded it with his deliberate, precise movements ("Oh, hurry up!" Constance used to say), and covered the photograph.

What would Emily say if she knew that every afternoon he covered Constance's face, and that every afternoon when he had done so he felt peaceful and happy and free of some intangible reproach? And what would Emily say if she knew that he was going this afternoon to meet the little Morton girl—that he was going to walk with her to the Red Brick Farm and give her tea and then take her back to the campus before he went to collect his themes? Emily would look grieved. Emily would look at him just as she had that day last summer when he had come back from his walk without any wild flowers. She had looked at his empty hands, and then into his eyes with a stricken expression, as if he had hurt her unbearably. "And why?" he thought savagely. "I never brought the flowers to her. I brought them for Constance, to put in front of her picture, because she always brought them back for herself. What damned business is it of Emily's?"

He crossed to his bookcase, took down a volume of Shakespeare, and settled himself in his worn leather chair. He opened

the book to *Macbeth*. He would have fifty themes this evening, all purporting to deal with "Dramatic Characterization in *Macbeth*," and Paul, not having read the play for several years, felt he should refresh his memory. But his mind was heavy and lifeless, and the verse seemed nothing but familiar jargon, so he turned the pages to Act III, scene four, laid the volume, open face downward, on the table, and then tiptoed across the room for a volume of short stories. As he returned stealthily to his chair and settled down again with the book, the lazy contentment which usually accompanied this maneuver was spoiled today by a vicious hatred that stirred in him—stirred and sought a victim and, as usual, settled on his sister-in-law, who was presumably asleep upstairs. It was Emily's fault, he felt rather than thought, that he was driven to these ignominious shifts whenever his mind craved diversion and relaxation. She would never let him alone. "Oh, no, my dear," she would exclaim, horrified, when anything arose that threatened to interfere with this two-hour retirement after lunch. "You can't let yourself be imposed on like that! I mean, your poetry means so much to you. If you once start letting people interfere with that *sacred* two hours, they'll soon forget what it means to you and make all sorts of demands. No, Paul, I won't *let* you sacrifice yourself this way."

Now, of course, the whole college knew that Professor Sanders could never be seen between two o'clock and four. Everyone knew that these hours were dedicated to his dead wife, and the consolations of immortal poetry. It was already a legend on the campus that he was himself a poet and had secretly been composing deathless verse. A famous English poet who had visited the college several years before was credited by rumor with having said that

Paul Sanders, if only he could be persuaded to give his work to the world, would probably, in a few years' time, rank with Wordsworth. Rumor also said that he had left directions in his will that his work must be buried with him. On hearing these rumors Paul had with frantic haste destroyed the small notebook in which he had tried vainly, during the agonizing year following Constance's death, to metamorphose into words the grief that was tormenting his mind.

Sometimes Paul could not avoid facing the fact that he was himself responsible for the continuance of a reputation he no longer merited. But not often. "I try, don't I?" (went his usual private self-justification). "I do try to keep those hours for Constance, but Emily has ruined it all. She never lets up for a minute. Never forgets. Never lets me forget. God, a man can't keep to a high pitch like that, day after day, year after year! I can't feel about poetry the way I did when Constance first died. I can't find a state of mystical exaltation between two and four by the clock, every afternoon, every God-damned day in the God-damned calendar."

But, obscurely, he knew it was his own fault. Or, at any rate, his own doing. That first year, when everything in the world outside his own mind and his crazy despair and longing for Constance had seemed unreal and unimportant—that first year he had needed some time every day when he could be absolutely alone. And his teaching schedule had allowed him only those two precious hours after lunch. And then he had read poetry feverishly, poring over it, repeating it aloud, walking up and down the room, letting the crystallization of other men's fury and grief put into a more manageable form his own chaotic emotions; getting from this formal beauty a kind of exaltation of sorrow which was,

if not exactly happiness, at least a brief respite from the loneliness of bereavement. In those days, of course, Emily had given him the only comfort he could accept from another human being. Emily had, as the saying goes, saved his life. Not that he had wanted it saved. He had wanted desperately to hurl it into the void of death, following Constance. But he could talk to Emily, and Emily, with her complete absence of self-consciousness, could talk to him. The things they had said to each other! The wild abandonment to emotion! It had been for both of them almost like talking to themselves; like the uncensored daydream conversations anyone can hold so happily within the soundproof walls of his own mind.

