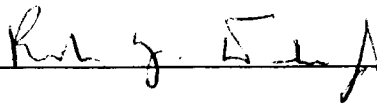


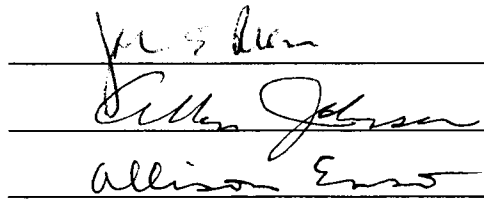
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Victoria V. Barker entitled " 'The Truth of a Song': A Study of the Function and Meaning of Music in the Novels and Selected Writings of Elizabeth Madox Roberts." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.



Robert Y. Drake, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and
recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

**"The Truth of a Song": A Study of the Function and Meaning of Music
in the Novels and Selected Writings
of Elizabeth Madox Roberts**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Victoria V. Barker
August 1996**

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family

Sheridan, Laurie, and Bradley Barker

and

to Laurie, Ida Lou, Claudia, Martha, Frances, and Ruth Short

the Kentucky women who "stood back of me"

to make such an endeavor possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, The Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, and Sisters Audrey Williamson and Nancy Hannah of St. Catharine College, St. Catharine, Kentucky, for providing access to the Roberts papers housed in their collections.

I would also like to express appreciation to the Mellon Foundation, the Appalachian College Association, and Carson-Newman College for the grant and sabbatical leave which made a timely completion of this study possible.

In conclusion, I offer my sincere gratitude to the members of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Robert Drake, Dr. Allison Ensor, Dr. Allen Johnson, and Dr. Jack Reese for their insight, suggestions, and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

This study explores Elizabeth Madox Roberts' use of classical, popular, folk, and sacred music as well as the music of nature in her novels, short stories, and poems. Roberts' unpublished papers, letters, and manuscripts from The Library of Congress, The Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, and St. Catharine College, St. Catharine, Kentucky, are employed to provide insights into the author's beliefs about literary composition, music, and why she attempted to blend together these two forms of art. This study describes Roberts' belief that all music is a revelation of something she calls "pattern," "design," or "form," words that are synonymous with both art and her conception of the way the divine is revealed to man. She wrote that man's understanding of "form" or "pattern" is a "message from beyond" and the only point at which "we can touch God." Hence, when she defines music as "pattern in motion," she is suggesting that music is the divine "in motion" and that through music one can sense God's force at work. Thus, her attempts to reflect the structure of such musical compositions as Beethoven's Sixth and Ninth Symphonies in her novels, as well as the use of the lyrics of innumerable ballads, songs, and hymns throughout her work, show her fascination with the patterned regularities of music, prose, and poetry, which to her were all earthly evidence of a creative God.

PREFACE

This study examines the function and meaning of music in the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts. The analysis focuses primarily on her novels: The Time of Man (1926), My Heart and My Flesh (1927), Jingling in the Wind (1928), The Great Meadow (1930), A Buried Treasure (1931), He Sent Forth a Raven (1935), and Black is My Truelove's Hair (1938). Short stories from The Haunted Mirror (1932) are also discussed, as well as poems from Under the Tree (1922) and Song in the Meadow (1940). Many references are made to Roberts' unpublished papers. The study discusses Roberts' belief that all music is a revelation of what she terms "pattern" or "form," terms that are synonymous with both creative expression and the way the divine is revealed to man.

Chapter One introduces Roberts (1881-1941) and discusses the critical reception of her work, the reasons for her descent into near obscurity, and her interest in music and its relationship to her literary aesthetic. Chapter Two discusses classical music as a structural model for the novels, The Time of Man, My Heart and My Flesh, and A Buried Treasure. Jingling in the Wind, which employs many elements of musical comedy, is also analyzed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the musical qualities of Roberts' prose. Chapter Three connects Roberts to the Romantic tradition by describing her use of the musical sounds found in nature. Parallels are drawn between her literary theory and that of the poet, William Wordsworth. Chapter Four discusses Roberts' use of balladry and popular music as reflective of her interest in America's cultural heritage. Chapter Five serves as a conclusion to the study in its analysis of the ways in which Roberts' theology and her aesthetic theory are inextricably blended.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The art of novelist and poet, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, essentially grew from two sources, the influences of the family she loved and the world of Central Kentucky with which she so closely identified. She named her region the "Little Country," (Campbell and Foster 35), and even today, more than fifty years after her death, the Salt River Valley of Springfield and Washington County remains much as the author presented it in her novels, stories, poems, and letters. Springfield is still a small, sleepy village. The Roberts home, Elenores, still stands on shady Walnut Street, complete with the addition Elizabeth had constructed in 1931 (Spears 221). The old Opera House where the writer's father once kept a store on the first floor is standing today, as well as the Christian Church where Roberts once taught Sunday School (Spears 104; Campbell and Foster 18). One can find evidence of Springfield's famous citizen in the historical marker outside her home, the display of her works in the public library, and the Roberts books and papers housed at nearby St. Catharine College. It is, however, in the landscape of the region itself - the lush Bluegrass meadows, winding streams, narrow country lanes, small rural communities, rocky bluffs, and in the wind, trees, and birds that one may truly sense the world of Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

For Elizabeth Madox Roberts, however, the land and people of Central Kentucky [her "Kentuckyness" as Campbell and Foster so aptly describe it (22)] were not only a backdrop for her work, but were intimately tied to both her deep interest in the region's history and in the history of her own family and its role in the settlement of The

Bluegrass, her "Great Meadow" (Campbell and Foster 5,6). So strong was her love for and personal identification with this region that her friend, Glenway Wescott wrote in his volume, Elizabeth Madox Roberts: A Personal Note, that "wherever she was it [Kentucky] evidently underlay the outbranching experience . . . an immense territorial ghost" (7).

Elizabeth Eleanor Madox Roberts was born in Perryville, Kentucky, on October 30, 1881, the second of the eight children of Simpson Roberts and Mary Elizabeth Brent (McDowell 21, 22). Simpson Roberts, "farmer, scholar, schoolteacher, surveyor, civil engineer, and merchant," was descended from an eighteenth century Welsh immigrant (McDowell 21). Mrs. Mary Roberts' colorful family history, closely tied in her daughter's mind to the region's and America's settlement, figures prominently in the author's novels and poems. The grandmother of Mrs. Roberts' grandfather, Valentine Garvin, had been killed by Indians near Ft. Harrod in an attack much like the one described by the author in The Great Meadow. Additionally, Roberts' poem, "Sailing for America," tells the story of the first Garvin who came to the United States as a stow-away and paid for his passage through indentured servanthood (E.M. Roberts "Memories" 132; Campbell and Foster 4-5). The author's sense of history was further enhanced by her parents' memories of the Civil War. At age fourteen, Simpson Roberts saw his father murdered for his refusal to join the National Guard. Two years later he joined the Confederate Army. Mary Brent Roberts' father, John, served as an officer in the Federal Army, and according to Campbell and Foster, before the end of the war changed his allegiance to the cause of the Confederacy (5). Thus, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' family gave her a strong Southern heritage which provided her with a sense of participation in both the continuity of family and history (Campbell and Foster 6). She commented that " . . .things held in family memory give a pleasurable sense of one's

own validity" (qtd. in Campbell and Foster 6). Her fascination with the interconnectedness of family and history led, of course, to The Great Meadow and a number of poems (among them, from Under the Tree: "The Grandmother," "In Maryland," "The Sunday Bonnet," "The Wolves," and "The Battle of Perryville;" and from Song in the Meadow: "Conversations beside a Stream," "Sailing for America," "Stranger," and "Boone Alone in Kentuck"). This same fascination also led to the July, 1940, publication of her mother's "Memories of Life on a Farm in Hart County, Kentucky, In the Early Sixties" in The Filson Club History Quarterly. It is in this essay, "narrated" to Elizabeth by her mother and prefaced with an introduction by Roberts, that the reader begins to see the early influence music had on the life of Mary Elizabeth Brent. It was simply woven into the fabric of family history. Brent, who lived with her parents in Louisville at Eleventh and Jefferson, often spent time with her grandparents, Polly Brawner and Valentine Garvin at their home, Blue Springs Grove, near the town of Horse Cave, Kentucky (M.E. Roberts 133). It was there she learned from the slaves such songs as, "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans," "Little Blue Wing," (139) and "Old Virginny" (147). In a fragmentary essay about her childhood, Elizabeth Madox Roberts notes a group of songs she remembered her mother singing to her. These titles seem representative of some of the varied types of music she continued to enjoy throughout her life. The titles also suggest something more of the musical heritage passed down through the Brent and Garvin families. These songs include the popular "Old Dog Tray" and "My Grandfather's Clock," as well as a ballad Roberts identified as a family favorite called "Beautiful Kitty," or "The Pitcher of Coleraine." Also included are the sacred songs, "My Redeemer," and "Haste to the Rock" (Library of Congress Box 8).

In the Roberts collection at St. Catharine College in Springfield, further evidence exists of Mary Brent Roberts' interest in music. The Roberts materials consist of

uncatalogued family books, sheet music, and a very few photographs and letters. Extant at St. Catharine are Mrs. Roberts' personal hymnals, Popular Hymns (1883) and Popular Hymns Number 2 (1901). Woodridge Spears notes that Mary Roberts' "knowledge of music was significant" and describes the "Nunns and Clark" piano upon which she and Elizabeth played "ballads, love songs, and hymns and anthems of the church" (88). Today, their collection of sheet music is stacked in a tall metal cabinet in a basement room at St. Catharine College. Among the eclectic titles, this writer observed copies of "My Old Kentucky Home," "Nearer My God to Thee," "Alan Percy: A Favorite Ballad," "Sally in Our Alley," "The Child's Unfinished Prayer," "Ground Hog Day Is Coming," "You'll Be a Lonesome Nigger When Your Baby's Gone," more than a dozen different polkas, an 1896 copy of Mozart's "Twelve Piano Pieces," and an 1893 printing of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words. These titles reflect the family's interest in the same varieties of music - classical, popular, sacred, and folk - which play such an important role in the author's work and about which this study is concerned.

Unquestionably, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' lifelong interest in music was developed and nurtured by her mother, but additionally, Elizabeth [Bessie, as she was known to her family (Spears 15)] was impressed with her grandfather Brent's singing of ballads. In a letter to a university friend, Monroe Wheeler, the author describes how her grandfather "sang ballads with a giant roaring voice . . . he sang 'Bangum and the Boar' [and] the one about Sweet William and Liddy Marget." She then continues by stating, "It is a joy to find these being sung yet . . . It is lovely that I have them in the marrow of my bones and in my flesh" (Library of Congress Box 10). The music closely associated with family stories and time spent with grandparents became a part of family history for Elizabeth Madox Roberts, so much so that she describes this music of her

youth as part of her physical body - implying its indelible print on her thinking and her indivisibility from it. Additionally, the value Simpson Roberts placed on music was an added influence on the writer-to-be. In his unpublished dissertation, Ballad in the Novels of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Charles Leo Mayer notes that Simpson Roberts “emphasized the importance of songs” as he described the significance of the fiddler’s lively and cheerful music to the spirits of the men in his Confederate regiment. Simpson Roberts stated the fiddler “was the most valuable man among us. He played ‘Turkey in the Straw’ and ‘Arkansas Traveler’” (qtd. in Mayer 9). Woodridge Spears further notes that Simpson Roberts often told stories to his family on winter evenings and would also include songs such as “Old Dan Tucker” (29).

In her youth, Elizabeth received piano instruction from Celia Minton Bosley, the wife of a local banker and politician. According to Spears, there is also evidence that she enjoyed play with other children, especially “rhythmic, singing games”, ring games, swinging, and playing house (24, 36). In addition, Roberts showed an early interest in architectural design and detail. She was apparently fascinated by the home of a friend, Lucie Selecman, whose residence was complete with an extensive garden, “iron gates,” and a “summer house” (Spears 37). As a child, the author also enjoyed writing stories and poems and identified herself as a poet at the age of eight after reading in The McGuffey Reader that Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a poet (Spears 38-39, 41).

In 1896, Roberts enrolled in the Covington High School in Covington, Kentucky, where she lived with her mother’s parents, the Brents (Spears 60). There she completed academic coursework, studying English and Latin as well as American literature (Spears 56). She graduated on June 12, 1900, ranking seventh in a class of nineteen (Spears 59). Roberts was later to use Covington and its neighboring city, Cincinnati, as models for “Mome,” the city depicted in the opening of My Heart and

My Flesh, whose unusual name, according to Rovit, may be a “portmanteau combination of ‘my home’” (McDowell 23; Rovit Herald 29). Following her years in high school, from 1900-1910, Roberts taught school in the public system of Springfield and in several outlying rural communities, notably Pleasant Grove and Maude, where she boarded with local families (Campbell and Foster 20). She also kept a private kindergarten for a time. The fact that she taught music during this period can be ascertained from two books in the Roberts collection at St. Catharine College. She owned a copy of Peter Burrowe’s Primer: Containing the Rudiments of Music, Calculated Either for Private Tuition, or Teaching Classes. This text is inscribed, “Miss Elizabeth Roberts.” An additional book, Musical Gems: A Graded Course In Music For Rural and Village Schools, compiled by Chas. L. and M.W. Moore and published in Chicago by Flanagan in 1901 is also extant at St. Catharine.

Biographers speculate that Elizabeth Madox Roberts deferred her college education for financial reasons and because of poor health (Campbell and Foster 17). She had battled headaches, frailty, and a lack of energy for years (Spears 93). Spears notes that during the years Roberts spent in Springfield between high school graduation and her eventual enrollment at The University of Chicago in 1917, that “music, long walks, and buggy rides in the country were beneficial in relieving the strain of teaching” (90). She was divided psychologically and drained physically during these years by the “impossible service demanded by two masters” -- teaching and writing (Spears 76). Spears observes, however, that in working with children she had the opportunity to better understand the language and mind of the child, as well as the customs, special events, and lifestyles of the rural farm families, both of which she later utilized in her poetry and fiction (81, 82). There is a book in the St. Catharine collection whose date and inscription (“Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Oct. 2, 1909”) place

its purchase during Roberts' pre-Chicago years. In this text, The History of English Literature by Reuben Post Halleck, Roberts has made an interesting notation which gives insight into her thinking during the time before she became a well-known writer. At one point in the book, Halleck discusses Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and quotes the following line: "The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne" (85). Roberts marked this passage, and after it wrote in her characteristic script, simply the word, "Ah!" (85).

In 1910, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was diagnosed as having tuberculosis. Rather than enter a sanitarium, she went to Larkspur, Colorado (just north of Colorado Springs) where she stayed with her brother, Charles. There, while she recovered, she wrote her first book of poetry, In The Great Steep's Garden, a collection of verse illustrated by the colored photographs of her friend, Kenneth Hartley (McDowell 24). The photographs were mounted on the pages facing each poem (Spears 119). Spears describes the book as "unified," meditative (122), and "simple [in] diction" (124). The book is comprised of poems about nature, primarily mountain flowers. Spears suggests that "the great steep" symbolizes a "spiritual ascent," and notes that it is typical of Roberts "to present the usual and casual, the appearance of things in light of possible spiritual relation" (119). During these Colorado years, the author was reading Birds and Poets by American naturalist John Burroughs (1837-1921); additional reading included Defoe, Scott, Balzac, Pope, Hawthorne, Austen, Emily and Charlotte Bronte, Richardson, Kipling, Stevenson, Hardy, and Kentucky author James Lane Allen (106-107).

After the Colorado years and subsequent return to Springfield, with the encouragement of family friend and University of Kentucky professor, James T. Cotton Noe, who wrote to University of Chicago professor Robert Morss Lovett on her behalf, Elizabeth Madox Roberts left Springfield, Kentucky, for Chicago on December 20, 1916.

She registered at the university on January 8, 1917 (McDowell 25; Spears 130). As Earl H. Rovit notes, at age thirty-six, Roberts "was suddenly exposed to what may have been the most stimulating literary atmosphere in America at that time" (3). She met Edgar Lee Masters and Vachel Lindsay. She heard Carl Sandburg read as well as Robert Frost, John Masefield and John Galsworthy (Spears 135). She heard Yeats lecture in March of 1920. Roberts became acquainted with Harriet Monroe, who spoke to the university Poetry Club while she [Roberts] was its president in 1921 (McDowell 25; Spears 140). At Chicago, Roberts became one of an "inner circle of student writers" (Rovit Herald 3) and was influenced by Robert Morss Lovett, Harriet Monroe, and students, Glenway Wescott, Yvor Winters, Janet Lewis, Monroe Wheeler, and Maurice Leleman, around whom The Poetry Club revolved. Roberts was secretary/treasurer in 1919-1920 and president in 1920-1921. The persons mentioned above became the author's lifelong friends (Campbell and Foster 27-28). A great deal of correspondence is extant between Roberts and her Chicago circle; it may be found in the Roberts papers at The Library of Congress, the Filson Club, St. Catharine College, and in the archives at the University of Chicago containing Harriet Monroe's correspondence.

As a college student, Roberts wrote verse, beginning a series of poems she termed her "butterbeans" -- a name derived from an early, representative poem, titled, "The Butterbean Tent." The "butterbeans" were primarily poems from a child's point of view and would later comprise her second volume of verse, Under the Tree (1922) (McDowell 25). Spears notes the poetry from the author's college years contains images which remain constant throughout her career -- "the seasons, the bird, the bird's song" (149). Rovit states that Roberts published seventeen poems during her years at Chicago (3); her work was accepted by both Poetry and The Atlantic Monthly as well as

several University of Chicago student publications (Spears 131, 133, 140, 146, 147).

While in Chicago, Roberts' interest in music continued. To provide income, she gave thirty-minute piano lessons to three pupils (Spears 138). She also attended concerts given by The University of Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association and numerous operatic productions (Campbell and Foster 25). In addition to being elected to Phi Beta Kappa on June 6, 1921 (Spears 149), while at Chicago, she was awarded the David Blair McLaughlin Prize for prose writing (1917), a scholarship for excellence in junior college work in English in 1919 (Campbell and Foster 29), and the Fiske Poetry Prize in 1921. The Fiske Prize was a competitive award adjudicated by a committee comprised of Dr. Robert Morss Lovett, Louis Untermeyer, and Edith Foster Flint, assistant professor of English at Chicago. The prize came to Roberts for a group of poems (later published in Under the Tree): "The Butterbean Tent," "The Pulpit," "Mr. Pennybaker at Church," "The Branch," "At the Water," and "Among the Rushes" (Spears 146-147). When Roberts graduated from The University of Chicago on June 14, 1921 (at age forty), she received her degree with honors in English. Her coursework in English had included composition, contemporary literature, Chaucer, a literary study of the Bible, Wordsworth and the Romantic Poets, American Literature since 1890, English Literature: 1660-1774, The English Novel: 1500-1800, Studies in Eighteenth Century Comedy, English Prose: 1832-1892, Shakespeare, and English Composition "Advanced" (Spears 131, 139). Certainly, the Chicago years were pivotal for Roberts. They gave her a "sense of intellectual self-confidence" and introduced her to an influential community of writers who provided an appreciative audience for her poetry (Rovit Herald 4; Spears 138).

Back home in Springfield, where her father was then superintendent of schools, Roberts saw the publication of a portion of the Under the Tree sequence of poems in the

July, 1921, issue of Harriet Monroe's Poetry (Spears 150, 152). In May of 1922 she learned that Under the Tree had a publisher, B.W. Heubsch, and that it would be published in the winter of that year (Spears 156). [B.W. Huebsch, Inc. became The Viking Press in a merger and the remainder of Roberts' book-length works were published by Viking (Rovit Herald 172)]. Roberts received her copies at noon on Christmas Day, 1922 (Spears 157). Under the Tree received favorable reviews. Louis Untermeyer wrote that "few American lyricists had made so successful a debut" (27). The May 23, 1923, issue of The New Republic ran a review by Harvard English instructor, William A. Norris, which noted that Roberts' book captured the wonder of "seeing things for the first time" (qtd. in Spears 158-159). The New York Times review of Jan. 28, 1923, praised the book for "the rare power of projecting the adult self into the child's consciousness" (qtd. in Spears 160). The Boston Evening Transcript called Roberts "the author of the most interesting book of the year" (qtd. in Spears 163).

During the summer of 1922, Elizabeth Madox Roberts began work on her first novel, The Time of Man. She completed it in November of 1925, and it was published in August of 1926 by Viking Press. The Time of Man tells the story of Ellen Chesser, a poor white Kentucky farm girl. Set in Roberts' own "Little Country," and covering a twenty-year period in the life of the central character, the novel's ten chapters trace Ellen's journey from the fourteen-year-old romantic daughter of a tenant farmer to a mature wife and mother who must struggle with and against the land simply to survive. Her lifelong aspirations for freedom, knowledge, and self-actualization are transferred to her children in each of whom she sees mirrored her hopes for the future (McDowell 42). The book proved to be both a critical and financial success. It was the October, 1926 Book-of-the-Month Club selection. It would later be published in England, and in

German, Swedish, Spanish, and Dano-Norwegian editions (Campbell and Foster 46,47). In his autobiography, All Our Years, Roberts' former professor, Robert Morss Lovett, writes of the novel's nomination for the Pulitzer Prize. Lovett served on "the jury" for the selection of the award and states, "My greatest disappointment was in my failure to persuade my colleagues to give the award to Elizabeth Madox Roberts' Time of Man, which was certainly the finest novel of the year" (199).

When Lovett reviewed the novel for The New Republic, he called it an "almost perfect blending of idea and substance, of soul and body" (24). Roberts herself was reading reviews as she recuperated from "a hard spell of grippe . . . a lung cold . . . and a slight lung moisture" in Santa Monica, California, where she lived near her sister, Lel, for many months during 1926. In a letter to her Springfield friend, Stella Simns Barber, dated Oct. 20, 1926, she mentions the "splendid" reviews of Lovett and Joseph Wood Krutch (qtd. in Campbell and Foster 48). The Krutch review in The Saturday Review of Literature of Aug. 20, 1926, had described the "ease and freedom" with which she wrote (qtd. in Spears 179). Accolades followed. On Sept. 6, 1926, Sherwood Anderson wrote in a letter to Roberts from his Ripshin Farm in Troutdale, Virginia, that The Time of Man " . . . is very beautiful - complete and lovely book . . . reading it has been an experience I shall never forget. No one in America is doing such writing" (Filson Club Box 1). Edgar Lee Masters, in a letter to Roberts dated May 24, 1927, wrote of The Time of Man:

I have read it all, noting your words which are so deftly woven together, and taking into my inner ear the rhythm of them, delicate and like the music of endless countries . . ." (Filson Club Box 1)

Donald Davidson stated in a review dated Sept. 5, 1926 that "on the evidence of one book alone . . . she has by one stroke placed herself among the best novelists of contemporary

America" (17). Ford Madox Ford called The Time of Man "the most beautiful individual piece of writing that has yet come out of America" (qtd. in McDowell 26), and Zona Gale proclaimed it "the most important first novel ever written in America" (qtd. in Spears 199). Some of the finest praise for The Time of Man, however, came from Louis Untermeyer. In a May 21, 1927, article in The Chicago Tribune, he was asked what book he would rather have written than any other. He responded:

I think I would rather have written Elizabeth Madox Roberts' The Time of Man than any book of this - or the previous generation . . . how these life-drenched earth breathing chapters ever got themselves down on paper still remains a mystery to me." (9)

From the time of the 1926 publication of The Time of Man, Roberts, though continually battling ill health, was first and foremost a writer, and one who generated impressive attention - - both critical and popular. From 1926-1935 she maintained a high level of creativity, often with several writing projects progressing simultaneously (McDowell 26, Campbell and Foster 53). Although Springfield was always home, she did not remain there exclusively from 1926 until her death in 1941. She had extended stays not only in California, but back in Chicago, in New York, in Louisville, and in Florida (McDowell 18-19). In the spring of 1926, while still in California, she began work on a second novel (Spears 192). By August of 1927, Roberts had completed the writing of My Heart and My Flesh. It was published by Viking in October of 1927. My Heart and My Flesh, like The Time of Man, presents a narrative told through the perspective of a young female central character. However, whereas The Time of Man was based on the lives of poor tenant farmers, My Heart and My Flesh tells the story of Theodosia Bell, a musician from a more privileged background who must fight her way back after losing literally everything -- sweethearts, grandfather, father, health, and the ability to play her

violin. Roberts herself called it a novel of "spiritual travail," noting, "It is the story of a woman who went to hell and returned to walk among you" (Library of Congress Box 8). Although McDowell writes that this novel "helped consolidate Miss Roberts' critical and popular reception" (26), it was not as well received as The Time of Man (Spears 199). While friend and fellow author, Glenway Wescott was proclaiming it better than The Time of Man (8), the ladies of Springfield (who were also upset by Ellen Chesser's lack of gentility), were aghast at the incest and miscegenation it presented. Campbell and Foster report that the Presbyterians among them read the prologue as "a sarcastic portrayal of their church" (52). Less than glowing appraisals also came from The Atlantic Monthly, where it was called "episodic," The Springfield Republican (Massachusetts), where it was described as "a failure by a first-rate writer," and The Nation, whose reviewer labeled it "confused" and "blurred" (qtd. in Spears 199). In a review for The New York Evening Post, Conrad Aiken, however, noted that despite "blemishes," it was deeply moving (qtd. in Spears 200). Allan Nevins also saw merit in the novel; he wrote in The Saturday Review of Literature that Roberts' treatment of the suffering of the central character, Theodosia Bell, was effective and praised the author's style (qtd. in Spears 200).

Interestingly, while Roberts was composing The Time of Man and My Heart and My Flesh, she was concurrently writing a third novel, Jingling in the Wind, a puzzling, satirical work, which according to Wagenknecht, provided her with comic diversion (390). The contemporary critical response to Jingling in the Wind was not generally positive. Kenneth Burke refers to it as "a book of no great moment" (qtd. in Rovit 91). Campbell and Foster note that it left the readers in Springfield "completely at sea" (53). The New York Times wished "Miss Roberts would return to human ground," and The Springfield Republican (Massachusetts) could find no "meaning" in the novel (qtd.

in Spears 206). In Allan Nevins' review, originally appearing in The New York Herald Tribune, he says that Jingling in the Wind defies "analysis" and "hope[s] that Miss Roberts will not do it again" (20). Nevins, however, does write that he "suspect[s] Miss Roberts of meaning more than meets the casual eye" (20), and Earl H. Rovit states in Herald to Chaos that the novel may help "shed light" on Roberts' other work (91).

The plot of Jingling in the Wind involves a love story between two professional rainmakers, Jeremy and Tulip, whose romance partially serves to satirize the conflict between religion and science epitomized by the Scopes Trial (Rovit Herald 95). A significant portion of the book, however, interrupts the central plot, and reminiscent of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, provides individual stories told by a group of stranded travelers. The satire which appears throughout this segment, and the novel as a whole, attacks such varied subjects as American advertising, Protestant evangelism, Prohibition, and Hollywood (Rovit 96). Rovit is correct in his view that underlying the satire in this novel, the reader may uncover Roberts' belief in "the rich organic connection between the life of man and the life of nature" (98). More important, however, is Rovit's contention that Jingling in the Wind provides a window into Roberts' aesthetic concerns (91). Certainly, the concluding segments of the fifth and final chapter contain clear statements of Roberts' personal philosophy. She outlines therein certain tenets which are basic to an understanding of her work as a whole as she writes:

" . . .lacking the poets we can still learn from the spiders and grasshoppers, and there is a world of wisdom in a drop of water," and, "In the midst of confusion there is always a flow of harmony, a quiet water that is not troubled by the weathers which are those winds of the world that blow about the earth" (248). Additionally, the last paragraph of the work outlines Roberts' central belief, based in part on the philosophy of British idealist, Bishop George Berkeley, that "Life is from within, and thus the noise outside is

a wind blowing in a mirror" (256). This statement summarizes poetically her basic stance that reality is to be found in an individual's unique perception of experience and the subjective, personal interpretation of that experience. Thus, she would teach simply that man must study the poetry of nature, eschew chaos, and, most importantly, nourish the inner life -- the spirit and soul.

Roberts spent most of 1929 in Springfield writing what was to be her second novel to achieve both popular and critical acclaim. The Great Meadow, first conceived during the Colorado years (Library of Congress Box 8), is the story of Diony Jarvis, a young woman who, along with her new husband, leaves her home in Virginia to join the westward migration into Kentucky's Bluegrass Region. Roberts describes the inception of the novel in an essay found in The Library of Congress collection. She states:

I saw these people coming over the Trace, some of them coming early when there were hundreds of miles of scarcely broken forests to be passed. The drama was brief but it was full and picturesque. I thought it would be excellent labor if one might gather these threads into one strand, if one might draw these strains into one person and bring this person over the Trace and through the Gateway in one symbolic journey, in one spiritual consummation that gathered the thought or the genius of a century. (Library of Congress Box 8)

The Great Meadow thus represents for Roberts the coming together of those stories of her pioneer ancestors born of "family memory" which gave her a "sense of [her] own validity" (qtd. in Campbell and Foster 6). Those stories encompassed her knowledge of not only family, however, but of American and regional history and culture which she blended together so expertly with her life-long fascination with the thinking of Bishop Berkeley (Bradford vii, x). Roberts' own father had been interested in Berkeleian idealism, and the author had taken a course in eighteenth century philosophy,

specializing in Berkeley, while studying at The University of Chicago in 1920 (McDowell 22; Campbell and Foster 29). Her interest in Berkeley was multi-faceted, but two of his ideas seem especially apparent in The Great Meadow. The first is that the natural physical world is a world of order and control, which Berkeley believed must be governed by a presently active God. The second is that all our experiences as humans are mental experiences, or as Jessop explains it in, "Berkeley as Religious Apologist," "the only causal power we ever know is that of our own minds" (105), or as Roberts herself explains even more succinctly, "Life is from within" (Jingling 256). Assuredly, Roberts' affinity for the thought of Berkeley clarifies the author's statement that "Diony is a creature of the mind, moving always more inwardly" (Library of Congress Box 8). This concept is also expressed in The Great Meadow in "the mystery and excitement of the idea of Kentucky" (Bradford vii) which so captures the minds of Berk and Diony Jarvis that they feel compelled to move westward to "make a world out of chaos" (Great Meadow 24). As Diony's father tells her in pure Berkeleian terms, this impetus is "a strong mark of the hidden purposes of the Author of all things" (Great Meadow 115). Bradford notes that for Roberts, the creation of "Kentucky as a civil community [is in this novel] synonymous with the majestic outward flow of mind in its transforming influence on all that is dark and without form" (ix).

Research for The Great Meadow kept Roberts in Kentucky where she read and worked at the Louisville Public Library and at the Filson Club and where she walked over and studied the grounds and buildings of Ft. Harrod in Harrodsburg, not far from her native Springfield (Campbell and Foster 56). During the summer of 1929, she was, in addition to reading pioneer history, "talking with anybody who could be made to talk about old times" (Spears 210). In December of 1929, when the novel was nearly completed, Roberts went to New York to supervise its publication (Campbell and Foster

56). While in New York, she attended classical music concerts at least once a week (favorites included works by Brahms, Beethoven, and Ravel) and “wished for strength to attend three a day” (qtd. in Spears 213). When the book appeared early in 1930, it was chosen as a Literary Guild Selection. In his review for Wings, Carl Van Doren describes it as a “story held together with amazing skill” and notes all parts of it are “subordinated to the central design” (24). The novel’s reputation has remained high. In 1945, J. Donald Adams called it “that finest of all American historical novels” (123). In 1960, Rovit referred to it as “the most highly regarded of Miss Roberts’ novels” (49), and in the 1992 Southern Classics Series edition, M.E. Bradford notes that it has had the largest readership of any of Roberts’ work and calls its central character, Diony, “one of the more remarkable heroines in the literature of the South” (xii, xiv).

While writing The Great Meadow, as was her practice, Roberts was concurrently working on another project, a short story, “A Buried Treasure,” which would appear in Harper’s December, 1929, and January, 1930 issues. In November, 1930, a new edition of Under the Tree was published, containing seven poems not in the original volume (McDowell 18; Spears 226). Also in 1930, Roberts traveled to Louisville to see the Metro-Goldwyn- Mayer film of The Great Meadow, a production which Campbell and Foster report “added nothing to the luster of the original book,” and in which the author’s sister reportedly found many changes from the novel, but much drama (57, 62). In 1931, the author won two significant literary awards, the Caroline Sinkler Prize of the Poetry Society of South Carolina for the new edition of Under the Tree, and second place in the twelfth O. Henry Prize Awards for the short story, “The Sacrifice of the Maidens,” a work based on a visit to St. Catharine convent to observe “the ceremony of taking of the veil by Catholic nuns” (Campbell and Foster 59; Spears 226). 1931 also saw the publication of the novel, A Buried Treasure, an expanded version of the

story of the same title which had originally appeared in Harper's (Spears 222).

A Buried Treasure was inspired by a newspaper article which appeared in The Springfield Sun on August 28, 1928. The article tells the story of a Washington County farmer, who, while digging on his land, unearthed a kettle containing sixteen hundred Spanish dollars in silver (Spears 222-223). This incident forms the basis for the story which recounts how Philly Blair and her husband, Andy, deal with the discovery of a similar buried treasure. The novel also contains sub-plots concerning a young man, Ben Shepherd, who is on a quest for information about his family's origins and Imogene Cundy, Philly's cousin, who must contend with her father Sam's violent objections to her marriage.

A Buried Treasure was chosen as a Literary Guild Selection, and contemporary critics admired the work. Robert Penn Warren praised it for its "intricate symbolism" (qtd. in Spears 225), and F. Lamar Janney, writing for The Sewanee Review, called it "a delightful summer idyll" (399). More recent critical evaluations have not been so kind, however. Rovit calls the work "the least successful of Miss Roberts' novels," citing the author's failure to integrate the sub-plots into the story as its major weakness (114-115).

Roberts' next literary project was completed during 1932, culminating in The Haunted Mirror, her first volume of collected short stories, published in November of that year (Campbell and Foster 64). The Haunted Mirror included, "Death at Bearwallow," "The Sacrifice of the Maidens," "Children of the Earth," "On the Mountainside," "The Scarecrow," "The Shepherd's Interval," and "Record at Oak Hill." Despite the inclusion of the prize-winning, "The Sacrifice of the Maidens," and the powerful and now often- anthologized, "Death at Bearwallow," critical reviews were mixed. The New Republic viewed the stories as inferior to Roberts' novels, and The

Nation called them “unrealized.” The New York Times, however, praised the stories as “work of the highest order,” and The New York Evening Post described the volume as containing “a poetic wisdom” that elevated Roberts’ work from mere “regional writing” (qtd. in Spears 228-229).

The years between 1931 and 1935, while productive and financially secure for Roberts, brought family crises, continued poor health, and what has been described as “acute sensitivity” (Campbell and Foster 62; Spears 230). A niece died in Reno, Nevada; Simpson Roberts died in August of 1933; Roberts herself suffered from a skin disorder, weakness, and anemia and became consumed with worries about the safety of her drinking water and the temperature of her environment (Campbell and Foster 63; Spears 230). She relaxed by handweaving, a craft she had learned in 1923 during a brief stay at the Riggs Foundation where she was treated for recurring headaches (McDowell 26; Campbell and Foster 62-63).

During 1933 and 1934, Roberts, again working on several projects concurrently, began a sketch, originally titled “Tamed Honey,” which would eventually be developed into the writer’s last novel, Black Is My Truelove’s Hair (1938). She also completed her sixth novel, He Sent Forth a Raven, published in 1935, the same year Roberts was awarded a Doctor of Letters degree from Russell Sage College and the same year she learned she had what would prove to be fatal Hodgkin’s Disease (Campbell and Foster 65-66).

He Sent Forth a Raven is the story of Stoner Drake, a prosperous farmer who, following the death of his wife, vows never to set foot on the earth again. The central consciousness of the novel, however, is to be found in Drake’s granddaughter, Jocelle, who represents the unquenchable force of life and individuality (Niles n.p.). The novel is a pastiche about agrarianism, the Depression, mechanization, theology, feminism, and

contemporary politics. Although Roberts herself admitted there were not “three critics to praise it,” she also defended the book by saying that “the reviewers generally confused themselves” and asserted that “the piece is [about] the dauntless spirit of that poor weakling, Man, trying to go his way alone” (qtd. in Niles n.p.). Indeed, the critics were confused by the novel. F. Lamar Janney calls it an “incoherent, tenuous, and unsuccessful attempt to handle imaginatively the conflict between individualism and communal well-being” (401). He further notes that in the novel “she attempted the impossible, writing about the group when the individual was always in her mind.” (406). Grant C. Knight, who describes the novel as “as original as anything a Kentucky writer has issued” (12), agrees with Janney when he asserts that its “structure is partially concealed in a metaphysical fog” and that it “falls short of the best art” (13). Grant C. Knight’s most interesting comment about the novel, however, is the statement that it “reveals more of Elizabeth Roberts than . . . any other of her novels, more of her exquisite sense of reality, her bewilderment with things as they are, her lyric anger, her slight vein of madness, [and] her faith in man’s redemption” (13). If Knight is correct, certainly anger, madness, and faith are difficult authorial stances to reconcile in just one novel. This writer would agree, however, that He Sent Forth a Raven echoes and attempts to blend elements from previous novels, especially My Heart and My Flesh, Jingling in the Wind, and A Buried Treasure. Through the repetition of a young woman musician’s tragic illness, a daughter’s romantic love opposed by a tyrannical father, theological questioning, and an ultimate vision of hope, the reader may glimpse further insight into the importance of these elements throughout Roberts’ work.

