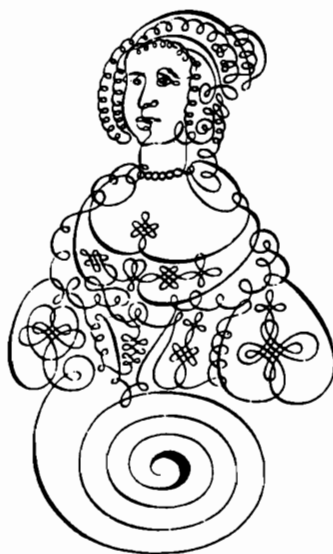


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A Journal for Critical Debate



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Crucifixion Imagery in *Paradise Lost*

CLAY DANIEL

Milton in *Paradise Lost* has appeared to avoid the subject of the Crucifixion because he includes only a brief, orthodox account of the “cursed death . . . shameful and accurst” of Jesus (12.406, 413).¹ Michael even metaphorically reassigns this crucifixion to Adam’s—and God’s—enemies: “But to the Cross he nails thy Enemies . . . and the sins / Of all mankind” (12.415-18). This, however, is much more than terse restatement of Christian dogma. It points to Milton’s use of Crucifixion imagery to characterize the devils’ punishment in Books 1 and 10. I will comment on this imagery in the following fourteen sections.

I.

Him the Almighty Power
Hurl’d headlong flaming from th’Ethereal Sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent to Arms.
Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
To mortal men, hee with his horrid crew
Lay vanquisht . . . (1.44-52)

Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, which according to tradition was where the Tree of Knowledge grew, where Eve was tempted and Adam was buried.² Milton suggests all of these traditions by describing Satan as bound with “Adamantine Chains” (1.47). The devils’ violent pitching from Heaven suggests another Crucifixion event, often represented in mystery plays, such as *The Wakefield Crucifixion*: Jesus cast down onto his cross and nailed,

For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debdaniel00802.htm>>.

like the devils, “prone” (*PL* 1.192).³ This amplification also is evident in the statement that the devils are being tormented for “nine times the space that measures Day and Night” (1.50), which compares with the death of Jesus in the ninth hour (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33-34; Luke 23:44). In accord with Mosaic law, Jesus is not permitted to “remain all night upon the tree” (Deut. 21:23). Neither is Satan allowed to remain on the fiery lake, as the same dull twilight extends through “the space” that would have measured night and day.

II.

No light, but rather darkness visible
 Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all; but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed
 With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
 Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
 For those rebellious . . . (1.63-71)

“Darkness visible,” rather than darkened visibility, continues the parody of light. It emulates the “darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour” during Jesus’ crucifixion (Luke 23:44-45). Yet Satan does not merely perish under an obscured sun—he is an eclipsed, punned sun (1.594-99). Golgotha (“a place of a Skull” [Matt. 27:33]) supposedly resembled a skull and was the burial place of skulls (including Adam’s). Hell’s “regions of sorrow” are similarly dismal, “a universe of death” (2.622). The “torture” that the devils receive here is the punishment for their “rebelliousness,” for provoking Heaven’s king, which recalls that Jesus was crucified for challenging the princes of this world. Satan is the instigator of “fraud” under the guise of “revolt” in Heaven (*PL* 7.143-44, 1.33). Satan will repeat this pattern on earth as the “first Grand Thief” (*PL* 4.188) and as the “Thief of Paradise” (*PR* 4.604). Appropriately, Milton characterizes his punishment in terms of crucifixion, which was “the death penalty for ‘robbers’ . . . and for martyrs.”⁴

III.

If thou beest hee; But O how fall'n! how chang'd

...

Thus Satan talking to his nearest Mate
With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood . . . (1.84, 192-96)

Satan's first words suggest that the devils have undergone a "torture" similar to that which leaves the crucified Jesus unrecognizable (John 20:14-15). Milton, in his most obvious use of crucifixion imagery, uses "rood" to characterize the devils' suffering. A crucial detail of this description reiterates that Satan is immobilized "With Head up-lift above the wave" (1.193). This painful position was omnipresent in Medieval and Renaissance representations of the Crucifixion. These representations, such as in *The York Mystery Plays*, were based on Matthew 8:20, often cited as Jesus' prophecy of the crucifixion:

For foxes their dens have they,
Birds have their nests to pay,
But the son of man this day
Has nought his head on for to rest. (192-95)⁵

Psalm 110:7 is often cited as a prophecy of this torture: "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head." This Psalm often was paired with Psalm 69:1-3: "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God." These psalms were read as a prophecy of Jesus being cast into the "foul pool" of Cedron (or Kidron) on his way to the cross.⁶ *Cedron* literally translates as "the 'turbid' stream" or the "shady" and "black brook."⁷ Milton's Hell is more fire than dirt ("stench and smoke" [1.237]), but the "dismal Situation waste and wild, / A Dungeon horrible" (1.60-61) clearly retains the tradition of Hell's polluted waters: As Edward Taylor writes in his "78. Meditation. Zech. 9.11. By the Blood of thy Covenant I have sent forth thy Prisoners out of the Pit

wherein is no water": "This Pit indeed's Sins Filthy Dungeon State, / No water's in't, but filth, and mire, Sins juyce" (13-14).⁸

Finally in relation to this passage, this self-proclaimed "Son of God," like Jesus, is seemingly abandoned by his Father. Satan, however, succumbs to the temptation with which Jesus was taunted: to prove that he is Messiah-King-Son of God by saving himself from the cross (Matt. 27:38-44, Mark 15:29-32, Luke 23:35-38). He will decide to substantiate his royal claims by escaping his cross and renewing the conflict. His first step in this direction is to encourage his first auditor in a parody of Jesus' encouragement of the sympathetic thief (Milton's focusing on two figures in this scene implies two thieves and no Messiah). Satan tells his fellow sufferer to flee the ignominy of his "crucifixion." He promises him not a paradise attained by faithful endurance but a "dreary Plain" gained by escape (1.180). Later, of course, he adds promises of paradise (re)-gained.

IV.

