The Birth of a Hebrew Tragedy: Woody Allen’s Cassandra’s Dream as a Morality Play

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Abstract

Woody Allen (WA) has been routinely, almost paradigmatically, defined as an American Jewish filmmaker. His usage of Jewish humor tropes and adaptation of the schlemiel archetype for his characters have been well documented. What largely remains overlooked is how WA transcends the mere autobiographic or ethnographic presentations of Jewishness in his films. By using Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989), Match Point (2005) and Cassandra’s Dream (2007) as a case study, this essay intends to argue that through interpretive engagement with Jewish scripture and modernist Jewish texts, on the one hand, and Greek drama and modern Western classics, on the other, WA constructs Jewishness as a philosophical, religious, and artistic concept.
Woody Allen’s Moral Trilogy:
Crimes and Misdemeanors/Match Point/Part One

Sander Lee pithily and correctly points out that “throughout Allen’s career, he has been frequently accused of narcissism and the advocacy of moral relativism, when in fact he has been, and continues to be, one of film’s most forceful advocates of the importance that an awareness of moral values plays in any meaningful life.”

In his body of work, Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989), Match Point (2005) and Cassandra’s Dream (2007) form the trilogy of good and evil. All three probe the question of justice and the director’s obsessive concern: is there order to the universe, embodied in the divine moral directive, or does everything happen at the whim of a chance, making any notion of absolute morality irrelevant? Jewishness constitutes the key aspect of the trilogy. In it, Crimes and Misdemeanors functions as a Jewish piece on the level of thematics and referentiality; Match Point presents, what I would call, a translation film, while Cassandra’s Dream emerges as an almost unique example of Jewish hermeneutics and polemics on screen, where conceptualizing Jewishness becomes the movie’s primary language.

Crimes and Misdemeanors develops through two parallel stories: of a doctor, Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau), who decides to have his mistress killed after she threatens the security of his marriage, and of a schlemiel, director Cliff Stern (WA), who fails in his attempts to find love, or any meaning in life. The doctor, who initially possesses an acute sense of justice and morality, learns to live
with the knowledge of the crime committed at his behest; furthermore, he puts any fear of God on the farthest backburner of his being. The film’s interrogation of justice, while certainly evocative of such classics as Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, is framed in stark Jewish terms. It is the recollections of his father, a God-fearing observant Jew, and the debates at his parents’ Passover Seder table that propel Judah’s doubts and torments. It is also Judah’s patient Ben, his rabbi, brilliantly played by Sam Waterston, who serves as the moral voice in the film, admonishing Judah in a dream, “but the Law, Judah. Without the Law it’s all darkness.” WA’s move is a daring one, considering that in the American imagination, both popular and literary, the question of morality is inextricably linked to Christianity, or at best the Judeo-Christian civilization, a strange concoction-child of American politics. In WA’s oeuvre, Christianity is either entirely absent, or serves as material for a joke, as in Hannah and her Sisters (1986).

WA operates within a self-sufficient Jewish intellectual and theological sphere. *Crimes and Misdemeanors* mirrors the classic Jewish debates of modernity: the traditionalist perspective, represented by Judah’s father and Ben; the Jewish Marxist and violently atheist one, personified by Judah’s aunt, and finally the voice of Jewish existentialist secular humanism, evocative of German Jewish heritage, and represented in the film by philosopher Levy, memorably played by psychoanalytic thinker Martin Bergmann, about whom Cliff is making a
Similarly to Martin Buber’s philosophy of “I and Thou,” Levy is trying to breach the chasm between God and humanity and reconcile the notions of transcendent and immanent God. In one of the footages, used by Cliff for his film, Levy, in his thick German accent, paradigmatically states, “Now, then, the first thing that happened to the early Israelites was that they conceived of a God who cares. He cares, but at the same time, He also demands that you behave morally. But here comes the paradox. What’s one of the first things that God asks? That God asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son, his beloved son, to Him. In others words, in spite of millennia of efforts, we have not succeeded to create a really and entirely loving image of God. This was beyond our capacity to imagine.” The secularism of Levy’s position is unmistakable: he speaks of conceiving of God, thus implying that God is a human creation; he also obliquely polemicizes with Christianity, which claims that it is through sacrifice that the divine love enters the world. Levy would have agreed with Harold Bloom who points out that the idea of a God who carries through with the plan of killing His own son is inconceivable to Judaism. As befits an existentialist, Levy commits a suicide, leaving Cliff dumbfounded. In the last footage we see of him, he intones, “Human happiness doesn’t seem to have been built into the universe... It is only we, with our capacity to love, that give meaning to it.”
With the character of Levy, WA writes his film into the canon of American Jewish writing. The film bears strong parallels with Saul Bellow’s magnificent *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*, whose protagonist, a one-eyed Jewish Tiresias, a Holocaust survivor and a thinker, served, I would argue, as a prototype for Levy. The concept of blindness and seeing connects the two works as well. Sammler is blinded in one eye; yet he possesses an instinctive moral vision. Judah is an ophthalmologist, but a morally blind character. He treats Rabbi Ben who loses his sight, but who does not relinquish insight into the primacy of the Law. As in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, in *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*, the question of justice is wavered between the failing secular Jewish option, that of Sammler, and the traditionalist one, that of his cousin Elya Gruner.