The year following the publication of He Sent Forth a Raven, the author received her second honorary doctorate; this award was given by Centre College in Danville, Kentucky in June of 1936 (Campbell and Foster 68; Spears 236). In June of 1937, The

University of Louisville presented Roberts with a third honorary doctorate (McDowell 19). Campbell and Foster report that the years between 1936-1938 were spent in reading and re-reading many of her favorites -- Housman, Hardy, old English ballads, Frost, Hopkins, Dickinson, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and the Greek dramatists (68,69,70). She was also "rely[ing] more and more upon music" as a means of relaxation and inspiration, her love for which Campbell and Foster describe as "profound" and "mystical" (70). She told J. Donald Adams when he visited her in 1939 that she used Bach and Mozart "to set the mood for writing" (qtd. in Campbell and Foster 70). Indeed, Adams notes Roberts' love of "symphonic music" in his 1944 work, The Shape of Books to Come, and asserts that her work aims at an ideal described by E.M. Forster in his Aspects of the Novel in which Forster writes of "an effect comparable to the effect of [Beethoven's] Fifth Symphony as a whole, where when the orchestra stops, we hear something that has never actually been played" (Forster 240; qtd. in Adams 130).

As Elizabeth Madox Roberts' health continued to decline, her medical expenses grew, and in 1937, she applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship to offset these expenses; however, "technical stipulations in the Guggenheim charter prevented the director of the foundation from awarding her a grant" (Campbell and Foster 71). This same period (1936-1938), however, found the writer still engaged in major literary projects. She continued to work on a manuscript, originally titled, "Tamed Honey," which was inspired by Kentucky folk-musician, John Jacob Niles' singing of the ballad "Black is the Color of My Truelove's Hair." She also began work on a novel about the devastating flooding of Louisville, Kentucky, which occurred early in 1937 (Spears 236). Roberts collected newspaper accounts of the disaster, and in her papers at the Library of Congress are her research materials, preliminary notes, and the manuscript of this

unfinished novel. McDowell refers to the work as "the most arresting of [the] unfinished manuscripts" (28). Roberts also planned the initial stages of what was envisioned as an "epic" about Daniel Boone (Campbell and Foster 73; McDowell 28).

The author's seventh and last novel, an expanded version of "Tamed Honey," titled Black is My Truelove's Hair, was published in October of 1938 (Spears 237). The central plot of this work revolves around a young woman, Dena James, who returns home after living a short time with a lover, Bill Langtry, who withdraws his promise to marry her. Langtry, however, vows to kill Dena if she ever becomes involved with another man. When a serious relationship develops between Dena and Cam Elliott, Langtry returns for revenge but does not follow through with his threat. Langtry's impending return creates tension throughout the novel -- a tension symbolized by an unearthly sound heard repeatedly by Dena, a cry like "the hoot of an owl . . . within the rhythm of a dog's bark" (Black 118). Two interwoven subplots involving Dena's responsibility for the loss of her sister's prized thimble and the problem of a barnyard gander whose incessant scream unnerves those who hear it, provide additional tension and symbolic counterpoint for two of the novel's central conflicts -- sexual tension and impending doom.

The contemporary critical reviews of Black is My Truelove's Hair were mixed. Clifton Fadiman, writing for The New Yorker, calls it "more wayward . . . whimsical . . . and obscure" than The Time of Man, My Heart and My Flesh, and The Great Meadow. He notes that the novel "has fewer contacts with the world of universal experience than The Time of Man or My Heart and my Flesh," and contends that it "appears to come out of a part of [Roberts'] mind that is extremely special, withdrawn" (69-70). The reviewer for Time, however, hailed Black is My Truelove's Hair as evidence that Roberts had "escaped" from a "blind alley," a "treacherous literary cul-de-sac" epitomized by the

"obscure" He Sent Forth a Raven. The Time reviewer calls the new novel "lively" and "brilliant" and writes that Roberts is now, with this publication, "safe again in her old Kentucky home" ("Kentucky" 75). In The Sewanee Review, Benjamin Spencer refers to Black is My Truelove's Hair as "poetic" and as a tribute "to the established regional order" (511). Spencer also states that Roberts, along with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, represents "the Southern regional novel . . . at its best" (509).

In 1939, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was completing preparations to publish a third book of poetry, Song in the Meadow. Poetry published six pieces from this forthcoming volume in its April, 1939 issue, and the work in its entirety was published a year later (Spears 242, 244). It differs from Under the Tree in its variety. Although selections like "Cinderella's Song" and "Song for a Girl Sent to Drive Cows," are written from a child's point of view and are thus reminiscent of the Under the Tree poems, most of the selections are far more philosophical and meditative. For example, in "Man Intolerant," Roberts writes of man "set adrift on a deep that can never be sounded" (169). Additionally, many poems in the volume reflect Roberts' life-long interests in family and Kentucky history and in music. The titles, "When Daniel [D.Boone] Was a Herdboy," "When Daniel Was a Blacksmith," and "Boone Alone in Kentuck," and "Woodcock of the Ivory Beak," all concern pioneer history. "The Battle of Perryville," "Sailing for America," and "Stranger" blend American and family history. In the poem "Conversations Beside a Stream" (a unique blend of prose, drama, traditional poetry, and lyrics from musical pieces as diverse as "Nelly Bly," "Marching to Zion," and "Bangum and the Boar"), the author equates the "growth of Song" with the growth of America by depicting America's musical and political histories as intertwined (74-80). Numerous other poems from the volume point to Roberts' interest in music, as may be evidenced by titles such as, "Evening Song," "The Song of the Dove," and "An

Old Love in Song." The influence of balladry is evident in selections like "The Fox Hunt," "Jack at the Fair," and "A Ballet Song of Mary." Reviews of Song in the Meadow were favorable. The review in Poetry notes the light and dark elements found in the poems and discusses Roberts' successful blending of feeling and thought (Spears 247-248). In a review called "Spirit and Sense," John Peale Bishop writes of Roberts' "distinguished mind" and that she "has rendered as no one before her . . . the particular portion of the border South which she inhabits." Bishop concludes that the author finds in Kentucky "life enough for endless meditation" (315).

The years 1939-1940 continued to be both personally difficult and professionally rewarding for Roberts. Despite her battle with Hodgkin's Disease, and the deaths of her brothers, Clifford and Brent, she continued to write (Spears 248). She worked on a forthcoming volume of short stories, two novels, and the Daniel Boone epic (Campbell and Foster 77). Biographers have described her at this period in her life as "curt and edgy," citing "the strain which the disease imposed on her sensibilities" as the cause (Campbell and Foster 75). Spears additionally suggests that the loss of her brothers "tried her strength of will" (249). She spent the winter of 1939-1940 in Orlando, Florida. During the summer of 1940, back home at Elenores, she employed a full-time nurse, Mrs. Mary Sallie Moran. In the fall of 1940 Roberts returned, with Moran, to Orlando (Spears 249).

Campbell and Foster write that during this time Roberts read daily from a Catholic missal, a gift from a friend in the 1930's (77,78). Despite her decidedly Protestant background, Roberts criticized the tradition harshly, writing of her "contempt" for the "goings-on" of the "social church," which she condemned for its overemphasis on a "personal savior, and its bad music, 2 by 4 thinking, bad gardening, [and] bad architecture" (Library of Congress Box 8). Conversely, the writer's

fascination with Catholicism ran deep. Undoubtedly, part of her interest was inspired simply by the fact that she spent most of her life in Washington County, Kentucky. Even today, in a short drive of less than ten minutes from the center of Springfield, one may view both the picturesque stone church and monastery of St. Rose, as well as the imposing walled, Gothic buildings of St. Catharine College and mother-house. In an essay found in the Roberts papers at The Library of Congress in which she describes her region, she notes:

The terrain includes the Catholic region of Kentucky, and there are, spreading westward from Lebanon and Cartwright's Creek, many convent schools and churches. At Bardstown is the oldest Catholic Church in the state and the former seat of the first established diocese west of the mountains. Here are relics and pictures that derived from French and Sicilian kings and have gathered a richness of romance and myth in the century that has passed since they came here . . . Southward then, one comes to the seat of the Trappist Monks . . . over their labor and prayers floats a frequent slow droning of devoted bells.

(Library of Congress Box 8)

A longer Roberts' essay on Catholicism in her region of Central Kentucky is extant at The Filson Club in Louisville. This essay chronicles the history of the aforementioned St. Rose, the "oldest Catholic mission house between the Alleghenies and the Pacific" (Filson Club Box 3). Roberts writes of her "tender reverence" for this Dominican church, monastery, mission, and seminary. She notes that she "loves" this place for its "sweet, deep-toned bell notes and the shrouded mystery of the cloister." She concludes by stating, "It is well if one has the St. Rose memory picture in his collection" (Filson Box 3).

Clearly, Roberts' "memory picture" of St. Rose [renamed St. Lucy in The Time

of Man (Spears 28)], and its nearby mission, St. Catharine, provided the author with background for many of her works. One of the myriad references to Catholicism may be found, for example, in the novel The Time of Man in the poetic description of how Ellen Chesser learns to tell time by relating the ringing of St. Lucy's bell "to the shadows" (240). Additionally, the short stories, "The Sacrifice of the Maidens" [based on a ceremony witnessed by Roberts at St. Catharine and second prize winner in the O. Henry awards for 1930 (Campbell and Foster 23)], and "Death at Bearwallow" from The Haunted Mirror are consummately tied to a deep understanding of the Catholic tradition. And, indeed, the very title of the author's last volume, Not by Strange Gods, as noted by Roberts, is taken directly from the Litany of the Saints, a portion of which reads, "Thy creatures, not made by strange gods, but by thee" (Library of Congress Box 9). Campbell and Foster suggest that the Catholic faith was a "consolation" to Roberts during the last months of her life (77-78), and since she actually never "made her profession of faith" in the Springfield Christian Church where she attended for many years, or formally joined any church at all, they point to the "pervasive" use of Catholicism throughout her novels, her report that she said the rosary "faithfully," and her "extremely well-thumbed" missal as evidences of her attachment to the Catholic faith (18; 22-23).

In January of 1941, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was made a member of The National Academy of Arts and Letters but returned her tickets to the January 18 event at Carnegie Hall because she was too ill to attend (Campbell and Foster 78; Spears 249).

She was, however, able to complete the manuscript of Not By Strange Gods during that same month and to correct proofs in early February (Spears 250). She was hospitalized on March 4, 1941, at which time she was very weak. Her temperature gradually rose, and despite three blood transfusions, she became "cyanotic" and died at Orange Memorial

Hospital in Orlando, Florida, on the afternoon of Thursday, March 13, 1941 (Campbell and Foster 79; Spears 250). The last work, the volume of short stories, Not By Strange Gods, was published on March 17, 1941, while Elizabeth Madox Roberts' body "lay in the library at Elenores" (Spears 251). Six stories were included in the work: "The Haunted Palace," "I Love My Bonnie Bride," "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," "Holy Morning," "The Betrothed," and "Love by the Highway."

The critical reviews of what Barbara Tunnell Anderson called Roberts' "Latest and Last" work were varied. Anderson notes "the prose flows in musical Biblical measure," and she asserts the collection has much to offer "in a world that suddenly is not ashamed to recognize its need of spiritual deepening" (7). In much the same spirit, The Nation, on May 3, 1941, describes the stories as "quiet, mellow" and filled with a "mystical exaltation" that "satisfies the poetic sense" (537). I.M. Turner in The Library Journal calls them "real literature" (220), and E.H. Walton, writing for The New York Times, describes the volume's "timeless quality" (6). However, Clifton Fadiman in a March 29, 1941, review in The New Yorker, calls the book "inaccessible" and asserts that "at least two" of the stories are "baffling almost to the point of incomprehensibility" (68).

In the spring of 1941, other critics were also adopting Fadiman's assertion that essentially Roberts' work displayed "a beautiful, broken talent" (68). In an anonymous review of Not by Strange Gods in the March 17, 1941 issue of Time, the writer defined "her weakness" as "a love for the archaic for its own sake" (100). Both The New York Times and The Nation described her later work as inferior to The Time of Man: Dorothy Van Doren wrote that "Miss Roberts reached her peak in her first book (758), and E.H. Walton noted there was "something remote . . . in all of the stories and novels which have followed The Time of Man" (6). Indeed, it has been suggested that the decline Roberts'

work suffered in both critical and popular appeal may well have “cost her the reputation that [The Time of Man] could have sustained” (Slavik “Journey” xix). Louis Auchincloss states the problem in the form of a question when he asks, “If Emily Bronte had survived the publication of Wuthering Heights to write a series of obscure and ponderous allegorical novels, would her reputation be as splendid as it is today?” (123). Certainly, Roberts’ books did not sell well after the early 1930’s (Slavik xx), but as Robert Penn Warren writes, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was not “the first good . . . writer to go underground” (“Within” xxx). Thus, it is well to ask how and why Roberts’ literary reputation began to be devalued in the years from the 1926 accolade describing her as “among the best” (Davidson, “Spyglass 17”), to the 1941 pronouncement of “hers as a beautiful, broken talent”—and beyond (Fadiman 68). Clearly, the answers to this question are complex; however, it does appear that they may be discovered both in the nature of Roberts’ life and work as well as in the cultural and literary politics of her era.

Robert Penn Warren notes that the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts was not in tune with the climate of the 1930’s, where the “inner world of individual experience was rejected in favor of “the graph, the statistic, the report of a commission . . . as final reality” (“Within” xxx). Warren also suggests that Roberts’ novels were politically unacceptable because they did not overtly protest or suggest remediation for the social ills they exposed, but rather explored the inner victories of individuals who triumphed over circumstances on a personal level. Warren asserts that “any literary work concerned with inward victory, was, in certain influential quarters, taken as subtle propaganda against any effort directed toward outward victory” (“Within” xxxi).

Donald Davidson also discusses the political climate of Roberts’ era, acknowledging that the trend in American art was to “despise American ways,” cultivate

the "cosmopolitan," and elevate the stature of the artist who could write without including "traces of his origin and tradition" (65-67). Certainly, Roberts, whose work was deeply tied to her origins in, and the traditions of, rural Central Kentucky was out-of-step with what was in literary vogue, especially during the 1920's. Davidson acknowledges that at this time in American history, "whatever was foreign or had a foreign air had prestige," and the "Southerner had no merit" in the eyes of the literary establishment (65-67; 229). Earl H. Rovit, in his article, "The Regions Versus the Nation: Critical Battle of the Thirties," admits that Elizabeth Madox Roberts' "neglect was practically insured by the administration of the label, 'regionalist,'" a designation he deems both ill-considered and pejorative (90; 97).

Additionally, the central premise of Elizabeth Ammons' volume, Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century, may shed light on another factor contributing to Roberts' decline in popularity and to her near-erasure from the canon. Although Ammons' work does not specifically speak about Roberts, it does discuss American literary history during the early years of the twentieth century and offers an explanation of why so many women writers born between 1850-1900 were overlooked for years in the study of American literature.

In her discussion of such writers as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sarah Orne Jewett, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Kate Chopin, Pauline Hopkins, and others, Ammons characterizes these writers as "new women," a term she uses to describe both a lifestyle and an aesthetic. Ammons maintains that most of these women writers "reject[ed] conventional female roles" of wife and mother in order to "assert their right to a career, a public voice" (7). She further claims that American women writers born between 1850-1900 wrote fiction characterized by "radical experimentation with narrative form" and chose themes dealing with the "sexual exploitation of women,

female muteness, a preoccupation with the figure of the woman artist, and the relationship between women of color and white women" (5). Elizabeth Madox Roberts undoubtedly fits Ammons' description. She was well-educated, unmarried, and writing was her sole occupation once she began. One need look no further than Jingling in the Wind's, "The Lady Traveler's Story" (149-152), or the "drama of the stars" (205-210) to find "radical experimentation." The aforementioned women's issues are all strongly present in My Heart and My Flesh, and many are apparent in the other novels as well, notably, He Sent Forth a Raven and Black is My Truelove's Hair.

To locate Roberts firmly in this tradition aids in an understanding of the issues which Ammons maintains caused the women writers of the early twentieth century to be "scattered, trivialized, and buried" (20). Ammons quotes from a speech, "Coeducation and Literature," given by A.G. Canfield at the 1909 meeting of The Modern Language Association. The speaker's thesis was that literary study needed to be brought "more in line" with "the ideal of masculine culture" in order to encourage more men to enter the field (Ammons 16; Canfield lxxix-lxxx, lxxxiii).

Certainly, with their central emphasis on the inward journeys of women whose lives often reflected the pain caused by rejection, betrayal, or abandonment by men (i.e., Ellen Chesser, Theodosia Bell, Diony Jarvis, Philly Blair, Imogene Cundy, Jocelle Drake, Martha Drake, and Dena James), the novels of Elizabeth Madox Roberts were "out of line" with the "masculine culture" of her day. A "new woman" writing about these issues as well as the dangers of "female muteness" (Ammons 5), might not be welcome in a canon whose shapers were attempting to define it in terms of "masculine culture" in order to discourage literature as "a study for girls" (Ammons 16).

Ultimately, however, one must look beyond politics to Roberts' life and work for answers concerning her loss of critical and popular esteem. Clearly, Roberts' failing

health was a major contribution to what Slavik in his essay, "Ellen Chesser: A Journey of the Mind," calls her later "indulgent poetic prose" (xix). The poor critical reception of, most notably, A Buried Treasure and He Sent Forth a Raven, along with the early dramatic failure of Jingling in the Wind, according to Robert Penn Warren, "aggravated" the "reassessment" that naturally occurs after a writer's death ("Within" xxx). But the real question remains -- was Roberts' decline the result of true artistic failure? Isabel Hawley, in an unpublished dissertation, Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Her Development as Self-Conscious Narrative Artist, agrees with Robert Penn Warren, that the later novels depend too heavily on symbolism and allegory (Hawley 21; Warren "Within" xxx). Hawley, however, identifies other problems, suggesting that the "narrative viewpoint" shifts in the later novels "from a close identification with the protagonist to a more distant objective position outside the story" (21). Indeed, if it is true that the narrative viewpoint or consciousness is detached at all, the reader needs be aware that it is so by conscious artistic design. Roberts wrote:

Through an identification of myself with the actors, goes still and always a condition of aesthetic detachment, aware and unaware - at once within the action, and aware of the tragedy and beauty of the all-enclosing form.

(Library of Congress Box 8)

Hawley also explains what she considers Roberts' artistic failure by discussing the writer's growing preoccupation with pattern and design which led to increased interest in imposing a "complexity of form" on her material. Hawley describes this as an "intellectualization" of the fiction, exemplified by the intrusive inclusion of literary parallels, folklore, mythology, psychology, and history into Roberts' texts (21, 22). Admittedly, in some Roberts novels (Jingling in the Wind, A Buried Treasure, He Sent Forth a Raven, and Black is My Truelove's Hair), the complex plot structures,

allegory, and symbolism may be more obtrusive, but it should be observed that these elements, along with the rest of Roberts' so-called "intellectualizations" (literary parallels, folklore, mythology, psychology, history, Berkelian philosophy, Catholic rituals, and music), serve to undergird the very heart of the author's work; thus, the qualities for which Hawley criticizes her, are elements which Roberts developed very consciously in an attempt to define herself as an artist. And so, it is in understanding these elements that one gains much -- the minor novels (Jingling in the Wind, A Buried Treasure, and He Sent Forth a Raven) providing useful insights into the mind of the writer and into the fuller understanding of the major novels, The Time of Man, My Heart and My Flesh, The Great Meadow, and possibly, Black is My Truelove's Hair.

Roberts herself did not consider her work flawed; the author's own attitude toward her critics offers interesting insight; she wrote: "I . . . learned long ago never to be annoyed by anything anybody may say of me" (Library of Congress Box 8). Her confidence in her work is further exemplified in her response to the criticism that Black is My Truelove's Hair was obscure:

Black is My Truelove's Hair is not obscure. Perhaps it will yield more if it is read more fully. The intention was to penetrate an event in all its implication deeply and more deeply, until it yielded its entire meaning in Time.

(Library of Congress Box 4)

It is this study's contention that Roberts was right; a cursory reading of her work will not suffice; there is an "entire meaning" to be discovered when her characters, complex structures, and multiple intellectualizations, are "read more fully" and probed "more deeply." Some novels may, indeed, be more fully realized in terms of Roberts' aesthetic designs, but each work serves to clarify the writer's mind, and will "yield" much when examined closely. It was not the author's intention to be "obscure,"

but neither was it her intention to write works that could be read quickly or casually.

As Alexander M. Buchan notes:

The hurried reader [of Roberts' work] accustomed to the journalistic methods of 'realistic' novels, misses the sense of a completed picture, either of people or things that comes from accumulation of masses of detail . . . Expecting an expository sermon, he finds a liturgy. (478)

Certainly, Roberts' work may offer much, however, to readers and scholars today who are prepared to read "more fully." Although academic interest has been sporadic, possibly reaching its most recent height in the 1984 Roberts conference held at St. Catharine College, it can provide many areas for study. Roberts' biography is yet unwritten, her letters and stories uncollected, and a number of topics in her work not yet fully explored, if at all. For example, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' work is of value for its stylistically unique language and speech patterns. The writer's accurate rendering of Washington County, Kentucky folk-speech, often expressed in a type of poetic antiphony reminiscent of the King James Bible, and complete with the archaic words she used in the attempt "to achieve . . . a speech marked with beauty and dignity, a speech made mellow by long use" (Library of Congress Box 4), has been noted by critics as the most obvious mark of her style. Mark Van Doren has called "this voice . . . the most interesting thing about Miss Roberts . . . because it in itself is a sort of substance" (97-98). He describes the language as "murmuring" (98) and notes that it "is in itself a thing of perpetual delight, tart with wit as well as languorous with longing for certitude" (106). Van Doren writes that "her language is the language of her own mind," (praising the very quality that Isabel Hawley rejects as "intellectualization"), as he comments that it reflects Roberts' "complexity of mind" -- an indispensable element in true artistic "excellence" (106).

Roberts' work may also deserve recognition for its epic themes. To be universal in scope was her intention; she wrote: "The only subjects worthy of permanent consideration are the fundamental passions, or instincts. Homeric themes of blood and waste and death . . . of life" (Library of Congress Box 4). And, in a fragmentary essay, Roberts writes: "Man the artist is always on the side of man in conflict . . . man is greatest in tragic art because here he is seen to be worthy of conflicts with vaster powers and destinies of the universe" (Library of Congress Box 9). Theodosia Bell, the heroine of My Heart and My Flesh, who possesses "pride and boundless ambition," "a woman who went to hell and returned to walk among you," is one of Roberts' characters engaged in such vast conflict; another such character is Diony Jarvis of The Great Meadow, the novel which possibly comes closest to epic design. Roberts describes Diony's life and this novel of frontier settlement as "one symbolic journey . . . that gathered the thought and genius of a century" (Library of Congress Box 9). Diony is a woman who desires to be "a great conduit between future and past" (Bradford viii), and in her migration to the wilderness of Kentucky wishes "to make a world out of chaos" (24). M.E. Bradford notes that the novel is about what he terms Kentucky's "heroic age" -- the age of pioneers and trail blazers like Daniel Boone and George Rogers Clark, and he calls the novel the story "of a new Troy rising in the Bluegrass" (xiv).

The heroine of The Great Meadow, Diony Hall Jarvis, memorable for her own heroic "sense of selfhood," independent thinking, and determination to survive and make a life in a hostile world becomes, however, only one in a series of Roberts' women (cf. Ellen Chesser, Theodosia Bell, Jocelle Drake, and Dena James) whose rich interior lives allow them to rise above difficult circumstances. Truly, the novels of Elizabeth Madox Roberts deserve continued consideration as chronicles of the interior triumphs of courageous women whose victories come not as a sugar-coated happy endings to placate a

romantic readership, but as realistic possibilities available to persons willing to look beyond tragedy, journey inward, and accept and develop the selves they discover.

Indeed, it is this emphasis on what has been called Roberts' "tone of affirmation" that most clearly places her in the company of other American women writers of her time (Adams "Shape" 116; Auchincloss 3). J. Donald Adams compares her with Willa Cather, Ellen Glasgow, and Pearl S. Buck because her heroines depict the "triumph of the individual over circumstances" (116). Louis Auchincloss agrees with Adams, noting that Roberts, Sarah Orne Jewett, Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, and Willa Cather are "not as dark" as most of their male counterparts (i.e., Dreiser, Lewis, Faulkner and O'Neill) and further asserts that the "common denominator" of these women writers is that they display "the very essence of the romantic concept of the American dream" (3,5). Willard Thorp also groups Roberts with Jewett and Cather, explaining that they are alike in their creation of a "right tone" or "relationship" with their characters, one in which they affirm the worth of the individual (240). Rouse notes this same characteristic in Roberts as he describes how she, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and, again, Ellen Glasgow, all make "time and place of the utmost significance" as they describe the dignity of the lives of the poor whites of the American South (144). McDowell points to Roberts' preoccupation with the inner lives of characters and the "symbolic implications of experience" as reminiscent of "Hawthorne and Melville," but also views her work as anticipatory of the "analytical and psychological bent . . . of . . . Faulkner, Wolfe, Warren, Welty, and Gordon" (7-8). He suggests, however, that Roberts' closest affinity may be with Virginia Woolf because both writers share a style that is "allusive, poetic, and symbolic," as well as a "fascination with the inner lives of . . . heroines, sometimes at the expense of their reality as social beings" (8).

McDowell continues by noting Roberts' deep interest in the "nuances of mental

life" (8) — an aspect of her work which merits continued study as evidenced by the repetitive and dramatic creation of strong heroines who deal successfully with issues such as rape, miscegenation, adultery, abandonment, betrayal, child-rearing, child-loss, family inter-dependence, self-understanding, work, and friendship. In addition, Roberts' concern with "mental life" is also expressed in notes left in her papers. In The Library of Congress collection is a scrap of paper labeled, "Psychological"; it reads: "Every creature is, first of all and last of all, interested in himself. We experience life deeply, realize it, when we feel alive, awake" (Box 9). She also writes an explanation of the title of her first book of short stories, The Haunted Mirror. Roberts explains, "The Haunted Mirror is the human mind, in the illusions of which [are] seen a reflection of reality" (Library of Congress Box 9). Another fragmentary essay reads:

Consciousness, reasoning powers, the understanding, even the will - all these may be illusions, as a sturdy group of psychologists will maintain,- illusions founded on images visual for the greater part which pay [sic] outward from the desires. In poverty, in mind-sickness . . . in wrecked illusions . . . the artist is always on the side of man in conflict, fighting with and for him.

(Library of Congress Box 4)

Roberts here seems to be not only interested in how the human mind perceives reality but also in an artistic identification with those whose perceptions may place them in conflict with self or community.

Closely related to Roberts' interest in psychology and the many still relevant social issues explored in her work, is an intense interest in theology and philosophy, as well. In connecting Roberts' interest in these areas, F. Lamar Janney states that the writer explores the "quintessence of human personality" which he defines in Roberts' own words as "the will to believe, to live, to hate evil, to gather power out of emotion . .

the will to love God the Creator" (qtd. in Janney 403). Her interest in the articulation of the will then becomes foundational, resting at the heart of her interest in both man and God. John J. Murphy in his essay, "Elizabeth Madox Roberts and the Civilizing Consciousness," calls this interest "a double infinity, the infinity outside the self leading to the infinity within." Murphy explains this by stating that in Roberts' economy (using Thomas Hall as mouthpiece in The Great Meadow), it is necessary for each individual to "understand and interpret the events of history and the laws of nature to discover among them his place in the universal plan" (113). Slavik also notes the importance of history in the author's work and points to this element as anticipatory of the work of Faulkner and Warren ("Journey" xviii). Roberts, thus, in adopting the philosophical and theological idealism of Bishop Berkeley, is interested in artistically exploring the way the mind orders and interprets experience in order to individually pattern meaning from it and to attempt to understand "the hidden purposes of the Author of all things" (Great Meadow 115).

Hence, to study the work of Roberts "deeply and more deeply" (Library of Congress Box 4), the task may be enriched by attention to a number of disciplines which can influence literary analysis -- linguistics, psychology, history, women's studies, theology, philosophy, and, of course, the one area on which this text will concentrate, music. The study of Roberts' writing is obviously rich and multi-faceted; the work is not "broken," as Clifton Fadiman proclaimed it in 1941 ("Books" 68); it deserves renewed attention.

Roberts' lifelong interest in many types of music, one of the most constant of her pursuits [Campbell and Foster write that during her last months, 'music was a continual and long solace to her' (78)], is the one part of her personal life and experience that was constantly made evident in the texts of the novels, short stories, and

poems. She was both a pianist and a vocalist (Spears 114), whose interest in and knowledge of classical, folk, sacred, and popular music is evident in the many references to it within her works, as well as in her notes, papers, and letters where there are countless copied lyrics, musical images, and allusions to her interest. Extant at St. Catharine College is the aforementioned large, eclectic collection of sheet music for the piano as well as the ballad collection by Josephine McGill used as a resource by the author and mentioned by her in notes located in The Library of Congress collection (Box 9). Among the ballads found copied by Roberts in her papers at The Library of Congress, are such titles as, "How Moss Caught His Mare," "Lord Lovel," "Lord Thomas," "The Cherry Tree," "The Greenwood Side," "Bangum and the Boar," "Sweet William," "The Fisherman's Wife and the Mere-Maiden," "Water," "Blue-Eyed Mary," "Will You Come to the Bower?" "Ballad of Susan Dow," "Old Virginny," and "There Was a Water With Ships." In addition, she mentions in notes "the power and persuasion that arises from music" and "the need for some harmonious plan by which to live" (Box 9). One interesting page attempts to render the songs of birds (a prevailing presence in Roberts texts) onomatopoeically; for example, Roberts writes: "Cardinal . . . ' wet shoes, wet,wet,wet,wet, shoes'" (Box 9). Also extant are notes on the composers Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. She calls Beethoven "a prophet" who "chiseled slowly" and Schubert the "Shelley and Keats of music" (Box 9).

Many critics and scholars have noted Roberts' affinity for music and have commented on what a reviewer of My Heart and My Flesh called "a song quality in Miss Roberts' prose (News Tribune, n.p.; Filson Club Box 2), and Woodridge Spears referred to as "the singing quality which people associate with poetry" (170) In an attempt to define this "lyric" style (Knickerbocker 105), Alexander Buchan refers to it as a "crescendo-diminuendo" with each phrase containing an "inner cadence" based in part

on “obvious tricks of the ballad” where a “four stress beat” is combined with “long incremental repetition end[ing] in a few crisp words” (469-470, 471, 473). Buchan uses the following passage from The Time of Man as an illustration:

You're worth all the balance put alongside each other . . . You're worth all the balance and to spare. You got the very honey of life in your heart . . . To-day I says to myself . . . I says, 'She's got the honey of life in her heart.'

(qtd. in Buchan 476)

Grant C. Knight also discusses what he calls “the tonality of her prose” but considers this quality of Roberts’ work as only one part of what he terms the “symphonic” elements in the novels (13). Knight includes thematic development and “the transition from adagio to finale” as added characteristics (13). McDowell also notes “successive climaxes” in structure (particularly in The Time of Man) which he likens to classical music (38). Mary Ross notes this same quality in My Heart and My Flesh which she describes as “mov[ing] with the rhythmic beat of a great symphony” (18). In The Shape of Books to Come, J. Donald Adams calls “symphonic structure . . . traceable in all Roberts’ work” (130). Like other writers who describe this element in Roberts’ novels, Adams omits application of his theory to particular fiction, but agreeing with Knight, does note an intrinsic design in the author’s novels characterized by “use of recurrent and interwoven theme, rise to high emotional pitch, and closing chords of conflict resolved into peace and hope” (130).

In his essay, “The Sexuality of History,” Lewis P. Simpson adds insight into Roberts’ use of music. He suggests that the novel, Black is My Truelove’s Hair, attempts to “recover the balladic world” through an identification of its principal character, Dena James, with both the earth and an “intimacy with history” (802). It seems that in identifying a link between music, earth, and history, Simpson has discovered an

important facet of Roberts' aesthetic, which he tacitly identifies, though his essay is not overtly concerned with music. This link, present to a degree in each novel, is clearly articulated in the poem, "Conversations Beside a Stream," from the volume, Song in the Meadow, in which Roberts creates a unique version of American history by connecting significant events and people not only to the land but to the songs that epitomize their lives, values, or eras. For example, one segment treats George Washington and identifies him with the song, "Yankee Doodle"; another segment discusses the "Two great songs in America," the epic *Moby Dick* and The Declaration of Independence (76,79). The poet asserts near the end of the work that "the growth of Song" parallels "the growth of State," asserting that "state" or history is not possible without an accompanying articulation through music. This would suggest the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley, adopted by Roberts in her belief that the only reality or causal power possible is to be found within the perceptions of the human mind (Jessop 105), since in Roberts' economy, in this poem, the creative/artistic mind of the musician plays an important role in the creation of a political reality (i.e., American history) because it molds and influences the collective perception of historical events. Hence, when Roberts writes in "Conversations Beside a Stream," that "the truth of a Song is the truth of another thing" (79), she declares her belief that music (which celebrates truth in its own right), should also point the reader beyond the immediate song toward a deeper and more abstract truth.

Mark Van Doren was correct when he called Roberts an "epistemologist" -- one who is "less interested in what we know than in how we know it" (100). Certainly, Roberts' own words support Van Doren's statement. The writer herself defines truth as "the permanent relation between stuff and idea . . . the mirroring of the form that belongs to both mind and matter" (Library of Congress Box 8). For her, music is truth

because it comes as close as possible to joining thought ("mind") to a tangible manifestation of mind -- sound. In the novel, My Heart and My Flesh, Roberts writes of her central character, Theodosia Bell, "Her fingers were little brains secreting the music of thought" (77). In this statement, Roberts affirms the power of music to be the form that unites mind and matter. By metaphorically describing the musician's fingers as conduits for observable thought (music), the writer suggests the unique function of music to form a bridge between the realms of the concrete and the abstract.

Roberts' interest in music as this bridge leading from observable phenomena toward "the truth of another thing," also informs her definition of music and aids in an understanding of the nature of what was, for Roberts, music's deeper truth. In her notes, the author explains the guiding principle behind her unique perception of the world : "A sense I choose which recognizes 'shape' in things - in the flow of words, experiences, music, objects placed" (Library of Congress Box 9). This idea of the importance of "shape," "pattern," or form, controls Roberts' work in its entirety. However, to understand her link between pattern, music, and truth, it is important to begin with one of Roberts' clearest statements of literary theory:

There is finally and at first, last and first, the aesthetic requirement, the design to be completed . . . one cannot avoid the demand. Some ultimate and fit design beyond all the uses of the mind, some necessity inherent in human works, calls for consummation. Shall we say the "categorical aesthetic"? It is meaning from beyond life. The hand of God writing on the walls of the cosmos.

(Library of Congress Box 9)

In another statement, she further defines her understanding of the term "cosmos" as she asserts: "When I say cosmos I do not mean a philosophical cosmos, the old completed and set, fixed cosmos of history - I mean I relate it to pattern - to the

Something" (Box 9). (Capitalization and underlining are the author's.) So, it seems for Roberts, "design," "pattern," and "shape" are markers pointing beyond man and into the eternal. This equation of "pattern" with "the Something," thus clarifies and elevates the meaning and importance of music in Roberts' work as she declares: "Music is pattern in motion" (Library of Congress Box 4), or "Pattern in motion . . . and that gives music" (Library of Congress Box 8). Roberts' belief that music is related to the sacred then further clarifies her belief that "the truth of a song is the truth of another thing." For her, the other "thing" is the pattern behind creation - "the hand of God writing on the wall."

The remainder of this study will explore the ways in which Roberts uses particular aspects, works, and types of music both as an inspiration and model for the structure of her novels and as a device through which she can explore her beliefs about an orderly universe -- one in which music epitomizes the breaking-through of the spiritual into the temporal realm.

Roberts' uses of classical music, popular music, folk music, sacred music, and the music found in nature will be explored. One way Elizabeth Madox Roberts incorporates classical music and popular music into her novels is by creating plots which parallel the movements of specific symphonies, symphonic structure in general, and the structure of the American musical comedy of her day (McDowell 38-39; "An Interview" 10; Knight 13). Thus, Chapter Two of this study, "The Influence of Music on the Structure of the Novels," will discuss what the author called the "musical form" of The Time of Man, her "symphony brought into words" (Library of Congress Box 4; McDowell 38-39), and the relationships she suggested between the novels, My Heart and My Flesh, and A Buried Treasure and Beethoven's Ninth and Sixth Symphonies, respectively (Knight 13).

Chapter Two will continue with an exploration of the relationship of Jingling in the Wind to the structure of the musical comedy, as the author indicated was her intent in a February 24, 1929, interview in the Louisville Courier Journal.

Finally, the second chapter will include a discussion of what Robert Penn Warren ("Within" xxix) has called the "lyricism" of her language -- the basic sentence and paragraph structure which may be described as antiphonal, repetitive, parallel, and rhythmic (Buchan 464-465; Lyon 1; Slavik "Journey" xiv-xv).