... or that Sea-beast

Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim in th' Ocean stream:
Him haply slumb'ring on the *Norway* foam
The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,
Deeming some Island, oft, as Seamen tell,
With fixed Anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the Lee (1.200-207)

The cross often was identified with an anchor, as in Donne's "To Mr. George Herbert, with my Seal, of the Anchor and Christ," a Latin poem published with his *Workes* (1650). Donne writes that the "Crosse grows an Anchor too. / But he that makes our Crosses Anchors thus, / Is Christ, who there is crucifi'd for us" (8-10).⁹ Milton suggests hope, as represented by Crucifixion, imperiously stuck onto Satan—by a Pilot/Pilate no less. The suggestion of crucifixion is enhanced by Milton's scriptural sources for this description: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent" (Isa. 27:1); "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which

thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?" (Job 41:1-2). In the first scripture, leviathan-Satan is a serpent, the implications of which will be discussed below. In regard to the second scripture, Milton's transformation of the crocodile/sea-monster into a whale invites a comparison of Satan's predicament to the swallowing of Jonah, which was read as a type of the death and resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 12:38-41).¹⁰

V.

His spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
Hewn on *Norwegian* hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand;
... (1.292-94)

Masts were commonly compared to crosses: "Swimme, and at every stroake, thou art thy Crosse; / The Mast and yard make one, where seas do tosse" (Donne, "The Crosse" 19-20). Spurning his tortuous chains, Satan's wielding his spear/mast/cross suggests a comparison to the obedient, passive Jesus, "King of the Jews," being mocked with a sceptre (Matt. 27:29, Mark 15:17-19). Flourishing his spear/mast/cross, Satan perverts the Christian tradition of the cross as a trophy: "Cross was a triumph; it was a trophy of distinction."¹¹

VI.

They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. (1.331-34)

Milton's metaphor echoes biblical warnings to watch for the coming of Christ. It similarly suggests that Satan uses his cross/sceptre/spear (when not using it as crutch [1.295-97]) to conduct his own version of sleepers awake. The deathlike angels who once slept on "th' oblivious Pool" (1.266),

"the sleepy drench / Of that forgetful Lake" (2.73-74), hectically respond to the alarm of Satan's call and the direction of his "uplifted Spear" (1.347). This massive re-animation mimics Jesus' death cry raising the sleeping dead: "... now by a voice He raised them, His body continuing up there, on the cross."¹² It also parodies the circumstances set forth in Calvin's commentary on John 18:5:

We may infer from this how dreadful and alarming to the wicked the voice of Christ will be, when he shall ascend his throne to judge the world ... his majesty, so far as outward appearance was concerned, was utterly gone; and yet when he utters but a single word, his armed and courageous enemies fall down.¹³

Significantly, it is Satan's followers (adorers [PL 2.477-99]) who fear the sound of his voice. This contrast is evident in other ways. When Jesus' disciples are "drowned in despondency, as not to have any sense even of His presence," he "doth not awake and rebuke them again, lest He should smite them that were already smitten."¹⁴ Satan actively involves his followers in his further ruin and agony; and he actually calls the "legions" (PL 1.299-301) of angels that Jesus refused to call (Matthew 26:53). The uplifting of banners and "A Forest huge of Spears" (PL 1.547) indicates that these devils too, in rejecting their punishments, have transformed their crosses into satanic "Trophies" (1.539). Not only does each devil carry a spear/tree/cross, but Milton actually compares the devils to trees, "As when Heaven's Fire / Hath scath'd the Forest Oaks, or Mountain Pines" (1.612-13); and, in the famous simile, Milton compares them to fallen leaves (1.301-05).¹⁵ This suggests that these charred tree-devils have rejected "ingrafting in Christ," effected by baptism and often represented by tree metaphor (Romans 11:17).¹⁶ The military imagery suggests that the devils have become their own Roman guard, which has become legion.

VII.

As when the potent Rod
Of Amram's Son in Egypt's evil day
Wav'd round the Coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud
Of Locusts, . . . (1.338-41)

Developing the analogy between the devils on Hell's lake and Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (1.304-11), Milton compares Satan's "uplifted Spear" (1.347) to "the potent Rod / Of Amram's Son" (338-39). This highlights another connection between the devils' punishments and the Crucifixion. The Crossing of the Red Sea often was linked with the Passion, and the emphasis on "rod" tends to interlace the stripes of the Passion, the punishment of the devils, and the "scourging" of Pharaoh.¹⁷ The Son's driving of the devils out of Heaven repeatedly is characterized as scourging—or "custody severe, / And stripes" (2.333-34), as Beëlzebub, relying on previous experience, forecasts the devils' "arbitrary punishment" in Hell. Abdiel had warned Satan that God had turned his "Golden Sceptre" into "an Iron Rod to bruise and break" him (5.886-87). The scourging implications of "Rod" are developed more fully when the Son "full of wrath" (6.826) drives the devils from Heaven. The Son is described as "in his right hand / Grasping ten thousand Thunders, which he sent / Before him" (6.835-37), working as an electric whip, "Among th' accurst, that wither'd all thir strength, / And of their wonted vigor left them drain'd, / Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n" (6.850-58). This vividly resembles the Son's own exhausting march to Golgotha. Gabriel later threatens Satan—apprehended in another paradise—with scourging for escaping Hell (providing an appropriate retort to Beëlzebub's admonition that the devils will receive "stripes" for remaining in Hell): "So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath, / Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight / Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell" (4.912-14).¹⁸

Scourging also is apparent in the only other threat of returning Satan to Hell. Death, insisting that he is Hell's "King . . . / King and Lord," menaces Satan, "Back to thy punishment, / False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings, / Lest with a whip of Scorpions I pursue / Thy ling'ring" (2.698-702). Milton here alludes to Jesus being beaten with a whip called a scorpion.¹⁹ His source is Rheoboam's threat in I Kings 12:11: "My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions"²⁰: "This saying is explained by the Targum and Syriac as meaning 'scourges,' probably correctly. The Romans used a scourge made of a long bag of leather filled tightly with sand and studded with spikes and called this 'the scorpion.'"²¹ Within the context of the Crucifixion, this definition of

"scorpion" is more aptly read in context with Pilate rather than with Rheoboam.