Emily had adored her young sister Constance. When Constance had grown up to be beautiful and bewitching, Emily had seemed to give up forever any dreams she might secretly have had for a life of her own. If she had ever expected, with that belief in miracles which keeps a large part of humanity moderately content with its imperfections, that she would some day awaken to find that her lusterless eyes had acquired flashing depths, that whatever power it is that looks after the architecture of the body had relented and given her face an undeniable chin, that her heavy personality had suddenly blossomed with charm—if Emily had ever prayed for this miracle, she seemed to have decided that her prayers had been answered but sent to the wrong address, and that henceforth she must let Constance do her living for her. She had accepted this decision with an apparently complete satisfaction. She had demanded of Constance nothing except material for this vicarious life, and Constance, as if she considered the bargain only just, had “told her sister everything.” So that, when Paul and Constance fell in love,

Emily had fallen in love, too. When Constance and Paul were married, Emily had felt married. And when Constance died, Emily had nothing left except Paul.

“Help me, Emily,” Paul had said. “Help me keep her with us. We can’t let her die. Help me.”

“We will never let her be dead,” Emily had said. “We will keep her with us, Paul. If *we* gave up and died, Constance would die with us. No one would remember her. But we won’t. I’ll help you.”

## II

Paul finally lost his thoughts in the book of short stories, but he could not lose his irritable impatience, and he was glad when he found it was quarter to four and he could prepare to go out. He replaced the volume of stories on the shelf, put the Shakespeare—still open at Act III, scene four, of *Macbeth*—face downward across the arm of his chair, and uncovered Constance’s picture, refolding his handkerchief meticulously before putting it back in his pocket. These simple operations took some time, as his slow, precise movements had of necessity the furtive care of a criminal eliminating clues. It did not occur to him to polish the fingerprints off the short story volume, but he would doubtless have done so had he thought of it.

The March day outside had sunlight in it but the trees were violent with wind, so he put on a light overcoat before he reached instinctively for his walking stick—reached for it, and then with a set determination in his face rattled it back into the umbrella stand. A door upstairs opened and Emily appeared at the head of the stairs, her bedroom slippers turning her limp into an irregular shuffle.

“Are you going now, Paul?”

He stared at her dumbly, feeling that if

he tried to produce his usual, "Yes, I'm off," it would turn into "Damn it, what did you think I was doing; coming in?"

A look of faded surprise came over Emily's face. She was hardly aware that she expected an answer to her question, but when the answer failed to come, a feeling of anxiety caught at her. And then she noticed that Paul was looking up at her with a very strange expression and that he was actually starting out without his walking stick.

"Why, Paul" — she shuffled down to the first landing on the stairs — "you haven't got your stick!"

Paul knew that he should say "No" very quietly, and then walk out of the house. It would be unfriendly not to add "Good-by," or "Back at six-thirty," but he was too furious for that hypocrisy. He knew, however, that he could manage the quiet "No"; that he could manage to close the door gently behind him and save the anger rising in him until he was out of the house and able to talk candidly to himself on the subject of Emily. Knowing this he took a new and delicious pleasure in refusing her the benefit of this self-control.

"No," he shouted at her suddenly. "I haven't my stick and I'm not going to take it."

Emily stopped where she was, halfway down the stairs. She had for ten years lived in a sort of dream-state, her position in the house unquestioned, her relationship with Paul unquestioned, the routine of their life together maintaining that dream-state intact by shielding her from the necessity of thinking or answering unasked questions. Now Paul had shouted at her, and he was going out without his stick. The mists of the dream began to stir, and she felt she was awakening into a strange world. She clutched the bannisters in terror, but Paul, looking up at her and revel-

ing in his sudden sense of freedom, saw nothing of this. Paul saw only what he had expected to see — a hurt look; and that made him pitiless. He spoke again, this time lowering his voice so that the hatred behind it sounded icy and distinct, like the sound of glass shattering.

"Don't tell me," he said, "that Constance wouldn't walk with me unless I had my stick. I'm sick of being tied body and soul to a memory I can't remember. I'm through!"

He jammed his hat on his head and ran out of the house, slamming the door to protect himself against being followed by the thoughts he had loosed.

### III

He was to meet the little Morton girl at the stone bridge west of the campus gates. The long street down which he hurried was twisting with shadows from the branches over his head. Paul felt exalted and young, as if the keys to heaven had been put into his hands. "I'm rid of Emily — I mean Constance," he said to himself. "But she'd have wanted it. It's wrong to try to keep faith with the dead. The living need our faith. It's what Constance would have wanted."

