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The Evolution of Foucault's Utopic Panopticon: Technology and the Creation of a Dystopia in *Big Brother*

Michelle-Taylor Sherwin

Alleviating an American audience from the constant bevy of reruns during the summer, the reality television show *Big Brother* has been a CBS staple since 2000. With seemingly diverse contestants (who are henceforth called "houseguests") ranging from across the nation, they are thrown into a house to compete against one another all summer. The houseguests compete in both physical and mental competitions (sometimes simultaneously), for power, luxury, and money. Alliances are formed, backs are stabbed, and tears are unabashedly shed. The ultimate goal: be the last houseguest standing in the game and win $500,000. The majority of scholarship regarding reality television focuses on the commodifiable aspect, normally applying Marxist theory. I am more interested in the social aspect of *Big Brother* and how this reality show specifically circumvents Michel Foucault's social theory. The houseguests in this show live in an artificial environment for three months with cameras that watch their every move and microphones that listen to their every word. Per Foucault's social theory of the "Panopticon" established in *Discipline and Punish*, with the constant and unrelenting surveillance in the house, the houseguests should be aware of the cameras at every point, and thus, they would/will change their behavior in a manner that will be favorable to the narrative construction of the producers, the audience, but not necessarily the houseguests themselves.

Regardless of the houseguests' willingness to enter this environment, according to Foucault's theory, they are still supposed to adhere to the innate power structure established through surveillance in which the watcher has the power. The true distinction that makes this reality show different from that of programs like *The Real World* or *Survivor* is simple: the utter lack of Foucault's "Panopticon." Through evidence of eviction interviews and instances of sexual behavior inside the house, I argue against the replication of Foucault's social theory within the

dynamics of this reality show. Instead of the power resting in the hands of the producers of the show, i.e. the gamemakers, the power lies with the houseguests.[1] The setting of the Big Brother house deconstructs the Foucauldian utopia and then reconstructs a dystopic mini-society in which the houseguests forget the presence of the cameras (and ultimately the American audience watching from their couches at home) and instead take the game into their own hands and decide whom to award the prize money to at the end of the game.

Instead of the literary understanding of George Orwell's "Big Brother" in *1984* that functions as a tyrannical form of government, the abstract construction of "Big Brother" in the world of reality television instead functions as a façade for the producers. These are the individuals who create the competitions for the houseguests. The first game, and what some would argue as the most important, is the weekly Head of Household competition (hereby referred to as HOH). The individual who wins this game is then tasked with selecting two houseguests who the rest of the cast will vote on to leave the house. Before the vote to evict a person from the house, another competition happens: Power of Veto, or POV for short. If a nominee wins, they may pull themselves off the chopping block and the HOH nominates another houseguest in their stead. If anyone else wins, that person has the option of saving their fellow houseguest or to leave the nominations the same. Eventually, there are two houseguests left and the previously evicted seven houseguests (or in some seasons, nine) vote on who wins the money. Throughout the show, each houseguest is called into a private room, known as the "Diary Room," where the producers ask each person questions regarding their emotions, their game play, etc. Three times a week for three months, the competitions and diary room sessions are edited and constructed to form a composed version that is then shown to the American audience. The producers surveil the houseguests and incorporate what they consider would make the most intriguing story.[2] The houseguests' behavior is at the mercy of the producers and how they choose to portray the members of their "cast of characters."

Foucault's theory of social behavior based on the idea of external surveillance is explained through the context of the plague in *Discipline and Punish*. The magistrates surveyed the infected individuals and the healthy. Both were locked in their homes, unable to leave.

> This enclosed, segmented space, observed at any point in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links

> the center and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead—all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary system. (Foucault 197)

With the magistrates at the top of the disciplinary chain as the observers, it is evident that these men were the ones with the power in the town. They would report any misdemeanor, any death, etc. Townspeople locked in their homes were constantly scrutinized. Foucault writes, "The plague-stricken town, traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in distinct way over all individual bodies—this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city" (198). With the inescapable and inextricable surveillance in the town, the people began to modify their behaviors, conforming to the power structure of the magistrates. In *Big Brother*, the camera acts as this punitive element, initially causing the behavior modification.

Foundationally, the "Panopticon" in Foucault's theoretical text is intentionally replicated in the process of *Big Brother*. The producers, like the magistrates, are the ones watching the houseguests and dutifully editing. The thought is that houseguests will act in a manner that is marketable to the American viewing audience. With the cameras rolling 24/7, the houseguests choose to relinquish all privacy. Even if not every clip is broadcasted to the audience, everything is recorded. Viewers have the ability to subscribe to the streaming program "CBS All Access" and pay a monthly fee to view the houseguests at any time, day or night. This extreme level of voyeurism perpetuates the established power structure: the bodies of the houseguests are completely available for both the producers of the game and the viewing audience. This is most evident in the first couple weeks of competition in the house.

Season 4 of *Big Brother*, which premiered in 2003, showed houseguests having sex for the first time in the Big Brother house within the first month of being in the game. David Lane and Amanda Craig have sex in the HOH bedroom—the HOH not only gets immunity from eviction for a week, they are also given the luxury of their own room. Following their tryst, David was recorded saying "Grandma's gonna love this" (Rosenfeld par. 5).[3] As such, David breaks the fourth wall for the viewers. He verbally acknowledges the cameras watching him. David is directly removing himself from the situation: he is bringing the action directly to the viewers. In terms of Foucault's idea of power in such an obviously-constructed environment, the audience

can genuinely see the power shifting from the producers, who are using these clips to construct a desired narrative, to the houseguests, who are trying to have a good time on their journey to win half million dollars. Their choice to have sex on camera depicts the houseguests taking the power into their hands and away from the producers.

Foucault's social theory lends itself to a process of behavior modification in most surveillance settings. While this is not to argue whether the disciplinary mechanism can work in another setting, like a prison, the attempted incorporation of Foucault's theory does not work in *Big Brother.* Reality television as a medium instead "has an organizing function, almost in an anthropological sense of being a totem whose various and multiple meanings crystalize and set off certain kinds of activity and discourse" (Bignell 7). Worth mentioning in terms of these "activities" and "discourse" is the abject willingness of the individuals to go through this process. Unlike Foucault's metaphor of individuals sick with the plague who essentially had no choice in their surveillance, the houseguests on this show go through extensive audition processes to be casted on the *Big Brother* show. They are willingly allowing themselves to be broadcasted on national television, with their every waking moment recorded. This differs greatly from "Bentham's prison," according to Jerome Bourdon, a sociologist, who calls this "new mechanics of surveillance, a kind of 'electronic fascism'" (70). The houseguests choose this voyeuristic lifestyle. Each houseguest is made aware of the conditions and situations in their search for the winning prize money. In terms of Foucault's social theory, that willingness shouldn't matter: surveillance should still cause behavior modification. To a degree in *Big Brother,* this does happen. However, as the show progresses and the potential to win a large amount of money is ever closer (even though it's not as large as the *Big Brother* sister-show *Survivor*), the behavior significantly changes in another way altogether that extends beyond Foucault's theory. With money as the perfect *modus operandi* for some houseguests, the perfect façade of a utopia is shattered and the dirty-moneyed dystopia shines through. As opposed to the negative reinforcement rampant in Foucault's theory, the prize money in *Big Brother* is positive reinforcement. This surveillance that is meant to be "based on a system of permanent registration" no longer stays within the confines of Foucault's established power structure. Alison Grodner as the executive producer of the show is no longer the one in charge. The money drives many of the houseguests.

In the first couple of weeks, as shown with Amanda and David's sexual distraction in the beginning of season 4, the money is hard to imagine. There are still three months to go before some lucky houseguest can actually win that money, which allows for more conscious

thought given to the cameras that monopolize every corner in the house.[4] However, as the number of people in the house begins to decrease and more are evicted, the realization that the money is eventually going to someone becomes the forefront. At some point in the game, following this realization, the cameras fall away. All that matters is the half million dollars waiting patiently at the end. Consequently, Foucault's theory fades away like the distant memory of the cameras and the American viewing audience. The surveillance no longer matters. In his interview with host Julie Chen, houseguest Bill "Bunky" Miller is a significant example for the individual agency that disrupts Foucault's theory in this setting. After his elimination from the game, Julie asks, "What surprised you most about this whole experience?"

> Umm, really, I didn't know it was going to take so long . . . and I was also surprised that the cameras and the microphones didn't bother me as much as I thought they would. I thought I would be very self-conscious and I wasn't . . . For the most part, you saw the real Bunky. I was still trying to play a game and I struggled with that. Should I be myself or should I try to be somebody else in order to win this game and I felt that it was more important to be honest and keep my integrity and be Bunky. (*Big Brother*)[5]

With this interview, the "Panopticon" is completely inverted and the power of control is no longer with the producers but rather with this specific houseguest. By saying that the audience saw the "real Bunky," who was still "playing the game," there is a behavior modification, but not to the same degree or reason that Foucault describes in his theoretical text. This is no longer the same structure: instead, it's a new interpretation of power and therefore a different practical application of power. Bunky admittedly modifies his behavior and therefore his identity in the game in order to make it to the end, not because he feels that all of America is watching him: he does this for his own purpose. With the power now in the players' hands, this leaves the production crew of the reality television show with a very limited narrative to construct during the segmented shows. The reversal of roles is surprising and stealthy, ultimately destroying the façade of the utopia.

On the surface, power in the *Big Brother* house shifts between houseguests fighting for money on an hourly basis. The power between the producers and the houseguests also shifts. To say that the producers of *Big Brother* don't valiantly attempt to both create a "utopia" and to retain the control of said "utopia" is naïve and unrealistic. Videos have been leaked of the production team asking houseguests leading

questions that demonstrate this insatiable need for control in a voyeuristic setting. An example of this is provided by a "live feed leak" of a Diary Room segment that was recorded and released on the Internet and featuring a conversation between Kail Harbick (a contestant of *Big Brother* 8) and an unnamed producer of *Big Brother*.

> "Are you sure this is what you want to do?"
> "Umm, well I think I'm going to go home, they're going to be sending me home in a couple weeks anyways. If I really don't want in the sequester house, and..."
> "This isn't the Kail who tried to get on seasons 5, 6, and 7."
> "I know, but I didn't think I was going to get cussed out every day either so..."
> " You've held your head pretty high, regardless of being cussed out every day." (*Big Brother*)

In terms of context for this video, Kail had said just before this live feed was leaked that she wanted to "self-evict." An unnamed producer responds with very clear prompting, attempting to manipulate Kail into staying. Regardless of the motive behind this action, this is more than a producer simply asking a houseguest why they're upset. The producer is utilizing Kail's sadness and anxiety so that the game can continue as planned, in addition to the edits.[6]

Producers are charged with creating the most tense and dramatic atmosphere possible : one worth the status of a reality television show. By Foucauldian standards, this leaves the gamemakers with the most power. For instance, as Leigh Edwards, a scholar who specializes in reality television and popular culture, writes in *The Triumph of Reality TV: The Revolution in American Television*, *Big Brother* "turn[s] the instability of the nuclear family into sensationalized plot twists," due to production influence (101). Edwards includes an in-depth analysis of a particular situation in season 5 that attempts to dramatize a familial relationship.

> *Big Brother* included the surprise ploy of having a half-brother and half-sister as contestants in the house together; the two did not know of each other's existence, since the sister grew up with their father and the brother had never met him. Producers, upon realizing their connection when both applied to the show, put them in the house together, then used the new-found blood bond to generate high drama in the Machiavellian completion game, as the two discovered they were siblings. (Edwards 101)

The circumstance of the plague in Foucault's text created a situation in which a power struggle was constantly in the favor of those doing the surveillance. With this environment in which houseguests willingly compete on the show, the producers construct an artificial environment that has all the opportunity to function as a high-stakes emotional setting, one that is still meant to give the producers the power. Producers attempted to create this "high drama" atmosphere with this trope of lost siblings reconnecting on a national television platform. However, in season five with half-siblings Michael "Cowboy" Ellis and Jennifer "Nakomis" Dedmon, the players destroyed that typical power dynamic by not allowing the producers to influence their behavior and reactions.

There is no doubt that the moment in which Nakomis and Cowboy realized they had a familial connection was a rather emotional and touching time, with every minute caught on camera for the world to view, of course. However, that's where the emotion and drama ends. The perfect utopia was not as it was created and filmed to be. There are two scenarios the producers undoubtedly hoped could play out. The first one included an alliance between two very unlikely people that make it to the final two of the show, creating an everlasting sentiment that would remain in the viewer's hearts for seasons to come. There was also room for a rivalry: an enemy relationship in which brand-new brother and sister constantly take stabs at one another's backs until one is pushed, defeated and broken, to the jury house and the other goes on to win. Regardless of the greedy cameras hungry for any sort of emotional reaction, neither scenario happened. The houseguests were able to push aside the hopes of the production team and instead behave and play the game according to their own free will and what each thought would take them further in the game. Both remained on opposite ends of the house in different alliances and relationships, with very little to do with one another.[7] The production team could not capitalize on their indifference, but instead had to attempt to recreate another narrative to make that season memorable.

With this destruction of the producer's power struggle comes the iteration of the setting of a reality television show as a reconfiguration of traditional Foucauldian expressions of power. Over time in the *Big Brother* house, the houseguests begin to thrive and work for their own benefit in the voyeuristic setting. Ironically, it is the destruction of what the producers are attempting to construct that makes this reality television show more complex than fourteen people lying around a house for three months. As the power struggle occurs not only between the houseguests, but also the houseguests and production, behavior modification creates multifaceted levels and unique opportunities for

houseguests to explore all different sides of themselves and to see how they react in a once-in-a-lifetime experience. *Big Brother* as a reality television show defies the confines of the "Panopticon" and therefore Foucault's foundational theory, creating a hybrid of voyeurism and surveillance in the desperate search for a half million dollars.

Notes

1. For the purposes of this claim, the evidence utilized in this research is conducted from seasons 2, 4, 5, and 8. There are more instances in the later years of *Big Brother* as well.

2. While there are a number of seasons that deviate from this particular format of the game, this is a simplified explanation of the game at its beginning. Indeed, it is significant to note that season 2 of *Big Brother* did not have a Power of Veto ceremony. Instead, the Head of Household nominated two nominees and those nominees were voted on to leave the house.

3. Amanda Craig was evicted on Day 12 and David Lane was evicted on Day 26 out of 82 days. Due to their rather early evictions, I argue that they were more aware of the cameras during their stay in the Big Brother house as opposed to some of the other houseguests I have examined.

4. Laura Rosenfeld's article entitled, "5 'Big Brother' Showmance Couples Who Weren't Afraid to Have Sex on Camera," provides an edited version, compiled by that season's producers, of the sexual relations between houseguests David Lane and Amanda Craig. The word "showmance" is a label, used particularly by avid watchers of *Big Brother* and *Survivor*, to indicate two players who have met, usually on the show, and develop romantic/sexual feelings for one another.

5. Bunky was evicted on Day 61 out of 82 days. As part of the final five of the game, I argue that this houseguest had a great deal of time to focus more on the money as opposed to the voyeuristic aspect of the game.

6. Kail Harbick was evicted on Day 41 out of 81 days.

7. Eventually, Michael Ellis was the runner-up of that season. Nakomis Dedmon was eliminated on Day 75 out of 82.

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Chelsea Dingman

The Ides of March

We only begin again when something ends.
Miscarrying, I couldn't tell if I was the scape
-goat or shepherdess. Sometimes, I survive

as an olive tree leftover from civilizations
that no longer exist. The heart
of me, unwooded. You tried to count

the ghosts I gather instead of rings. I am
burdened by blood, when I want
so many things. Your sleeping body

next to me. Less water in the streets.
Fewer ghosts that I house like emigrants
in cars on the TransCanada highway, as we were

when we left frozen shores pining for sun. I pine
for my blood to clot. I pine for you
while you're sleeping somewhere

new. For Canada & the child I was
before a child could break
in me. I lie in the dark & listen

to the sounds of steady rain on this Florida
roof. I let it fill me like you used to. I want to translate this
night into a night assigned to another

country where I don't wear my mother
so well. Where you kiss me goodnight
& I am not at the mercy of this country

I made. Of this person I pine for
who will make me less
mortal.

Émigré

my mother didn't say please.
my mother didn't say please stay away from my kids
to men she entertained when their hands were vines
& we were helpless.
my mother didn't say please don't.
my mother didn't say please don't leave.
my mother didn't say this is the beginning & the end
as we passed the railyard in Craigellachie
where the last spike was driven into the ground.
my mother didn't say your body isn't a passport.
my mother didn't say there is no god.
my mother didn't say your father got drunk
& drove off of a cliff on the Coquihalla highway.
my mother didn't say being young doesn't have to hurt
after she changed the locks
& left my clothes in the yard.
my mother didn't say everything will be okay
when she stopped coming home
at night, when my brothers cried, their tiny bodies
in the bed next to me. When I swallowed every pill
she left behind.
my mother didn't say I'm sorry that running is easy
when she saw me at the hospital.
When she left me there, covered in charcoal,
ashen hair haloing my face.
my mother didn't say you'll learn.
my mother didn't say you'll learn that later, when you leave
the only country you've known to be
the only country your children know.

Post-Diagnosis

Astronomers found seven new planets
last night, but I'm outside on the lawn,

new baby pulled tight against me.
I rub his head like a prayer stone.

Like a marriage-bed. The sky, overcast,
pulls the heavy world toward us.

The porch, buckled by rain. The cicadas
sing in the fields under low sun.

The sun, the last body you saw
as a whippoorwill warbled in the dead

-end street. Truth: the body you saw last
was mine. Full. Fierce. There is no exile

for a woman from herself. Her child.
Depressive: put your fist through another

wall. Sleep in another room. Night comes,
as it must. You say you dream of the pines,

frozen in place. Of snow. Of our place
among planets we don't know.

Daughter-hymn

I've been up all night tearing
up old proverbs. Pages of names.

Your origin story.

I won't say your name again.
I won't be praised.

I want revision, but even the guilty
walk free sometimes.

If I have to carry you like a wrist
-watch, I must leave the desert

of my body. I must forget the sound you made
leaving. I must forgive the white flag of sky overhead.

Betray me not again.
I didn't know that we all die

more than once. The cord at your throat
spared you that. Like praise

in this ugly hour, I live. My body, an address.

Didn't you know?

There's devotion in every ghost
story. A woman on her knees.

In the Country of

I.

my dead father, he hands me a fly
to hook at the end of my fishing line

but I want to ask why where
he's been for thirty years I want

to rescue my brothers, my mother,
the townspeople, the river. My father asks

why do they need rescuing?

I recite the names of men, killed while felling
trees, while scaling the Rockies, while burning snow & ice
from the roads only to die on icy roads in snow
-storms. In avalanches. On skidoos.
I recite the names of fathers, too poor
to feed their families. Of hunger-sores.
Of winter. Of the midday dark.

And what of Hope—

the city, outside Vancouver. They find
his body there. Before the lawsuits & burial
& orphan's benefits. Before *father* was
just a word stuck between riverstones.

II.

The crimes I've committed: leaving
Canada at twenty. Having two kids
who don't know where I'm from.

At the US-Canada border, I'm detained.
Put on a no-fly list. My vehicle, seized
in Montana, I am guilty & lying
next to my husband in a hotel room

in Montreal when I am pardoned. At the border,
my children are separated from me

& questioned. I am too much my father, too
much my mother. Too other.
I am every new vowel I forget to remember.

III.

After 9/11, a border guard says: *this is the world
we live in now*, a loaded weapon strapped to his back.

The world of my father from British Columbia.
The world of my grandfather from Eastern Europe.
The world of my grandmother from England.
The world of my American children.

My father is dead. I am thousands of bodies
aflame. Nobody will survive the future if the future means

forgetting. If the future hinges on vowels.
How they pass through a mouth.
The mouths they pass through.

About the Author

Chelsea Dingman is a Visiting Instructor at the University of South Florida. Her first book, *Thaw*, was chosen by Allison Joseph to win the National Poetry Series (University of Georgia Press, 2017). Her chapbook, *What Bodies Have I Moved*, is forthcoming from Madhouse Press (2018). In 2016-17, she also won *The Southeast Review*'s Gearhart Poetry Prize, *The Sycamore Review*'s Wabash Prize, and *Water-stone Review*'s Jane Kenyon Poetry Prize. Her work can be found in *Ninth Letter*, *The Colorado Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*, among others. Visit her website: chelseadingman.com.

T. S. Eliot and Popular Music: Ragtime, Music-Hall Songs, Bawdy Ballads, and All That Jazz

Nancy D. Hargrove

Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Guy A. Hargrove, Jr.

Throughout his life, T. S. Eliot not only enjoyed the various forms of popular entertainment in the United States, France, and Great Britain, but was also greatly influenced by them in writing his poetry, plays, and essays. Indeed, many of their elements are reflected in numerous ways from the earliest of his works to the last. David Chinitz in *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* illustrates the extent to which Eliot in his youth was steeped in and influenced by American popular culture. My book *T. S. Eliot's Parisian Year* contains a chapter on the Parisian popular entertainment scene that influenced him during his 1910-1911 sojourn in the French capital. And Ronald Schuchard in his essay "In the Music Halls" in *Eliot's Dark Angel* establishes the influence of British music hall on Eliot. This essay will focus on the music and performers in popular entertainment that seem to have inspired him, moving chronologically from his youth in St. Louis and Boston to his year in Paris when he was 22 and finally to his adulthood in London. I will demonstrate how they informed the rhythm and shape of his works, provided him with lyrics, and encouraged his eagerness to experiment.

I will begin with a brief review of the major characteristics of variety theatre, a broad umbrella term that includes most of the types of popular entertainment that Eliot experienced: American minstrel shows, vaudeville, revues, and musicals; Parisian café-concerts (cafés with musical entertainment) and music halls (imported from England, but given a French flavor); and British music halls and revues. All presented a series of different acts or "turns," featuring songs, comedy routines, and specialty acts such as magicians, acrobats, and dancers. The songs, typically aimed at working-class or middle-class audiences and romantic, sentimental, patriotic, or humorous in nature, consisted of a series of verses sung by the performer, each of which was followed by a refrain with which the audience joined in. A contemporary account of

a Parisian café-concert, for example, notes that there is "direct contact between the song and the people, . . . for the audience takes up the refrain in a chorus, . . . accepting the [singer's] invitation which often ends the last verse: 'Sing with me . . . Repeat with me,'" an invitation facilitated by the sale of printed refrains (Caretie qtd. in Caradec and Weill 30).[1] Eliot found this feature particularly appealing, noting in his famous 1922 essay on the British music-hall comedienne and singer Marie Lloyd, "The working man who . . . joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art" ("Marie Lloyd" 74).

As Chinitz demonstrates, Eliot's youth in St. Louis was permeated with the exciting sounds of American popular music from minstrel shows, vaudeville, revues, and musicals as well as from honky-tonks and saloons, although at his young age he was surely not allowed to go to the last two, but probably heard their tunes. Ragtime, an original American musical genre, began in the late 1890s and was popular until the late teens when it was eclipsed by jazz. An abbreviation of "ragged time," a reference to its ragged or syncopated rhythm, ragtime grew out of dance music played in red-light districts in St. Louis and New Orleans and jigs and marches played by African American brass bands. Its lyrics, as described by Philip Furia, reflected the American vernacular and employed internal rhymes and jagged syntactical breaks (Chinitz 37). Since ragtime literally "filled the St. Louis air," as Eric Sigg points out (20-21), its rhythms and lyrics surely informed Eliot's own sense of rhythm and contributed to his appreciation for the daring and experimental from an early age, as well as provided him with actual lyrics for his works.

In Boston during his undergraduate years at Harvard, with occasional trips to New York City, Eliot's opportunities to experience popular entertainment expanded; there, for example, he could have attended George M. Cohan's 1907 musical *Fifty Miles from Boston*, which contained the song "Harrigan," and Chinitz suggests that he probably heard "My Evaline," a 1901 song from a vaudeville-minstrel act, sung as a barbershop quartet at Harvard (43). And because of his love of ballroom dancing, he was familiar with current dance tunes.

Eliot's most well-known use of ragtime in his works is "That Shakespearian Rag" (see fig. 1), from the 1912 Ziegfeld Follies, in Section II of *The Waste Land.* In the scene portraying the upper-class couple in their ornately-decorated flat, the frantic wife tries to elicit a response from her silent, depressed husband by asking, "'Is there nothing in your head?'" He only thinks the reply, nothing

But
O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—
It's so elegant
So intelligent. (127-130)

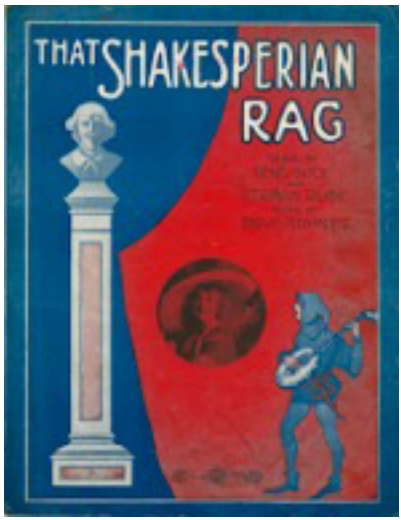

Fig. 1

"That Shakesperian Rag." York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, John Arpin Fonds, FO JAC005281.

This fragment of a popular tune suggests the triviality and vacuity of his existence. The poem's odd spelling "Shakespeherian," which is overlooked by most Eliot scholars, is surely meant to indicate both the syncopated beat of ragtime (Chinitz 48) and the way the refrain sounds when sung by a music-hall singer and repeated by the audience. The Grizzly Bear referred to in the chorus was a popular dance considered shocking at the time, which, Schuchard notes, was the trademark of the British music-hall star Ethel Levy and whose steps Eliot offered to teach Virginia Woolf (106, 235 n. 10). Sara M. Evans in her book *Born for Liberty* reveals that, "after a ten-to-twelve hour workday [young working-class women] flocked to dance halls where young men would treat them to drinks and [they would] join in the faddish 'tough dancing.' The raw sexuality of dances like the slow rag, turkey trot, bunny hug, grizzly bear, and 'shaking the shimmy' horrified the middle classes. . . . Such public eroticism shocked one magazine into announcing in 1913 that 'sex o'clock' had struck" (161).

Two lines of the chorus of another popular song are found in the excised opening passage of *The Waste Land*. "Harrigan," as noted earlier, appeared in Cohan's 1907 musical *Fifty Miles from Boston*, sung by an Irish American proud of his heritage, with a rousing chorus that is still well-known today. Eliot uses this song to characterize the group of lowbrows who are drinking and carousing when one of them recalls an earlier incident in which "we got Joe to sing / 'I'm proud of all the Irish blood that's in me, / There's not a man can say a word agin me'" (*The Waste Land: Facsimile* 5). Eliot substitutes "There's not a man"

for the original's Irish dialectal phrase "Divil a man," meaning "Nary a man," perhaps to avoid misunderstanding.

However, the two lines from "Harrigan" are circled in the typescript, and notations in the right margin indicate alternate choices: lines from the songs "By the Watermelon Vine" and "My Evaline," which are struck through, and two lines from the chorus of a 1909 ragtime song "The Cubanola Glide" (*The Waste Land: Facsimile* 5; see fig. 2), which, according to Chinitz, was significant for its tropical rhythms, its African American dialect, and its contribution to the developing social dance craze (43). In the song an amorous man invites his "honey babe" to learn a Cuban dance that involves "kissin" and "squeezing" as they "Glide to Glory"; the lines from the chorus written in the margin are "Tease, Squeeze lovin & wooin / Say Kid what're y' doin" (*The Waste Land: Facsimile* 5), with "Say kid" substituted for the original's "Oh babe." Eliot was apparently quite fond of this song because he had used two other lines from the chorus ("'*Throw your arms around me—Aint you glad you found me*'" 18) ten years earlier in "The smoke that gathers blue and sinks," a poem written in Paris in February 1911, to which I'll return later. Interestingly, this second pair of lines was adapted from a 1907 song entitled "Ain't You Glad You Found Me."

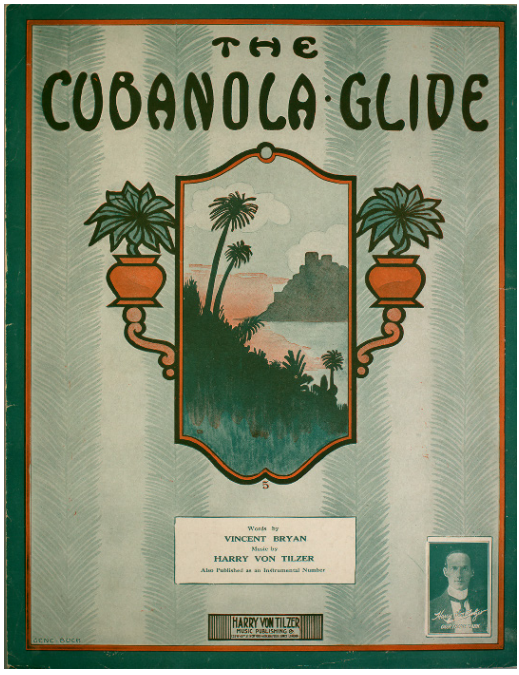

Fig. 2

"The Cubanola Glide": 32278011731092: The Cubanola Glide, Charles H. Templeton, Sr. sheet music collection. Special Collections, Mississippi State University Libraries.

Eliot uses the song "Under the Bamboo Tree" in his highly experimental melodrama *Sweeney Agonistes*. Wishing to convey to a broad audience the serious theme that the menace of savagery resides in modern civilization, he incorporated not only this song but also

numerous elements of the minstrel show, vaudeville, music hall, café-concert, and melodrama. For instance, when the play was first published in 1926-7 in the *Criterion*, it was entitled *Wanna Go Home, Baby* to resemble a music-hall song and / or a drunken question with modern-day sexual implications, but he later changed it to the title it bears today. Musically speaking, Eliot drew from ragtime and jazz, the latter of which had its beginnings in New Orleans in the mid to late teens with African American musicians and had become extremely popular by the early 1920s in Europe as well as in America. Both ragtime and jazz used syncopation and American slang and dialects, but jazz introduced improvisations, thus authorizing free-wheeling experimentation and individuality on the part of the performers, and pushed the envelope with more and more daring uses of the vernacular and sexual innuendo. As Chinitz shows, these and other aspects of popular entertainment can be seen in the play's irregular rhythm, repetition, slang, rapid-fire cross-talk, sexual innuendo, and stock characters (43). Concerning the characters, Schuchard suggests that the British music-hall comedian George Robey's Prehistoric Man is a model for Sweeney (105; see photograph of Robey in the illustrations found between pp. 108 and 109).

"Under the Bamboo Tree," which tells of a Zulu from Matabooloo who woos a jungle maiden, was written by the African American song-writers Bob Cole and brothers James Weldon and Rosamond Johnson for their popular vaudeville act and was then included in the 1902 Broadway musical *Sally in Our Alley*. Sung by Marie Cahill, it was such a hit that she sang it again in her next show, *Nancy Brown*. In the second part of *Sweeney Agonistes,* the characters Sam Wauchope and Captain Horsfall, accompanied in minstrel-show style by Swarts and Snow on the tambourine and bones (castenets), sing a humorous, but sinister, version of the chorus elicited by Sweeney's proposal to carry Doris off to a cannibal isle:

> *Under the bamboo*
> *Bamboo bamboo*
> *Under the bamboo tree*
> *Two live as one*
> *One live as two*
> *Two live as three*
> *Under the bam*
> *Under the boo*
> *Under the bamboo tree.* (40-48)

Peter Ackroyd reports that Eliot sang this song for his guests at a party celebrating his winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948 (290).

Eliot left Harvard and America in 1910 for a year in Paris, where he attended the courses given by the famous philosopher Henri Bergson at the Collège de France and simultaneously searched for his poetic voice in the home of French poets such as Jules Laforgue. With the sounds of American popular music ringing in his ears, he doubtless couldn't wait to check out the famous—or infamous—Parisian forms of light entertainment (removed as he was then by an entire ocean from the watchful eye of his mother and of Bostonian proper society). There he heard French popular music along with the American tunes that were staples in Parisian night spots. Nancy Perloff describes the Paris of this time as "one vast entertainment world" (20) with a wide array of offerings, two of the most dominant being café-concerts and music hall. While the lack of surviving documents makes it impossible to know exactly what he attended, the great variety of choices discussed below suggests what he might have seen and heard.

The major offering of the café-concert, where one could drink, smoke, and move around freely, was banal songs of a coarse, crude, and / or humorous nature sung by various performers, with the audience joining in on the refrains, which were printed and sold to the customers. Between the rounds of sentimental or licentious love songs, patriotic songs, and idiotic songs were dances, comic skits, and revues. One of the most popular singers was Dranem, whose signature idiotic song "Les p'tits pois" ("Green Peas") had ten verses, each of which was followed by the refrain "Ça n' se mange pas avec les doigts" ("Don't eat them with your fingers").

Félix Mayol, known for his lively, light-hearted songs, owned his own café-concert called the Concert Mayol, which was patronized by *Le Tout Paris* (the cream of Parisian society). He was famous for his perfect diction, his raised tuft of hair, his elegant formal clothing, and the sprig of lily of the valley on his lapel. Several You Tube videos show him doing dance movements while singing that look silly and even laughable today, but at the time were a part of his appeal. His most celebrated song, the 1902 hit "Viens, Poupoule" ("Come on, chick," a term of affection), is about a Parisian working-class man who invites his wife to go to a café-concert on Saturday as their dessert, urging her to hurry so that they will get good seats for the entertainment. He says that the songs will make him "naughty," reminding her that that is how he became a papa!

I have described the Parisian café-concert in some detail because, although Eliot did not echo any of its specific songs in his works (a bit puzzling since he certainly used foreign languages in many of them),

he was highly influenced by the interaction between singer and audience and incorporated its setting and performers into several poems written in Paris in 1911, most notably "The smoke that gathers blue and sinks." Among several types of café-concert performers was the *gommeuse*, a sensual singer of sexually explicit songs who was typically buxom but had a poor voice (see fig. 3). In the poem, Eliot's speaker describes the entertainer in such a venue as a woman who is surely a *gommeuse,* "A lady of almost any age / But chiefly breasts and rings," who sings "'*Throw your arms around me—Aint you glad you found me*'" (16-18) from the chorus of "The Cubanola Glide," an authentic combination of French and American influences since American ragtime was very popular in Paris at that time.

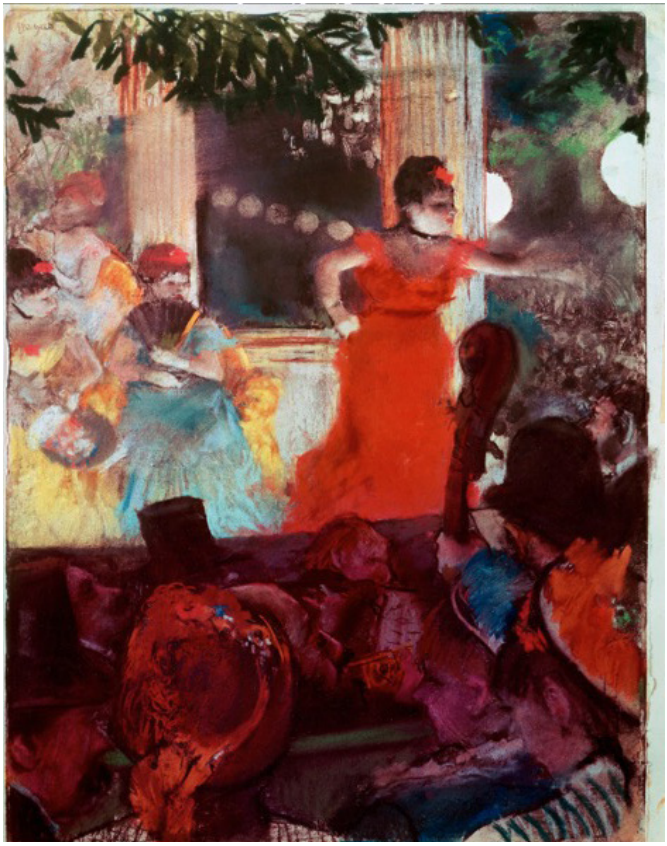

Fig. 3.

A Gommeuse. Degas, Edgar (1834-1917). Café Concert aux Ambassadeurs. Oil on canvas. Photo Credit : Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

The influence of specific performers in Parisian music halls such as Ba-ta-clan[2] is also evident in Eliot's works. Harry Fragson was a comedian and singer who delighted Parisian audiences with his "inimitable cocoricos" ("Fragson" 7), his comic hallmark; perhaps Eliot heard this French onomatopoetic word for the crowing of a rooster at one of Fragson's performances at the Alhambra Music Hall in November 1910 and used it as a symbol of hope and protection when *The Waste Land*'s protagonist arrives at the ruined chapel, based on the rooster's well-known function as the guardian of France (see Hargrove 296 n. 17). The first music-hall performer to accompany himself on the piano, Fragson sang comic, sentimental, and patriotic songs, with whose refrains his audiences joined him.

Fina Montjoie, a leading female singer in a popular revue in the fall of 1910, may have furnished the name Maisie Montjoy that Eliot uses in his last play *The Elder Statesman* for the stage name of the beautiful star of revue with whom Lord Claverton had a love affair as a young man. She tells other characters that her name once "Topped the bill in revue" (89) and was known by everyone in London (92). The hit song that made her reputation was entitled "It's not too late for you to love me" (68, 92), which she sang with great emotion as a result of her anguish at Claverton's breaking off with her. While I could not find an actual popular song with that title, it's certainly typical of the genre.