The comparison of Satan's directing "uplifted Spear" to the rod of Moses, together with the comparison of the devils in the flood to Pharaoh's "*Memphian Chivalry*," whom the "waves o'erthrew" (1.306-07), evokes baptism and its connection with the Passion:

The safe passage of the chyldren of Israel thorow the red sea, and all the power of Pharao drowned in the same, sygnifieth mankynd passyng oute of the dyuels daunger, thorowe the water of baptism, the sacrament takyng his force of the red blood of Christ that he shed upon hys bytter passion, and all the diuels power vsurped vppon vs before, and laboryng to keepe vs styll, drowned and destroyed in the water of baptisme, and the red bloode of Christes passion.²²

As suggested here, the baptismal blood of Jesus sometimes was represented as a flood flowing from his pierced side.²³ This second flood, instead of extinguishing mankind, redeemed it and extinguished the devils. The blood's healing properties were celebrated in the Grail narratives, and it was seen as the source for the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.²⁴

Milton himself writes in *De Doctrina Christiana* that "the type of Baptism, before the Mosaic law, was Noah's Ark."²⁵ The floating Satan echoes this patristic identification of the cross as a ship, and this ship as Noah's Ark (Old Testament) or the Church (New Testament) in which alone the faithful could withstand the "tempests of temptation."²⁶ As Donne writes in "A Hymne to Christ, at the Authors last going into Germany":

In what torne ship soever I embarke,
That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke;
What sea soever swallow mee, that flood
Shall be to mee an embleme of thy blood. (1-4)

The baptismal blood that flowed from the side of Jesus revived the Church that awaited Jesus as his bride—as Eve awaited Adam—at his opened side. At Satan's opened side are "the universal [and punned] Host" (1.541), "welt'ring" (1.78) on the burning lake. In addition to "toss about on waves," this verb means, "to wither," which recalls the scourging that "wither'd all their strength." "Welter" also can denote "to roll or lie prostrate (*in*

one's blood); hence (hyperbolically) to be soaked with blood and gore."²⁷ The lake of hell, in contrast with the healing, cleansing blood of Jesus, is the tainted, tainting blood of Satan. The devils are described as death-like in this "flood" (1.239, 312, 324). Satan himself withers in this lake, soaked and mocked in his purple robe (his blood), as Jesus was often represented.²⁸

Though primarily focusing on the negative aspects of Hell's liquid, Milton also suggests an identification of the fiery lake with the holy waters of baptism (a baptism of fire, no less). As Taylor declares, the "Covenantall blood. / Which when it touches, oh! the happy Cry! / The doores fly ope. Now jayle's Deliverir" ("78 Meditation" 22-24). This connection between the burning lake and the waters of baptism suggests that stiff-necked Satan begins his mission to destroy mankind with a perversion of the event that begins the ministry of Jesus to save it. Milton develops this point in a number of ways that evoke baptism "as a symbol for Christ's painful life, his death and his burial, in which he was, so to speak, immersed for a time."²⁹ Jesus himself characterized his crucifixion as a baptism: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened til it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50; also Mark 11:38). Milton cites these verses, and 1 Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27, Rom. 6:3, Col. 2:12, to support his belief that those who are baptized must be completely immersed in water:

AT BAPTISM THE BODIES OF BELIEVERS WHO PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO PURITY OF LIFE ARE IMMERSSED IN RUNNING WATER. THIS IS TO SIGNIFY OUR REGENERATION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ALSO OUR UNION WITH CHRIST THROUGH HIS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.³⁰

Satan founders in a perverse baptism or refusal of baptism. Chrysostom had written that "as we easily dip and lift our heads again, so He [Jesus] also easily died and rose again when He willed, or rather much more easily, though He tarried the three days for the dispensation of a certain mystery."³¹ Satan scorns to dip his head. He is one of those who has "counted the blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has scorned the spirit of grace; II Pet. ii. 1; even denying the Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves."³²

VIII.

Rous'd from the slumber on that fiery Couch
At thir great Emperor's call . . . (1.377-78)

Satan had taunted the devils that continued to endure their "torture" (1.67) with the possibility that the Son's angels would "with linked Thunderbolts / Transfix" these docile devils to the "bottom" of their "Gulf" (1.328-29)—such as in the manner of Caiaphas in Canto 23 of *Inferno*. The devils are then "Rous'd from the slumber on that fiery Couch" (1.377). This description ironically alludes to Ambrose's words on those who refuse Jesus as the Messiah. These creatures pollute, rather than rest on, the "paternal couch" of the cross:

Rather, let them do penance for their offenses, for it was a hard people that went up to its father's bed and polluted a holy couch. That is, it fastened the flesh of our Lord Jesus, our Creator, to the gibbet of the cross, on which His saints rest with the refreshment of salvation as if on a kind of bed and paternal couch.³³

Prompted by Satan's taunts as well as his "miracle" of escape, the devils similarly spurn the baptism of the Lord and the "resting place" of their crosses. Instead, the devils are "baptized" in Satan's "blood," becoming his "church."³⁴

IX.

Then straight commands that at the warlike sound
Of Trumpets loud and Clarions be uprear'd
His mighty Standard; that proud honor claim'd
Azazel at his right, a Cherub tall:
. . . (1.531-34)

The reasons for this puzzling choice for standard-bearer become clearer within the context of the Crucifixion.³⁵ Jesus often was identified with the scapegoat of the Day of Atonement: "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Lev. 16:22); and "in Lev. xvi, 20, *Azazel* is the word

signifying the scapegoat which annually carried the sins of Israel into the wilderness."³⁶ Milton explicitly compares the devils to "a Herd / Of Goats" (6.856-57), scourged from Heaven to their crucifixion in the "land not inhabited" of Hell. This identification also suggests the second of the two goats used to expiate sin, the sacrificial goat of the Day of Atonement, which was distinguished from Azazel by casting lots. This goat's blood was sprinkled "within the veil" of the Ark (Lev. 16:14-15). Echoing Hebrews 10.4, Michael later comments on this as a type of the Crucifixion when he discusses "those shadowy expiations weak, / The blood of Bulls and Goats" (12.291-92).

X.