He stopped speaking for a moment to take pleasure in the rhythmic sound of his own footsteps and to enjoy striding in and out of the shadows on the sidewalk without disturbing their shifting patterns.

"The truth is, instead of keeping Constance alive, I was trying to make myself dead. Yes, that's certainly what I was up to. Not really keeping Constance alive at all. And now I'm free. God, it's like going out for the first time after a long illness! You feel you can do anything at all — anything."

He stopped speaking again, because he



was a modest man and much as he liked talking aloud to himself there were certain things one couldn't say. His mind had begun stretching the future to include vast achievements and flattering pleasures. He was going to write at least one world-famous book. He didn't know exactly what kind of book—damn it, he might even write that poetry with which rumor had fathered him. But he would be famous, and first he would have to live. He needed life, after all these years of death. Love—some woman—someone not at all like Constance or Emily. Emily, of course, wasn't really at all like Constance, and she'd be gone when he got back to the house tonight. . . . The little Morton girl, maybe? Very pretty—very eager—young, of course, but he wanted youth. He needed someone gay and careless who would laugh out loud in his house. Constance used to laugh—such a lovely sound, like three notes of music making half a tune.

The little Morton girl was waiting at the bridge. She saw him coming, he knew, but she pretended not to and leaned on the parapet as if absorbed in the flow of water in the rocky stream beneath. Paul smiled and was glad she had solved for him the problem of approach. Always so difficult—when to begin smiling: not too soon, because then you had to keep it up, and walking along smiling made you feel foolish. He looked appraisingly at the girl's figure. Nice legs and ankles—good body—rather awkward, that pose of hers, but what delightful red hair she had. Red-headed women were supposed to be passionate.

"Good afternoon, Miss Morton."

She gave a plausible start, and turned. She could never say, "Good afternoon"—the words stuck in her throat and turned into a mumble. Why was good afternoon so hard to say when anyone could say good

morning and good night without thinking?

She smiled instead. "Isn't it a beautiful day?"

The ground was thawing under the determined March sun. They picked their way carefully at first, trying to avoid the mud and puddles in the narrow country road, and their conversation was as jumpy and erratic as their progress. But after a time they grew more careless, and as they drew near the severe outlines of the Red Brick Farm they were muddy enough not to care and even took pleasure in stepping deliberately into the ooze. Paul eyed the girl furtively, wondering whether he did want to make love to her, or whether his sexual imagination was simply using her to celebrate its sudden release from bondage. Of course he couldn't make love to her, anyhow. Professors couldn't make love to their students whenever they felt like it.

She stopped short. "Now I know what it is!"

He stopped beside her. "What what is?"

"You haven't got your stick. I knew there was something funny about you this afternoon."

"I can't imagine," Paul said stiffly, "why not having my stick should make me appear funny." That was silly, he thought anxiously, as soon as he had said it. It sounded stuffy and professorial—not his style at all. He must not be annoyed. His reputation was for irony, not irritability.

"But I've never seen you without it before," she was saying. "Gosh, wait till I tell them. They won't believe me."

"Who?"

"The other girls. It's one of our favorite phrases, you know—'Sanders' Stick.' We say, 'I swear by Sanders' Stick!' and sometimes 'Sure as Sanders' Stick' and sometimes instead of 'Damn!' just plain 'Sanders' Stick!'"

Paul's annoyance vanished and he felt very sorry that he had left his stick behind. So it was part of his own personality, was it? Not just a symbolic reminder of Constance? He looked at the little Morton girl, letting her see the twinkle in his eyes, and said, "Indeed?" That was right, he thought—that was the formula. The legend was that he had never laughed since his wife died, but that his eyes twinkled. The legend also said that he was very enigmatic—"You never know whether he's pleased with what you've said, or just thinks you're a fool." That "Indeed?" was exactly right.

Nevertheless Paul felt in some obscure way that his new freedom was being interfered with and thwarted. The little Morton girl seemed less attractive than she had a few minutes before. He watched with unfriendly attention while she poured the tea and devoured cinnamon toast. Very crude and raw, of course. He preferred a woman of the world—someone who could at least pour tea without slopping it into the saucer; someone who attacked her food with more circumspection.

"But of course," the little Morton girl was saying, talking with her mouth full, "Of course the girl's a moron."

"Of course," Paul said dryly. "But which girl?"

The irony was wasted.

"Maybe you don't know her—she sits in the front row whenever she can. She swears she's going to marry you."

"Oh! Does she?"