Chapter Two will conclude by noting that Black is My Truelove's Hair, is also structured around a musical form -- the folk ballad. This aspect of the novel will be discussed fully in Chapter Four.

The purpose of Chapter Three, "The Music of Nature," will be to connect Roberts with one facet of the romantic tradition by demonstrating how the musical sounds she finds in nature (especially that of birds) appear in each of the novels to underscore the emotional states of characters, to highlight major and minor themes, and to emphasize Roberts' beliefs in the unity of all life and the cyclical nature of all experience. William H. Slavik notes Roberts' acknowledgement of (among others) Hardy and Synge as her "masters" because of their depiction of "man's life [as] inseparable from the natural world," and "the experience of union with nature" ("Journey" x, xi). This study will also connect her to the Wordsworthian tradition (Fadiman "Black" 69; Knickerbocker 104,106), and will refer the work of Roger Murray to help explain the connection between Wordsworth's desire to bridge the gap between the concrete and abstract and Roberts' attempt to use music to do the same.

Chapter Four, "The Music of the Folk," will discuss the uses of the folk ballad and secular music in Roberts' novels and in the prose-poem, "Conversations Beside a Stream," from Song in the Meadow. Identification of often- repeated ballads will be

made, and, when possible, Roberts' sources will be noted. Characteristics of Roberts' balladeers will be analyzed, with special emphasis given to Ellen Chesser, Ab Elliott, and Evan Muir. The ballad or song will primarily be discussed as a medium to reflect or foreshadow events, motifs, or thematic concerns in each novel. For example, The Great Meadow begins with the singing of the ballad, "The Golden Vanity," which tells of a ship sailing for "North Amer-i-kee," loneliness, the travails of travel, and of a father's unwillingness to give his daughter in marriage (1). All of these elements are of significance in the novel which follows. Additionally, discussion will be given to the relationship between the plot structure of Black is My Truelove's Hair and the narrative found in the folk ballad of the same name.

Chapter Five, "Music as Sacrament," will explore Roberts' use of the sacred music of the Protestant tradition and the liturgy of the Catholic Church as they appear in the novels and in the short stories, "The Sacrifice of the Maidens," and "Death at Bearwallow." Roberts' interest in the Catholic tradition will be examined.

Other instances of Roberts' use of sacred music are to be found in My Heart and My Flesh, He Sent Forth a Raven, and Black is My Truelove's Hair, novels which will be examined in order to explore Roberts' both positive and negative attitudes toward the church and its music. In addition, the poems "Night and Storm," and "In the Chapel" (Song 20,67) will be discussed as indicative of Roberts' conflicting opinions about the church. The manuscript of The Great Meadow will also be utilized in order to explore Roberts' attitude toward the persuasive, emotional aspects of Protestant revivalism. Significant passages from Roberts' papers which reflect her theological beliefs will also be discussed.

This study will also note the importance of two selections (a poem and an essay) to an understanding of the interrelationship between the sacred and the secular which so

informs all of Roberts' work. It is an analysis of this interrelationship which will provide a conclusion to this study. The first selection discussed will be a poem, (unpublished, Library of Congress Box 9), which concludes with a description of the darkness of the world, "orbed with sound," but affirms in it "a Jesus of gentle connections" . . . the author's bridge between reality (the physical world) and idea (the imagination). The second passage is from a short essay in the Library of Congress papers (Box 9), which illuminates Roberts' use of music and its significance to her. In this fragment, she moves from a description of her garden as a "symphony" to a clear affirmation of music and nature as representatives of the divine pattern or structure by which she believes the cosmos is governed. A close analysis of the essay will follow with a closing discussion of how it exemplifies Roberts' belief in the function of all music and art to point beyond itself and into the infinite -- a concept she describes as the "categorical aesthetic" (Library of Congress Box 9).

Chapter II

"I Follow a Form":

The Influence of Music on the Structure of the Novels

In describing the process of writing The Time of Man, Elizabeth Madox Roberts wrote: "I follow a form -- a musical form" (Library of Congress Box 9). In an exploration of the meaning of this statement, it is well to begin with a definition of the term *form*, as it applies to both music and literature. In his book, Music and Literature, A Comparison of the Arts, Calvin S. Brown defines the term as synonymous with structural pattern, "as in a fugue or Italian sonnet" (128). That Roberts' underlying "form" or structural pattern for her first novel was the symphony is made clear in her notes; she writes: "The Time of Man is a symphony brought into words . . . at its root, its inception, it might have taken musical form" (qtd. in McDowell 39). In her notes, Roberts further clarifies the structure of The Time of Man by naming or describing six distinct divisions within the novel. She identifies these divisions as: [Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are Roberts'.]

- I. A Genesis . . She comes into the Land . . But the land rejects her . . She remembers Eden (Tessie).
- II. She grows into the land, takes soil or root. Life tries her . . lapses in loveliness . . is the not-lover of Trent.
- III. Expands with all the Land . . .
- IV. The first blossoming
- V. Withdrawal . . and sinking back into the earth.
- VI. Flowering out of stone (Library of Congress Box 9)

Since the novel has ten chapters, it is clear that Roberts' divisions do not correspond exactly to the chapters of the work, but as Louis Auchincloss states, they do correspond "to the symphonic movements of her idea of the story" (125). Roberts acknowledged "Beethoven's symphonies" as a major influence on her work (Slavik "Journey" x); however, it is to be noted that his symphonies typically contain four movements, rather than six (Cuyler 50). Possibly, Roberts' six sections may be explained, in part, by considering the sonata form, which Rose Fay Thomas asserts, is "the basis of all symphonic writing" (xi), and is evidenced by Beethoven's use of it in at least one movement of each of his nine symphonies (Moore and Heger 10-45).

Thomas identifies six sections of the sonata and classifies them thematically, with sections one and two providing an introduction or exposition [presentation of themes]; section three developing the major theme; sections four and five recapitulating [restating] previously introduced themes, and section six functioning as a coda, or formal closing (xi). Clearly, as the Harvard Dictionary of Music explains, "the sonata form is the most characteristic movement form in instrumental music from the Classical period to the 20th century" and occurs in a wide variety of musical genres, including the symphony. It is to be noted, however, that today sonata form is not considered a "rigid, prescriptive mold" (Randel 764), as Thomas' explanation of the form would indicate; rather, it is quite flexible, and, in actuality, requires only three sections -- the exposition, development, and recapitulation, but may contain an introduction and coda, as well (Randel 765). In the past, the sonata form [especially, the Romantic sonata form, which was greatly influenced by Beethoven (Randel 766)] was primarily viewed as "a vehicle for the presentation of themes" (Randel 767; Thomas xi), and this is most likely what Elizabeth Madox Roberts had in mind when she wrote that it was her intention for Chapters or Sections I and II of The Time of Man to

serve as an “overture” or introduction and for Chapter 10 (Section VI of the same novel) to serve as a coda (Library of Congress Box 9). However, sonata form is approached differently by musical theorists today who study its structure not only in terms of “thematic order” (exposition, development, and recapitulation), but are also students of its “harmonic form,” -- a term that refers to the key changes within the structure of sonata form (Ratner 194; 198). As Ratner explains in Music: The Listener's Art, it is important to note that in sonata form, the harmonic and thematic or dramatic forms may have a parallel relationship. For example, in the recapitulation section of a sonata, the section in which the work's “themes [are] restated,” it is common for the sonata to return to the key in which it began” (194). Thus, while it is necessary to keep in mind the current importance of harmonic form in the study of the sonata, and to realize that it is not a “rigid, prescriptive mold” (Randel 764) with each musical work in the genre employing an identical structure, it is also important to realize that since Elizabeth Madox Roberts' was attempting to use the symphony and/or the sonata as the structural basis for novels, as was her habit, and as the necessity of such a project might dictate, she was consistent in her adherence to her model, as she perceived it. For example, there are no discrepancies between her notes concerning the structure of The Time of Man and the completed novel, and the relationship between the thematic structure of the novel and sonata form is clear enough for parallels to be drawn. The following chart may aid in an understanding of the relationship between both the novel's section and chapter structures as well as the how sonata form may function as a structuring device. The titles of the novel's six sections are here abbreviated from Roberts' notes as reproduced on page 50 of this study. Page numbers are in parentheses.

CHAPTER	SECTION	CORRESPONDENCE TO SONATA FORM
1 (1-56)	I. A Genesis	presentation of major themes
2 (57-96)	II. She grows	presentation of major themes
3 (97-122)	III. Expands with all the land	development of major themes
4 (123-160)	IV. The first blossoming	development of major themes
5-9 (161-353)	V. Withdrawal	restatement of major themes
10 (354-382)	VI. Flowering	coda, or formal closing

One basic characteristic shared by both sonata form and the structure of The Time of Man is that of the restatement or recapitulation of previously introduced themes, a characteristic that may also be identified as “repetition with variations,” and which Brown describes as “basic to both literature and music” (128). J. Donald Adams describes this same quality in his discussion of Roberts’ intention “to bring to her novels something of symphonic structure” and notes this use of “recurrent and interwoven themes” as that which connects her work most closely to the structural forms of the symphony and/or the sonata (Adams Shape 130). Interestingly, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was not the only novelist of her era to attempt to write novels patterned after symphonies. Andre Gide’s 1919 work, La Symphonie pastorale, and Paul Emil Cadilhac’s novels L’Heroique (1921) and La Pastorale (1924) involved a similar attempt. In his preface to La Pastorale, Cadilhac wrote, “Themes are the basis for a symphonic novel. Musically, themes are the dominating ideas of a work -- its framework” (qtd. in Brown 174). Significantly, the important themes of The Time of Man are all introduced in the first two chapters.

Roberts has called Chapters I and II of the novel an “overture . . . containing as they do, all of it in the end” (Library of Congress Box 9). She is, of course, referring,

in general terms, to a musical overture, which may serve as an introduction to a composition's major themes. As such, this "overture" also comprises Sections I and II of the novel, what Roberts terms, "Genesis" and "Growing into the Land," the first ninety-six pages. The final section of the novel (Chapter 10, pages 354-382) also has the nature of an overture, "containing all of it," Roberts notes as she explains how this last section reflects the first, as in her words, it "mounts again in shadowy reminiscence of first youthful glow" (Library of Congress Box 9). In Section I, the most significant theme of the novel is introduced as the central character, Ellen Chesser, grows and discovers the inner beauty of self through the simple understanding that she is truly alive in a passage from the novel which Roberts refers to as expressing "an exalted experience of rapture in being" (Library of Congress Box 9):

'It's no known how lovely I am. I'm a-liven. My heart beats on and on and my skin laps around me and my blood runs up and it runs down, shut in me. It's unknown how lovely.' (90)

This same feeling returns to Ellen in the novel's final section and chapter, "Flowering out of stone." This unusual section title can be explained by Elizabeth Madox Roberts' note on a page in her papers labeled simply, "Plan." The author explains therein that this last part of The Time of Man is to be "seen through the medium of the children," and that it is about how "emerging from the dust, indestructible, the children begin to flower" (Library of Congress Box 9). In Chapter VI, Ellen is told by the itinerant orchard planter, Luke Wimble, that she has "the honey of life in her heart" (366), a pronouncement she implicitly accepts. Roberts calls the passage in Section I in which Ellen "delight[s] in . . . and assert[s] life over death" by proclaiming, "I'm a-liven," a "dance of life" (Library of Congress Box 9). Echoing this, in Chapter VI, Ellen quite literally gives evidence of the joy in living that remains part of her as she joins in a

dance and sees her own shadow as the "shadow of a girl with slim ankles and straight round thighs and supple shoulders" (363). Importantly, Ellen's response to this moonlight dance, which makes her "blood run like cold liquid silver," is to sing (363).

The first and last sections of the novel are further linked by Ellen's strong feelings for her mother, expressed in Section I in her fear at the thought of separation, and in the final section in her belief that "her mother's life merged into her own" (368). Additionally, Tessie, the friend Ellen so longs for in Section I, is remembered by the mature Ellen in Section VI (Chapter X), as she considers her life-long desire to be re-united with her friend but acknowledges that after so many years they might meet and not even recognize each other. A further thematic parallel between Sections I and VI appears as Ellen's son, Dick, in the "Flowering out of stone" section, echoes his mother's deep and early longing for books and knowledge. When, in Section VI, Dick exclaims, "I want books to know", Ellen understands his need. Roberts writes: "His want . . . [came] upon her [Ellen] as something she knew already, had always known" (374).

Another significant thematic parallel between Sections I and VI occurs in the recovery from social rejection experienced by Ellen in both parts of the novel. In Section I, Joe Trent, a young man Ellen likes, tells her, "I don't want you, lousy brat. I wouldn't tech your lousy rags" (63), a phrase that becomes a refrain throughout the first section of the novel but is eventually replaced in Ellen's mind with the concept, "It's no knowen how lovely I am. I'm a-liven" (90), a phrase Roberts describes as expressive of "a feeling or sensation," or a kind of "rapture" (Library of Congress Box 9). In Section VI, the theme of recovery from rejection again appears as Ellen's husband, Jasper, is falsely accused of barn-burning and beaten by a Klan-like mob. Ellen, in response, drives off the men, cares for Jasper, and helps to formulate a plan

for the family to move. Both Sections I and VI conclude, not with a final solution to the problem of continued social rejection, but with affirmation that the problem can be handled courageously within the family unit.

Section III of The Time of Man, titled "Expands with all the land," is a short section, corresponding with Chapter 3 (pages 97-122). In terms of the structure of the sonata, it represents a developmental portion of the novel, one in which major themes are explored. In this section, Ellen Chesser is eighteen years old, and early in the section her life is consumed with farm work -- raising turkeys and milking cows. Slowly, however, as spring approaches, she becomes aware, through the influence of music, that life has more to offer her than mere drudgery. Ellen's interest in music is well-established in Section I as she sings, hears reflectively, and remembers such songs and ballads as "O, Brother Andrew," "The New-Cut Road," "The Greenwood Side," "Fair Elender," "The Banks of the Wabash," "The Sands o' Dee," "The Carolina Dove," "Bangum and the Boar," and "Liddy Marget." Additionally, she is sensitive to the musical sounds and rhythms of her world. The rain "a-dripen on the floor" of the Chesser's "poor trash house" is "a fair sound" (3); in setting tobacco, she catches "the rhythm of her task" (6); the "cackling of hens" is "a high fluted sound" (8); blackbirds "chime" (13,41); "frogs and crickets sing . . ." (49); she finds "words on her lips" to fit the rhythmic gait of horses" (71); and the "jingle" of a wagon causes her to "repeat . . . songs" (72). Thus, in Chapter III, the reader is well-prepared for the influence of music to be the catalyst when Ellen first feels a desire for a world outside her own farmyard. As she sleeps and dreamily responds to guitar music coming from a player walking down a nearby road, Roberts writes: "Ellen had not known that such a thing could be -- full-throated chords falling quick and strong, beautiful, breaking in upon dreams, rising out of the muddy pasture" (107). This section ends

with Ellen making friends with Dorine Wheatley, a girl of "much . . . grace and much music" (110) and attending a local party where she herself entertains the group by singing, the fulfillment of a desire she expresses in Section I when she hides in some weeds to listen to a group of people singing as they pass near her and thinks, "Men and women have pretty singing . . . I wish I could sing like that" (46).

Section IV of The Time of Man, titled, "The first blossoming," begins with Chapter IV (page 123) and continues through page 161. It, like Section III, provides thematic development for the novel. This section concludes at the point in the action just before Cassie MacMurtrie's suicide. This is clear from Roberts' notes in which she identifies the episode of the "hanged woman" as belonging to Section V of the novel (Library of Congress Box 9). In his discussion of the structure of The Time of Man in Herald to Chaos, Earl Rovit states that Sections I through IV of the novel correspond to the first four chapters of the work, that Chapters V, VI, and VII make up the fifth section, and that Chapters VIII, IX, and X, comprise the sixth and final division. This study agrees with Rovit that the first four chapters correspond to Roberts' first four section titles, comprising in terms of the sonata form the presentation and development of major themes (Thomas xi). It, however, seems obvious that the recapitulation section of the novel, beginning with Chapter V and the death of Cassie MacMurtrie, is not fully completed thematically until the closing of Chapter IX with the death of Chick, who is foreshadowed in the phantom child of Chapter IV and who symbolizes, in part, Ellen's conflict with her husband, Jasper, for which Chick is the agent of resolution. That the death of Chick (at the end of Chapter IX) was intended to conclude a major section of the novel is further evidenced by Roberts' Library of Congress notes labelled, "Plan." This page obviously describes an early plan for the novel because it mentions unrealized sections about the ancestors of Jasper and a character named Julia Pike. However, it

does clearly suggest that the death of Chick is to be a climactic event of the novel, as Roberts writes, "Sweep then forward to the death of Chick," and continues by ending a major division of the page with "The death of Chick" (Library of Congress 9).

Additionally, Roberts clarifies in her notes that Section VI, "Flowering out of stone," is reminiscent "of first youthful glow" and contains "dancing" and the story of "the man who knew the trees," who "felt the power of her [Ellen]" (Library of Congress Box 9), all of which are clearly elements of Chapter X alone. As such, Chapter X provides, in terms of the sonata form, a coda. Thus, it seems that Rovit's plan for explaining how Roberts' six-section division of the novel may be best understood within the framework of its ten chapters does not take into account all of the notes in which Roberts indicates the pattern behind The Time of Man's deeper structure.

Roberts has described Section IV of the novel as concerning the "high pitch of youth . . . wealth of friends . . . merry making," and "life observed in the minute" (Library of Congress Box 9). Certainly, the first part of this section (pages 123-135), comprises a description of Ellen's joy in friendships with other young people in her community as they flirt, talk, sing, take walks, go to church, and dance. Roberts writes that Ellen is "filled with an inner sweetness" (133) and feels as though she is "the musical core" of the growing affection between her friends, Dorine and Elmer (135). The author describes this "high pitch of youth" in musical terms as she writes of the lovers, Dorine and Elmer, and by extension, Ellen and her friends: "It was as if they sang a come-hither-come-hither to all the summer and all the country side" (135).

Section IV, however, introduces a motif about the dangers of illicit sexuality, which, in this portion of the novel, is juxtaposed against and softened by the happiness of first love but foreshadows the break-up of Jonas and Ellen and the later deaths of both Cassie MacMurtrie and Ellen's son, Chick. In the introduction of these important

elements into the novel, Chapter/Section IV continues, in terms of the sonata form, the portion of the work, which combined with Section III, further develops or explores the novel's major themes and motifs. This motif of illicit sexuality is first introduced in, again, musical terms, as Ellen hears:

. . . the whippoorwills cry out their songs . . . songs more mournful than
all sorrow . . . repeating with monotonous cry a loss incurred over and over
. . . of the endless futility of nests and litters fathered and mothered to be
the prey of some other futile kind. (136)

This "futility of nests and litters," refers, in part, to Jonas's guilt and shame, which he shares with Ellen in Section IV, over his fathering of a child by the prostitute, Jule Nestor, a woman he describes as "dirty, inside and out" (156). Ellen later realizes that Jonas's shame causes their estrangement, driving him to "Sallie Lou because she had not seen him in the first hours of his suffering" (202). In addition, the suicide of Cassie MacMurtrie is foreshadowed in Section IV as Ellen learns of Cassie's husband's affair with Amanda Cain and imagines a child born of that union as "a phantom . . . having a slim long face and a mouth that shut into a thin line," and who "haunted the barn" and "would catch the lizards . . . and eat away their lank sides" (139). In Ellen's mind, the cry of this "phantom" child merges with the song of the whippoorwill, and so as she hears the bird's song, it is like "the lonely quiver and lash" of "a thong" (139). This image of the lash also introduces the motif of beating or whipping, which figures prominently in Chapter X when Ellen's husband, Jasper Kent, is accused of barn-burning and beaten by a mob. The word lash itself is repeated three times in the description of Jasper's beating in Chapter X (375,376). The two episodes, Ellen's imagining of the "phantom child" and Jasper's beating, are related in their depiction of Ellen's reaction to the sins of others. The betrayal of Cassie MacMurtrie by her husband,

Scott with Amanda Cain, then parallels the illicit behavior of Jonas Prather (which alters and then ends his relationship with Ellen), Jasper Kent's affair with Hester, and Ellen's dismay in Chapter X when her husband is beaten. These episodes are connected because each event in which Ellen is forced to face the consequences of wrong-doing finds her growing stronger, an important concept in Roberts' structuring of the novel, which she describes as "a book founded upon additions," her meaning and purpose being to develop the character of Ellen slowly and "cumulatively," so that each successive crisis adds wisdom to her character (Rovit Herald 16). As she reacts to Scott and Amanda, she feels it is "a sour pain" (138) and a secret she will never tell; when confronted with Jonas's story of his illegitimate child, she faces the truth but denies that it will affect their relationship; when, however, she confronts the mob that is beating her husband, she is able to act with courage as she curses them "with a blasting prediction that they would never forget . . . that they would remember it in dying" (376). The one experience that enables Ellen to finally face such evil with courage and force is a repetition of Section IV's motif of the "futility of nests" and is also related to the image of Amanda Cain's "phantom child." In Chapter IX (Section V), Ellen's husband, Jasper Kent, has an affair with Hester Shuck, yet cruelly and falsely accuses Ellen of carrying Joe Phillips' child and threatens to leave her. Ellen firmly responds to Jasper's intentions to leave her as well as "gouge his [Joe's] heart outen his body and empty out his body of guts" and "tear his brains outen his skull" (347). She uses this occasion to remind Jasper that he is "wedded up tight" and affirms that she will sell her cow and use that money and her small savings in order to bail him out of jail, if necessary. The child born out of this period of hatred and conflict is Chick, who like Amanda's "phantom" child of Chapter IV, is "thin" with a "bony face" and a "long protruding skull" (347). For Ellen, the frail and ill Chick embodies a kind of "futility" as she

struggles to understand her feelings for him, which range from "hatred" to "a fervor of tenderness" (351). Her sense of futility is also fueled by the sacrifices she makes for Chick -- money spent for blankets, medicine, food, and her never-ending work.

However, Ellen acknowledges in the death of Chick, a child who also symbolizes the complexities of her feelings for Jasper, that Chick is truly hers as she says, "But he's mine and always was. I earned him all for myself" (353). Here, in understanding her role as Chick's mother, Ellen accepts responsibility for the life of another in a way she could not when she was asked in Chapter IV to testify concerning the truth about Cassie MacMurtrie's death. She understands now that she is fully an integral part of the life and death of another human being. This knowledge then enables her to later accept blows to her own body as she fights off the mob that attacks Jasper, name the attackers (as she could not name Amanda Cain), and finally, as she did earlier at Chick's death, accept solely the responsibility of caring for Jasper ["It was her own matter" (377)], and to feel "pride in her own" in doing so (376).

As noted earlier, Section V, "Withdrawal and sinking back into the earth" (Chapters V-IX), comprises, in terms of the sonata's form, the portion of the novel that parallels the sonata's recapitulation or restatement of previously introduced themes -- in this instance, the dangers of illicit behavior, the "phantom child" theme, and the acceptance of responsibility.

In addition, this longest section of The Time of Man also reiterates the novel's central theme of man's "indestructible . . . creative power, wonder at the earth," and "oneness with life" (Library of Congress Box 9). However, in crisis, Ellen Chesser often experiences thoughts of violence as she works her way toward affirmation of self and acceptance of circumstances. Thus, a motif of violence (often involving knives and cutting or stabbing) is interwoven with Ellen's "dances of life" (Library of Congress

Box 9). Clearly, this juxtaposition of Ellen's impulse for violence with her joy in living represents what Roberts calls Ellen's "delight in life and assertion of life over death," the major theme of the novel (Library of Congress Box 9). The theme of a recovery from violent impulses is first seen in the novel in Chapter I when Ellen remembers the fights of Connie and Screw. She remembers how Connie threatens to kill Screw with her razor but instead washes his clothes while singing a sentimental song (14). Ellen first experiences violent emotions herself when her mother, Nellie, tells her that she cannot go to find her friend, Tessie. Roberts writes: "Ellen wanted to plunge the knife she held in her hand into the bent head" (19); however, by the next morning, she is tearful and "subdued" (20). When, in Section V, Ellen loses her first love, Jonas, a similar pattern occurs. Ellen vows to kill Jonas, to "stab him with her knife" (214); however, after identifying with Cassie MacMurtrie's grief, she realizes that rather than resorting to violence, she wishes only to "push aside the old event . . . and be what she was before" (219). Hence, she is able to again sense a "oneness with life" (9) as she realizes that despite her pain, she is "still herself": "I'm Ellen Chesser. And I'm here, in myself" (220). This same theme of the "assertion of life over death" occurs again in the novel in the Hester Shuck episode of Section V. When Ellen learns of Jasper's unfaithfulness, she thinks of going "to the thicket with a knife in her hand" to kill Hester (335). However, interestingly, it is not just Hester's seduction of Jasper that angers Ellen, but it is Hester's recipe for getting rid of an unwanted baby that causes Ellen to think of her as "a sow" and "bestial" (342): " ' a sharp crack on the head with a stick of stovewood and bury it along with the chicken guts and feathers out behind the ash hopper' " (342). Thus, Hester's total disregard for life stands in bold contrast to Ellen's nurturing of her son Chick. In Section V, Ellen is only able to recover from the hatred and desire for violence engendered by Hester Shuck as she remembers the experience (recorded in

Section I) of standing in the cemetery as a girl and rejoicing in an assertion of life and self with the words, "I'm a-liven" (94). Roberts explains that Ellen:

remembered . . . a hill grave where the sun had poured over a white marble shaft and where she had sung of life with a great shout, and she turned upon that picture the whole of her questioning pain and begged of it for life for her child, as if she would pray that hour to take from herself half, even all, and give it to him. (350)

In this prayer of sacrifice, Ellen's maturity is complete as she expresses her desire to give her life in exchange for Chick's. Here Ellen's development has reached its climax, and from this point in the novel forward into Chapter X, Ellen's life becomes both fully individual and fully subsumed in the lives of her husband and children, demonstrating what Rovit calls Roberts' "faith in the potency of the human spirit" (Rovit Herald 16; 25). Ellen is fully individual in her enjoyment of the dance and her friendship with Luke Wimble, yet her belief that there is a better way and place for her children and her assertion of faithfulness to Jasper point to her willingness to sacrifice for them, as well. Ellen has every reason to despair in the concluding pages of the novel as she and her family are forced to move again after the attack on Jasper. The Kent family leaves Rock Creek with no particular destination in mind, but Ellen guides the group with hope by affirming that they will find "Some better country. Our own place maybe . . . Our own land sometime. Our place to keep . . ." (382). The novel thus ends, on one level, much as it began -- Ellen is in a wagon, with her family, moving to a new place. In terms of structural patterning, the work is unified by the repetition, with variations, of the motif of wandering. By concluding The Time of Man with the same image with which it began -- the endless cycle of moving in search of a better life, Roberts provides a fitting coda for her "symphony brought into words." In musical terms, she has ended, in a

sense, in the same key and with the same theme with which she began. In terms, however, of personal growth, Ellen, rather than moving in a circular pattern, has been moving forward, her physical circumstances and her inner life, as it were, moving on two different planes, suggesting the possibility that human dignity, courage, and worth may be discovered even in the most outwardly impoverished of lives.

Like The Time of Man, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' second novel, My Heart and My Flesh, was also influenced by the classical symphony. J. Donald Adams, in The Shape of Books to Come, calls the author, "an interesting experimenter in matters of form . . . a lover of symphonic music" who was effectively using its structure in ways "easily traceable in all her major work" (130). Mary Ross writes that My Heart and My Flesh "moves with the rhythmic beat of a great symphony, swelling to the breaking point of anguish, then resolving itself majestically into quietude" (18). Grant C. Knight calls the comparison between Roberts' novels and symphonic music both analogical and "irresistible," and notes the fact that she listened specifically to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as she wrote My Heart and My Flesh (13). Her interest in Beethoven as an artist and his symphonies, in particular, may well rest in her perception of the composer's like fascination with design and form. She told interviewer Rena Niles that if she were a musician, she "would probably be a composer," because of her interest in "the making of design" (Niles n. pag.). Indeed, Beethoven called himself a "Tondichter" (tone-poet), describing his art in literary terms (Cuyler 49), and it has been suggested that his sonatas and symphonies all have "the same organically articulated events" epitomized by a "progression of passion, pain, cheerfulness, and liberation" (Bloch 32). These poetic "events" within the symphony, in fact, led Beethoven's contemporaries to believe he was writing opera in disguise. As Ernest Bloch asserts, "The dramatic principle behind his symphonic construction is undeniable" (33).

Indeed, this “dramatic principle” is what Mary Ross was describing in Roberts’ work when she wrote of My Heart and My Flesh “mov[ing] with the rhythmic beat of a great symphony . . . swelling . . . and resolving” (18), and what J. Donald Adams meant when he wrote that her novels were characterized by “something of symphonic structure” in their recurrent and interwoven themes, rise to high emotional pitch, closing chords of conflict, and resolutions of peace and hope” (130).

In conceiving a structural framework for My Heart and My Flesh, Roberts utilized elements of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, attempting, in part, to suggest its introduction and finale, its changes in rhythm, and its central themes as exemplified in the text of Schiller’s “Ode to Joy,” adapted by Beethoven for the choral portion of the Fourth Movement. Much of Roberts’ technique, like Beethoven’s, involves the use, as it did in The Time of Man, of repetitions of themes with variations (Cook 28). It is also significant that My Heart and My Flesh is the story of a musician, who, like Beethoven, must live with a physical limitation which profoundly affects artistic expression. Beethoven was a composer who could not hear; Theodosia Bell is a gifted violinist, but one whose hands are not large enough to “do concert work.” She does not have the capability of playing “triple and quadruple stops . . . artificial harmonics and successive octaves” (Library of Congress Box 2). Of more importance, however, is the fact that, according to Roberts, Theodosia Bell is a “searcher” (Library of Congress Box 2), a questioner of matters related to both theology and music, who like Beethoven, appropriating the words from Schiller’s “Ode to Joy,” asks in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony, “Ahnest du den Schopfer, Welt?” (“Do you feel your creator, world?”) (qtd. in Moore and Heger 47). And it is significant that the very next line of the “Ode to Joy” commands, “such’ ihn.” (“Seek him”) (qtd. in Moore and Heger 47), a concept foundational to My Heart and My Flesh, whose title is taken from Psalms 84:2

-- "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

My Heart and My Flesh, like The Time of Man, employs a six-part structure. Roberts' own typewritten manuscript of the work, found in Box 2 of the Library of Congress collection, is divided into six sections, each prefaced with a handwritten Roman numeral. However, only three of the six sections (I, IV, and V) are titled, unlike The Time of Man's divisions, which are all titled and described by the author. Again, like The Time of Man, the six sections do not correspond perfectly to the chapters of the novel, even though My Heart and My Flesh does have six chapters. Section I of My Heart and My Flesh is called, "Theodosia: The First Romance: Search for the Soul." It concludes at the end of the Prologue since Roman numeral II labels the next section, which begins with Chapter I and ends on page 128 (mid-way through Chapter III), when Albert breaks-off his relationship with Theodosia. The remainder of Chapter III, pages 128-159, comprising the death of Conway and the pregnancy of Minnie Harter, is labelled as Part III. Part IV is titled, "Man Looking Within Upon the Wonders of His Inner Part," and includes Chapter IV from its beginning until the death of Anthony Bell and Theodosia's confrontation with her drunken father (Page 183). Section V, titled, "Looking more deeply within, parting thought and thought, parting the [illegible word] dark which lies between sleep and waking," begins on page 183 mid-way through Chapter IV and concludes on page 202 at the end of Chapter IV, as Theodosia departs for Aunt Doe's farm. Section VI, then, includes Chapters V-VI -- pages 203-300. Upon examination, it may be discovered that Roberts' sectional divisions, as opposed to chapter designations, may have served to suggest to the writer more thematically correct divisions within the story of Theodosia's life since the 'breaks' come at logical moments signifying stages in her descent into what Roberts has described as "hell" (298).

Although, like The Time of Man, the six-part structure of the sonata may have influenced the divisions of My Heart and My Flesh (the novel does have both six chapters and six divisions), it is difficult to discuss the structure of My Heart and My Flesh solely from the perspective of the sonata, since the concept of repetition with variations (or restatement of major themes) so unifies the novel that it may be discovered in nearly every chapter and event. However, in general terms, the Prologue (Section I of the novel) serves as an introduction; Sections II-V of the novel develop major themes, and Section VI of My Heart and My Flesh may be divided into two parts, the restatement or recapitulation of previously introduced themes and the coda, or finale, with Chapters V and VI serving these functions respectively (Thomas xi). The following chart may aid in clarifying the relationship between the novel's sections and chapters as well as suggest how the sonata form may serve as a structuring device. Page numbers are included in parentheses.

CHAPTER	SECTION	CORRESPONDENCE TO SONATA FORM
Prologue (1-33)	I. "Theodosia . . ."	presentation of major themes
1-3.5 (34-128)	II. unnamed section	development of major themes
3.5 (128-159)	III. unnamed section	development of major themes
4-4.5 (160-183)	IV. "Man looking . . ."	development of major themes
4.5 (183-202)	V. "Looking more deeply . . ."	development of major themes
5-6 (203-300)	VI. unnamed section	restatement of major themes; coda

The Prologue or introduction to My Heart and My Flesh (Section I) introduces the importance of music to the novel, beginning with descriptions of the "low half-musical squawks" of "Moll Peters, the negress" (3), and Theodosia Bell, the work's

central character, as she practices for a church pageant, "tossing her body with the up-and-down toss of the music" (5), foreshadowing the later interrelationship between her music and her physical and mental health. In the relationship of Moll and Berry, epitomized by the popular songs by which he woos her ("I cannot stand to see my baby lose," " . . . my Black Venus," " . . . high-born lady," and "I'll telegraph my baby") (21-23), is foreshadowed the themes of female rivalry and male inconstancy which appear later in the novel in the relationships of Theodosia with Albert and Conway, of Ross and Lethe, and of Horace and Charlotte Bell, Theodosia's parents. The theological questions which echo through the novel are also introduced in the Prologue as the child Luce (the character who represents the central consciousness of this section) devises an unusual catechism which asks all the questions she truly wants answered. She asks two questions which remain significant to Theodosia Bell: "Can you see God?" and "How do you know that you have a soul?" (10,11). The theme of the inescapable interrelatedness of the lives of blacks and whites, which Grant C. Knight lauded in 1945 as "bold . . . and realistic" (13), is also introduced in the Prologue as Roberts describes the unhappy life of Theodosia's half-brother, the "yellow boy" (12), Stiggins, a character who will figure prominently in the central sections of the novel, along with his sisters, Lethe and Americy. The attitude of the white community toward blacks is explored, as well, prefiguring Theodosia's attitude toward Aunt Deesie's family and her own half-siblings later in the novel, as Luce both pities Stiggins and at the same time thinks he is "not real . . . not a being," exhibiting both attraction and repulsion (14).

The importance of music to an understanding of the thematic core of My Heart and My Flesh is also suggested in the Prologue in the brief appearance of Caleb Burns. He will, in Section VI, of course, represent the true love of Theodosia Bell, standing in contrast to the dramatic betrayals of Albert, Conway, Horace, and Aunt Doe. It is not

coincidental that Caleb, a man who epitomizes life and good health, is also a composer of sorts -- he walks "across his pasture singing a song he himself is making as he goes" (28). Thus, the major themes of My Heart and My Flesh (inconstancy, interrelatedness, and redemption) are foreshadowed in the Prologue but presented in a manner that only hints at their significance to an understanding of the novel as a whole.

Cook notes that Beethoven, similarly, conceals the plan of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony "behind a mass of thematic detail" (28), and, like Caleb Burns, whose music in the Prologue foreshadows Theodosia's return to health and happiness in Section/Chapter VI, the "Joy" theme of the Ninth Symphony's final movement is "pre-figured" in the first movement, as well (28). In addition, Calvin Brown describes a "sense of mystery" in the opening bars of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, which he notes "is produced by avoiding the third degree of the scale and thus keeping the listener ignorant as to whether the key is major or minor" (235). The opening passages of My Heart and My Flesh also keep the reader, in this case, suspended. The story begins with emphasis on the child, Luce, and Moll (who do not reappear in the novel), rather than the central character, Theodosia Bell, and the connection between the characters of the Prologue and both Luce and Theodosia is hazy. For example, the Prologue merely introduces such characters as Stiggins, Caleb Burns, and Ross, and does not clarify their relationship to Theodosia or her family. The aforementioned technique of thematic repetition with variations is then employed throughout the rest of the novel to effectively unite the seemingly disparate elements introduced in the Prologue. Interestingly, one of Roberts' most effective uses of this technique occurs as the Prologue closes with both music (the singing of Negro work songs) and the introduction of Ross, the man whose murder will so profoundly affect Theodosia. Here the recurring motif of jail is first introduced in the final lines of a work song:

Look down that dirt-road,

Far as I could see.

Saw a jail door . . .