At which the universal Host upsent
A shout that tore Hell's Concave, and beyond
Frighted the Reign of *Chaos* and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand Banners rise into the Air. (1.541-45)

The revived beast-devils' first noise after their release from their crosses parodies the last shout of Jesus on his cross (which, again, was often interpreted as raising the dead):

The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. (Matthew 27:49-52)

Milton comments on this episode: "During the earthquake (which was on the same day, not three days after, as is commonly believed) the graves were opened and the dead arose and came out . . . they eventually entered the holy city, after the resurrection of Christ."³⁷ These events convince the bystanders that "truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54). The epic events, marking the revival of the devils, support the claims that the devils are still "Sons of God." To support this point, Milton alludes ironically

to Ezekiel 11:22-23, verses that were interpreted by Church Fathers as prophecies of the tearing of the temple veil: "Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city": "Eusebius, St. Jerome, and others report, that with this earthquake at the Passion, the doors of the Temple flew open, and that the tutelar angels were heard to cry, 'Let us remove from this place.'"³⁸

The earthquake and the opening of the graves often were linked with the Harrowing of Hell. Though incorporated into the Apostles' Creed, this event has scant New Testament support. Milton, who believed that Jesus was completely dead for three days, calls this episode the source of "that peevish controversy about Christ's descent into hell."³⁹ However, Milton's belief in the spurious nature of this episode—as perhaps with the other patristic traditions concerning crucifixion—would have rendered it more appropriate for characterizing Satan in his role as a false messiah.

In 1 Peter 3:19-21, the evangelist describes the Harrowing of Hell:

By which also he [Jesus] went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us

In addition to highlighting the connection between baptism, crucifixion, and Noah's Ark, this verse suggests that Jesus baptized those whom he freed from Hell. Satan had conducted his own "baptism" of the devils with his spear-mast-cross in "thir Prison ordained / In utter darkness" (1.71-72), and then preached his own gospel of escape to the "captive multitude" of "This place our dungeon" (2.323, 317) as Beëlzebub says in expositing Satan's plan "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isaiah 42.7).

Satan's predicament appears similarly parodic in relation to Isaiah 45.2-3, another scriptural source for the Harrowing of Hell:

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayst know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

This scripture stresses that salvation comes only through the Lord, and it provides an ironic context for Satan's rescue of the devils. He, not God, offers Eve a different treasure of darkness. That they may know that he is a messiah, Satan will ensure a straight way across chaos. The causeway is built by Sin and Death (as Satan dutifully reports to the faithful [10.472-74]), who guard the gates of Hell. Jesus' breaking these gates was a standard facet of accounts of his Harrowing of Hell. Of course, Jesus breaks into Hell, while Satan breaks out of it. Satan effects his escape by using the same means with which Christians were accused of "resurrecting" Jesus: the guards are bribed. To cap this parody, the bribe itself is the satanic equivalent of one of Jesus' miracles. Where Jesus feeds the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, Satan will feed Death with two humans who will produce an entire race on which to feast.⁴⁰

XI.

At last as from a Cloud his fulgent head
And shape Star-bright appear'd, or brighter, clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter . . . (10.449-52)

After ten books of epic effort, Satan returns to complete the resurrection of his believers out of their grave/prison. Satan replicates his own resurrection by becoming invisible and then "Star-bright appear'd, or brighter" as he "Ascended his high Throne" of "regal lustre" (10.445-50). This parodies the Ascension of the Son as well as the invisibility of the Father that is caused by his excessive brightness (3.375-82).

XII.

His Visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
 His arms clung to his Ribs, his Legs entwining
 Each other, till supplanted down he fell
 A monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone,
 Reluctant, but in vain: a greater power
 Now rul'd him, punisht in the shape he sinn'd,
 According to his doom: he would have spoke,
 But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
 To forked tongue, for now were all transform'd
 Alike, to Serpents . . . (10.511-20)

Believe, Satan says, and follow him into an everlasting life of "full bliss" (10.503), just as according to Christian tradition the spirits of the dead entered the "holy city" after the resurrection of Jesus.⁴¹ The "Universe of death" (2.622) then is filled with a "universal hiss" (10.508). It then becomes clear that Satan has succeeded in making himself, and his faithful, a kind of "worm's meat": "One has Christ for his King; the other, sin and the devil; the food of one is Christ, of the other, that meat which decays and perishes; one has worms' meat for raiment, the other the Lord of angels."⁴² In Book 9, Satan had willingly entangled himself with this form of death in his "foul descent" into "bestial slime" (9.163-65), a transformation that is not so much a parody of Jesus' incarnation as it is a parody of his death. Satan that "to the highth of Deity aspir'd (9.167) becomes a worm—another form of "bestial slime"—before he and his followers escape hell. In Book 10, Satan verges on permanent death. He has incurred the very thing that Jesus avoided: having a "waste of time / Resolve this Heavenly Figure into slime" (Sandys, *Christ's Passion* 5.107-08).

Satan's transformation into a snake fulfills only one part of his "doom" (10.175-81), as announced by the Son: "Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go," eating dust. The primary punishment of Satan is absent, the bruising of his head by the woman's seed; nor is there anything in the scene that represents enmity between man and Satan. Instead, the devils' "doom" also refers to their initial punishment (and the "fated" futility of attempting to avert it).

The serpent-encrusted tree and the hissing snake-pit of Hell also point to another frequently cited prophecy of the Crucifixion, Lam. 2:16: "All

thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it." The devils had "opened their mouth against" the Lord. Now, like Jesus before Pilate, they do not answer to the charges against them—though the devils "would have spoke" (10.517). Instead, they are forced wordlessly to mock themselves.

XIII.

There stood
 A Grove hard by, sprung up with this thir change,
 His will who reigns above, to aggravate
 Thir penance, laden with fair Fruit, like that
 Which grew in Paradise, the bait of *Eve*
 Us'd by the Tempter: on that prospect strange
 Thir earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining
 For one forbidden Tree a multitude
 Now ris'n, to work them funder woe or shame;
 Yet parcht with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
 Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
 But on they roll'd in heaps, and up the Trees
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
 That curl'd *Megara*: greedily they pluck'd
 The Fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
 Near the bituminous Lake where *Sodom* flam'd;
 This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
 Deceiv'd; they fondly thinking to allay
 Thir appetite with gust, instead of Fruit
 Chew'd bitter Ashes, which th' offended taste
 With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd,
 Hunger and thirst constraining, drugg'd as oft,
 With hatefulest disrelish writh'd thir jaws
 With soot and cinders fill'd . . . (10.547-570)

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33). Clearly, this generation cannot. To support this point, Milton develops the serpent imagery that was evident in his initial description of the crucified devils.⁴³ Stripped not merely of their clothes

but of their forms, the devils, once more hurled onto the hellish turf, are again forced to endure a punishment characterized with Crucifixion imagery. Milton describes the snakes as "up the Trees / Climbing" (10.558-59), which points to the representation—present in English literature from *Dream of the Rood* through Herbert ("The Sacrifice" 201-04)—of Jesus climbing onto the cross. This ascent suggests that the devils' transformation not only seconds Satan's entering into the serpent (*PL* 9.188) but his entering into Judas (*Luke* 22:3).