Ultimately WA, as does Bellow, leaves the question of good and evil in a Platonic state of aporia, or, to use a Talmudic term, that of kash’ya, an insoluble issue. Neither Levy’s absurdist and self-destructive quest for love nor the demands of the Law suffice. Indeed, Judah overcomes any sense of the impending punishment, yet there is no guarantee that retribution will not catch up with him after death, for once again, the possibility of God’s existence remains on the table, unshaken by Levy’s talk of the construction of God’s image. Inconsolable, WA’s character becomes the sign of the film’s aporia, both lyrical and mesmerizing.
In the context of the trilogy, the Jewish terms of Crimes and Misdemeanors had to be translated into a general parlance and in the process, made much less ambiguous; hence Match Point. The Jewish content is entirely absent from it precisely because it is both a translation piece and an act of pure performance, utterly lacking in either solid theological, or ethical referentiality. Its allusions are clear: either Western to Dostoevsky, or American to Dreiser. The film’s protagonist commits an act almost identical to Judah’s (Judah facilitates his mistress’s murder, while Jonathan (Chris Wilton), commits the dirty deed himself). He and Judah, however, are polar opposites. Jonathan experiences a natural fear that he might be caught, but carries none of Judah’s religious and family baggage. His crime is undiscovered due to pure chance and thus, the film abandons the principle of aporia both artistically and philosophically; any assumption of a moral order in the universe, just, or unjust, cancels itself out. It is of utmost significance that WA does not translate the Jewish allusions of Crimes and Misdemeanors into the Christian ones in Match Point, thus strongly suggesting that the two are not at all interchangeable. His concerns are specifically Jewish and not, as has been assumed, generally religious, or moral. Cassandra’s Dream fully activates his presentation of Jewishness as a concept.

A Hebrew Tragedy is Born: Cassandra’s Dream/Part Two
Ostensibly, on its own Cassandra’s Dream seems to be at best a minor crime flick, with a somewhat unexpected ending. However, when read as a conceptual discourse, both self-referential and commenting on WA’s body of work, it begins to shine. The film works on at least two levels: hermeneutic, directed at interpreting the Bible and the modernist texts of Osip Mandelshtam and Edouard Roditi, and polemical, pitting WA’s concept of justice and moral choice against the Aristotelian theory of drama. More specifically, he seizes upon Aristotle’s fundamental element of catharsis, making it the centerpiece of the film’s dramatic effect. In Cassandra’s Dream, WA follows in the footsteps of Kafka, none of whose characters are distinctly Jewish, and are presented as even decidedly non-Jewish. At the same time, the Prague writer’s texts are not only reflective of the predicaments of the assimilated Jews of his generation, but ultimately are profound ruminations on the Judaic concepts of the Law, Justice, and the people of Israel. Kafka’ writings, as readers have long discovered, are deeply allegorical, on the one hand, and, contrary to the very principle of allegory, detailed, specific, and inconclusive, on the other.