The dancer Polaire, who began her career as a *gommeuse* in a café-concert, expanded the vulgar gestures of that type to create the epileptic dance genre with her frenetic movements—shaking, jerking, and twirling her body in a manner considered scandalous at the time; indeed, she was described as the "agitating and agitated" Polaire (Caradec and Weill 177-8). A drawing of the time with the title "Epileptic Singer: Vulgar gestures and a voice like vinaigrette" captures well this dance new to the café-concert. At the time of Eliot's arrival in Paris, audiences at the Moulin Rouge thrilled to "La Danse Noire," described in the October 23, 1910 issue of the leading Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* as an "impassioned and brutal dance by Polaire and Gaston Sylvestre" ("Spectacles" 4). She may well have been the model for the actual epileptic in Eliot's 1917 poem "Sweeney Erect" since the latter's appearance closely resembles Polaire's disheveled hair, immense dark eyes that appeared bruised, and large voracious mouth (Caradec and Weill 178): "This withered root of knots of hair / Slitted below and gashed with eyes, / This oval O cropped out with teeth" (13-15).

Perhaps the most celebrated Parisian performer in popular entertainment was the singer, dancer, and comedienne Mistinguett or LA Mistinguett (THE Mistinguett, as she was called, see fig. 4) who appeared at the Moulin Rouge, the Folies Bergère, the Eldorado, and the

Casino de Paris. Eliot doubtless first saw her perform during his 1910-1911 year in Paris, and he did see her in January 1922 in Paris during his stopover there on his way back to London after his treatment in Lausanne; in his London Letter of April 1922, he wrote that in Paris he saw "Mistinguette [*sic*] at the Casino de Paris," noting that "she is versatile" and made him think of Marie Lloyd's "directness, frankness, and ferocious humour" (513).

A particularly noteworthy intersection of American and Parisian popular entertainment that influenced Eliot in writing *The Waste Land* was the scandalous Cubist ballet *Parade*, which combined elements of music hall, street fair, circus, cinema, and ragtime. First performed in Paris in 1917, it was revived in 1919 in London, where Eliot probably saw it. The composer Erik Satie incorporated into his innovative score the melody of the chorus of Berlin and Snyder's 1911 "That Mysterious Rag," which had been featured in a revue at the Moulin Rouge in 1913. Satie's use of this popular ragtime song no doubt inspired Eliot to include "That Shakespearian Rag" in his ground-breaking poem. Satie also incorporated into the score sounds of lowbrow entertainment such as the calliope, the lottery wheel, and the small bands of Parisian street fairs and the sounds of the modern industrial world such as typewriters, sirens, airplanes, and trains, perhaps an inspiration for Eliot's description in *The Waste Land* of the bells of St. Mary Woolnoth, the "horns and motors" of urban traffic, and the inclusion of a typist. Furthermore, the major character in the ballet is the Chinese Conjuror, based on the wildly popular Chinese magician Chung Ling Soo (actually an American named William Ellsworth Robinson) and danced by Leonide Massine. Eliot probably saw this famed magician at the Alhambra Music Hall in Paris, where he performed annually from

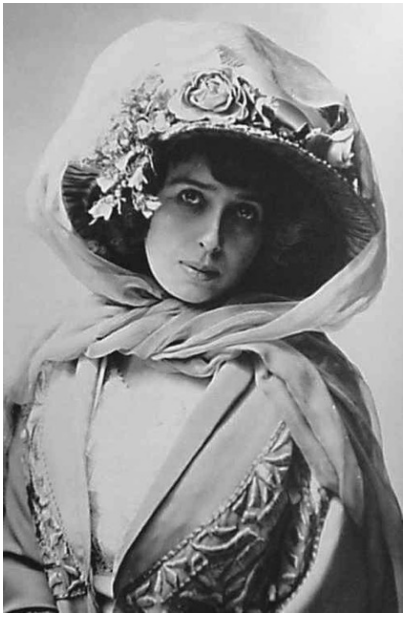

Fig. 4.

Mistinguett. Photograph by Paul Tournachon Nadar (son of Nadar), c. 1900. www.dutempsdescerisesauxfeuillesmortes. Used by permission of Jacques Marchioro.

1910 to 1918 and / or in London at the Empire, the Alhambra, or the Coliseum, music halls which he frequented.

Finally, the stars and songs of the British music hall had a great influence on Eliot as an adult. He greatly admired the "Queen of the Halls," the inimitable Marie Lloyd (see fig. 5). Known for her mischievous wink, her sometimes vulgar gestures, and her bawdy songs, such as "What's that for, eh?" and "She'd never had her ticket punched before," she "always envisaged the seamy side of life with gusto rather than deprecation," according to British theatre critic James Agate (qtd. in "Marie Lloyd" 1). Her trademark song, "Oh, Mr. Porter" about a woman who takes the wrong train but receives an offer of marriage from an elderly passenger, with plenty of sexual innuendo and opportunities for lewd gestures, is considered by some scholars as a possible source for Mrs. Porter in *The Waste Land*, a bit of a stretch in my opinion.

Fig. 5

Marie Lloyd. Postcard of Lloyd onstage in the 1890s. Hana Studios Ltd. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Of course, the major source is "O the Moon Shone Bright on Mrs. Porter," a bawdy ballad of uncertain origin sung by Australian soldiers in World War I about the owner of a brothel in Cairo and her daughter. In his notes to *The Waste Land*, Eliot comments, "I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken; it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia" (74 n 199). While one version contains the vulgar word for the female genitalia in place of the word "Feet," Eliot uses the more polite version in the fragment appearing in *The Waste Land*.

The song "At Trinity Church I Met my Doom" (1894), made famous by the music-hall comedian Tom Costello, is about a man who meets a "noble buxom creature" at ballroom dances, and, as he puts it, "Like

to salmon I was speared"; believing her claims to be "five-and-twenty" and wealthy, he weds her, mourning in the chorus the rotten life he now leads. A You Tube video of Costello performing this song shows him with a top hat, a rumpled frock coat, a big hump on his backside (whose significance is not at all apparent), and a cane with which he imitates spearing a salmon; as he sings, he prances around what seems to be the "top back room" of the song. After finishing the song, he confides to an apparent male audience that "the woman pulls the string and the man is a yo-yo" and admits that he was foolish to get married twice! Eliot's rendition of the song's lyrics is sung by the Cockney foreman Ethelbert in *The Rock* (see Schuchard 239 n 45).

"One-Eyed Riley" is a traditional Irish drinking song that exists in many versions, some of which are quite vulgar; indeed, Schuchard includes a bawdy English version in which the singer reveals that he would like to "shag" (rather than marry) the bar owner's daughter, ending with the chorus

> Hi yi yi—Hi yi yi
> The one-eyed Reilly,
> Rub it up, stuff it up, bum and all,
> Play it on your old bass drum. (239-40 n 47)

Eliot, however, uses a quite respectable version in *The Cocktail Party*, sung merrily and unexpectedly by the Unidentified Guest in the first act, and he originally intended to use the song's title as the title of the play.

Eliot clearly enjoyed the music and performers of the varied forms of popular entertainment in the United States, France, and Great Britain. Indeed, as Schuchard tells us, Eliot sang or hummed popular music all his life, noting Gordon's reference to Mary Trevelyan's revelation in her unpublished memoir that he "would sing tunelessly in a harsh low voice on the way home after dinners: music-hall songs of his youth, or Negro spirituals" (Gordon 445; Schuchard 118) as well as Valerie Eliot's statement that he possessed "an astounding repertoire of 'music-hall ditties'" (qtd. in "T.S. Eliot and I"; Schuchard 118). Of even greater importance for Eliot studies, he made extensive and significant use of popular songs and popular entertainment from his earliest works to his last.[3]

Notes

1. All translations from French are mine. Limited portions of the discussion of Parisian popular entertainment were adapted, with permission, from *T. S. Eliot's Parisian Year* by Nancy Duvall Hargrove. University Press of Florida, 2009.

2. This music hall was one of the sites in Paris in November 2015 of the infamous terrorist attacks.

3. My late husband, tenor extraordinaire Guy A. Hargrove, sang the songs mentioned in this paper for presentations that we made many times for the T. S. Eliot Society, the T.S. Eliot International Summer School, and other organizations. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=dupPxd_gYfw for a video of the presentation at Little Gidding, U.K, in July 2013 during the T.S. Eliot International Summer School at the Annual Meeting of the Little Gidding Society.

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Auden the Librettist v. The Late Mr William Butler Yeats: Challenging Romantic Ideology in *Elegy for Young Lovers*

Matthew Paul Carlson

In *The Table Talk of W. H. Auden*, Alan Ansen records a 1947 conversation during which Auden remarked, "I have to give a talk on Yeats before the MLA in Detroit. You know, the more I read him, the less I like him. . . . He was a horrible old man." Then, seemingly in response to an unrecorded question from Ansen, he added, "No, I couldn't launch an open attack on him. This is supposed to be some kind of celebration, after all" (72). Auden's MLA talk, which was published soon afterward in the *Kenyon Review*, strikes a delicate balance between attack and celebration: he opens by poking fun at Yeats's occultism ("Yeats" 385), yet he concludes by praising his ancestor's poetic legacies (388-89). The roots of these conflicted feelings go back further than 1947; in fact, the conflict seems to have reached an initial crux in 1939, just as Auden had emigrated from England to America, when he wrote the famously ambivalent elegy "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" and its complementary prose piece, "The Public v. the Late Mr William Butler Yeats." But it was not until 1959, when Auden and Chester Kallman began writing their libretto for Hans Werner Henze's opera *Elegy for Young Lovers*, that Auden created what Edward Callan calls his "most direct repudiation of what Yeats stood for" (146).

The purpose of this essay is to explore the nature of this "repudiation," which I believe is more complex than has been previously recognized. While some critics have rightly observed that the opera's protagonist, the poet Gregor Mittenhofer, is modeled on Yeats, they have often left this claim unsupported; in part one below, I will spell out the significant parallels. More importantly, I will argue that, in the very act of writing an opera libretto, Auden is adopting a form that implicitly rejects the romantic (or neo-romantic) model of poetry he connected with Yeats. The essay's second section is devoted to analyzing the literary status of librettos in general as well as some of the specific features of the *Elegy for Young Lovers* libretto. Humphrey Carpenter is correct to assert that "the opera is not an essay in autobiography" (as some

have supposed) and that "Its subject is not Auden but the kind of poet he desired *not* to be" (399). An interpretation of *Elegy for Young Lovers* that aims to prove this must not only consider the opera's content (its unflattering characterization of the "Master" poet Mittenhofer) but also its form, the inherently collaborative medium of opera, whose essence involves the subordination of words to music.

The Master Poet

As Edward Mendelson observes, "Auden enjoyed deflating romantic images of inspired poets driven only by their genius" (Introduction xiii). The creation of Gregor Mittenhofer is the culmination of this impulse, but it was not Auden and Kallman's first attempt to represent dramatically the romantic artist-genius. While Stravinsky was still composing the score for *The Rake's Progress*, Auden and Kallman devised a scenario for a comic opera called *On the Way*, the subject of which was supposed to be "the romantic sensibility of the post-Napoleonic period in Europe as exhibited by its artists, in particular by its musicians" (481-82). The scenario itself is a trifling work and was soon abandoned, but some of its details clearly foreshadow the theme and subject matter of *Elegy for Young Lovers*. Both works take place at an inn in the Alps, and two of *On the Way*'s three main characters, "bards who resemble Berlioz, Mendelssohn . . . and Rossini" (479), are described as "sharing an enthusiasm for alpine scenery" (484). Although *Elegy for Young Lovers*, like *On the Way*, aims to present a generalized "European myth" ("Genesis" 247), Auden knew that the Alps occupied a particularly privileged place in the English romantic imagination; one immediately thinks of the Alpine-inspired reflections in works such as Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (book VI), Shelley's "Mont Blanc," and Byron's *Manfred*. In fact, in their essay that accompanied the program for *Elegy for Young Lovers*, the librettists explained that they originally conceived the main character as "a great actor . . . whose supreme ambition in life is to play the lead in Byron's *Manfred*" ("Genesis" 245).[1] Eventually, the "great actor" became a great poet, Gregor Mittenhofer (whose name is prefigured in the *On the Way* scenario by the character Gregor Schöngeist). However, in the same essay, the librettists are careful to note that, though the poet is Viennese, "this does not mean that we think his outrageous behavior an Austrian characteristic. As a matter of fact," they continue, "the only things about him which were suggested to us by historical incidents were drawn from the life of a poet—no matter whom—who wrote in English" (247).

Although Mittenhofer's character combines the features of several great poets and artists (including Auden himself), I believe that the "poet . . . who wrote in English" whose life suggested certain "historical incidents" was indeed W. B. Yeats. A summary of the opera's major plot elements will illustrate the specific similarities. At one level, *Elegy for Young Lovers* is a portrait of an aging poet's relationship to his entourage. The first character to appear is a widow named Hilda Mack, whose visionary spells Mittenhofer exploits for his poetry. Later in Auden's life, when his tactfulness began to flag, he made Hilda's inspiration explicit: "Remembering that Yeats had a wife from whose mediumistic gifts he profited, it seemed plausible that Mittenhofer should have discovered Frau Mack" ("World" 104). Similarly, when the libretto has Countess Carolina von Kirchstetten, Mittenhofer's aristocratic patron and de facto secretary, discuss her habit of hiding money for the poet "behind his bedroom clock" (194), Auden and Kallman were drawing on stories about Yeats's interactions with Lady Augusta Gregory.[2] This secret, too, Auden eventually revealed in a 1970 interview (Loney 14). Another member of Mittenhofer's entourage, Dr. Wilhelm Reischmann, provides the poet with stimulating injections, which have their real-life parallel in the Steinach operation for male rejuvenation that Yeats underwent; partly as a result of this operation, he began to adopt the persona of the "wild old wicked man." In the libretto, a reviewer's description of Mittenhofer's poetry as "The erotic dreams / Of impotent old age" certainly evokes this later phase of Yeats's career (193), as does the character of Elizabeth Zimmer, Mittenhofer's young mistress and muse, who seems to be a composite representation of the young women with whom Yeats became romantically involved during his self-described "second puberty" (Ellmann 10).[3] All of these ancillary characters have, in one way or another, sacrificed themselves for the "greater good" of Mittenhofer's poetry, though they receive no credit for the end result; as Carolina and the Doctor sing in the final couplet of their first-act duet, "No one thanks, in Essays or Reviews, / The Servants of the Servant of the Muse" (196). But by placing these (literally) supporting characters on the stage, the librettists and the composer give them voices and effectively demystify the idea of the solitary artistic genius.

The disturbing yet orderly network of servile relationships between the poet and his entourage is disrupted by the appearance of the doctor's son (and Mittenhofer's godson), Toni, whose arrival sets the main plot in motion. Not surprisingly, Toni and Elizabeth promptly fall in love and become the "young lovers" of the opera's title—a development about which the great poet seems suspiciously unconcerned. Meanwhile, at the news that her long-lost husband's body has been

found, Hilda snaps out of her visionary state, leaving Mittenhofer without images for his poetry. Deprived of his two main sources of inspiration (Hilda's trances and Elizabeth's youthful beauty), the poet sends the young lovers up the mountainside to gather edelweiss, "a visionary 'aid' / [He has] often found effective when all else / Failed" (228). While they are out, an Alpine guide informs Mittenhofer a snowstorm is approaching and asks whether anyone is on the mountain, but Mittenhofer neglects to mention Toni and Elizabeth, thus sealing their fate. The lovers perish, and the poet now has the appropriate subject matter for the poem that has been incubating throughout the opera, an "Elegy for Young Lovers," which he "recites" in the final scene.[4] It is this sequence of events that renders the opera more than just an unflattering portrait of a poet in old age; it is also a serious commentary on the privileging of the aesthetic at the expense of the ethical. In their program note, Auden and Kallman claim that "The Theme of *Elegy of Young Lovers* is summed up in two lines by Yeats: 'The intellect of man is forced to choose / Perfection of the life or of the work'" ("Genesis" 246). The lines come from Yeats's 1933 poem "The Choice"; based on the libretto's characterization of Mittenhofer, one clearly gathers that Auden and Kallman thought Yeats had pursued "Perfection . . . of the work" rather than the life. At one point, Mittenhofer essentially admits his abandonment of moral principles for the purposes of aesthetic gain: "in time / One no longer knows / What is true and false / Or right and wrong. / Only what goes / And won't go into song" (218).[5] The climactic offering of the young lovers on the mountain, then, is simply the most powerful symbol—and the logical outcome—of a pattern of life in which the superior god-like artist considers himself beyond good and evil and demands the servitude of the lesser beings that surround him.

Despite all of the evidence assembled above, I do not mean to suggest that Mittenhofer is a straightforward biographical portrayal of Yeats. Auden never did "launch an open attack." (After all, the opera is set in Austria, not Ireland). In fact, when the opera is performed in German translation, as it was at its premiere, audiences are more apt to see the ghosts of other overbearing artists: Stefan George, Rilke, Wagner, and Goethe are among the most frequently cited. Some critics have even taken Mittenhofer to be Auden's self-portrait, and indeed, there are a few correspondences. Richard Davenport-Hines points out that the relationship between Mittenhofer and Carolina von Kirchstetten "cruelly resembles the contacts of Auden and [his former patron] Caroline Newton in the 1940s" (254). (Kirchstetten is also the name of the small Austrian town in which Auden had recently purchased a summer home.) And when Carolina complains about Mittenhofer's

illegible handwriting, anyone who has spent time attempting to decipher Auden's manuscripts will recognize a touch of autobiography. However, if one extends this argument too far, the opera's message is lost. Assuming that Auden, a great poet himself, would naturally celebrate the elevated status of the artist, an anonymous contemporary reviewer came to the conclusion that the opera's "tragicomic moral" is that "death for art's sake is O.K." ("Surprise" 56). But this interpretation gets it precisely wrong. If Auden sees himself in Mittenhofer at all, he only does so out of self-loathing. In a letter to Stephen Spender, Auden confessed that Yeats "has become for me a symbol of my own devil of unauthenticity, of everything which I must try to eliminate from my own poetry, false emotions, inflated rhetoric, empty sonorities . . . His [poems] make me whore after lies" (qtd. in Carpenter 416). Auden, like Yeats perhaps, realized he would never attain "Perfection of the life." But unlike Yeats, he did not then strive for the "Perfection . . . of the work" at the expense of truth and goodness. Instead, he deliberately sought poetic modes that would counteract any lingering Promethean pretentions, and it is in this context that Auden's attraction to the libretto as a literary form should be viewed.

"Master" Librettist(s)

Elegy for Young Lovers is "gratefully dedicated by its three makers" "To the memory of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Austrian, European and Master Librettist" (189), and the work pays tribute to Hofmannsthal's memory in some obvious ways. In addition to the Austrian location, the opera's historical setting (circa 1910) alludes to the era of Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss's greatest triumph as librettist and composer, *Der Rosenkavalier*.[6] The libretto also explicitly refers to Hofmannsthal on two occasions, and in both cases, he is presented—first indirectly, then directly—as competition for Mittenhofer (196, 202). I believe that, for Auden, this notion of Hofmannsthal as a rival has a deeper significance; if Mittenhofer-Yeats represents "everything which I must try to eliminate from my own poetry," Hofmannsthal represents an alternative role for the poet, one that Auden found particularly attractive. Indeed, the two poets' careers share a similar shape. Each man achieved great fame prematurely as a tremendously gifted lyric poet with an uncanny command of poetic forms—Hofmannsthal as a member of Jung-Wien in the 1890s and Auden as the leader of a left-leaning group of British writers in the 1930s. Each one also developed his gift in the shadow of a great Bard (Stefan George played the role of Yeats in Hofmannsthal's life). More significantly, both Auden and Hofmannsthal turned away

from the kind of poetry that initially brought them recognition to devote their energies in new directions. Hofmannsthal, whose early poetry is reminiscent of Yeats and the French symbolists (Steinberg 144), radically abandoned the lyric altogether, turning exclusively to dramatic forms, eventually leading to his great series of operatic collaborations with Richard Strauss. And while Auden did not give up lyric poetry entirely, he did reject many of his most famous poems and, like Hofmannsthal, became increasingly involved in the world of opera. In the year of the *Elegy* premiere, Auden reviewed Strauss and Hofmannsthal's selected correspondence, and his observations reveal both his admiration for Hofmannsthal and a sense of self-recognition: "Hofmannsthal was the first poet with an established public literary reputation to write libretti and, in his day, this was a daring thing to do. In the literary circle to which he belonged opera was not highly regarded as an art-form . . . Certainly most of his friends thought that he was wasting his time and talents writing libretti" ("Marriage" 352). Writing for the operatic stage may not have enhanced either poet's status in literary circles, but between them, along with Chester Kallman, they produced many of the finest librettos of the twentieth century.

As Patrick Smith argues, Hofmannsthal's example "served to revive and restore the concept of the librettist as a creative artist on a par with the composer" (364), and clearly Auden hoped to imitate his operatic success.[7] But to label either of them a "Master Librettist" is, in one sense, profoundly oxymoronic. To adopt the role of librettist is to relinquish the role of "Master" (the role that Mittenhofer performs so well) and to surrender mastery of one's own poetic material. A libretto is an intrinsically incomplete medium: even if the composer chooses to keep every word, the text will still be altered through its musical setting and even further in performance. This notion of the written word's ephemerality is something that appealed to Auden, a poet who wrote in the foreword to the 1965 edition of his *Collected Poems* that "On revisions as a matter of principle, I agree with Valéry: 'A poem is never finished; it is only abandoned'" (xxx). In fact, he was often willing—sometimes to the chagrin of his readers—to discard whole poems for being "dishonest," a requirement that obviously never would have occurred to a poet like Mittenhofer. For Auden, writing librettos was a way of ensuring that he would not be tempted to believe in the "Perfection . . . of the work"; the composer's revisions emphatically deny the text's claim to completeness or self-sufficiency. For the opera's "three makers" to dedicate *Elegy for Young Lovers* to Hofmannsthal the librettist evokes a collaborative model of creativity that contrasts sharply with the romantic conception of the isolated artist-genius. Edward Mendelson makes the inherently anti-romantic aspects of collaboration quite clear:

> [A]side from a solitary couplet by Wordsworth somewhere in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' there was no collaboration among the romantics. Although the romantic experience of loss, isolation and quest takes similar forms in all who endure it, that experience can never be shared. Romantic vision is private . . . before collaboration could again become a factor in English poetry it was necessary for a poet to break free of the whole set of assumptions and methods that informed the romantic tradition. Auden was the first poet to achieve this. ("Auden-Isherwood" 276)

Mendelson writes this in the context of discussing Auden's early dramatic collaborations with Christopher Isherwood, but Auden's practice as a librettist is an even more radical example of his anti-romanticism. Not only did he continue to collaborate on a purely textual level (with his co-librettist Chester Kallman), but he also handed over these words to be transformed by the composer. Auden's embrace of opera as a medium and of the libretto as a poetic form represents a further step in his "break[ing] free of the whole set of assumptions and methods that informed the romantic tradition," that very tradition which is embodied by Mittenhofer.

Although the *Elegy for Young Lovers* libretto is by far Auden's most extended poetic engagement with Yeats's legacy, both its thematic preoccupation with the relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical and its formal insistence on transience relate directly to Auden's only other works about Yeats in his *Collected Poems*: his 1939 elegy and a limerick from 1960. It is especially appropriate that Auden and Kallman's libretto should deal with the creation of an elegy since Yeats and Auden were jointly responsible for reinvigorating that poetic genre in the first half of the twentieth century. Toward the end of his life, Auden reflected, "Poets seem to be more generally successful at writing elegies than at any other literary genre. Indeed, the only elegy I know of which seems to me a failure is [Shelley's] 'Adonais'" (*Certain* 147). And in his 1947 MLA talk, he credits Yeats with transforming the occasional poem, specifically citing the elegy "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" as "something new and important in the history of English poetry" ("Yeats" 388). The very title of this historic elegy inspired Auden's "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," which echoes several of Yeats's later poems as well (see S. Smith). Like the MLA talk, Auden's elegy initially subverts Yeats's romantic image (along with the conventions of the pastoral elegy) but ends with an homage to the deceased. Parts I and II, in particular, seem to foreshadow the formal and thematic concerns of *Elegy for Young Lovers*. The down-to-earth, biologi-

cal metaphor in the lines "The words of a dead man / Are modified in the guts of the living" refuses the traditional elegy's assertion of the dead poet's immortality while also providing a rather stark image of the fate of a libretto's words, which are quite literally "modified in the guts of the living" (89). Furthermore, the first line of part II, "You were silly like us: your gift survived it all" (89), could serve as a succinct characterization of Mittenhofer, whose poetry prospers despite his basic foolishness. In their unromantic acknowledgment of the great artist's personal flaws, both elegy and *Elegy* exhibit an anti-elegiac quality that is broadly characteristic of the genre in its modern guise (Ramazani xi). Indeed, although *Elegy for Young Lovers* shows the development of Mittenhofer's poem about Toni and Elizabeth, on another level, the opera itself is a kind of large-scale anti-elegy for Mittenhofer's factual counterpart.

Part III of "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" appears more decorous, as if Auden had belatedly remembered (as in his MLA tribute) that his poem "is supposed to be some kind of celebration, after all" (Ansen 72),[8] but it also raises ethical questions that would reemerge in *Elegy for Young Lovers*. In his book on the English elegy, Peter Sacks finds the final section of Auden's poem "the least satisfying": "it is difficult not to resist much of [its] highly formal pomp and ceremony, together with its rather hollow impersonation of the Yeatsian mode" (304). Late in his career, Auden seems to have come to the same conclusion about at least a portion of the poem. Though he did not erase the work from his oeuvre, he did remove the following three stanzas from part III, beginning with his 1958 edition of *Selected Poetry* (53):

> Time that is intolerant
> Of the brave and innocent,
> And indifferent in a week
> To a beautiful physique,
>
> Worships language and forgives
> Everyone by whom it lives;
> Pardons cowardice, conceit,
> Lays its honours at their feet.
>
> Time that with this strange excuse
> Pardoned Kipling and his views,
> And will pardon Paul Claudel,
> Pardons him for writing well. (90)

Like the previous sections of the poem, these lines still insist on the reality of the poet's physical demise, yet unlike the rest of the poem, they also make a special ethical exemption for those with literary skill. Auden did not agree with the conservative political views of Kipling, Claudel, or Yeats, but he suggests that time will pardon them all "for writing well." In "The Public v. the Late Mr William Butler Yeats," Auden had claimed that, despite Yeats's "false or undemocratic ideas," his language displays "the true democratic style" (7). By generously excusing Yeats, however, Auden is (unwittingly, perhaps) espousing the very ideal that is represented by Mittenhofer—that the artist is an exceptional individual and thus is not subject to common standards of moral judgment. It is almost as if, in mimicking the trochaic tetrameter as well as the diction of "Under Ben Bulben" and "Man and the Echo," Auden had unconsciously absorbed some of Yeats's "undemocratic ideas," too.

Auden's second—and last—poem about Yeats does not risk being too Yeatsian. Auden's 1960 volume, *Homage to Clio*, concludes with an addendum called "Academic Graffiti," which contains thirty-two irreverent clerihews about famous personages, from Socrates's wife, Xantippe, to the botanist Hugo de Vries. Most of the poems, however, are about great writers, and the last two treat Auden's immediate predecessors, Eliot and Yeats. Interestingly, these poems are not clerihews but limericks, and the final one on Yeats is the naughtier of the two:

> To get the Last Poems of Yeats,
> You need not mug up on dates;
> All a reader requires
> Is some knowledge of gyres
> And the sort of people he hates. ("Academic" 685)

As usual, Auden is unable to resist the urge to ridicule Yeats's metaphysical system (the gyres), but he also hints, more seriously, at a reprehensible capacity for hatred in Yeats. Perhaps sensing that he was participating in the hate that he was condemning, Auden removed the poem from an expanded edition of *Academic Graffiti* (1972), though he also removed the Eliot poem, so it is possible he simply wanted to be the first major poet to publish a book consisting solely of clerihews, the least refined of light verse forms. In any case, the very notion of poetry as "graffiti" suggests the same kind of ephemerality that inheres in the libretto as a poetic form. In fact, in the expanded version, Auden adopts a librettist-like stance toward the book's illustrator, Filippo Sanjust, who was also the designer for the premiere of Auden, Kallman, and Henze's next opera, *The Bassarids*. Once again subordinating his

contribution in a collaborative partnership, Auden writes, "I know that my verses are a small matter, compared to Filippo Sanjust's illustrations" (Forenote). And just as *Elegy for Young Lovers* retains some of the anti-elegiac qualities of "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," it also incorporates the spirit of the clerihew, which "mocks both the famous and the learned by providing a cockeyed look at the great" (Teague 219). Although Auden's last poem about Yeats is technically a limerick, it, too, participates in the same project: the poetic equivalent of drawing mustaches on the illustrious images of Bards like Mittenhofer who take themselves too seriously.

Relatively early in his career (1937-38), Auden edited *The Oxford Book of Light Verse*, which he conceived, at least in part, as a kind of complement—or even rival—to Yeats's recently published (and more solemn) *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (see Auden, *Prose and Travel* 707-08). Auden's commitment to light verse only increased over the years, and writing librettos gave his talent for comic and folk poetry another outlet. Indeed, much of the *Elegy for Young Lovers* libretto, despite its serious themes, tends toward farce. For instance, the humor of Dr. Reischmann's lines in his first-act duet with Carolina, for which Auden was responsible (see *Libretti* 645), is rather broad:

> Tooth decay,
>
> Muse away;
>
> Blood-pressure drops,
>
> Invention stops;
>
> Upset tum,
>
> No images come;
>
> Kidney infected,
>
> Diction deflected;
>
> Joints rheumatic,
>
> Rhythm erratic;
>
> Skin too dry,

Form awry;

Muscle tense,

Little sense;

Irregular stools,

Inspiration cools. (194-95)

The comical rapid-fire rhymes call to mind Inkslinger's "Love Song" from Auden's first libretto, *Paul Bunyan* (25-27), but in this case, the comedy and cleverness have a more serious thematic purpose. The stanza above—along with the two that follow—draw attention to those mundane elements of a poet's life, with which Auden was all too familiar and that the romantic Bard (through his underlings' assistance) painstakingly conceals from the public's view: his often embarrassing physical needs, his reliance on patronage and secretarial work (195), and his reputation's dependence on that ever-growing body of parasites, literary critics (195-96). Moreover, the lightness of the poetic form itself is an affront to the kind of poet it satirizes. When the critic Arthur Jacobs reports that his colleagues objected to the coarseness and absurdity of the opera's representation of Mittenhofer at the 1961 Glyndebourne performance, he understands that this point is moot: "That this un-admirable man writes admirable poetry is the *given* thing in *Elegy for Young Lovers*" (30). Fascinatingly, the very fact that audience members would object to Mittenhofer's vulgarity offers proof that the myth of the romantic artist-genius endures; perhaps the same people, hearing the phrase "Irregular stools" in the elegant atmosphere of Glyndebourne, were startled to see the name of a poet as renowned as Auden on the covers of their programs.

While some are uncomfortable with the allegedly sub-literary elements in Auden's librettos, others accuse him of writing librettos that are hyper-literary and hence resistant to musical setting (an accusation that is also sometimes leveled at his hero, Hofmannsthal). According to Peter Porter, "For all Auden's stipulations about the humble status of the poet when working with the composer, his practice has been as self-indulgent as that of any other writer" (194). Interestingly, however, Porter goes on to claim that "Auden is the greatest librettist of this century" and that he "would certainly put him above Hofmannsthal" (194). The paradox is that to be a "great librettist" is simultaneously to be a defective one. Auden himself declared that "Hofmannsthal is the one librettist you can read apart from the music" (Ansen 18), yet

he also criticized Hofmannsthal's *Rosenkavalier* libretto for being "too near real poetry" ("Some Reflections" 254).[9] Likewise, Allan Altman observes that "In the theater, some of [Auden's] librettos may have seemed dense and 'over-literary,' but on paper they make absorbing, rewarding reading" (41). This tension between the literary quality of a libretto and its suitability for the operatic stage becomes especially interesting in the case of *Elegy for Young Lovers*. In 1961, Andrew Porter published two write-ups on the opera for *The Musical Times*. Before ever hearing or seeing the music, he calls the libretto "masterly" and gushes, "Auden's poetry, when it is written for singing, goes into music more readily, more perfectly, than any other of our day" (419). But after seeing the opera four times, he writes, "It soon becomes clear that—whatever I may have written in these pages earlier—the Auden-Kallman libretto is a concoction whose only merit is that it provides a framework for music" (639). Porter's extreme about-face reflects just how divergently a libretto can be judged for its effect on the page rather than on the stage.[10] Not all critics have been this severe in their assessments of the opera, but the apparent tension between the libretto and its setting persists as a dominant theme. Like Porter, *New York Times* critic Bernard Holland has written two pieces on the work, and their titles alone are enough to suggest the issue at stake: "A Dominion of Words" (1988) and "Music and Words, Passing in the Night" (1996).

If the libretto's words sometimes insist upon themselves too forcefully—particularly in the penultimate sequence, the lovers' mountaintop duet (act 3, scenes 6-8)[11]—this dramaturgical dilemma is effectively sidestepped in the opera's final scene, which eliminates words from the equation altogether and, at the same time, illuminates yet another way in which Auden the librettist distances himself from Mittenhofer. After the death of Toni and Elizabeth, Mittenhofer prepares to recite his elegy from the stage of a Vienna theater, which features "an ornamental backdrop" depicting "Mount Parnassus, the Muses crowning a Poet," and "Apollo with lyre and cherubim." The libretto goes on to indicate that "We do not actually hear the words, but from behind him come one by one until they are all together, the voices of all who contributed to the writing of the poem" (243). In the program note, Auden and Kallman offer a pragmatic rationale for choosing music rather than words to portray Mittenhofer's elegy: they argue that the work of a great poet cannot be convincingly represented by another poet but must be conveyed through a different artistic medium—in this case, the "orchestral sound and pure vocalisation" of Henze's score ("Genesis" 247).[12] But this unusual solution goes beyond mere dramaturgy; it also highlights the moral dilemma at the center of the opera. In an article on the representation of evil in opera, Walter Bernhart

explains how difficult it is to interpret Mittenhofer as a plainly sinister figure because of the innately positive connotations of music (171-78). Even Henze was initially unclear about whether Mittenhofer ought to be condemned (*Music* 108-11). Yet, in one respect, this response is perfectly fitting. Auden knew his Shakespeare and would have remembered that "music oft hath such a charm / To make bad good" (Shakespeare 440). Without any knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the poem's creation, the imaginary audience in that Vienna theater would only experience the lyrical beauty of the great poet's art, which is wonderfully evoked through Henze's music. In the 1947 poem "Music Is International," Auden remarks on music's "enigmatic grammar which at last / Says all things well" (338), a claim he develops further in his collection of aphoristic reflections, "Dichtung und Wahrheit" (written about the same time as the *Elegy for Young Lovers* libretto): "The language of music is, as it were, intransitive, and it is just this intransitivity which makes it meaningless for a listener to ask:—'Does the composer really mean what he says, or is he only pretending?'" (648). When Mittenhofer's poem is considered *as music*—that is, on its aesthetic merits alone, divorced from all questions of truth or goodness—it should impress us as a triumph.

But while the final scene seems to vindicate Mittenhofer as a poet, it also exposes his ethical failure as a man. In another section of "Dichtung and Wahrheit," Auden maintains that "The 'symboliste' attempt to make poetry as intransitive as music can get no further than the narcissistic reflexive—'I love Myself'" (648). The librettists make Mittenhofer's narcissism unmistakable (if it was not already clear) at the beginning of the final scene, when the poet is instructed to stare into the mirror and chant "One. Two. Three. Four. / Whom do we adore? / Gregor! Gregor! Gregor!" (242). These lines may seem shockingly banal coming from a character whom we are supposed to believe is a great poet, yet they effectively convey the essential emptiness at the heart of his poetic vision. When Mittenhofer's poem reaches the audience through music alone, it creates the illusion, in true romantic fashion, that it is the product of a solitary artist-genius. At the same time, however, that very music (as indicated in the libretto) can only come into being through the voices of those who made the poem possible by their personal sacrifices. Henze weaves each individual character's voice into the score, thereby providing one final metaphor for the egomaniacal artist's unacknowledged dependence on those whom he exploits. Of course, applying all of Mittenhofer's demonic qualities to his real-life inspiration, W. B. Yeats, is probably going too far. But I think it safe to assume that Auden would have taken some pleasure in seeing Yeats's fictional equivalent swallowed up by music at the fall of

the curtain. When Yeats commented on the use of music in his plays, he insisted that "words must always remain words"; in a somewhat dictatorial tone, he writes, "No vowel must ever be prolonged unnaturally, no word of mine must ever change into a mere musical note, no singer of my words must ever cease to be a man and become an instrument" ("Music" 757-58). For an arch-romantic such as Yeats, words possess a kind of sacred completeness, which should not be distorted by "mere musical note[s]"; as he wrote in one of his earliest lyrics, "Words alone are certain good" ("Song" 5). On the other hand, Auden's librettos, like Hofmannsthal's—no matter how "literary" they may be—"incorporate . . . the awareness that they do not stand alone as linguistic documents" (Steinberg 151). Auden recognized that Yeats's "conception of song implies the complete subordination of the composer to the poet" ("I Am" 518), and so, partly to counter his influence, he subordinated the poet to the composer.

Notes

1. This conception also recalls Auden and Christopher Isherwood's 1936 play, *The Ascent of F6*, whose protagonist, Michael Ransom, is a Manfred-like mountaineer.

2. Although her behavior mimics Lady Gregory's, the character's name also brings to mind Yeats's childhood friend Countess Constance Markievicz.