This mass of snake-dripping trees recalls Vida's description of Golgotha: ("Everywhere around it, bodies hung from tree trunks, the oozing gore blackening on them"; 5.479-80). Milton more explicitly connects these trees with the Crucifixion by identifying them with the Tree of Knowledge (10.550-55), often identified with the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Milton also compares these trees to those "which grew / Near the bituminous Lake where *Sodom* flam'd" (10.561-62). This links them again with their initial floating crosses on the "burning Lake" (1.210), their own dead sea. As George Sandys describes the Dead Sea in *Christ's Passion*, "In her profound / None are receiv'd, but float undrown'd" (1.239-40). Satan also again echoes the flood of blood from the side of Jesus as a source for the Eucharist. The blood of Satan, functioning as a literally dead sea, has borne its own dead sea fruit fed by the stagnant waters of that sea.

This scene also recalls Chrysostom's commentary on the power of the cross to compel serpents:

For we have, we surely have, spiritual charms, even the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the might of the Cross. This charm will not only bring the serpent out of his lurking places, and cast him into the fire (*Acts* xxviii 5), but even wounds it healeth.⁴⁴

Chrysostom's connection of serpents with healing points to another episode that informs the devils' plight. Jesus had prophesied his crucifixion: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up" (*John* 3.14). According to Richard Hooker,

the serpent spoken of was first erected for the extraordinary and *miraculous cure* of the Israelites in the desert. This use having presently an end when the cause for which God ordained it was once removed, the thing itself they notwith-

standing kept for a *monument of God's mercy*, as in like consideration they did the pot of manna, the rod of Aaron, and the sword which David took from Goliath. In process of time they made of a monument of divine power a plain idol, they burnt incense before it contrary to the law of God, and did it the services of honour due unto God only. Which gross and grievous abuse continued until Ezechias restoring the purity of sound religion, destroyed utterly that which had been so long and so generally a snare unto them.⁴⁵

Seeing the serpent had healed the Israelites who because of their "idolatry . . . were suffering extermination by serpents, except that in this case he [Moses] was exhibiting the Lord's *cross* on which the 'serpent' the devil was 'made a show of.'"⁴⁶ Satan, emerging from invisibility to be seen by, heal, and deliver the devils, is "'made a show of.'" The devils are "Sublime with expectation when to see / In Triumph issuing forth thir glorious Chief" (10.536-37), *sublime* indicating "uplifted."⁴⁷ When the uplifted Satan is seen, he does not heal the devils. Instead, they themselves are turned into snakes, "uplifted" as crucified and suffering serpents.

The devils' plight is rendered more dire since they are "parcht with scalding thirst" (10.556). In a stern reminder that Jewish law forbade drinking on the Day of Atonement, they are mocked with refreshment. Constrained to spit upon themselves, they enact a variation of the mocking of Jesus. Their becoming "drugg'd" by their partial ingestion (568), though it can mean "nauseated," also is based on the account in Mark 15:23 that the drink offered to, and refused by, Jesus contained a sedative.⁴⁸ This reference to the drugged drink again recalls the devils' initial suffering in Hell. Cast from Heaven, they "weltered" in the Cedronic mire of Hell. They withered on that "oblivious pool" (1.266), "benumb[ed]" in "the sleepy drench / Of that forgetful Lake" (2.73-74). "Drench"—in addition to representing a blood-soaked Satan—denotes a "soporific drink."⁴⁹

The devils' hapless attempts to eat the fruit and drink the narcotic also evoke the response of Jesus to Peter, when he attempted to avert the Crucifixion: "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). It also alludes to Mark 10:38 (which Milton cites as identifying baptism with crucifixion). Denying James and John the right to sit beside him in glory, Jesus asks, "Ye know not what you ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The parodic aspect of the devils' plight is enhanced by Milton's allusions to Psalm 69 and Psalm 22, prophecies of the crucifixion. According to Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34, Jesus on the cross quotes the first line of Psalm 22. Psalm 22 portends the mocking of Jesus (Matt. 27:39, Mark 15:31), and the division of Jesus' clothes (Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:24).⁵⁰ Psalm 22 is compellingly ironic within Milton's account of Satan's crucifixion: "But I am a worm, and no man" (6); "But thou art he who took me out of the womb [of Hell]" (9); "I am poured out like water" (14); "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (15); and "All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him" (29).

These psalms also serve as a two-handed engine. Their description of the Crucifixion applies to Satan's torment, but the psalmist's imprecations upon enemies would seem to light more readily on the crucified devils of *Paradise Lost* rather than on the actual crucifiers of Jesus, whom he forgave. The characterization of the crucifiers of Jesus as bulls, lions, dogs, and unicorns (Psalm 22) backgrounds the beast imagery in the catalogue of devils in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost*. These devil-beasts are to be "blotted out of the book of the living," "darkened, that they see not," overtaken by God's "wrathful anger," and set to dwell in desolation (Psalm 69.23-28).

XIV.

Thus were they plagu'd
And worn with Famine long, and ceaseless hiss,
Till thir lost shape, permitted, they resum'd,
Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling . . . (10.572-76)

God, then, resurrects the "worm's meat" (unlike the Son, who resurrects himself with the Father's help).⁵¹ God's effort seems as scornful as it is graceful: Satan's resurrection is quietly "permitted."⁵² God in a single off-hand moment attains and demeans Satan's epic adventure at nothing less

than existence. It is reduced to an "annual humbling," an infernal Easter—or so "some say" (10.574-76).