In Cassandra’s Dream, WA presents a biblical allegory, with elements of a Greek tragedy, imbued with an idiosyncratic Judaic content. Despite its parabolic structure, necessarily symbolic and devoid of any pretense at psychology, as would be expected of classic tragedy, it reaches the level of poignancy, traditionally associated with the lyric. The film’s terrain is allegorical. Though we know that the
events take place in today’s England, it lacks, unlike the London of *Match Point*, any specificity.\(^9\) The plot is centered on two brothers and their uncle, evocative of the evil Uncle Charlie from Hitchcock’s *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), one of WA’s favorite films.\(^10\) The uncle, deftly played by Tom Wilkinson, promises to help the nephews with their troubles and aspirations, if they would agree to kill his business partner, who is intent on testifying against him in court on the matter of some shady dealings. After much deliberation and soul-searching, the brothers do kill the man. The aftermath of the murder provides a blend of *Crimes and Misdemeanors* and *Match Point*. One brother, Terry (Collin Farrell), becomes the troubled Judah, while Ian (Ewan McGregor), resembles the amoral Jonathan. Finally Terry, perhaps alluding to the character of Alberto in Juan Antonio Bardem’s epic *Death of a Cyclist* (1955), decides to turn himself in. Having learned of this turn of events, the uncle convinces Ian to kill the brother; obedient and frightened, he resolves to poison Terry on an excursion on their boat, “Cassandra’s Dream.” Something unexpected transpires there: Ian is unable to carry out the plan; the two brothers fight and Terry accidentally kills Ian, exclaiming “God, oh, God.” In the next shot, we learn from the police that Terry killed himself by drowning immediately afterwards. At first glance the brothers’ characters bear no resemblance to WA’s other protagonists. They are not witty, or original; they are not Jewish. The film’s Jewish layer, however, opens up through a critical analysis.
Cassandra’s Dream is linked to Crimes and Misdemeanors not merely through its subject matter, but the very figures of brothers themselves. For it is, of course, Judah’s brother Jack (Jerry Rosenthal), who organizes the murder in Crimes and Misdemeanors. It is Jack, who threatens to kill Judah if he were to reveal himself to the police. It is Jack, the wicked son from the Passover Haggadah’s “four sons” tale (to remind, the theme of Seder is central to the film), who foreshadows the lines to be spoken by Ian in Cassandra’s Dream. Conversely, it is also Ian who begins to resemble Judah, with his final worship of reason and the embrace of amoral survival. Ian emerges as the exclusive voice of anti-Judaic philosophy in WA’s oeuvre, telling Terry after the murder, “Then was then and now is now. We’ve done it and it’s over. It’s always now.” The chilling power of these words, which echo queen Clytemnestra’s soliloquy after her murder of Agamemnon in Aeschylus’ masterpiece,11 resolutely contradicts the very premise of the Hebrew Bible. Its main injunction is “thou shalt remember,” addressed to both the Israelites and incumbent upon God Himself, who swears to remember the people’s misdeeds till the fourth generation and, of course, redeems the Israelites precisely because He recalls the promise made to their forefathers. Memory stands at the center of the biblical and consequently Judaic conception of the orderly universe. Ian, the specter of Jack, smashes it. While Terry invokes God’s justice, admonishing Ian in no uncertain terms, “We broke God’s law,” Ian inveighs against it, whispering, “God?
Terry, what God? What God, you idiot, God?” In this exchange, the word “God” is repeated five times, making it abundantly clear, what concerns WA the most.

The dichotomy of Terry and Ian runs in two directions. On the one hand, it is an interpretation of Cain and Abel story not only as the saga of the brotherly rivalry, but an instance of the primordial murder. The notion of memory is central to the fourth chapter of Genesis as well, with God’s eternal remembrance of Cain’s sin and the prohibition against multiplying it. This scriptural context constitutes the film’s allegorical and hermeneutic levels and is precisely why McEwan and Ferrell play their roles as if they were wearing masks, for their characters are intently generic. Suggestively, the uncle is a famous plastic surgeon, a mass producer of masks. At the same time, WA thwarts the allegorical structure by turning Crimes and Misdemeanors, whose characters are supremely psychological, into Cassandra’s Dream’s main referent. This hermeneutic turn details the allegory and makes its Jewish biblical content plausible and tangible.12