Look like home to me. (33)

This motif will appear again in the novel as Lethe, Theodosia's half-sister, is jailed for the murder of her husband, Ross. And it will appear again as Theodosia, who because of betrayals by her own beaux, Albert and Conway, identifies so completely with Lethe's anger that she believes she has killed Ross herself, becomes ill, and is sent to recuperate at the home of Aunt Doe, a place that represents both a literal confinement for Theodosia as well as the imprisonment of a soul without music, friends, or even the food necessary for survival. Thus, it is through the development of themes and motifs repeated with variations that Roberts' novel bears resemblance to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Nicholas Cook, in his work, Beethoven: Symphony No. 9, agrees with an 1811 statement by Guiseppe Cambini, who wrote that Beethoven "takes the majestic flight of the eagle, then he creeps along grotesque paths . . . He seems to harbor doves and crocodiles at the same time" (qtd. in Cook 102-103). For example, Cook describes the ironic juxtaposition at "bar 331 of the Ninth Symphony's finale . . . where the majestic tones" accompanying the words, " ' and the seraph stands with God,' are punctuated by the absurd grunts of the bassoons and bass drum." Cook also notes what he describes as "another moment of incongruity" in the "double fugue at bar 655," where the two major themes of the finale are "superimposed upon each other" (103). In fact, Cook reports that the composer Richard Wagner referred to the introduction to the Fourth Movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as a "horror fanfare" (qtd. in Cook 35). Certainly, "horror" finds literary expression in My Heart and My Flesh. Roberts wrote that she intended for this novel to be about "a woman who went to hell and returned to

walk among you,” and also indicated that, in opposition to the principle of “additions” on which The Time of Man was written, wherein a woman would grow more mature and more filled with life with each successive page, the second novel would explore the interior life of a woman from whom everything dear was stripped away (Library of Congress Box 9). In Theodosia Bell’s great losses, the reader certainly sees the “horror” appear. Roberts wrote:

There is no beauty too pure or too exalted to be approached by literature and no suffering or ugliness through which men must pass which is too gross or too repulsive. It is the necessity of literature to present man in his conflict with the cosmos. Man is indeed a poor creature if he cannot bear to know his suffering part or if he finds beauty cloying. (Library of Congress Box 8)

She was even more specific about how to integrate the grotesque into her work, as she suggested in a brief note: “Suppose we go back – leap off – find beauty and amazement in those things which will develop out of the macabre” (Library of Congress Box 9). Clearly, the last chapter of Roberts’ second novel, her version of a hymn to joy, develops out of the grotesque and/or the macabre. For it is in the necessity of response to this element in her life, as exemplified by Aunt Doe and the dogs, that Theodosia must decide if she will drown herself or re-make her life. The principle of the grotesque, as it is delineated in the above quote from Roberts’ notes, appears in My Heart and My Flesh first in the Prologue, as the author describes the city of Mome, symbolic of life, as embodying both “pleasure and pain” (27). Here the book’s central themes of the interrelatedness of people and events and the promise of re-birth or redemption are identified as necessary components in a pattern developed from pain and loss, which are often exemplified in the novel by the grotesque. Roberts paints a clear picture of this concept as she writes:

It [Mome] is nobody's useless old cat, having been stoned three times to death and left by boys in a tin-can heap at the bottom of a gully in Dee Young's pasture, arising one-eye hanging by a thread, to cry "meauw" on a woman's kitchen doorstep and to drink warm milk from a brown saucer. (27-28)

Further examples of Roberts' use of the grotesque or macabre occur frequently throughout the novel. Significant passages include the dog attack in Chapter I; Stig's "recitative" (164) (calling to mind the introduction to the Fourth Movement of the Ninth Symphony in the use of this term [Moore and Heger 45]) about the starving rat, foreshadowing Theodosia's later starvation; Theodosia's dream of the naked man (178-179); the incestuous scene between Americy and Stig (191-197); Theodosia's delirious vision of the slain Ross ("mouth open, teeth wide, bloody throat") (239); and the eating of the "dog bread . . . slobbered over by the two bitches" (242).

The theme of loss as depicted in My Heart and My Flesh is expressed in terms of a series of broken or dysfunctional relationships, and as Theodosia experiences each, her pain is reflected in a diminished ability to play the violin, another recurring motif. When she learns of her father's broken marriage vows, resulting in his three illegitimate children, she finds "her hands on the fiddle were weak and apathetic, startled into numbness" (100). When Albert falls in love with Florence Agnew, Theodosia " . . . took her instrument from its case . . . but her ear was dead" (129). After Conway's death, "a barrier . . . come[s] between her and the violin" (147), and after Lethe murders Ross and Theodosia becomes ill, the "fiddle [is] shut securely into its case" (200). The key, however, to Theodosia's progressive break-down and loss of her music has its roots in the first severed relationship in the series - father and daughter. When, after breaking free from Horace Bell's "obscene kisses," Theodosia proclaims that she is "freed to hate" him, and that she "loath[es]" her own

soul and “cut[s] it free with hate,” she next declares that from her soul (which she “loathes”), the music must come” (105). Quite obviously, then, the most significant broken relationship in the novel is between Theodosia and her inner-self, for music cannot be born of “disconnections” (298) or disharmony in the world of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, who believed that man has an “imperative need” for “some harmonious plan by which to live” (Library of Congress Box 9).

Interestingly, at a significant moment of crisis when Theodosia is in a state of delirium after Ross’s murder, this lack of inner harmony is made apparent as her “body shak[es] in curious rhythms that buil[d] upward toward a climax and subside only to arise again, a compound rhythm of quivering flesh” (198). Roberts continues by describing “strange rhythms tearing her body in orderly stabs of pain” (198), and later writes that the “rhythm flowed in strange complexity, short rhythms fitted into the long flow of the heavier beat” (200). Rhythm is also a significant element in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. It has been noted, for example, that the First Movement is “distinctive for its rhythmic rather than its melodic character” (77), and that the tempos and rhythms of the Second Movement make it seem shorter than its actual length would indicate (Brown 28, Cuyler 79). In addition, significant tempo changes also create “drama-inspired effects” in the Choral-Orchestral Rondo of the Fourth Movement (Cuyler 82, 51). Since Roberts wrote My Heart and My Flesh while listening to the Ninth Symphony, it is certainly possible that her emphasis on changing rhythms, as noted above, could have been influenced by the many complexities of rhythm within the symphony.

Clearly, it is not possible for Theodosia to survive in a state of alienation from her own soul or self, terms Roberts thought of as synonymous, as she explains in her notes that “soul” is the conscious mind -- that which “keeps the whole going self-

ward" (Library of Congress Box 9). Theodosia's hell, the separation of body and soul by "cutting it [soul] free with hate" (105), is repeated symbolically in the "strange rhythms," "stabbing pain," and the delusional belief that she "killed Ross . . . cut his throat open" (198-199). Obviously, for the "strange rhythms" (symbolizing disorder) in Theodosia's life to be resolved back into harmony, she must re-unite body and soul, and the motif of violent stabbing must be replaced by the image of blood and death as only part of the process by which the healthy are fed.

The novel's resolution, which re-establishes Theodosia's health and restores her severed connections to self, human companionship and love, thematically parallels Schiller's "Ode to Joy," the poem Beethoven used as the text for the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony. The recitative introducing the "Ode," whose words were written by Beethoven rather than Schiller, is to be found in the first section of the Fourth Movement. The words to this recitative, "O Friends, not these tones!/ Rather raise we now together our voices in joyful song" (qtd. in Moore and Heger 46) (here amended by the author of this study in order to provide a more literal translation), indicate that the music to follow will be in contrast to what has come before it, clearly implying that the previous music was suggestive of disunity. That the disunity within the human family is the problem that, "Joy," personified as a heavenly daughter will correct is made apparent in the lines, "Let thy magic bring together/ All whom earth-born laws divide; All mankind shall be as brothers . . ." (qtd. in Moore and Heger 46).

In Section VI, Chapters V and VI of My Heart and My Flesh, Theodosia Bell experiences such restoration and redemption. She rejoins the human race and finds true friends in Spring Run Valley; she also finds a man who loves her and again becomes connected to life. The "Ode's" image of the person who has no bond with his or her fellowman may be illustrative of Theodosia's plight while living with her Aunt, as well

as Aunt Doe herself. Theodosia's restoration, however, first begins with an understanding of her own isolation. This happens as her friend Frank comes to symbolize what she truly needs, "kind voices . . . voices of praise, giving warm life and the warm flow of blood" and "the strength of people, of places, of people talking together" (248). However, before she can participate in life again, she must find a way to re-connect her soul or true inner self which has been "cut away with hate." As in the third stanza of Beethoven's adaptation of Schiller's "Ode to Joy," this is accomplished, in part, by a re-union with nature. The "Ode" states: "Joy does all creation/ Drink from nature's breast" (qtd. in Moore and Heger 46). Roberts writes that once Theodosia is able to experience hope, symbolized by the word "tomorrow," "the earth came back" (255). Then, next, in Roberts' version of an ode to joy, Theodosia is able to "laugh" and "feel a glow of pride in life and joy" (256). Interestingly, the author uses the word joy itself five times in the three paragraphs (255-257) that describe Theodosia's "re-birth," as well as three more times as she journeys to Spring Run Valley. However, it is the word "tomorrow" which begins Theodosia's movement toward joy, and reminiscent of Ellen Chesser's words in The Time of Man, she sings, "I'm alive, I'm alive," a phrase Roberts describes as indicative of "new birth" (255-256). It is significant not only that a renewed awareness of the earth returns to Theodosia, but at the same time her music returns, as well. In the paragraph before the "resurrection" is described, Roberts writes that Theodosia "kept no relation to the fiddle" and calls it "a darkened mass . . . identical with some abstract goodness" (254). However, after Theodosia's epiphany, not only is she able to sing, but it is important that her music is of primary concern. Her first physical action is to "shut her fiddle into its case and place the music in a pile beside it," in order to be ready to leave the farm early the next day (256). Her trip to Spring Run Valley is paralleled in the fourth verse stanza of Schiller's "Ode to

Joy," which also describes a "joyous journey" (qtd. in Moore and Heger 47). As she enters fully into the community life at Spring Run Valley, her music returns; she is first heard playing at night; then next as the teacher at the local school, she plays progressively livelier pieces for her students.

In Theodosia's mind, music has always been associated with a quest for an understanding of the soul and of God. This quest is precipitated because she has been told that "music must come out of the spirit, the soul," and she does not understand "where and what it . . . [is]" (87). Roberts writes that Theodosia "striv[es] to divide her being," looking for the "inner unit" (88). When her teacher explains to Theodosia that her hands are too small to play "successive octaves," she exclaims that she wants to play a particular piece that is beyond her ability because, "It'll liberate my soul" (94). That she connects pushing beyond the limits of her ability with a search for soul and God is made clear as she affirms, "I will go to the end of everything, I'll look over the edge of the last precipice of music . . . I'll look over the last precipice of music and say, 'God!' I'll say 'Where are you?'" (94). Interestingly, in Chapter VI, even after her liberation has occurred, Theodosia is still searching. As she sleeps on a porch in the open air while boarding in the home of one of her students, she looks at the night sky and "her mind play[s] at a crooked phrase, a distressed lack-melody that mounted with a perpetual question toward the constellations in the open sky above and in the grass below" (283). Her question is a repetition of one asked earlier in the novel, clearly not about the existence of God, but about where or how to find Him. This question is also a reflection of the content of the sixth and seventh verse stanzas of Schiller's "Ode" in which the loving father who dwells beyond the "Sternenzelt" (starry firmament) is sought as the source for brotherly love on earth. Roberts echoes the content of Schiller's "Ode," as she writes of Theodosia: ". . . she would go out quietly across the powdered dark that was

granulated with dull light, go with incandescent insects and the firmaments of night-cries that set stars of sound into the mellow black" (282-283). Verse stanza seven of the "Ode to Joy," parallels Theodosia's question, as Schiller, and by extension, Beethoven, asks in line 1, "Will all you millions fall low? [before God], and "World, does your creator know or foresee?" These questions remain unanswered as the poet concludes in lines 3 and 4, "Seek him over the starry firmament!/ Over the stars must he dwell" (47). Cook suggests that a correct translation of this section of the "Ode" "will not emphasize falling prostrate but to rise from prostration and look upwards to the Father above the starry vault." Cook thus maintains that the original text suggests "humanistic freedom" (107). Truly, Theodosia's recovery from the effect of hate is begun by her own realization of hope, and does suggest a rising-up from prostration through her own efforts, but looking toward the stars for answers about the soul and God seems unsatisfactory for her. Instead, her answers may at first glance appear earth-bound, finding full realization through her love for Caleb Burns. However, it is to be noted that Caleb Burns functions as a farmer-priest. His life is completely immersed in the raising of fine cattle, but as he works, his music, his singing, points heavenward. Indeed, Roberts seems to equate life lived close to nature with life tuned to spiritual matters. In her notes, she writes, "We are creatures of the earth and the ground, and we like to smell the earth and the soil and call it a benediction" (Library of Congress Box 9). In a similar vein, Roberts also wrote:

The pattern of being - the design - takes form within the creator. It is identical, however, at every point, with that which lies without and upon which he is to operate. ("Poetry" 46)

This concept of the interrelationship between creator and creation, is not far from the "Ode to Joy's" suggestion that the source of joy is to be found both in God and in

nature. In My Heart and My Flesh, it is through the character of Caleb Burns, whose life exemplifies the priestly duties of the offering of the sacrifices of the earth ("he would stab the young beast at the throat and hang it to bleed" (28)) and offering praises to God, that Theodosia finds love. Significantly, Caleb Burns is first introduced as he sings music described as a "medieval altarpiece" (28). When this character reappears later in the novel, he is singing both the songs of earth and heaven. His 'earthy song' --

Who buttoned up the peasecod?

Who buttoned up the bean?

I'm sure I never buttoned any,

Although I've unbuttoned a many. (284)

speaks implicitly of sexuality, as does his occupation of cattle breeder. That Caleb's 'heavenly music' is an integral part of his earthly occupation is made clear, however, as he begins a monologue reminiscent of a litany, in which he describes the fine attributes of his beef cattle. His conversations, as noted by one character in the text, are not like the conversations of others -- he says what he thinks, and so as Caleb speaks, a stream of consciousness is provided which enables the reader to observe his easy blending of the heavenly and the earthly. The monologue repeats the fact that his cows' names are "all written in the Short-horn Herd Book," a registry for pure-bred cattle. Caleb then quickly includes the singing of a gospel hymn, "Is my name written there,/ On that page white and fair . . ." (288). The hymn, "Is My Name Written There" (Kidder 93), makes reference to another book of lists - the "Lamb's Book of Life" of Revelation 21:27 and 22:18, a book in which the names of the redeemed of all ages are written by God. Caleb, in this rapid moving from the facts of the secular world to a faith in the eternal demonstrates well how the two are integrated and even fused in the mind of the farmer-priest. As Caleb sings the traditional chorus of the Isaac Watts' hymn text,

"We're Marching to Zion" (8), this fusing of sacred and secular is further clarified since he is "singing over the heads of his cattle" (289), and his "phrases" and "voice" sound both "well" and "rich" as they "resonate" off the outer walls of the barn, suggesting the barn as symbolic of a house of worship. In addition, the "hills" (nature itself) "lend assistance" to Caleb's hymn, which not incidentally, begins with the images of love and joy ("Come ye that love the Lord and let your joys be known"), two central images, of course, in Schiller's "Ode," as well (289-290). Beethoven's musical setting for Schiller's "Ode", as noted by Cook, "evokes ecclesiastical chant [in the] . . . initial setting of the 'be embraced' theme (bars 595-626 of the Fourth Movement)" (37), certainly providing Roberts with a model for the use of sacred music in the final section of her work, as well.

Theodosia's health and well-being are thus fully restored through her relationship with Caleb Burns. His gift to her of his prize-winning cow, Betty Hawthorne, represents a gift of both love and sacrifice. It is a gift of the earth, most certainly, but significant in its perfection and in its importance as Caleb's most valuable possession. During the discussion between Theodosia and Caleb, as she considers accepting the gift of the cow, she "remembers hell" (299), but her memories of the past are replaced with the name of Caleb Burns. It would seem that his sacrifice of the cow makes this possible. The Judeo-Christian symbolism of the offering of a perfect sacrifice or gift to symbolize redemption is unmistakable; however, it is interesting that interwoven with such orthodox Christian theology is found reference to classical mythology, as well. In using the mythological figure of Aphrodite, it would seem that the author is attempting to echo the mythological context of the opening lines of Schiller's "Ode to Joy," which refer to joy as a "daughter of Elysium" (qtd. in Moore and Heger 46). Certainly, Aphrodite, as goddess of love and beauty, and without whom "there is no

joy" (Hamilton 32-33), is an appropriate figure to symbolize the regenerated Theodosia since, appropriately, on Aphrodite's feast day, "snow white heifers were offered to her" (Hamilton 110). Roberts writes that as Theodosia walks in the pasture, just before Caleb gives her the gift of his cow, Betty Hawthorne, birds begin to sing in celebration, "as if . . . to announce the beginning of fine desires and the passing of Aphrodite among the pastures" (296). This spontaneous music of nature suggests, again, as does Schiller's "Ode," that the natural world is a source of joy, as well as an emanation from the divine, for in the "Ode," the first source of joy mentioned is "Gotterfunken" -- "God's fire" (qtd. in More and Heger 46). It would seem, thus, that the last section of My Heart and My Flesh represents an attempt on the part of the author to fictionally explore the themes of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, as exemplified in the text of Schiller's "Ode to Joy." As Theodosia Bell moves from resident of hell to goddess of the pasture -- literally from death to life -- Roberts parallels the "Ode's" themes of both the interrelatedness of the sacred and the secular and the brotherhood of all mankind.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts' fifth novel, A Buried Treasure, is the third novel which she identified as influenced by the symphony (Knight 13). A Buried Treasure was influenced by Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the Pastorale, a work in the genre known as "descriptive" or "program" music (Brown 245). These terms refer, of course, to the work's "drama-inspired effects" (Cuyler 51), which are evidenced not only in the music itself but in Beethoven's descriptions of each movement. The composer's notes for the titles of each movement reflect, as Beethoven wrote, his desire that "hearers should be allowed to discover the situations" he wishes to express through the music (qtd. in Brown 246). Brown writes that there are extant "notes for the titles" of the movements "in four different forms," but that the following are used most frequently:

Pastoral Symphony, or a recollection of country life (more expressive of feeling than a painting).

1. Allegro ma non troppo. The cheerful feelings aroused by arrival in the country.
2. Andante molto moto. By the brook.
3. Allegro. Peasants merrymaking.
4. Allegro. Storm.
5. Allegretto. Shepherd's song: joy and thanksgiving after the storm. (286)

A Buried Treasure, like the Pastorale Symphony's five movements, has five chapters whose events parallel the musical "situations" described by Beethoven above. This novel "has less breadth and depth" than The Time of Man or My Heart and My Flesh (McDowell 63), and is intended to be, according to the author, "a comedy in five acts" and "an experiment in the presentation of shifting points of view" (qtd. in Wagenknecht 390 n.), with "Chapters I, III, and V being narrated from Philly Blair's point of view, and Chapters II and IV from Ben Shepherd's" (Rovit Herald 101). The purpose of this discussion will be, however, to discover the ways in which the plot of the novel is suggested by the composer's descriptions of the five movements of the Sixth Symphony. A Buried Treasure is clearly the easiest Roberts novel to discuss in terms of symphonic structure, since the influential symphony's movements are titled or described and the novel has a corresponding number of chapters. Roberts' notes, however, contain little information about the composition of this work, in contrast to The Time of Man, My Heart and My Flesh, The Great Meadow, and Black is My Truelove's Hair, about all of which she left detailed insights concerning structure and themes. It is known that the genesis of the novel was in a clipping from Roberts' local Springfield, Kentucky paper describing a Mr. Sam Bottom, who found three silver Spanish dollars (dated

1784, 1804, and 1820) while plowing corn (Library of Congress Box 9). As Rovit suggests, however, there is quite a distance in this novel between the "raw material" and its "artistic form" (Herald 99).

Chapter I, which parallels the title of the First Movement of the Sixth Symphony, "Cheerful Feelings," clearly has a pastoral setting, as does the entire novel, which is set in Roberts' own region of rural, central Kentucky. In writing about the composition of The Time of Man, Roberts declared, "I know the life of which I wrote at first hand, for I lived near it and merged into it" (Library of Congress Box 8). She was, of course, referring to those early years of teaching and boarding in the communities surrounding Springfield, Kentucky, which gave her insight into the lives and customs of the farm families of her region. Beethoven was similarly enamored of rural life. He wrote: "No man on earth loves the country more; woods, trees, and rocks give the response which man requires. Every tree seems to say, 'Holy, Holy'" (qtd. in Grove 186). This sentiment is certainly reminiscent of Elizabeth Madox Roberts' words, "We like to smell the earth and the soil -- and call it a benediction" (Library of Congress Box 8).

Chapter I of A Buried Treasure is written in the spirit of the First Movement of Beethoven's the Sixth Symphony, the Allegro, as it describes the joy experienced by Philly and Andy Blair in their discovery of a pot containing nineteen hundred dollars in coins and two small pearls and their desire to share the news of their discovery with the community. Rovit notes that the discovery of the pot of gold has a "grotesquely comic quality" (Herald 102) -- certainly suggested by Andy Blair's recital of praise for himself and his great "luck" (20) in finding the kettle, juxtaposed against his wife's practical plans for using the money and her reminders of Andy's past failures. Their elation quickly turns to suspicion and distrust of others soon after they invite friends and family members to a party to celebrate their good fortune. Chapter I, also like the

“overture” to The Time of Man and the Prologue to My Heart and My Flesh, introduces themes which will be developed later in the novel. The conflict (the “storm”) of Chapter IV, for example, is foreshadowed as Philly gossips with a group of women about the problems of Sam Cundy, who will not entertain the idea of his daughter’s marriage. The first chapter also introduces both the widow, Hester Trigg, and Andy Blair’s possessiveness of the pearls, preparing the reader for a sub-plot of Chapter IV when Andy gives the pearls to Hester. In addition, the footprints Andy finds behind the barn in Chapter I introduce the possibility of both strangers and robbery, motifs which will figure prominently throughout the novel. Despite elements suggesting the novel’s major conflicts, Rovit is correct in his assessment that “the general atmosphere of this first segment of the novel is one of “pastoral lightness” (Herald 102), an “atmosphere” epitomized by Philly’s happiness. Roberts writes:

The kettle of bright money in the cubbyhole . . . arose before her as a bright blossom . . . Her heart leaped in its beat for joy, and a joy at foretelling the praise and envy of the people when they knew of the good fortune quickened her steps. (53)

Chapter II of A Buried Treasure, corresponding to the second movement of Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, “By the brook,” introduces the novel’s most important sub-plot in the character of Ben Shepherd, a young man who has recently come to the Pigeon River country in order to do informal genealogical research, or as Roberts states it, “get the names off the tombstones” (73). His name, Shepherd, is significant in light of its strong identification with the pastoral tradition, and it is also to be noted that Beethoven uses the image of the shepherd in the Fifth Movement, titled, “Shepherd’s Song” (Brown 246). Not coincidentally, as this second chapter opens, Roberts begins a description of the rivers and creeks of Central Kentucky. As Ben Shepherd follows the

Pigeon River to Elk Creek in search of his ancestral graveyard, his journey is explained according to his movements in relationship to the creeks. He is literally encamped, in Beethoven's words, "By the brookside," throughout much of the chapter. We are told, "he left her where the road crossed Elk Creek" (68-69); "He crossed and recrossed the stream" (71); "He looked at the creek in the channel below him" (71); "... he searched for a spring in the ledge" [above the creek] ... (72); "Going up the stream ... he felt a deep and near relation to the graveyard" (73); "Ben fished in the stream all the afternoon" (180); the graveyard is located "... a mile toward the north, beyond the creek" (81). Certainly, Roberts may be emphasizing the importance of streams and/or water in an attempt to parallel Beethoven's Second Movement of the Sixth Symphony; however, again like the composer, more significantly, she connects nature to a sense of the spiritual as she writes in Chapter III:

The earth itself, Terra -- the first, the earliest, the most ancient oracle, the most profound deity -- showed herself here in the beginnings of lesser mountains and little rivers. (68)

Since the Second Movement of the symphony is titled, "By the brook," water is obviously an important motif in this section of the work. As Brown notes, the movement "generally suggests the out-of-doors" with "the brook always in the background" as the lower strings keep up a figure suggestive of running water" (247-248). Brown states further that Beethoven "wanted a soft, unobtrusive, continuous sound" (251), which is the effect Roberts achieves, as well, since the motif of the creek or stream is surely constant, but always in the background of Ben Shepherd's reaction to the Blairs' discovery of gold and his own attempts to learn more about his family's past.

Near the end of Beethoven's Second Movement of the Sixth Symphony is another passage imitative of nature, a passage in which the composer's music imitates bird-

calls. Written into the score are the names of the birds -- the nightingale, the quail, and the cuckoo, represented musically by the flute, oboe, and clarinet, respectively (Brown 249-251). Historically, critical assessments of this passage have ranged from comments calling the birds "a silly stunt" to "one of the greatest beauties of the symphony" (Brown 250). Elizabeth Madox Roberts' great interest in birds is evident throughout her novels. There are countless references to birds in her work (ten in Chapter II of A Buried Treasure); her published writing includes a review of Constance Rourke's The Life of Audubon, and her papers include a copy of an article about how to start a "bird club" (Library of Congress Box 9), which she did in Springfield in 1921, with the help of her friend, Louis McElroy (Spears 128). In Chapter II of A Buried Treasure, she first introduces crows, whose "cries have the quality of murmured speech" (83), and then alternates the cries of the cock and the dove, with each appearing three times, throughout the rest of the chapter. Interrupting this sequence is the cuckoo, one of the birds from Beethoven's Second Movement. As is her practice, Roberts weaves the call of this bird into the thematic content of the novel, for as Ben Shepherd hears the cuckoo, in his mind, it fuses with the voice of Grove, a fellow farm worker who brags about stealing money from a "green teapot." Roberts writes: "Ben wonder[s] if he heard the speech or had devised it out of the call of the cuckoo. It did not seem strange then that the bird might be crying out about a green teapot" (113). It might seem merely coincidental that Roberts, like Beethoven, uses bird calls, if it were not for their similar placement within the second chapter or movement, the use of the cuckoo specifically, and the integration of this bird into the plot of the novel. Certainly, the motif of stolen money and the green teapot helps to develop the theme of the fear of robbery, which justifiably haunts Philly and Andy as soon as their initial exuberance over finding the treasure abates. It will also be this same green teapot which provides

the incriminating evidence in the arrest of Grove in the last chapter of the novel. Thus, the green teapot, an example of a recurring symbol which is repeated with variations, reminds the reader of the Blairs' pot of gold, as well, and the dangers inherent in hidden money.

Chapter III of A Buried Treasure tells the story of the party to which the Blairs have invited all their neighbors -- a celebration of their good fortune in finding the money. A complication arises, however, since the Blairs have promised their guests a surprise but have decided that it is not safe to tell the story of their new-found wealth. Thus, in the midst of the party itself, Philly must find a way to justify the celebration to her guests. Since a preacher, Hez Turner, is in attendance, as well as an engaged couple, Giles and Imogene, Philly talks the young couple into turning the party into an impromptu wedding in order to save face. The party, which is a great success, becomes, however, the catalyst for the conflict with the bride's father, which follows in Chapter IV.

Chapter III parallels, then, the Third Movement of the Sixth Symphony, titled, "Peasants merrymaking" (Brown 246), or "Jolly gathering of the country folk (Moore and Heger 32). Roberts seems to echo Beethoven's title as she describes the party's guests: "They were a pleasant gathering then, all seeming glad to be assembled" (135). Moore and Heger note that at bar 165, the strings present an allegro, a "vigorous theme" in "2/4 time," "suggesting a folk-dance" (32). The dance music at Philly's party is also "vigorous." It is described as a march that "leaped" and "surged" (134), providing "rhythms" for the dancers (136). Even after the music stops, "The rhythm [is] continuous, beating about," and the organist plays "to what already pulse[s]" (143). The music of the evening, though, is not limited to dance music. The guests also enjoy singing revival songs, and it is against this "din" (157), that Philly suggests the

wedding. Although the chapter ends with the company "singing" (165), obviously the conflict or storm has been foreshadowed in the bride's fear of going home to face her father. As in the action of the novel, which moves rapidly into the conflict engendered by the wedding, both Cuyler (71) and Moore and Heger (32) note that the Third Movement of the Sixth Symphony moves without a break into the thunderstorm of the Fourth Movement.

In A Buried Treasure, as the company of young people moves away from the Blair home at the beginning of Chapter IV, a literal storm has already taken place. Roberts writes:

A great rain had fallen high up in the headwaters of the creek. The rush and roar of the water was heard up in the pasture, and the yellow flood . . . the roaring, flowing mass of it gathered to be a torrent that surged down between the hills. (170-171)

This storm functions both as a symbol of the anger of Sam Cundy over his daughter's marriage, as well as a parallel to the musical event of Beethoven's Fourth Movement. As Cundy's anger mounts and he continually, publicly accuses his daughter of being an unmarried "hussy" (194) and burns her clothes and books, a second storm occurs. This storm brings "a quick flow of dashing water" (208) and crosses the creek, only to "turn . . . back and gather anew" (208), symbolic of Sam Cundy's renewed attempts to slander his daughter.

Chapter V of A Buried Treasure serves to bring resolution to previously introduced conflicts: Hester Trigg, whom Philly perceives as a threat to her own marriage, persuades Sam Cundy to allow the preacher, Hez Turner, to complete and file the marriage certificate; the pot of gold is buried in a safe place; the thief, Grove, is apprehended; and Ben Shepherd, his mission accomplished, goes home. Beethoven's Fifth

Movement, titled, "Shepherd's song: joy and thanksgiving after the storm," is an appropriate parallel. Interestingly, there is an actual "Shepherd's Song" in Chapter V of A Buried Treasure as Ben visits Philly in order to warn her about the thief, Grove, and his conversation reminds her of "a long flow of singing words" (254).

However, full resolution of conflict comes as Philly joins in another dance, an impromptu gambol, as the neighborhood folk form a circle singing the "game-song," "Here we go round the mulberry bush" and playing "drop-the-handkerchief" (280). The game-song, played and sung as hands are held and players move in a circle, seems to represent the cyclical nature of human experience, with the circle or "wheel" representing the earth (281). Roberts also suggests in the image of the circle or wheel as the "world of mankind turning all together," not only the cyclical nature of human experience, but the possibility of human unity as well. That this game occurs on the longest night of the year, June 21, also suggests fecundity as it represents the height of the growing season as well as a season for human love. As Philly and Andy notice lovers "in the shadows . . . just out of sight . . . behind the ditches, under the hummocks" (295), the pastoral setting is re-emphasized as the earth itself becomes quite literally the place where procreation is accomplished. The conclusion of the novel thus affirms the importance of the earth as nourisher of man -- suggesting with Beethoven, the universal significance of the pastoral tradition implicit in the Sixth Symphony and in his affirmation that "woods, trees, and rocks, give the response which man requires" (qtd. in Grove 186).

Elizabeth Madox Roberts' third novel, Jingling in the Wind (1928), has from the time of its publication, been regarded as her least satisfactory artistic effort (Auchincloss 130). Intended as a satire on contemporary American life, it has been called "shrill and silly" (Auchincloss 130), and in Herald to Chaos, Earl H. Rovit

describes it as a "combination of farce, fantasy, and poetry, leaving the reader with a concoction that should be drunk swiftly with one's eyes shut" (90). Rovit continues by noting that it is difficult to "take [the novel] too seriously," since he sees it as a "pastiche" rather than a "unified metaphorical statement of experience" and suggests that the book is a failure because Roberts did not "find an appropriate structural frame within which she could develop her themes" (91,97). Rovit's point may be well-taken; however, in his identification of the "structural framework" of Jingling in the Wind as "the picaresque novel" (90), he overlooks Roberts' own statement in this regard. In an interview, she called the book "a five-part comedy," but was even more specific when she commented:

I hoped it would leave in the mind the savor of a musical comedy. There is a slight change of tempo in each part, and the devices by which these changes are effected are very easily discovered. It moves always toward farce and breaks in the end upon lyric verse. (qtd. in "An Interview" 10)

The characteristics of Jingling in the Wind noted above -- "musical comedy," filled with "change," and combining both "farce" and "lyric verse" -- when examined in the context of the musical theatre of the early decades of the twentieth century, and especially the 1920's, can lead the reader, if not toward a greater appreciation of Jingling in the Wind, then certainly toward a greater understanding of it in the light of its structural model, the American musical stage of the years preceeding its composition.

The American stage, according to Glenn Hughes, was in its heyday in the 1920's. For example, in 1920 alone, 151 shows were produced on Broadway, with a total of two thousand productions opening in New York during this ten year period. There were eighty houses available to producers in New York, and, as Hughes notes, "Frivolous entertainment flourished extravagantly" (356, 350, 381). It was "the great era" of

the revue, a stage entertainment that combined music, loosely connected comedy skits, and elaborate tableaux and/or production numbers, such as the one presented in the 1918 Ziegfeld Follies in which actress, Lillian Lorraine and thirty-two attendants in gowns covered in tiny mirrors, moved up and down a staircase illuminated with green and mauve lights (Ziegfeld 245). The late teens and the 1920's were, indeed, the "golden age" of Florenz Ziegfeld and his famous Ziegfeld Follies, a series of revue productions which will serve as examples for this discussion since they represent the most widely-known and elaborate musical/comedy revues from the era. This study will rely on the volume, The Ziegfeld Touch: The Life and Times of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. by Richard and Paulette Ziegfeld (an encyclopedic work by distant relatives of Florenz, detailing every imaginable fact about each Ziegfeld production), for information about the Follies.

As Brooks Atkinson notes, these musical revues of the 1920's "had no plots" (321). For example, in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1921, there was a comic skit starring Fannie Brice and W. C. Fields about "a family loaded with picnic paraphernalia struggling to board a subway train for the country," a skit about male prize fighters with female trainers, one about a piano tuner who destroys the home where he is working, and another about a magician who gets drunk while entertaining a Sunday school class (Ziegfeld 252). In addition, there was a scene called "The Legend of the Cyclamen Tree" about a Persian princess who received suitors and a tree which came alive. This same production, however, introduced the haunting, "My Man," sung by Fannie Brice, as well as her comic, "Second Hand Rose," both simply interjected into the sequence of scenes (Ziegfeld 251-252). In Jingling in the Wind, the action of Chapter II alone demonstrates this same lack of thematic unity. It involves the story of "the great city" (38), as told to Jeremy by his friend Josephus, but interwoven into

this discourse are the disconnected stories of Tulip McAfee; Zelda, the dancer; a Sultan and his consort; and a dialogue between the constellations, written in the form of a play which parodies American advertising.

It would seem that the revue, as typified by the Ziegfeld Follies, is closest in structure to Roberts' Jingling in the Wind, and, thus, may have been the kind of musical comedy she envisioned as suggestive of the structure of the novel. The elements of the 1920's revue which parallel Roberts' novel were, first and foremost, the loosely connected comic and satiric scenes-- many farcical-- the lavish tableaux and production numbers often complete with spectacular special effects, and the interpolation of musical numbers into the scenes. The presence of these elements within the novel as well as within the revues of the 1920's, along with Roberts' statement that she intended the book to have "the savor" of musical comedy, combine to indicate the kind of theatre Roberts was attempting to suggest as a model for this novel, the kind of vehicle used by Ziegfeld himself (and appropriated by Roberts) not only to entertain, but also to epitomize and spotlight the political, social, and artistic interests of his day in a theatre he filled with the very life of the era.

There is no evidence recorded by Spears or Campbell and Foster, Roberts' most thorough biographers, that the author herself attended musical theatre in the 1920's. However, her acquaintance with it is implicit in her comment that she wished Jingling in the Wind to have its "savor." Additionally, Roberts spent a good deal of time in New York during the years her first three novels were written and published. She was there for extended periods in 1923, 1926, 1927, and 1928, residing at various times in apartments in Greenwich Village and on Fifth Avenue (Spears 166-168, 187, 198, 203). It was then she could have had the opportunity to either view or become aware of the revues of her day. In addition, revues were often taken "on the road," touring larger

cities, such as Chicago, where the 1922 Ziegfeld Frolic closed in May after a one month's run in that city. Interestingly, Roberts' correspondence with Harriet Monroe places her in Chicago in May of 1922, as well (Spears 156).

Jingling in the Wind contains five chapters into which Roberts has poured a large cast of bizarre, loosely connected characters -- a snake, a spider, a sultan, a dancer, two rainmakers, an evangelist, Adam (from the Old Testament), and an assortment of nymphs, to mention only a few. Chapter I is divided by the author into eight sections, or scenes, and is illustrative of the author's use of the revue's technique of presenting farce, tableaux or production numbers, and musical interpolations, all with no chronological or thematic sequencing. The first four sections of the chapter comprise a musical overture. Scene I introduces both the music of nature and of man. The first two sentences of the novel are auditory in imagery and are intended to convey an unmistakable sense of musical sound, as exemplified in Roberts' use of the words (here underlined for emphasis) in the passage below :

The rain increased in a crescendo and made a more continuous patter-dripping that arose higher in the scale with the increase of speed. Underneath the steady clatter of drops on the leaves and the grass there was a faint humming that was perpetual in tone, as if the machinery of the instrument were heard through the music. (1)

Section I of Chapter I then continues with a description of the central character, the rainmaker, Jeremy, walking through the grass, but his walk is described completely in terms of the musical sounds it creates. The effect of instrumental music is produced by such words and phrases as, "tone," "percussion," "beat," "drum-tap," "metallic string tones," "unstressed music," "strings," "fiddled," and "running sound" (2-3). This description of a sort of musical walking builds then to song as Jeremy begins to sing

because of his pleasure in the rain. The musical overture continues with Scene or Section II as Jeremy encounters a singing hen and with Scene III where his singing is interrupted by a comic discourse with a snake who identifies himself as Irish, complete with the conventional brogue. The scene with the snake is an unmistakable parody of the comedy sketches -- broad farces -- of the American musical stage. The revues of the 1920's, and the years just preceeding this decade, included comic scenes with actors dressed as talking animals, and often actual animals, frequently dogs and birds, were presented (Ziegfeld 245, 250, 71). Scene IV continues with Jeremy again singing, but "inwardly, adding orchestration" (14). The next scene (V), and the two which follow it (VI and VII), are again comic, containing such farcical humor as the situations involving Jeremy's sister-in-law, who puts "scratchy sheets" (17) on his bed because he has rejected her in love, and Jeremy's unknowingly chewing on "the mamillary gland of the hog" (24).