3. Auden seems to have been well informed of Yeats's proclivity to May-December romances. Writing to James Stern from Swarthmore College in 1942, Auden reports, "At my last Thursday Evening At home, my room was packed to capacity with girls who wanted to know if I felt inspired when I wrote. How Yeats would have enjoyed himself. I didnt [*sic*]" ("Some Letters" 86).

4. See part two, below, for an explanation of how this "recitation" is dramatized.

5. Henze's score emphasizes this moment of insight with a fortississimo (fff) climax (*Elegy* 252).

6. Auden, Kallman, and Henze might also have been trying to capitalize on the recent success of Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti's *Vanessa*, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in January 1958. Although Barber and Menotti's protagonist is not an artist, the basic atmosphere is quite similar (*Vanessa* is set in a chilly European country house, around 1905). The stories have overlapping qualities, too: both feature an aging protagonist vying for the affection of a younger lover, and both also include a snowstorm as a prominent plot element.

7. Patrick Smith also calls Hofmannsthal "the greatest librettist of love" and claims that his last collaboration with Strauss, *Arabella* (1933), is "one of the

finest librettos of love ever written" (365, 378). Robert Craft reports Auden saying that "The *Elegy* was our version of *Arabella*" (344).

8. In fact, Auden wrote part II last. See Mendelson, *Later Auden* (4).

9. When Auden revised this essay for publication in *The Dyer's Hand*, he removed his critique of *Der Rosenkavalier*, perhaps realizing it could easily be turned against his own librettos.

10. Fascinatingly, Porter preferred the German-language production of the opera to the original English; one assumes the text's literary qualities seemed less conspicuous in translation.

11. This sequence is entirely Auden's work (see *Libretti* 645). In his review of the German premiere, H. H. Stuckenschmidt complains, "The third act must be vigorously re-worked: the mountain scene is much too expansive, and poetically not ideal. As it stands it serves no purpose, for no one wants to watch events which have been almost excessively predetermined" (436). Auden himself later admitted that the sequence is "far too literary and complicated in the argument, far too dependant upon every word being heard to get across when set to music" ("World" 108), and at Glyndebourne, it was omitted (Jacobs 29), leaving Henze's orchestral snowstorm to communicate indirectly the lovers' fate.

12. According to one of Robert Craft's 1958 diary entries, Auden also "denies the possibility of dramatizing the life of a composer unless his music is used" (175), which suggests another reason why the composer-protagonists of *On the Way* ultimately transformed into the poet Mittenhofer.

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The Collapsing Roof of History: James Joyce, Josephus Flavius, and the Duty of Memory

Ron Ben-Tovim

This essay will argue for the value of reading and understanding James Joyce's *Dubliners*, and specifically the collection's most celebrated story, "The Dead," alongside two works of classical history: Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431 BCE) and, more importantly, Josephus Flavius's *The Jewish War* (75 CE). In perhaps the briefest way possible, the merit rising from these comparative readings can be phrased thus: that memory, whether historical, cultural, or personal, serves as the central operating feature of these texts, and that this memory is informed by a twofold presence of exile and poetic recollection. The rationale behind reading texts separated by millennia can be delineated in these ways: a) the possibility of Joyce being influenced by classical historiography as part of a prevailing influence of Josephus's history on Irish culture; b) a similarity in the kind of political and personal context of writing, with an emphasis on concepts such as Empire (Roman and English) and exile (Josephus and Joyce); and c) the idea that these similarities in history, culture, and biography may also steer us toward a textual similarity, at least in terms of the works' internal logic and moral mission. While the first two points will serve as significant additions to this essay, it is with this third aspect that I shall begin, the elucidation of which will be performed via another classical moment: the Greek poet Simonides and the positioning of poetry and memory.

In recounting the story of Simonides within his essay on rhetoric, *de Oratore,* Cicero frames the tale as the myth of the invention of the art of memory: the ability to sustain, through memory, an argument's constituent parts through a reliance on physical space. In the story, Simonides is hired to perform at the home of local nobleman Scopas, and thus expected to praise the host and patron. However, Simonides chooses to pay tribute to the gods instead, causing the irate Scopas to threaten the poet with decreased pay. A simple argument between an agent of political power and the poet, however, complicates further as disaster strikes: having completed his performance, Simonides is sud-

denly beckoned outside. Once out of the house, the entire structure collapses, killing everyone inside:

> [I]n the interval of [Simonides's] absence the roof of the hall where Scopas was giving the banquet fell in, crushing Scopas himself and his relations underneath the ruins and killing them; and when their friends wanted to bury them but were altogether unable to know them apart as they had been completely crushed, the story goes that Simonides was enabled by his recollection of the place in which each of them had been reclining at table to identify them for separate interment. (353)

The reality unfurled following this shocking collapse is one in which Simonides, being the sole survivor, is forced to use his memory not for the recitation of metered lines but to facilitate the communal acts of burial and mourning. Simonides is able to fulfill his calling as a poet, moreover, through two distinct and related acts, both traceable in the texts that stand at the center of this essay: a "stepping outside" as well as a complementary ability to remember and reconstruct the identity of the collapse's victims. His exit and the subsequent collapse of Scopas's home can in itself be seen as a moment of utter self-centeredness. The poet escapes, in other words, and saves his own skin. But once outside, that same poet is thrust into a wider ethical role, as he who remembers places and names, that then facilitates the individual act of mourning. Memory, then, as that which orders facts in that order, shape, form, or style that enables mourning, a memorial inscribed with the names who would otherwise be lost to post-disaster oblivion.

The role of memory in the work of literature, then, if we are to take up the tragic tale of Simonides's ill-fated performance as a model of sorts, is a multifaceted one. On the one hand the poet is demanded to express a very specific type of memory, one having to do less with contemporary politics and more with a distant, originary, and religious mythology. Moreover the poet is expected to remember, in the most literal sense, the lines of poetry he is to recite, a skill that stands at the heart of one aspect of memory celebrated in Cicero's text – mnemonics. Lastly, the poet's historical memory is joined with his ability to remember specific detail in order to create what is his own communal act of memory: the tracing and naming of the dead, and the enabling of mourning.

Millennia after both Cicero and Simonides, Amir Eshel speaks of literature's ability to restore agency where agency has seemingly been lost as "futurity" – the fashioning of a future where no future can be found, only a bleeding and all-encompassing past (4-6). Quoting Israeli author

David Grossman, Eshel links this notion of excavation to the essence of the literary act. To write literature, Grossman writes, is characterized by what I have been thus far describing as the double Simonidian action of self-preservation and remembering others: "Sometimes I feel as if I am digging people out of ice in which reality has encased them. I write. I feel the many possibilities that exist in every human situation, and I feel my capacity to choose among them" (3).

Simonides' myth, the double act of exile and memory, sets the table for a more thorough discussion of the basic twofold bind that stands at the heart of the works I discuss in this essay. In order to remember the poet must step out. But once he steps out he must remember, a double-bind I shall now discuss in terms of James Joyce's *Dubliners*.

* * *

Joyce's original plan for *Dubliners* represents in this formulation the detached and exilic pole of the work of poetic memory, or, as he articulates it in his letters, a "nicely polished looking glass" through which the Irish can get a "good look at themselves" (*Letters* 64). This motivation is evident in the oft-cited letter Joyce wrote ahead of the collection's publication, referring to the invisible force that had taken hold of Dublin life as "paralysis": "I am writing a series of *epicleti* – ten – for a paper . . . I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city" (*Letters* 55). It is to this recreation of Dublin's undoing that the "The Dead," this essay would like to suggest, adds an explicit discussion of the moment of "stepping out" of Dublin, as well as the survivor's gaze swiveling back in order to reconstruct his lost home. The first impetus, then, is that of writing as severing, manifest in the act of exile itself, one shared by both Joyce and Josephus – Josephus in Rome, Joyce just to the north of the Italian peninsula in Trieste. And as writing directed toward severing, it is one engaged in depicting the plague of erasure, of the undifferentiated post-disaster human mass of loss: the paralysis of Dublin that led to the author's act of "stepping out," much like Simonides's dispute with Scopes. However, it is the explicit depiction of the escape into exile depicted in "The Dead" that interrupts the detached view of social malaise, turning toward the post-exilic mode of poetic reconstruction and mourning.

The moment of "swiveling" toward the home in "The Dead" is, then, the reason that *Dubliners*'s final story has been signaled out as the collection's stark aberration by generations of Joycean critics. Joyce's delineation of paralysis through the various stories – the "looking glass" – is to a large extent completed in the span between its opening and penultimate stories, "The Sisters" and "Grace" – within the confines

of *Dubliners*'s original layout (Walzl 1977). Addressing the closed cycle formed by these stories, Thomas Jackson Rice offers to "consider that Joyce looked at 'Grace' as the structural complement to 'The Sisters,' the end that would join with this new beginning" (411). "The Sisters" opens *Dubliners*, as Florence Walzl claims in "The Liturgy of the Epiphany," with the corpse of Rev. Flynn, a symbol for "the Irish church and nation" (444), whose dead body serves as an emblem for civil-strife-stricken Ireland (Schwartzlander 305), a nation moribund by way of social decomposition and disease. In the same way, the collection ends with could be read as the final stage leading up to Flynn's deathly paralysis, with the helpless Mr. Kernan. With story after story Joyce paints a bleak portrait of a city throttled by external and internal pressure via British influence and constant Irish sectarian rivalries and violence. One example of the manner in which *Dubliners* depicts the implosion of Dubliners into paralyzed objects is "A Mother."

"A Mother" presents the moment of collapse indicative of *Dubliners* as a whole, but in itself strikingly similar to the model set up by Simonides's myth: a seemingly benign squabble over both money and art deteriorates into paralysis. In the context of early twentieth-century Dublin, "A Mother" shines a light on one specific type of Irish group amid the growing sectarian and imperialist pressure of the time: the politically unaffiliated Irish family. Writing of the pressure experienced by the politically unaffiliated, historian James Carroll states that not only were the politically unattached Irish "lost to memory, but they were often physically targeted by both sides," adding that "those who refused to identify with the polar extremes were in grave danger" (145). The benign squabble then is set in a time and place in which such disputes are never seen as *only* about money. By seeking the fulfillment of a legal agreement, Mrs. Kearney depends on the kind of social order that historical and political turmoil had misshapen beyond repair, as evident from this conversation with the revivalist organizers:

> As soon as the first part was ended Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Holohan went over to Mrs. Kearney and told her that the other four guineas would be paid after the committee meeting, on the following Tuesday, and that, in case her daughter did not play for the second part, the committee would consider the contract broken and would pay nothing.
>
> "I haven't seen any committee," said Mrs. Kearney angrily. "My daughter has her contract. She will get four pounds eight into her hands or a foot she won't put on that platform."

> "I'm surprised at you, Mrs. Kearney," said Mr. Holohan. "I never thought you would treat us this way."
>
> "And what way did you treat me?" asked Mrs. Kearney. (148)

Mrs. Kearney insists on "rights," demanding a "civil answer" (149), while the revivalists bemoan her apparent lack of "decency" and "lady-like" conduct. What is clear, however, is that these terms do not mean the same thing to both parties. For Mrs. Kearney, "lady-like behavior" represents the honoring of a contract, while for the revivalists it refers to toeing the party line. This inability to communicate, along with the family's incapacity in the face of pressure, culminates in Mrs. Kearney being pressured to the point of paralysis, reenacting the Simonidian moment of collapse. Mrs. Kearney looks as if "she would attack someone with her hands" (148), dumbfounded by an unseen force or "committee," standing "still for an instant like an angry stone image" (149). While indeed Mrs. Kearney, as several readings have suggested, can be seen as just another meddling mother (Paige 332) or an independent heroine (Miller), her frozen visage is a snapshot of the undoing of life under the collapsing roof of a violently torn society.

As the miniatures of life under the slowly collapsing roof are completed by the time "Grace" ends, "The Dead" is where the "looking glass" is turned onto the author, triggering an explicit discussion of his escape from Irish calamity as well as depicting his moral obligation to retrace Irish lives from the collapsed roof of history. Escape, in other words, has turned from being *just* a moment of self-preservation into the construction of a work of memorialization, in which the exiled author recognizes his ethical role in memorializing "the dead." The Morkan household is then that location in "The Dead" in which the pressure that had shaped "The Dead" and *Dubliners* comes into contact with the writer's body, threatening to paralyze it, and thus prompt the shift into exile. Later, it will be in the eastern exile of the Gresham Hotel that Joyce's doppelganger, Gabriel, will be struck by the second act of resistance: the moral imperative to commemorate those who were lost to pressure, manifest in the powerful image of Michael Furey's tombstone being slowly covered by snow. "The Dead" serves, then, as the keystone to the structure of the poetic memory text in that it encompasses the inherent duality of such a work. Gabriel's iconic westward gaze, mirroring Joyce's gaze toward Ireland from exile in Italy, provides both an historical context to the act of exile as well as a testament of the writer's enduring homeward gaze.

In "The Dead," paralyzing calamity, which takes on the image of homogenizing snow that freezes Joyce's Dublin, has reached Joyce,

threatening to smother him with its collapsing roof of frigid snow. It is perhaps best, then, at this point, however, that before continuing with the importance of this menacing cover of snow, and its relation to both Joyce and *Dubliners*, that we retrace our steps back into another moment of historical memory: Josephus's history of the Jewish rebellion against the Romans and the possible role a reading of that text can have in understanding precisely what that snow is, and how the poetic memory hopes to combat its smothering effect. As a first step, and as promised at this essay's onset, a few words on how Josephus's depiction of the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolt influenced Irish culture.

* * *

It would perhaps go without saying that Irish interest in the story of ancient Judea and its rebellion against Rome has several anchors. The first of those is the fact that the very reason that Josephus's works had survived centuries of scribes, monks, and wars, was an immense interest in Catholic circles in what was considered to be historical proof of the existence of Jesus Christ (Meier 76-77). While the question whether or not Josephus had in fact documented the historical Jesus in his later work *Antiquities of the Jews* remains controversial, what is less than controversial is the importance Josephus's text gained through this association, one that enabled his works' unlikely longevity, thus preserving the only existing non-liturgical account of Second-Temple-era Judea. Thus, Josephus's text was and remains religiously significant, and relatively prevalent among Christian communities across Europe, with a strong emphasis on ancient Catholic communities, including Ireland. Another religious aspect of Josephus's work in terms of the Christian world's interest in his texts was the notion that *The Jewish War* described in fact the moment in which Judeans as a nation became the wandering Jews of Europe, a nation penalized for its surrendering of the messiah into Roman hands. Thus, in *The Jewish War*, Josephus also provided what was later read as the moral and historical context of the expulsion of the Jews and their incessant wandering, a notion taken on explicitly by Joyce in his portrayal of one noteworthy wandering Jew, Leo Bloom in *Ulysses*.[1]

Moreover, the above religious aspect of the Judeo-Irish link can be said to influence Irish self-identity as both colonized and wandering themselves, with the latter meaning as manifest through the Irish medieval tradition of wandering or exiled missionaries to the pagan continent. Joyce was invested in this notion of Irish Christianity and Irish spiritualism in general as inherently that of wandering, opposing it with the static and oppressive influence of Roman Catholicism. Most notably he writes in his seminal talk "Ireland: Land of Saints

and Sages": "I confess that I do not see what good it does to fulminate against the English tyranny while the Roman tyranny occupies the palace of the soul" (173). However, even before Joyce's own fascination with the spiritual work of exile and wandering, other examples can be found of the moral importance the Judean tale has to Ireland's own self understanding. One such case is found in Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," where Swift explicitly parallels first-century Jerusalem to eighteenth-century Ireland. The Irish, he ironically writes, should consider selling their babies for food, before weighing solutions such as "quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken" (Swift 233). Remarking on the Judea-Ireland link in his commentary of Swift's text, Sir Walter Scott, citing the response of a foreign author to "A Modest Proposal," says his colleague considered the work's style to represent "an instance of the extreme distress of Ireland, which appeared to equal that of Jerusalem in its last siege" (Scott 244). In a more modern remark, Frank Lestringant links Swift's text directly to Josephus's work, arguing that the Irish were compared by Swift to "the Jews of the time of Titus" that were "immortalized by Flavius Josephus's narrative" (Lestringant 121). The worst the Irish could do, and what the Irish may have been destined to repeat, was to respond to English rule as Jews responded to Roman oppression.

Thus, as Swift's example shows, beyond the strictly religious interest the Judean story was also in its own way an historical precursor of the colonial world of the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. In fact, it is a point of parallel that manifested in a fraternity of sorts between the fledgling Zionist and Irish nationalist movements (Beatty, "A Long and Intertwined History") with the tragedy of Judea's descent into *stasis* serving for Irish men and women as a parallel to the hardships their nation suffered under British rule. Judeans, thus, despite their sins against Christ, were also a nation colonized by empire, and whose rebellion served as both warning for the kind of social implosion that colonization could trigger as well as a valorization of anti-imperialist acts of resistance. Added to this aspect of the Judean story is, and in conjunction with the previous points, of course, the religious aspect of the historical narrative of empire and rebellion. Namely, the fact that the Roman Empire suppressed Judea as well as their Hebrew faith, much in the same way the Irish saw a religious element to their subjugation to a Protestant occupier. Writing explicitly regarding this link, James Carroll writes how for "centuries, the dominated Irish were able to resist the overlord English by aggressively practicing their Catholic faith – religion as a political force, as the only political force

– so every Jew who entered the Temple to participate in God's cult of sacrifice was defying Rome" (113).

The above considerations led, ultimately, to what could be described as an Irish cultural self-description as modern Judeans fighting for political and religious freedom. In other words, that Josephus's text, that document made famous for immortalizing the struggle between Judea and Rome, had a considerable impact on Irish culture. An importance, moreover, that led to the unlikely and tragic coming together of the two narratives during the Great Famine in the nineteenth century: as noted in the preface to the 1851 Dublin edition of *The Jewish War*, the translation of Josephus's text had been delayed since its translator, Rev. Dr. Robert Traill, died while aiding his western-Ireland community of Skull, which had been hard struck by the 1846-7 famine.[2] As unlikely as this coincidence may seem, however, it fits well into an Irish tradition, as Andrew Gibson writes, until the late nineteenth century, of identifying with the plight of the Jewish people not only as an "abstraction or a biblical trope," or a simple "allegorization of the Irish as the Jewish people awaiting their redeemer," but also on the insistence on an essential resemblance between Irish and Jewish histories, one of a shared "oppression, persecution, victimization, immiseration, demonization, disempowerment, diaspora" (Gibson 49). While the Judean tale served as a point of reference for the Irish, its tragic outcome functioned as a stark warning against the tragic results of sectarian fighting. The tale of Jews maddened by Roman siege "struck a chord," according to Lestringant,

> [not] only because of the persistence and the horror of the fratricidal struggles, but also and perhaps especially, because of an anecdote, exaggerated in the Christian West and distorted by a long tradition of anti-Semitism: harassed and despoiled by soldiers, a woman was reduced to eating the child she was nursing. (121)

This last anecdote, made famous through Josephus's depiction of the devastating effects of the Roman siege on Jerusalem, is, then, as we turn to the text of *The Jewish War*, our first glimpse of the make up of that dreaded snow seen covering Ireland in the last line of Joyce's collection. A snow, much like the disfigured bodies under Scopas's collapsed roofs, of a forgotten, eviscerated humanity.

* * *

The Jewish War, a chronicle of the Great Jewish Rebellion against the Roman Empire in the first century AD, combines personal escape

and the communal act of poetic reconstruction. And out of those two elements it is perhaps easier to first chart Flavius's link to the act of escape and exile, the reason for that being Flavius's dubious reputation in Jewish lore as infamous traitor and notorious liar.[3] First entering the scene as a member of a respectable priestly family and a commander of Judean forces, Flavius, born Yosef Ben-Matityahu, notoriously surrendered to the Romans following a lengthy siege on the town of Jotapata. Later he would sit as official historian to the court of Vespasian, to whom he surrendered, and write the story of Jewish resistance to the Romans, the *Bellum Judaicum*. However, despite the importance of the narrative depicted in Josephus's text, that same story of empire, civil war, and expulsion that so captivated the Irish imagination, and despite the infamy of his betrayal, Josephus nonetheless frames his work in personal, Simonidian terms: the act of textual memory as both the result of individual self preservation as well as of communal memorialization. The most striking moment of this stepping out in order to reconstruct is no doubt Josephus's depiction of his own siege and escape during the Roman siege on the Galilean stronghold of Jotapata.

With Romans sweeping the beleaguered town, the rebellion's regional commander is moved to consider surrender. As Flavius writes, the other noblemen hiding with their leader under the city's streets will hear none of it: "Desperation made his hearers deaf; they had long ago devoted themselves to death, and now they were furious with him. Running at him from all directions sword in hand, they reviled him for cowardice, everyone appearing to be about to strike him" (3.8.4). The Judean noblemen, ruing the treasonous offer, provide the honorable way out of defeat: "'We will lend you a sword and a hand to wield it. If you die willingly, you die as commander-in-chief of the Jews; if unwillingly, as a traitor.' As they said this, they pointed their swords at him and threatened to run him through if he gave in to the Romans" (3.86). Josephus stands at the epicenter of the smallest of siege rings: with Romans surrounding the city and surrounding the cave in which he is hiding, he finds himself surrounded by his countrymen and their outstretched swords. His response to this impasse, not unlike Gabriel's during the latter stages of Joyce's "The Dead," is to save his own life. His plan involves baiting them into death, convincing his compatriots to kill every third man while standing in a circle, and positioning himself in such a way as to escape death with one other Judean. The ploy immediately strikes a chord: "Without hesitation each man in turn offered his throat for the next man to cut, in the belief that a moment later his commander will die too. Life was sweet, but not so sweet as death if Josephus died with them!" (3.8.7).Josephus finds his exit from the scene of disaster just as the roof above him begins to topple.

Josephus's commitment to remember the human shapes out of the shapeless mass of disaster, as in Simonides's tale, is writ large throughout *TJW*. And unlike its symbolic appearance in Joyce's text as the chillingly white layer of snow, the concept of a formless, mass grave of disaster is presented in Josephus's text in all its graphic gory detail. One example is the depiction of Judeans fleeing Roman soldiers:

> Now there was a terrible crowding about the gates, and while every body was making haste to get before another, the flight of them all was retarded, and a terrible destruction there was among those that fell down, for they were suffocated, and broken to pieces by the multitude of those that were uppermost; nor could any of them be distinguished by his relations in order to the care of his funeral. (2.15.5)

As with the snow "general all over Ireland," Josephus's image is one of humans being pressed into or covered by a homogenous sheet, the same surface that would then be used by the author to write his text. The annihilating force from which Josephus ostensibly attempts to reconstruct these images, echoes to which can be detected in Joyce's Dublin as well as in Josephus's Judea, can be traced in the second classical work of historiography, Thucydides's discussion of *stasis* in *The Peloponnesian War*.

Thucydides's image of *stasis* – the ancient predecessor of Joyce's "paralysis" – refers to the collapse of civil society under the pressure of occupation and sectarian violence, centering on the island nation of Corcyra. As conflict erupts between supporters and opponents of the state's affiliation with Athens, Corcyrians in favor of the treaty with the Athenians, fearing reprisals from Corinthian forces and their local supporters, take refuge in the Temple of Juno. With isolation and paranoia increasing, the fugitives finally opt for suicide: "most of the sanctuary men, that is, all those that were not induced to stand to trial by law, when they saw what was done, killed one another there right in the temple; some hanged themselves on trees; everyone as he had means made himself away" (3.81.3). This limited violent eruption, an early version of the mass suicides depicted in Josephus, such as the one in Jotapata, quickly spreads into the city. Facing the fear of an enemy invasion generated by the image of Corinthian galleys waiting offshore, the populace is infected with paralyzing paranoia. The ring of unseen power surrounding the small island creates a chaotic microclimate of anxiety and violence with the power to trigger an utter social implosion (3.81.4-5).

Adding to his depictions of the horrific scenes of slaughter, Thucydides includes an analysis of the social ramifications that enable such a social implosion. The spread of the disease of *stasis* brings about the "disappearance of all the standard safeguards of a civilized life," in which one "has always to watch one's back" and in which the "lack of security is general, and therefore much more terrifying and desperate" than during traditional war. In an ever-polarizing social scene, the very meaning of words begins to shift, with '"thoughtless daring' coming to mean 'partisan courage,' and 'hesitation' turning into 'specious cowardice'" (3.82.4). Stasis, as in the myth of Simonides and Joyce's "A Mother," also spells the undoing of oaths and contracts, and the basis of everyday dealings among citizens, "remained strong only so long as one did not have power to break them" (Saxonhouse 472).

To return to Josephus's text, then, one inspired by Thucydides's subject matter and innovative methodologies (Canofa 749), *The Jewish War* is the type of historical account meant to counteract the paralysis violence undoing Judea by focusing on ordinary lives crushed under the combined pressure of Roman tyranny and Judean sectarian infighting. Such moments include accounts, whether firsthand or via the use of eyewitnesses,[3] of family members stealing food from each another during the siege on Jerusalem (5.10.2-3), and random assassinations shocking bystanders into a state of "hourly expecting death" (2.13.3). But, vis-à-vis a stress on memory, mourning, and burial, Josephus also chillingly depicts the direct ramifications of civil chaos on the ability to remember the dead. Focusing on the siege-mad capital city of Jerusalem, Josephus writes of family members leaving the bodies of loved ones killed in fraternal violence to rot in the street, for fear their burial would be perceived as a political act:

> Those whom they caught in the daytime were slain in the night, and then their bodies were carried out and thrown away, that there might be room for other prisoners and the terror that was upon the people was so great, that no one had courage enough either to weep openly for the dead man that was related to him, or to bury him; but those that were shut up in their own houses could only shed tears in secret, and durst not even groan without great caution, lest any of their enemies should hear them for if they did, those that mourned for others soon underwent the same death with those whom they mourned for. Only in the nighttime they would take up a little dust, and throw it upon their bodies; and even some that were the most ready to expose themselves to danger would do

> it in the daytime and there were twelve thousand of the better sort who perished in this manner. (4.5.3)

By linking the social horror of a *stasis*-like implosion to the inability to mourn, to the post-calamity homogenous sheet of bodies, Josephus is foregrounding his duty to remember. To use the opportunity of survival in exile to etch these singular forms back into life. And it is from this cold ice of history that Joyce remembers and mourns the victims of Irish paralysis.

* * *

To return from the site of massacre under Scopas's collapsed roof, the carnage of Corcyra and the bloody tragedy of Judea to the streets of twentieth-century Dublin means to notice an utter lack of blood in the streets. In Josephus's text, the disastrous results of social implosion or *stasis* can be seen everywhere, with Judeans described throughout *TJW* as willing to take their lives in order to avoid breaking Jewish law (2.165, 2.205) or committing mass suicide to avoid defeat, such as the story of Simon of Scythopolis, who killed his entire family (2.467-9); in the grand-scale tragedies of Gamla (4.11) and Masada (7.389); in Elazar's suicide at the foot of Antiochus's elephants (1.37); and in the ubiquitous presence of Roman cruelty. Jotapata, Josephus's transformative moment of pressure, then, is shown to be not a unique moment of madness and desperation, but just another instance of pressure amid countless others. Disaster and bloodshed, however, are seldom if ever seen in *Dubliners*, while the invisible hand of *stasis* is somehow still, I would argue, omnipresent. The scars, as Vincent Cheng writes, can be seen in the monuments of English rule that dot the Dublin landscape in the "The Dead" (*Joyce, Race, and Empire* 139-41); in the frequent referral to the depravity and moral corruption of the Catholic Church, as in "The Boarding House" and "Grace"; and in the subversive specter of perhaps the greatest Irish calamity under foreign siege, the Irish Potato Famine (Roos 101). In other words, we are made to gauge the force of historical disaster solely through the effect it brings upon its victims. Reading Joyce, as Hugh Kenner remarks, is to "learn to notice that we are not being told everything" (383). The element withheld is that invisible plague given form by both Thucydides and Josephus, a disease in which, as Paul Delaney writes, everything is "socially determined down to the smallest details of idiom or gesture; how each character both contributes to, and is held prisoner by, the general paralysis of the city" (260). Joyce is thus able to portray the gnomonic (Gordon 4), un-representable pressure through the depiction of anything but that element.

Despite what seems like a gaping chasm in terms of genre and style, Joyce, like Josephus, is invested in a similar literary act, one anchored in the twofold nature of exile and memory. For Joyce, as Bonnie Roos argues, this particular combination of seen and unseen, real and imagined, represents an attempt to "tell the 'reality' of Ireland's situation," substituting "folklore and fairytales for 'truth'" (100). Terms like "truth" or Walzl's "epiphany" ("Liturgy" 93) refer to, then, the effect achieved by retracing individual lives by, also, bringing forth the ghost of *stasis* from the mists. As Homi Bhabha writes, in privatizing and aestheticizing the historical moment of displacement, a foundational concept for both Joyce's and Flavius's work as exilic writers, the historical itself dissipates into the background, only to return as uncanny displacement: "In order to appear as material or empirical reality, the historical or social process must pass through an 'aesthetic' alienation, or 'privatization' of its public visibility. The discourse of 'the social' then finds its means of representation in a kind of unconsciousness that obscures the immediacy of meaning, darkens the public event with an 'unhomely' glow" (143).

I would argue that it is this texture of private realities and uncanny disaster that Josephus dubs "truth," one meant to counter contemporary historical narratives written by Roman historians. Josephus, as he states, seeks to tell the "truth" as a way to disrupt what is posited as the polar opposite – "entertainment": "To those who took part in the war or have ascertained the facts I have left no ground for complaint or criticism; it is for those who love the truth, not those who seek entertainment, that I have written" (1.30). In other words, to resist the military narratives created by Roman historians that overlooked "events that went on within the walls of the besieged city" (52). As Fausto Parente continues, it "is the latter which Josephus places *decidedly in the foreground*, and the description of them is an essential part of the book. And this is so because the book was written, as Josephus himself says, to correct and supplement the other account" (52). Thus, *TJW* is written as a history of the Jewish rebellion, while at the same time fulfilling the poet's moral task of memorialization and burial. (It would be interesting to gauge the role of these works within the larger context of Joyce's and Josephus's oeuvre, and raise the possibility that the construction of these moments of memory also led to the work each writer would take on later in their respective career: While Joyce's focus on individual escape and memory led him to ever-widening mythological cycles in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Josephus expanded his memorialization to a history-mythology of the Jewish people with his *Antiquities of the Jews* and his impassioned defense of the Jews and Judaism in *Against Apion*.)

If to finally return, then, following an extended detour to what I would argue are Joyce's predecessors and sources of influence, it seems plausible to suggest that Joyce's moment of "stepping out" and remembering would be facilitated by the most Joyce-like of protagonists: Gabriel Conroy. Commenting on the similarity between Gretta's tale of lost love in "The Dead" and the story of lost young love that the young Nora Barnacle experienced in her youth, Roland Garrett notes that Joyce "put in the story his wife, his dead rival, his city, his language, and elements of his national history" (116). In the first of the story's locations, the snow that has blanketed Ireland besieges the Morkan sisters and their guests. Gabriel is described almost as if avoiding contamination, seen "scraping the snow from his goloshes," and "scraping his feet vigorously," the "cold, fragrant air from out-of-doors" escaping "from crevices and folds" (177). This last hideout from the chill of paralysis, however, proves less than safe. Molly Ivors, her last name, as that of Lily the caretaker, evoking a snow-like whiteness, rattles the introverted Gabriel by labeling him a traitor or "West Briton." The sense of tightening siege, mirroring the ring of Judean nobles pressuring Josephus to surrender, is brought to life through a wealth of militaristic diction, which one might expect to find in a piece of Roman military history, not in a Dublin dinner. The Protestant Mr. Browne is said to be leading "his charges" (183); Mary Jane escorts her "recruits" (184); Julia carries a "column" (184) of napkins; and Gabriel, depicted as being confused as to how to meet Molly Ivors's "charge" (188) during the "lancers" (187), later allowing a "blush [to] invade his forehead" (189). Further siege references are delivered with the description of the "old-fashioned decanters" standing "as sentries" (196), as well as the "three squads" of bottles, "drawn up according to the colors of their uniforms" (197). The military formation sets the stage for the first of the Simonidian tasks: exile.

The carving of the goose is where separation and exile are played out, the moment in which the Simonidian writer steps out of the room, in which Josephus tricks his way out of the cave. Blocked by British sentries and extremist compatriots, Gabriel cuts his way into exile by taking "his seat boldly at the head of the table and, having looked to the edge of the carver, plunged his fork firmly into the goose. He felt quite at ease now, for he was an expert carver and liked nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well-laden table" (197). The scene of "stepping out" is performed with slabs of meat being dispatched one by one – one *Dubliners* story at a time – with Gabriel acting as both facilitator, non-participant, and chronicler: "Gabriel began to carve second helpings as soon as he had finished the first round without serving himself. Every one protested loudly, so that he compromised

by taking a long draught of stout, for he had found the carving hot work" (197). While Gabriel finally obliges himself to take part in the feast, he never ingests the goose, succumbing to the pressure of the crowd by relegating himself to potatoes. This direct reference to the potato famine is, then, Gabriel's way of remembering: Like Simonides who insists on praising the Gods, on remembering a context beyond the political moment, Gabriel is remembering the Irish undoing at the hands of the British Empire. His refusal to eat the goose enforces the sense of contamination, as if steering clear of the poisoned flesh. Gabriel saves only himself, allowing others to die. Fooling the other diners of his intention to partake in their ceremony, Gabriel slips away. In the wake of sacrifice and amputation, Gabriel and Gretta survive, relocating eastward to the exilic Gresham Hotel, across the waters of the River Liffey.[4]

Exile, however, while enabling survival and a necessary precondition to the act of historical writing, stops short of completing the Simonidian task, since the departed writer finds himself thrust into the role of rememberer, reconstructer, and mourner. As Michael Patrick Gillespie writes of Joyce's own sense of continued and exilic ambivalence toward Ireland: "Despite living abroad for more than thirty-six years, Dublin's turn-of-the-century ethos remained keenly impressed upon him; evoking that ethos became a feature central to his artistic process" (19). And so, as an act of both personal and communal memorial a poetic prosthesis must be written so as to permit mourning and to begin what Richard Ellmann calls the "task of making amends" (*James Joyce* 275). These two counter movements of the text – exile and memory – converge in what is possibly *Dubliners*'s most stirring moment of mourning: Gretta's tale of Michael Furey's death.

The Gresham Hotel is the site of isolation in exile, completing Gabriel's personal resistance, one parallel to Josephus's arrival at Rome and Joyce's own seat in Trieste. Gabriel is at last faced with the task of memory, both his as well as those who had been left behind. Upon hearing the story of Furey's fatal love for Gretta, Gabriel finds himself surrounded by memory, seized with "terror," and feeling, again recalling Bhabha's notion of the return of the uncanny historical context, as though "a vindictive being was coming against him, gathering forces against him in the vague world" (*Dubliners* 220). The source of Gabriel's horror is twofold: On the one hand it represents that moment in which Joyce and Gabriel are sewn together via what Ellmann identifies as the resemblance of Furey's tale to a real childhood lover from Nora Barnacle's past ("The Backgrounds of the Dead" 508). But it also represents the terror of the romantic-nationalistic notion of Irish self-sacrifice, bitterly criticized by Joyce the exile, and that is, at the same time,

eulogized, given a proper burial, through the telling of Furey's story. If in fact Michael Furey's romantic death stands at the epicenter of this emotional siege, then his image marks that one space in *Dubliners* in which the historical threat is reborn as poetic re-imagination: Furey's mythology is part of the siege that stifles Gabriel into finally resisting pressure through the act of writing, and it is Furey's tombstone that rises first out of the "general" snow, reemerging as a distinct human story out of snow-clad Ireland.

Furey's ghost, and the effect his story has on both Gretta and Gabriel, rattles the latter into the act of writing via the moral prism of memorializing. Back at the Morkan household, Gabriel is at a loss of words upon the view of Gretta listening to the "Lass of Aughrim," a song that most certainly has "a melody" to her, and finds the loss, or ineptitude, to be much greater when faced with the explicit story of their young love and his tragic death. The death of Michael Furey only made it clear how tone-deaf Joyce had become. Bruce Robbins writes that the fact that "Michael Furey dies for love and does so in Galway, center of Irish national feeling, seems to set a national standard of love and devotion with which the cosmopolitan Gabriel cannot compete" (105). But it is not that he cannot compete, but that he will not, not on these terms, at least. Perhaps, as some have suggested, torn between rural and urban Irish elements (Cheng 2001) or between aestheticism and nationalism (Burns 119), Gabriel, and ultimately Joyce, is above all now a poet of memory. Suddenly sensing the uncanny that had been hitherto unseen, Gabriel turns to use the white, paralyzed, and chaotic Ireland as the white sheets on which he shall etch his text.

As Gretta completes her story of loss, an ellipsis appears in the text, at the end of which we find Gretta asleep, a white gap that provides for its readers what could be seen as an encapsulated blot of whiteness, the visual image of the blankness that will soon be filled with the text of *Dubliners*. This loss of consciousness leaves Gabriel alone in his gaze westward, as Joyce gazes toward Dublin from exile to snow-covered Ireland. Having completed his move from Dublin, from the British siege and the horror of Irish infighting, for Joyce the snow over Ireland represents the homogenizing crush of Ireland's internal plight that also enables the act of writing as memory. The snow, "general all over Ireland," covers "the living and the dead" (224), allowing Gabriel to view his homeland as the white page that will, in a backward flip, become "a series of *epicleti* – ten – for a paper . . . I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city." The culmination of *Dubliners* representing, then, as a counter to Joyce's original desire to betray the soul of paralysis, the initiation of the act of memory and mourning.