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NOTES

¹In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton calls crucifixion "a supreme disgrace." Quoting Deut. 21:23, Milton writes that Jesus as "the hanged man is accursed in the sight of God, and the curse due to us was transferred to him, Gal. iii. 13, along with the horrifying awareness of divine anger being poured upon him, an awareness that led to that dying cry, Matt. xxvii. 46: *my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" (*The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don Wolfe, vol. 6, *De Doctrina Christiana* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1973] 439). Crucifixion imagery would readily characterize the punishment of Satan since Satan is "accurst / Above all" (*PL* 10.175-76). Citations to Milton's prose will refer to this volume (*CPW*). Citations to Milton's poetry refer to *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957). References to scripture are to the King James Version of the Bible *The Holy Bible* (Oxford: OUP, n.d.). These citations, as well as other multiple citations to poems, will be included in the essay.

²Golgotha is "where the head of Adam was found, which gave the name to that mount; buried in that place where his bones might be sprinkled with the real Blood of our Saviour" (George Sandys, *The Poetical Works*, ed. Rev. Richard Hooper, vol. 2, *Christ's Passion* [1872; rpt. Darmstadt: Georg Olms, 1968] 481n). Also see *Calvin's Commentaries*, transl. Rev. William Pringle, vol. 18, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (1848; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979) 227n.

³"The Wakefield Crucifixion," *Medieval and Tudor Drama*, ed. John Gassner (New York: Bantam, 1963) 158.

⁴*Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993 ed., s.v. "Crucifixion."

⁵"The Death of Christ," *The York Mystery Plays*, ed. Richard Beadle and Pamela King (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).

⁶James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert Publishing Co., 1979) 104-09. For evidence of this tradition in England, Marrow cites Anna Jameson, who in turn cites Jeremy Taylor (*A History of Our Lord as Exemplified in Works of Art*, vol. 2. [London: Longmans, 1890] 44).

⁷*Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, 1963 ed., s.v. "Cedron"; Calvin 190, 190n.

⁸*The Poems of Edward Taylor*, ed. Donald Stanford (New Haven: Yale UP, 1960).

⁹*The Poems of John Donne*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (London: Oxford UP, 1933).

¹⁰The tempest that precipitated Jonah being thrown overboard also was compared to the Crucifixion, such as in Edward Taylor's "Meditation" on these verses.

¹¹Rufinus: *A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*, trans. and annotated by J. N. D. Kelly (London: Longmans, 1955) 48. Origen's commentary on the Book of John and St. Cyril's *The Catechetical Lectures* are listed as Rufinus' precedents (118n).

¹²Chrysostom, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, American Edition, First Series, vol. 10, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* (1888; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975) 521.

¹³Calvin's *Commentaries* 192.

¹⁴Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* 498.

¹⁵The oak often was identified, as in Vida's *Christiad* 5.406-08, as the tree of the Cross (Marco Vida, *The Christiad*, ed. and transl. Gertrude Drake and Clarence Forbes [Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1978]). In "The Passion" (26), Milton had praised Vida's epic.

¹⁶CPW 256; Timothy O'Keefe, *Milton and the Pauline Tradition: A Study of Theme and Symbol* (New York: Oxford UP, 1982) 226-27.

¹⁷Thomas More, for example, writes of "the rodde of God laying the lashes upon him [Pharaoh], yet after the rodde scant remoued, ever more his stubburn pride sprang into his hard hart" (*The Complete Works of Thomas More*, ed. Garry E. Haupt, vol. 13, *A Treatise Upon the Passion* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1976] 59).

¹⁸Satan's contemptuous "Know ye not mee? . . . Not to know me argues yourselves unknown" (4.828-30) also parodies the response of Jesus to Philip: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also . . . Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" (John 14:7-9).

¹⁹Marrow 136-37.

²⁰*Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed., ed. Scott Elledge (New York: Norton, 1993) 52n.

²¹*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 3 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952-57) 115.

²²More 58.

²³See for example Herbert, "Christ on the Cross" in his *Passio Discerpta* (*The Works of George Herbert*, ed F. E. Hutchinson [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941]; and Henry Vaughan's "Admission" 29-32 (Henry Vaughan, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Alan Rudrum [New Haven: Yale UP, 1976]).

²⁴Augustine, *Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, ed. Rev. Marcus Dods, vol. 11, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel According to John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884) 517-18. Calvin comments, "I do not object to what Augustine says, that our sacraments have flowed from Christ's side" (*Calvin's Commentaries* 241).

²⁵CPW 552.

²⁶Augustine, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, American Edition, First series, vol. 1, *St. Augustin: The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin* (1886; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) 52; *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, American Edition, First series, vol. 7, *St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies* (1888; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974) 14; and *A Select Library of*

the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, American Edition, First series, vol. 6, *St. Augustin: Sermon on the Mount, Harmony on the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels* (1888; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) 337.

²⁷OED, s.v. "Welter."

²⁸Isaiah 63:1-3; Herbert, "The Agonie" 7-12; Vaughan, "The Passion" 15-28.

²⁹CPW 550.

³⁰CPW 544, 550.

³¹Chrysostom comments while identifying baptism with the Crucifixion (*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, American Edition, First Series, vol. 14, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John* [1889; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975] 89).

³²CPW 447.

³³Ambrose, *The Fathers of the Church*, trans. Michael McHugh, vol. 65, *St. Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic U of America P, 1972) 246.

³⁴A. C. Labriola discusses the saving power of Jesus' blood in relation to the Church and Adam ("The Aesthetics of Self-Diminution: Christian Iconography and *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 7 [1975]: 279-80).

³⁵Harris Fletcher discusses the many questions presented by Milton's use of Azazel in Milton's *Rabbinical Reading* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1930) 279-300.

³⁶Hughes 225n. John Crossan discusses the connection between the Crucifixion and the scapegoat in *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988) 117-33.

³⁷CPW 412.

³⁸Sandys, *Christ's Passion* 484n.

³⁹CPW 439.

⁴⁰There are other aspects of the Crucifixion that characterize the devils' plight in the epic's first two books. The elaborate, mocking salutes to the devils recalls the "short summary," in three languages, placed on the cross of Jesus, an aspect included in nearly all accounts of the Crucifixion (*Calvin's Commentaries* 229). The militant activity of the devils echoes the response of the angels to the crucifixion of Jesus in Vida's *Christiad*, who arm and prepare to storm out the gates of Heaven to assist the Son (5.510-644). Where Vida's angels are constrained to remain within the gates by the Father, the devils insist on exiting the gates of Hell. Even Satan's defiant "Let it" (*PL* 9.173) is derived from traditions pertaining to Jesus. Nathanael Eaton, addressing "infernal powers," writes of the execution of Jesus, "He being ruined by you ruin'd you" ("On Good Friday" 10, *Sacred Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Rev. R. Cattermole [1836; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1969]).