The last scene of Chapter I, in terms of the musical revue, resembles a tableau, an elaborate scene usually involving a number of lavishly costumed women who presented what was described as a "living picture" (Ziegfeld 93, 121, 298). Often, optical illusions were involved. In Jingling in the Wind, Jeremy has twenty-two "phantom" "nymphs" (34). They are described as "apparitions" which can fade into each other, "be folded up and put inside Jeremy's vest pocket" (35) -- "image[s] abstractly seen" who "could pass in and out of substances, moods, dreams, and nightmares" (36). These nymphs are certainly reminiscent of stage illusions, as in a tableau called "Lace Land" in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1922 in which lace-like garments worn by dancers changed color or were made to glow in the darkened theatre by iridescent paints and special lighting effects. As Richard and Paulette Ziegfeld note, "As the lights were blended, everything on the stage seemed to change." The authors then

describe how, when all the stage lights were turned off, the audience could no longer see the dancers, but only the patterns of the lace, which appeared to move (252). Jeremy's nymphs even have such show-girl names as "Adelaide, Flora, Pansy, Fiametta, Tuppie, Pippin, Celestine, and Roxanna" (34).

In later chapters, Roberts continues to utilize the kinds of fantastic special effects for which the musical revues of the 1920's were famous. In Chapter III, a lady (Tulip) is seen "in the heart of [a] cloud . . . pursued by four or five wild horses" (144). [It is to be noted that horses were occasionally used on stage as part of the revue, both in tableaux and production numbers (Ziegfeld 177, 250)]. While Tulip's flight certainly lies in the realm of the fantastic, her rescue by Jeremy and his fellow-travelers is quite realistic; however, Tulip's appraisal of the situation as a dream, again suggests the unreal. This juxtaposition of illusion and reality was part and parcel of the stagecraft of the Ziegfeld Follies, as typified by the example of the actress in the 1916 Follies who appeared to run out of a motion picture right onto the stage (244) and by the "moving picture illusion" depicting "a comet crossing the earth" with the face of stage-star Anna Held, Ziegfeld's first wife, as the comet's steering gear" (Ziegfeld 222).

In Chapter IV of Jingling in the Wind, another fantastic scene is described as Jeremy tries to produce rain and a cloud turns from a "monster whale to a salamander . . . [then] into a dragon . . . a great barrel, a vast teapot, a mighty ewer, [and finally] a percolator" (216). Indeed, an integral part of the revue's special effects were optical illusions in which one thing appeared to turn into quite something else. For example, lighting was used to blacken white faces (Ziegfeld 254), and on one occasion was used to make it appear that women's headdresses were "battleships moving in the night through the sea to the audience" (Ziegfeld 245).

Another example of the fantastic used in Jingling in the Wind, occurs in the

parade of Chapter V in which a dizzying assortment of characters appear -- "knights," "nurses," "butlers," and monsters named "Forbidding," "Ginbreath," and "Bruitabout," or "Advertising" (228-229); these are reminiscent of revue productions in which Richard and Paulette Ziegfeld report large numbers of chorus girls were dressed to represent such abstractions as various imaginary species of birds (225), salad ingredients, such as lettuce, spice, oil, sugar, and paprika (248), historical periods (252), and the Allied Nations of 1918 (66).

Additionally, elements of farce appear throughout the novel, and most especially, in the stories, suggestive of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, which are told by the stranded travelers. The story of Lester Tookington told by "the man in pepper and salt clothes," is a farce about an aged man who gets "new glands" and begins to grow younger, but it is a farce with a message condemning men who reject women who are readers and thinkers. Additionally, the "Farmer's Story" of "Belindy Lou" and her encounter with a skunk provides the same overstated humor, but, like "The Story of the Man in Pepper and Salt Clothes," it praises a woman who can out-think a man. Broad farce was a standard feature of the comedy skits of the revue, exemplified by a 1919 Ziegfeld Follies sketch in which a comic played the part of a talking dog who could also cry real tears, and the 1923 Follies skit wherein an actor ate a sandwich while crying and singing an emotional "Mammy" song (Ziegfeld 250, 257). Richard and Paulette Ziegfeld refer to this type of comedy as "freewheeling, wacky, and unsophisticated," and cite an Eddie Cantor sketch called "At the Osteopath's," in which the actor is "twisted into odd pretzel shapes by the loony Dr. Cheeseboro Simpson," as exemplifying the type of humor for which Ziegfeld productions were famous (178). However, "wacky" the humor in a Ziegfeld show, it is to be noted, as the French philosopher Henri Bergson suggests, that everything that is comic must have its roots in "what is strictly human"

(62) and that "any incident which is comic calls our attention to the physical side of a person when it is the moral side that is concerned" (93). Hence, in the 1919 Follies, laughter was evoked by a dog who cried tears that should have come from the man, and, in Roberts' novel, the comedy of the vile smelling skunk calls attention to the animal's offensiveness to the narrator but also accentuates his inability to deal with the problem, in both cases suggesting an underlying attack on human weaknesses. Thus, even in broad farce, one is compelled to acknowledge the roots of this type of humor in the many problems from which laughter may provide escape and to note its kinship with satire, which has been called the "undercurrent" of "most comedy" (Sypher 242-246).

In addition to farce, both Jingling in the Wind and the musical revues did employ open satire, especially satire targeting current issues. For example, Ziegfeld's revues satirized Prohibition and the role of black Americans in New York theatre (Ziegfeld 252, 254), but understated satire was really the forte of one of his most popular stars, Will Rogers, who would read the newspapers to find fresh material for his nightly monologue in order to make droll comments about the government, society, or the overly-pretentious (Ziegfeld 177-178). In Jingling in the Wind, Roberts' satiric comments on the Scopes Trial are among the most effective in the work. Since she believed that the "scientific approach . . . does not determine or influence any belief in a revealed religion," and that in the public mind Darwinism was wrongly and "roughly confused with atheism and agnosticism" (Library of Congress Box 8), she uses "The Story of the Eminent Clergyman," to present her views through Adam (from the Old Testament book of Genesis), a character who strongly believes he is the first human on earth despite evidence to the contrary presented by a cast of humorous characters representing earlier evolutionary forms of man. Roberts also satirizes the overly-

pretentious by describing American women who show their disdain for each other through materialistic competitions involving jewels and parties (64-65), and she denounces American economics as a “turmoil” in which commodities are hawked at continually higher prices (41). Certainly, one senses in Jingling in the Wind Roberts’ serious concern about the issues of her day. Her papers mention the ramifications of the Scopes Trial, as well as her fears about the growth of big business in America. She writes:

An effort is being made by the Baptists -- and others-- to have our legislature pass a law prohibiting the teaching of ‘Darwinism’ in the public schools of the state . . . Saint Francis would have loved his little beast-brothers. We won’t even claim the relationship. (Library of Congress Box 8)

Her seriousness about what she satirizes in Jingling in the Wind is further evident as she writes about her perception of the dangers of economic monopolies:

Everything is handeled [sic] now from above . . . chain stores, oil stations, chain meats, the country squeezed dry and pinched sore. They’ve made the chain, it’s only one step further to take possession of the chain.

(Library of Congress Box 8)

It is clear, of course, from reading the novel that it was, for the most part, intended to amuse. Campbell and Foster report that Roberts herself laughed so hard while reading the manuscript to her friend and former music teacher, Mrs. C.F. Bosely, that she was forced to stop reading (50). In the author’s own words, it was written for “the refreshment of changed outlook” while working on The Time of Man (qtd. in “An Interview” 10). Roberts also wrote of the novel that “Jeremy’s soul or mind” was the “one reality” in the work “that alone [could] be treated seriously” (qtd. in Rovit Herald 89). But, however the writing may have amused or refreshed its author, it is clear that

the issues she chose for satiric attack were perceptive, and of lasting and legitimate concern to both Roberts and the nation. Her comedy was not without a message; it was a vehicle, like the monologues of Will Rogers, for exposing those frighteningly ridiculous aspects of American life which are so often absorbed into our national consciousness without pause for reflection on their impact or meaning. As Earl H. Rovit notes in Herald to Chaos, Roberts was satirizing those aspects of American culture, such as advertising, Hollywood, fads, psychoanalysis, the work of congressional committees, and theological arguments, which seem to assume great import for the world at large, but may have "inconsequential" value for the individual, since they do not truly touch the "soul or mind" (Rovit 96, 89, Campbell and Foster 203).

Finally, the interpolation of music into the text of Jingling in the Wind occurs in every chapter. As previously noted, there are frequent musical images in Chapter I, and an additional example is found in the description of the Sultan's consort, Khadija who, "when she danced . . . music blew from eerie cliffs" (69). There is also frequent mention of the music of nature within the novel; for instance, when Jeremy thinks of Tulip, "all the birds of [his] heart . . . begin to sing" (50); however, the use of music that is most similar to the musical comedy or revue involves the interjection of singing into the text in such a way that it either provides a background accompaniment for the story or interrupts a scene as a character bursts into song. In Chapter II, the farmer's song, "A lady lover-longs for me," provides a background for Josephus who "carr[ies] forward the story through the singing that continue[s] now and then" (50). In Chapter III, however, the "diabolical" Mr. Breed simply "bursts into a song"-- and it is a farcical number beginning, "The dilly-dally turtle/ And the niddle-noddle shilly-shally . . ." (96). [Such farcical music was often part of a Ziegfeld production, as in the song sung by Eddie Cantor that began, "Oh How She Could Yacki, Hicki, Wicki,

Wacki Woo . . .” (Ziegfeld 71)]. In Chapter IV of Jingling in the Wind, a song is interpolated to re-introduce the character, John Bolingbroke, into the action as Jeremy hears this man singing a corruption of the ballad, “Bangum and the Boar” (191) while he walks through the dark. Then, again, in Chapter IV, a song about “Penelope Weaving” (200-202), provides background for a scene about the relationship of Breed and Tulip.

In the final chapter, the music provides a lyric finale to the novel, as the greater portion of the text describes singing and records the words to songs. The spider of Chapter V begins the music with a “chant” (232-233), which provides background, but birds also sing, and John Bolingbroke reprises his earlier “Bangum and the Boar.” As the chapter is concluded, Jeremy and Tulip sing love songs to each other and then join in a duet, the spider sings a hymn to nature, and Bolingbroke sings the ballad of “St. Thomas” (255). The auditory images and the action of the singers are obviously intended to provide a parallel to the musical finale of a stage production, complete with the conventional reprise and lover’s duet. However, the novel’s final paragraphs do more; they provide a poetic statement of a philosophical stance which is critical to an understanding of Roberts’ work as a whole, and as such are invaluable as a window into the mind of the writer. McDowell points to Berkeley as the source for Roberts’ fundamental belief in what he calls, “the sovereign self” (152), a belief which is expressed with both simplicity and profundity in Jingling in the Wind’s final paragraph in which Roberts’ writes, “Life is from within, and thus the noise outside is a wind blowing in a mirror” (256). This assertion that reality is to be found only in the internal workings of the human mind rather than in the external, physical world illuminates the author’s statement, quoted earlier in this text, that “The one reality in this is Jeremy’s soul or mind, that alone can be treated seriously” (qtd. in Rovit Herald 89) and also informs Roberts’ art as a whole, an art in which the inner lives of

characters is the one subject of supreme importance (Warren "Within" xxxii), a concept exemplified in Jeremy's statement, "I am from this moment forth a man of action and my ideal is in my mind" (236).

It would seem, then, that Jingling in the Wind is important to a study of Roberts' work in light of its clarity in expressing many of the author's ideas on a wide range of topics, from her art to economics and religion. And an examination of its suggested structural model, the musical revue, aids in an understanding of why the author employed loose plot structure, comic twists, and pervasive music. This study would not imply, however, that these elements necessarily provide a totally successful aesthetic achievement, but that they suggest another facet of the mind of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, who was always attempting to find unique forms or designs through which to express her art.

Roberts' use of the structures of musical comedy and the symphony, however, represent only two of the ways she was using musical patterns in her novels. Music is also written deeply into both the language and basic sentence structure of her work. Slavik calls her style a "folk poetic idiom," ("Spoon" 756), and Rovit asserts that she was drawn to the use of folk-speech in her novels "because it was musical" (Herald 142). This folk-speech, absorbed from the "archaic and fluent" speech of her maternal grandmother, appealed greatly to the author (Library of Congress Box 9). She wrote: "When someone uses a rich flow of archaic words, indicative of deep resting pools of archaic thought, my very heart leaps" (qtd. in Slavik "Spoon" 756). Her interest in "archaic thought" is undoubtedly traceable to her fascination with history and "her own past as a Kentuckian descended from early settlers" (Bradford x), as well as to her desire to record the memories of her parents and grandparents in order to understand "a way of life but little described in song or story" (E.M. Roberts "Foreward" 130).

Folk-speech also appealed to her for its “peculiar poetry,” poignancy, directness, and simplicity (Library of Congress Box 8). In addition, her comments about the language or folk-idiom of The Time of Man shed further light on her interest in this aspect of her work:

The Time of Man is not written about mountain people, as we Kentuckians would readily know. There is not a word used in the speech idiom which I have not heard in my own county. In writing this speech I chose the archaic word rather than the illiterate word, wishing to achieve, if possible, a speech marked with beauty and dignity, a speech made mellow by long use.

(Library of Congress Box 9)

Examples of Roberts’ use of archaic speech include the use of the prefix a (pronounced as the unstressed vowel) before verbs ending with -ing (which Roberts spells as en). So, for example, words such as swapping and trading, when used in dialogues or interior monologues, are written as “a-swappen” and “a-traden” (The Time of Man 54). Other examples of archaic speech, all from The Time of Man, appear in the use of the word “hit” instead of the pronoun, it; “outen,” for out of; “unlessen,” for unless; and the contractions, “ne’er,” “o’nary,” and “see’t,” for never, ordinary, and see that (55, 53, 55, 62, 63, 85). Roberts’ folk-idiom also contains archaic expressions such as, “right glad to favor you,” to express pleasure in doing a favor for another; “got shed of,” to mean got rid of; “she was taken bad,” to signify serious illness, and “fatched-up,” to mean reared (Time 55, 77, 32, 132, 141).

Slavik notes that Roberts transforms this “Kentucky folk speech into a rhythm” and suggests that this is accomplished through the author’s efforts to fully “integrate poetry . . . into [her] prose style” (“Journey” viii, xiv). Indeed, the author herself wrote that she was attempting in her writing “to achieve a form in which the uses of

poetry and prose are identical" (qtd. in Slavik "Spoon" 756), implying that, for Roberts, poetry, as a genre, was so highly regarded that she wished to fashion a prose style that employed its qualities. The result is a style which Van Doren has called "the most interesting thing about Miss Roberts" (97), and about which Slavik has called music the chief element ("Journey" xv). It is important before exploring the reasons Roberts attempted to craft a prose style which so closely resembled poetry, to delineate the qualities of that style which so distinguish it. In fact, Slavik has identified six characteristics of Roberts' style which give it the musical qualities which such critics as Knickerbocker (104), Tate (103,111), Rovit (Herald 139-145), Van Doren (97-101), Buchan (470-481), and McDowell (57-62) so readily acknowledge. Slavik (whose work is much indebted to Alexander Buchan) suggests that Roberts' prose creates a sense of the musical through the use of "rising and falling sentence rhythms," "the repetition of subject-predicate-participial phrase sentence patterns," "the repetition of words and phrases," the use of "piled-up 'ands' and compound sentences," and the "frequent use of the 'would' tense" -- indicating the subjunctive mood ("Journey" xv).

Buchan notes that Roberts' sentences have an "inner cadence" -- much like the "rising and falling rhythm" which Slavik describes -- and suggests that this is based on the four stress beat of the ballad line (473). He further states that evidence of the rhythm and meter of the ballad may be "traced in the endings of innumerable sentences," as exemplified by two from My Heart and My Flesh: "... or from time to time there would be a space of quiet when no one spoke," and "... a gladness shining through her thin blood, where life still beat" (qtd. in Buchan 473). This four stress beat pattern is also apparent in the simple sentences near the end of Chapter VII of The Time of Man, as Ellen thinks about Jasper leaving. Using the four stress beat, as well as

the often-used subjunctive mood and repetition, Ellen wishfully declares three times, "He would come back," while her mother twice asserts, "He's gone for good" (284).

Certainly, the cadence of Roberts' sentences also becomes rhythmic or musical through the repetition of the syntactical patterns demonstrated in the following examples, all taken from two successive paragraphs in The Time of Man and describing Jonas Prather's affair with Jule Nestor:

Jonas told his story sparingly, deferring its point . . .

His voice was dry and husky as he told of the broken throat latch, drawing near his story . . .

Jule was as dirty as ever and dirtier, offering dirty talk. (Time 156)

Each above example of the subject-predicate-participial phrase pattern, which Roberts frequently employs, contributes to what has been called the "musically monotonous flow" of her prose (Rovit Herald 140).

The same effect of rhythmic monotony is also achieved through the use of repetition as the following example, utilizing the word name, from The Great Meadow, demonstrates. In this passage, which also shows Roberts' adept handling of archaic speech, Diony's mother speaks to her as Diony prepares to leave Virginia for the wilderness of Kentucky. Italics are not found in the novel, but used herein for emphasis.

'And when you've *named* all the *names* you fancy and when Berk is satisfied with *names* and's *named* after all his folks he has a mind to, I wish you'd *name* one, iffen hit's a girl-baby, Nancy Anne. I always had a favorance to Nancy Anne to *name* a girl with.' (128)

Roberts also uses repetition within dialogues between characters to create an antiphonal effect, as in the following conversation about wilderness heroes, overheard by Diony at Ft. Harrod, and which the text describes as a "recital" (182):

'And Logan is of a great size too, a giant.'

'A big heart inside his breast.'

'Logan, his body made big to hold his big heart.' (182)

In fact, Rovit calls a longer passage in The Time of Man, much like the one above in its antiphonal qualities, "an operatic duet," because of the "repetition of words and phrases which interweave between the . . . speakers," and further comments that it "manifests not only a tonal but an emotional harmony between the two" characters (Herald 145). This passage of dialogue between Ellen and Jasper the night before their wedding, contains, for example, seven repetitions of the word sweet as Jasper describes his physical attraction to Ellen. One sentence alone, "Your mouth is sweet to taste and your hair is sweet, and under the cloak is sweet," contains three uses of the word (292). Additionally, the lovers echo each other in their promises, as Jasper states, "We will not part any more. Some fair country is what we'll find, and never part, me and you," (291), and Ellen later responds, "And I will never leave you, Jasper, forever, but I will stay with you all my enduren life and I will work for you all my days." Note also in this speech the repetition of the phrases, "I will," and "all my," as well as the word, "you" (293), which taken together, add to the rhythmic quality of the prose. And, in the above example, as Alexander Buchan suggests about the body of Roberts' work as a whole, there are poetic "turns of phrase" which come "indistinctly but certainly" from the King James Version of the Bible (481). For example, Ellen's words to Jasper, "I will never leave you," are reminiscent in phrasing and meter of Ruth 4:16, where Ruth says, "Entreat me not to leave thee."

Slavik also points to Roberts' use of "pile-up and's" and compound sentences as contributing to the rhythmic effect of her prose. One example typical of this stylistic feature of Roberts' work is found in The Great Meadow in Chapter V, just after the birth

of Diony's child, Tom. Italics are added for emphasis:

Diony and Berk would sit together over the cradle, a shield of smooth wood lined with pelts *and* a bit of a blanket, *and* they would look at the infant *and* at each other, *and* smile. (222)

Another example from Chapter V of The Great Meadow reads: "New spring winds swept over the fort *and* over the forest, *and* they beat Diony's skirt in a quick rhythm when she went without *and* tossed the ends of her shawl" (224). A third example, this one of "piled-up and's," gives further evidence that this stylistic feature of Roberts' work is used most often to provide rhythmic effect in passages of descriptive prose, rather than in dialogues: "Molly Anne was small *and* dark-haired, with freckled hands *and* withering skin that had been burnt by the sun *and* the rain *and* the winds . . ." (Great 224).

The "piled-up and's" used in examples such as these, may well be a further indication of Roberts' indebtedness to the ballad form, which relies heavily on rhythmic repetition (Friedman xv). For example, in the ballad "Sweet William" ["Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (Friedman 52-53)], from Roberts' own copy of Josephine McGill's Folk Songs of the Kentucky Mountains, extant in the St. Catharine collection of Roberts papers, the last stanza alone contains four repetitions of the word and:

They grew *and* they grew to the high church top,
And then they could grow no higher;
And there they tied in a true lover's knot
 The red rose *and* the briar. (McGill n.p.)

When reading Roberts' own poetry from her first volume, Under the Tree, her use of the word and as a rhythmic device becomes pervasive. In the poem, "Babes in the

Woods" (38-39)(based on a short ballad of the same title found in McGill, and which itself uses the word and seven times), Roberts uses and to begin nine of her sixteen lines. In "The Circus," ten of her twenty lines begin with and, and in "The Worm," twelve of twenty-four lines begin with this same word. It is quite obviously the word most often used to begin lines of poetry throughout the entire volume. An excellent example of this is found in the last stanza of the poem, "The Sunday Bonnet":

And Alice said, "Oh, lawsie me!

And then she cried *and* came running down.

And everyone went to see, *and* the cat

Had five little cats in the bonnet crown. (66)

It is thus apparent that Roberts was utilizing (and adopting as her own) a poetic convention throughout her prose as a further means of "integrat[ing] poetry into her prose style" (Slavik "Journey" viii), an objective she clearly desires as evidenced by her comment, noted earlier in this study, that she was trying "to achieve a form in which the uses of poetry and prose are identical" (qtd. in Slavik "Spoon" 756). However, as Rovit so perceptively comments, "Stylistic analysis can only point a direction" (*Herald* 148), and so it is well, then, in an attempt to understand Roberts' style, to explore what were, for her, on a deeper level, the "uses of poetry." First, it is important to note that she described her own prose style as "poetic realism" (Library of Congress Box 9). She explains this term as descriptive of the process by which she is attempting, through a unique approach to language, to create contact between poetry and real life. She writes in a note found in Box 8 at The Library of Congress:

I find that I have tried for a poignant speech, as direct as a simple equation. 2 plus 2=4. And I have tried for great precision in rendering sensuous contacts -- the points where poetry touches life.

By her use of "life" in the above sentence, Roberts is referring to "that which is held in the common mind as being true . . . the common reality shared by the people for whom the poet speaks" (Library of Congress Box 8). So, for Roberts, poetry's purpose is to clarify this "common reality," as she explains in her definition of poetry:

Poetry, then is . . . A high synthesis of human longings, brought to clear statement in terms of beauty . . . so that the hind and the yokel may participate in this synthesis . . . when their . . . emotion is clarified to some pattern or technique as in folk poetry . . . (Library of Congress Box 8)

Thus, for Roberts, the "pattern or technique" is the all-important 'way in,' the door or methodology by which participation in the poetic experience, this clarification of emotion, which she believed should lead to a "meaningful communal level of shared experience" (Rovit Herald 159) is made possible; hence, the supreme importance of pattern or structure and stylistic techniques in this author's work. Her definition of music as "pattern in motion" (Library of Congress Box 8), further clarifies music as a means of communal participation in the poetic experience, a way of establishing this "sensuous contact" between poetry and life. She writes that, "We go into the unseen by way of the visible, into the unknown by way of the known" ("On Poetry" 45), suggesting again the importance of "the visible" and "the known" -- the "common reality" and its function as the agent by which poetry "search[es] into the relation between mind and matter, into the one-ness of flesh and thin air - spirit" ("On Poetry" 45). That Roberts believed music could provide a way of exploring this relationship between the visible and the knowable and the unseen and unknown [which the author defined as the "high function of Poetry" ("On Poetry" 45)], is made clear by her use of music on every structural level possible within her work. There are, most obviously, the printed lyrics to innumerable songs found within the texts of the novels; on a deeper

level are found thematic movements within the novels which are patterned after symphonies, ballads, and musical theatre. On a still deeper level, Roberts finds music in the natural world, as represented by the sounds of birds, animals, and by the rhythmic return of the seasons. And, finally in a structural sense, Roberts writes musical rhythms into the very fabric of the syntax of her novels through the use of her folk-idiom and consciously crafted repetitions of words and grammatical constructions, again, as a way to attempt to create what she terms "contact between poetry and life" so that participation in the poetic experience is possible for even the "hind and the yokel" ("On Poetry 45; Library of Congress Box 8). As Donald Davidson so clearly explains in his essay, "Poetry as Tradition," it is impossible to completely separate poetic style "from the poem in its absolute totality," and as he quotes Joseph Conrad's words that "the meaning of the poem is not a kernel lying at its center, but is in the wrappings that must be unfolded one by one as much as it is in the center" (7), one is reminded that the stylistic analysis of an author's work, although it may, as Rovit states, "only point a direction" (Herald 148), that direction should be invariably toward the center of the writer's aesthetic purpose. So, indeed, when Campbell and Foster state that "Song lay at the very base of Miss Roberts' imagination" (259), it is important to explore this "wrapping" of song that envelops this author's art in an effort to understand how and why the writer uses it to push the written word as close to music as "the medium will allow" in order "to make an identity of [the] close relation between the physical and the spiritual" (246).

The author's belief that music could provide a bridge between the knowable and the unknown is also made clear through the character Theodosia Bell of My Heart and My Flesh, whose music provides "An interpretation of life. Of mind, mood, thought, by the way of sound . . . speech for the spirit of man" (78), and who wishes to push music to

its farthest limits in order to experience the unknown. Theodosia states: "I will go to the end of everything, I'll look over the edge of the last precipice of music . . . I'll look over the last precipice of music and say, 'God!' I'll say 'Where are you?'" (94). As Rovit suggests, Roberts describes in the above passage what she attempts to achieve through the use of music in her novels -- "the actual process of a mind perceiving sensation [through music] and transforming it into realized experience" (*Herald* 141). Again, Joseph Conrad, in his "Preface to The Nigger of the 'Narcissus,'" explains a similar view of the purpose and effect of art, one which may complement the aesthetic aims of Elizabeth Madox Roberts:

"All art . . . appeals primarily to the senses, and . . . must also make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions. It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the color of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music -- which is the art of arts. And it is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting, never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to color, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play.

(1499)

Roberts truly uses music as "magic suggestiveness," as Conrad states, in order to reach through the senses of the reader to his or her emotions in order to find those places where poetry can communicate on a level where reader and artist can participate in a "common reality." It is also Roberts' desire to use music (as exemplified in *Theodosia Bell*) to push the known, sensory experience as far as possible toward the mystical or "unknown," which may be what Conrad suggests when he calls music "magic." And it is surely Roberts' "care for the shape and ring of sentences" through which her aims are

accomplished.

Hence, it would seem that Roberts, by using music on so many different levels in her fiction, is herself pushing it to its farthest limits in order to approximate an art which connects poetry and life -- one in which her style, in the words of Rovit, "serves her aesthetic aim by luring her reader into a participative position, where the reading experience may bring true enlargement of perspective and a heightened sense of reality" (Herald 148).

Chapter III

"All the sounds of the earth are like music" - Oscar Hammerstein

Romanticism and The Music of Nature

Many scholars who have written about Elizabeth Madox Roberts have noted the importance of her work's connectedness to the earth. Slavik states that "few writers have so intimately joined character and earth" ("Journey" xiii); Lewis P. Simpson sees in the novels, "a sacramental connection of the artist with the simple and uncomplicated earth" (72); Janney calls Roberts "earth-born" (409); and Campbell and Foster suggest that there is "No single novel, short story, or important poem in which the earth does not figure as a significant and healthful influence" (87). Slavik further notes Roberts' indebtedness to two of her acknowledged influences, Thomas Hardy and John Millington Synge, for, in the case of Hardy, a view of life which was "inseparable from the natural world" and one closely tied to "a sense of place" ("Journey" x). Slavik states that Roberts "admires [Synge's] wonder at the beauty of the world in the midst of desolation, appreciation of landscape, recognition of nature as a dramatic presence, and his experience of union with nature ("Journey" x-xi). Since, as noted in Chapter II, Campbell and Foster suggest that the "serious function" of music in Roberts' work is to create a relationship "between the physical and spiritual," it is appropriate that the physical world is often represented in her art through its musical sounds. She wrote:

We perceive that the mind is forever trying to possess physical things in all their fullness and beauty. It wants flowers or grass or winds or the green of

leaves or the wetness of water, to hold in the very hands of the mind. Poetry searches into this desire. ("On Poetry" 45)

Her work accomplishes this creation of the immediacy of the physical world on the printed page, in part, as she uses the auditory imagery of nature. Even in her letters, Roberts demonstrates her unique ability to create auditory imagery. In a letter to her friend, Monroe Wheeler, she wrote, in describing a Kentucky spring -- "The hills float off in beautiful rhythmns, lifting and turning, line on line" (Library of Congress Box 9). Roberts uses the sounds of birds, animals, and other sounds found in nature in order to reflect what is occurring internally in the minds of her characters in an attempt to connect the inner world of "ideas" with the "visible" outer world of nature (Library of Congress Box 8). As the hills, as described above, "float off," they seem to become spiritualized - as though their metaphorical kinship with musical score, imbues them with life.

It is tempting to suggest that Roberts' habit of creatively using nature (and its sounds) to connect the physical and spiritual was suggested to her early in life by an elementary school science text, Friends in Feathers and Fur (1884), largely devoted to birds and extant in the Roberts collection at St. Catharine College. The preface to this text states, "Beginning with familiar forms of life, the pupil is led to see more clearly that which is about him, and then to advance into the realm of the unknown," a philosophy clearly paralleling the author's own statement that, "we go into the . . . unknown by way of the known" ("On Poetry" 44).

This principle is further expressed by Roberts in the novel, The Great Meadow, through the musical sounds of birds. In this work, one of the more interesting recurring motifs is that of the cry of the owl. It first appears as the central character, Diony Hall Jarvis, listens to her father read the lines, " Save that from yonder ivy-manteled

tower/ The moping owl does to the moon complain," from Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" (qtd. in Great 126), a poem that is described in the novel as "aching" (127). The owl's significance as a harbinger of danger, the unknown, and death is clear and occurs again as Diony, in the open wilderness, thinks of how her family back at home in Albemarle lives "without danger," and then, as she blends sight, sound, and memory, she recognizes the "false" cry of an owl as an Indian signal, the most potent danger imaginable to the travelers (166-167). Later, after her husband Berk's departure from Ft. Harrod on his quest to avenge his mother's murder by Indians, Diony is wandering, distraught and finds herself accidentally locked out of the fort for the night. At this point in the novel, Diony again hears owls and acknowledges her ability to distinguish an Indian's cry from an owl's, but she knows that this recognition is the key to her safety on only one level. Diony's growing understanding of true danger has led her to the knowledge that the real peril she faces comes from the fact that she feels "lost" and filled with "terror" in what she describes as the "indefinite [chaotic] earth" (276). The initial appearance of the cry of the owl is connected vaguely with the possibility of danger and death and also with separation from home and family. The second appearance of owls signals an immediate physical danger from Indians, but with the third appearance of owls' cries, Diony realizes that she is in a kind of spiritual peril since she knows how little she can comprehend beyond the actuality of the "herbs" and "trees" around her. She can discern the owl's cry and know her world superficially, but she longs to move beyond this kind of knowledge of the visible world and "run home to God" (276). For Diony, then, ultimately, the greatest danger is not from outside forces, but comes in the moment when nature, symbolized by the cry of the owl, brings no advancement into the realm of the spiritual, or "unknown," beyond the knowledge that it exists.

Most often, however, in The Great Meadow, bird-song is used as an accompaniment to moments of great joy and peace for Diony. After Diony and her party reach their destination of Ft. Harrod in Kentucky, she looks into the future and imaginatively creates planted fields over which plovers fly "calling now one and now all together" (208). Then, when Berk and Diony experience joy in the birth of their son, Tom, birds provide background music described as "twitter and clatter . . . shrill cries and whistled notes [and] pure flute calls" (223). Later, in the days when Evan Muir courts Diony, an orchestration of sounds occurs as Muir sings, Diony weaves with "irregular rhythm," and geese make "a high thin musical clamor over the noises of the fort" (280). Finally, as Diony and Muir move out of the fort and into the house Berk built, the plovers Diony previously imagined cry overhead. Bird-song, then, in The Great Meadow, functions both as a reflection of the inner mind of Diony Jarvis, as well as a catalyst, as in the case of the owl, for deeper knowledge of both self and inscrutable mysteries beyond the self. The reader may, thus, be reminded of lines in William Wordsworth's "To the Cuckoo," in which the poet writes that the cuckoo is "No bird, but an invisible thing,/ A voice, a mystery . . ." (309).

Roberts employs the voice of the owl, again "mysterious" and "invisible," in her last novel, Black is my Truelove's Hair. Throughout much of the story, a strange sound haunts the central character, Dena Janes, although she never sees the creature who makes it. Roberts describes the sound as like "the hoot of an owl . . . within the rhythm of a dog's bark" (118), and writes that it sounded "as if it came from some musical creature" (147). Later in the novel, it is still clearer that musical sound is evoked by the creature as the author writes that Dena hears "five or six notes" that make a "curve" (237-238). Like the cries of the owls in The Great Meadow, this sound also symbolizes danger. In Black is My Truelove's Hair, Dena James' life is

threatened by Bill Langtry, whom she leaves after it becomes obvious that he does not plan to marry her even though the two have gone away together for that purpose. When Dena tells Langtry she is leaving to go back home, he vows to kill her if she ever becomes involved with another man. In her notes, Roberts makes it clear that "Bill Langtry is a symbol - he is death" and cites three examples (found on pages 13, 69, and 280) which point to this fact (Library of Congress Box 9). The sound of the "dog-owl" (229), which symbolizes Bill Langtry's threat and, also, literally, death itself, creates in Dena a "vague apprehension" (119), which grows into "terror" (227) as she reveals that the sound "remind[s] her of the shape [of a gun] she had drawn in the sand" when she told her friend, Journeyman, about Langtry's threat (226-227). Even when Dena's new love, Cam Elliott, informs her that the mysterious sound is merely an echo created by a barking dog, the reality of the threat of death which the sound creates in her mind, is more real than the verifiable fact that it is an echo. Campbell and Foster call the sound the "objective equivalent for the psychic trauma created by [Dena's] experience with Bill Langtry" (194). Certainly, this is true, but the sound may suggest even more. Clearly, what Dena imagines possesses a reality that cannot be displaced. Roberts writes of Dena:

She fancied a distorted creature having the head of a dog and the body of an owl . . . at night it flitted lower to open its terrible dog-mouth and cry owl-cries mingled with dog-rhythms. In the cry was the printed shape, the threat, the terror. In the five or six notes of the whole cry there was a curve that made a shape as it outlined the iron weapon she had drawn in the gravel of Journeyman's path.

(237-238)

It would seem that in the above passage, Roberts is describing not only the fear Dena experiences, but a great deal about the process of artistic composition, the process by

which the imagination of a musician (or a writer) may utilize sensory stimuli, auditory or visual, and place an imaginative representation of those stimuli on a musical score or a printed page in a particular form or pattern in such a way that the original, inspiring sound or sight assumes a form stamped less by its origins than by the imagination that produces it. Hence, a simple echo can be transformed, through the imagination, into a "printed shape" which is symbolic of death. In Roberts' world, then, memory and imagination may be triggered by nature's sounds in order to produce a kind of internal reality in the mind of the artist (or a character, like Dena Janes), a reality that may be of more significance to the creation of the art or the understanding of the world than a simple sound would readily suggest. In such a view, the understanding of the internal, imaginative, interpretation of a response to an external stimulus, is much more important than objectively understanding the stimulus itself.

Roberts illustrates this concept further in Black is My Truelove's Hair as Cam Elliott relates to Dena an experience of "years ago," the memory of which has been triggered by the song of a redbird. After Cam relates the experience, Dena asks, "How would a redbird make you remember all that?" And Cam replies, "The shape somehow. Shape of the song. And out of a tangle of horseweeds" (243). Thus, the music of nature first sparks the memory of a significant event for Cam, the day he learned to shoot a gun, then creates a desire to share the event with Dena. He states, "I'll tell Dena. I'll make Dena see along of me," and he instinctively understands that the song's "shape" is "somehow" the key to his ability to not only remember the story but also compels him to "make" another person understand it, as well. It seems, here, that music may function as a key ingredient in the process by which stories are told, suggesting an interrelatedness in the mind of Elizabeth Madox Roberts between music and her art, giving further evidence to substantiate Campbell and Foster's claim that "song

lay at the very base of Miss Roberts' imagination" (259). Interestingly, once Dena hears Cam's explanation of how the "shape of the song" of the redbird triggered his story, she affirms his answer by replying, "It's a likely thing enough. It's the way a person remembers" (243), a concept that may call to mind Marcel Proust's belief, borrowed from Henri Bergson and expressed in the Swan's Way portion of Remembrance of Things Past, that memory can "well up from [the] unconscious mind" when the sensory stimuli to which it has been wedded is re-experienced (Mack 1435).