Notes

1. For a closer look at Joyce's interest in Jews, see Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 197 and 430; for a discussion of the Jewish backgrounds of Leo Bloom's character, see Hyman, 170-9; and for Joyce and a Jewish poetics of exile, Reizbaum, 132.

2. *The Jewish War*, translated by Robert Traill (Dublin, 1851): v-vi. A short description of Traill's efforts can be found in "Sketches in the West of Ireland," *The Illustrated London News*, Feb. 13, 1847.

3. For further discussion of Josephus's reliability as narrator and historian see Mader, Mason, McLaren, Rajak, and Rodgers.

4. The Gresham shares the physical relation to the Morkan household that Joyce shares to his Irish homeland, with the hotel across the river and to the east of the story's initial location. See Mulliken.

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Toby, Tristram, and the Reader: The Triumph and the Defeat of "True Shandeism"

Richard C. Raymond

Forty years ago, William Freedman and James Swearingen published monographs on *Tristram Shandy*; together, these books demonstrate that Laurence Sterne's work belongs as much to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as it does to Sterne's own eighteenth century. In Freedman's reading, Tristram's progressive self-study reflects Sterne's roots in the pre-Romantic period, borrowing the processes of music—just as modernists such as Mann, Proust, Hesse, Huxley, and Joyce would do—to intensify the emotional appeal of literature (1-8). In Swearingen's reading, *Tristram Shandy* paints a typically Augustan view of decadent England and Europe; this view, however, anticipates modernism in that Tristram's reflexive examination of his own being suggests a way to "heal" the cultural illnesses of arrogant rationalism and insensitive sentimentality, the sicknesses of father Walter and uncle Toby passed on to Tristram and to us all (14, 198-99, 239).

Over the forty years since Freedman and Swearingen made these claims about *Tristram Shandy* forecasting Romantic and modernist themes, other scholars have bolstered their complementary views, describing Tristram's exploring of his subjectivity not as an act of self-absorption but as an act of friendship, a way to extend beyond the self in compassion for others who, like Tristram, must suffer and die.[1]

Focusing thus on the purgative, renewing effects of Tristram's *Life* on the reader, Freedman, Swearingen, and their scholarly successors have stressed the comic union of Tristram and his reader, a bond, as Swearigen claims, formed not through Sterne's Cervantic hero Toby but rather through Tristram's success in revealing and thereby sharing his inner life. According to Freedman, we should see Toby as only one of the many instruments that Tristram plays to create his inner song, an instrument that helps modulate the theme of love by contrasting Toby's supposed naivete with Widow Wadman's sexual calculations and with Walter's cynicism on false morality. Though Toby's amorous song contributes to the "ground bass" of Tristram's "polyphonic composition," Tristram himself represents the "melody," explains Freedman (184, 4, 10), a view shared by Debora M. Vlock, who speaks of music—Toby's

whistling, Tristram's penile punning on wind instruments, the symphonic scoring of Yorick's sermons, for example—as Sterne's primary method of conveying his "knowledge of the human heart" (530). In other words, for Freedman and Vlock, the significance of Toby's story lies not in the laughable tale but in the musical telling: Toby loses an unlikely lover, but Tristram wins a friend, the reader. For Swearingen, neither Toby's defeat in love nor Tristram's triumph in friendship should surprise us, given Toby's emotional illness and Tristram's self-reflexivity, his use of language as a process of finding and forming community (179, 43, 148), a view bolstered by George E. Haggerty and Helen Williams. Haggerty discusses the "elegiac friendship" between Yorick and Eugenius, revealing Sterne's roots in Montaigne (1450-56); and Williams explores Yorick's funereal black page and Sterne's other graphic contributions to eighteenth-century "graveyard literature"; together, these analyses of grief in friendships—Yorick and Eugenius's, Tristram and Yorick's—mirror what the dying Tristram hopes will become the reader's friendship with him (313-44).

However, as I hope to show below, within the form of Tristram's narrative, that friendship between him and his reader never forms, as Tristram encounters readers more inclined to mock his Uncle Toby than to embrace his flawed but gentle humanity, readers also more likely to shred his self-reflexive elegy than to embrace his appeal for friendship.

Tristram, of course, cannot sing the song of his life and opinions without telling his Uncle Toby's story, and close analysis of Toby's character reveals an emotional depth and a benevolent "moral character" observed long ago by Wayne Booth and Ronald Paulson but overlooked by Swearingen and the major critics mentioned above.[2] In studying Tristram's "Cervantick" story (Sterne 4: 337),[3] we find in Toby, as in Don Quixote, what Alvin Kernan in describing comic characters calls the "instinct for what is good," the resilience of one who suffers intensely but briefly each time his martial hobby collides with reality, and the will of one who moves "with the full stream of life" in his daily struggle to survive with benevolence (190-91). In examining Tristram's comic motives, we find, too, that Tristram intends Toby's laughter-provoking story of benevolence—the story itself, not merely the process of telling—to win friends. Indeed, though Freedman and Swearingen stress only the story-telling process, Tristram has "looked forward" to Toby's story "with so much earnest desire," confident that the spirit of "true Shandeism," in Toby's "amours" as well as in Tristram's account of them, will open "the heart and lungs" of all, converting "bilious . . . saturnine" readers into "hearty laughing subjects" (4: 337-38).

Finally, we must also qualify the views of Freedman, Swearingen, and their followers on the occurrence of comic union in *Tristram Shandy*. Though Toby qualifies as a comic character and Tristram holds comic designs on his readers, hoping that they will "laugh" their way into "friendship" with him (1: 11), within Tristram's fictional world neither Toby's story nor Tristram's efforts reach the traditional happy ending of comedy with its renewal of life and its defeat of the forces blocking happiness, for the comic plot of *Tristram Shandy* roots too deeply in satire to end with the comic triumph of life.[4] Further, as Shannon Hartling and Brian Michael Norton argue in 2006—and as many critical predecessors to Freeman and Swearingen have argued—the ending of Sterne's novel modulates satire with tragic tones, as Sterne's "Christian teachings," calling for compassionate responses to sexual frailties, illness, and death, go largely unheeded in Toby's and Tristram's worlds, and as Tristram's comic plan fails to humanize readers insensitive to others' inevitable sufferings.[5] In other words, instead of ending in marriage, children, and comic renewal, Tristram's bawdy account of Toby's affair with Widow Wadman ends in slander, disillusionment, and rejection. As the Shandy family disintegrates, Tristram's confident friendliness fails to better the health of his readers. Though we would all count ourselves among Sterne's "hearty laughing" readers who join Yorick in pronouncing *Tristram Shandy* a cock-and-bull story "and the best of its kind" (4: 338; 9: 647), we must remember, Freedman and Swearingen notwithstanding, that Sterne populates Tristram's fictional world with our incorrigible surrogates, readers who remain unimaginative and abusive, unreformed by the comic spirit of "true Shandeism." (4: 337).[6] Perhaps, then, we should be more cautious than are Freedman, Swearingen, and their successors in concluding that narrator-reader communities can be so readily formed.

Toby's Comic Character and the Defeat of True Shandeism

Not until late in volume six does Tristram begin Toby's love story. But even as Tristram through six volumes has eagerly anticipated relating his uncle's "Cervantick" attack on the Widow Wadman (4: 337), he has prepared his readers for friendship with Toby, the Shandy that Swearingen finds too shallow to merit a friendly reception (210), a view supported twenty-four years later when Ross King aligns Toby's story with Sterne's "satiric humor" emerging from his focus on "male bodies" defined by their wounds, deformities, or diseases (291-92). In spite of Toby's wounded groin, in drawing the gentleness of Toby's military

hobby and the benevolence of Toby's moral character, Sterne, through Tristram, depicts the comic drama of self-preservation, of self-assertion combatting the forces of change. As Tristram hopes, Toby's pursuit of permanence should draw empathetic readers to the comic form, to the story of renewal that "makes the wheel of life run long and cheerfully round" (4: 338).[7]

In his first detailed sketch of Toby, late in volume one, Tristram portrays Captain Shandy suffering the "unspeakable miseries" of a crushed hip and an early retirement (1: 79). Trying to speak of these miserable changes early in volume two, Toby offers the first sample of his self-defeating egocentricity. As Swearingen rightly observes (165), Toby's absorption with his military past yields a minute description of "the half-moon and ravelin" and all features of the fortifications at Namur, so minute that he defeats his objective: to provide through his model a clear account of how, when, where, and why he was wounded (2: 82-83). But Toby's self-magnifying story reveals no concern with fame and false fronts usually displayed by egocentric objects of satire. Like Tristram, Toby indeed values family "honour," as we see in his embarrassed response to Walter's tale of Aunt Dinah's infamous "backsliding" with the coachman (1: 67-68). Yet Toby wants "the character of our family" to be honorable in fact, not merely in reputation. Like Yorick, like Tristram, like all comic heroes, Captain Shandy disregards what the "world" has "said or thought" (1: 69, 78).

Similarly, Toby's life must be honorable in present fact, not merely in past martial stories. As Tristram says, Toby "fretted and fumed inwardly" on his sick-bed trying to find "words" to account honorably for Namur and his wound (2: 83, 87). But we find more than self-absorption in Toby's struggle with language. To get off "his back," to survive, he must search Namur for the remains of his soldierly identity, for scraps from which to refashion his permanence (2: 83). Though guilty of obsessing over the shapes of siege architecture, as Jonathan Lamb has noted, Toby rides his military hobbyhorse to heal psychically as well as physically (9). The map of Namur, the abstruse volumes on fortifications and projectiles—such devices of learning help revive the puzzled and displaced Toby by renewing his sense of profession (2: 89). Though Tristram warns Toby against the madness that comes from such obsessive reading, his allusion to Don Quixote (2: 89) suggests that Toby's madness, like that of Cervantes' knight, derives from the comic determination to act benevolently in a brutal world, to assert a meaningful, permanent identity in a life of absurdity and change.[8]

Though absorbed in the madness of his maps and his volumes on projectile physics, Toby glows with a "blush of joy" when Corporal Trim suggests that they build model fortifications on Toby's bowling green

(2: 94, 97). Able now to convert his "ravelins, bastions, curtins, and hornworks" from paper to sod, able to mimic the Spanish War, able to demolish model towns as "fast" as King William after he reads the *Gazette*, Toby radiates the joy of a comic hero given the means to re-create himself (2: 96, 97).

Yet Toby's comic joy also reflects his quixotic madness, as Tristram has noted, for Toby believes that his "operations" serve "the good of the nation" (3: 205-26). Certainly, his campaign benefits Toby. The "good air and good exercise" fulfill Toby's comic "desire of life and health," a desire which partly accounts for Toby's sudden departure from the "sorrow" of his sick-bed (2: 97, 92). But Tristram knows that Toby broils "with impatience" to execute his nation-saving "design" because his "Hobby Horse" has grown "head-strong," because he has said "farewell" to "cool reason and fair discretion" (2:93).

We have noted Swearingen's view of Toby's mental illness, as stressed above in Tristram's own language, but other critics have not agreed on the significance of madness in Toby's method of comic survival. Toby's departure from reason, says Richard A. Lanham, shows his comic capacity to convert a painful accident into a self-pleasing game, a game which must precede comic "fellow-feeling" (84). Stressing the necessity of Toby's mad game, Michael V. De Porte insists that Toby must have comforting illusions of his benign service to his country to endure the malignant madness of a violent world (149). Denying the harmless benignity of Toby's military hobby, Melvyn New and John Stedmond argue that Toby's quixotic madness, his obsession with martial games, leaves Toby emotionally shallow. In trying to be more than he is, New and Stedmond explain, Toby becomes, for all his apparent tenderness, less than a man, too much involved in pomp and play to see the real suffering caused by wars both real and feigned (New 130, 165-66; Stedmond 81, 83). Clearly, New and Stedmond rightly assert that Toby's military hobby offers him pleasant distractions from real pain—sometimes. Admitting the "pleasure" he finds on his bowling green, Toby regrets the 1713 Peace of Utrecht, which ends his delight as well as the war's devastation (6: 462). Indeed, before the Peace, when the war became most "bloody," Toby orders his "ramallie wig"; the soothing solemnity of his ceremony diverts him from the slaughter of "eleven hundred" (6: 450). Further, when Mrs. Shandy lies in labor with Tristram, Toby finds comfort in Stevinus's volume on fortifications (2: 110). Additionally, when young Tristram lies brutally circumcised, the victim of Toby's order to convert the window-sash weights into artillery pieces, Toby blunts the pain of guilt with a dissertation on Trim's duty as a soldier to follow orders (5: 379), and when Le Fever lies dying,

nostalgic Toby wishes he were "asleep" to indulge more fully his martial memories (6: 423).

Yet Toby's self-pleasing hobby does not always preserve him from pain, and in his sensitivity to others' suffering—when he is not madly mounted—we can readily find the instinctive sympathy and the benevolent moral character of the comic hero. For instance, when Walter, unable to bear another military definition from his brother, angrily tears Toby from his hobbyhorse, Toby responds with "fraternal" tenderness, not with resentment, aware that his pleasure has caused Walter pain (2: 115). Later, when Walter's mockery causes Toby to redouble "the vehemence of smoking his pipe," Toby again shows benevolence by regretting instead of enjoying the "fit of violent coughing" his smoke causes Walter (3: 211). With Toby, that "worthy soul," tapping Walter's back, "holding his head," and "wiping his eyes," Walter quickly revives (3: 212).

Toby's peevish brother Walter is not the only one whose suffering arouses Toby's moral character. Though Stedmond and New make much of Toby's insensitivity to the pains of Mrs. Shandy and Tristram, as noted above, Toby elsewhere expresses his appreciation and concern for the "burden" of pain Mrs. Shandy suffers for her "family" (4: 284; 2: 144). While Walter speculates on methods of protecting a theoretical fetus before and after birth, Toby expresses gratefulness for the health of the real mother and baby after the pains both suffer in delivery (3: 164). Further, when Mrs. Shandy, bereft of son Bobby, receives Socratic analogies from husband Walter, Toby gives her a "kindly" hand (5: 370). Also, as Dr. Slop enters with news of Tristram's violent circumcision, Walter inquires of the "whelp"; yet Toby, fully aware that his zeal for model artillery pieces caused Tristram's pain, inquires of the "boy" (5: 401).

In addition to Toby's sensitive feelings toward others' pain, he acts with comic benevolence to relieve suffering. When, for instance, he must choose whether to continue his make-believe "siege of Dendermond" or to aid the dying Le Fever, Toby forgoes his madness to bend "his whole thoughts toward the private distresses at the inn" (6: 424). Though Toby clings to unrealistic hopes for Le Fever's recovery, Toby backs up his zeal to preserve the lieutenant with "his purse" (6: 425). Once Le Fever dies, Toby continues to act on his generous sentiments, paying the elder Le Fever's bills, sending the younger to public school, and then fetching the boy on Whitsuntide and Christmas (6: 430). Finally, when young Le Fever returns after four years of martial "mischances," Toby recommends him to Walter for Tristram's tutor. In seconding the suggestion, Parson Yorick endorses Toby as well as Le Fever for being "generous and good" (6: 432).

Indeed, even in his mad pursuit of martial pleasure, Toby acts on a model of benevolence. Given the brutality of the world and the grasping of tyrants for honor, war, says Toby, becomes a preventative "necessity" (6: 462). Therefore, he must pursue his "pleasure" as a soldier (6: 462). New has pointed out the self-justifying folly of Toby's illogic: with the Peace of Utrecht, Toby, the Christian soldier, should be pleased when war is no longer necessary (166). But Toby rejects peace not simply because his pleasant games have ended, as Walter accuses; rather, he rejects them because he feels confused: without his martial identity, he wonders how to serve God and man, "the great ends of our creation" (6: 462).[9] Arguing in his own defense when Walter attacks his hobby, Toby reminds his brother that he served when he could. He knows from experience as an officer that war is suffering, not merely pomp, that the "miseries of war" include "the desolations of whole countries" and "intolerable fatigues and hardships" on soldiers (6: 461). In other words, Toby's legitimate military career, ended and symbolized by his wound, proves that he has in fact served his nation, that he has sought not only the pomp of "drums and trumpets" but also "liberty" for the "quiet and harmless" (6: 462).

Given such compelling evidence of Toby's goodness—goodness in action, not just in sentiments—as we assess the critical judgments of Toby's selfishness and insensitivity, noted above, we should qualify these views with John Richardson's argument that the eccentric Captain Toby actually proved his bravery on the battle field at Namur, and that we must see his healing hobby in the context of Toby's real service to the country he loves, making him the self-sacrificial embodiment of "Sterne's Patriotic Shandeism" (26, 35). Further, as Nicholas Visser has argued, Toby's patriotism reflects that of Sterne, who filled his novel with allusions to the politics, the wars, and the suffering that defined his time (489, 496). Though we may fairly describe Toby's mad games as objects of satire, as ineffectual beyond preserving his identity, his games also form a model of his former benevolent action, a comic model of one generous way to serve man and the "governor of the world" (6: 422). Like all men and women, Toby rides his hobby for pleasure, for soothing pain, for cantering "away from the cares and solicitudes of life" (8: 584). But for Toby, his hobby, a model of his life, must provide the pleasure of service, however illusory, to humanity and God. Such religious service, Toby instructs Walter, offers the only help for enduring the necessity of pain (4: 279).

"Flung viciously" from his benevolent hobbyhorse by the Utrecht Peace, Toby grows "listless" in his defeat as he felt immediately after his wound (6: 463, 465). But thanks to the Widow Wadman's passions and Toby's resilience, his confused inaction does not last long. Describing

comic action in general, Alvin Kernan explains that comic characters possess this capacity to rebound, to "suffer intently but briefly over" whatever mischances occur, to plunge "into the current" of life (188). As the wily Widow approaches Toby's sentry box, Toby stands vulnerably "naked and defenseless" against her seductive attack (6: 455). Toby has put off the widow for eleven years to pursue his martial hobby. With Dunkirk destroyed, however, Toby can be easily blown up in his sentry box (8: 552). Lit, "like a candle, at either end," Toby, showing his resilience, wastes little time ending the long "armistice" with the widow and begins his own "siege" of love; for the handy widow has found "sufficient wick standing out" (8: 549, 553).

As Scott R. MacKenzie reminds us, we can find such eroticism in most eighteenth-century fiction, written to meet market expectations (24). Tristram's bawdy phallic imagery here undercuts the reader's concupiscence as it has earlier, when we discover that Toby's "candle" denotes his leg, which the widow subtly strokes as Toby surveys his map (8: 556). But while Tristram satirizes our taste for love reduced to sexual description, we discover Toby's "natural appetite for sex," a trait, notes Kernan, that attends the resilience of comic characters (188). Though Toby's hunger for sex is natural and spontaneous, it also coaxes smiles: only the longest beards would not laugh as Toby, a man of some age and much modesty, stands trembling but siege-ready at the edge of the widow's "trench" (8: 583). In fact, Toby joins the reader as object of satire, as Trim's tale of knee-rubbing nurses arouses the Captain even as he insists that such strokes flow only from "good nature" (8: 576, 571). But despite Toby's naive, over-simplified assessment of sexual nature, despite his unlikely "attack" on the widow, we see him here as a comic man unable to keep his "asse" from "kicking" (8: 584). When Walter inquires whimsically of Toby's "asse," he is asking about Toby's passions for the widow; when Toby replies "much better," he refers to his popped saddle blister (8: 585). Yet "general" laughter follows this cross-purposed exchange, not only because of Toby's unexpected, bawdy equivocation, but also because innocent Toby's obstinate "asse" drags him into "love" (8: 585).

As mentioned above, benevolence follows healthy instinct in comic characters. Once Toby's appetite has been aroused, his moral character takes charge, as we see when he proposes to love and to procreate, just as he fought and played, for the sake of man and God (8: 586-87). Concerned that Toby follow the proper "system of Love," Walter offers his brother Platonic distinctions between "rational" love and "natural" love, between love of the "Brain" and love of the "Liver," advising "dear brother Toby" to avoid goat's meat and to bleed his ears in order to keep "thy asse," his passions, from "kicking" (8: 586, 587, 585, 590,

592). In response, sensible Toby wonders "what a man who believes in God has to do with" such systems and distinctions (8: 587). So far as Toby can see, the rational and the natural are one; he simply intends to "marry, and love his wife, and get a few children" (8: 587, 586), a view that Parson Yorick heartily endorses (8: 588), as does Elizabeth Kraft, when she reminds us that spirituality and sexuality link inseparably in the Biblical stories of Isaac and Rebecca as well as Jacob and Rachel (368). Melvyn New lends support to Kraft's view when he speaks of Sterne's interest in "the entire human enterprise," his "insistence that sex and love, body and soul . . . have something to do with one another" ("Sterne's Bawdy" 86, 87).

In Helene Moglen's view, Toby only offers "lip service" to marital procreation, being "ignorant of the reality" (140). As Moglen suggests, Toby is in fact ignorant of the widow's "natural" concern for Toby's potency (9: 636). Since her first husband was disabled at hip and thigh, the Widow Wadman must discover from Toby, before she yields to his siege, "whereabouts" lies his wound (9: 638). But Toby calls naively for his map of Namur so that the curious widow can lay her "finger on the place" of his wound (9: 624, 638).

Toby's naiveté in sexual combat notwithstanding, his willingness to forsake "liberty" for "love" suggests his serious intent to follow marriage with the paternal functions sanctioned by his Book of Prayer (9: 634-35). That Toby can perform these sexual functions receives graphic corroboration when Trim presses Bridget's hand to "the part" on which Toby was wounded. Willing Bridget moves her hand more to "the middle" where she thought Toby had been hurt; "that would have undone us for ever—said the Corporal—and left my poor mistress undone too—said Bridget" (9: 639). Proof that Toby knows how to use his powers comes early in Sterne's work. In spite of his naiveté, in spite of his claim that he knows nothing of women, Toby tells Tristram of his ridiculous clock-winding conception, a story he could not relate if he knew nothing of procreation (2: 101; 1: 7). Further, Toby knows enough of a woman's "right end" to understand Mrs. Shandy's modesty concerning the services of the male Dr. Slop and enough to reprove Slop for his bawdy pun on the "hornworks of cuckoldom" (2: 100, 111). According to Martha F. Bowden, Tristram "affirms the importance of women" (46); clearly, Tristram has inherited this respectfulness from his uncle Toby. Simple but not simple-minded, the comic Toby stands ready for marriage and the reality of procreation, the fruits of comic union. Tristram affirms Toby's "fitness" on both counts, describing his uncle as formed of "the kindest clay," the "sweetest spirit," and the "***" (9: 626). Such attributes should enable Toby to "love his wife and get a

few children," a plan of love which Yorick, the model of comic action, endorses for its "reason and plain sense" (8: 586-87).

But this comic union never takes place, for Toby falls victim to slander and distrust. Persuaded by Trim's hand-pressing "argument" that Toby retains potency, Bridget receives further pressing from the Corporal to divulge "whose suspicion has misled thee" concerning Toby's wound (9: 640). After Bridget tells Trim "all," we learn that the concerned widow has made Mrs. Shandy her "confident" concerning Toby's powers (9: 643). Mrs. Shandy, a veteran of Walter's ridiculous sexual clock-work, sees "nothing at all" in Toby's wound "to make the least bustle about" (9: 643). Bridget herself, however, takes her concern to Susannah, who "exports" the "secret" to all the domestics, until every "old woman in the village for five miles around" knows "the difficulties of my uncle Toby's siege," and the "secret articles" which have "delayed the surrender" (9: 644).

Such gossip and distrust lead to Toby's disappointment and his choice to end the affair. When the report of the widow's sexual interest finally reaches unsuspecting Toby through Trim, he gives "a long whistle" (9: 643). Tristram has told us that Toby always whistles "Lillabullero" when he hears something absurd (1: 69-70). This time, however, he holds a "note which could scarce be heard across the table," shocked that the widow's "humanity" shows more concern for "the place" than "compassion" for the man (9: 643). As John C. Leslie reminds us, Toby's whistling also forms a motif in Sterne's musical score, a recurring song inviting "empathy and compassion for suffering," not ridicule (56). In Moglen's view, Toby is simply "put off" by the widow's "indelicate" concern and therefore decides to "withdraw," to "sidestep the issue" of his questioned powers (87). We should note again, however, that the "fact" of Toby's impotence rests on Bridget's gossip, a "story" that honest Trim describes as "false as hell" (9: 639). Toby has indeed been maimed, as Trim testifies, on "the very curtin of the *place,*" but not on the place itself (9: 643). More accurately, then, Toby ends his siege to sidestep disillusionment, not impotence. As Kernan tells us, a comic character never dwells on pain or disappointment (188). Had the widow been more trusting, more comic, she would have joined Toby in love and marriage, in leaving "the matter to work after its own way" (9: 633).

Showing his comic resilience once more, Toby returns to Walter's Shandy Hall with "infinite benevolence and forgiveness in his looks," accepting the failure of his siege as quickly as he ended the "armistice" (9: 644). But while Toby remains conventionally comic in his instinct for renewal and in his conscious choice to forgive, the traditional comic ending shatters with Toby's prospects for marriage and family. Since Toby and Trim have rejoined Walter, Elizabeth, Yorick, and Dr. Slop,

we can readily see the shadow of family integration typical of comic endings. Yet no comic union occurs in the Shandys' gathering. With no marriage to celebrate, the family cannot be renewed by Toby and his comic benevolence. Instead, Toby stands at the center of attack. As Walter sets out in a rage to right the "trespass done my brother" by public gossip and the widow's "lust," he ironically condemns the bestiality of procreation and war—the two ways by which Toby has offered to serve humanity and God (9: 644-45). We have seen that Toby's most recent services—his fortifications and his love-siege—do not deserve such censure. His defeat, however, is total. Regardless of his paternal powers or his benevolent intentions, Toby remains, like the Shandy bull, impotent and ridiculous in the eyes of "most of the townsmen" (9: 646).

Tristram's Flight from Death and his Readers' Cold Responses

Tristram, too, remains ridiculous in the eyes of carping surrogate readers unaffected by his Cervantic tale of Toby. Riding Tristram's "back" through the first seven volumes, the reader chastises Tristram in volume eight for trying to account for the causes of Toby's love, finding needless complexity where Yorick finds a cock-and-bull story, the "best of its kind" (6: 436; 8: 547-48; 9: 647). Earlier, pretending deference to these demands for reducing narrative art to simple chronological order, Tristram graphs the jagged progress of his first five volumes, defiantly displaying his recklessness, then facetiously promising to "go on with my uncle Toby's story, and my own, in a tolerable straight line" now that he—by the end of volume six—is "fairly into" his work (6: 473). Though Barbara M. Benedict separates Sterne's "madam" reader from his "sir" reader, associating the former with the appetite for prurience, the latter with good taste and decorum (485-98), by volume eight we see Tristram mocking any reader who expects conventional plotting; he does so by rejecting even the pretense of respect for conventional narrative order, refusing "to go on coolly, critically, and canonically, planting his cabbages one by one in straight lines" (8: 539). Further underscoring this ironic commitment to chronological order, late in volume nine Tristram reaffirms his pledge to proceed in his "own way" with his and Toby's stories, even if that promise leaves Chapter XVIII after Chapter XXV (9: 633).

Tristram also reminds his readers that his willfulness is not all arrogance, that he writes wildly to coax a humanizing laugh from Lady "Spleen" and the "dirty fellows" of morality (9: 601, 618). Even as late

as his misplaced Invocation, near the end of volume nine, Tristram hopes his raucous story of Toby's "amours" will inspire the "good will" he feels himself (9: 629). But Tristram is "abus'd, curs'd, criticis'd, and confounded" for the story of Toby's "thundering attack," as countless shaking, grave "mystic heads" remain unreformed by the comic spirit of "true Shandeism" (9: 617).

Because Tristram's work receives an increasingly poor reception, Tristram suffers what Northrop Frye calls an "epiphany of law": his comic intent has generated tragic self-isolation, an alienated state that becomes all the more painful when he learns that his art, like his life, faces oblivion (208). From the outset, Tristram has endured the lonely rigors of writing, sustained by his belief, as we saw earlier, that his work will make a great impression in the literary world (1: 7). Even near the end of his writings, Tristram believes that his satirical work deserves to float "down the gutters of time" with Swift's *Tale of a Tub* despite the malice of hostile critics (9: 610).

Though confident in the value of his work, in volume seven Tristram's "vile cough" brings Death to his door, a visit that motivates Tristram to lead this "son of a whore" on a dance through Europe, hoping to escape Death long enough to complete his comic story and to win, at last, some friends; after all, he has "forty volumes to write, and forty thousand things to say and do" (7: 480). However, as Tristram travels through Europe, he finds a civilization in decay, a faithless world that receives his self-recreation with indifference. From the beginning of his travels with Death on his heels, Tristram acknowledges the "principles of change" that generate decay (7: 490). He feels tempted, therefore, to draw Janatone, the innkeeper's beautiful daughter, before he leaves Montreuil; for her shape, unlike that of the "great parish church" which "your worships" would have Tristram draw, may be gone "e'er twice twelve months are pass'd (7: 490). Serving as Sterne's satiric narrator, Tristram tweaks the false morality of such readers who profess interest in churches even as they drool over Janatone's "wettest drapery," reflecting thereby, as H. W. Metalene has observed, this "culture's tendency to reduce all life, metaphorically, to sex" (362). Tristram then abandons his sketch to travel on, but not before he observes the threat to art in godless countries: the beautiful abbey of Saint Austreberte, the parish church, and by implication all Christian art—including Sterne's work—will remain less mutable than Janatone's beauty, less vulnerable to oblivion, only "if the belief in Christ continues" (7: 490).

Doubting that Christianity will continue beyond the next "half a century" (7: 495), Tristram the satirical moralist discovers in Paris that one fruit of faith, human kindness, has already died in those "good people" who crowd the filthy, narrow streets (7: 498). Though Tristram

finds as many churches as "nasty" streets in Paris, he also finds, in being denied "the wall," that these urbane Christians lack common courtesy (7: 498). Continuing his journey through these squalid streets too narrow "to turn a wheelbarrow," Tristram learns, too, that crowding results from un-Christian selfishness and pretense: Parisians have ten "cook's shops" and "twice the number of barbers . . . within three minutes driving" because "their God is their belly," their periwigs their gentility (7: 499). Clearly, vanity and hypocrisy thrive in this "greatest city"—just as they did four decades previously, when Swift published *Gulliver's Travels*, and nearly two decades before, when Fielding published *Tom Jones*—in spite of Tristram's calls for friendship and his jesting campaign against worldly self-indulgence. Significantly, Tristram and his work have been ignored or forgotten by the "gourmands" and "gentlemen" who choke the "beshit" passages of this labyrinth (7: 499, 498); consequently, Tristram passes unnoticed through this dim city, a nameless, "pale" author "clad in black," just like his pursuer (7: 498).[10]

Showing once again his comic resilience, Tristram does not dwell on the decadence of the labyrinth, realizing that the satirical "spleen" he has vented on "gay" but degenerate France has done nothing to preserve his work from the darkness of neglect (7: 501). In fact, his spleen has only upset his stomach, which Tristram proceeds to soothe with his comically bawdy tale of the Abbess of Andoillets and her novice, the former suffering from a "stiff joint" caused by kneeling, the later from a "middle finger" inflamed by "sticking it constantly into the Abess' cast poultices, etc." (7: 504-05). Predictably, moralistic "madam" reader objects to such "a strange story" (7: 511). Tristram, however, makes only a mock-concession to her spleen, admitting that he should "never have wrote it" but refusing to "blot anything out" (7: 511). As Martha F. Bowden rightly argues, Tristram's story of this lesbian relationship, combined with Mrs. Shandy's and Widow Wadman's efforts to resist the dominance of Walter and Toby respectively, provides evidence of the "interdependence of women in *Tristram Shandy*" (40-47). Having remained true to his commitment to laughter as the best way to teach interdependence to us all as we face personal and cultural decay, Tristram secures his "fool's cap," determined to "go on" writing and running in the interest of friendship (7: 511).

Through the remainder of his travels, Tristram continues to show his comic resilience when confronted by his own physical decay or by signs of a decadent culture. When he fails in his sexual encounter with Jenny, Tristram drinks "goat's whey," resolving to "gain seven years longer life for the accident" instead of merely lamenting "what had not pass'd" and "blaming Fortune" for "small evils" (7: 517-18). When his coach breaks down, Tristram sells it piecemeal, resolving to "fly down

the rapid Rhone" in a boat and to make "a penny" on the "disaster" (7: 517). When the commissary, a greater "ass" than the long-eared one that shares Tristram's macaroon, taxes Tristram for changing his mode of conveyance, Tristram pays and moves on, realizing that "if fickleness is taxable in France—we have nothing to do but to make the best peace with it we can" (7: 528).

Yet Tristram's comic resilience no longer roots in his hubristic assumption of long life for himself and his work. When Tristram realizes he has left his travelogue in the coach he sold, he responds first with arrogant anger for having lost a potentially profitable piece to "a chaise-vamper" (7: 530). However, when Tristram finds his work, shredded and twisted for curlers, on the head of the chaise-vamper's wife, he realizes once more that this decaying culture has no interest in his work. Remembering those critics who have read his writing with more malice than indifference toward his friendly purpose, Tristram knows, too, that when his work reaches print it will be "worse twisted still" (7: 531), or, as Matthew Beaumont puts it, that as narrator he will always be "displaced by the act of narration" (811).

Humbled by abuse and neglect but still a determined artist, Tristram writes on. We discover, therefore, that his comic resilience becomes one with his tragic resistance to his mortal fate and to his self-created fate as an author. As we have noted, Tristram has faced Death, acknowledged his "debt" to Nature; he has seen, too, that his writing for friendship has left him and his work without friends. These epiphanies notwithstanding, in his recognition that isolation must follow his choice to recreate his life and opinion, Tristram displays a courageous tragic spirit, resisting with his pen oblivion, his doom.

Tristram still eludes the oblivion of Death, as we have noted, by the end of volume seven. However, he quickly rediscovers the futility of resistance, for his "vile asthma" returns and "ten cart-loads" of his earlier volumes remain "still—still unsold" (8: 545). Though he has succeeded in borrowing days from his "imagination" (7: 495), putting off Death to commit yet more of his life and opinions to paper, Tristram has the tragic knowledge that "Time wastes too fast" (9: 610), devouring his creative life. Indeed, Tristram clearly perceives Time as his tragic nemesis (9: 610). Every letter, too, has been met by indifference or malice, compounding Tristram's tragic sense of separation: not only must he soon die, but his work—all ten cart-loads—will apparently find no friends. His resistance to Death has been futile.

Yet Tristram continues to resist separation from life and friends, even though he has accepted the inevitability of his death, faced the indifference to his work; for in creating his own isolation, Tristram has become profoundly aware of his own uniqueness. In the beginning, as

we have noted, Tristram thinks himself important enough as an individual to make a great "noise" in the world when his life and opinion become known (1: 7). The "ten cart-loads" of unsold writings, however, have shown Tristram the foolishness of his initial self-importance. Yet in filling these carts, Tristram has learned that he can define what he is on "this 12th day of August, 1766" (9: 600), not by recounting all "ab Ovo" as he first arrogantly intended (1: 7), but by fusing past and present moments into a fluid portrait of self, or, as Bell describes it, by experiencing his "Fragment of Life" (1: 3) as scattered experiences of past and present fused into each moment of flux (23).

Indeed, Tristram has grown fascinated by the power of his mind to blend multiple scenes from the past and present into one imaginative portrait. As he compares his flight through Europe with his family-accompanied tour as a youth, Tristram marvels over the associative, fusing power of memory: "I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre with my father and my uncle Toby . . . also entering Lyons with my post-chaise broke into a thousand pieces—and . . . in a handsome pavilion . . . where I now sit rhapsodizing all these affairs" (7: 516). While such self-scrutiny suggests his self-inflating pomposity, the traditional sin committed by objects of satire, in his meeting with the beautiful but tormented Maria, Tristram discovers that he, like all men, bears some resemblance to the mad girl's goat (9: 631), a self-knowledge that dunces in satiric plots never achieve. Though he enjoys his creative powers, Tristram, like Yorick, has become humbly aware of the ridiculous figure he cuts as he sits writing in his "purple jerkin and yellow pair of slippers, without either wig or cap on," a "tragicomical completion" of Walter's prediction that he would "neither think nor act like any other man's child" (9: 600).

Helene Moglen, as we have seen, describes Tristram as a tragicomic character, meaning that he becomes tragically isolated in his comic efforts to renew life in the illusions of art (138). However, as we have just noted, Tristram has escaped his illusions about life and art. Therefore, when Tristram uses the term "tragicomical," he means that he has, as always, the resistance of a comic fool and, now, the tragic self-awareness of a man alone. Certainly, Tristram qualifies as comic in his clownish appearance but also in his motive to win friendship by arousing laughter, the very motive of Sterne in his dedication to Pitt (1: 3). Yet Tristram qualifies as tragic because, instead of making friends as he intended, he has been excluded by the few who condemn his work and by the many who leave his work in the "carts."

One might argue, following Melvyn New's persuasive reading of *Tristram Shandy*, that such exclusion results inevitably from Tristram's undue concern with his own personality, the deserved punishment of

one who presumes to elude mortality (181). In short, one might argue that volume seven and its denouement in volume nine unfold a plot of satire: self-aggrandizement leads to self-defeat. However, such an interpretation overlooks the important fact that Tristram learns a great deal about his limitations as an artist and as a man. He learns that imaginative fusion works better than "telling all" in composing art. He learns that Death—and sometimes society—remain indifferent to the survival of both art and artist. Putting these two lessons together, Tristram also learns that the very certainty of oblivion makes the work of his imagination all the more worthy of preservation, not because of his greatness, but rather because of his common humanity and his uncommon artistry. Though sometimes the object of his own satire, Tristram becomes tragic because in his awareness of his uniqueness he has the courage to continue his self-recreation in the face of rejection, to resist the inevitable oblivion he knows he does not deserve.