The second direction of Terry/Ian plotline is polemical and forms the core of the film’s conceptual language. WA ensures that the attentive viewer recognizes what constitutes his target. On the one hand, he replicates the devices of Greek tragedy in the film’s very structure through an intricate set of allusions to a number of tragedies and on the other, revisits Aristotle’s theory of drama, paying particular attention to catharsis. Among the three dominant components of Aristotle’s
definition of tragedy, it being an “imitation of serious and complete action,” the
necessity of it having a completion and a certain size, and it imitating action through
“purgation of these emotions through pity and fear,” the latter – catharsis – looms
large. On a very general level, WA’s film does imitate action, a serious and complete one at that, and it certainly does have a neat structure. At the same time, these criteria are vague and can describe almost any Hollywood drama. In fact Aristotle himself applies the same features of seriousness and completion to any work of art and especially epic poetry. While what Aristotle means by catharsis is quite murky, the term is absolutely specific to tragedy. Recognizing both the concept’s indeterminacy and its singular moral/aesthetic capabilities, WA appropriates it for the film’s goals, imbuing it in the process with a fresh meaning.

The turn to tragedy begins with an intertextual play. In a conversation between Ian, his actress girlfriend Angela and her director, which immediately precedes the “God” exchange between Terry and Ian, the director and Angela (Hayley Atwell) discuss which Greek tragedy they like the most. The director states that his is Euripides’ “Medea.” Angela agrees, adding that for her Clytemnestra is the most powerful heroine. He overlooks her response, commenting that the best production of the play was done by Martha Graham, capturing beautifully “all the Aristotelian pity and fear.” Ian, preoccupied with his thoughts, cannot quite understand what they are talking about; to the question of what his favorite play is,
he confesses that he is “not all that familiar.” Here WA constructs an elaborate interplay of idiocy and blind spots, which, nevertheless, holds the key to his project. “Medea,” of course, has nothing to do with Clytemnestra, a character, most famously, in Aeschylus’ “Agamemnon,” whose preliminary significance for the film was already established (see above). Thus, at work is not a social satire, though indeed none of these characters, a bad actress, a bogus intellectual and a lying murderer know anything about Greek drama. In his film, WA emphatically reproduces the very techniques of Greek tragedy, the most crucial of which is ironic foreshadowing. Most paradigmatically, “Oedipus Rex” functions through such a device. Indeed Terry, a character in a tragedy, is “not all that familiar” because his impending “execution” will not be staved off. The audience recognizes this reality, while he, along with his backdrops, remains in the dark. In “Agamemnon,” Cassandra formulates this trope of misunderstandings and misreadings, blindfolds and miscommunications”: “You are lost, to every word I said.” Thus, the theme of blindness, central to both Greek drama and Crimes and Misdemeanors, enters the film. The director himself, a masterful puppeteer, takes on the role of an all-knowing Tiresias, a concoctor of a delicate network of concealed signs and allusions.

Ultimately, WA reinterprets “all the Aristotelian pity and fear,” turning it into his own concept of the Judaic justice. Throughout the film, Terry insists that
one has a choice: to kill, or not to kill. Once the killing is done, the mechanism of justice and punishment is set into motion. Thus, both Terry and Ian could have avoided the divine punishment had they made the right choice. This view directly contradicts the logic of Greek tragedy, where characters are marked by fate from the start, which they can neither control nor avoid: Oedipus never has a choice. Even in such tragedies as “Agamemnon,” obsessed with the notions of absolute justice, punishment, and suffering, at issue is not the human agent, confronting an ethical choice, but the preordained nature of a crime. “The one who acts must suffer/—that is law,” states the chorus in “Agamemnon.” Since to act here is to live, the notion of choice is taken out of the equation altogether.

It is through the moment of catharsis that the spectators purge themselves of their own fears of suffering and the impending doom. Cognizant of the prevalent Western reading, or rather misreading of Aristotle, WA presents catharsis in moral terms, which produce, nevertheless, an exceptionally powerful aesthetic impact. What happens on the boat, when Terry accidentally kills Ian (who ironically just concluded that he is indeed his “brother’s keeper” by choosing not to murder Terry) and subsequently drowns himself, is not the recognition of chance, as Match Point would have it, or of pills and booze, as the police seem to conjecture, but the enactment of the divine justice. A new choice not to kill does not cancel out the previous transgression. Unlike Cain’s, in this Hebrew tragedy, Ian’s, or Terry’s for
that matter, life would not be spared. Terry realizes this horror when he shouts, having killed Ian, "O God, God...” The audience does as well, having just experienced catharsis through this utterance. Thus, WA establishes an instance of primordial biblical justice, spelled out in the terms of Aristotelian pity and fear, which takes here repentance out of the equation due to the logic of the film’s dramatic structure. The aporia of *Crimes and Misdemeanors* vanishes and a new conceptual Jewish language is engendered.