This same pattern of bird-song triggering memory, imagination, and response is repeated in The Time of Man in a conversation between Jasper and Ellen, as she, speaking of the cries of doves, states: "It's the sorrowfulest sound there is . . . It calls to mind good times that are lost and bad sorrowful ones, both gone together somehow" (272). Also, in a significant passage, which explores the meaning of the novel's title, as Ellen Chesser and her father are removing stones from a newly plowed field, Henry tells her, "No plow ever cut this-here hill afore, not in the whole time of man" (79). The phrase, "the time of man," captures the young Ellen's imagination and inspires interest in both human and natural history. Later, as she works alone, she hears "doves crying" and "plovers . . . singing," and Roberts writes, "the afternoon seemed very still back of the dove calls and the cries of the plovers, back of a faint dying phrase, 'in the time of man'" (81). It is, again, as though Roberts is using musical sound as a bridge to get "back of" the sound itself to something more profound that the sound suggests -- once more "looking over the edge of the last precipice of music," as Theodosia Bell wishes to do in My Heart and My Flesh. When Ellen, then, remembers the words, "the time of man," a phrase which Roberts says signifies how "Life is a slender thread running through the brown crust of the earth" (Library of Congress Box 9), she cries out, as though compelled by the combination of music and memory to communicate with what

Roberts here calls, "the great sky," a phrase suggestive of the divine, "Here I am! I'm Ellen Chesser! I'm here" (81). After her cry, she then "listens" and "search[es] the air with her senses," as if she expects to hear an audible response (81). In this scene from the novel, it would seem that bird-song becomes even more than "the way a person remembers," but functions as a conduit by which the unknown may be intuitively approached.

Although bird-songs are the sounds of nature most frequently encountered in the works of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, other musical sounds of nature function in a similar way in order to evoke or reflect emotion, thought, memory, or lead toward an exploration of the spiritual realm, which Roberts believed, in accordance with the thought of Bishop Berkeley, was "behind" the "reliable regularities of the sensed world" (Jessop 106). For example, there are "ewes" in He Sent Forth a Raven, whose cries make a "deep running tone" (121); there are "singing" frogs and crickets in The Time of Man (49); there is rain, which makes a "crescendo" and rises "higher in the scale" in Jingling in the Wind (1); and there is the "musical thunder" of [the] barnyard" in Black is My Truelove's Hair (38). But possibly one of the most interesting aspects of the way Roberts uses music is to be found in her fascination with the way man-made music is perceived in the minds of her characters as it floats through the air and seems almost to become part of the natural world into which it travels. In The Great Meadow, after Berk's mother, Elvira, has been killed by Indians, a woman who cares for the wounded Diony, chants, "Blessed are the dead the rain falls on," and in Diony's mind, the chant is "mingled thereafter" with the sound of the rain itself (200-201). In Black is My Truelove's Hair, Roberts describes the sound of the evening bell at St. Mark's Church, whose sound comes from "the valley" near the hill where the church stands and finds its way to "the pasture" of the Janes farm. In this passage, Roberts

moves from auditory imagery suggesting the blending of sound and landscape, to a visual image of the church itself as one with the land, as well. She writes: "The spire was gray and silver and stood as if it were woven in and out among the trees" (145). Near the end of Black is My Truelove's Hair, during the night when Dena is pursued by Langtry, she lies in a hayfield and places her ear next to the earth in order to hear the sounds of voices and music "that seemed to arise from the Glen" (273). To Dena, these sounds seem "meaningless and distant" and "less real than the barking of a dog toward the north" (273). As this music of man becomes blended with the landscape (signified by Dena's need to put her ear to the earth to hear it), it is perceived in Dena's mind as "less real" because it is overshadowed by Langtry's threat, symbolized by the barking dog. This same mingling of music and landscape also occurs in The Time of Man as Ellen hides in a pasture to listen to voices, singing. Roberts writes that "The night brought sublimated tones across the interlying space, thin planes of sound spreading through the trees and rocks" (47), indicating, it seems, that the music is absorbed into the natural world as it moves through the air, becoming metaphorically concrete as it moves through the trees and rocks, a description that is consistent with Roberts' concept that music is defined, in part, by motion (Library of Congress Box 9). Her statement that "music is pattern in motion" is further exemplified in a description of piano music as it "came out of the house, curves of music running through the air" (Time 51). Certainly, "planes . . . spreading," and "curves . . . running," are quite literal descriptions of "pattern in motion," as the music moves outward to become part of the natural world.

A final example of Roberts' blending of man-made music with nature is found, again, in The Time of Man, as the young Ellen, in a state between sleeping and waking, hears guitar music, which is described by Roberts with vivid, active verbs, all denoting

motion -- "beating," "danced," "ran," "recede," "growing," "rounded," "moved," "changing," "scurried," "falling," "breaking," and "rising" (106-107). This music is perceived by Ellen to be "coming out of the pasture that all day had been sopping mud" (106-107). This guitar music, which so clearly communicates to Ellen, is first made by a man who is walking home at night, but then changes as it passes through the natural world [the tones "rounded the osage shrubs and moved . . . toward the west, changing rhythms"], and, finally, is "recognized" by Ellen as something "beautiful . . . rising out of the muddy pasture" (107). Thus, Ellen, in this instance, is able to understand (and later internalize) the concept of music and beauty rising literally from the mud as she, who, according to Roberts, "must be identified with the dirt of the ground" (Library of Congress Box 9), becomes transformed into a woman who is both musical and beautiful. In each of the above examples, the music produced by man is internalized in the minds of these characters after it comes into contact with the world of nature, and Ellen's, Dena's, and Diony's perceptions of reality or self are altered by the fact that nature and music are united as participants in the process by which each woman learns through subjective, imaginative listening. Diony learns that the sounds of nature and music can be forever united and fixed in the memory. Dena learns that reality is created in her mind by her own fears and the way those fears cause her to perceive the sounds she hears. And Ellen learns that the beauty of music can work its way into her mind despite the most impossible of conditions. It is as though nature colors the music as it filters it on its journey inward, in order, as Roberts writes in My Heart and My Flesh, "to make a speech for the spirit of man" (78).

It is, however, in My Heart and My Flesh, the Roberts novel most overtly concerned with the world and life of a musician, that the author most clearly unites music and the natural world. Theodosia Bell lifts her eyes from her violin to see a field

where the "earth had been made new and where it ran perpetually now with her singing legato . . ." (77); she plays scales, "blending them in her thought with the running autumn and crisp frost" (79); and, at the point after the grandfather's death when her ownership of his estate is in jeopardy, she identifies so completely with the earth and its music that she becomes one with it. This scene, describing Theodosia's intense emotions as she thinks of her earliest memories of her grandfather's farm, Linden Hill, is, in the character's mind, seen as "a super-drama," heightened by the belief that the land is hers because it is "deeply imbedded" in her memory and is part of the "fragrant, richly toned ideas" associated with the unfolding, intellectual growth she experienced there (185-186). It is significant to note Roberts' use of these sensory images of smell and musical sound to describe Theodosia's thoughts. The passage then records how the child, Theodosia, enjoyed digging in the ground with her "fingertips," emphasizing, by repetition, how she used her hands to explore "the earth to find out its way" (186). Roberts writes: "Her mind was fixed now to regain the visible sign of the old play, to keep the trail that led back to her first knowledge" (186). The author's use of the phrase, "old play," of course, on one level, describes Theodosia's childhood digging, but through this memory she is following a "trail" left in her mind by sensory impressions -- sight, touch, smell, and sound -- and so, clearly, the word "play" is also evocative of Theodosia's musicianship, especially since climactic sentences in this same passage describe the memory of hearing music, her first bird-song, a memory "so real and vivid as to be cruelly felt," and one which gives her "a quick and joyous pleasure" (186). The bird-song leads her, then, from memory to "pleasure" to "recognition" (steps carrying her, surely, more inward) as she realizes that she is "attached to the earth" (186). Her union with the earth, effected by all her senses, but significantly, by that of sound through bird-song, culminates in Theodosia's statement: "I perceive the

earth, myself imbedded into it, attached to it at all points . . . sinking at each moment into it' " (186). This complete identification with the earth, which F. Lamar Janney calls a "theophany" (393), and which Slavik sees as "sacramental" as he describes this same "neurasthenic interpenetration of the outer and inner worlds" in the life of Ellen Chesser ("Journey" xiii), again validates Campbell and Foster's belief that the "serious function of music [in the work of Roberts] is to make an identity . . . of [the] close relation between the physical and the spiritual" (246). Roberts identification with the earth also creates a clear point of connection between her work and the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, especially the work of the poet William Wordsworth in his belief that it is the function of poetry to join the physical and spiritual through the poet's "mirror[ing] of nature" and the spiritual elements within it ("Preface" 362). This concept is made clear in Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," as he writes that it is the physical, which he calls "nature and the language of sense," that he finds as "guardian of [his] heart, and soul/ Of all [his] moral being" (lines 108-110).

It is possible, in part, to suggest a relationship of influence between Wordsworth's literary philosophy and the work of Roberts since during her years as an upperclassman at The University of Chicago, she took a course titled, "Wordsworth and the Romantic Poets," as well as one called, "Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century" (Spears 139), and although she does not acknowledge Wordsworth or any other romantic poets as her "masters" [as she does acknowledge Hardy, Synge, Beethoven, Hopkins, Dickinson, and Shakespeare (Slavik "Journey" x)], she was obviously well-acquainted with them, and their influence is quite apparent in her work. In a letter to her father, written from Chicago, dated May 18, 1920, and now in the Roberts collection at St. Catharine College, the Wordsworthian influence is clear. She

writes about, and sends copies of, the poems she will eventually publish in the volume, Under the Tree, stating that she has tried, in this work, to be "very accurate and to tell the plain truth, [for] that is what makes good, close-to-Nature poetry." And In this same letter, at the bottom of the page on which she has typed the poem, "The Babes in the Woods," she writes: "This is an intimation of immortality. It is founded on the fact that children cannot think of the dead except as living." Although, Roberts' explanation of the theme of her poem is certainly not consistent with that of Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," it does reflect the author's knowledge of it, as well as the content and precise theme of another poem by Wordsworth, "We Are Seven" (252), a poem, indeed, about a child who thinks of her dead siblings as ever-present members of her family-unit.

In addition, Roberts is further linked to Wordsworth by her aesthetic concerns, which clearly mirror many of Wordsworth's poetic tenets as stated in his "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads, 1800. As Donald Davidson states in his essay, "Poetry as Tradition," "poetry has to be defended . . . The task is inescapable, and it cannot be left to the scholar and the nonpoet critic if the true role of the poet and the meaning of his art are to be asserted with sufficiently compelling force" (4). Since it is the purpose of this study to explore the meaning of Roberts' art, it is important to understand her view of poetry and to place it correctly in the tradition to which it belongs, believing that, that tradition's view of the poet and of the subject- at- hand, the music of nature, will aid in the illumination of Roberts' work.

Roberts' aesthetic theory, unlike that of Wordsworth, is not written into a coherent document like the "Preface." It is to be found scattered throughout her papers, primarily those housed at The Library of Congress. It was never published by the author during her lifetime. However, a significant portion of her theories about art may be

found in Box 9 of The Library of Congress collection; this box contains her black notebook, which comprises an organized group of unpublished writings, miscellaneous, in part, but significant for their personal importance to the author. She wrote on the front of her notebook:

My relation to my notebook is that of a Guinea-hen to her nest. If you put your hand into the Guinea-hen's nest, she will never return to it. Eggs must be taken, if at all, with a long-handled spoon.

The above quotation is, of course, the source for the title of William H. Slavik's excellent article on the Roberts papers and letters, "Taken with a Long-Handled Spoon," which appeared in The Southern Review in 1984. It is Slavik, also, who in the 1981 Elizabeth Madox Roberts issue of Kentucky Poetry Review, published a portion of Roberts' poetic theory, garnered from her black notebook, notes, and letters, in a document he titled simply, "On Poetry" (44-46). The notes included in "On Poetry" are not extensive; they comprise, when placed together in a somewhat disconnected fashion (certainly reflecting the way they were both written and found), a brief two and one half page text. That text, however, is most arresting in its parallels to Wordsworth's "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads, 1800. In describing Roberts' poetry in an essay accompanying "On Poetry," it is interesting that Slavik mentions that influences of "LaForgue and Corbiere, Hopkins and Hardy and Dickinson, Whitman and Frost, Yeats and Synge, Pound, and her contemporary imagists" (53), but neither he nor Rovit (in Herald to Chaos) mentions a Wordsworth connection. Interestingly, however, Rovit does note that Roberts is like Blake in the way her works require the reader to participate in "the life of the poem and recreate [it] out of his own experience" (Herald 153), and McDowell's preface to his Twayne series work on Roberts calls her fiction, "romantic." Additionally, McDowell does connect her to the romantic tradition by suggesting that the

character Jocelle Drake from He Sent Forth a Raven “embodies Coleridge’s concept of the imagination as ‘a shaping or modifying power’ which harmonizes into a new unity the disparate elements of experience” (145). However, Roberts’ own concepts about poetry bear such striking similarity to those espoused in Wordsworth’s 1800 “Preface,” that it is his influence that is primarily apparent. For example, Wordsworth writes about “humble and rustic” life, stating that because of “the necessary character of rural occupations,” the people who draw upon the land for their livelihood are closer to “essential passions of the heart,” and “simplicity” of feelings (358). Wordsworth also states that these “passions” and feelings, arising from closeness to the earth and unity with the natural world -- an “identity with the earth” -- elevate or enoble the agricultural or rustic man (358). Similarly, Elizabeth Madox Roberts extols the attributes of people who live close to the land, viewing them, like Wordsworth, as imbued with qualities absent in others. She writes:

Agricultural people are closer to their mortality. They touch it daily . . .
 whatever rises above mortality or frees itself from the earth escapes with
 greater ease and more swift flight by reason of this identity with the earth.
 I believe, then, that for the uses of the tragic muse, images can be continually
 drawn from some region close to the soil. (Library of Congress Box 9)

Additionally, Roberts follows Wordsworth’s dictum to use “incidents . . . from common life,” and to portray them by employing “language really used by men” (358). She states that she, too, “discard[s] all poetic fancies,” and attempts to write using a “direct speech,” which avoids “all literary words and all literary phrases” (44). Roberts also adopts Wordsworth’s belief that there “neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition” (360) in her attempt, as she states it, to “achieve a form in which the uses of poetry and prose are identical” (qtd. in

Slavik "Spoon" 757). For example, in a July 4, 1926, letter to Harriet Monroe, she wrote that in The Time of Man it was her desire to make the speeches of her characters come as close as possible to poetry (Slavik "Spoon" 757). And, significantly, Roberts, like Wordsworth, views the relationship between poetry and emotion as one of supreme importance. Roberts writes that "poetry must appeal to the emotions" (44), agreeing, both in theory and practice, with Wordsworth's belief that one purpose of poetry is to allow the emotional content or "feeling" developed in a poem to "give importance to the action or situation" (359), a precept certainly reminiscent of Roberts' predilection for the exploration of the interior lives of her characters, as exemplified in The Great Meadow, when Berk's return from Indian captivity is related in terms of its emotional impact on Diony.

Although Slavik and Rovit neglect to note a connection between Roberts and Wordsworth, in fact, several other scholars and critics have done so. Clifton Fadiman lauds Black is My Truelove's Hair for its "Wordsworthian simplicity" (69); Alexander M. Buchan pronounces her "in excellent literary company" in her "romantic" notion that the lives of those who work the soil possess a "finer reality" (476); and F.W. Knickerbocker (the title of whose article on The Time of Man, "Like Harmony in Music," is taken from Book I of Wordsworth's The Prelude) writes that Ellen Chesser "recalls Wordsworth's 'Michael'" because both depict "human life as part of the great process of nature" (104), and compares The Time of Man to The Prelude itself because of the way "sensations and memories" not only "mould" the mind but also lead to an understanding of "that mystery of the human spirit responding to the deeper mystery of things" (106). Knickerbocker quotes part of a passage from Book I of The Prelude, the whole of which praises the ability of nature (and, implicitly, a beneficent force behind it) to "intervene" and "minister" to the poet's "discordant" spirit. Wordsworth

writes:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
 Like harmony in music; there is a dark
 inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together
 In one society. (lines 340-345)

Both Roberts and Wordsworth would agree that there is an impulse in man for harmony, stemming from what Wordsworth calls “a dark inscrutable workmanship” in the above passage and “a motion and a spirit, that . . . rolls through all things in “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” (100-102). Of this impulse, Roberts writes: “Flowing out of him [man] forever is the imperative need, the ‘desire’ for some good way, some harmonious plan by which to live. And thus the argument leads back to God” (Library of Congress Box 9). That both authors write of the need to reconcile the discordant [cf. Diony Hall’s plea in The Great Meadow -- “Oh, to make a world out of chaos” (24)] and that they acknowledge the source of harmony as emanating from the divine, suggests a kinship on an even deeper level than agreement about subject matter and language would suggest.

Possibly, such a kinship may stem, in part, from the pastoral tradition on which both Wordsworth and Roberts freely draw. In his discussion of the pastoral tradition, Leo Marx states in his work, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America, that because of “a delicate blend of myth and reality” in the creation of the edenic, Arcadia, Virgil’s Eclogues are the source of the pastoral strain in American literature (19). He supports this contention by discussing the work’s theme of the necessity of man’s harmony with his “natural environment” and points to the “romantic pastoralism of Wordsworth” as derivative of Virgil, whose shepherd, Tityrus, a

musician, finds that "the woods 'echo back' the notes of his pipe" (23). Marx continues:

It is as if the consciousness of the musician shared a principle of order with the landscape and, indeed, the external universe. The echo . . . evokes a sense of relatedness between man and no-man which lends a metaphysical aspect to the notes; it is a hint of the quasi-religious experience to be developed in the romantic pastoralism of Wordsworth, Emerson, and Thoreau. (23)

As Geoffrey Hartman states of Wordsworth in his essay, "A Poet's Progress: Wordsworth and the Via Naturaliter Negativa," "Nature itself led him beyond nature" (599).

"Every incident [in The Prelude] involving nature is propaedeutic and relates to that 'dark Inscrutable workmanship' mentioned by Prelude I, lines 340 ff . . . Thus Nature is not an 'object' but a presence and a power" (604). One is, thus, reminded of Ellen Chesser's experience in The Time of Man, where Roberts writes: "the afternoon seemed very still back of the dove calls and the cries of the plovers, back of a faint dying phrase, 'in the time of man'" (81), as Ellen tries to "get back" of nature and its music to the profundities it suggests. This impulse in Ellen (and in Roberts herself) is not only reminiscent of Hartman's assertion that for Wordsworth, "Nature itself led him beyond nature" (599), but also suggests Roberts' line from her poem, "Conversations Beside a Stream," in which she writes that "The truth of a song is the truth of another thing" (79). Thus, both Roberts and Wordsworth seem to affirm the idea that truth is to be found "beyond" or "behind" the sensory impressions afforded by nature or song (or both when they are experienced through nature's music). Indeed, Russell Noyes reminds us that much of Wordsworth's poetry is indebted to the belief that "human knowledge originates in perceptions made by the five senses" (238). A classic example of nature's music leading beyond nature to revelation is found in Wordsworth's "The Reverie of Poor Susan," a poem about a girl who hears "the song of the Bird" and is, through it,

given a "vision" of her home (lines 6-8). And the concept that sensory perception may lead the participant to "the truth of another thing" is clearly evident in Roberts' poem, "Moonlight in Summer," from her volume Song in the Meadow. The original title of the poem, "Tell of God," points to its theme, as well as to the function of bird-song in this work -- a poem which urges the reader/listener twice to, "Take heed, ye, to what he [the mockingbird] tells now (lines 1,12). The song of the bird represents the "knowing" of "truth," as the bird's song penetrates into and literally joins the inner world of the soul with the external world of nature. Roberts writes:

Take heed, ye, to what he tells new, - song-thrusting into the near

The immediate close of the soul, and the vaster

Dark of the welkin . . . (12-14).

The closing lines of the poem, then, explain how the poet envisions the song of the mockingbird as exemplary of truth as the "spear" of song simultaneously penetrates a third realm as it is sent to "God, the lover, the infinite builder, the master" (15). So, it would seem that the sensory experience of hearing this song of nature, leads the listener into an understanding that he is participating, through music, in a joining of the inner world of the soul not only with the external world of nature, but with the divine, as well, as the song is able to simultaneously penetrate all three worlds, yet finally points toward God as the "builder" and "master" of each. Certainly, Roberts' great affinity for the thinking of Bishop Berkeley fits well into this use of nature and its music since Berkeley has been called "a precursor of the Romantic period" for his argument "for the existence of God based on God's relation to the material world," and his belief that "everything we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, every object . . . is a witness of the present activity of God . . . who is immediately behind it" (Jessop 98, 106).

An attempt to trace the roots of the above concept, which seems to be shared by Berkeley, Wordsworth, and Roberts, may, at first seem difficult, since Wordsworth apparently does not share Elizabeth Madox Roberts' affinity with the thinking of Bishop Berkeley. The key, however, comes in finding those whose thinking Berkeley did influence, and therein discover kinship. Berkeley's philosophy points forward to the post-Kantian German idealists (especially Hegel), who attempt to "internalize the dualism between the mind and the object" (McConnell 52, Farooqi 127), or, in simpler terms, to find a connection between the absolute [defined as God, or the truly real by Hegel (Stumpf 332)], nature, and man's mind, exactly the issue explored in Roberts' poem, "Moonlight in Summer," and reflected in her comment that it is the "high function of poetry to search into the relationship between mind and matter" ("On Poetry" 45).

Samuel Enoch Stumpf, in his text, Socrates to Sartre, not only connects Berkeley to Hegel, but also connects Wordsworth to Hegel, as well, noting "shared attitudes" in German idealism and the poetry of Wordsworth (327). And while Russell Noyes correctly contends that in Wordsworth one may trace Kant's belief that the "mind of man [is] the creative interpreter of nature" (xxxii), Roberts' Library of Congress notes on "Philosophic Thought" rightly suggest that Kant stops on the threshold of a belief she shares with Berkeley and the post-Kantian German idealists that "God . . . is here actually" both "in us" and in "the whole finite world" (Box 8), a concept certainly shared by Wordsworth in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" where he writes:

. . . And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. (93-102)

But, possibly, the connection between Berkeley, Hegel, Wordsworth, and Roberts is best expressed in T.E. Jessop's essay, "Berkeley as Religious Apologist," in his comment that Berkeley believed that "It is from a richly caparisoned world . . . that we have in fact to start in our quest for the nature of God" (104). Certainly, those caparisons are myriad, and that Roberts chose nature's music as one aspect of the natural world by which she would further her quest to move from the "known" toward the "unknown" is remarkably like Wordsworth's impulse in the poem, "An Evening Walk," in which he writes:

The song of the mountain-streams, unheard by day,
 Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
 Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
 To catch the spiritual music of the hill. (316-319)

The evidence that Wordsworth and Roberts believe that the music of nature is "spiritual music" is certainly to be found in the works of these two authors which this study has already discussed, as well as in such poems by Wordsworth as "Lines Written in Early Spring," in which bird-song leads to contemplation of "Nature's holy plan" (22); "To My Sister," in which the song of a bird creates a mood which leads the poet to

appropriate love, which emanates from "the blessed power that rolls/ About, below, above" (33-34); and "Ode on Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood," in which bird-song ultimately aids in engendering "the faith that looks through death" (185).

In fact, in Campbell and Foster's discussion of Roberts' use of music, they refer to it as "mythopoeic" (109). They explain this assertion by describing Roberts' and Berkeley's beliefs that nature, man, the universe, and the divine are but "aspects of one unified reality (104), beliefs that allow the temporal world of nature to become spiritualized, and often the spiritual to become, metaphorically, concrete (106). A similar impetus can be seen in Wordsworth's "spiritual music of the hill," as well as in Ben Shepherd of Roberts' A Buried Treasure, who views the Kentucky knobs (a hilly region, south of the central Bluegrass plain) as "a great god lain down to sleep at the edge of the sky" (qtd. in Campbell and Foster 106). It is in this merging of the concrete with the abstract -- of people and the earth (and the music of both) with what Campbell and Foster call "the cosmic rhythms of the universe," that they maintain makes Roberts' work, "mythopoeic" and ties it to the "old Ptolemaic 'music of the spheres'" (109). This concept of the music of the spheres [incidentally, adopted by the German romantic-idealist philosopher, Schelling, whom Roberts contends one must know in order to understand her "master," Beethoven (Library of Congress Box 9), and who believed, with Hegel, that every object of knowledge is a product of an Absolute mind (Stumpf 330)], asserts that "all music comes from God and has its model in the singing of the heavenly hosts," and by extension, in the harmony and rhythm epitomized by the movements of "heavenly bodies" (Bloch 214, 217). Thus, when one examines Roberts' assertion that "music is pattern [God] in motion" (Library of Congress Box 8), the known or concrete (music) is merged or equated with the observable activity or

movement of the abstract (God), so that it is a simple step forward to say that through music one can observe God, and/or all music comes from God, as the proponents of the music of the spheres would affirm, or even that music is God. By defining music in theological terms, it is evident that Roberts sees it as a means by which the concrete and abstract may be merged. Thus, Roberts can write about how auditory impressions of the concrete world can lead one toward deeper, and often spiritual, understanding. This is the process by which the song of the mockingbird in "Moonlight in Summer" can lead to an understanding of God as "lover" and "infinite builder" (16), or how in "Summer is Ended" from Song in the Meadow, music (again, the song of a bird) can lead both outward to an observation of the "beauty and plenty" of the concrete world ("Leaf, loaf, frost, and bird") and also to an acknowledgement of the power of "the Lord" to accomplish the harvest (12-14). Hence, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' music of nature serves the same function as Wordsworth's images and metaphors of objects in nature, to serve as a "signpost to that metaphysical place [she] wants to go" (Ferry 41). Roger Murray describes this same joining of concrete and abstract in Wordsworth as "a merging of contexts" (140), and David Ferry states that this leads the poet to his "ultimate subject matter -- the celebration of the metaphysical, the eternal, and one" (41).

This affinity of Elizabeth Roberts with the romantic movement of the nineteenth century, as epitomized in the poet, Wordsworth, is clearly evident in parallels to other British romantic poets of the era, as well, further joining Roberts to this tradition in unmistakable ways. William Blake, in his poem, "The Choir of Day," from Milton, describes how the lark " . . . every feather on throat & breast & wings vibrates with the effluence Divine" (lines 15-16), and in "The Eolian Harp," Coleridge writes, in musical metaphor, of the interrelationship between nature, the spirit of man, and God:

And what if all of animated nature
 Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
 That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
 At once the Soul of each, and God of all? (lines 44-48)

In addition, both Shelley's "To a Skylark" and Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" call to mind the way Roberts uses bird-song to lead the reader to a truth behind the music. Clearly, Roberts depicts the music of nature as teacher, inspirer, and as the audible manifestation of the "infinite one pervad[ing] the whole finite world" (Library of Congress Box 8). She is clearly akin to Wordsworth in his belief that nature can give "insight into the spiritual governance of the universe" (Noyes 240), and shares with him and the Romantic movement as a whole the concepts of optimism, a love of the country life, a concern for the individual, a "glorification of native tradition," the use of image and symbol, and an interest in the "ascendancy of the imagination" (Noyes xxi). It would, however, be misguided to suggest that Roberts' inherent optimism is naive; in her work, nature poses too many dangers which must be overcome. In The Great Meadow, for example, Diony's trail into the wilderness is called "the way of the wolves" (141), and her husband, Berk, is described as "lean as the wolf -- man assuming the wolf to overcome the wolf" (169), suggesting the necessity of the imaginative identification with, and an understanding of, the dark side of nature as a means to create order in a new world. Wordsworth also acknowledges the fearful in nature, notably in the Simpon Pass episode in Book VI of The Prelude when he is lost in the Alps and nature becomes, as symbolized by the "winds," "bewildered and forlorn" (line 560). It is in this passage that Wordsworth affirms that "darkness and light" (568) are both, paradoxically, inherent in nature, and that the mind (the imagination) is, for him (as it is for Roberts'

characters), the agent for creating order from chaos (Hartman 609).

It is interesting that Campbell and Foster conclude their volume, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, with a statement, which not only employs a quotation from Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," but, in essence, captures Roberts' relationship to the poet, as well as her purpose in using the music of nature so widely in her prose and poetry. Campbell and Foster write that "Miss Roberts' best works will endure, because in them discerning readers will always find in very truth, both artistically and spiritually, 'a glory from the earth'" (283). Surely, the 'glory' to which they allude is present in the descriptions of nature found in both writers' work -- signifying a kinship on an artistic level, but it is most significant as the glories, and even the dark places in and of the earth, are used to point the reader toward the mysteries behind the natural world -- mysteries whose exploration lives at the very heart of the work of Wordsworth and his disciple, Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

Chapter IV

"Bound Together by Song":

Roberts' use of Ballads, Folk, and Popular Music

Elizabeth Madox Roberts' interest in both traditional folk music and the popular music of her day is evidenced by the frequent interpolation of the lyrics of these types of music into her prose, as well as by her own creation of many balladic poems, especially in her volume, Song in the Meadow [see, for example, "Tapestry Weaving" (42-43) and "Stranger" (95-96)]. That folk-music was an important influence on the writer is made clear in a letter, previously mentioned in this study, in which she writes to her friend, Monroe Wheeler, that because of her family's transmission of this music, ballads are "in the marrow of my bones and in my flesh" (Library of Congress Box 10). Her papers, especially those housed at The Library of Congress, are filled with hand-copied as well as typewritten copies of ballads and fragments of ballads. Many of the ballads found copied into her notes make their way into the novels, especially those she found in Josephine McGill's, Folk-Songs of the Kentucky Mountains. The McGill book [Roberts' copy is extant at St. Catharine College] contains twenty ballads, six of which ["Bangum and the Boar," "The Cherry Tree," "The Greenwood Side," "Lord Lovel," "Lord Thomas," and "Sweet William"] are copied into Roberts' notes, along with the comment that they were collected by McGill in Knott and Letcher counties in Kentucky in 1914 (Library of Congress Box 9). Interestingly, Roberts uses thirteen of McGill's twenty ballads, either as inspiration for poems [as in the cases of "The Cherry Tree Carol," which influences "Tapestry Weaving: A Ballet Song of Mary" (Song 42-

43) and "Babes in the Woods," the title of which Roberts adopts in a poem closely akin to the ballad (Tree 38)], or as lyrics written into the prose texts, as in the cases of "Bangum and the Boar," "Barbara Allen," "The Golden Willow Tree," "The Greenwood Side," "Her Cheek is Like Some Blooming Red Rose," "Little Sparrow," "Lord Lovel," "Lord Thomas," and "Sweet William." These titles appear scattered throughout Roberts' novels and short stories, with her grandfather Brent's favorite, "Bangum and the Boar," appearing most frequently (cf., The Time of Man, Jingling in the Wind, The Great Meadow, and "Conversations Beside a Stream"). Both Roberts and McGill are careful to note the titles and numbers which were assigned to these ballads by the noted scholar, Francis James Child, whose collection of traditional British ballads, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, set the early standard for the texts and identification of this music. As Friedman notes in The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World, it is customary in the study of ballads to refer to a "Child-type ballad by the number it bears in Child's collection, even though the title and version" may vary in some way from that printed by Child (xi).

Thus, it may be instructive to more carefully identify what is meant by a "Child-type ballad," since a number of these [including, but not limited to the following from McGill: "Bangum and the Boar," "Barbara Allen," "The Cherry Tree," "The Golden Willow Tree," "The Greenwood Side," "Lord Lovel," "Lord Thomas," and "Sweet William"] appear in Roberts' prose and/or influence her poetry. A Child-type ballad may be characterized by its stories of "lust, revenge, and domestic crime," usually described in a "single situation" with little introduction or denouement (Friedman xx-xxi). The stories are presented dramatically with much dialogue but little moralizing (Friedman xii-xiii), and the language is very formalized, containing a "limited number of stock images, epithets, and descriptive terms but with a great deal of hyperbole,

understatement, repetition, and parallelism (Friedman xiv, xvi, xviii).

Although the ballads which Roberts employs most frequently -- "Bangum and the Boar" ("Sir Rylas" 18), "Lord Thomas" ("Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" 73), "Sweet William" ("Fair Margaret and Sweet William" 74), "Lord Lovel" (75), and "The Greenwood Side" ("The Cruel Mother" 20) -- are all Child-type ballads, as indicated by his titles and numbers given above, her knowledge of, and interest in, other ballads and folk-songs, as well as the popular music of her day, was extensive, as demonstrated by her use of it in The Time of Man, in which the lyrics to over thirty songs as diverse as Paul Dresser's very popular "On the Banks of the Wabash Far Away" (Lloyd 197-199), John Woodward's "The Ballad of Joe Bowers" (Friedman 431), Stephen Foster's "Old Black Joe," and "The Sands 'O Dee" (Mayer 51-52), are integrated into the text along with Child-type ballads, as well as "Sourwood Mountain" (Davis 246), and such dance tunes as "Cage the Bird," and "Kiss the Girl."

Clearly, the ballads and songs that were passed down to Roberts by her family or learned in childhood, appear often in her work. "Little Blue Wing," a song Mary E. Brent Roberts remembered dancing to with her grandfather's young slave girls ("Memories" 139), appears in The Time of Man (91), as well as a variation of "Old Virginny," another song Mrs. Roberts learned from a slave on her grandfather's farm ("Memories" 147; Time 18; see also Davis Folk-Songs 319). Additionally, a song, identified by Elizabeth Roberts as "How Moss Caught His Mare," and sung to her by her grandmother Brent, appears five times in The Great Meadow (17, 21, 23, 24, 41-42). And Roberts' Library of Congress notes (Boxes 9 and 10) establish the fact that she learned "Bangum and the Boar" ("Sir Rylas" 18), "Sweet Wiliam" ("Fair Margaret and Sweet William" 74), and "The Greenwood Side" ("The Cruel Mother" 20) from her maternal grandfather. Indeed, of the five most frequently used ballads in Roberts' work,

three of these ("Bangum and the Boar," "Sweet William," and "The Greenwood Side") were transmitted to her directly by her grandfather. She even makes careful note of the differences in her grandfather's version of "The Greenwood Side" and that of McGill; indeed, Mr. Brent's version, which appears in The Time of Man as the lighthearted refrain, "Jingle at the window, tidy - o" (34), bears slight resemblance to its original source, the Child-type ballad, "The Cruel Mother" (20), again suggesting the strong influence of family tradition in Roberts' choice of ballad lyrics for her work.

It is, thus, valuable to examine the reasons why Roberts was so attracted to the music of her forefathers. First, it is clear from her comments about the genesis of The Great Meadow, as well as such poems as "The Grandmother" and "In Maryland," (Tree 62-65), that she was able to imaginatively and literally identify herself with her ancestors who came from Virginia and Maryland to settle the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. She begins her discussion of The Great Meadow by writing, "I saw these people coming over the Trace," explaining that she wants to tell their story through one character whose experience will "epitomize a symbolic journey" (Library of Congress Box 9). Later, in the same short essay, she clearly explains that "these poeple" are her and her people, as she writes: "... that ... country [Kentucky] is mine ... we came there ... will I ever be able to tell our coming with sufficient words?" (Box 9). As she wonders whether narrative poetry or "ballad" will be the best genre for her story, it is evident that she sees the function of the ballad as a means to connect the thought of the past to that of the present. This is clear from her belief that through "things held in family memory," "one projects himself into more than one century and knows what it is to be alive in a reach and breadth of existence that transcends three score years and ten" (Library of Congress Box 9). It is not difficult, then, to imagine that Roberts would have agreed with Donald Davidson that ballads are the "only thing left

present in our folk-memory in a fully meaningful and authentic form” and that their transmission is vital (Rebels 106, 135), for this sentiment is clearly expressed in her poem, “An Old Love in Song,” from Song in the Meadow (47-48), in which she writes of an old song which is nearly lost to the memory of the folk. The poem describes how the poet asks an old man to sing the song, but he is unable to remember it. The poet then describes three occasions on which she came close to discovering this song -- a song that is, through imagery, made physically tangible to the author. Once the song “lean[s] against the latch” of a door she touches; once she sees it sitting on a shelf, “curved against an ancient bowl,” and finally, she finds it “lying in the ground” in a hole she digs “beside an old rose bush,” and is able to touch it with her “spade.” Her identification of the song with objects which are associated with home (a door, a bowl, and a rose bush) suggests the tune’s deep integration into family life, and its burial and recovery suggest both its safe-keeping in the earth and the importance of working to find it again. Perhaps, however, the one key to an understanding of why remembering the old song is so important is to be found in the poem’s fourth stanza, where Roberts writes, “It [the song] walks on tiptoe on other thoughts,” a line illustrative of her belief that an important function of folk-music is to connect the present to the past in a very real way. She, thus, sees song as a way to understand history in its broadest senses -- certainly, not only political history [see “Conversation Beside a Stream” Song (74-80) for an affirmation of song as reflective of political history], but family history and cultural history, as well. And so, the line “the truth of a song is the truth of another thing” (Song 79), may also mean that Roberts views song as a way to participate in what Davidson calls “folk-memory” (Rebels 106), the loss of which Roberts observed in her culture and deplored (Mayer 14-15). She wrote the following as one of the very few criticisms of her region and its people; its content indicates that the “barrenness”

referred to is a barrenness of history, and her own Irish ancestry is interesting to note in connection with the following passage.