Because oblivion never overtakes Tristram in the pages of *Tristram Shandy*, one might be tempted to claim a comic ending for Sterne's work. Though Toby's story ends with no comic union, as shown above, Tristram does in fact survive, escaping Death who threatens him at the beginning of volume seven. In addition, from the perspective of Sterne's current readers, Tristram's work has withstood neglect and mis-readings for over 250 years. Yet from Tristram's point of view, his work has indeed been neglected, and Death rattles in his every asthmatic-tuberculin wheeze. Tristram's clinging to life and to pen, therefore, creates only the semblance of comic renewal at the end of Sterne's novel. Though we have no sustained comic triumph of life within Tristram's fictional world, we find nevertheless a tragic affirmation of life in Tristram's tenacious self-recreation, a tragic celebration of one man's doomed resistance to death.

The writing of insightful criticism like that of Freedman, Swearingen, and others mentioned here testifies to the legitimacy and the possibility of the comic union formed between Tristram and readers who can, as Sterne puts it, "taste humor" and enjoy the "intimacy" of shared "inner life."[11] In exploring Tristram's inner life and the ways readers respond to such confessions, late-twentieth and twenty-first century critics have stressed the cultural milieu from which this self-revelatory world of *Tristram Shandy* grew.[12] But even as we engage with such accounts of eighteenth-century culture reflected in and shaped by *Tristram Shandy*, when we consider the form of this complicated novel, we should take care not to mistake the depth of our human understanding or the readiness with which such sympathies are formed. After all, inside Tristram's fictional world, Tristram fails to win friends, and Sterne doubts our abilities to overcome our self-serving hobbies.[13]

To stress Toby's selfishness as soldier and lover to the point of denying his moral character, to stress Tristram's self-absorption to the point of denying his abiding longing for friendship, as Swearingen and others have done, is to drift away from "the laughing part of the world,"[14] who have found the healing spirit of "true Shandeism" in Toby, in spite of his madness as soldier and lover, and in Tristram, in spite of—or because of—his impossible narrative project. This spirit, Tristram promises, will "do all your hearts good—And all your heads too—provided you understand it" (6: 436).

Notes

1. A decade following Freedman's and Swearingen's books, for instance, Wolfgang Iser described Sterne's chaotic, non-linear narrative as a masterful depiction of Tristram's subjective experience as he writes to read his life, and Elizabeth Livingston Davidson stresses the consequence of Tristram's imaginative creation, the Romantic engagement of the reader's imagination in feeling and understanding the "meaning of the narrative" (55). John Freeman and Robert H. Bell echo these views a decade later, calling the "chaos" (141) of Tristram's story-telling as a "dynamic, creative force" (27) that fuses past and present as Tristram tries to describe the flux of his life and opinions. As a result of Tristram's imaginative work, Luigi Cazzato observes, Sterne pours the "old wine" of the playfulness found in Montaigne, Burton, Rabelais, and Cervantes into the "new bottles of the modern novel" (171), where, as James Chandler argues in his explication of Sterne's "languages of sentiment," Tristram infers his soul in his capacity to "feel beyond" himself, the very imaginative faculty that, Tristram hopes, will "transport" his readers into friendship with him (23, 25). Stressing this same power of self-disclosing narrative to stir humanizing emotions, Heather Keenleyside asserts in her discussion of "Locke, Sterne, and the autobiographical animal," that the *Life* Tristram writes and the life he lives become "fundamentally one vital form, a union that Tristram calls 'this self-same life of mine'" (132). Anastacia Eccles has recently extended Keenleyside's work on the fusing of writing-time and living-time in Sterne's novel, arguing that form and feeling "converge" in the erratic pages of *Tristram Shandy*, where Sterne makes "the form of the novel more visible precisely to the extent that it violates" chronological order and blends graphics with words (535).

2. Wayne Booth argues that we laugh at Toby's sentimentality with a "benign, forgiving spirit," for Toby's folly springs "from an excess" of virtue—his heart "is in the right place." See *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, U of Chicago P, 1961, p. 246. Ronald Paulson also discusses Sterne's comic revision of traditional objects of satire. See *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England,* Yale UP, 1965, pp. 190-91.

3. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. James A. Work, The Odyssey Press, 1940, 4: 337. References are to this edition.

4. For historical discussion of the traditional comic plot, see Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, Princeton UP, 1957, pp. 167, 177-80.

5. Shannon Hartling, "Inexpressible Sadness: Sterne's Sermons and the Moral Inadequacies of Politeness in *Tristram Shandy*," *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2006, p. 495; Brian Michael Norton, "The Moral in Phutatorius's Breeches: *Tristram Shandy* and the Limits of Stoic Ethics, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol.18, no. 4, 2006, p. 423. For comment on the co-existence of tragedy with satiric comedy, see Ben Reid, "The Sad Hilarity of Sterne," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, vol. 32, 1956, pp. 107-30; William B. Piper, "Tristram Shandy's Tragicomical Testimony," *Criticism*, vol. 3, 1961, pp. 171-85; Stanley G. Eskin, "*Tristram Shandy* and *Oedipus Rex*: Reflections on Comedy and Tragedy, *College English*, vol. 24, 1963, pp. 271-77; Martin Price, "Sterne: Art and Nature," in *To the Palace of Wisdom: Studies in Order and Energy from Dryden to Blake*, Doubleday, 1964, p. 340; A. E. Dyson, *The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony*, Books for Libraries Press, 1965, p. 41; Robert A. Donovan, *The Shaping Vision: Imagination in the English Novel from Defoe to Dickens*, Cornell UP, 1966, p. 112; Helene Moglen, *The Philosophical Irony of Laurence Sterne*, UP of Florida, 1975.

6. Even though *Tristram Shandy* became immediately fashionable, Sterne, like Tristram, received numerous rebukes from "grave" moralists. In a 1761 letter to Hall-Stevenson, for instance, Sterne asserted his "valorous" intention to proceed with the novel despite critical censure he had received. See Letter 77, *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, edited by L. P. Curtis, Clarendon Press, 1935, p. 140. Also, see Alan B. Howes, *Yorick and the Critics: Sterne's Reputation in England, 1760-1868*, Yale Studies in English, vol. 139, Yale UP, 1958, pp. 2, 25.

7. Seven years before Swearingen's book, William V. Holtz also speaks of the pursuit of permanence as the comic action appealing to readers. See *Image and Immortality: A Study of* Tristram Shandy, Brown UP, 1970, p. 141.

8. For comment on hobby-horse riding as a survival technique, see Michael V. De Porte, *Nightmares and Hobbyhorses: Swift, Sterne, and the Augustan Idea of Madness*, Huntington Library, 1974, p. 151; Earl R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassic and Romantic Poems*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1959, p. 170.

9.Though Toby's hobbyhorse has dubious practical value, his language reveals sound Lockean motives. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Peter H. Nidditch, The Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. iv, xii, 11, 646.

10. If we can judge from Sterne's letters, the author suffered far less anonymity in France than does Tristram. See Letters 83 and 85 in *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, pp. 151, 157. Such disparity between Sterne and Tristram suggests that we must cautiously qualify William V. Holtz's view of Tristram as Sterne's "surrogate." See *Image and Immortality*, p. 156.

11. See Curtis, Letter 229, *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, p. 411.

12. Robert H. Bell, for instance, examines Sterne's allusions to "clowning priests" such as Rabelais, Burton and Swift, as well as to philosophers Locke and Hume (21-22); Luigi Cazzalo studies Sterne's celebrity vis-à-vis Joshua Reynolds, Lord Chesterfield, George III, and James Boswell (160); Scott MacKenzie explores Sterne's novel and the commercial value of literature in the eighteenth century (69-80); Brian Norton examines Sterne's challenge to stoicism (406-23); and John Richardson juxtaposes Toby's story to English ideas on patriotism in the eighteenth century (20-42). We should note, too, Jonathan Lamb's discussion of "siege architecture" relative to Toby's hobbyhorse (9); Nicholas Visser's study of Walter and Toby relative to historical events, economic currents, and anti-Semitic prejudices to which Sterne regularly alludes (489-502); Deborah Vlock's analysis of sexual themes in Sterne's novel relative to his rejection of "the mathematic discourse of Baroque music theory" (518); and most recently, George E. Haggerty's analysis of Yorick and Eugenius in the context of Montaigne's views on friendship and the elegiac tradition (1450-56); as well as Helen Williams' discussion of Sterne's graphic experimentation with the black page, a symbol of Yorick's death, as a contribution to fashionable "grave-yard literature" and the tradition of typographic epigraphs (313-44).

13. Curtis, *Letters*, pp. 229, 411. Stene explained to Dr. Eustace that readers of *Tristram Shandy* would grab the novel by the "handle" which "suits their passions, their ignorance or sensibility." He observed, too, that only a "true feeler" could respond to his humor.

14. Curtis, Letter 101, p. 189.

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Benjy as "Black": The Embodiment of Eugenic Stereotypes in *The Sound and the Fury*

Adam Nemmers

Critics have historically remarked upon *The Sound and the Fury*'s superficial treatment of black lives, which are at once omnipresent and unexplored in the text. An early, illustrative example appears in a 1929 review by Frances Lamont Robbins, who juxtaposes the Compsons' "spectacle of white disintegration" with the "full-living wholeness of their Negroes," a theme Robbins considered promising but "too faintly expressed to be clear" (38). In *Faulkner's Negro* (1983), Thadious M. Davis posits that Faulkner's works reflect the Jim Crow South insofar as his "white and black characters develop the ability to live mutually exclusive lives, which acknowledge the existence but not the validity of the other" (92). Philip Weinstein (1996) observes that whereas Faulkner reveals the inner lives of several white characters, Dilsey's experiences "from within her racial and gender identity" are absent; instead, the text leaves her "silent about the systemic oppressions within which she finds the operative terms for her life" (163). And, while conceding that black voices are "audible on occasion," Barbara Ladd (2007) highlights "Faulkner's inability to fully imagine the subjective experience of his African American characters" and argues that "the reader never sees very far into [their] lives" (141). These and similar statements amount to bricks in the wall of critical consensus, virtually all of which acknowledges that *The Sound and the Fury* displaces and marginalizes issues of race (Matthews 72) in order to "privilege the subjectivity of the white Compson family over [its] black characters, who lack distinction and serve merely as background props" (Robertson 158).

In recent years, however, several noteworthy inroads have been made to "break the critical cul de sac delimiting the work's representation of the African American experience" (Matthews 78). Richard Godden's *Fictions of Labor* illuminates the occluded reality that the "white-owned world" of *The Sound and the Fury* was "made by black work," a "traumatic secret" that both undergirds and destabilizes the "coexistence of black and white populations" (6). Sarah Robertson argues that, given the "shared humanity" and metaphorically mutual

bloodlines of the Compson and Gibson families, "white and black was never so easily separated" (163), despite the segregated infrastructure of Southern society. And, in detailing the pervasive influence of black "sounds" throughout the text, John T. Matthews asserts that "minority voices and subjects are not incidental to Faulkner's achievement; they are its foundation" (73). By attending to latent considerations, such critics have done yeoman work to unearth the purportedly "absent" elements of race in *The Sound and the Fury*, recognizing the novel's extensive engagement with black lives beneath its white façade.

Most germane to the present study is the recent identification of Faulkner's "in-between characters—Caucasians who instantiate blackness in ways that complicate the southern racial binarism"—as principally advanced by the forceful work of John Duvall ("A Strange Nigger" 107). In a cluster of publications, Duvall calls attention to the instability of race across Faulkner's oeuvre, as evinced by "minstrely" figures such as Pierrot/Shade of Pierrot (from *The Marionettes)*, "Faulkner" and Gordon (from *Mosquitos*), and Quentin Compson, whose Southern accent queerly positions him as a "white colored man" while at Harvard (*Race and White Identity* 49). Likewise, Isaac McCaslin of *Go Down, Moses* is considered a "black white man" on account of his "failure to enact the scripts of white Southern masculine identity" (47-8). Duvall's framework extends to *Sanctuary*'s Lee Goodwin and especially Popeye, whose blackness, he argues, is "queerly positioned between figurativeness (he's really white) and literalness (other characters identify him as black)" (41). To that end Deborah Barker observes that "although Popeye is directly referred to as a white man, the narrator describes Popeye's skin as having a 'dead, dark pallor,' Horace Benbow comments that 'he smells black,' and Temple refers to him as 'that black man'" (74-5); Duvall similarly notes that "the 'black' Popeye is a primitive—unevolved and subhuman—an implication that is consistent with white racist attitudes toward African Americans" (*Race and White Identity* 39). Given the presence of these "Caucasians tropologically linked to blackness," he summarizes, "not all of Faulkner's black lives are lived by African Americans" ("Why?" 149).

Taking up Duvall's proposition, I wish to add a branch to this limb of inquiry and consider another of Faulkner's "blacks in white face": Benjy Compson, whose character, I will argue, serves as a eugenicist caricature of the African-American male. This interpretation is in no way to argue that Benjy is literally black or physically appears so, but rather to submit that—alongside the liminal figures mentioned above—he functions as a "black white man" in *The Sound and the Fury*, and that Benjy's embodiment of prejudiced African-American stereotypes has profound implications on both a critical reading of the novel and

Faulkner's overall engagement with race. That Faulkner's most famous character is figuratively black places the African-American experience at the forefront of *The Sound and the Fury*; the novel's extended treatment of Benjy's plight, in turn, refutes the spurious charge that Faulkner's early works subordinate or otherwise marginalize issues of race. It is through Benjy, I posit, that Faulkner offers an intimate and scathing portrayal of African-American life in the Jim Crow South, and through Benjy's jumbled narration that we may witness a sliver of the terror and agony that existence necessarily entailed.

In what follows I explore a number of eugenicist African-American stereotypes as they relate to Benjy Compson in an effort to reinterpret the function and meaning of his character. In so doing I establish Benjy as a complex and traumatic figure, not only an "in-between character" in the vein of Ike and Popeye, but also a "tragic mulatto" alongside Joe Christmas, Charles Bon, and Jim Bond, who suffer on account of their uncertain ethnicity. This Faulknerian "black white" figure, whether literal or figurative, is so common as to serve as a trope; critics from Doreen Fowler to Jay Watson to Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman have ably explored its appearance and implications across Faulkner's work. As Duvall summarizes, "the urge in Southern culture to oppose whiteness to the Negro turns out to be a kind of category mistake, one Faulkner's figurative use of blackness helps to illuminate" ("Why?" 154).

Criticism on Benjy has often focused on the nature of his narration, discussing whether he is capable of chronology, agency, and abstract thought; or whether he merely serves as a faithful and unwitting piece of equipment through which Faulkner's story might be candidly told.[1] Recent scholarship through the lens of disability studies has challenged the validity of his supposed "idiocy." Taylor Hagood, in his *Faulkner, Writer of Disability*, contends that though physically impaired, Benjy is "consciously complex" and "more prescient" than previously considered, and that his narration would be capable were it not for Faulkner's experimental design (103-4). Charging Faulkner with "textual abuse," Maria Truchan-Tataryn argues that Benjy "portrays an entrenched, derogatory stereotype of disability that has served both in fiction and reality to reify and oppress a large percentage of the human population," arguing that an uncritical reading may promote "myths of human inferiority grounded in Social Darwinism" and ultimately serves to "dehumanize real people with developmental disabilities" (170, 164). And, though she grants that "the psychological act of dehumanization has the adverse effect of calling attention to [his] humanity," Stephanie Larson likewise decries Faulkner's depiction of Benjy as "deplorable" (Larson). In all, the combined power of such approaches has offered

a trenchant corrective to traditional analyses that celebrate Faulkner's achievement in transmitting the thoughts of a "simple idiot."

While laudable for problematizing the ableism of Faulkner and critics alike, these assessments have overlooked a ready connection to race: in selecting Benjy as his initial narrator, Faulkner offers not only the viewpoint of a dehumanized, cognitively disabled man, but also provides the perspective of a "black" man debilitated by the prejudice of white society. Consider—for thought experiment—a character with the following set of attributes: a hulking, infantile brute incapable of higher thought or ratiocination; a man in the constant company of Negroes,[2] who belongs in the "marginal space of the other" (Hagood "The Secret Machinery" 93); who is a perceived sexual threat to the white women of his community; who when intoxicated becomes a "howling monster; a drunken monster" (Mellard 239); who is locked up at night and penned up during day; who has an intuitive, animalistic connection with nature; whose world is "subhuman," "premoral," "prehuman," "prelapsarian,"and "natural" (Grant 709); in all, a castrated man-child of little societal value who warrants incarceration. The man I have described is a racist, eugenicist caricature of the African-American male, the same hyperbolized figure that loomed large in the white consciousness of the South during Faulkner's era. In *The Sound and the Fury,* this man is Benjy Compson.[3]

The claim of Benjy's "blackness" would come as no surprise to the novel's Negro characters, for they regard him as one of their own. Versh reveals as much when he informs Benjy that his name change, from Maury to Benjamin, was done in order to make "a bluegum[4] out of you" (69), equating this rechristening with a past episode when Benjy's "grandpaw changed [a] nigger's name" (69). The slave, who "didn't use to be bluegum," suddenly became "bluegum too" (69). Versh thus implies that Benjy, as a result of his name-change[5] (which Mrs. Compson undertakes once she realizes the extent of his disabilities), must now be considered black as well, "making him a slave to her willful preoccupation with the purity of Bascomb blood" (Godden 18). Beyond this marking, Benjy clearly belongs to black spaces in the novel: the church, the yard, the cellar, even the servants' beds. Lee Jenkins writes that Benjy likes "the unmistakable smell of Negroes—a complete reversal of that attitude of fear and loathing with which all the other whites in Faulkner confront this much-referred-to-phenomenon" (139). Indeed, so close is their relationship that Dilsey calls Benjy "my baby" and treats him like her own son; other blacks, like Versh, Frony, T. P., and Luster, regard Benjy as a confessor, confidant, or companion. Jenkins points out that "because they are blacks and . . . participate in a more elemental sphere of being to which Benjy has been consigned by a chance

of fate, it is only appropriate that they share a mutual understanding with Benjy" (139). This, in direct opposition to the white characters, who "with the exception of Caddy, and Mr. Compson in his own way . . . view Benjy as a menace and disgrace whose idiocy constitutes a stigmatizing and contaminating influence that must be avoided and against which their own self-esteem must be preserved and defended" (140)—is precisely the sort of inflammatory language leveraged against African Americans in the Jim Crow South. In this way the "black" Benjy serves as scapegoat for the post-bellum decline of the Compsons, who seek to defend their self-esteem by consigning his "stigmatizing and contaminating influence" to segregated spaces. Maligned by a series of racist stereotypes, branded a "menace and disgrace" by a society from which he cannot escape, Benjy epitomizes the traumatized Jim Crow Negro, through whose voice "all time and injustice and sorrow become[s] vocal for an instant" (*SF* 288).

Negro as Child

Faulkner wrote *The Sound and the Fury* at the height of the eugenics movement, which sought to attribute the difference between the races to genetic determinism, and further, the eventual fate of each race as a matter of natural evolution. According to an 1894 article in *Medical Review*, for example, "evolution has not yet modified in this black race, the brutal feeling and instincts to the same degree that it has matured them among the Caucasian races of the progressive countries" (Paquin 305). Thus stunted in development, blacks' natural inferiority did not equip them for success in the racial "struggle for existence." In handicapping the outcome of this struggle, leading eugenicists such as Harry Laughlin and Charles Davenport conducted anatomical surveys to classify the evolutionary strengths and weaknesses of different races.Yet those doing the evaluating were white, and as a result of biased studies classified the Negro as the "lowest" "grade of human beings," "incapable of cultivation, destitute of the capacity of improvement" (Paulding 182, 184) and disseminated such pernicious racial dogma as the "blackfellow appears to be an early Paleolithic survival" and "the mental level of the *average* Paleolithic man can hardly have been higher than that of our modern feeble-minded" (Gates 225).

In this way eugenicists conceptualized Negroes as a race in evolutionary stasis, trapped forever in a childlike state. Authorities like Dr. Josiah Nott argued that "like children . . . Negroes required care, direction, and control. If manumitted, they would soon perish because of their inability to endure the 'ravages' of freedom" (qtd. in Smedley

233). In a 1907 book, Alfred Holt Stone, a Mississippi planter and tax commissioner and among the oldest officeholders in the state, wrote the following: "the Negro masses are of a contented, happy disposition. They are docile, tractable, and unambitious—with but few wants, and those easily satisfied. They incline to idleness and though having a tendency to the commission of petty crimes, are not malicious, and rarely cherish hatred" (431). Thus the stereotype of the black as infantile and feeble-minded was well-established decades before Faulkner composed *The Sound and the Fury*.

The character of Benjy Compson arrives as a child in mind and heart who embodies the stereotyped qualities of the Negro. David Minter explains that "Benjy comes to us as a wholly dependent creature seeking shelter. Sentenced to stillness and silence—'like something eyeless and voice-less which . . . existed merely because of its ability to suffer,' he is all need and all helplessness" (386). In the text we see Benjy holding flowers and playing with paper dolls, clutching at comfort objects and fighting babies for their play things. Faulkner himself said that he imbued Benjy with "the blind, self-centeredness of innocence, typified by children" ("Interview" 146). Sensing this, Benjy's mother reminds the family "you'll have to think for him," and Luster, "going by what mammy say," remarks that Benjy is not thirty-three, but has in reality turned three years old thirty times (*SF* 17). Seen from this vantage, Benjy becomes less a hapless, helpless idiot and more the stereotyped caricature of the African-American male, the "white man's burden" stunted in development and incapable of realizing the promise of maturity and freedom.

Negro as "Natural"

Drawing from this same line of thought, eugenicists assumed that cognitive processes differed among the "lower races," whose mental development was presumed stultified on account of environmental factors. Although the Negro's intellect had been stunted as the result of these "differing processes," many believed the race had been recompensed with extraordinary abilities in other areas. As Julian Huxley reported in his 1931 *Africa View*, "the negro average of pure intelligence was definitely but rather slightly below the white, [but] the negro was rather more emotional and excelled in certain tests indicative of artistic appreciation" (401). Excellence in "artistic appreciation" was exhibited by blacks' skillful singing, dancing, and music-making; that Negroes were "more emotional" could be easily validated by witness of their church services. Based upon anthropological observation, Alcee Fortiér report-

ed in the *Journal of American Folklore* that "the Negroes, as all ignorant people, are very superstitious" and therefore relied upon omens, signs, and myths to guide their apprehension of the world (138).

Thus was born the stereotype of the Negro as a "natural" being, a race of instinctual savages who had an immediate and symbiotic relationship with the natural world. As Michael Starkey notes, in the South, blacks were predominantly seen as inherently wild, as naturally "living in or recently emerged from the jungle" (3). To promote this notion, Negroes were often depicted as jungle-dwelling savages or conflated with apes and orangutans. Perhaps the most pervasive belief was in the strength of the Negro's sense of smell, which was said to be "more acute" and allow its owner the ability to perceive beyond "normal" human range (Van Evrie 114). As the 1812 *Treatise on the Influence of Climate on the Human Species* explained, "nature intended [the Negro] to have a more exquisite sense of smell than his European brethren" (Pitta 71). More incredibly, J. H. Van Evrie, a physician and perhaps the first professional racist in American history, contended in his *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination* that Negroes' stupendous olfactory ability "permits them to discriminate and to indicate the presence of the rattle snake, or other venomous serpents" (120). Such beliefs were still in full effect during the 1920s and '30s, when Southern folklore held that Negroes had natural abilities far exceeding their intelligence.

To balance his lack of intellect, Benjy exhibits a heightened sense of smell—not merely a heightened sense of smell but an olfactory "sixth sense" which lends him extraperceptive abilities. Although (or perhaps because) he cannot speak intelligibly about them, he is constantly smelling things, whether pigs in their pen (*SF* 20, 35), T.P.'s bed (29), or the rain (68). Yet Benjy's olfactory prowess is of most value when he uses his nose to smell trouble. Without being told, he smells his father's death (34); later, he is somehow able to intuit the loss of Caddy's virginity (42-3). Finally, on April 8, 1928, Benjy must be taken from the premises when he "smells" and is distressed by the unrest at the Compson estate (288). His seemingly aberrant behavior in each of these instances is recognized without surprise by the novel's superstitious blacks, who "participate in a more elemental sphere of being to which Benjy has been consigned by a chance of fate" (Jenkins 139) and believe Benjy has acute, extrasensory powers like the magical abilities of the bluegum preacher (*SF* 69). As Roskus argues, Benjy "know a lot more than folks thinks . . . he knowed they time was coming like that pointer[6] done" (*SF* 31). That the novel's Negroes recognize Benjy's tremendous "natural" insight further confirms his function as an African-American stereotype, and testifies to the pernicious power of this stereotype in Southern culture. James Mellard argues that "we may dis-

cover in Benjy's love of water, rain, trees, and flowers that in nature he does have his origin" and that "the frequent references to smells suggests something of this inter-mingling of man and nature" (236). William Grant agrees, noting that

> Benjy is associated with earth (the pasture), air (his sense of smell), fire (one of the things he loved), and water (the branch and the baptismal rain on the night his name changed). This direct association with the four elements suggests Benjy as "natural man," a suggestion that is heightened when Dalton Ames refers to him as "the natural." (709)

The most prominent display of Benjy's "natural" being is his fascination with trees and overall fondness for flowers. Throughout the novel he constantly clutches a jimson weed, which traditionally held analgesic and hallucinogenic properties and was "used by Southern Negroes in contraception and abortion" (Bleikasten 85). Considering his plight, it comes as no wonder that he clings to such flowers as a refuge from the ravages of the harsh white world. Indeed, the book's final image is of Benjy holding a cornflower, "his eyes empty and blue and serene" (*SF* 321).

Negro as Animal and Criminal

Regarding Negroes as childlike and natural beings, Social Darwinists such as Huxley pointed to "a certain amount of evidence that the Negro is an earlier product of human evolution than the Mongolian or the European, and as such might be expected to have advanced less, both in body and in mind" (405). This "evidence," in turn, was marshaled to portray blacks as animals and criminals, a race of morally degenerate brutes who lacked a sense of right and wrong. Incredibly, to many whites the perceived surge of postbellum Negro crime was credited neither to poverty nor to inequities in the criminal justice system, but instead to the eradication of slavery, which was seen as a philanthropic institution that had provided necessary regulation of blacks' naturally dissolute behavior. As the eugenics movement gained traction after 1900, racial "researchers" such as Stone reclaimed the slave-master as a kindly paternalistic figure who had taken "responsibility for the proper rearing of the family," since "obedience to the law in the face of temptation is . . . a product of training . . . from the family" (447). When freed from this guidance, others argued, blacks were "like animals escaping from their cages," a dangerous plague of brutes prone to immorality

when following "the first impulse of freedom" (Gage 72). As such, many Southern whites believed that the abolition of slavery (and the dissolution of its rigid hierarchy) had released blacks from the moorings of morality and cast them as prey to their baser instincts. Stone theorized that while "the white race [lived] on its inherited capital of family organisation and responsibilities . . . the Negroes [had] no such capital" (448); "since emancipation," Frank Wellington Gage declared, "they are restless, inclined to shift from place to place and to be slack and indolent when not under strict supervision" (71). In his 1892 book *The Negro Problem in the United States,* Gage demonstrated the theoretical extension of this conviction:

> it is a matter neither of wonder nor of discouragement if the cardinal faults of the newly emancipated freedman, indolence, restlessness, improvidence and the like, should be for a long time the predominant features of his character. Some new discipline must arise in place of the slave-driver's whip. That this strict discipline had its value is true, and its effect is still seen in the greater steadiness and trustworthiness of the older Negroes, many of whom will carry the scars of the whip to the grave. (72)

Throughout this period African Americans were depicted as mules and apes,[7] primal beasts who would suffer an instinctual degeneracy without the crack of an overseer's whip. Indeed, eugenicists held that "an inherent inclination toward crime, debauchery, and sloth would cause them to degenerate even further"—back into a simian state, or extinction (Smedley 236)—and that "a member of the African race, other things equal, is much more likely to fall into crime than a member of the white race" (Stone 444-45). Like animals, Negroes were born without morals; like animals, they could not be expected to keep the civilized code of human ethics without discipline and supervision.

In this vein, Benjy Compson is marked by the other characters as a "sub-human" degenerate or, as Faulkner claimed, "an animal" (Stein 246). Although allowed sporadic treatment as human, Benjy is more frequently sent out of the house and seen "whimpering" and "slobbering" (*SF* 315), "his thick mouth" (274) drooling while he patrols the fence-line like a large and indolent dog. We are told that spending a meal with Benjy is like "eating with a pig"; in the evening he would "head for the gate like a cow for the barn," even "lowing like a cow" (70, 253, 222). When castrated, Benjy is referred to not as a eunuch but instead "The Great American Gelding"; Jason further suggests that Benjy should be sent "to the cavalry," which used geldings because their di-

minished testosterone made them easier to control (263, 196).[8] Beyond these allusions, Benjy's most prominent association is with a bear in a cage (252-3). In his only direct rendering he is described as moving "with a shambling gait like a trained bear," a big man with clear eyes and a thick mouth—a huge intractable beast forever accompanied by his human handlers (274).

Given this set of animalistic comparisons, it comes as no surprise that Benjy is regarded as a senseless brute as well. As Patrick Samway explains, "Benjy reacts on an elementary sensory level, devoid of moral evaluations that deal with possibilities, probabilities, and statements of ultimate value" (6). Throughout the text Benjy behaves according to stimulus and response, lacking evaluation of right and wrong or the recognition that a greater moral code exists. In this way he lives outside the conscience which binds others' behavior; if he is not by deed a criminal, it is only because he has been kept away from society as a precaution. In fact, in one of his few furloughs beyond his pen, Benjy and his caretaker Luster come across a wayward golf ball, which Luster attempts to sell for a quarter. The bright shiny object draws Benjy's attention, but Luster, knowing local whites' prejudice, refuses to let Benjy play with it, reasoning that "If them men sees you with it they'll say you stole it" (32)—exactly the charge Luster faces when a golfer claims he must have found the ball "in somebody's golf bag" (53). In this way Benjy is readily linked with Luster: both are slandered by the reflexive assumption of criminality on account of their non-normative statuses.

A later episode brings into focus the extent of Benjy's amoral misbehavior. Told to keep Benjy quiet and "out of sight," his caretaker T.P. brings him to the cellar, where they come across a stash of "sarsaprilluh"—in fact champagne on the occasion of Caddy's wedding (37). When Benjy starts bellowing, he's plied with the bottle until it is empty, whereupon T.P. grabs another and urges him to drink some more. Unable to regulate his intake or action, Benjy quickly becomes drunk and lurches around the room, bumping his head and crashing into walls; when they emerge outside he is struck with a violent fit of hiccups before eventually collapsing near the fence and being placed "in the trough where the cows ate" (21). Though he is not responsible for his drunkenness, it's clear that Benjy has little capacity for personal control, repeatedly declaring that "I couldn't stop" (21). And while he avoids the thrashing T.P. receives from Quentin—"you see that white man kick me"? (20)—Benjy's actions again align with common black stereotypes, as helplessly disposed towards dissolution. As if to underscore the subhuman connection, Faulkner peppers the episode with references to a snake, a dog, and finally a bear (37-39), characterizing Benjy as bestial, slothful, and uncouth. In this regard, Benjy's charac-

ter satisfies the racist belief that Negroes "for the most part, are lazy, thriftless, intemperate . . . and without the most rudimentary elements of morality" (Page 80). As a senseless brute, the "black" Benjy may be treated without regard to humanity, just as the Jim Crow South held the African-American male at once dangerous and dispensable.

Negro as Rapist

An amalgam of established aspersions, the eugenicist trope of the black rapist was "one of the most virulently racist stereotypes of black masculinity in [American] history" (Richardson 36). The notion of the African-American male as lustful and sexually insatiable gained prominence after the Civil War and had reached its apex at the time of the novel's publication in 1929. Working hand-in-hand with the aforementioned Social Darwinist and eugenicist scientific thought—which portrayed blacks as primitive and racially inferior to whites—Southern propagandists established the image of the freed black man as violent, lascivious, and constantly on the prowl. For example, Dr. William Lee Howard, a physician and planter, asserted in 1903 that black male "attacks on defenseless white women are evidence of racial instincts that are about as amenable to ethical culture as is the inherent odor of the race" (qtd. in Kennedy 190). In this way the myth of the black rapist marked black men as "predatory and bestial," linking them to "an inherently perverted sexuality" (Richardson 36). One of the most extreme (though telling) reactions came from an editorial in the *Wilmington Daily Record*, wherein the white supremacist Rebecca Latimer Felton cried that "one thousand blacks [should] be lynched a day to protect white southern women from black male rapists" (Richardson 33).

While Benjy may have the mind of a three-year-old, his body grows into a latent sexual maturity. His potential menace is manifested in an early episode in which Caroline tells thirteen-year-old Benjy he is "a big boy" now, and that "Caddy [is] tired [of] sleeping with [him]" (*SF* 44). When his plaintive moans are enough to overcome her objections, Caddy relents but is careful to only get in "between the spread and the blanket" and notably does not take off her bathrobe (*SF* 44).[9] Godden argues that "by means of a black mask, Benjy . . . intends to get his sister" (18); as Mellard posits, Benjy "does become something of a sexual threat to Caddy" (242), a statement which aligns with Riché Richardson's note that "the idea of the black rapist gained its force and authority precisely from the southern fantasy of a ravaged, traumatized, and potentially miscegenated white female body" (58).

The danger posed to those white female bodies is realized in a later episode that features Benjy roaming in the Compsons' penned yard, "moaning and slobbering through the fence" (*SF* 52). This manic pacing is usual for him, and, as mentioned, evocative of a large dog or bear more than anything human. In this particular instance, however, the gate has "mistakenly" been left open by Jason, giving Benjy the opportunity to escape or create mayhem. Though he could conceivably exit at any time, Benjy instead waits for the approach of two girls, one of whom passes by every day (53). His behavior here is uncharacteristically methodical, as he emphasizes four times that "I wasn't crying," an aberrant display of agency and self-control. As the girls near the gate, Benjy explains that he "held to [it]" while the girls "came slow" (54); when they pass he opens the gate and jumps out at them, and is immediately given over to his passions. Whereas previously he was calm—waiting, watching, listening—he is now a jumble of words and actions as he catches the girl, "trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began to stop and I tried to get out" (53). In the end no harm is done, but Benjy's behavior is perceived as lascivious by the white community; he must be castrated to eliminate the danger of his unrestrained sexuality. Such an impulse was all too common among white Southerners during this era, owing to the belief that, as Robert Wilson Schufeldt wrote in 1915, "in the Negro all the passions, emotions, and ambitions, are almost wholly subservient to the sexual instinct" (145).

Benjy's subsequent castration is also indicative of a black man's experience, for as Marques P. Richeson reports, sterilization in the South "primarily occurred in public mental institutions that housed poor ethnic and racial minorities in disproportionately high numbers" in order to discourage the "breeding of individuals with undesirable traits, particularly those whom society considered feebleminded or criminal" (99). Benjy's case ties together these stereotypes, for Jason and Mr. Compson's conversation reveals that if the imbecilic Benjy is not sent to Jackson he will likely be shot or lynched by the assailed girl's father (*SF* 52). Faced with this ultimatum, the family decides in favor of castration, and Benjy, the would-be rapist no longer, is left to look at his naked self and cry (73). As Michelle Jarman points out, "the eugenic rationale of surgery functions to guarantee Benjy's sexual complacency and at the same time ensure his limited freedom within the confines of the yard" (99). In this light, Benjy's supposed sexual threat represents yet another facet of the eugenicist caricature of the Negro male, rationalizing wholesale castration and incarceration as a necessary measure to protect Southern women.

So it was that as a result of racist and eugenicist propaganda, the African-American male was saddled with a number of pernicious stereotypes—idiot, animal, criminal, and rapist—that maligned him as both the white man's burden and curse. After all, many white Southerners despaired, what can be done about the monster whom you had introduced, and whom you were now forced to live alongside and look after? *The Sound and the Fury* offers a portrait of just such a man—an unassimilated, figuratively miscegenated "brute" who has been quarantined from contact with outside white society.

Viewing Benjy as an assemblage of African-American stereotypes provides an avenue out of the "critical cul de sac" that has traditionally delimited *The Sound and the Fury*'s "representation of the African American experience" (Matthews 78). Concomitant with these perspectives is the charge that the novel is not "about" race as such—as Matthews summarizes, that the novel itself "wishes [matters of race] to be absent" (72). Rather than displacing race to the margins of the text, Benjy's blackening foregrounds the first-person perspective of a "Negro" character, allowing access to a viewpoint rarely featured in the literature of the era—in this case, the experience of "the figurative black," who, Abdur-Rahman asserts, "was assigned the features and made to inhabit the social position that was most detested and feared in the collective imaginary" (53). In turn, the novel's extended (if latent) treatment of veiled blackness positions *The Sound and the Fury* alongside Faulkner's "race trilogy" (*Light in August*, *Absalom!, Absalom!*, *Go Down, Moses*) in exploring the anxious dread of miscegenation in the South. As Eric Sundquist writes, the novel "contains the repressed that returns with increasing visibility over the course of Faulkner's career" (*The House Divided* 26).