"M-m-m-m!" The little Morton girl swallowed the last bite of toast and licked two fingers. "Marry you—no less. Absolutely cuckoo, of course, but she read somewhere that any woman can get any man she wants if only she tries hard enough, and she says, 'just wait and see!'"

Paul said nothing. The girl looked at him anxiously over her cup.

"You don't mind, do you? I mean, you won't hold it against me for telling you? I suppose I shouldn't have, but I thought maybe you'd think it was funny, because of course the girl's absolutely batty about you and just doesn't realize how—I mean what a —"

Paul looked at her coldly. She flushed.

"I mean," she said earnestly, "everybody with any sense knows that—well, that it's just *sacrilege* to talk about you marrying again or anything like that. But this poor sap doesn't seem to realize —"

She stopped and looked at Paul appealingly. Her eyes were misty with emotion. His impulse was to say, "And what reason has anyone to suppose that I shan't marry again?" Instead of which he responded almost automatically: "We're all poor saps in our way, my child," and he smiled sadly and examined the palm of his hand.

The little Morton girl said, "Yes, I suppose we are."

She was very susceptible to wistful, sentimental remarks. They always seemed to her profoundly wise and immensely sad. Her nose began to feel prickly and her eyes filled with tears.

Paul saw the tears. He thought, "Good Lord, the child must be in love with me," and elation ran through his veins like wine. But at the same time, and still pretending to be lost in contemplation of his palm, he glanced around the room to see whether people at the other tables had noticed. There were no students in the room, which was lucky. He wouldn't care to have the news spread over the campus that he had made the little Morton girl cry into her teacup. It didn't fit in with his reputation for remoteness and dignity.

But there were, after all, only two tears. The little Morton girl put her elbows on the table and shaded her face with her hands. Paul asked for another cup of tea,

and she smudged the tears away with her fingers, then filled his cup, this time spilling a great deal of tea in the saucer. "Oh, I'm sorry," she said, emptying the saucer. Emotion always makes young people untidy, Paul thought. But at the same time he approved of the emotion.

He reached across the table to take his cup, and without looking at her asked in a low voice, "What is it?"

"Nothing. I'm sorry to be so silly."

Paul looked at her. He let the twinkle appear in his eyes.

"It's certainly silly to cry about nothing." He stirred his tea thoughtfully, and then looked at her again. "But was it nothing?"

"You looked so sad!" she burst out. Then, lowering her voice: "It—it always makes me feel like crying when you look like that. I suppose you'll think it's none of my business, and I know it, but I can't help it. Honestly, Professor Sanders, I wish I could do something to help you."

"Perhaps you can." Paul studied the palm of his hand again. After a moment he sighed faintly, and repeated, "Perhaps you can."

"Everybody knows how marvelous you've been—going right on with your work—and—well, keeping *her* memory alive and making something so—so—" she gulped and continued almost defiantly—"so *beautiful* out of—I mean—" The little Morton girl gasped and stopped. Her cheeks were bright red.

"There are people, I suppose," Paul said slowly, "Who think I've been sentimental—mawkish."

"There aren't!" she said indignantly. "How could they? At least, the girls all think it's the most romantic and beautiful—I mean, we were talking about it one night and we decided that—that if we could ever have anyone love us as much as that—" She stopped again. She'd said too

much. His face looked very odd—darker, somehow, and he was frowning. "I'm sorry," she said. "I know you never talk about it. But you've been so nice to me—I wanted you to know——"

Paul stopped her protests with a gesture. "Don't," he said. "It was sweet, what you said. It was comforting. Don't apologize."

"There are some things," he went on after a pause, "that one can't talk about."

"Yes, I know," breathed the little Morton girl.

"But to feel that other people understand—to feel that there is friendliness and sympathy—that's more than enough, my dear." He looked at her. His voice was rich and low, and his eyes were so sad that she felt the uneasy approach of more tears and winked to keep them back. "Some of us," Paul went on, "have to go alone all our lives. But sympathy like yours can make the loneliness tolerable. It's warming—like being out on a cold dark night, and knowing that there is a fire on the hearth at home."

#### IV

"Thank you for tea," the little Morton girl said shyly when they had reached the dusky campus.

"Thank you for something better than tea," Paul answered gravely, and turned abruptly away.

The little Morton girl walked home, feeling strangely uplifted and mature. After all, he'd treated her like an old friend, hadn't he—not at all like a student he had to be polite to? That walk back from the Farm, for instance. They hadn't said a word, and yet it wasn't because there was any constraint. It was just a sign of the deep understanding between them. They could walk side by side for half an hour, and think their separate thoughts.