This is a barren country, cut to the earth and scraped. The Irish do not remember Deirdre or Conchubar and they know nothing of Emer or Red Hanrahan or Tara. You cannot make them remember. Did Grandfather Patric know about Emer and about Maeve and Findabain, about Narinh or Deidre or Finn or the Finamre? Hey ho, the wind and the rain . . . (Library of Congress Box 3)

The above statement, "You cannot make them remember," seems an indictment, but may provide a window into the mind of the writer of The Great Meadow who wanted to do just that for her own generation (and beyond) by transmitting history through her depiction of such men as Daniel Boone and James Harrod as "unlegendary, in the flesh, walk[ing] in actual truth over the soil of Kentucky" ("Over" 8). In her essay, "Over the Trace to 'The Great Meadow,'" Roberts addresses the retrieval of the past through memory and affirms the value of memory as history as she describes the process by which her grandmother Brent "thrust her memory back into the memories of her fathers and mothers" in order to provide Roberts with a sense of her own place in the history of both her nation and her family. That Roberts sees herself as part of both is evident in her use of the personal pronouns "us" and "we" as she describes her own identification with and participation in her grandmother's stories. She wrote: "The first thrust [of her grandmother's memory] put us back into Virginia and Maryland, but driving again into a more dim region we went into England and Ireland" ("Over" 6). Appropriately, Roberts' own place in history is measured not by years but by generations, admittedly a measure of time, but a measure personalized by the transmission of a family identity. As she describes her ancestor who was killed by Indians near Ft. Harrod, and on whom she bases the story of Elvira Jarvis in The Great Meadow, she writes, "She stands back of me

the length of six generations" ("Over" 7), and in the poem "Sailing for America," again she measures time by the passing of generations, as she writes, describing her first ancestor who came to America: "Just how he looked I do not know./ That was seven grandmothers ago" (Song 89).

Possibly, another impetus for Roberts to first consider writing the story of her ancestors in ballad form stemmed from her sense of the great drama inherent in the material itself. As Donald Davidson notes:

All of the greatest traditional ballads of our inherited stock move at the heroic and tragic level and have much of the dignity and finality of high drama and epic. Taken together they constitute for us as our forebears . . . [the] cultural equivalent of epical literature. To us they are, or ought to be, something like what the Homeric poems were to the Greeks. (Rebels 106)

Indeed, Roberts, herself, wrote: "The only subjects worthy of permanent consideration are the fundamental passions, or instincts. Homeric themes of blood and waste and death . . . of life" (Library of Congress Box 9). She describes these pioneers, her ancestors, as "strong-limbed men, swift in thought and often relentless . . . brave personal fighters . . . heroic . . . given to strong drink, strong laughter, love, ceremony and self-justification . . . free of the mass . . . liv[ing] exuberantly and dangerously ("Over" 8-9), a description which could well apply to Homer's Odysseus. In fact, Roberts wrote that Kentucky frontiersmen Harrod and Logan were "men of Homeric strength and size" (qtd. in Mayer 87). Certainly, their stories are the stuff from which ballads are made, and it is by design that balladry is carefully integrated into The Great Meadow.

As Charles Leo Mayer notes, it was often Roberts' practice to place within her prose texts the lyrics of ballads and songs whose stories in some way reflect or comment

on the plot of the novel or story (5). The Great Meadow thus employs eight ballads and/or songs in the ballad tradition for this purpose -- among them are four Child-type ballads, herein identified in parentheses by Child's titles and numbers -- "The Golden Vanity" ("The Sweet Trinity" 286); "Lord Beichan" ("Young Beichan" 53); and a variant of "The Twa Sisters" (10). For complete texts of these three ballads, see Sharp I, 285-286 and McGill 97; Freidman 409, 128, 161; and J. J. Niles 47-53.

Additionally, Roberts includes the Child-type ballad, "Bangum and the Boar" ("Sir Rylas" 18) (McGill 79), as well as the traditonal songs, "Baby Bunting" (Davis 183; Friedman 460), and "Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies" (McGill 24; Sharp 118), along with a ballad of her own composition called, "Hannibal Hane" (Mayer 106), as well as, "How Moss Caught His Mare," a text not found by this writer in standard sources (Davis, Freidman, Niles, McGill, Sharp), but identified by Roberts as one she learned from her grandmother Brent (Library of Congress Box 9; Mayer 97). Mayer also notes that this song was not included in sources available for his study (97).

"The Golden Vanity," which appears on the first two pages of The Great Meadow (3-4), tells the story of a cabin-boy who is promised the hand of his ship captain's daughter if he will sink an enemy's vessel. The cabin-boy accomplishes this, but the captain refuses to honor his promise or even allow the boy back on board the "Golden Vanity" (Sharp I, 285-286; McGill 97). This ballad concerning the dangers of travel, a father's conflicted feelings about giving his daughter in marriage, and the betrayal of one who risks his life in hopes of reward, foreshadows the dangerous journey of Diony and Berk, Thomas Hall's initial determination not to let his daughter go into the wilderness, and Berk's abandonment of Diony and their baby when he leaves them at Ft. Harrod in order to avenge his mother's murder by Indians.

Like "The Golden Vanity," the singing of "Lord Beichan" (Great 64-65),

foreshadows later plot developments in The Great Meadow. In "Lord Beichan," the hero is cruelly imprisoned in a strange land but later set free by his true-love who is the daughter of his captor. He then returns home only to marry another whom he quickly rejects when his true-love appears unexpectedly (Friedman 129-131). Berk Jarvis, like Beichan, is held prisoner far from home, and after his release, a choice between two lovers is required; however, this choice is reversed in the novel since it is the woman, Diony, who must choose between two husbands when Berk unexpectedly reappears after he has been presumed dead. In addition, Diony's abandonment by Berk is foreshadowed in her singing of "Come, all ye fair and tender ladies,/ Take warning how you court young men./ They're like a star in the summer morning./ They first appear and then they're gone" (Great 64), which she sings just before her rendition of "Lord Beichan."

Roberts introduces a variant of "The Twa Sisters," a Child-type ballad about two sisters' conflict over the impending marriage of one (J. Niles 47-53), late in the novel as simply an entertaining song Evan Muir sings to Diony's son, Tom (298). In its entirety, however, it does suggest the earlier conflict Diony experienced with her younger sister, Betty, who was openly "hostile" (94) to the idea of Diony's marriage to Berk, as well as the conflict of Berk and Evan over who will remain Diony's husband. The song Evan Muir sings most often, however, is "Bangum and the Boar" (Great 151, 280-281, 298; McGill 79), which Roberts associates with both Muir's good humor and the dangers of the wilderness, suggesting both the power of the singer and the song to diffuse and/or conquer the fear and danger inherent in frontier life.

As Mayer states, Roberts' choice of ballads and songs for inclusion in The Great Meadow was also fueled by her desire for historical authenticity (98-99). Certainly, this goal is clear from her copious notes on the many subjects she researched in

preparation for the writing of this novel, including old wives' tales, early marriage laws, and Kentucky history (Library of Congress Boxes 3, 9). Roberts' bibliography of works used in her research for The Great Meadow is extant in The Library of Congress collection (Box 3); it primarily includes works on Kentucky history and frontier life, and although it contains no books of, or about music, the ballads and songs she chose do reveal an attempt to reflect the music of the era about which she wrote -- the late 1700's. "How Moss Caught His Mare," for example, is a fragment remembered by Roberts' grandmother (Library of Congress Box 9), and thus represents the music (like that described in the aforementioned poem, "An Old Love in Song") that goes so far back into family memory that it is nearly lost. In fact, Roberts describes this song as "not well remembered" (Library of Congress Box 9). In addition, "How Moss Caught His Mare" may be intended to add historical realism to the novel since it is integrated into passages containing information primarily about everyday family life and work -- passages about sheep shearing, spinning, weaving, and blacksmithing. As a background accompaniment to these activities, its comic story seems an appropriate vehicle of expression for Diony's brother -- a young man whose future is safe and secure in Albemarle.

The two remaining songs in The Great Meadow, "Baby Bunting," a traditional nursery song, and "Hannibal Hane," again reflect the historical and thematic context of the novel. "Baby Bunting" (220) is an appropriate song of the frontier since it speaks of the necessity of the father's role as provider and protector for the family, something Diony loses and must replace in order to survive when Berk leaves her. "Hannibal Hane," sung by "old Bethel," a man the travelers encounter on their way to Kentucky, tells the story of a river pirate and reflects the essential lawlessness of the country into which Diony's party will travel (145-146).

The ballads and songs found in The Great Meadow represent a two-fold impetus on the part of its author; Roberts was attempting, on one level, to be historically accurate, but also to so fuse these lyrics into her prose that their stories would be deeply suggestive of hers and hers of theirs, so much so that the kind of dramatic blending of fact and story from which many ballads originally grew [see Friedman's account of the origins of "Young Beichan" (128)] might literally be recreated by Roberts from historical facts about the settlement of Kentucky which had been blurred into myth. The novel itself, then, beomes balladic in its dramatization of larger-than-life ["epic" (Davidson 106)] events and people, such as Daniel Boone. Thus, through The Great Meadow the reader is taken deeper into what Lewis P. Simpson calls "the balladic world" -- a place of danger, adventure, heroes, and romance -- a place Roberts wished to imaginatively inhabit, in order, as she wrote, "To know what it is to be alive in a reach and breadth of existence that trandscends three score years and ten" (Library of Congress Box 9). In folk-music's role as the "only remaining aspect of folk- memory" (Davidson Rebels 106) which preserves a sense of this mythical "existence," it was, for Roberts, a key element in her novel's design. She began by imagining The Great Meadow as a ballad, and, in actuality, that is what she achieved.

Roberts' last novel, Black is My Truelove's Hair, while not a historical novel in the sense of The Great Meadow, does, like the earlier novel, "pose the nostalgic possibility of recovering the balladic world" (Simpson "History" 802). Roberts chose the title, Black is My Truelove's Hair, after hearing Kentucky folk-singer and ballad-collector, John Jacob Niles, sing the song of the same title at her home in Springfield in the summer of 1938, and she later described her choice of this name as "inevitable" (qtd. in Mayer 122). It is, hence, significant in discussing qualities shared between the song and the novel to use Roberts' source, John Jacob Niles, as the basis for discussion.

Mayer's work relies on a variant of the song collected at Hot Springs, North Carolina, and found in Cecil Sharp's English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians (vol. I, 131). John Jacob Niles' variant is obviously a Kentucky version, as evidenced by its reference to "Troublesome," a creek in Knott County, Kentucky, near the Hindman community (156). In fact, Roberts was especially pleased when folk-music acquired a Kentucky flavor; she wrote: "That they have the marks of our country upon them makes them more precious" (Library of Congress Box 10). The Niles variant is printed here as transcribed from a 1978 videotaped concert performance of the song.

Black Is The Color of My Truelove's Hair

Black, black, black is the color of my truelove's hair,
 Her lips are something rosy fair;
 The prettiest face and the neatest hands,
 I love the grass whereon she stands.

I love my love and well she knows,
 I love the grass whereon she goes;
 If she on earth no more I see,
 My life will quickly leave me.

I go to Troublesome to mourn and weep,
 But satisfied I ne'er could sleep;
 I'll write her a note in a few little lines,
 And suffer death ten thousand times.

Black, black, black is the color of my truelove's hair,
 Her lips are something rosy fair;
 The prettiest face and the daintiest hands,
 I love the ground whereon she stands.

As in The Great Meadow, where Roberts uses ballads to foreshadow or parallel events in the work, the song "Black is My Truelove's Hair," in the novel of the same title, parallels thematic and factual aspects of this work, as well. Most obviously, Dena's true love, Cam Elliot, (as he is described by Roberts) has black hair (187), is "pretty" (164), and has a "deep pink" countenance (190). Additionally, the ballad's declaration, "I go to Troublesome to mourn and weep," parallels Dena's journey along the creek in the novel's last chapter as she desperately tries to avoid a confrontation with her murderous former lover, Langtry. She first follows the stream as she walks to and from St. Mark's Church (265, 268), and her travel along the creek as she tries to escape from Langtry, is mentioned no fewer than nine times (265-273). The creek's importance at this point in the novel may be discovered in its recurrence in conjunction with Dena's prayers. She finishes an anguished prayer, "The Lord have mercy! . . . Forgive us by Thy holy Blood, save us by Thy holy Blood, now and forever, Amen" (269), only after she has been "cooled" (269) by the dampness at the creek bank, certainly suggestive of the water as a symbol of religious purification and sanctification, for it is through this combination of praying and walking or hiding about the creek bank that she realizes she must face Langtry alone and finally finds the courage to do so. The fact that Dena spends the entire novel in fear of Langtry's threat to kill her also, of course, further parallels the last line of the ballad's third stanza. Clearly, Dena

imaginatively suffers death throughout the work each time she hears the mysterious barking dog (see Chapter III of this study for a discussion of this sound) which reminds her of Langtry's threat-- a threat of death from a character, who, according to the author, is symbolic of death itself (Library of Congress Box 9).

The ballad, "Black is the Color of My Truelove's Hair," is also sung twice in the novel by Ab Elliott, the father of Dena's true-love, Cam Elliott. The first time he sings it, the song serves as a prelude to Ab's long, persuasive blend of music and a single, repeated question, "Did you ever take notice to my boy Cam?" (161), a question intended to create, in Dena, an interest in a relationship with the younger Elliott. Interestingly, Ab Elliott sings only the "first verses of the song," omitting the dark third stanza about mourning, weeping, and suffering death, an appropriate omission since Dena's suffering in this novel is caused by Langtry and not Cam. The second time the ballad is sung, Cam's mother asks Ab to sing in celebration of the engagement of Dena and their son. Ab appropriately chooses the song with which he first began his match-making efforts, and, thus, the song functions as a framing device for the entire courtship of the couple.

Other examples of music in Black is My Truelove's Hair also reflect the novel's content, but they are few. Ab Elliott sings an original composition based on the names of his children, indicating his deep attachment to family which has been passed on to his son and providing a contrast to Langtry's rootlessness (Rovit Herald 123-124). The "rural oracle" or "high priest of love in the village" (Rovit Herald 118), Nat Journeyman, who encourages young lovers to rendezvous in his orchard, sings, "When the Roses Bloom Again" (38) (Davis Folk-Songs 260), a popular song symbolic of "old-fashioned love," which he contrasts with his present "age of violence and unbelief, Age of agonies . . . Age of fear and hurry" (39), a contrast intended to suggest the innocent

world of Cam Elliott as opposed to the evil world of Bill Langtry. Finally, again in Journeyman's orchard, a group of children sings a game song, "A Bushel of Wheat," while Dena asks Journeyman what he knows about the character of Cam Elliott. This song about wheat is appropriate since the Elliott men own and work a mill where wheat is ground.

Therefore, as in The Great Meadow, each ballad or song Roberts employs in Black is My Truelove's Hair is carefully chosen to reflect the thematic content of the novel, often functioning to subtly foreshadow or parallel the events described in order to suggest its own kinship with them. Such a technique adds depth to each novel, especially rewarding the reader who is familiar with the lyrics used and so will be able to read and understand the songs much as one enjoys and understands the dimensions of echo, suggestion, and anticipation that a well-known literary allusion may bring to a work.

The Time of Man also utilizes ballads and songs to foreshadow or parallel the plot and lend cultural and/or historical accuracy to the work. It is difficult, however, to discuss the significance of all the lyrics included in this novel in a study of this length since the words to over thirty different songs or ballads appear in The Time of Man, usually in elliptical form. A number of these songs are simply heard and absorbed by Ellen Chesser as she moves about her world. For example, she hears her father sing "Old Virginny" (M.E.B. Roberts "Memories" 147 ; Davis Folk-Songs 319), as an expression of his joy in his work, and she hears a carriage full of singers passing on the road singing, "By the Banks of the Wabash Far Away," a song which intensifies Ellen's own longings for music, for the past, and for the "far away" (46). A number of singers appear in The Time of Man -- among them, Connie, Henry Chesser, Mr. Wheatley, Elmer, Mr. Townley, Hank Seay, J.B. Tarbell, Jasper Kent, and Nannie; none of these singers, however, is as significant as Ellen herself. The songs Ellen sings fall into two

groups -- the Child-type ballads and popular and/or traditional songs. The popular and traditional songs are interesting in their reflection of the growth and development of the mind of the child, Ellen. Roberts wrote that The Time of Man was a "book founded upon additions":

The intention was to begin with the least that one could handle, scarcely more than the breath of life in the throat, and slowly to add minute particle after minute particle until a being with life experience should be built together.

(Library of Congress Box 9)

Certainly, Ellen's cumulative development, as described above, is reflected in the songs she sings. Her earliest song:

Hounds on my track,

Chicken on my back.

Oh, brother Andrew Have you got a G fiddle string? (Time 12)

is, in Roberts' words, "a jargon of many phrases" (Time 12), and, in actuality, combines a Negro work song whose theme is theft (see My Heart and My Flesh 31-32) with a tune Ellen heard in a Nashville church she visited with her friend, Tessie. It is an appropriate jumble of lyrics since the young Ellen is motivated by a desire to be reunited with Tessie, as well as to take something of what she perceives as the bounty of the Bodine farm where her father is employed -- be it only an egg or some blackberries. Thus, the song expresses the needs of the girl -- friendship and a desire for her simple, elemental needs to be met. Ellen's next non-balladic song is "The Sands o'Dee" (Time 38), a piece about a flash flood which so captures her imagination as she sings it that she runs "terrified" out of a creek bed, expecting to look back and see a "wall of water" (39). This song and its effect on Ellen highlight not only her love for story and her child-like identification with it, but also her growing ability to perceive reality since

she is quickly able to laugh at her own behavior. A third song, "Little Blue Wing," further demonstrates the young Ellen's increasing maturity. It reflects her belief, "It's no known how lovely I am" (90), with its description of "Blue Wing," "a pretty thing" with nice clothes and hair and whom boys admire (91). The song serves as a means for Ellen not only to reinforce her developing positive self-image through song, but as a means to counteract Joe Trent's insults, as she affirms, after singing, "I'm as good as you. I'm no trash. I got no lice on me" (91).

The Child-type ballads sung by Ellen Chesser in The Time of Man ("The Cruel Mother," "Lord Thomas," "Bangum and the Boar," "Lord Lovel," and "Sweet William"), like the ballads used in The Great Meadow and Black is My Truelove's Hair, serve to reflect or foreshadow significant aspects of the plot. "Lord Thomas" tells the story of a man who must choose between two women, thus paralleling Ellen's relationships with both Jonas Prather and Jasper Kent. The tragedy of "Lord Lovel" is based on a broken-hearted woman who is left behind by her lover, again paralleling Ellen's relationship with Jonas Prather, and "The Cruel Mother," a ballad about a mother who murders her babies, looks forward to Hester Shuck, who advocates getting rid of unwanted children with "a sharp crack of the head with a stick of stovewood" (342). The remaining ballads, "Sweet William" and "Bangum and the Boar," are combined by the young Ellen into a seemingly non-sensical stanza (92), which she sings "in the face of the cattle" and just before she "jeer[s]" at tobacco plants and then enters the graveyard to triumphantly proclaim her superiority over the dead judge, James Bartholomew Gowan, as she cries, "I'm better'n you. I'm a-liven and you ain't!" (96). Both ballads are about death; "Sweet William" about the deaths of two lovers and "Bangum and the Boar" about the death of a man-eating boar. The ballads are possibly related in Ellen's mind by the fact that "Sweet William" tells of a dream in which the

central character dreams his "room was full of wild swine,/ My bride bed full of blood" (McGill 71). Appropriately, however, "Bangum and the Boar," ends the stanza, since its exuberant theme of triumph over death reflects Ellen's defiant mood throughout this portion of Chapter II (90-96), and especially, in the graveyard.

Ellen Chesser's role as a singer of ballads also connects her to other significant balladeers in Roberts' work, characters with whom Ellen shares notable characteristics. There are similarities in the singers in the three novels in which balladry plays such an important role -- The Time of Man, The Great Meadow, and Black is My Truelove's Hair. It is interesting to note that these three books are Roberts' first, fourth, and seventh novels, respectively; certainly demonstrating this author's continued interest in balladry and folk-music, in general, throughout her career. Of course, each of the remaining novels, My Heart and My Flesh, Jingling in the Wind, A Buried Treasure, and He Sent Forth a Raven, contains lyrics of various folk-songs, as well; notable are, for example, the many Negro work songs, as well as lyrics to popular songs in My Heart and My Flesh (21-33); the use of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" in Jingling in the Wind (255-256); the singing of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush" in A Buried Treasure (280); and the use of "Casey Jones" in He Sent Forth a Raven (125,161). The folk-singers, Ellen Chesser, Ab Elliott, and Evan Muir, however, share qualities which, unlike Roberts' other musicians and singers, are fully ennobling, suggesting that their music, which connects them to the cultural tradition of their region, adds a dimension to their characters which is absent from those who do not know and sing folk music. Ellen, Ab, and Evan do not face the agonizing self-recriminations and/or unhappiness of Theodosia Bell, Jeremy, or Martha Drake. Each character exhibits a strong tie to both the land and his or her family, each has an attitude of optimism in the face of obstacles or trials, and each is fully mature, possessing a confidence that is born

of honesty, hard work, and self-acceptance and understanding.

Ellen Chesser is compared to the beauty produced by the land; Luke Wimble tells her she is like a "flower," an "apple," and "a dogwood tree in spring" (364-365), and throughout The Time of Man she is vividly identified with nature by her life as a farm worker. Ellen teaches her children the songs she knows, symbolically imparting to them all she has acquired of learning and culture. After the birth of her first child, she sings, "morning and afternoon, song after song" (310). Additionally, she retains a sense of optimism; even at the close of the novel when the family is forced to move after the terror and disgrace of Jasper's beating, Ellen affirms that they are going to "Some better country," identifying this unknown place as wherever ownership of house, trees, and land might be possible (382). Finally, her maturity is evidenced in her ability to nurture her son, Chick, to forgive Jasper for his affair with Hester, and to defend and protect him during his attack by the mob.

Ab Elliott, the ballad singer and father of Cam in Black is My Truelove's Hair, while not the central character in the novel, does possess many of the same character traits as Ellen Chesser in The Time of Man. Charles Leo Mayer suggests that Ab represents "the deep-rooted value of the ballad singer in the life of the folk" (139). Ab is deeply tied to the land; Roberts describes him as covered with the "dust of ground grain" (154), and in his occupation as miller is, thus, the literal embodiment of the nourishment provided by the land. Ab is also tied to the land through his ancestral heritage; he explains to Dena that his mother's family name goes "back a hundred years and fifty more" to the early settlement of the region when the first Cambron received a land grant of five hundred acres (161). Ab Elliott is also a man who is deeply tied to his family. In the episode in which he first encourages a relationship between Dena and his son, Cam, Ab sings all the names of his children and his wife in an original composition

intended not only as play, but as a means of describing the essence of each family member. It is clear that Ab Elliott knows his children well, so well, in fact, that he is unconcerned about Dena's reputation as a "ruined girl" (163), for he intuitively senses that because of her intrinsic goodness she is the right mate for his son, even though the two young people are scarcely acquainted. Ab has the ability to see into the hearts of both Dena and Cam, proclaiming the truth about Dena, "You are as sweet as a new rose" (161) and assuring her that her past with Bill Langtry will "be all right" (164). This ability to see beneath community censure and gossip about Dena indicates Ab's wisdom and maturity, and Dena's praise of him as "frank . . . [and] pleasant" with "smiling eyes" and a love of laughter" (155, 157), indicates his essentially optimistic spirit. That Dena is "charmed by the grace of the man" (157) is high praise for this character who is insightful, loving, and self-confident enough to rescue Dena from the confusion and self-doubt she experiences after her affair with Langtry. Ab is reminiscent of the mature Ellen Chesser who, according to Luke Wimble, has "the honey of life in her heart" (Time 366).

The third ballad singer in this group is Evan Muir, the second husband of Diony Hall Jarvis in The Great Meadow. Like Ab Elliott, he is a man of laughter and good humor. Roberts describes his "warm , hearty presence" (274), noting that he "laughs deeply" and that "anger went off his shoulders as if it were chaff" (300, 151). And, like Ellen Chesser, his singing is often for the benefit of children, including Diony's Tom and others, who respond to him in obvious delight (280-281). His concern for Diony's son, Tom, is made obvious when, during his own marriage ceremony to Diony, Evan holds and quiets the crying child. And just as Ab Elliott named his eldest son, Cambron, for his earliest ancestor who came into the region, Evan's regard for family tradition is clear in his naming of his son 'Michael,' a "Muir name from a long way back" (303).

Also like Ellen and Ab, Evan is closely associated with the land. He knows Kentucky geography (190); he is well-versed in the flora of the region and its special uses (170, 171, 226, 293); and he is a good gardener (289). Throughout the novel, his knowledge and hard work bring success to the travelers and comfort and provision for Diony. He kills meat (141, 161, 267, etc.); keeps time (149); cares well for animals (150); and does carpentry work (267, 302, 334). His deep wisdom and sound mind are clear from his behavior after Berk returns from Indian captivity to reclaim Diony and his house and land. After initial outrage and anger, Evan calmly asks, "What will we do?" (315). He later, quietly accepts Diony's decision to return to Berk, " . . . half whispering, 'It will be as Diony would choose. Let it be'" (335). Interestingly, Berk and Evan remain friends; as the novel ends, they walk off together, talking politics; Roberts notes that Berk respects Muir, and obviously, both men respect Diony's decision. Their behavior, especially Muir's in not challenging Berk's claim and Diony's decision, allows Diony's penultimate desire, "to make a world out of chaos" (24), to come closer to reality.

Ellen Chesser, Ab Elliott, and Evan Muir thus represent, for Roberts, something of an ideal. Each is an insightful nurturer of others who is deeply connected to the land and who has the ability to resolve conflict. Taken together, the way in which each uses balladry within the family unit, may suggest something of its value to the author. Ellen uses song to pass a cultural heritage to her children, Ab's singing is so integrated with his spoken words that it becomes a means of creative communication and self-revelation, and Evan Muir's singing is primarily for delight, certainly an element that is present in the singing of both Ellen and Ab, as well. These three uses of music -- instruction, revelation, and delight -- then, not only suggest the ways Ellen, Ab, and Evan use folk-music, but also reflect the purposes for which it is woven into the structure of the

novels. Folk-music is instructive, for Roberts, in its function as a means of preserving and imparting the music and mind of an earlier era, as well as connecting many generations of a family through the transmission of a musical heritage, for, as Joseph W. Hendron writes, "The [folk-song] tradition in our country has tended to follow family lines. The songs may be cherished heirlooms . . ." (8). In addition, as noted earlier in this chapter, folk-music also functions to reveal significant elements of themes within Roberts' novels; and, indeed, it delights the reader with an awareness of lyrics so well-chosen and integrated into the text that they are one with the fabric of each novel. As Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren write in Understanding Fiction, it is this "expressive interpenetration" of the elements within a piece of fiction that ultimately gives it coherence, for, as they note, "a good story is, after all, a unity" (xviii, 82). In The Time of Man, The Great Meadow, and Black is My Truelove's Hair, the use of song lyrics certainly creates such unity by reflecting the culture and history intrinsic to each work as well as its themes and plot structure. Roberts has so fittingly chosen the lyrics she incorporates into these novels that to remove a song like "Bangum and the Boar" from The Great Meadow, for example, would be to omit from the work an essential ingredient, one which accurately records and explores the deepest fears and greatest hopes of a people and in so doing communicates on universal level. The ballad's theme, man's triumph over chaos and disorder, reflects the central theme of the novel, and its use allows that theme to be suggested in a manner consistent with the courageous bravado and single-minded intent of the pioneers who settled the American frontier.

A study of Roberts' interest in and use of balladry, as well as folk and popular music, would not be complete without a discussion of her poem, "Conversations Beside a Stream," from Song in the Meadow (74-80). McDowell and Campbell and Foster rightly point to this poem as Whitmanesque, noting its "long," "loose," free-verse lines and

catalogues (32; 263-264). Campbell and Foster also call the poem "experimental" (264), and it might marginally be considered so, but only in its use of a dramatic format in which speakers are identified as "first voice," "second voice," "voice," or "voices" (74-80), and even this stylistic device is far from unique to Elizabeth Madox Roberts when the work of her contemporaries is considered. Note, for example, Robert Frost's "The Witch of Coos," "The Lovely Shall Be Choosers," and "Death of the Hired Man," all of which contain dramatic dialogue (rpt. in Robinson and Rideout 230-234; 239-241). McDowell and Campbell and Foster also describe this work as inferior to Roberts' other poetry, an opinion not shared by this study, for "Conversations Beside a Stream," is not only good poetry, it is invaluable to an understanding of the meaning of balladry and music to Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

"Conversations Beside a Stream" employs parts of over thirty lyrics from six types of songs – the popular, epitomized by the works of Stephen Foster; the Negro spiritual; the patriotic; English balladry; gospel; and what Roberts terms, "Two great songs," Moby Dick and The Declaration of Independence (79). The inclusion of these two prose works is indicative of Elizabeth Madox Roberts' broad definition of song to include those texts, which, by her definition, produce two effects, that of the classic "epic" -- the legend that has been "the thousand times told," and that which epitomizes "the desires of a people" (79). As Rovit states, "The poem articulates the existence of a strongly linked chain of cultural continuity in America" (Herald 158). Importantly, that chain, for Roberts, is song. As Rovit notes further, in this poem, the reader is drawn into the poet's vision of "what it means to be an American" because, through references to a common heritage of song, the reader and writer may "share experience" (Chaos 158-159). However, back of this idea, which is closely related to Roberts' desire to preserve her own family's and her nation's musical heritage in order to

imaginatively "be alive in a reach and breadth of existence that transcends three score years and ten" (Library of Congress Box 9), is her concept of history, a concept straight from the pages of Roberts' favorite thinker, Bishop Berkeley. As Lewis P. Simpson explains, in the philosophy of Berkeley, the growth "of knowledge - letters, learning, the arts - is no longer parallel with the [growth] of empire. It is the [growth] of empire" (788). In such a theory, the creative mind becomes the source of history, and so the development of music, or literature, or science could literally become not a corollary or branch of American history, but literally be, as well as tell, the story of our nation's growth (Simpson "History" 788). In this sense, music becomes imminently political, in the broadest sense of the word, possessing, as Roberts wrote in one of her notes, the qualities of "power and persuasion" (Library of Congress Box 9). Berkeley's theory, then, that the growth of the arts and the development of a nation are not separate artistic and political activities, but actually one political reality, clearly informs the following lines from "Conversations Beside a Stream":

... A theory, a Plan, a technique is not a state.

A technique, established by a tyrant, is not a state.

Thus: it will never be a state.

States are made as songs are made.

Voice: The growth of Song: the growth of State.

Voice: Songs. Of the people, for the people, by the people.

Voice: Equals: State ... of, for, by ...

Voice: Let the people speak!

Voice: As the people sing! (80)

Hence, the above line, "The growth of Song: the growth of State," is a direct use of Berkeley's concept of history and certainly not only encapsulates the meaning of this

poem, but also elevates the importance of song to a high pinnacle in Roberts' thinking, ascribing to it the ability to create political reality and national identity. Thus, it is interesting to examine the qualities found in the songs to which Roberts attributes this power.

Roberts begins this poem by locating the stream she is describing. It is "the little Beech Fork" (74), a tributary of the Kentucky River, a stream which is symbolic in this work of "the stream of life" (78). The fact that she locates the poem so precisely in her own region of Central Kentucky may, in part, account for the emphasis given to the music of Stephen Foster in this poem. Certainly, his songs are well-known nationally and reflect significant aspects of American history (the institution of slavery is depicted, for example, in such songs as "Old Black Joe" and "My Old Kentucky Home"); however, Roberts' home in Springfield is seventeen miles from Federal Hill, the plantation home Foster immortalized in "My Old Kentucky Home," and by virtue of this composition, he has long enjoyed canonization as a favorite son of the state [Roberts calls him "our poor Foster" (76)], even though he was not a native Kentuckian. The Foster lyrics included in "Conversations Beside a Stream" -- "Old Folks at Home," "Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Nelly Bly," "Beautiful Dreamer," and "Oh, Susanna," speak to the importance of home, family, love, and the hope of overcoming hardship, values Roberts esteemed as evidenced in the characters of the aforementioned balladeers, Ellen Chessier, Evan Muir, and Ab Elliott. Her inclusion of this group of songs indicates her belief in their significance in the American consciousness, thus suggesting the importance Roberts ascribes to the values they espouse in the formation of public policy, as well.

Roberts, additionally, uses the songs "Yankee Doodle" and "Dixie" as the embodiment of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and notes "The Star-Spangled

Banner's" function as a political creed which may be summed up in only two words, "still there" (qtd. in "Conversations" 76). All three of these songs speak of steadfastness -- "Yankee Doodle keep it up; "our flag was still there," "I'll take my stand . . ." -- and use words which, again, embody the perseverance Roberts implies was synonymous with the unified nation itself.

The poet's discussion of America's heritage of English balladry reflects a sense of ownership of English history and song. She refers to "our England" (77), and catalogs historic, legendary, and literary figures, such as, "Littul" John, Simon de Montfort, Falstaff, Lord Lovell, and Barbara Allen, claiming, "we descend from them all" (77), in an attempt to suggest that the Berkeleian concept that the growth of the arts is synonymous with the growth of state is not limited to any one nation, but was actually true before America was founded and connects us to a much older tradition and political reality, which, provides us, through music, with a cultural and political kinship with England.

Roberts also includes Negro spirituals and/or songs traditionally associated with the American Negro in her catalogue of songs in "Conversations Beside a Stream." The lyrics she chooses to quote are from such songs as "Hear the Lambs A-Cryen," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Old Man River" (from the musical, Showboat) and "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" (75). These lyrics obviously create a mournful mood, and the longing and sorrow they epitomize are synonymous with the tragic consequences of slavery in the United States. In this poetic paragraph of six lines, the words, "lambs a-cryen," or "lambs still a-cryen," are repeated six times in order to reinforce both the vulnerability of the American Negro in the past as well as at the time the poem was published in 1940. The inclusion of "Old Man River" from Showboat (1927), a Florenz Ziegfeld production with music by Jerome Kern and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, a

show which was "based on American history" (Ziegfeld 147), further emphasizes, through music, the interrelatedness of the historical past with Roberts' own era.

The songs of the white Protestant tradition which Roberts includes in this poem (77-78) stand in contrast to those from the Negro tradition. With one exception, C. Austin Miles' joyful, yet meditative, "In the Garden" (356), they are rhythmic gospel numbers such as Elisha A. Hoffman's, "Are You Washed in the Blood?" (111); Philip P. Bliss's "Jesus Loves Even Me" (319); and "We're Marching to Zion" (Watts/ Lowry 8). These are all songs of "salvation" and "re-creation," and, as the poet states, they are associated with "the beat of a drum," "shouting," and "marching" (77-78). There are no "lambs a-cryen" in these lyrics, and so, the implication in this poem, is that of white America's sense of joy and belonging; it is the music of political ascendancy, ironically, even for the "pop-eyed leer-lipped creature . . . picked up out of the gutter," who sings these songs "on a street corner" (78).

When Roberts writes, then, in this poem, that, "The truth of a song is the truth of another thing" (79), that "other thing" is, in part, the political reality that she believes is encapsulated in America's music. Using Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence as an example, she claims that, "One man to himself alone/ Cannot make a song" (79), and "One man cannot make a state" (80), suggesting that all music, like Jefferson's Declaration (which she calls "song"), is a compendium of "the desires of a people,/ of thousands of thinking and feeling men" (79), who together, out of a common quest for "liberty" and "democracy," literally "sing . . . their will" (80). Thus, Americans, for Roberts, may virtually bring this political "will" into being through their songs. As noted earlier in this chapter, Roberts employs the lyrics of songs in her work in order to provide instruction, revelation, and delight. In "Conversations Beside a Stream;" however, she uses song as more than a vehicle to transmit an idea about how

she views history, she suggests that music possesses the kind of truth which can carry us deep beneath its surface toward the understanding that our art carries inherent within it the truth of who we are as a nation.