Indeed, it is through the depiction and narration of Benjy that William Faulkner provides an early displaced portrait of the Negro male, a wretched man-child and tragic mulatto who has been penned up and castrated, tormented and marginalized, whose plaintive cries are met not with compassion but instead the unceasing command to hush. It is important to note that Benjy is unquestionably racially white, and thus does not bear the full prejudice of a black man. He keeps his Compson name and is cared for by employees of the family, and while he may be penned and castrated, he is not lynched for his attempted assault. Yet neither does Benjy enjoy the benefits of being culturally white—which is to say he suffers from his inability to play the role of the paternal Southern aristocrat. In this he joins liminal fig-

ures such as Popeye, Lee Goodwin, and Ike McCaslin, who for various reasons may not or do not claim a full-fledged white Southern identity. For Popeye, it is his impotence; for Lee, his class and criminality, for Ike, his refusal to inherit the family plantation. For Benjy, it is his cognitive disability that relegates him to the realm of abject other, where he comes to embody the most virulent Negro stereotypes in the eyes of his community. The literal whiteness and figurative blackness of these characters highlight the subjectivity of Southern conceptions of race, demonstrating that "white" and "black" are not categories of biology but instead relationships to power. Race is less an essence and more a social distinction, drawn by those in power to saddle lesser whites with the most contemptible slander imaginable: an association with blackness.

In this vein, I further posit that given the tortured nature of his figuratively black persona, Benjy must also be considered an early model for what Sundquist terms "the hallucinating, self-projecting image of 'the Negro' that the South created out of guilt and fear, the image so wonderfully and shockingly embodied in the monstrous, uncanny figures of the 'white niggers,' Joe Christmas and Charles Bon" (*House* 21), to which I would append Jim Bond as well. Christmas has often been considered Faulkner's most tragic figure—jeered, maltreated, castrated, and lynched—on account of his liminal racial status and especially because, as Faulkner insisted, Joe does not know "who or what he is" (Davis 176). On account of his condition Benjy similarly cannot realize why, for instance, he has been penned up, castrated, and forbidden to sleep with his sister any longer. As a result of being disabled and misunderstood, as well as helpless of self-explanation, Benjy, like Joe Christmas, he has become "the monstrous other" without recourse and through no fault of his own. As detailed above, the virulent stereotyping of Benjy, which reduces him to a maligned yet innocent brute, matches the characterization of Joe, which "encompasses a level of abstraction and generalization which undermines his humanity, no matter whether he is black or white" (Davis 176). And the life and story of Benjy, alongside Joe's, are connected with "mechanisms of segregation and exclusion, with violent expulsion both from familial and sexual relationships and from the larger community of human compassion" (Sundquist "Faulkner" 13). So it is that both Benjy and Joe share a tragic fate as black white men pushed to the margins of Southern society.

Charles Bon, unlike Benjy and Christmas, has the good fortune of his handsome white appearance, wealth, "an ease of manner," a "swaggering gallant air," and "worldly elegance and assurance beyond his years" (*AA* 58). Yet he, too, is eventually stigmatized by racist stereo-

types and maligned as a "white nigger" whom his "pure" brother has to kill—the same specter that catalyzed the lynching of black men in order to protect white Southern women. Disavowed by his white, low-blood father because his mother may have a fraction of "black" blood, Bon is a victim of heartless ignorance much like that directed against Benjy. Indeed, through the lurid narration of Quentin and Shreve, whose imagination "is frozen into the clichés of southern thinking" (Davis 217), Bon becomes "the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister . . . Unless you stop [him]" (*AA* 286). Like Bon and Christmas, Benjy embodies the spectral danger of Southern miscegenation, which might, Faulkner suggests, be lurking within those closest to you—your close friends and family, or even yourself.

As a prominent pair of like characters, Benjy Compson and Jim Bond, the miscegenated dead-end of the Sutpen line, have received ample scholarly attention, though the bulk of criticism has focused on their kindred status as "idiots." Reading Benjy as black injects a racial element to their comparison, and positions Benjy, like Bond, as the black sheep of a Southern dynasty fallen into ruin.[10] The enduring image of *Absalom, Absalom!* is of Bond, the "idiot boy," lurking amid the ashes and gutted chimneys of Sutpen's Hundred, howling "until someone came and drove him away" (*AA* 301). Drawing from the "fugitive justice" framework of Stephen Best and Saidiya Hartman, Abdur-Rahman describes Bond's mournful expression as "caught 'between grievance and grief; between the necessity of legal remedy and the impossibility of redress' . . . Jim Bond's wail is the sonic registration of grief, of internality, of sentience, of righteous opposition" (56). Benjy offers a similar "sonic registration" on Easter Sunday,[11] when he begins to wail "again, hopeless and prolonged," a description that gives uncharacteristic humanity to Benjy's bellowing (*SF* 288). The narrator follows by speculating that "it might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant" (288), an analysis that doubles as the Southern Negro's lament under the oppressive Jim Crow climate. While Bond appears only for a moment at the end of *Absalom! Absalom!*, Benjy's grief is illustrated throughout *The Sound and the Fury*, and especially during its first and most memorable chapter, wherein Faulkner offers a stark and pitiful account of symbolic male "Negro" life, placing the neglected youth deep into a world outside his faded but pretentious white family.

Ultimately Benjy's case exposes the unsettling truth that in the South anybody that deviated from the norm could be treated as black, regardless of the appearance or "blood" of that body—and that the treatment of "blacks" was so abhorrent in part because it was so arbitrary. Joe, Charles, Jim, Popeye, Lee, Ike, even Quentin—the existence

of these "black white men" speaks to the ruthless application of the one-drop rule. In Faulkner's fiction and his South, virtually anyone who muddied the color line (i.e., suspected or discovered as neither expressly white nor black) comes to a bad end, whether by hanging, lynching, suicide, castration, isolation, or dissolution. In their liminality these characters serve as evidence for two uncomfortable truths, neither of which could be allowed to stand: the prevalence of miscegenation, even among seemingly "pure" whites, and its corollary, that black and white people were not categorically different, but rather kindred versions of the same humanity.

Both the Compsons and the South at-large believed themselves "afflicted with a curse and guilty of some unspecified crime, for which [they] must be made to suffer eternally" (Jenkins 145). Rather than leaving this "unspecified crime" nameless, Benjy's embodied blackness places the curse on their very doorstep. *The Sound and the Fury* serves as testament that the sin of the Jim Crow South is not only the ancient horrors of slavery but also the continuing, abhorrent treatment of blacks, who "are seen shedding tears when the whites see no reason for doing so" (Jenkins 142). In this way the novel serves as an elaborate dirge for the miserable figure of Benjy Compson, whose name, freedom, and speech are forfeit to an innocent condition; whose manhood is taken on the false pretext of sexual assault; and who is filled with "eyeless, tongueless" agony after a wrong turn at the Confederate monument (*SF* 320).

I would like to dedicate this article to the late Dr. David Vanderwerken, my mentor and a devoted Faulkner scholar who believed my seminar paper would one day be published.

Notes

1. For a representative sample, see Ted Roggenbuck, "'The Way he looked said Hush'"; Patrick S. J. Samway and Gentry Silver, "In *The Sound and the Fury*, Benjy Compson Most Likely Suffers from Autism"; and Sara McLaughlin, "Faulkner's Faux Pas: Referring to Benjamin Compson as an Idiot," among others.

2. I use the term "Negro" throughout this essay, as it was common to the speech and thought of white Southerners during the time Faulkner wrote.

3. Jay Watson brings up a similar idea (though in a very different context) in "Genealogies of White Deviance: The Eugenic Family Studies, Buck and Bell, and William Faulkner, 1926-1931," in *Faulkner and Whiteness*, edited by Jay Watson (UP of Mississippi, 2011), pp. 19-55.

4. "Bluegum" is slang for an African American, especially one with very dark skin or who has a bluish hue to his gums.

5. Hagood writes that this rechristening "is something that in this novel happens to black people" ("The Secret Machinery" 93), and that "his being placed among African Americans, mak[es] him 'less' white, perhaps even nonwhite" (*Faulkner, Writer* 92).

6. The reference to the "pointer" dog, which was developed to assist hunters in finding and retrieving game, metaphorically links Benjy with the animal.

7. Faulkner describes the travelling black preacher Shegog as having a "wizened face like a small, aged monkey" (293); the congregation listens to his voice "as they would have to a monkey talking" (293).

8. Indeed, even the Appendix refers to Benjy not as "castrated" but "gelded," terminology for an operation performed on animals.

9. It is noteworthy, as well, that the supposedly witless and mechanical Benjy perceives her reluctance to undress.

10. As an adulterating presence who can neither be embraced nor erased, Benjy further serves as a "black mark" upon Mrs. Compson's false pride regarding a mythical Bascomb purity.

11. As Hagood asserts, "The fact that Benjy crosses over into African American spaces on Easter Sunday testifies to the fact that he 'belongs' in the marginal space of the other" ("The Secret Machinery" 93).

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Woven Between the Lines: The Short Fiction of Elliott White Springs

Christopher Bundrick

There are really quite a few reasons you should have heard of Elliott White Springs. Enlisting immediately after graduating from Princeton, Springs trained with the Royal Flying Corps and saw considerable action in France. He returned to the U.S. in 1919, the fifth highest ranking American Ace, with eleven confirmed victories, a Distinguished Service Cross, and a Distinguished Flying Cross. Deeply shaken by his experience at the front, Springs lingered in New York where he mostly lived the life one would expect of a wealthy young man who hadn't expected to survive. Springs would occasionally return to South Carolina, but before long the dullness of mill town life as well as constant conflict with his father usually drove him back to the city. Along the way, Springs spent much of the second half of the 1920s transforming himself into a successful writer. He began publishing short stories about WWI in magazines such as *McClure's*, *U.S. Air Service*, and *Liberty*. His largest, and most serious literary breakthrough came with his 1926 novel, *War Birds*, a wildly popular book that some critics still consider the quintessential treatment of WWI aviation. Furthermore, in 1973 Richard Dillon argued that *War Birds* was a major source of William Faulkner's sense of the "connection between the tales of combat flyers and the legends of the American South," going so far as to claim that "Springs's *vita* reads a little like John Sartoris's" (629). Discussing Springs's 1928 novel *Leave Me with a Smile*, Dillon highlights the similarity between Faulkner's and Springs's emphasis on the inescapable memory of "a single traumatic aerial combat" (634). "In both cases," he writes, "the memories haunt the protagonist asleep and awake [. . .] Springs's pilot remembers the time his flight was slaughtered by a superior number of German Fokkers, and in Faulkner's novel Bayard, can't forget his twin brother John falling to his death after being shot down by a Fokker" (634-5). Air combat—and the cavalier myth it invoked—was obviously important to both men, but their correspondence doesn't end there.

The biographical parallels between Faulkner and Spring are striking as well. Like Faulkner's paternal grandfather, Springs's father was an industrialist and leading man of the community. Also, like William Clark Falkner, Leroy Springs was shot by a disgruntled business as-

sociate looking for revenge.[1] As was the case with William Faulkner, who the people of Oxford, Mississippi sometimes called "Count No-Count," Elliott White Springs suffered from a reputation for being a ne'er-do-well. Even once Springs began to achieve a measure of literary success, his father was annoyed by what he saw as Elliott's lurid and overly autobiographical writing. Like William Faulkner, Elliott White Springs worked hard to fashion himself into a southern man of letters (albeit one who mostly eschewed bucolic leisure) and they both did so by invoking nineteenth-century literary traditions—the romance for Faulkner and frontier humor for Springs—reframed through a twentieth-century lens.[2] Yet, where the backward glance might define Allen Tate's twentieth-century southerner, Elliott White Springs didn't seem to offer as much as a sidelong look.[3] In fact, much of Springs's work is only obliquely about the South at all. His approach, as the two stories this essay examines will demonstrate, is mostly to adapt the humorous techniques we see in Southwestern Humor to twentieth-century, metropolitan, and international settings.

"Perils of Paris"

Originally published in *Liberty* in 1929, the story begins in classic frame narrative style. Carol Banks and an unnamed frame narrator are "splitting a big bottle of ale in a little speakeasy on Forty-ninth Street on night" when two men and two women arrive (84). One of the men flinches when he notices Banks and calls out loudly, "'I'd like you to meet my wife. This is my wife with me'" (84). The narrator notes that "'He was awfully proud of his wife,'" signaling that the man's emphasis that he *is* with his wife is the detail that inspires a frame narrative. The first temptation is to read "Perils" as a fairly simple comedy, aimed at generating rude humor by recounting the bawdy adventures of two fliers in wartime Paris. With its male, prank-oriented plot, the story fits very nicely within standard readings of Southwestern Humor frame narrative tradition. Kenneth Lynn's 1960 reading of the genre, which argued that Southwestern Humorists "found that the frame was a convenient way of keeping their first-person narrators outside and above the comic action, thereby drawing a *cordon sanitaire*, so to speak, between the morally irreproachable Gentleman and the tainted life he described," established the chief approach to Southwestern Humor that many critics used for decades (64). But Southwestern Humor has proven to be more subtle than Lynn's reading suggested. More recent critics have adopted complex approaches to frame narratives in southern literature. Scott Romine, for example, argues that Southwest

Humor has a built-in element of resistance to traditional class hierarchies in that, "the very nature of the horse swap and its equivalents [. . .] throughout the genre revolves around the ability to both interpret completely and to objectify oneself so as to deny this ability to others" (45). But even Lynn's contemporaries challenged his approach; Jesse Bier's *Rise and Fall of American Humor* (1968) argues instead that, "the stronger the fences such writers build about themselves, the stronger the urge to be utterly free" (55). Additionally, since the frame narrator in the case of "Perils of Paris" has brought his story from a cultured wartime Paris to the high-toned Park Slope neighborhood of New York City, Lynn-style readings based on the *sanitare* must give way to something more complex.

With a title that evokes both *The Perils of Pauline* and the Judgment of Paris, "The Perils of Paris" blends a range of literary and cultural forms. Springs generates a frame narrative structure through which Carol Banks can create a sense of distance for his war story. Layered beneath that is a genre-driven intertextual frame that has echoes of classical mythology and a pop culture franchise that make it impossible only to think of the framed figures as uncivilized buffoons. In other words, a complete close reading of the text compels readers to approach the story from different perspectives, none of which fully resolve into meaning without a basic appreciation of their relationship to the others. That Springs's story might invoke classical mythology and yet also allude to lowbrow texts shouldn't come as much of a surprise. Although Princeton-educated, Spring was born in nineteenth-century South Carolina and it seems unlikely that a young man who showed an interest in things literary as well as demonstrated a remarkable (if somewhat off-color) raconteur instinct wouldn't have encountered and appreciated the work of writers such as Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Joel Chandler Harris, or Mark Twain.[4] It's equally unlikely that he wouldn't be aware of *The Perils of Pauline*, whose twenty-episode serial in 1914 was one of the most popular films of its day. In fact, according to Ben Singer, *Perils of Pauline* expressed more concern for narrative than it might at first seem, and serialization, as well as the film's Sunday newspaper supplements, was a way for the silent films both to escape Vaudevillian spectacle and capitalize on "modes of narrative continuity, cohesion and characterization derived from literature and drama," something that seems very interesting to Springs as well (489). But if we approach Southwestern Humor frame narratives and silent film from a certain perspective, the argument might be that there is a degree of aesthetic and cultural overlap that makes it relatively easy to imagine both of these as sources of inspiration for the Springs narrative. Ultimately, a more interesting way to read "The Perils of Paris," then,

might be as a translative intertext of The Judgment of Paris, which asks readers to juxtapose a lasting, high-culture work of Classical Greek mythology with aspects of the movie reel and pulp magazine themes the story explores.

The inner narrator of "Perils of Paris" has an easy, well-heeled manner that goes with his highly referential style of expression. His nearly constant allusion to early twentieth-century popular culture, classical literature, Bible stories, and the landmarks of high society on both sides of the Atlantic mark him as an urban sophisticate. The framed narrative begins years earlier in World War I, when Hap Willis, Banks's good friend, brings news of a mission that will put the men in a position to sneak away to Paris for some unauthorized R&R. Banks isn't sure, but Willis convinces him, saying, "I wanna trip the light fantastic on the primrose path that passeth all understanding just once more before this corruptible shall have put on incorruption" (87). In *Honor and Slavery* Kenneth Greenberg explains this sort of inventive bluster as it manifests in the Old South when he writes:

> Many cultures concerned with honor value appearance highly. Their members project themselves through how they look and what they say. They are treated honorably when their projections are respected and accepted as true. The central issue of concern to men in such a culture is not the nature of some underlying reality but the acceptance of their projections. (7)

Banks has an obvious predilection for overly dramatic rhetorical flourishes (which sound interestingly similar to the ad copy that Springs would produce for Springmaid in years to come), but the banter of this scene serves to convey the intimate friendship between two men who have surprised themselves by surviving what was, by all accounts, a terrible fight, and who celebrate that by adopting a cynical linguistic swagger. It isn't hard to think of this performance as a way for the young fliers to satisfy a nearly constant need to reaffirm their courage—something that Springs usually downplayed, but which he revealed in a letter to his stepmother, writing, "I don't know which is going to get me first, a bullet or nervous strain. Playing bait is the most desperate game in the world and unless properly played is the most deadly. That's all I've been doing for the past two weeks and it's beginning to tell" (Vaughan 204). At the same time, Willis is clearly aiming to amuse.

The two men obviously relish their sport and they play it with a deft hand, making it clear that gestures toward recognizing their shared circumstance are a much more important part of the dialogue than its content—or, as Greenberg might put it, "wearing a mask was no shame

for a man of honor; the horror was to be unmasked—to be publicly shamed" (25). It didn't matter if all the flyers knew that everyone was scared, so long as no one explicitly recognized the mask that each of them used to hide the fear. Banks goes on, "Do I have to face West Point or point West? [. . .] Do we have to do a Major Brown or a twinkle-twinkle-little-gold-star?" (85). Shifting from singular "I" to a plural "we" reinforces the way this banter expresses and reaffirms the sense of a shared experience that joins the two. Banks's performance transforms what could seem like meaningless chit-chat into a ritualized gesture of cavalier indifference in solidarity with his friend.

As it turns out, however, Willis's news isn't so bad. He and Banks have been ordered to pick up two replacement planes from Orly, an errand that he believes will allow them to claim bad weather and enjoy a few days in Paris. Banks is not so sure. The US Marines are in charge there and, as he reminds his friend, "[t]hey saved Paris from the Huns so now they want to keep it for themselves" (86). Willis argues vigorously, and readers might sense that when Banks decides to go along, it's less because he's convinced that it will work out and more that he's curious to see just how much trouble they'll find. Once in Paris, it very quickly seems that Banks was right to be wary of the city. It's not the marines with whom they run afoul, however; it's a woman.

Heading to Ciro's on their first night, the pair of flyers can't find a taxi. They find, instead, a chauffeur waiting by a car and try to persuade him that he can drive them to the restaurant and get back (ten francs richer) before his employer misses him. The negotiation changes tone quite a lot, however, when, Yvette, a beautiful Parisian woman, arrives to reclaim her car. The aviators immediate forget about Ciro's and focus entirely on charming her. The trio end up sharing a bottle of champagne in Yvette's apartment and over drinks she tells her suitors that she's very fond of Americans. The car, she explains—maybe offering a not-so-subtle hint—was a gift from an American Army colonel who, she recounts tearfully, has be ordered to the front. They drink several toasts and Banks reflects "with pleasure that the Hun marksmanship was getting better every day" (88). Banks and Willis convince Yvette that rather than brood over her lost colonel she should join them for dinner and a show. The group sets out for *La Becasse* and the only problem, of course, is that three's a crowd. The two men agree that all is fair in love and war, and after the theater Willis, using his superior French, explains to Yvette that his friend is tired and preferred to go to bed. Outmaneuvered, Banks returns to their room and sulks.

While the young flyers' competition for the woman's affection seems to be the main plot, the title's allusion to *Perils of Pauline* reminds us to think about Yvette's place in the narrative. In the films Pauline is a

young woman waiting for her majority in order to take possession of the large inheritance her rich uncle has left her. Her foster brother, Henry, is pressing her to marry him and, at the same time, Mr. Koerne, her late uncle's secretary, is trying to arrange for her death so that he can keep the money for himself. Dark as this seems, *Pauline* keeps a relatively light tone, narrating the young woman's adventures in madcap, melodramatic style that focuses on the slapstick rather than the violence of the action. Nevertheless, this is a story that pits a young woman's attempts to achieve independence against the desires (fiduciary and sexual) of at least two men. Similarly, "Perils of Paris," while focused on Hap's narrative of his pursuit, has embedded in it an interesting parallel in which a young woman works to negotiate her own independence within a complex network of male desire and violence.

The tale, at this point, seems to be following a familiar plot—two young men participate in a vaguely buffoonish competition for the affection of the lady—and to some degree it is. But the story signals an interesting twist on that plot when before long a crestfallen Willis returns, explaining that when he and Yvette returned to her apartment, they found a none-too-happy American colonel waiting there. "'It just goes to show,'" a philosophical Hap remarks, with an admirable jumble of mixed cliché, "'that you can't count your chickens without crossing the road until you come to it'" (90). Yvette makes up an excuse, but the colonel is suspicious and makes sure to take Willis away with him when he goes. On the way out, however, Hap manages to make whispered arrangements to meet Yvette at Ciro's the next night. Banks responds, "think again Don Juan. You may be big and strong but you haven't kicked in with any petrol yet and this is still Paris and not Grimm's Fairy Tales" (91). Maybe he still resents being excluded from the trio early, but Banks's comments here demonstrate a clear sense of what is really most important to Yvette.

At the same time, the story has started to look a little bit like a fairy tale and the title seems to invite us to see a certain similarity between "Perils of Paris" and The Judgment of Paris—in which a shepherd must decide who among three goddesses is the most beautiful. Angry after being turned away from Peleus and Thetis's wedding ceremony, Eris (the goddess of discord) tosses a golden apple inscribed "For the Fairest" into the banquet hall. Zeus shrewdly—and perhaps more than a little bit irresponsibly—refuses to rule on the question, sending the goddesses who claim the title instead to Paris of Troy. Each of the three goddesses offers the young man a boon, hoping the gift will entice him to choose them. Hera offers political power, while Athena promises victory in war, and Aphrodite tempts him with the fairest woman in the world as his wife. As we know, Paris selects Aphrodite, who helps him

elope with Helen. Most often we frame this story around its role as the event that precipitates the Trojan War. Yet, there are perspectives that might allow us to see this story in more complicated ways. For instance, where Bulfinch approaches the tale as a story of the time "Minerva [. . .] did a very foolish thing," (211) Edith Hamilton's handling of the story focuses on Eris's fury at being the only god excluded from the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (211). Bulfinch understands the story as a warning against vanity, while Edith Hamilton sees a more complex caution about the danger of trying to defeat rather than cope with discord (179). "Perils of Paris," however, offers us an inverted version of this myth in which a young woman must choose between three men and the potential advantages they represent. The American colonel brings with him the definite promise of material comforts; he can supply Yvette with petrol and other wartime luxuries. His absence while he's at the front threatens her relationship with him, but at the same time it offers her the chance to cultivate more (and possibly more beneficial) connections with men like Hap Willis and Carol Banks. With wartime Paris as a backdrop, the three men work to undermine each other. Making this a story about a single woman choosing between three men (rather than the man choosing among women as in Judgement of Paris), Springs emphasizes Yvette's vulnerability, but also allows us to see her as combining Bulfinch's and Hamilton's strategies—trying to get what she needs by embracing a certain amount of discord in order to capitalize on the foolish men's vanity.

Willis and Banks engage in open (and somewhat convivial) rivalry. In fact, their attempts to outwit each other almost seem to suggest a sort of delight that ennobles seduction beyond the machinations of simple lust. When Willis returns after his run-in with the colonel, for instance, Banks acts out the sort of anger one might expect, but Willis playfully responds, "Oh boy! Her lips burn like phosphorus. 'Oh grave where is thy victory! Death, where is thy sting?" (91). This is a continuation of the mock-heroic wordplay in which the pair have engaged throughout the story, but while quoting an otherwise humorously apt passage from Corinthians, Willis invokes a moment where the Apostle Paul celebrates the victory of salvation over death, which reminds us of the other, much more dire contest in which these young men are engaged (according to one source, the life expectancy of allied pilots in the early part of WWI was 40-60 flying hours) (USAS). In recognition of military hierarchy, however, the two flyers must present a more subtle form of opposition to the colonel. Like many of the other tricksters from the Southwestern Humor tradition, the young men recognize that there are limits to their ability to openly challenge his authority, so rather than the affectionately open game Willis and Banks play

with each other, they must work to subtly slip around the colonel, undermining his hold on Yvette by capitalizing on his absence and playing along with her excuses rather than directly confronting his authority when they're caught.[5] Where the colonel simply and openly exerts his will, the lower-ranking aviators must (much as they did with the technologically superior German Fokkers in the skies above France) do their best to outmaneuver him—dodging and circling with a fascinating mix of superficial deference to rank, respect for friendship, and shameless self-interest.

After Willis's dirty trick on the first day, Banks manages to distract his friend (with several Bronx cocktails) and takes his place with Yvette at Ciro's.[6] The young woman seems happy enough with the substitution and the two of them go in to a dinner that is only slightly disturbed by the sounds of what they're later told are the MPs arresting a drunken pilot at the door. After dinner they return to her apartment, but as "Cleopatra's barge had just raised sail," the lovers hear a key in the lock and, once again, in walks the Colonel (92). Furious at finding another man there again, the colonel completely loses his temper. "'You damn little liar!'" he shouts at Yvette, "'I might have known you'd go out and get one of them as soon as I left town. Last night was bad enough, but I came back down again, ready to forgive you and didn't want to be unreasonable. Now look at you, you ungrateful little cheater, you ten-franc wench, you—'" Banks interrupts to defend the lady, but the colonel goes on, "'She's nothing but a damn little—'" and before he can finish the flyer punches him in the eye, knocking him out cold (94, 95). Bending over to check the downed man, Banks hears a scream and looks up just in time to see Yvette smashing a vase down on his head. He wakes up in the hospital where a doctor tells him that he'd been hit by a taxi on the Champs Elysees and brought in by a considerate colonel who just happened to see the accident. Bruised and stitched, Banks makes his way back to Orly, where an equally disheveled Willis reports that he'd spent a couple days in the brig and, when no one answered the door at Yvette's apartment, he returned to the barracks. Exhausted and beaten, they retreat to the front.

Returning to the post-war speakeasy, the frame narrator laughs at the conclusion to Banks's war story and adds his own punch line, remarking, "That sure was a funny reunion [...] but I thought your friend Willis wouldn't cross the Mason-Dixon Line" (96). Banks, however, returns to the strangeness of their initial encounter with the stranger and his wife. "'That wasn't Hap,'" he says, "'That was Colonel Horatio Calthrope, D.S.M. and Legion d'Honneur'" (97). An elegant revival of some of the more interesting features of Southwestern Humor, "Perils of Paris" starts with an amusing tale of two young men whose exploits

gently undermine traditional military hierarchy and reimagines their adventures in ways that might foreshadow similar approaches Springs would go on to adopt in the areas of business and advertising.

"Twins"

Originally published as "Ulysses" in a 1926 issue of *U.S. Air* Service magazine, "Twins" is also a frame narrative, but Springs complicates the approach with a double frame. The unnamed external narrator erects a border outside the frame narrative presented by his somewhat ribald friend Joe Gish. Reading a newspaper report about a man who is divorcing his second wife to remarry his first, the narrator remarks to Gish, "I've known plenty of men who couldn't resist making a pass at any strange geranium, but that fellow wasn't even looking at the green grass in the next pasture" (34). The exchange of witty dialogue establishes both narrators as the urbane sophisticates whose traditional role in the narrative is to mock the rube who's gotten himself into a very unlikely fix—proving, according to Joe Gish, that when husbands stray they do so with women so much like their wives that they "could wear her clothes" (34).

The set up here is interesting enough that it deserves extra attention. Without explicitly saying so, the opening paragraphs suggest that Gish and the unnamed narrator are men at leisure, occupying themselves by discussing rumors from the society pages and using the occasion as an excuse to swap tales. There is no explicit description of the setting, but the comfortable way they settle into the story suggests an oak-paneled club, or a smoking room, perhaps—a place where Gish can be relatively certain that his bawdy story might be received in the humorously cautionary spirit in which he offers it. If the frame, as Lynn argues, serves as a *cordone sanitare*, the parties being kept apart in this case are the experienced men-of-the-world represented by Gish and his friend, and less sophisticated types who might otherwise "misunderstand" and take the story too seriously. As with traditional Southwestern Humor, however, this narrative responds to more than one reading strategy. It would be easy, for example, to approach "Twins" as an example of the double standards endemic to misogynistic ideology that encourage men to bring a sense of sexual entitlement to marriage—because that's what it is. But at the same time, the story also allows for a more subtle reading in which the men, who ostensibly have complete mastery over the landscape of 1920s marriage, are left befuddled by a wife's inventive strategy for limiting her husband's sexual independence.

The inner narrative begins with Gish reacting to the newspaper story "in disgust," but the cause of that disgust is unclear (34). Given the introductory frame, readers can guess right away what George Crowell's problem is going to be, but Gish retells his story not for its plot value, but to illustrate in an interestingly unexpected way the argument that men want the same thing. "George certainly was courting disaster when he married one of the Holt twins," he begins with a groan-worthy pun (35). At the same time, his failure to mention precisely which twin nicely foreshadows the exact nature of the problem George is soon to face.

The twins' mother was anxious to get them married, Gish explains, but this was a problem because, although they were both very attractive, their propensity to do everything together stymied potential suitors by making it impossible "to work up any sentiment about either one of them" (35). Repurposing an argument Marx first made about the interchangeability of workers in capitalist systems, Sarah J. Gervais offers us a way to understand this situation in the framework of an ideologically imposed gender hierarchy when she argues that "Fungibility is one indicator of objectification" (499). Gervais's approach suggests that being unable able to tell women apart might be the ultimate consequence of a culture that doesn't see women as individuals so much as socially-constructed types designed to occupy certain, limited roles. And while the twins might be a special case, the narrative comes close to explicitly admitting a disturbing truth—that the men of this world aren't capable or willing to think about women as individual human beings.

At the same time, if the two Holts are aware of their mother's difficulty, they don't seem very concerned about it. They sabotage all her attempts to make them more conspicuously individualized, cutting their hair the same way and dressing freely from each other's closets. The uncanny doubling these two women perform might be unnerving in a different kind of narrative, but Gish is largely unconcerned about the pair's refusal to adopt distinct identities. He's so casual about it, in fact, that he doesn't even offer the most superficial attempt to explain their motives for behaving so. It could be that since the identical twins are necessary for the punch line at the end of the story, Gish must act like their behavior is completely normal. Explaining it, even slightly, might remind the reader how fantastical this situation really is and lead us to unsuspend our disbelief.[7] And at the heart of this narrative is certainly a fantasy of sorts, something Gish gently makes obvious when he points out that at the announcement of George's engagement "the remarks that were made [...] would make Earl Carroll blush" (35).[8] After George and Mary are married the fantasy becomes all the more explicit when

Elizabeth—still unwilling to be separated from her sister—spends so much time at George and Mary's house that she "practically became a permanent resident" (36).

Gish's story reaches its inevitable crisis a few years after the marriage when George, who still can't tell the sisters apart, develops a powerful "yen" for Elizabeth, his sister-in-law (36). The cause for this, Gish claims, perhaps hinting indirectly at Freud's ideas about the uncanny, is "the innate perversity of human nature," suggesting that George, as he puts it more directly later, simply "goes haywire" (36). The difficulty being sure which woman is which still plagues George Crowell, but it seems that there are reliable ways to tell them apart. Mary, for instance, is nonplussed when her husband enters the room while she's dressing, but if George walks in on Elizabeth, "she'd get fussed and stammer," something the narrator tells us "gave George a kick" (37).

Much of the story seems to be about exploring the mystery of George's preference for a woman who is identical to his wife, but this episode in the dressing room makes a couple of things clear. First, Elizabeth and Mary are not, in fact, identical—only their appearance is similar—and second, George's pleasure at Elizabeth's discomfort is what makes him think he's attracted to her. Back in the narrative frame, Gish drolly explains the facts of married life, saying, "[a] man considers his honeymoon ended when he finds he is accustomed to having a wife, and his marriage is over when he finds out she is accustomed to having a husband" (37). Happily embracing a wide range of sexisms, Gish offers a reasonably complete explanation for George's otherwise entirely incomprehensible willingness to pursue a desire for Elizabeth. We might understand George as responding to two powerful and overlapping motives that run parallel to Laura Mulvey's argument in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in that George needs to alienate both women by "subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" at the same time that he clearly organizes his supposed preference for Elizabeth around the idea that pairing with her will somehow better complete him (Mulvey 17).

Gish's story clearly illustrates George's desire for visual mastery; he wants the power of his gaze to be enough to organize the two women into their proper categories— in this case an eligible, socially-acceptable sex partner and excitingly transgressive sex partner. At the same time, he needs the recipient of that gaze to respond in a way that acknowledges its power. Mary, having grown accustomed to George's presence in her life, no longer quivers at his touch, but while kissing both sisters goodbye before a business trip he "thought that Elizabeth trembled a little" (37). George can't seem to be satisfied by a fully formed wife, but rather seems to crave the unnaturally eternal new-

lywed that Elizabeth represents—a woman who, even after essentially living with him for years, is still nervous about his look as well as his touch. It could also be that Gish is simply joking about male vanity, and expects the other narrator (as well as the reader) to understand that George Crowell is selfishly inventing all these signs, or at least misreading Elizabeth's reactions to his behavior. But even if that is the case, George's response to his sister-in-law's behavior is problematic at best. In fact, it should probably make us wonder just how accidental are his blunderings into the dressing room and threaten to transform the character Gish presents as ostensibly light-hearted and buffoonish into something more dangerous and predatory. Eventually George begins to search for ways to get Elizabeth alone. But besides the usual threats this kind of assignation represents, it's strange that he's incapable of imagining that, even if Elizabeth does reciprocate, she too would eventually become "accustomed to having a husband" (37). Nonetheless, when Mary leaves them alone while she goes to a League of Women Voters meeting, George pushes ahead with his plans.

Once the opportunity materializes, George confronts his sister-in-law right away. He glimpses "a figure in dishabille in Elizabeth's room," who yells at him to stay out, but "[t]hat was what he wanted to hear and barged on in" (39). He tells her he loves her and can't live without her, but Elizabeth, "regard[ing] him coolly" points out, "And yet you can't tell us apart" (39). George's reply is a masterpiece of delusion, "Oh, yes, I can, or I wouldn't be so much in love with you" (39). George insists that he couldn't be confused about which sister was which, but Elizabeth shocks him (as well as the reader) when she tells him, "Oh yes, you could [...] and I'll tell why I know it. This won't be the first time" (40). Then, after swearing him to secrecy, "she kissed him mischievously," but the suggestion is clearly that things didn't stop at kissing.

What Joe Gish's narrative doesn't emphasize about this part of the story is that it is the moment when Elizabeth takes control of the situation, putting George at a two-fold disadvantage. Obviously, her claim makes it impossible for him to continue arguing that he can tell one sister from another, and more importantly, it intimates that he hasn't always been the one in control of his partnering, robbing George of his sexual authority. Even though he's gotten what he thought would make his life complete, George's life takes on a strange, almost fairy-tale quality.[9] The secret encounter seems, for George, to be just as wracking as his longing had been. The secret becomes a burden that shatters George's ability to make sense of his life. For George, signified and signifier have completely broken down; not only can he not tell which sister is which, he can't even fully understand the role each one

is playing in this strange love triangle that seems to have made his life so unbearable.

George finally cracks and confronts Elizabeth about their arrangement, but she acts like she has no idea what he means. "Tell me what happened," she asks, and once George has reviewed the details of their assignation, Elizabeth explains that Mary didn't want to go to "any darn league jabber," so she switched places with Elizabeth. When George thought he was finally telling Elizabeth about his forbidden desire, he was, in fact, confessing it to his wife. Mary, however, loathe to admit her deception, played along, swearing George to secrecy in order to keep her own secret and, one assumes, to limit future adultery with "Elizabeth" (42). "'My God,' George cries as the truth sinks in, 'then it's Mary I've been in love with all the time'" (43). Ignoring the staggering confusion of fallacies required to reach this conclusion, he resolves to come clean and explain everything, but Elizabeth stops him, insisting that the better play is to leave the secret untold and allow Mary to believe that her ploy has succeeded. Elizabeth says that she will move out and then George will no longer be confused about the identity of the woman in his arms. Gish goes on to explain that once Elizabeth moves out everything is great. Mary "got all the affection that George had been saving for Elizabeth, and this time George was sincere" (43). In the end, however, the twin bond proves too strong and Elizabeth moves back. George's situation is worse than before. Now not only can he not tell the sisters apart, neither can he tell when one is deliberately pretending to be the other. Gish rejects George's discomfort, saying to him to "Cheer up [...] Think of the fix you'd be in if they were triplets instead of twins" (44). Remembering that the tale was occasioned by Gish's pronouncement that the "innate perversity of human nature is beyond my humble power of comprehension," readers are, no doubt, drawn to a sense of this story in which George is the humorous and slightly risqué example of perverse human nature and the mess of his domestic situation is simply comeuppance for his out-of-bounds desire, but it is also a story about the way the sisters use their situation to their advantage—recognizing that the absence of individual identify can also mean an absence of personal responsibility (34).

In this case the story's connection to the Southwest Humor tradition is plain. We have male narrators (in an ostensibly male space) trading stories about sexual misbehavior that they consider harmless enough to be humorous, but significant enough to point out certain foibles of human nature. The story is supposedly edifying, but not to the point of compromising its generally humorous demeanor. At the same time, "Twins" invokes some of the more subtle features of Southwestern Humor by generating enough ambivalence that it's hard to judge ex-

actly which of the narrators is in charge of the tale and who is the butt of the joke. While Gish and the other unnamed narrator are the closest to the readers, their happy acceptance of George's behavior makes it hard for us to fully trust their sense of things.