⁴¹CPW 412.

⁴²Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 89.

⁴³*The Poems of John Milton*, ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 1968) 473n, 474n.

⁴⁴*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Phillip Schaff, American Edition, First Series, vol. 11, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts*

of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans (1889; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) 392.

⁴⁵The Works of Richard Hooker, ed. Rev. R. W. Church and F. Paget, 7th ed., vol. 2, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1888) 330. Hooker notes that this act of Ezechias (or Hezekiah) was often cited by Puritans in their attack on the "idolatry" of the crown.

⁴⁶Tertullian, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Revs. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American Edition, Revised edition, vol. 3, *An Answer to the Jews* (1888; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978) 166.

⁴⁷Carey and Fowler, *The Poems of John Milton* 953n.

⁴⁸Hughes notes "drugg'd" as "nauseated" (420n). The editors of *The Oxford Authors* similarly note, "Nauseated, a usage apparently originating with Milton" (*The Oxford Authors: John Milton*), ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg [New York: Oxford UP, 1991] 911n).

⁴⁹*The Oxford Authors: John Milton* 863n.

⁵⁰See the commentary in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, expanded Revised Standard Edition (New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 1211n, 1237n, 1282n, 1314-15n.

⁵¹Milton's Arianism leads him at least partially to assign the Resurrection to the Father (PL 3.247-51; CPW 440-41). For an argument of the Son's self-resurrection, see Donne's sermon on Easter 1630 in *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. Evelyn Simpson and George Potter, vol. 9 (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1958) 202-03.

⁵²A similar line appears in *Paradise Regained* 1.494-96. Jesus tells Satan, "Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope, / I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st / Permission from above; thou canst not more." Jon Lawry comments, "This speech allusively gives assent to the coming 'permitted' crucifixion" (*The Shadow of Heaven: Matter and Stance in Milton's Poetry* [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1968] 316).

My Career Goes Bung: Genre-Parody, Australianness and Anglophilia

SANJAY SIRCAR

Miles Franklin (1879-1954) entered the Australian canon with her first novel, the realist, nationalist, feminist-“revisioning,” autobiographically-based first-person *My Brilliant Career* (*Career*; 1901, filmed 1979). She followed it with neglected experimental metafictional novels whose heroines are also authorial personae with the same name, Sybylla, but are not the same character. The first is *My Career Goes Bung* (*Bung*; c. 1902-1904, revised c. 1935, published 1946, sets of draft mss. extant). Sybylla II tells how she wrote an imitative *draft* of a novel set in England, and was advised by her schoolmaster Old Harris to draw on her own setting and experience. Her reconceived nameless first-person *novel* (identifiable as *Career*) was published in England; she was lauded and reviled, and invited by rich Mrs Crasterton to Sydney. She rejected the job of newspaper society columnist there, and has returned home to the bush, where she is now writing *Bung*, her actual *autobiography*, and planning to go to England to write there.

Bung has been seen as weak authorial self-plagiarism, “not much more than an echo” (Green [1961] 1984, 694) and also as “more an autobiography, and less of an autobiographical fiction” than *Career* (Perosa 1985, 20, 28). All Franklin’s novels lend themselves to *roman-à-clef* readings, but more importantly *Bung*, a fiction about writing fiction, is both a deflationary parody of *Career* (both are about a trip away from the poor bush, a disappointed return, no marriage) and a genre-parody of cheap English serialised formula fiction, the *Penny Post* novel. The *Post* novel is at the heart of Sybylla II’s *Künstlerroman* growth out of her naïve belief in cheap fiction as a literary model, of the self-directed irony of her *Bildungsroman* growth out of her romantomaniac belief that such fiction validly mirrors the world, and of her social satire. But in ways she does not recognize,

the formulaic *Post* novel does correspond to Sybylla II's own stylised narrative world, partially and ironically, and has a bearing on her expatriate aspirations.

The *Penny Post* novel: a bad literary model, a good prototype for parody

Franklin says in her 1946 preface to *Bung* that at about thirteen, the "enchanted," "trashy novelettes reprinted in the *Supplement to the Goulburn Evening Penny Post*," read secretly, inspired her "imitative lucubrations" of these "romances." Her friends enjoyed them, but "an Englishman" directed her to "the Australian scene as the natural setting for [her] literary efforts" and she wrote *Career* (5). Ironically enough, this Englishman appears to have been Thomas J. Hebblewhite, the *Post*'s editor. Franklin directly mentions the *Post* novel as the foreign model rejected for *Career*'s authentic Australian, but Sybylla II covertly insinuates the *Post* novel into her account, in two widely separated sections.

Bung first recounts the mentor's advice, then indicates what was imitated after a long gap. Sybylla II, a "voracious reader" (30), leaves school and sets out to write a first-person work to "burlesque autobiography," mock virtuous people, "liberate" the words caged in her, "crystallize rebellion" and express her "longing to escape" the Australian bush. Her draft starts "in an ancient castle on an English moor," but is not a historical novel because she is uncertain about the generic diction of "Odds fish, ma'am" and "Gad Zooms" (34). But her schoolmaster, Old Harris, asks her, "Why do you write about a castle in England that you have never seen?" answering that "imagination makes [the castle] more enthralling than things near at hand. Why not try reality? . . . Well, instead of the roses on that castle wall, why not this fragrant bower of wattle? Instead of the wind moaning across the moor, why not the pitiless sun beating down on the cracked dusty earth?" "It is the highest form of culture and craftsmanship in art to use local materials," to add to rather than "merely imitate" culture, for "imitation is a form of flattery to the imitated, [but] a form of weakness or snobbery in the perpetrator."

Old Harris “expands” Sybylla II’s horizons, but unremarked by either, her presentation of the Australian wattle and baked paddocks which are familiar, tame and ugly to her, is still driven by England. An expatriate *Englishman*, about to leave permanently for England, recommends depiction of a “real” Australian setting and experience rather than imaginary English ones, because “Australia is crying out to be done: England is done to death”—for *English* readers, who are as familiar with the castle and the slum street as she is with the bush, and will find the bush new and informative.