Chapter V

"Get God Into It": Music as Sacrament

On a scrap of paper, now in Box 8 of the Roberts papers housed at The Library of Congress, in bold script Elizabeth Madox Roberts wrote the words, "Get God into it." Although this phrase is found on a page containing an unfinished poem, it could have been a reference to any number of her works, both prose and poetry. Her 1922 collection of poetry, Under the Tree, contains fourteen poems which deal specifically with some aspect of the Christian tradition as evidenced by such titles as "The Pulpit," "Mr. Pennybaker at Church," and "Three Dominican Nuns." Her final volume of poetry, Song in the Meadow, includes twelve poems with theological themes or implications; notable among these are "In the Chapel," "Night and Storm," "Summer is Ended," "Moonlight in Summer," and "Tapestry Weaving: A Ballet Song of Mary." In addition, the Christian faith is a significant element in the novels My Heart and My Flesh, The Great Meadow, A Buried Treasure, He Sent Forth a Raven, and Black is My Truelove's Hair, and it is especially notable in such short stories as "Death at Bearwallow" and "The Sacrifice of the Maidens" from The Haunted Mirror and "Love by the Highway" and "Holy Morning" from Not by Strange Gods.

In any discussion of Roberts' personal religious faith or her references to or use of Protestant sacred music or Catholic liturgy within her texts, it is necessary to explore her attitudes toward these two traditions from which she drew so freely. It is first important to note, again, that although Roberts' parents were active members of the Springfield Christian Church and the author once taught a Sunday School class there,

she was not an actual member of that church or any other (Campbell and Foster 18). In fact, despite her obvious appreciation for some of the music of the Protestant tradition (see "In the Chapel" Song 20), and her integration of many of its memorable lyrics into her prose, she was also highly critical of Protestantism as she knew it. She wrote, for example, that "If St. John were here he would not endure one of our church services ten minutes" (Library of Congress Box 8). She also wrote:

Our religion is a barren, treeless, flowerless . . . waste deriving from the reason of the 18th century. The preacher cannot bring religion home to these hills.

Religion is all platitudes and set sayings. A woman sings, "Let Jesus come into your heart." And what can this mean without reference to beauty?

(Library of Congress Box 8)

In another passage, she expresses contempt for what she terms the "social church" and states that she will "ignore it and go back to fundamentals - despise contemporary conditions - uplift prohibitions - libraries - rook clubs" (Library of Congress Box 9).

And, finally, in an interesting manuscript passage omitted by the author from The Great Meadow, Roberts describes an eight-day revival at Ft. Harrod. The singing is described as a "sad wail" which accompanies the preacher's desire for his weeping, ragged, barefoot congregation to be "humbled." When Berk Jarvis and several men proclaim, "God almighty! I've had enough of this here," and bodily push the preacher out of the fort, Roberts writes that the men laugh at what they have done (Filson Club Box 2). It is tempting to imagine that Roberts herself might have felt as Berk did about the emotionalism of the revivals of her own day and their music, as well. In a letter to Glenway Wescott, she is critical of neighbors who disturb her reading by playing what she calls "primitive tom tom hymns," noting the Fannie J. Crosby and George C. Stebbins song, "Jesus is Calling" (57) as an example (Campbell and Foster 34).

In fact, when the revival passage from the manuscript of The Great Meadow is juxtaposed against passages from the same novel which strongly support the historically questionable legality of pre-Revolutionary War marriages performed by the Methodist clergy (and the Methodist tradition, in general) (see 129, 135-136, 229, 289, 292), the reader is presented with Roberts' own conflicting opinions about American Protestantism. However, it is through an examination of her attitude toward the music of Protestantism that the source of this conflict may be discovered. For example, its music is described as a "din" in A Buried Treasure when the preacher Hez Turner tries to persuade Andy Blair to "get religion" (157,158). Here Roberts not only criticizes Turner's message, which is summed-up in the phrase, "Lay your whole pocketbook on the altar," but she also illustrates how "exciting songs used for revivals" help to make the preacher's message mesmerizing (157). It is as though Andy Blair is being hypnotized as Hez Turner waves his hands in front of Andy and --

riding on the power of song . . . began to admonish with a loud voice, his phrases thundering with the rolling song and making terrible warnings and judgments that seemed to be falling from the leaping music. (158)

Andy Blair's response is to "groan and beat the air with his hands" (159), and even after Hez Turner's attention is diverted to the marriage ceremony he is about to perform, Andy's legs shake and his head still moves to the rhythm of the silenced music, suggesting the power of the song to affect self-control and even rational thought. Here, in Roberts' thinking, music's inherent "power and persuasion" (Library of Congress Box 9) is perverted for the purpose of the preacher's material gain.

The music of the Protestant church is described positively, however, in My Heart and My Flesh as the farmer Caleb Burns sings the song, "We're Marching to Zion" (Watts, Lowry 8) as an anthem of joy in his labor. Roberts writes that his singing is

"intoned well before the great barn and fitted well to the voice . . ." (290).

Interestingly, in Roberts' transcription of the lyrics of this song into the text of the novel, she chooses to use the chorus, which repeats the word beautiful; Caleb Burns sings, "We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion; We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God" (290). In her use of this song as well as "The Sweet Story of Old" (Heart 59); "Jerusalem My Happy Home" (Raven 192); and "Shall We Gather at the River" and "Beulah Land" ("Children of the Earth" 153), each of which speaks of beauty, joy, and heaven, one is reminded of Roberts' belief that religious faith has no meaning without reference to beauty (Library of Congress Box 8). It would seem, then, that she rejects Protestant church music which makes no reference to beauty, is used for the purpose of proselytizing, or attempts to manipulate the listener into an excessive or unwarranted emotional response. Conversely, the hymns whose lyrics speak of praise, hope, beauty, joy, love, and especially, heaven are fully embraced; by noting that Roberts rejects the music of persuasive, emotional revivalism in favor of hymns about beauty and heaven, one may infer that she believes the purpose of church music should be to point the participant toward the worship of God and/or the contemplation of beauty rather than an awareness of his or her own short-comings. This is certainly true in the Prologue to My Heart and My Flesh, where Luce's joy in getting dressed-up to go to church is extinguished by interminable lessons and sermons about sin (17-20), lessons which are rejected in the darkest of terms as "meaningless," "impenetrable," and an "aromatic stench" (18-19). Not surprisingly, the thinking of Berkeley, who believed that "everything that happens in the universe is a result of the [active] present volition of God" (Guzzo 81), is consistent with Roberts' views about the function of church music. It would be inconsistent with Berkeley's views for one man to attempt to persuade another to accept religious doctrine, since such an

action would deny Berkeley's belief that every action and thought of man is already under God's control. It is, then, quite appropriate for Berk Jarvis in The Great Meadow, a character whose name Roberts derives from that of the philosopher, George Berkeley, to take joy in bodily ejecting a revival preacher from Fort Harrod in a complete refutation of everything the man espouses (Rovit Herald 174). And it is also appropriate for Philly Blair in A Buried Treasure to criticize "Hez Turner's [persuasive form of] religion . . . a religion where you give up all you've got . . . that's swallowed down many's the small little pocketbook" (234), but to affirm to her husband Andy that she will not make him give any of their gold "to God" because she believes, as do Berkeley and Roberts, that this matter is already "in the hands of God" (271-272).

Roberts' interest in beauty in connection with religious experience, the absence of which she deplored in the Protestant church, may have been one of the factors which fostered her interest in Catholicism, an interest evident in references to its liturgy, ceremonies, bells, and clergy in several of her works. The Time of Man describes the bells of St. Lucy, a Dominican house much like St. Rose in Springfield, Kentucky (Spears 176), whose regular ringing helps Ellen Chesser to tell time. Roberts' final novel, Black is My Truelove's Hair, is steeped in the Catholic tradition, as are the short stories, "The Sacrifice of the Maidens" and "Death at Bearwallow" (Haunted 29-47; 159-185). As Campbell and Foster note, Roberts was attracted to "aesthetic aspects of the Catholic ritual and liturgy," often commenting, "There's beautiful art in Catholic ceremonies" (23). In a brief essay about her region, she notes that one of its "distinctive features is its convents, monasteries, and abbeys" (Library of Congress Box 9), and she had significant knowledge of the history of Catholicism in Kentucky, as evidenced by a long essay written on that subject and now housed with her papers at The Filson Club in Louisville. In the Filson essay she writes of her attraction to the

"shrouded" and "alluring mystery" of the cloister as she describes the beauty of the church of St. Rose (Filson Box 2). In the same work, she discusses the character of Saint Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, to which St. Rose belongs, commenting that "humble and self-effacing always, he labored only for the approval of Heaven and answered all inquiries of the curious with the simple report, 'God knows'" (Filson Box 2). This phrase, "God knows," is certainly familiar to the reader of The Time of Man, where it appears as a refrain (292, 310, 312, 313, 356, 378, 381) often used by Jasper Kent, also a man of great humility. The phrase, "God knows," may also be significant to Roberts because it echoes her belief (and Berkeley's) that "everything that happens in the universe" is a direct result of God's present activity (Guzzo 81).

As Campbell and Foster note, however, Roberts' interest in Catholicism was more than historical and aesthetic, and it grew deeper during the last years of her life (23). Certainly, the reader of Black is My Truelove's Hair, the novel completed when Roberts was suffering from Hodgkin's Disease and nearing the end of her life, is aware of the Catholic faith as part of the very fabric of the novel. There is very frequent mention of St. Mark's Church and its priest, Father Grimes, and prayers are offered for both the simple as well as the significant problems faced by the novel's cast of characters. Roberts' attraction to Catholicism may be understood, in part, by Dena Janes' attitude toward prayer in this novel. At the end of Chapter Four, Dena prays for Cam Elliott's safety, and Roberts writes that her request was "made eloquent" by "repeated rosaries" because the words of the "Hail Marys and Our Fathers . . . prayed for her when she was dumb, for they had been joined to many petitions from many asking and troubled hearts" (219-220). Dena's belief in the power of prayer implicit in the above quotation is clarified further in a passage from the final pages of Black is My Truelove's Hair which describes how she finds "comfort" and "rest" in the "automatic habit of prayer"

(274). Roberts also describes the solace to be found in the prayers of the Catholic Church in the short story, "Death at Bearwallow," in which the central character, Dave Nally, feels that his hands are "cold and empty" without the beads of the rosary (179).

It is important to note, however, that Roberts was not consistently positive in the treatment of Catholicism in her work. The short story, "The Sacrifice of the Maidens," detailing the ceremony in which a group of four postulants take vows to become Dominican nuns, is strongly critical of the church. Written from the point of view of the brother of one of the postulants, it contrasts the obvious sexuality of the four young women [one is "full-breasted," and one is a "lovely creature" (38,46)] with the "disaster of a burnt-out creation," a phrase that expresses the author's attitude toward their withdrawal into the cloister (46). Roberts, interestingly, describes the choral music of the ceremony as a "thin hymn to God" (40) and records the response of Felix, the brother, as he imagines that he can hear the laughter of the girls "blowing in a wind through the settled bars of the incantation" (43). The sterility of the music is thus juxtaposed against the laughter of the girls in order to suggest a dual meaning in the use of the word bars. For Felix, the vows and the accompanying music represent not only imprisonment but a repression of the life-urge that threatens "the whole earth [with] a swift consummation" (44).

Thus, Roberts had conflicting opinions about both Catholicism and Protestantism, and although her works reflect both traditions, she did not fully embrace either. It seems, rather, that these two Christian traditions provided her with a vocabulary and the music or liturgy that could be utilized in the development and exploration (through her writing) of what must have been a very private faith, one which lauded the jubilant music of Protestantism as well as the ceremony and liturgy of Catholicism while rejecting essential elements of the doctrine of each. And so, even though Campbell and

Foster are correct that Catholicism gave solace to Roberts, what attracted and repelled her about both traditions was essentially the same. She believed she saw God's hand in the "form" of hymns, in their musical structure which employed the elements of rhythm and repetition. She expresses this in the poem, "In the Chapel" in which she writes:

Oh, there is gladness in the turning of a hymn.

Wave leap and wave leap, it reaches for an end . . .

A song of Zion and the cherubim,

The wheels of singing break and curve and bend. (Song 20)

Note that Roberts' attraction to hymn singing in this poem is based on regularity of structure; she likens the hymn's form to that of other "patterns in motion" -- the rolling movements of waves and wheels (Library of Congress Box 9). Her attraction to Catholic liturgy was also based on her fascination with pattern, rhythm, and repetition (cf., the description of the prayers of the priest and the congregation in "The Sacrifice of the Maidens" 31-33). Thus, the "form" she found in both traditions was an evidence of the divine at work. Her faith, however, was not in the music or liturgy itself, but in the God-inspired order or form she sensed behind it. Her rejection of both traditions is based on the attempt she saw in each to impose religious doctrine and/or restrict individual freedom of thought or action. She, therefore, rejects Protestant evangelistic revivalism as well as the Catholic ceremony wherein a young woman assumes a new church-given name, symbolically becomes "married" to Christ, and withdraws from family life in order to become a nun. It seems, then, that Roberts affirms the importance of individual freedom of thought in matters of faith, a stance clearly evident in her own eclectic blending of the thinking of Bishop Berkeley with elements which appealed to her from Protestantism, Catholicism, and even the nineteenth century British Romantics

(see Chapter Three of this study for a discussion of Roberts and romanticism).

Possibly her response to organized religion has its roots in what Grant C. Knight has described as Roberts' "conflict between inbred conservatism and acquired radicalism" (13), a conflict that is continually present in her fictional exploration of what happens to women who violate society's expectations by exploring a frontier -- be it musical, as in the case of Theodosia Bell; political and geographical in the instance of Diony Hall Jarvis; or sexual in the example of Dena Janes. Although each heroine listed above, along with Ellen Chesser and Jocelle Drake, in some way challenges the accepted norms of her society, each is able to re-create a world for herself as she learns that it is possible to challenge society's expectations in order to create a new order out of the chaos she faces. The church's inability to provide complete answers for Roberts and her heroines [even Father Grimes in the strongly Catholic Black is My Truelove's Hair tells Dena to go to Journeyman for protection (73)], is explained, in part, in the following poem:

Night and Storm

The wind is at the clapboards,
The sky is turning black,
And in the down-slope of the gale
I hear the steeple rock.

I hear the steeple totter,
And hear the stricken bell;
The note that calls to service

Has something more to tell.

The note that falls on Sundays

In slow iambic form,

Is torn to spill its terror,

And shrieks along the storm. (Song 67)

Not only does "Night and Storm" use musical imagery to express the church's inability to withstand an assault from outside its walls, its "terror" is depicted as coming from within as well, leaving the reader with the image of its symbolic center (the steeple and bell) as not only destroyed, but simultaneously unified with the outside force of destruction. This dark picture of the church, with its music-become-"shriek," may, of course, not only signify Roberts' private fears about the Christian tradition, but may reflect the temper of society at large in the years between the two world wars, since poetry with a similar perspective was being published by her contemporaries -- T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, and Robert Frost, for example.

As noted earlier, Roberts' fascination with "pattern" or design as a revelation of the divine ["music is pattern in motion" . . . "When I say I am concerned with the cosmos . . . I mean I relate it to pattern -- to the Something" (Library of Congress Box 8)] is what fueled her interest in music, in part, and clearly suggested its use throughout her prose and poetry. In "The Sacrifice of the Maidens," for example, she writes of how the rhythmic, chant-like cycle of the Rosary represents the "pattern" of "regeneration and death continued" and calls it "a mystery in a clear pattern" (33). However, it is in a short unpublished essay that Roberts most clearly articulates her belief that all design, all art, is synonymous with God:

But I see one clear report one sharply actual evidence of something which

lies beyond all that these tentacles can gather, one evidence of an unseen power at work, a Hand moving among the things of science but untouched by Science. This is something which is as clearly evinced as any other piece of scientific datum, is continually but not everywhere visible. This is: the apprehension of form by the mind, the comprehension of pure form, the mind demanding that things, lines, masses of matter, be placed in certain relations to give satisfaction or pleasure. All men do not have this sense of form; and it is peculiarly rich in the body of the artist, but I have seen manifestations of it in the behaviors of very lowly people . . . This is not a social sense. It is not something one learns from his fellowmen. It is something which he has. It is intuitive, innate, a message as it were from beyond . . .

At this point only we can touch God. Here we can say, seeing this force at work among men, Here is Art; here is God . . . (Library of Congress Box 8)

Thus, Roberts' work is greatly influenced by the belief that it is only through an observation of or participation in this "sense of form" that one can even approach an understanding of the divine. In a reflection of this concept, she once wrote (using the term "artists" in a global sense) that "Only artists go to heaven" (Box 8), a statement that she worked-out fictionally in My Heart and My Flesh and He Sent Forth a Raven.

As noted earlier in this study, Roberts wrote that My Heart and My Flesh was the story of the "spiritual travail . . . of a woman who went to hell and returned to walk among you" (Library of Congress Box 9). Theodosia Bell's descent into a symbolic hell is hastened by her association with her half-sister, Lethe Froman, with whose murderous hatred of the husband who has betrayed her Theodosia so identifies that she actually believes she has knifed Ross herself. In a climactic scene in Chapter Four in which Theodosia is "mingled with Lethe's anger and hate" (194) and is embraced by

Lethe in a vampirish caress, Roberts uses the Protestant gospel song, "Lord, I'm Coming Home" (Kirkpatrick 237), sung by the drunken Americy, as a counterpoint to Lethe's violent words of murderous intent. The singer in this scene is prevented by her song, a voluntary petition to God, from participating in the hellish rage which surrounds her, and, imperfectly understanding the inherent power of the music, attempts to use it persuasively as she cries:

'There's singen in the church. Let all you-all sing now. Let all you sing. All together. Stand and sing the song of the invitation. I see the new Jerusalem and the glory of the Lord. Come sinner, Halleluiah!' (191)

Lethe responds to Americy's plea with more discussion of murder; thus, the music is effectual only for the redemption of the artist/singer herself and is ignored by the rest of the characters, Theodosia, Lethe, and Stig, who are numbed by hate or ignorance.

In He Sent Forth a Raven, it is significant that at the perceptive insistence of a musician, Martha Drake, the preacher, Jack Briggs, preaches a message of real redemption to her father, the unhappy Stoner Drake, who has vowed (because of anger and grief over the death of his wife) never again to set his feet on the ground. Martha admonishes Briggs, whose only sermon is about Noah and the flood, to "Preach the Redeemer" (240). Interestingly, as Briggs does this, he tells Drake first to get in touch with the earth, to "pick up dirt with [his] fingers"; then he tells him to go to church (242). If Roberts' fears about the church are clearly articulated in "Night and Storm," it is at this point in He Sent Forth a Raven that her belief in it and the potentially redemptive power of its music and/or liturgy is expressed. Briggs gives Drake two equal choices; he first tells him about a Protestant church, Bethel, where he can find redemption by "shout[ing] and sing[ing] with all there, and prais[ing] God" and asking for mercy (242). Briggs then suggests that Drake could also go to a Catholic church

where he could pray the rhythmic, liturgical prayer, “Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy” (243). Roberts seems to be affirming that through a participation in the design or form represented by music or liturgy that both Christian traditions can offer Drake the same result; however, consistent with Roberts’ dislike of religious persuasion, one man is unable to influence another in matters of faith. Thus, while in Roberts’ economy, the solution to Drake’s problems may very well lie in the artist’s suggestion to “preach the redeemer” and Briggs’ admonition to Drake to “sing and praise God” (242), she again rejects anything that hints of revivalism or a Calvinistic emphasis on sin, and is especially opposed to one person’s revealing, condemning or persuading against the sins of another. Roberts believes that “only artists go to heaven,” but they go there because they have received revelation and inspiration solely on their own terms.

Again in My Heart and My Flesh, for example, Theodosia Bell is redeemed from her hellish existence at Aunt Doe’s farm by a completely individual, internal revelation which Roberts describes as “a vivid appearance [that] entered her mind, so brilliant and powerful that her consciousness was abashed” (255). This experience is an epiphany for Theodosia because through it she is able to connect, in Roberts’ words, the “world of the mind” with “the outer order” (qtd. in Rovit Herald 6). For Roberts, this “outer order” is the “pattern or form” which she calls the Something, a synonym for God (Library of Congress Box 8). When she writes that Theodosia experiences “a vivid appearance [that] entered her mind,” and then for Theodosia, “the earth came back” (255), Roberts is fictionally creating the same experience she was describing when she wrote:

Somewhere there is a connection between the world of the mind and the outer order - It is the secret of the contact that we are after, the point, the moment

of union. We faintly sense the one and we know as faintly the other, but there is a point at which they come together, and we can never know the whole of reality until we know these two completely. (qtd. in Rovit Herald 6)

Theodosia finds this "connection" in the "vivid appearance [which] enters her mind," an appearance she recognizes as a word she is "unable to say" (255). Keeping in mind that the title of this novel is taken from Psalms 84:2 -- "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," and that Roberts describes Theodosia's experience as a "resurrection," it is clear the author intends for this passage to indicate that Theodosia does indeed here encounter "the living God." It is also significant that Roberts uses the word, word in an extraordinary way in this portion of Chapter Five, and it is tempting to suggest that in sentences like, "Her recognition settled to a word, groped with words, settled again about a word, some word, catching at words with a net. The word was vivid, was like a new flower . . ." (255) she is alluding to the first chapter of the Gospel of John in which Christ is repeatedly called "the Word": "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1: 1, 14). Campbell and Foster acknowledge in the tendency of Roberts to suggest the fusion and/or interrelatedness of the physical and the spiritual (as seen in the example of Theodosia Bell, whose spiritual distress is manifested in physical distress and nearly leads to suicide), an "artistic counterpart of the religious word made flesh -- a way of expressing (even communicating) the inexpressible . . ." (278).

Interestingly, in Roberts' Library of Congress papers there is an unpublished poem which further illuminates this desired connection between the self and God, and also implies that Christ may serve as a possible agent for this experience. The poem depicts the process of awakening in "the cold of the morning" in a "fearful," uncertain

hour" when the poet can "see . . . nothing"; she can only hear "The tread of shod feet . . . and the flare of the gander." In this work, the poet's personal, physical world is dark, while the outer world is filled with sound. Roberts then concludes the poem with the following three lines:

Thus in the dark is the world

Orbed with sound

In it a Jesus of gentle connections (Library of Congress Box 9)

Roberts seems to suggest here that the "world orbed with sound" has inherent within it the means for the inner world of man to be connected to the "outer order" -- to pattern, design, or God. Since in traditional Christian theology, faith in Jesus provides a connector, a means for mankind to re-establish a relationship with God, it is appropriate for the poet to find "a Jesus of gentle connections" in the sound which links her inner world to the outer order. Certainly, it is significant that Roberts acknowledges the role of "a Jesus" in effecting this contact, and the role of sound in this mystical process again calls to mind Roberts' belief that music is "pattern [God] in motion," and emphasizes the importance of sound in Roberts' work as a whole.

If one, then, postulates that sound consistently provides for Roberts these "gentle connections" between man and God, the use of music and rhythmic sound in her work takes on an added dimension of meaning. It explains why three of the novels (My Heart and My Flesh, Jingling in the Wind, and Black is My Truelove's Hair) begin with descriptions of sound. It explains her fascination with bird-song and other sounds heard in nature, as well as musicians, church bells, symphonic structure, classical music, and the lyrics to every type of song known to her, from Negro work songs to the sacred music of the church.

In Black is My Truelove's Hair, Roberts offers another connection between

sacred music and “pattern” as she describes the ringing of the church bells. She suggests a relationship between mathematics, theology, and music when she writes:

There fell the faint ringing of the slow bell at St. Mark’s Church . . . It beat a patient and slow three-pattern, for the Father, for the Son, and for the Holy Spirit, and this was compounded to a three-beat three times. At the end of this declaration of faith and design came the steady ringing of the bell until twenty-seven blows had been sounded, and thus the three was squared and cubed and rounded to an end.

‘Father Grimes is a careful mathematician’ . . . ‘Salutes the angels with mathematical order.’ (35)

Although this description of the mathematical regularity of the bells may hearken back to the medieval concept of musica mathematica, which connected the origin of music to the regularity of the motions of the stars and planets and whose model was in “the singing of the heavenly hosts” (Bloch 210, 214), the key to understanding the above passage from Black is My Truelove’s Hair is to be found in Roberts’ pairing of the words faith and design. She clearly believed with such medieval theorists as Kepler that music emanates from God (Bloch 214), but in her equation of faith with design, she again elevates the concept of design or pattern as definitive of God to the position of supreme importance in her thinking, suggesting that life’s ultimate meaning and the intelligibility of religious faith is to be found in attention to this concept. Roberts clarifies its importance even further in the following:

I believe that the great value of sacred writings is not in their moral teaching, morality being a matter of fashion or historical interest, but in their aesthetic and comforting design, their approach to pure form. Here is . . . the revelation from God. (Library of Congress Box 9)

It is necessary, however, to note that Roberts was keenly aware of that which stands in opposition to man's connection to design, pattern, or God, and she employs the term, "chaos" to refer to such opposition. In The Great Meadow, Diony Hall Jarvis desires to "make a world out of chaos" (24), and Roberts wrote in her notes that "disharmony is but a part of the chaotic natural world which surrounds man" (Library of Congress Box 9). Diony is amazed at Daniel Boone, whose character Roberts continually contrasts with Diony's own desire for her life to be stable and ordered. Boone is not worried about being in the unsettled, "chaotic" world of the frontier because he is "never lost . . . [as he] move[s] securely among the chaotic things of the woods and rivers" (338); Diony, however, proclaims, " 'Never lost . . . It's curious . . . I'm not the Boone kind'" (187). Since Roberts defines Boone's role in the novel, and in history, as "a messenger to the chaotic part, a herald, an envoy there, to prepare it for civil men" (338), it is necessary that he be secure in a way that Diony cannot be, for in this work he serves as the "connector" between the order of civilization and the disorder of the wilderness. Elizabeth Madox Roberts had planned an epic cycle of poems about Boone which was never completed but was intended to depict him as "the complete man" (Campbell and Foster 73). In one manuscript poem, "Ancestor," which was written as part of this cycle, it is clear what she meant by the phrase, "complete man," for he is identified first with nature (as a squirrel because of his "squirrel hat"); then he becomes (in a stanza borrowed from the ballad) Bangum of the ballad, "Bangum and the Boar." Next, Boone is identified with Julius Caesar, George Washington, Paul Bunyan, and even God, as finally the poem concludes with the following stanzas:

At last he dug the Mammoth Cave.

He spaded out the rock and air.

And he said now let it be dark

And it was so in there.

And he divided the dark in two,

And the bright half he called light.

-- That's where we get night,

The bright half he called light. (Library of Congress Box 9)

Certainly, one who is "never lost" and who is symbolically identified as the creator of darkness and light, may indeed be best viewed as a type of mythic "demigod" (another "jesus of gentle connections") who represents the harmony for which Diony and her sister-heroines (Ellen, Theodosia, Jocelle, Philly, and Dena) long (Campbell and Foster 146). It is notable that when Diony first encounters Daniel Boone, "He came singing to make his presence known" (184), and makes music in the poems Roberts writes about him, as well [cf., "Ancestor," "When Daniel was a Herdboy," "When Daniel was a Blacksmith," and "Boone Alone in Kentuck" (Song 97, 98, 99)]. His singing, especially the fact that he sings as he moves toward Fort Harrod in order to reveal his presence and/or identity, provides another portrait of music as "pattern [the divine] in motion" and suggests that in The Great Meadow, Boone and his music provide a way to see beyond chaos to the possibility of the development of order in the wilderness.

While it is true that Daniel Boone (along with such characters as Ellen Chesser, Theodosia Bell, and Diony Jarvis) does find strength through a "spiritual independence," Campbell and Foster may be amiss in their claim that such independence is more Aristotelian than Christian (147). They note in their work, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, that her brand of religion seems to combine elements not only of what they call "Berkeley's Aristotelian thought, which describes God as the 'great Mover and Author of

Nature,” but they consider her characters’ dependence on and closeness to the earth as “a tendency toward pantheism” (146) and also note her interest in pagan mythology (149). Certainly, Roberts never attempted to create any kind of systematic theological or philosophical system, and clearly her religious thought is a unique blend of elements found in Catholicism, Protestantism, and Romanticism; however creative she may have been in blending these ways of thinking about the role of the divine in the lives of men and the way music plays a part in connecting man’s mind to God’s “patterns,” her work is, like Berkeley’s, more Christian than Aristotelian in orientation. While Aristotle’s “Unmoved Mover,” his term for a higher power, does embody the “eternal principle of motion” (Stumpf 100), which sounds very much like Roberts’ definition of “music [as] pattern [the divine] in motion,” she and Berkeley depart from Aristotle in their belief that there is a supreme power who “thinks or prescribes purposes for the world” (Stumpf 100).

In a brief, unpublished essay, dated 1922, Roberts clarifies her beliefs about the relationships between art, nature, music, and the divine, suggesting a coherence in these important facets of her thinking.

I am still planting and digging, far-seeing into the time when my garden will be a burst of color, a symphony surrounding me magnificently with -- at least, my reward. Blue iris and red rose, zinnia and salvia and pflox, ivy vines and scarlet runner and peonies. I ought to have some things with lovely names, like delphinium. I have no ideas what delphinium is like, but I think it would be blue. If I wanted to hide in the name of a flower [I] could find no word into which to go more beautiful and full of content. I will content myself with morning glory. It is a cathedral choir and a burst of sun-light and organ notes, the host lifted and the people forgiven. (Library of Congress Box 8)

In an analysis of the above passage, it is first notable that she thinks of her garden as “a symphony,” characteristically using an auditory image, as though a description of the visual is never enough to fully convey an intended meaning. She next imaginatively “hides” (or projects herself) into the word that she finds most beautiful and filled with meaning, and it is important that this word represents a natural object and that the epiphany-like experience she describes occurs while she is “planting and digging.” Her characters who are also connected to the earth (Ellen Chesser, Caleb Burns, Evan Muir, Diony Jarvis, and Ab and Cam Elliott) are, of course, musicians, and represent health of body, mind, and spirit. Conversely, Stoner Drake, the one character who literally never touches the land, is tortured, selfish, and loveless. It is also noteworthy that in the 1922 essay, it is a single word which leads the writer in a spiritual direction. Here Roberts emphasizes the potential power of a name or word, and by associating it with the beautiful, allows it to embody both art and faith. [As noted earlier in this chapter, Roberts believed religion could have no meaning without reference to beauty (Library of Congress Box 8)]. Of course, as also discussed earlier in this chapter, the power of the word is emphasized dramatically in My Heart and My Flesh when Theodosia experiences a “resurrection” which is precipitated by the power of her memory of one word, a word which Roberts similarly describes as “vivid . . . like a new flower in a sunny place” (255). In the 1922 essay, Roberts’ emphasis on the beauty of the word gains further meaning in light of the following note from her papers:

When some clear conception of beauty is experienced, whether it is in the physical world outside, in human behavior, in significant design or color and line, in sounds, in movement of the human body, in the word-touch, man feels his worlds with something more than man-pleasure . . .

(Library of Congress Box 8)

Although she does not define the expression, "the word-touch," it is clearly equivalent to the concept described in the 1922 essay as she discusses the spiritual dimension into which she is led by the single name, "morning glory." The final sentence of the 1922 essay, then, explains why Roberts is "content" with "morning glory" as the embodiment of beauty and meaning. It is first imaginatively associated with sacred choral and organ music as she asserts that the "morning glory" "is a cathedral choir" and "organ notes." And this association is appropriate since, in Roberts' art, words are employed in repetitive and rhythmic patterns suggestive of music. However, here she so closely unifies word and music that they become synonymous in their function, a function which is, in this essay, entirely redemptive and entirely Christian. In the purpose of the word-become-song (to suggest the sacrament of holy communion), Roberts sketches the message of the Christian faith in the image of the host, which is representative of the body of Christ offered in sacrificial death. She, however, ends the paragraph by affirming the power of this union of nature, word, song, and sacrament to lead toward the ultimate goal of forgiveness. It is this same progression of man's union with nature and song leading toward spiritual understanding and forgiveness that is in the prescription the preacher, Jack Briggs, gives to Stoner Drake in He Sent Forth a Raven [the novel Grant C. Knight calls "finally and endlessly religious" (13)] when he tells him to first "pick up the dirt," then go to church to sing and then ask for forgiveness (242). If Roberts' views are at all pantheistic in their emphasis on the importance of man's physical contact with the earth, as Campbell and Foster suggest (149), her so-called pantheism represents merely the initial stage in spiritual understanding and not a final apotheosis.

In the final analysis, Roberts' use of sacred music, and music in general, is always, as David Ferry wrote of Wordsworth's use of nature, "a signpost to that

metaphysical place [she] wants to go" (41). She saw a coherence in everything she termed beauty or art -- words, music, gardening -- and that coherence was something she referred to as design. For her, in the words of Thomas Hall of The Great Meadow, that design was evidence of the "strong mark of the hidden purposes of the Author of all things" (115). Roberts' belief that it is only through an apprehension of design or pattern that "we can touch God," led her to define art as God's "force at work among men" and to claim that "only artists go to heaven" (Library of Congress Box 2, 8). It must be emphasized, however, that her definition of art is broad (it includes anything at all that involves creating a regularity, design, or pattern), as is her definition of music. It would seem, for Roberts, that it was difficult to separate the spoken or written word from her concept of music, and especially song. The 1922 essay literally equates the words "morning glory" with song by the proclamation that the name "is a cathedral choir," and the poem "Conversations Beside a Stream" (Song 74-80) asserts that the "Two great songs sung in America" are Moby Dick and The Declaration of Independence, two prose works not generally associated with melody. Thus, in "Conversations Beside a Stream" Roberts defines song broadly to include all works of art which she believes may function to bring or bind people together. She explores in that work, the historical, political, social, cultural, and religious songs through which she believes Americans may share a common bond. By blurring the distinction between song and prose in "Conversations Beside a Stream," through a declaration that both Melville and Jefferson are singers ["Two great songs in America./ One, sung by Melville, Moby Dick,/ . . . The other by Thomas Jefferson" (79)], Roberts opens a window into an understanding of why she chose to incorporate so many song lyrics into her prose, as well as why she chose to use the symphony or sonata and the musical comedy as the structural basis for such novels as The Time of Man, My Heart and My Flesh, Jingling in the Wind, and A

Buried Treasure. If Roberts views prose and song essentially as facets of the same art form, the only art form -- that which reveals and/or reflects God's force, design, or pattern at work -- then it is a natural out-growth of such thinking for her to attempt to infuse as many elements of music as possible into her prose. Music is thus embedded so deeply into the structural framework of her plots and the rhythm of her syntax, as well as her allusions, imagery, motifs, and characterizations that this stylistic quality of her work becomes unified with and reflective of her belief that inherent within man is an essential "need" for "some harmonious plan by which to live" which leads him to God (qtd. in McDowell 152).

As Campbell and Foster state, this desire for harmony is exhibited in Roberts' use of musical lyrics and structures throughout her work, a trademark that they refer to as her "aesthetic process" and "an aid to . . . [discovering] the spiritual truth which is her constant goal" (277). Thus, when Roberts writes, "The fluidity of song is in my hand" (Library of Congress Box 8), she is explaining the belief that she possesses a means by which to explore "spiritual truth," and when she states, "We go into the unseen by the way of the visible, into the unknown by way of the known," she proclaims that "the truth of . . . song" is in its "magic suggestiveness" (Conrad 1499), its ability to provide one of those "visible" and "known" avenues that could lead her and her readers toward what Theodosia Bell calls "the edge of the last precipice," a place where she could encounter the "unseen" and "unknown" and thus find "liberation of . . . soul" (Heart 94). But, as Campbell and Foster so aptly state, just as Theodosia Bell never mistakes music for spiritual reality, "Roberts never equates art with religion"; she reasons, however, that if music is spiritual in origin, exploring its avenues and precipices should lead one back to its ultimate source, suggesting that art can provide an incredibly mystical and hopeful dimension to the experience of being human, an

experience that explains Roberts' unerringly optimistic vision (111). Each novel, willing though the artist is to examine the chaotic and even the grotesque, ends on a positive note. Her heroines find love, conflicts are resolved, and harmony is restored. Roberts thus allows each novel to effectively demonstrate her belief that all art is sacramental because in her view the artist uses his or her skill not only to create harmonious, well-wrought design, but uses that design as liturgy in the broadest sense of the word, as a means by which all who participate can find beauty, truth, hope, and in Roberts' words, "a common reality" ("On Poetry" 46). So when Roberts writes, "Art should be the final criterion, the comment, the excuse, the judge, the advocate. Art for the sake of life . . ." she is suggesting that as music is woven deeply and indivisibly into the fabric of her poetry and prose, so all art, the earthly evidence of a creative God, is woven deeply into the natural world and may provide for the "sensitive mind" or "imager" (Library of Congress Box 9) a "new order dawning out of chaos" (Meadow 337).

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VITA

Victoria Barker was born in Louisville, Kentucky on August 18, 1950. She was educated in the public schools of Louisville and graduated from Waggener High School in May, 1968. She entered Carson-Newman College in September, 1968 and graduated with honors in English from that institution in May, 1972 with teaching certification in secondary education. After teaching for a year, she entered the Master's program in English at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, receiving the M.A. in May, 1975. Between 1975 and 1982 she taught middle school language arts in Jefferson County, Tennessee. In 1984 she began teaching at Carson-Newman College. In the summer of 1991 she returned to The University of Tennessee to pursue a Ph.D. in English. She was the recipient of a scholarship from The Delta Kappa Gamma Society and was awarded a James B. Stephens Fellowship from The Mellon Foundation for completion of her doctoral program. The Ph.D. in English was received August, 1996.

She is presently an assistant professor of English at Carson-Newman College where she teaches American literature, composition, and children's literature.