George is complicit in his misfortune, but Mary and Elizabeth manage to speak through the frame. Resisting the masculine assumption of authorial (and marital) control, they make it impossible for George to know which of them is which and rescript events *sub-rosa*. Pretending to be each other when there is advantage in it and then urging George to maintain the fiction of his one night stand with Elizabeth, the women refuse to be framed by the narrative structures. Gish's final comment admits as much. Within the male homosocial frame, the conclusion that George's life would be harder if the twins were triplets is something we could understand as a vaguely chauvinist swipe jab, suggesting that more women always means more trouble. But given the degree of control Mary and Elizabeth have exerted over the tale, it seems equally reasonable to see Gish's last remark as (perhaps subconscious) recognition that, despite the culturally assumed authority of their positions, neither George nor Gish can maintain the fiction of their authority in the face of the women's challenges to the frames that maintain it.

Springs essentially stopped writing fiction when his father's death in 1931 finally forced him to take over the family business. He did, however, continue to think about the complex relationships that frame region and gender. The best—and best known—example of this might be the notorious advertising campaign he launched to promote his Springmaid line of fabrics. Springs had already demonstrated complete mastery of the frame narrative in fiction and simply followed a similar strategy in his approach to advertising. The $14 million Grace Bleachery Springs completed in 1948, for instance, allowed him to control every aspect of production and distribution from spinning, weaving, and coloring, all the way to marketing the finished and folded sheets. In other words, Springs expanded the company in precisely the way that would allow him to circumvent the northern finishing plants that once "framed" his product and, at the same time, put him in direct communication with the retail customer.

One ad for women's undergarments features an impossibly buxom young woman, whose skirt has only a passing acquaintance with the laws of gravity, being menaced by a goose, but Springs winks at his knowing readers in the text accompanying the images, which advises women, "Whether you are on Capitol Hill for business or pleasure bent, you need not eat off the mantle if you have your foundations covered" (Davis 177). Another (and probably the most infamous) of

the Springmaid ads includes a Native American couple in what clearly seems to be post-coital bliss on a Springmaid sheet—which cost about a dollar at the time—accompanied by the caption, "A buck well spent on a Springmaid sheet" (Davis 177). Acting the part of the provincial wag, he used the Springmaid ad campaign to deliver his risqué message directly to a public who were, as it turns out, ready to laugh at the outrage the ads provoked.

The same way Southwestern Humor frame narratives worked to undermine the social hierarchies that they, on the surface, seemed to uphold, Springs casts traditional advertising strategies as the starched-shirt dandy—out of place in the frontier that was mid-twentieth-century consumer culture. The discomfiture of magazines like the *Woman's Home Companion* or *Advertising Age* became a joke shared between the wily southern raconteur and American consumers who, after the lean years of the Depression and World War II, were ready for a bit of colorful excess. We would, however, underestimate the ambition that drove Springs to these lengths if we mistook this iconoclastic approach for a cynical marketing ploy. We don't even have to look that closely at the strategies he employed, as both writer and captain of industry, to see evidence of an organized and integrated approach, carried out over a period of decades, aimed at rewriting the regional-industrial narratives that had until then mapped the intersection of twentieth-century American culture and capitalism.

Notes

1. The family name was spelled without a "u" until William Faulkner. Theories abound about the reason for the change in spelling.

2. An important difference between the two, however, is that Springs, unlike Faulkner, adopted a credibly modest posture when discussing his own work. Although he claimed to have sold a story for "the highest price that had ever been paid for a short story up to that time" (Clothes i), he also declined the offer of an honorary doctorate, writing, "My scribblings had no literary merit. I still have no illusions about that" (Davis 121).

3. In his 1945 essay, "The New Provincialism," Allen Tate famously claimed, "With the war of 1914-1918, the South re-entered the world—but gave a backward glance as it stepped over the border: that backward glance gave us the Southern renascence, a literature conscious of the past in the present" (545).

4. Springs, the scion of a powerful family whose wealth emerged from nineteenth-century cotton markets, occupied a social position not unlike those that characterize the traditional Southwestern Humor frame narrators. At

the same time, his southern background also threatened to force him into the framed, subaltern role while in New York high society.

5. The character from Southwestern Humor this story might best recollect is Johnson Jones Hooper's 1844 creation, Simon Suggs, but similar examples abound.

6. According to *Mr. Boston*, the classic Bronx Cocktail is 6 parts gin, 3 parts sweet vermouth, 3 parts dry vermouth, and 3 parts orange juice (61).

7. In fact, Walter Blair lists as one of the key aspects of Old Southwestern Humor, "Incongruity between realism—discoverable in the framework wherein the scene and the narrator are realistically portrayed, and fantasy, which enters into the enclosed narrative because the narrator selects details and uses figures of speech, epithets, and verbs which give grotesque coloring" (92).

8. Earl Carroll was a producer and director on Broadway at the time who, according to *A History of American Musical Theatre*, "delighted in testing the boundaries of decency and morality" and was nicknamed "the body merchant" for all the nudity in his shows (Hurwitz 88).

9. The promise of complete silence that Elizabeth has extracted from him is reminiscent of troubling sexual encounters from myth and fairy tales, including, for instance, Eros and Psyche.

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The First of Many Heroines: Claudia's Dialogic Escape in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

Gema Ortega

Fiction is not random and narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created.

--Morrison, *Nobel Lecture*

I. Introduction

Toni Morrison's novels center around assertive female characters who live to tell their stories. This paper revisits the first of these heroines, Claudia McTeer, in the *Bluest Eye*, offering an analysis of Claudia's dialogic development. While Pecola has been the focus of most of the scholarship, Claudia's voice inaugurated in Toni Morrison's work the use of hybridity as a narrative strategy that granted her subsequent heroines the power to subvert the authority of gender and racial master narratives. Yet, hybridity in *The Bluest Eye* is not conceived as an ambivalent or liminal state. I argue that Morrison aligned Claudia's dialogic development with Bakhtinian "inner speech" and the "intentional hybrid."[1] Claudia exemplifies in *The Bluest Eye* the way in which subjects are formed and survive in dialogue. While Pecola internalizes the master narrative and is unable to escape the authoritative word, Claudia's hybrid voice emerges, heroically and despite adversity, through the process of telling her story in tandem with the stories of others in the community. Thus, the dialogic formation of Claudia's self deserves a closer analysis since she provides the answer to "how" Morrison's female characters relativize dominant discourses in order to escape madness, oppression, and objectification (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 6). Claudia's freedom from external, oppressive narratives is the result of an active response that maintains her self in constant transition and dialogue with other subject positions. Yet, Claudia's process

of self-actualization in the novel does not reinforce a triumphant transcendental and essential subject. Instead, as bell hooks asserts, "rather than assuming, 'I think therefore I am,' I like to think I am because the story is" (50). *The Bluest Eye* is the story of Claudia's self-actualization. She is the first in a long line of Morrison's heroines to create herself as the narrative develops, emerging as an empowered character through and because of the process of negotiating others' voices into an independent narrative of self that resists and escapes silencing and victimization.

II. Connecting M.M. Bakhtin with Toni Morrison's Writing

> Language is what makes me be more and more by way of non-being. The more I happen not to be, the more I reach being. (Kristeva 116)

In the 1920s, the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin started the project of deconstructing traditional Western epistemology and its claims to universal knowledge. Namely, Bakhtin's literary theory sought to decenter rationalism, which he refers to as "fatal theoreticism." In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, he states his most explicit disapproval:

> It is an unfortunate misunderstanding to think that truth can only be the truth that is composed of universal moments; that the truth of a situation is precisely that which is repeatable and constant in it . . . whereas individual truth is artistic and irresponsible, i.e. it isolates a given individuality. (27, 37)

Bakhtin challenges structuralism for creating an abstract set of rules, a master narrative, to describe language, not only separated from its individual speakers but also from the time and space in which "language" occurs.[2] Bakhtin also objects to the idea of language divorced from "life," and therefore having no bearing on the ontological dimension of the subject. This version of language, according to Bakhtin, "does not correspond to any real moment in the historical process of becoming" (Volosinov 66). Language and being are intertwined in Bakhtin as elements of an active and creative narrative process that dialogizes multiple voices or worldviews to actualize one's consciousness as multiple, decentralized, and individually negotiated.

Approximately thirty years before Bakhtin wrote his most influential works and well-before they became popular in the U.S of the 60s, W.E.B. DuBois had already described African American consciousness as double—split between an inner self and an external identity imposed by Anglo-American society. In his famous passage included in *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois describes "double-consciousness" as:

> ... always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body . . . The History of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. (8-9)

The differences in time, culture, and historical experience between DuBois and Bakhtin are indeed vast, and it is not within the scope of this paper to compare the works of these two scholars.[3] Yet, what makes Bakhtinian critical framework affine to the African American literary tradition and experience, described by DuBois, is his emphasis on the power of dominant elements in society to shape individual consciousness. Bakhtin's ultimate goal, similarly to DuBois's, was to awaken people's awareness to challenge authority, maintaining an active control on the formation of individual subjectivities. Thus, DuBois's "double consciousness," a strictly social phenomenon, unique of African Americans in the U.S., becomes Bakhtinian "double-voicedness" by incorporating language as the mediator in the "strife" between the external and internal dimensions of all individual identities. Language is for Bakhtin a tool to challenge the transcendental and essentialist subject "invented" by Western rationalism, which was, in turn, used to maintain the authority of master texts about non-Western others. Contemporary literary theorists have welcomed the addition of a linguistic component to the Duboisian socially constructed subject. Namely, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Houston Baker were the first to insist on "the 'double-voicedness' of African American writing" (Peterson 765). Mary O'Connor also focuses on the helpfulness of pairing social and linguistic theories for feminist approaches to construct counter narratives of identity (200). Black women writing, in particular, has been characterized by its composite voice and the prominence given to language as the site to contest power from monologic, single narratives. Hazel Carby describes this sociolinguistic interest in contemporary African American women writers as a struggle over the sign, which becomes the "construct be-

tween socially organized persons in the process of their interaction" (17).

Rooted in both—the African American experience and African American women's writing—Toni Morrison has made it her goal to disrupt authoritative languages. Since the inception of her literary career, she has been a champion of oral traditions and has developed, in the process, narratives with the capacity to subvert and escape the dominance of a single and authorized form of signification. Bakhtinian hybridity thus offers an optimal theoretical framework to analyze Toni Morrison's heroines in the process of actualizing their identity, in language and through language, while maintaining a contestatory dialogue with the multiple discourses that try to essentialize their constant negotiation and change.[4] For the occasion of her Nobel Lecture in 1993, Morrison underscores the urgency to use language creatively in order to "reject, alter and expose" those other "oppressive" languages—sexist, racist, theistic—that "do not permit new knowledge or encourage the mutual exchange of ideas" ("Nobel Lecture" 3). For Morrison, as for Bakhtin, dialogism replaces monologic claims of truth, acknowledging that, since language cannot express the totality of meaning, imagining and validating different forms of identities is not only possible, but absolutely necessary:

> Language can never "pin down" slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn for the arrogance to be able to do so. Its force, its felicity is in its reach toward the ineffable ... Word-work is sublime . . . because it is generative; it makes meaning that secures difference, our human difference—the way in which we are like no other life. (Nobel Lecture 3-4)

For Morrison, those who actively engage in discourse can always negotiate meaning. That is in fact "the fundamental indicator of ethical, legal, and political human beings," in Bakhtinian terms as well (*Dialogic Imagination* 349-350). The "speaking person" grows as she challenges and re-establishes the boundaries of other people's discourses, resulting in a narrative of her identity. Similarly, Toni Morrison believes that storytelling determines subject formation. That is, the stories we tell "create us as they are being created" ("Nobel Lecture" 5).

Thus, the art of storytelling is for Morrison, as for Bakhtin, the medium through which individuals overcome the "strife" to "merge" the gap between themselves and others, attaining the self-consciousness so desired by DuBois.[5] Apropos of her work against the legacy of slavery in the U.S., Toni Morrison states that "the slaveholders have won if this experience is beyond my imagination and my powers . . . so

I have to take it back—in a way that I can tell it. And that is the satisfaction" (Caldwell 245). Accordingly, Morrison creates texts that take control of external definitions of individual identities while consciously negotiating other people's discourses and positions. In slave narratives, the slaves/authors used the signature, "written by himself" or "herself," to both "authorize" and to "authenticate" themselves as human beings for those who doubted it. Explicitly, the authors regain the control of defining their subjectivity through the act of writing, mixing together oral tradition, storytelling, and autobiography (Morrison, "The Site of Memory" 89). These narratives would develop into what Alice Deck calls auto-ethnographies: "intricate interplay of the introspective personal engagement expected of an autobiography and the self-effacement expected of cultural descriptions" (238). The polyphonic and dialogic structure of the accounts avoid "a monolithic observing self in favor of one that narrates from the multiple potions of personal anecdotes, generalized descriptions, and irony" (Deck 238-239).

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is in effect an auto-ethnographic account. Morrison's heroine, Claudia, emerges as an independent, hybrid voice while the story she tells about herself combines the life experience of multiple people in her community. Claudia's identity is not constituted in isolation from the reality of others. As Bakhtin reminds us—discourses of the self are always tied to the interactions with and responses to others. She is "crafted" out of the relationships of power among different languages and the internalization of such discourses into a personal voice that becomes the sign—the language—of her very self. Claudia's hybridity surfaces in the narrative as she intentionally "orchestrates" the voices of the community, transcending monologism and the master text (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 430-431). In order to do that, the "I" of the narrator must be conceived as a self-referential discourse. Yet, Claudia's identity in *The Bluest Eye* is not a metonymy of her self or the community, for her voice is never finished. As the novel itself, it is always in the process of becoming (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 7). Simultaneously, Claudia recognizes other members in the community not as objects of discourse, but as subjects. That is, they can invent their own selves as much as she has invented hers and others in negotiation. Then, the "I" authors itself as it is being authored, exchanging the role of object and subject in a dialogic interaction between independent yet responsive subjectivities.[6] It is only through the on-going process of Claudia's act of authoring that the relationship between subject and object is problematized, opening the possibility of writing herself back against the master text.[7]

III. Claudia's Inner Speech, Pecola's Madness, and the Evil Eye/I

In her "Nobel Lecture," Morrison clearly states that, "the vitality of language lies in its ability to limn the actual, imagined and possible lives of its speakers, readers, writers . . . (3). Morrison's very first heroine, Claudia, does just that. She refuses to accept monologic forms of representation that not only exclude but also objectify others. Claudia does not readily accept any external form of signification. Instead, she deconstructs the master text, much the way the preamble of the novel is distorted, in order to re-make its meaning. In the process, Claudia creates an alternative discourse that validates her own perception of the world against the one externally imposed by the Dick-and-Jane text. This process causes monologic narratives to lose their grip on her subjectivity and Claudia's singular voice appears, as a result, in the form of the novel.

From the beginning of *The Bluest Eye,* Claudia's reality is described in stark opposition to Dick and Jane's. Her house is not as "nice." Hers is "old, cold, and green" (10). Roaches and mice substitute the cat and the dog, and adults "issue orders" without smiling or taking into consideration the children in the house (10). Claudia's environment, presented in contrast to the apparently healthy and moral life in the primer, appears to be detrimental to her wellbeing. To reinforce that first impression, when Claudia comes home after collecting coal to warm the house on a cold winter day, she gets sick and her mother yells at her, "Great Jesus. Get on in that bed. How many times do I have to tell you to wear something on that head? You must be the biggest fool in town" (10). The sickness, which follows the description of her house and her condition, seems indeed the natural consequence of her unwholesome life. The mother's verbal abuse also produces the impression of insensitivity, for she lacks the "motherly" affection and tender care that one would have expected from the "nice" white middle-class mother featured in the preface. However, Morrison's narrative strategy suddenly shifts to reveal an alternative truth, upsetting the dynamics of the comparison between Claudia's reality and the primer of a "healthy" family life. The white middle-class decorum of the Dick-and-Jane story is suddenly challenged by a grotesque realism that focuses on Claudia's body and her sickness:

> I am covered up with heavy quilts and ordered to sweat, which I do promptly. Later I throw up . . . The puke swaddles down the pillow onto the sheet—green-gray, with flecks of orange. It moves like the insides of an uncooked egg. Stubbornly clinging

> to its own mass, refusing to break up and be removed. How, I wonder, can it be so neat and nasty at the same time? (11)

Claudia's ultrarealistic description of the puke opens the possibility to see beauty in what is commonly considered repulsive. In fact, Bakhtin's own analysis of the grotesque reminds us that "[the body] offers a liberation from all that is humdrum and universally accepted" (*Rabelais* 34, 94). Focusing on the reality and materiality of body functions, Claudia's narrative starts gaining a greater sense of personal affirmation and liberation that renders any attempt at identification with monologic narratives, such as the Dick-and-Jane primer, pointless. As a consequence, Dick and Jane's wholesome and pristine congeniality as presented in the primer is revealed in its artificiality when compared to the realistic description of Claudia's puke. Certainly, the more Claudia speaks about her experience, the more the preamble loses the power to exclude Claudia's life, making her story more convincing than the "eternal happiness" of Dick and Jane's unrealistic family life. Claudia gains the ability to give universal signs a different meaning. Puke itself becomes "neat," and Claudia's "motherly love" no longer is defined by the standard presented in the middle-class white primer: "Mother is very nice . . . Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh" (3). Claudia's mother loves more significantly and more realistically. Her love, Claudia says, is "thick, dark, and sweet." "Love" and "darkness," antithetic terms in the dominant discourse of the primer, converge in Claudia's language to signify her experience of motherhood and the tenderness of those hands that "don't want [her] to die" (12).

Claudia's hatred for dolls is an even more poignant example of the way in which the Bakhtinian focus on the body serves as a place of struggle with predetermined meaning in *The Bluest Eye*. While children and adults alike seem to rejoice looking at the "blue-eyed Baby Doll" as a sign of supreme beauty, Claudia cannot understand where the value of "the thing" actually lies. Her instinct leads her to deconstruct it, literally. She breaks the doll apart to look inside the plastic body with the hope of finding the source of its power. Yet, she finds nothing (20-21). There is no substance, no essential meaning, in the plastic thing itself. Nothing makes it beautiful. Thus, Claudia discovers at a tender age the arbitrariness of language. She also notices the social value of signs, which she does not accept readily "as is" or "just because." Indeed, "the word of a father, of adults, and teachers" demands an unconditional obedience that Claudia is not ready to pledge (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 342). In response, Claudia starts once again a dialogizing process of signification. The result is Claudia's unique voice, one informed by a complex array of discourses that have

been analyzed and re-organized to signify in her own terms. Claudia develops what Bakhtin calls an "internally persuasive" discourse that, while not directly opposed to the "authoritative" one, struggles with it in order to demystify its power and privilege (*The Dialogic Imagination* 342).

Thus, the same drive that leads Claudia to deconstruct "beauty" in white dolls forces her to grapple with the unconditional deference that everyone seems to show for white girls. Claudia hates them for what they represent to others (22-23). Yet, Claudia had already learned by dismembering the doll that there was no essential reason to consider white girls superior in their beauty. Their bodies are indeed no less material than that of a doll. She concludes that white girls' power must be "magical," something invisible that exists independently and despite their bodies. She also realizes that white girls, unlike dolls, are human. Therefore, she cannot subject them to the same objectifying process by which she examined, dissected, and dismembered the doll, for such "disinterested violence" towards people is "shameful." Claudia's inner discourse settles instead for "fraudulent love" (23). Some critics like Donald B. Gibson and Cynthia A. Davis finds Claudia's resolution to be "devastating" (126) and not as "appropriate" (11) as her reaction against the white doll, "pristine sadism" (*The Bluest Eye* 23). Claudia's response towards white girls is more sophisticated than physical violence. Claudia takes back what she already knows is the "magical" power of dominant culture. She appropriates the language from others to (re) name, (re)define, and (re)create the meaning of things on her own. She becomes an active and conscious participant in the game of making meaning. Moreover, she comes to understand that her emotional responses—love or hatred—are toward an image that the authoritative discourse imposes. She has learned to break, change, and dialogize. Her "love" for "cleanliness" as much as for "whiteness" becomes a conscious and strategic positioning towards a discourse that has lost its powerful spell, for she now understands that "whiteness" is created in and through language and, therefore, is arbitrary and hollow. From that point on, Claudia continues subjecting "whiteness" to the same irreverence she shows for the dolls. This complexity in Claudia's voice is typically hybrid, in Bakhtinian terms. Her hybridity is formed through the conscious, internal dialogization of external authoritative discourses. Thus, Claudia's consciousness is not in between, as Michael Awkward contends, echoing Bhabha's theory of liminality (83-84). On the contrary, hers is a unique but engaged voice that emerges out of the struggle to dialogize heteroglossia, a multiplicity of other voices, which constantly compete to define the meaning of things in her world.[8]

To illustrate how one attains an engaged but distinctive voice in order to escape the power of the master text, Claudia tells the stories of other members of the community who, unlike her, fell prey to the power of the Dick-and-Jane image. The Breedloves, for example, are the antithesis of the white family represented in the preface of the novel. They are introduced as "poor and black." More importantly, "they believed they were ugly" by the standards of beauty established in the primer (38). Claudia has understood what they themselves have not: blackness and beauty are not biological, essential terms, but stereotypes in the dominant discourse geared to objectify and marginalize designated groups. Claudia affirms that "[they] wore their ugliness, put it on, so to speak, although it did not belong to them" (38). The pairing of blackness and ugliness, while whiteness is associated with beauty, is the main stigmatizing element of the binary system within the dominant cultural discourse. Those individuals, who, like the Breedloves, do not learn to dialogize the binary, fully adopt the stereotype as part of their ontology. Claudia explicitly states,

> The master had said, 'You are ugly people.' They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. 'Yes,' they had said. 'You are right.' And they took their ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. (39)

Bhabha's conception of the stereotype as the source of hybridity and therefore potential subversion is thus challenged in *The Bluest Eye*. Bhabha claims that, as a strategy to assert power and appease the master's anxiety, the stereotype assigns rigid roles to those considered "Other" ("Difference" 204). But, the individual, according to Bhabha, can look back at the master's text, reminding him of its lack of complete control over those deemed different, causing the master paranoia ("Signs" 154-155; The *Location* 86-89). In *The Bluest Eye,* however, no one looks back. On the contrary, those objectified by means of the stereotype suffer its devastating consequences.

One of the main characters affected by the power of stereotypes is Pauline Breedlove. While Polly's life is reported to have been "lovely" in the beginning, Polly's physical characteristics, a cavity in her front tooth and a crooked foot, cause her isolation. To cope, she delights in taking control of the material world around her, ordering and counting things. Ironically, once she moves north with her husband, Pauline becomes an object herself to be cataloged, sorted, and classified. City folks categorize her as unrefined, Southern, and ignorant. She tries

straightening her hair, wearing high heels or putting on make-up, but nothing seems to be enough to get the "look" required to fit in within the group (118). She still feels as "*no-count*" (117, my emphasis). Then, giving up to the pressure, she literally and figuratively makes herself disappear in the darkness of movie theaters. While her body becomes invisible in the dark auditorium, the image of the white world emerges illuminated on the screen, becoming Polly's object of desire. She then commits herself to its imitation as a way to escape "blackness." Polly's mimicry—the process of accepting the stereotype as an image of self and then rejecting it to adopt the values of the master—does not cause any debilitating ambivalence in the master's text itself (Young, *Ambivalence* 147). On the contrary, in Polly's case, mimicry fortifies the devastating power of the master's discourse. Having accepted a new set of external, "foreign" values, dictated by an idealization of beauty and goodness marked by "whiteness," Polly "settled down to just being ugly" (123) and an "ideal servant" (127). Being a maid for a white middle class family gives her "second-hand" power and perpetuates the hierarchical structure of objectification that master discourses create (127-128). That is, the little power Polly may attain as "a good servant" in the value system of the master, she holds over those whom she considers her inferiors, even when those are, in the case of Polly, her own family. Moreover, Polly finds validation for her own self-aggrandizement in the language of Christianity, "holding Cholly as a model of sin and failure, [bearing] him like a crown of thorns, and her children like a cross" (127). In this sense, Polly becomes part of the discursive strategy by perpetuating the idea that "otherness" begets evil, whereas "goodness" comes exclusively from the values of the master's world. In becoming a mimic woman, Polly is an "authorized" Other. Like the "good Indian," or the "good savage," the "good" servant is "white but not quite" (Young, *Ambivalence* 147). She turns into a sign within the master discourse. Rather than questioning the stereotype in any way, she reinforces it by becoming a regulating element within the system of oppression.

Geraldine, unlike Polly, does not consider herself "ugly," but her whole life also evolves around the stereotype (81). "Brown, narrow, and tall," she is closer to the white ideal than Polly (82). Yet, just like Polly, Geraldine has internalized the norms, culture, and values of the dominant culture in an attempt to "civilize" anything in her and around her that remotely might be associated with "otherness." For that reason, she zealously guards her body and behavior, making sure "to get rid of the funkiness" (83). She fears any sign of "blackness," becoming a prisoner of the system of signs that devaluates her own body (87). Both Polly and Geraldine become merely symbols within this system of oppression since they do not imagine themselves differently, outside the

realm of "whiteness." They accept and embody the objectification of their beings, losing any ability to speak other than through the master's language. Moreover, they play a role in the reaffirmation of the narcissistic demands of the "authoritative language" by internalizing it and modeling themselves after it to the point of invisibility (Bhabha, *The Location* 98). When Polly goes to give birth at a hospital and the doctor refers to her as a "horse" to "teach" his medical students the "fact" that black women deliver with "no pain," Polly points out: "*They never said nothing to me. Only one looked at me. Looked at my face, I mean. I looked right back at him. He dropped his eyes and turned red*" (125). Polly's return of the gaze does not disturb anyone in any significant way. Her looking back is by no means "radical" or powerful enough to challenge the doctor's teaching. Polly cannot articulate her condition, and like in the case of animals, people dismiss her suffering because she cannot speak (125).

Therefore, hybridity in *The Bluest Eye* does not appear as a by-product of the psychological ambivalence of the master's psyche (Young, *Ambivalence* 145). Nor does it contest or subvert the master's authoritative discourse. Active subversion comes out of the process of dialogizing, not repeating, external languages. In the mere repetition of the values and the language of the dominant culture, there is no room to express oneself differently to become a subject. On the contrary, mimicry requires the objectification of others in a hierarchical structure. For Geraldine, that scale is clear. Thinking of herself in a better position as "colored," she signifies the border between "whites" and "niggers" (87). Polly, unlike Geraldine, cannot use her body to associate herself with those deemed superior. Yet, she adheres fiercely to their ideology to the extent that she communicates with her family using only the punitive language of the master. She thereby loses her ability to empathize and identify with anyone other than the white world. One casualty of this pervasive and sadist system is her own daughter, Pecola, the most vulnerable character in *The Bluest Eye*.

Pecola, Pauline's daughter, is born into the system that condemns her to be "ugly" from the very beginning. Her mother cannot see her otherwise (126). Pecola's response to these stereotypical codes is primal, pre-linguistic, and, for that reason, even more damaging. She obsessively drinks milk out of a Shirley Temple cup with the hope of transforming into the image everyone respects (46-47). However, Pecola seems to have possessed an incipient ability to create a language of her own. For example, at the beginning of the story, she cherishes the beauty of dandelions, even when everyone scorns them for being "many, strong, and soon" (47). Yet, the white immigrant clerk crashes the potential of her internal voice when he "needs not waste the

effort of a glance" (47). Accustomed to the indifference, Pecola ultimately disappears into her invisibility, desiring a white body to replace the black one. Significantly, the dandelions, which she thought to be pretty before the incident with the shopkeeper, "*are,*" emphatically, "ugly" after it. "They *are* weeds," for she no longer dares to image them otherwise in her own inner language (50). Pecola's initial dialogism lacks the support to speak or look back. As a result, she immediately accepts the exterior, authoritative language without question. At that moment, she loses her internal compass, the beginning of what could have been a personal voice, and significantly "trips" on the "familiar" sidewalk crack on her way back home (50). Unlike Claudia, she fails to see the emptiness in the discourse of "whiteness" and the futility of pursuing it. Pecola loses, early on, the ability and strength to give a different meaning to things that already signify for others. Instead, she firmly believes that by literally consuming "whiteness," which has been externally created for her, she will finally become "white": "To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane" (50).

Pecola's complete objectification through the process of mimicry makes her the ultimate Other (Bhabha, *Location* 85). Her community and the larger society, so dependent on exclusion to maintain the hierarchical order, send Pecola to the very bottom of the scale. She is the one whom everyone despises and keeps down since to raise one's status depends on pushing others down and away from the center. Claudia clearly articulates society's participation in Pecola's demise: "We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her frailty, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength" (205). Mimicry, a necessary part of the oppressive system, does not provide a realistic chance at subversion. Indeed, the gaze, which Bhabha assures subverts the master text, is returned by very few, if any ("Signs" 154). On the contrary, mimicry exacerbates the difficulty of attaining individuality for those who are pushed to the bottom, since people's punitive look is not directed toward the master, but towards those who are the most vulnerable. People, who like Pecola, cannot find a way to get out of this pervasive, destructive system, disintegrate.

Understandingly, Pecola does the only thing she knows: she asks for blue eyes in a desperate and instinctual attempt to flee from her body. If she changes her body, she can change her existence, her experience, her whole being along with it. Soaphead, a mimic man himself, having been subjected to the pressures of colonialism in the Caribbean, is familiar with Pecola's plight—a little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of blackness and see the world with blue eyes (174). But indeed, the "evil of [its] fulfillment" is devastating (204). After the visit

to Soaphead and the working of his "magic," Pecola starts hallucinating a self with blue eyes and another self who sees them. Pecola splits, entering a psychotic stage that destroys her ego, precluding any possibility of her ever becoming a "speaking subject." She inhabits what Kristeva calls a "borderline" state, in which one becomes both "actor," involved in life, and "spectator," observer of life (106). Both positions are indistinguishable from one another and fluid within a single individual, disconnecting the self from others. The subject loses its limits, becoming within itself subject and object, an ambiguous entity without a stable "I" from which to speak. Significantly enough, the next time we hear from Pecola in the novel, she is looking at herself in a mirror and two indistinct voices speak back and forth about Pecola's blue eyes and whether they are the bluest they have ever seen (193-204). Morrison calls Pecola's ambiguity a state of "unbeing," echoing Kristeva's description of borderline experiences (Morrison 215 and Kristeva 114). Bhabha, on the other hand, considers this ambiguity, invisibility, indeterminacy, and complete instability, the moment in which hybridity causes paranoia in the master's psyche. Yet, Bhabha's "evil eye/I" is for Morrison, the "bluest eye/I," a much less sinister and more hopeless reality (*The Location* 47, 53-54). Far from being able to look back into the eye of power as a specter, Pecola ceases to exist, having no voice, language, or experience of her own concrete body to host her subjectivity. Imitation, the basis element of mimicry, precludes her ability to create new meanings with which subjects can fight back.

Self-imposed isolation from dominant narratives is another way to escape discursive oppression in *The Bluest Eye*. Miss Marie, Poland, and China are the prostitutes who rent the room above Pecola's storefront apartment. They tell her stories, give her clothes, and acknowledge her with "fond" epithets, unlike the rest of society (50-51). The prostitutes are the only ones who show Pecola any kind of affection. These characters are important in the novel because they categorically reject any participation or complicity with the dominant culture and discourse. That is, they reject all the possible ways their profession would be "acceptable" in the eyes of "respectable' society (56-57). They are free from the suffocating language of official authorization. That is the reason why they treat Pecola differently; they do not engage in any way with external languages. Their freedom comes from a complete and conscious removal from the language of the social order. Consequently, society does not have the power to affect or define them. Yet, they are limited by the language of hate. Claudia explains, "these women hated men, all men, without shame, apology or discrimination . . . Neither did they have respect for women . . . it made no difference" (56). Despite their amiable interaction with Pecola, the prostitutes'

model to resist objectification remains closed and oppositional but not internally hybridized. For Claudia, this epic confrontation is as stifling and oppressive as any other form of external signification, precluding any possibility of individual appropriation and further development.

There is yet another character described as positively "free" from language, Cholly, Pecola's dad. This character is difficult to analyze. While Morrison does not justify his actions, specifically the rape of his daughter, she does not allow easy judgment, either. After a life characterized by abandonment, reproach, racism, and oppression, his "ugliness" stems from the abusive treatment he has received at the hands of others. Cholly "reacted to [his children] and his reactions were based on what he felt at the moment," the narrator explains (161). A mixture of tenderness, powerlessness, and love is what Cholly feels when he is raping his own daughter. If the prostitutes and Soaphead understand and sympathize with Pecola, Cholly purportedly loves her the only way he can, for as the narrator tells us, "love is never any better than the lover" (206). Cholly's characterization as a "free" man is even more troubling. He is free because he is completely outside a language system, whether as a mimic, oppositional, or hybrid speaker (*The Bluest Eye* 159-160). Completely untethered to society, with nothing more to lose, he is "dangerously free." His linguistic disconnection allows him to manifest his "love" or "hate" for Pecola in any way he feels at a given moment, for the dominant cultural language system no longer has the power to restrain Cholly's behavior. His physical reactions are the only language he knows. In this regard, Bakhtin asserts that, "two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (*Problems* 213). Morrison seems to agree. The characters who, like Cholly, are "free" from oppressive discourses do not engage actively in a dialogue with them. Their isolation does not allow them to change the main system of signification in any meaningful way. That is, Morrison and Bakhtin believe that engaged subjectivities recognize that the "I" of the other is always a subject, and therefore an active participant in the production of meaning. For Bakhtin, the way to break free from monologic discourses is not in isolation, but by engaging in the construction of an "I" that serves as author and narrator of a personal identity, using, changing, discarding, and redistributing the words of others. The result is a polyphonic text of the self: a plurality of voices orchestrated into a single, individual narrative, independent altogether of the dominant language and immune to its power to objectify the self (Bakhtin, *Problems* 6, 10 and *Dialogic Imagination* 348).

IV. Conclusion

Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, offers the narration of Claudia's "I" as it intentionally hybridizes the master discourse. Her voice is the one that makes the effort to negotiate its way through the multiple languages the novel presents. She considers "all speech a code to be broken" (191). Even when she does not understand, she is "careful to listen for truth in timbre"(15). While Claudia shows respect and understanding for each character's subjectivity, the novel offers only the aesthetic discourse that has translated the consciousness of others into Claudia's inner speech. In doing so, *The Bluest Eye* narrates the formation of a hybrid, internal voice: a single narrative authority oriented towards someone else's discourse that goes beyond other characters' subjectivities (Bakhtin, *Problems* 199). Claudia thereby partakes in the tradition of authoring one's self through the practice of storytelling. The stories Claudia recounts reveal her own self in and through the novel. Indeed, as Matus argues, Claudia becomes "indistinguishable from the story" itself (124). Certainly, the eye/I of the title refers to the novel, narrated as the sign of Claudia's hybrid consciousness that *can see* others, particularly Pecola, in relation to herself. *The Bluest Eye* is Claudia's own meta-language. She creates her own self with the purpose of telling how one escapes objectification while engaged in dialogue with dominant discourses in order to dismantle them. Her authorship, the distinctive feature of a hybrid consciousness, underscores the discursive quality of the subject. In this sense, identity is not reduced to an essential truth, stable and unchangeable. The subject imagines herself to be a sign in a given time and place. As in language, the signifier—I—cannot contain the signified—the self—in its entirety and complexity. The I, understood in its narrative, discursive form, is always in the process of development, as Claudia is in *The Bluest Eye*.

Accordingly, the temporality of the novel is not rigid or stable. A mixture of past, present and future framed within the circular movement of seasons infuses a sense of open-endedness to the narrative and therefore to Claudia's self. While the past is revisited in the stories, it is not constituted as a source of origins. Cyclical time does not allow such reification. The novel, just like Claudia's hybrid consciousness, is narrated out of a sense of unfinalizability.[8] This is how Claudia breaks through the "unyielding" language that, like the earth in the story for that year, is hostile to life (Morrison, "Nobel Lecture" 2 and *The Bluest Eye* 5). Claudia narrates from the future where Claudia continues her process of development as a hybrid subject. Bakhtin affirms that for the "I," "memory is memory of the future; for the other—it is memory of the past" (*Art and Answerability* 125). That is, past discourses and

stories from which Claudia's voice is born are finished, for they are produced through her memory. Yet, for as long as she keeps dialogizing them, her voice will never arrive at an end—it will continue building itself. Thus, her narrative voice consists of past stories that, dialogized in the present of the narrative, project her voice from the future, resembling the trace of a spiral boomerang rather than the linear trajectory of traditional *bildungsromans*.

In brief, hybridity, in *The Bluest Eye*, is the stabilizing element that keeps the main narrator, Claudia, attached to a personal voice, while monologic languages battle to erase the subjectivity of those who mimic. Pecola, in particular, but also Polly, Geraldine and the rest of the characters in the story fall victims to monologic discourses of race, class, gender, and history. They are isolated, go mad, disappear, die, or self-destruct. These characters repeat the words of others or, by exiting completely the realm of signification, become *dangerously* disconnected. Claudia might have been the first, but she is not alone in Morrison's fictional universe. She is indeed followed by Violet in *Jazz*, Denver in *Beloved*, Florens in *A Mercy*, and Bride in Morrison's latest novel, *God Help The Child*. All Morrison's heroines opt for a more productive alternative: dialogic hybridity. They find their individual identity resisting and transcending monologic languages as they tell the stories of others, creating one single, yet not finished, text, called their self (Holquist, *Answering* 315).