**Cinematic Intertextuality: Osip Mandelshtam/Edouard Roditi/Part Three**

WA pits his radical reworking of Genesis and the Jewish net of allusions of Crimes and Misdemeanors against the Greek drama. The two are equalized, with the tragedy having the upper formalist hand, the poetics, and the conceptual Jewishness, performed through it, maintaining the ideational/metaphysical end. In 1926, major Russian modernist poet Osip Mandelshtam (1891-1938), with whose poetry WA may certainly be familiar, wrote a review of a production of the Moscow Yiddish Theater, commenting on the performance of its legendary actor, Solomon Mikhoels,

Mikhoels’s face takes on the expression of world-weariness and mournful ecstasy in the course of his dance as if the mask of the Jewish people were drawing nearer to the mask of Classical antiquity, becoming [almost] indistinguishable from it.
The dancing Jew now resembles the leader of the ancient Greek chorus. All the power of Judaism, all the rhythm of abstract ideas in dance, all the pride of the dance whose single motive is, in the final analysis, compassion for the earth - all this extends into the trembling of the hands, into the vibration of the thinking fingers which are animated like articulated speech.¹⁸

One wonders why in such a meticulously constructed film as Cassandra’s Dream, in the conversation with Angela, the director mentions the dance production of “Medea,” while dance plays no important role in the movie at all (Ian does dance with Angela once). A possible answer lies in the above quotation from Mandelshtam.¹⁹ Mikhoels is a Jewish actor whose dance is equal in greatness to the Dionysian frenzy of the Greeks. WA’s Cassandra’s Dream emerges as this dance, painstakingly attentive to the Greek awesomeness, yet supremely concerned with pursuing its own independent vision. The film’s enigmatic title adds another layer to this negotiation between Jewish and Greek poles.

At its most literal level, the title refers to the name of the brothers’ fateful boat, which they purchase at the start of the film. Terry proposes that they call her “Cassandra’s Dream,” the name of a winning horse that he has recently bet on at races. His winnings contribute to acquiring the boat. She is the film’s symbol – evocative of the brothers’ happy days, she becomes the stage of their cathartic downfall. Inscribed into the very name of the tragic prophetess, their dream conceals the nightmare. As we know from Seinfeld, in life, or in art for that matter, “there are no big coincidences, or small coincidences, there are just coincidences,”
and even those turn out to be premeditated and deliberate. Thus, the link between the film, *Cassandra’s Dream*, and Edouard Roditi’s poem, “Cassandra’s Dream,” cannot be coincidental. On the contrary, Roditi’s piece serves as a suggestive backdrop for WA’s conception.

Edouard Roditi (1910-1992), a fellow traveler of the French Surrealist movement, a prolific translator, art critic and a significant American poet in his own right, wrote his long poem in 1939-1940 at Berkeley and then Kansas City. The piece, clearly modeled on T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, is an amalgam of historical references, from the crusades to the realities of the pre-war Central Europe; it is an impassioned philosophical rumination on the cyclical nature of history and the meaninglessness of any change in human existence. It is the poem of doom. Roditi commented on its composition, “I was then so intensely aware of doom, of the end of an era and of the impending Holocaust, that I suffered in quick succession some of the most violent seizures of my life and had to go into neuropsychiatric treatment, though with little positive effect.” Indeed, in his poetry, Roditi often presents himself as a visionary, whose ailment provides him with the gift of a prophetic insight. The poem proposes an Ecclesiastes-like worldview, with its pessimistic and an almost cynical insistence on the interchangeability of epochs and human lives. “Yet beware of signs,” the poet states, for “there is no end, / but an endless change from same to same...”
In hindsight, the following lines bear an unmistakable allusion to Ian’s statement on the “now” in the film:

From the pain of the past and the pain
Of the future, memory and foresight,
Are lighter than pangs of the endless present
In which we live, save in our sleep,
In hopes, in fears, in poetry
And in our death, those five sole doors
Of escape (though one will open only
Once from the present, allows no return
To the present, if once we try this door).  