The wind was cold now. She drew the fur collar up about her chin and realized scornfully that they would all try to pump her when she got back. Well, let them try. Just let them try. I'll say, "Very pleasant, thanks," she decided. Not another word. What did we talk about? Oh, everything. Just talked. She practised it in a cool, aloof voice. Then her mind fell back into the elaborate story she had been telling herself during the dark silent walk home. He hadn't any other friends. She was the only one who understood. There would be more walks. Little by little he would confide in her. He would show her his poems and she would criticize — advise — inspire him. One of those friendships you read about — perhaps some letters that would be published when they were both dead. Not quite love — well, of course, not love at all, in a way. Something very deep and quiet, very intimate.

Paul hardly noticed when he left the little Morton girl. His thoughts had been driving him in fierce silence along the muddy road, and now they drove him homeward with an even fiercer insistence. He forgot that he had intended to collect the essays on *Macbeth* before returning. He forgot everything except his panicky realization that he had failed Emily, and almost failed Constance.

Almost — but not quite. All afternoon,

until the little Morton girl had said, "if we could ever have anyone love us as much as that," he had been resenting the part he habitually played. Oh, he'd been playing it very nicely. Very convincing — that silence, the sad eyes examining the palm of his hand, the remote low voice. Convincing to everyone except himself. And then suddenly, looking at the little Morton girl's flushed cheeks and tearful eyes, he had known that he had exactly what he wanted from life, and the desire to tear down his house of grief had gone as entirely and as quietly as fever quits the body, leaving it cool and real to itself.

He was cool and real to himself again as he quickened his steps and planned how he would comfort Emily. He would tell her that his longing for Constance had, today, been so unendurable that he had tried with words to drive her out of his memory. . . . Well, wasn't it true? All these years hadn't he been paralyzed from the pressure of grief? Didn't intolerable pain induce numbness, when the mind tried to kill pain by killing consciousness?

Emily would understand. She would say all the words for him. And everything would go on as it always had. His was a great and enduring love. Even that Morton child had known it. "That's Sanders. Yes, that's the one. Never looked at another woman. . . . Sanders' stick."

# EUROPE IS AT IT AGAIN

BY NATHANIEL PEFFER

THERE is a marginal note on contemporary history which illuminates the chronicle of our time more clearly than the text itself. I refer to the Abyssinian conflict. Now, I do not know whether there will be fighting between Italian and Abyssinian troops when the rains cease on the East African coast this month; nor is the advent of war there and its outcome of any particular moment. When civilizations appear to be tottering, the formal independence of one small, barren and not over-civilized country on the African coast is relatively unimportant—except perhaps to its inhabitants, and in this modern world, fate deals summarily with the inhabitants of small countries. Indeed, it is almost contrary to natural law that one tiny area on the African continent should have remained even nominally independent, as Abyssinia has to date—to date, but not much longer. Abyssinia is about to go the way of all weak nations which have the misfortune to lie in the path of strong ones. And that is almost all that need be said of Abyssinia itself.

What is happening or about to happen on the African coast is significant primarily for the light it casts on Europe's present status. It reveals that the more things change, the more they remain the same. With some difference of names, details and accentuation, the history of the second decade before the World War and the history of the second decade afterward can be transposed. It is the same old imbroglio.

The fallacy of conventional diagnoses of the European malady lies in trying to understand Europe by looking at Europe alone. The feud that has riven the Continent and now threatens to destroy it is European insofar as its protagonists are concerned, but not in the causes that have made it and the objects fought for. To understand Europe (and perhaps in recent years America as well), it is necessary to look at Asia and Africa. Hitler, Italian intransigence, French-Italian fencing for ascendancy in the Danubian area, the struggle for Austria—none of these is European in origin. All are effects of what makes the war system, not causes of the war system.

The point of vantage from which to view Europe now is Abyssinia. The key to the meaning of European events in the last two generations can be found in the following sequence:

Before the World War, Italy cast its lot with Germany and Austria-Hungary because it could not get satisfaction for its demands in Africa from Great Britain and France. Thus the Triple Alliance was formed; the Triple Alliance was countered by the Entente Cordiale; Europe was divided into two militant camps which began to arm against each other. Between the end of the World War and 1934, Italy leaned now in one direction and now in another, awaiting offers. In the last year it has cast its lot with Great Britain and France because it is strong enough to wring from them the satisfaction of its de-