Notes

1. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, M. M. Bakhtin describes novelistic hybrids as intentional characters whose double-voicedness is not meant to resolve (429). Their hybridity depends on the integration of different discourses within the self, becoming subjects with the capacity of developing an inner speech that de-privileges languages and strives to expose the limitations of (master) images and discourses (348). Also see, M.M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist, U of Texas P, 1990, p. 15.

2. Saussure, as the main exponent of structuralism, conceived language as a set of two opposing codes: the synchronic and the diachronic. The first one refers to the logical system of rules that govern the language of a given collectivity. The second one, dismissed as the mere instance of the first, is deemed as disorganized and chaotic, and therefore necessarily subdued by the "rationality" of the synchronic. Bakhtin criticizes Saussure's notion of language on two fronts. He considers that privileging the synchronic as an essential, ultimate truth of language is a deceptive and artificial construct. He counters that "the speaker's subjective consciousness does not in the least operate with language as a system of normatively identical forms. That system is merely an abstrac-

tion arrived at with a good deal of struggle and with a definite cognitive focus of attention.

3. For a comparative analysis of Bakhtin and Du Bois's theories of "double-voice" and "double-consciousness," see Dorothy Hale, "Social Formalism of Identity Studies" in *Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present*. Stanford UP, 1998.

4. Bakhtinian hybridity is described by Young as a "dissonant heterogeneity," which is considered subversive for its "challenge to monological, hegemonic forms of authority, which it shows can be transgressed and contested" (*Torn Halves* 61-62).

5. Morrison believes that the novel uses the oral tradition to delineate and heal the African-American experience ("Rootedness" 58). Similarly, Bakhtin considers the novel rooted in the early stages of verbal culture when "diverse forms were transmit(ted) ... and represented from various vantage points . . ." (*The Dialogic Imagination* 50).

6. Michael Holquist underscores that "dialogism is the name not just for dualism but for a necessary *multiplicity* in human perception. This multiplicity manifests itself as a series of distinctions between categories appropriate to the perceiver on the one hand, and to whatever is being perceived on the other" ("From Body-Talk" 16).

7. I make reference here to a major study in post-colonial thought in order to relate Bakhtin's theories and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* to the seemingly distanced field of post-colonial studies, where the concept of "hybridity" has also been deployed as a way to distort the master texts. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Routledge, 1989) and Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994).

8. Bakhtin notes in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* that "nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future" (138).

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Don Quixote in Russia in the Early Twentieth Century: The Problem of Perception and Interpretation

Slav N. Gratchev

This study logically continues my previous examination of the perception of *Don Quixote* in Russia throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and how this perception changed over time. In this new article, I will again use a number of materials inaccessible to English-speaking scholars to demonstrate how the perception of Don Quixote by Russian intelligentsia shifted from humorous to complete admiration and even idealization of the hero. Don Quixote was more and more frequently compared with Prometheus, the most powerful and most romanticized personage of Greek methodology. Indeed, "начав юмористический роман, осмеивающий увлечение современников рыцарскими похождениями, Сервантес и не думал, что потешный рыцарь печального образа постепенно вырастет в гигантскую фигуру страдальца-идеалиста" ("by starting a humorous novel satirizing contemporary fascination with knightly adventures, Cervantes could not even guess that the amusing Knight of the Sad Countenance would gradually grow into a great figure of the suffering idealist"; my trans; Solomin 91).

This study will not attempt to exhaust all questions related to this matter. Instead it tries to open some new routes that will perhaps lead us toward new generalizations and productive conclusions. At the very least, this study aims to arouse a scholarly interest in some key topics related to Cervantes' reception in Russia in the early twentieth century, his re-discovery and gradual transformation or, more to the point, *re-accentuation* of the image of Don Quixote during the Silver Age of Russian literary Renaissance.

This term—Silver Age—initially suggested by the Russian philosopher Nikolay Berdyaev,[1] became customary to use when referring to the last decade of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth centuries.[2] It was not only an exceptionally creative period in the history of Russian poetry and prose, but it was also a time for re-evaluating many of the values of the past, including Cervantes' Don Quixote.

It is only in the twentieth century that, for the first time, we start hearing the voices of intellectuals, poets, writers, and literary critics refer to Cervantes as a "genius." It is noted that, "Между тем, Дон Кихот, как истинное произведение гения, содержит в себе массу сторон и в каждой из них Сервантес является огромным знатоком человеческого ума и сердца" ("Meanwhile, Don Quixote is a true work of genius. It contains a lot of different sides, and, in each of them, Cervantes is a great connoisseur of the human mind and heart"; my trans; Solomin 93).

G. Galina,[3] one of the many talented poets that appeared during the first decade of the twentieth century, right at the splendor of the Silver Age, wrote a short poem that is unique in its romantic perception of Don Quixote. Here, maybe for the first time, the old notion of the "loco" (crazy) is defeated, and the image of the "Bronze horseman"[4] comes out instead of the Knight of the Sad Countenance:

> От будничной тоски, тревоги и забот
> я ухожу в мой мир фантазии туманной.
> мне облик видится тогда смешной и странный -
> в наряде рыцарском безумный Дон Кихот.
> а сытая толпа бежит, глумясь над ним,
> как за шутом своим, забавным и безумным,
> и потешется, венчая смехом шумным
> все то, что он зовет великим и святым.
> пусть это только бред его души больной,
> он все же дорог мне в своей борьбе напрасной.
> кто может так любить, так ненавидеть страстно,
> тот не безумец, нет! тот рыцарь и святой. (Galina 26)

> From everyday boredom, anxiety, and worries
> I run into my world where only fantasy reigns.
> And the first one I see is a Stranger--
> Our eternal knight Don Quixote.
> And a well-fed crowd runs after him,
> and calls him clown, funny, and insane,
> and laughs at him, and makes funny faces
> at everything he calls great and holy.
> But even if it's only the cry of his sad soul,
> he is still dear to me while he fights in vain.
> The One who can love and hate so, with such a passion
> He is not a madman, no! He is a Knight and Saint! (my trans)

It was symptomatic at that time—the time of the first Russian Revolution—for intelligentsia to look for an escape into the "world where only fantasy reigns," and it is particularly interesting that, in this world, they found the eternal figure of Don Quixote. Galina, whose poem I just cited, represented in her poetry the very best tradition of Russian poetry of the late nineteenth century. She belonged to the generation of Blok, and her re-accentuation of Don Quixote as a "Knight and Saint" can be seen as emblematic for the entire Silver Age literary generation.

It should not be forgotten that in 1905 Don Quixote "turned" 300 years old, and his "birthday" also had a remarkable resonance in Russia. Vyacheslav Ivanov [5] gave Don Quixote a new title, calling him "The Hero of Our Time." [6] In his article "The Crisis of Individualism," specifically dedicated to the 300th anniversary of *Don Quixote*, Ivanov, for the first time in Russian literary criticism and, possibly for the first time ever, called Cervantes' novel "a poem," reconfirming the new and highly romanticized perspective that Russian Silver Age intelligentsia of the early twentieth century developed toward Cervantes' hero. He states:

> Весь сонм великих теней с нами...Эти вечные типы человека глядят не только в вечность. Есть у них особенный, проникновенный взгляд и на нас. Они поднялись из небытия под общим знаком, их связывает между собою нечто пророчественно общее. Впервые во всемирной истории они явили духу запросы нового индивидуализма и трагической антиномии. (Ivanov 831)

> The whole company of great shadows is here with us . . . [Ivanov refers to Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth.] These eternal human types look into eternity, but they also look at us. They rose from obscurity under a common sign; they share a lot in common, and there is prophesy related to each of them. For the first time in world history, they have revealed the spirit of new questions of individualism and its tragic antinomy. (my trans)

What is interesting, though, is that Ivanov, also for the first time in literary criticism, does not put Don Quixote on a lower scale in relation to those "eternal human types," but instead he places Cervantes' hero above Hamlet in his philosophical significance and humanistic mission. For Ivanov, Don Quixote does not just come to this world with

the *new word*; instead, he comes to this world to bring a new life, to revive a tradition of *chivalry*, and to restore the good old meaning of the *knight-errantry*. Ivanov states:

> Он, как и Гамлет, носитель своих скрижалей. Только не новые и еще не выступившие письмена силится он разобрать на них: нет, ясно начертаны в его сознании старые письмена, отвергнутые миром. Не новое действие родится в нем, а старое воскресает. (Ivanov 834)

> He, like Hamlet, is the carrier of his own tablets. But he is not trying to read the new writings that simply try to show themselves to the world; instead, he remembers the old ones that are clearly inscribed in his mind, those writings that are now rejected by the world. It is not a new action that is being born inside him but an old one that is being resurrected. (my trans)

Ivanov does not stop here with the particular uniqueness of Don Quixote that he sees in Quixote's attempt—so far unheard of in universal literature—to challenge the realness of the world by the realness of his personal *Weltanschauung*.[7] In this bold attempt—to challenge the entire world—Ivanov sees the uniqueness of Don Quixote, his philosophical and universal significance. This daring attempt to challenge the imperfect world is what makes Don Quixote the second truly great *individualist* of world literature.[8] But still, insists Ivanov, Don Quixote would be the "first Knight" in a crowd that consists of Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear. There is something in Don Quixote, notes Ivanov, that makes this Spanish knight totally singular and totally unparalleled by any of the great Shakespearian characters. He indicates: "Но в глубине своей души он несет росток новой души…Если мир не таков, каким должен быть, как постулат духа, тем хуже для мира, да и нет вовсе такого мира" ("But in the depths of his soul he carries the germ of a new soul … If the world is not what it should be, as a postulate of the spirit, so much the worse for the world, and a world like this does not even exist"; my trans; Ivanov 834).

But only just paired with the great crowd of Shakespearian characters, Don Quixote almost immediately makes another step forward—the very step that will distinguish him forever from other great literary figures. He dares to *reject* the world as it is! In other words, in the early seventeenth century, at the dawn of modern literature, Don Quixote has done what Ivan Karamazov of Dostoevsky will do, only 250 years later. As indicated:

> Ну так представь же себе, что в окончательном результате я мира этого божьего - не принимаю, и хоть и знаю, что он существует, да не допускаю его вовсе. Я не бога не принимаю, пойми ты это, я мира, им созданного, мирато божьего не принимаю и не могу согласиться принять. (Dostoevsky 214)

> Well, imagine yourself that, as a final result, this world of God is what I do not accept, and, even though I know that it exists, I do not accept it at all. And, it is not God that I do not accept, you must understand this. It is the world He created, this world of God. This is what I do not accept and cannot agree to accept. (my trans)

Not a single literary character, before Cervantes or after him, ever went so far as to reject the world, but Don Quixote did. He is not a philosopher, like Ivan Karamazov; he is just a knight errant, but not accepting the world that had become so corrupt is the essence of his *individualist Weltanschauung*. Hamlet also does it, but his motives are different; it is certainly easier to reject the world when you are unhappy and when your heart is full of revenge. Then the frustration can be explained and understood, and the challenge can be justified. The case of the Spanish knight is different; Don Quixote, who "whenever he was at leisure (which was mostly all the year round) gave himself up to reading books of chivalry" (*Don Quixote* I: 82), certainly does not have much reason for frustration. Nevertheless, he "hit upon the strangest notion that every madman in this world hit upon that he should make a knight-errant of himself, roaming the world over in full armor and on horseback in quest of adventures" (*Don Quixote* I: 83).

Don Quixote, unlike Hamlet, does not pursue any personal revenge; his ambitions are immeasurably higher, and this is what, for Ivanov, makes Don Quixote immeasurably more versatile, more philosophically and spiritually significant than one of the most famous Shakespearian characters. He argues:

> Он борется с миром на жизнь и на смерть, и вместе отрицает его. Чары волшебников обтатили всю вселенную в одну иллюзию. Вначале герой прозревает колдовское наваждение только в отдельных несоответствиях искомого и обретаемого; потом кольцо чародейства смыкается вокруг одинокой души сплошною темницей

> обмана. Мир, уже весь целиком, один только злой призрак. (Ivanov 834)

> He fights with the world for life and death and denies it at the same time. The enchantments of wizards have turned the whole world into an illusion. Initially, the hero begins to see magical obsession only in certain inconsistencies between the desired and the gained, but then the ring closes more and more around the lonely soul, sorrowing and poisoning her by deception. And the world, now the entire one, is nothing but one evil ghost. (my trans)

It is interesting to observe how the highly romantic attitude toward Cervantes' hero, experienced by early Russian symbolists like Galina and Solomin, gradually shifted toward an appreciation of his philosophical significance and spiritual strength. It may not be surprising though if we recall that Russian intelligentsia had always been looking for the strong spirituality and the total *answerability* of the literary character. (This important term was introduced to literary criticism by Mikhail Bakhtin in 1919 when his first scholarly essay "Art and Answerability" appeared in the journal *Mir Iskusstva* ["The World of Arts"]). It does not mean that the romantic attitude toward Don Quixote completely disappears, but certainly it becomes more marginal than at the dawn of the twentieth century.

What interests us in particular is analyzing how the "crisis of individualism" that Don Quixote supposedly experiences is being viewed, perceived, and interpreted in Russia during the first decades of the twentieth century and how the "rebellion against the world" pairs Don Quixote with a rebellious Greek titan, Prometheus, the first and the only individualist in world literature before Don Quixote. As Ivanov states:

> Бунт против мира, впервые провозглашенный этим новым Прометеем печального образа, наложил свои стигмы на многострадальную тень героя из Ламанчи. Отныне на знамени индивидуализма будет начертан вызов объективной истине, своего рода утверждение ценности нас возвышающего обмана, тьмы низких истин. Именно как было в гносеологии Ницше: истинно то, что усиливает жизнь; всякая другая истина есть ложь. (Ivanov 106)

> The revolt against the world, first proclaimed by this new Prometheus of the Sad Image, cast its shadow of stigma on the long-suffering hero of La Mancha. From now on, the banner of individualism will be inscribed on the challenge to objective truth, a kind of a statement that claims the value of the elevating deception, the darkness of low truth. It has been in the epistemology of Nietzsche: the truth is what enhances life; every other truth is a lie. (my trans)

While this "crisis of individualism" that Ivanov analyzes in his article is symptomatic of all great literary characters—Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear—who suffer from it, Don Quixote instead glorifies this "crisis." He, in spite of all the imperfections of this world, loves and glorifies "the darkness of low truth" that nourishes the indestructible soul of this individualistic Knight-errant. Why then should he care that today's beauty too often wears the distorted mask of a ghost of greatness? He deliberately condemns himself to chivalry, to the desperate search for truth and to endless wandering, and his knight-errantry will always be free from any fear and any reproach.

Maybe that is why in another article, "Shakespeare and Cervantes," Ivanov notes that "чем-то радостным, бодрящим и добрым веет от страниц Сервантеса, страниц незапятнанных ни злобою, ни осуждением, ни горестным раздумьем о смысле жизни" ("something pleasurable, invigorating and good emanates from the pages of Cervantes, pages that do not convey malice, nor condemnation, nor sorrowful meditation on the meaning of life"; my trans; Ivanov 108).

The "crisis of individualism" that so heavily and tragically affects Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear, is, in Cervantes' book, transformed into something completely different; it becomes an ode to the tireless knight. And the Russian critic, despite all the mishaps that happen to the Hero, refuses to see tragedy in *Don Quixote*; as he notes:

> Дон Кихот оставляет в душе читателя благостное очищение, в основе которого лежит пафос веры и глубокое чувствование тщеты всякого самочинного человеческого стремления перед простою правдою Бога. (Ivanov 108)

> Don Quixote leaves in the soul of the reader a unique sense of happiness, which is based on faith, enthusiasm, and a deep feeling of the vanity of all arbitrary human endeavors if compared to the simple truth of God. (my trans)

How can this transformation of the "crisis" be explained? Is Don Quixote an individualist of a different caliber than Hamlet, King Lear, and Othello? Why does the novel that is, although not formally, still a tragedy by its internal nature, leave us with this "unique sense of happiness," and not sorrow, like *Hamlet*? There must be something that distinguishes this "new Prometheus of the Sad Image" from his counterparts, and this must be something very significant. To all these questions, Ivanov gives us one absolutely comprehensive answer; it is the harmonic equilibrium that possesses the soul of a Spaniard, and only a Spaniard. He states:

> Это гармоническое равновесие души есть, несомненно, плод испанской верности католической церкви, - верности, которая обезвредила и смягчила глубокие противоречия, раскрывшиеся в сознании новых времен. (Ivanov 109)

> This harmonious balance of the Spanish soul is, undoubtedly, the fruit of fidelity to the Catholic Church—loyalty, which defused and softened all deep contradictions disclosed by the minds of modern times. (my trans)

This equilibrium could, however, easily generate a very superficial and even narrow-minded attitude toward the world. But the sensitive ear of Cervantes, the poet, was able to hear and recognize the noise of the fierce battle—the battle between the rising and awakening New World and the last medieval Night Shadows. This is how, perhaps, the Russian critic perceives Cervantes' novel. And to fight such a battle there must be a new type of hero who is not blinded by revenge, like Hamlet; who is not blinded by jealousy, like Othello; and who is not blinded by deep sorrow, like King Lear. Only such a hero would be able to bring his mission to the end. Who could it be? What country would give birth to this hero?

The mystical glow of the Spanish soul has always been so close and loyal to the Catholic faith, and this soul could not cool down as quickly as did the souls of other European nations. The melting furnaces of the Spanish spirit continued to burn in the secluded shelters of the hermits of spirit, while, outside of their modest dwellings, the unbearably white Spanish day continued to dazzle, and the lonely knight kept riding his Rocinante and, sweating and squinting in the bright sun, constantly looked into the horizon. Only this new type of hero who "did not care to put off any longer the execution of his design, urged

on to it by the thought of all the world was losing by his delay, seeing what wrongs he intended to right, grievances to redress, injustices to repair, abuses to remove, and duties to discharge" (*Don Quixote* I:78) would sally forth "without giving notice of his intention to anyone, and without anybody seeing him" (*Don Quixote* I: 78). Ivanov notes,

> И вот перед нами, как и перед самим Сервантесом, стоит, подобная загадке сфинкса, фигура странствующего рыцаря. Стоит она как вечная проблема: как может благородное и доблестное, святое и пламенное, чистейшая любовь и вера, не смутимая никакою видимостью, вечно распинаться верховным Разумом жизни? и как люди, осмеивающие и презирающие высокое и святое, могут оказываться в согласии с судом этого Разума? (Ivanov 111)

> And here stands, in front of us, as before it was standing before Cervantes, as a famous riddle of the Sphinx, the figure of the knight-errant. It stands as an eternal problem: how can the noble and valiant, the holy and pure, the pure love and faith, be forever condemned by the Supreme Mind of life? And how can people that ridicule and despise the high and the holy be in accordance with that Mind? (my trans)

Where does Ivanov perceive the real greatness of Cervantes? Does he see it in his ability to solve this riddle? But, does Cervantes ever try to solve anything? Probably he, like any great artist, prefers to offer us questions, not necessarily to answer them. So, "how can people that ridicule and despise the high and the holy be in accordance with that Mind?"

These are what Ivanov identifies as the amazing qualities of Cervantes: he can see and describe things as they are, and, for the ultimate *answerability*, he is even capable of "отдать на поругание платонического любовника Дульсинеи" ("giving up for public reproach the sad platonic lover of Dulcinea"; my trans; Ivanov 108). He sacrifices his hero, even though his heart is bleeding, to see how heartless and merciless the outside world is. And so Quixote leaves this imperfect world the last "individualist"—the only one who truly cares for others and not himself. As we can see, the "crisis of individualism" is definitely present in *Don Quixote*, but it is a different kind of crisis; it is the crisis of a society that is neither ready nor willing to accept the new hero whose "great time" has not come yet. As Ivanov argues: "Величие Сервантеса покоится на его гениальном узрении

иррационального в "рационально" устроенном мире его эпохи." ("Cervantes' greatness rests on his genius of beholding rationally the irrational, organized, world day consciousness of his era"; my trans; Ivanov 112).

Another prominent Russian symbolist, Konstantin Balmont,[9] also offers us an interesting understanding and extensive re-evaluation of Cervantes' literary hero. Contrary to Ivanov, who was interested more in the new philosophical significance of Cervantes' work, Balmont focuses on different aspects of Cervantes' hero; instead of analyzing Don Quixote's philosophical significance in relation to his dramatic counterparts (Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear), Balmont puts Don Quixote in the historical context of his own country, Spain, and pairs him up with another great Spanish literary character—Don Juan. Probably no one before Balmont or after him has ever better contextualized Don Quixote, and not only connected him with Spain but also pointed out the internal ligaments that connected Don Quixote to other countries. Balmont argues:

> Вся историа Испании была сплошным безумным и беспрерывным романом. Многовековая дуэль с маврами, создание самого красивого европейского языка, сосредоточение под властью одного короля стольких царств, что солнце не заходило в его владениях . . . Сервантес, который в мусульманском плену несколько раз избегает казни победною чарою своего морально-красивого лика и пишет свою бессмертную книгу в тюрьме, приготовленную для него добрыми соотечественниками . . . Лопе де Вега, считающуй свои драмы и комедии тысячами, и какие комедии! Святая Тереза, бессмертно влюбленная в Христа . . . Непобедимая Армада, потонувшая прежде, чем ей пришлось побеждать или быть побежденной . . . и это неправдоподобное падение после всемирно-смелого головокружительного взлета, и этот веселый ребяческий смех, и звук кастаньет . . . и все это после того как историческая роль безвозвратно сыграна. Не страницы ли это из книги сказок? Я сказал - сыграна? О, нет! Кроме внешних монархий существуют внутренние. И пусть никогда больше не повторится фигура Филиппа Второго, но в пределах целого земного полушария говорят и будут говорить по- испанworld's greatски, и мы, европейцы, не можем прожить и нескольких часов чтобы не сказать - Дон Кихот и Дон Жуан. (Balmont 34)

> The whole history of Spain has been a continuous and uninterrupted novel. The centuries-long duel with the Moors, the creation of the most beautiful European language, the concentration under one crown of all those kingdoms, where the sun never set. Cervantes, who was a Muslim prisoner several times, avoided the capital penalty due to his beautiful moral . . . and wrote his immortal book in prison, prepared for him by his good fellow citizens. Lope de Vega, counting his dramas and comedies by the thousands, and what comedies! Saint Teresa, forever and immortally in love with Christ. The Invincible Armada, drowning before it was able to win or be defeated. And the improbable and dizzy fall of the empire after its meteoric rise. And this merry and childish laughter and the sound of castanets. And all this after the historic role is played forever. Isn't it a page from a book of fairy tales? Did I say—played? Oh no! There are internal, external monarchies as well. And although there may never be repeated the figure of Philip II, within the whole terrestrial hemisphere they speak and will always speak Spanish, and we Europeans cannot live a few hours and not say Don Quixote and Don Juan. (my trans)

As we remember, romanticism is what characterized the entire group of the Russian Silver Age poets, and their complete admiration of Don Quixote as a New Hero, a Messiah, changed, for many years, the perception of Cervantes' hero in Russia in the early twentieth century. Romanticism was in the air, and the ghost of freedom, after all those terrible years, started to loom again. That ghost awakened Russian intelligentsia, who again started to believe that there was a better world and started to look around, and here He was, a real Hero, Don Quixote de la Mancha, the Spaniard.

It is interesting how unquestionably Balmont connected Spain not only to Russia but to other countries as well. For him, a hero like Don Quixote can never be disconnected from the world, neither by space nor by time; he is timeless, and he is *spaceless*, so to speak, and, being as such, he leads and connects other literary characters in one invisible chain—the *Knight-errantry*. Balmont argues that,

> Есть мировая перекличка от страны к стране . . . Страна к стране посылает в веках вестника, чтобы страны не одичали в своей отъединенности; посылает такого глашатая, коротый говорит равно убедительно и своим, и всем чужим. Гекзаметры Гомера не поют ли до сих пор и в современной Элладе, и в бледной Норвегии, и в

> ученой Германии. И не читает ли «Дон Кихота» и русский шкильник, и судомойка в Аргентине, и надменный англичанин, и мало что читающий житель Испании! (Balmont 334)

> There is a global connection from country to country. From country to country, a messenger is sent through the centuries so that other countries do not get alienated in their disunion; each country sends a herald that can talk equally well to his own people and to all strangers. The hexameter of Homer is being sung nowadays in the modern Hellas, and it is sung in pale Norway and in scholarly and educated Germany. And doesn't any Russian schoolboy, and the kitchen girl in Argentina, and the haughty Englishman, and also the little reading resident of Spain still read "Don Quixote"? (my trans)

As I have been trying to show, the most romantic age in the history of Russian poetry—the Silver Age—fully re-interpreted Don Quixote; from a Knight of the Doleful Countenance, Cervantes' hero became the greatest and the noblest literary figure as well as the most romantic one. Thus, in the enchanted kingdom of Romanticism, the exclusive love of all romantic poets for four major literary figures—Prometheus, Faustus, Don Quixote, and Don Juan—became nothing less than a logical inevitability. These four eternal characters have been and always will be irresistible to the heart of any romantic, whether he is a poet or not. Prometheus will always symbolize a broken barrier between Heaven and Earth, between Knowledge and Ignorance. Faustus will always mesmerize us with his boundless thirst for Knowledge that is inaccessible to Man. Don Juan will die again and again for his boundless passion for Love. But Don Quixote will always be the eternal Troubadour of the platonic Dulcinea, the Knight of the Dream, struck by his endless and unachievable quest for universal happiness. As Balmont observes,

> Торжествующая Природа и пробужденная Личность - вот те два светильника, говорящие о Новом Времени и Новом Человеке...И тот же огонь горел в Сервантесе, когда он написал «Дон Кихота», книгу, которую читали и будут читать больше всего на земном шаре. (Balmont 473)

> The triumphant Nature and the Awakened personality—these are the two candlesticks that speak about the New Time and the New Man. And the same torch was leading Cervantes when he wrote "Don Quixote," the book that people have read and will continue to read the most. (my trans)

Notes

1. Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) was one of the most prominent Russian political and religious philosophers of the twentieth century.

2. Starting in 1929, the political situation in Communist Russia began to change rapidly. Stalin, who gained absolute and uncontrolled power, initiated a preliminary purge among the "Old Bolsheviks" who were still supportive of Lenin's ideas. Freedom of expression was becoming an inexcusable luxury, more often dangerous than not. My next article will deal with the perception and interpretation of Don Quixote in the 30-50s, up until Stalin's death in 1953.

3. Galina is a literary nickname of the poetess Glafira Einerling (1870-1942), who was writing in the traditional style of the late nineteenth century.

4. Bronze Horseman is the famous statue of Peter the Great erected in Saint Petersburg by Catherine the Great in 1782.

5. Vyacheslav Ivánov (1866-1949) was one of the most prominent of the Russian symbolist poets, literary critics, and philosophers.

6. *The Hero of Our Time* is a novel written by Mikhail Lermontov in 1840 that started the tradition of the Russian psychological novel. It is also considered to be the pinnacle of Lermontov's prose and one of the most influential Russian novels of the first half of the nineteenth century.

7. *Weltanschauung* is a concept, fundamental for German philosophy and epistemology, that refers to a wide-world perception.

8. He is second after Hamlet who, as we know today, appeared between 1599 and 1602.

9. Konstantin Balmont (1867-1942) was a Russian symbolist poet, literary critic, and translator. Due to his immigration from Soviet Russia, his name was forgotten for many years and his translations, often excellent, were not published. Only at the end of the 1980s did his name regain popularity and love among a new generation of Russians.

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Odious Caribbean Women and the Palpable Aesthetics of Transgression. By Gladys M. Francis. Lexington Books, 2017. xxiv + 153 pp. $90.00 (hardcover).

The body has long served as a powerful point of departure for scholars pursuing questions of gender and sexuality, power, phenomenology, and subjectivity, to name but a few. The diverse and interdisciplinary attention the body has garnered makes the originality of Gladys M. Francis's approach and theoretical framework in *Odious Caribbean Women and the Palpable Aesthetics of Transgression* all the more noteworthy. At the heart of the book is Francis's theory of "corpomemorial tracing," which she defines as a process emerging from a sensorial aesthetic that forces readers to engage and participate in a dialogue about "painful embodied black experiences" (xiv). According to Francis, the "odious" depictions of the black female body in pain in different literary and visual productions and performances create the foundation for "conscientious witnessing and agency, rather than otiose spectatorship," and thereby resist forms of commodification rooted in shock culture (xiv).

The book's introduction provides a cogent framework of the author's theory of corpomemorial tracing that structures her readings of novels, plays, paintings, and performance pieces by Caribbean women artists and their evocations of the body's uncertain pleasures and pains. She elucidates the sensorial aesthetic that generates crucial countervailing images and imagery to longstanding stereotypes of French Caribbean women as hedonistic, exotic, and beautiful. She thus proposes a hermeneutics of the body that serves to dismantle the dynamics of power and commodification that overdetermine the historical, aesthetic, and cultural conditions of black Caribbean women within colonial, post-colonial, and neocolonial contexts. In the four chapters that follow, Francis will effectively develop her notion of corpomemorial tracing by drawing from an array of feminist, gender and sexuality, cultural, performance, and embodiment theories.

In the first chapter, Francis contextualizes Gerty Dambury's *Les Rétifs*, Gisèle Pineau's *Cent vies et des poussières*, and Fabienne Kanor's *D'eaux douces* within the ambiguous political and cultural status of France's Overseas Departments. Through a feminist cultural studies lens concentrating on historiography, memory, witnessing, and suffering bodies, Francis elucidates the tensions between the French Antilles and the former colonial power and how these relations "are experienced by female characters who are dominated, degraded, or silenced" (9). In particular, she connects her close readings of

these novels to a compelling argument about the ethics and power structures underpinning the beholding of bodies in pain, and thereby underscores how these writers complicate the reading experience. Chapter two focuses on textual representations of performance and the "palpable mode of constructing, imaging, and imagining the female body in pain" they transmit (27). The first section of the chapter looks to illustrations of Caribbean dance and music in Sylvaine Dampierre's film *Le Pays à l'envers* and Maryse Condé's play *Pension les Alizés* as creolizing counter discourses to mainstream configurations of the Caribbean "as an exotic and ecstatic space" (44). The chapter's second section examines Simone Schwarz-Bart's novel *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle* and Ina Césaire's play *Mémoire d'isles*. It focuses to good effect on how these texts showcase kinesthetic remembrance and storytelling as strategies that recuperate black people's histories all while shedding light on "the causes that disrupt or reinforce the formation by black bodies of community and resistance" (54). The third chapter is particularly successful because it makes the book's strongest point about transgressive representations of Caribbean women that "de-sexualize and/or de-objectify the black female body" (61). Francis leads her readers through cogent analyses of consumerism and shock-driven culture in order to demonstrate how Pineau's *Cent vies et des poussières*, Kanor's *Humus*, Dambury's *Trames*, and Miriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* prompt new methodologies of reading that prevent the commodification of their texts, and, consequently, the black women's bodies and lives that populate their writings. The fourth chapter further deepens the book's interdisciplinary scope by looking at "scandalous and ecstatic female characters" in Condé's *Pension les Alizés* and Kanor's novels *Humus* and *D'eaux douces* and performance *Le Corps de l'histoire* from the vantage point of the art of Picasso, Mambour, and Gauguin, as well as Caribbean painters Béatrice Mélina and Michel Rovélas (91). Drawing from Julia Kristeva's theory, Francis deploys the notion of "transgressive *jouissance*" (91) to draw intriguing links between literary and artistic representations of black women's sexuality. In so doing, she goes to the heart of aesthetic questions concerning black women's bodies and the ways in which the writers she studies resist reassuring notions of the female form.

In the end, Francis blends her innovative theory of corpomemorial tracing with multiple theoretical strands, creating a novel framework for grappling with enduring questions about "repugnant chapters of our shared history" (xiv). Through her rich historical and cultural analyses of Caribbean dance, song, and visual art, and readings of lesser-known artists, films, and underexamined texts by Condé and Pineau, Francis accomplishes a complex and nuanced study of the

French Caribbean. It is in fact this striking interdisciplinary scope that makes *Odious Caribbean Women and the Palpable Aesthetics of Transgression* a valuable resource for scholars interested in multiple forms of Caribbean cultural expression, as well as those interested in body studies, gender and sexuality, and Francophone postcolonial identities.

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A Study of Scarletts: *Scarlett O'Hara and Her Literary Daughters*. By Margaret Donovan Bauer. The University of South Carolina University Press, 2014. 159 pp. $29.95 (paper).

Arguing that the South's most iconic literary heroine deserves a more sympathetic response than readers of Margaret Mitchell's novel and viewers of David O. Selznick's film *Gone with the Wind* have afforded her, Margaret D. Bauer presents a feminist-oriented critical analysis of Scarlett O'Hara as she appears in the 1936 novel. After an initial chapter defending Scarlett as a stalwart provider undeserving of her reputation as shrew, Bauer provides intertextual readings of four other novels whose female protagonists parallel Scarlett in their resistance to limited roles. Strong women in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Ellen Glasgow's *Barren Ground*, Toni Morrison's *Sula*, and Kat Meads's *The Invented Life of Kitty Duncan* expose society's double standard concerning men's and women's behavior, several of them countering the heterosexual romance plot with nurturing female friendships. Bauer's study of Scarlett O'Hara and her literary descendants sheds new light on Margaret Mitchell's seminal portrayal of (southern) womanhood as it advances the conversation about gender stereotypes that continue to plague societies world-wide.

Bauer rightly emphasizes that Selznick's 1939 film omits much of the novel's characterization, resulting in a Scarlett more selfish and petty than Mitchell's. Grounding her interpretations in the novel's text, Bauer contends that the heroine acts unselfishly, marrying for money to save

Tara, providing for her family, and following her business sense in ways that earn men acclaim. Analyses of male leads and of Scarlett's mother provide evidence for a sympathetic reading of this young woman's search for sustaining love in a time of war. Ashley Wilkes, Rhett Butler, and Ellen Robillard O'Hara all fail Scarlett, ultimately, leaving Melanie Wilkes's deeper acceptance of Scarlett as a human being to form the basis for the most satisfying relationship in the novel.

Women's friendship creates the most productive connection in *Cold Mountain* as well, a fact that the movie version of Frazier's Civil War novel again fails to depict satisfactorily, according to Bauer, because heterosexual romance continues to dominate our culture's assumptions concerning happy lives. Seeing in Ada Monroe and Ruby Thewes "Scarlett and Melanie Redux," Bauer argues compellingly that the 1997 novel provides an uplifting beyond-the-romance-plot ending, with women finding a life of contentment outside the traditional fairy tale ideology of marriage. References to Rhett Butler enhance explorations of Frazier's soldier W.P. Inman and analysis of Ada's finding her own identity.

Organized according to the novels' settings, *A Study of Scarletts* moves from the Civil War to Glasgow's post-Reconstruction era *Barren Ground* and then to Morrison's *Sula,* a novel beginning just after World War I. Notable intersections establish these books' links to *Gone with the Wind*, including evidence that Mitchell read Glasgow's novel shortly before writing her own. Bauer sees in Dorinda Oakley the prototype for Scarlett O'Hara, both tradition-breaking survivors whose similar mothers model the unhappy effects of women's drudgery and limited opportunities for fulfillment. Many parallels and correlating scenes support Bauer's reading of *Barren Ground* as influence for *Gone with the Wind*, including the valuing of land that leads these heroines, their notions of romance dashed, to find solace in working the soil. This analysis of Dorinda Oakley counters early criticism of Glasgow's heroine that painted her as a failure, alone at the novel's end, a critique that discounts her dairy farming success. Morrison's novel likewise interrogates social attitudes towards unattached women and also, more openly than Mitchell's, towards women's friendship. Bauer's discussion of parallels between love triangles, the privileging of marriage over friendship, and men's weaknesses in *Sula* and *Gone with the Wind* leads to a logical defense of rule-breaker Sula. At the end of Morrison's novel, Sula's double Nel Wright Greene realizes that it is really the female bond with Sula that she misses, not her ex-husband Jude. In all the books Bauer discusses, she argues that women protagonists may be better off without unworthy men.

A novel by a little-known author now living in California, eastern North Carolina native Kat Meads, concludes Bauer's exploration of Scarlett's literary daughters. A fictional biography, *The Invented Life of Kitty Duncan (Benedict Roberts Duncan*) portrays a 1960s-era young woman determined to live on her own terms. Bauer calls Kitty an "evolved Scarlett" (117) in that she, unlike her prototype, cares nothing about her mother's disapproval of her seemingly self-centered behavior. Meads's novel implies that the South has continued for more than a century after *Gone with the Wind* "to hold onto its narrow sense of propriety," and Bauer implores readers who "balk at Kitty Duncan's audacious behavior" (119) to consider whether it is not the South, and by extension the larger society, that needs to transform, rather than the women resisting gender constraints. Kitty's maternal skills, her mother's influence, and her attitude toward sexuality form the core of her comparison to Scarlett O'Hara, with a focus on women's need to find fulfillment in meaningful activity, not in shallow social appearances. At novel's end, Kitty's willingness for her lesbian daughter to be what she needs to be signals the unconditional love that all the women in these five novels have sought.

A Study of Scarletts reminds us that leading fulfilling lives need not depend upon meeting social norms. Its thorough tracing of parallels among men in *Gone with the Wind* and men in the other novels whose female protagonists follow Scarlett's independence supports its sympathetic readings of bold women. Bauer's frequent references to published criticism of Mitchell's, Frazier's, Glasgow's, and Morrison's fiction provide important critical context and enhance her plea for the place of Meads's work among the better known novels. A significant contribution to southern and women's studies, this book forces a continued examination of cultural definitions of good women and bad as it broadens our understanding of the value of women's community.

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