Hopes, fears and poetry are, of course, the “stuff” of tragedy that breaks the comforting zone of the “now.” It is, however, not the specific allusions to the text that link it most strongly to the film, but its “pre-history.” Roditi wrote regarding it, “‘Cassandra’s Dream’ is named after the long dramatic monologue composed in ancient Alexandria by the Greek poet Lycophron, whom Charles James Fox, in the eighteenth century, believed to have been the only Greek poet endowed with the same gift of prophecy as the Hebrew prophets.” Originally, “Cassandra’s Dream” was published in a collection of Roditi’s poems in 1949 and then republished in 1981 in a collection titled Thrice Chosen. While the original 1949 edition is hard
to come by, the 1981 one is readily available and contains Roditi’s explanation quoted above. I would argue that it is precisely this link between the ancient Greek poet and the Hebrew prophets that attracted WA’s attention, substantiating his concept of the Hebrew tragedy.

Furthermore, in part four of the poem, the speaker, troubled by how his word would be understood in posterity, writes,

I must know, as I write, what each word means
Now to me and hereafter to all who read
This and all that I write.

In spring, birds sing

And the ear, turned to winter’s dialectic,
Hears sound without meaning, pauses to listen
Like the bird that hears Old Homer’s voice,
The Song, but not the tale of Troy.27

These lines by this supposedly minor poet astound with both their precision and depth. WA is their perceptive reader, for his “Cassandra’s Dream” is both an homage/commentary and a reinterpretation of Roditi’s masterwork. “The song, but not the tale of Troy”: isn’t it what his film is most profoundly about, where “the
song” is the Aristotelian structure and “not the tale of Troy” – a new Judaic content? While Roditi speaks to the disjunction between eras and the ultimate, surprising for a Western poet, unsurvivability of art, WA imbues this paradox with a positive impetus, pitting and yet equalizing “Athens and Jerusalem.”

Roditi identified himself as a Jewish artist, perpetually attentive to Jewish traditions, biblical, mystical, and rabbinic alike. He wrote in the preface to Thrice Chosen, “Three of my grandparents were Jews, but the fourth, my maternal grandmother, was a Flemish Catholic, so that neither my mother nor I were born Jews according to traditional Jewish law. I chose, however, to be one of the Chosen people, a choice that already implies a kind of double election.”28 One can surmise that WA is doubly chosen as well, where the election of a Jewish artist is counterbalanced with “all the Aristotelian pity and fear.” Unlike his unfortunate character, this Jew from New York is all that familiar.


2 The centrality of existential themes to Crimes and Misdemeanors has been previously explored by Sander Lee.


Sander Lee has suggested that Levy’s character is also partially based on Primo Levi. In an interview with Lee, WA acknowledged that Levi is “probably present on an unconscious level” in the film. “Existential Themes in Crimes and Misdemeanors”: 77-78. To an extent, Levy’s philosophy replicates Martin Bergmann’s own commentary on the Bible. See Martin S. Bergmann, *In the Shadow of Moloch: the Sacrifice of Children and its Impact on Western Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press). I am thankful to Steven Wasserstrom for pointing me in the direction of Bergmann’s writings.


For an analysis of the link between WA and Kafka, see *The Films of Woody Allen*: 171-197.


“Here I stand and here I struck/ and here my work is done... Done is done.” Aeschylus, *The Oresteia* (New York: Penguin, 1977): 161-162.

It is important to remember that on its own, the Hebrew Bible is weary of any allegorizing. Its characters are singular in their predicaments. Imposing allegory on the Bible is part of a hermeneutic process itself.


Of course, WA already provided a very playful and light commentary on Greek tragedy in *The Mighty Aphrodite* (1995).

Aeschylus: 153.

Ibid., 167.


22 *Thrice Chosen*: 17.

23 Ibid., 72.

24 Nevertheless, they are also revealing. The poem specifically tells of suicide, which becomes significant in light of Terry’s drowning: “There is no other end but death:/ between death and death, fast or slow,/ no choice but self-inflicted./ Usurp time’s powers, try to cheat/ chance of its tricks, the end/ is still the same: death by death’s hand/ or death by your own, guided by death’s.” I would argue that WA replaces the notion of chance, central to Match Point, with that of divine/poetic justice.

25 Ibid., 72.


27 Ibid., 74.

28 Ibid., 17.