There is a further contradiction between Old Harris’s advice to depict a directly known Australian milieu rather than a foreign one imagined at second-hand, and his advice on depicting imagined fictional characters in that milieu. He says that Sybylla II can “picture” “everyone in the Australian bush” with “refreshing” “vigor and conviction,” can “draw portraits of all the characters that furnish [her] life,” but *also* that if she portrays imaginary character-types, as she suggests, they “may be more real that way.” Correspondingly, he suggests that Sybylla II “project [herself] upon the canvas,” but accepts her wish to depict a fiery fictional heroine, not her own docile, modest self. So she plasters his ideas onto the original burlesque autobiography, depicts the imaginary hot-tempered “girl of [her] admiration” and characters “created in the image of reality” (34-36).

Nevertheless, Sybylla II’s Ma cannot “see that an interesting book could be made of [bush] reality” (36). National, then rural/urban, economic and class inflexions enter Sybylla II’s sense of this “reality [which] would look mighty queer in a book, something like a swaggie at a Government House party” (39). But Sybylla II’s Australian novel is published to the avid horror of the neighbours, who find it either not real enough or too real for comfort. “[H]itherto [their] only reading had been the *Penny Post*”—the first, apparently casual reference to it—“and the Bible or a circular from Tattersall’s [sweepstakes]” (62).

So Sybylla II blames Old Harris adjuring her “to be Australian and add to culture. CULTURE!,” and regrets her “foolish notion of showing how comical the ‘Possum Gully sort of reality would look by comparison” with her original project of “lords and ladies in England and a beautiful heroine

who went through tophet to give the hero a chance to show-off as a deferred rescuer . . . :

[If] I had had the villain scrunching the gravel, and a jealous rival beauty biting her lips till the blood came and breaking the stem of a champagne glass between her jewelled fingers with rage (though I had not yet seen a champagne glass) I should have been acclaimed. My tale might have adorned the *Supplement to the Goulburn Evening Penny Post*. I love the tales in the *Penny Post*, full of mystery and glamour and castles and lords and gorgeous lovers. (75)

Only now, retrospectively, is it clear that the draft's English rose-decked castle on the windy moor, with pasteboard aristocrats in a hackneyed love-plot, were derived from Sybylla II's *reading* of *Post* novels; thus that rejecting them for Australian wattle, paddocks, imaginary heroine and imagined bush types is both a colonial rejection of a colonizing imagined English *reality* and of a certain sort of English *literary model*. The point is that though Sybylla II has shocked Australians, worthwhile literary works are made *in reaction to* previous ones; that to be Australian, fresh, directly observed, and newly imagined is to be not-English, to abjure an English model, to be about an Australian bush setting and a different rural class experience. *Bung* establishes the value, originality and shocking realism of such Australian writing, reviled and praised for its truth to life by assertion (Franklin 6; Pa 57; SII 37, 62, 75, 109; Henry Beauchamp 83; Old Harris 92; others 62-63, 74, 107, 109) *and* by contrast with the formulaic English newspaper serial, a straw genre set up to be knocked down.

But Sybylla II's autobiography covertly, more self-consciously, *returns* to something *like* her draft and its hackneyed English model, now in conscious, critical *comic literary parody* of the *Post* novel and its ridiculous untruth to life. For even after her novel's success, during her time in Sydney Sybylla II naïvely continued to believe in the real existence and worth of the milieu, life, and characters of the *Post* novel; longed to experience it and mentally use its diction. Sadder and wiser, the narrating Sybylla II now uses *Post* imagery and diction with "transfer of sympathy" (see Romberg, 1962), with the naïve mindset, admiring wonder and the *Post* cliché-words which the narrated Sybylla II would have indulged in. But they function as retrospective signals of *self-directed irony* at a past self,

and of *social satire* at the false Australian people and their Anglophile class- and culture-related public personae which incarnate the *Post* novel and hence partake of its pasteboard worthlessness. The negative values of the parody, irony and satire inflect each other.

In 1946 Franklin denies doing anything other than omitting passages from her manuscript of the 1900s, author and narrator both refer to the "Supplement" to the *Post* (5, 75), but the narratorial reference may have been a late addition, for there seems to have been no such supplement. The serialised reprints of anonymous English work (by the same hand?), in the *Post* itself are melodramatic Sensation Novels, of the school which flourished between 1860 and 1880, most set in High Society, all replete with motifs of insanity, imposture, mystery, murder, forgery, bigamy, arson, incarceration, and railway accidents. Where Franklin's late preface has them "prinked" with more Gothic Novel-like "castles with ivied towers and hooting owls, . . . inhabited by the [Montoni-like] unaccommodating guardians, thrilling seducers and more thrilling rescuers of titled maidens, as pure as angels" (Preface 5), Sybylla II's modern champagne glass and gravel (and no unaccommodating guardian), gives a more accurate impression.

However, the images and diction *Bung* associates with the *Post* novel are *not* specifically taken from the particular conventions of the Gothic Novel, the Sensation Novel, or any one or any set of the actual novels which the *Post* serialised between 1890 and 1900 (though *Career* itself does indeed sometimes directly echo and ironically modify their motifs). Instead, *Bung* uses the *Post* novel as a name to ground a generalized composite image of any cheap formulaic English High Society romance, novelette or novel (Franklin's preface uses all three words). Sybylla II was "in a quandary about style" when she started her draft (34), and the internally caged words she liberated in it must have been the fancy words of the *Post* novel. She now writes her autobiography in a plain, sometimes very colloquial style, in which jarringly obtrusive imitation-*Post* passages, embedded like separable nuggets, focus on trite images of the fancy expensive things of rich, aristocratic Anglophile life in stilted clichéd diction which often includes French words. These passages are sometimes

underlined by explicit references to the *Post* novel and often typographically signaled.

Bung's typographical markers (upper case, italics, inverted commas) always signal ironic movements out of ordinary English, but they serve many purposes, so not all the marked words directly point to the *Post* novel. Such catchwords as "CULTURE," "EXPERIENCE," "SOCIETY," which indicate the social power of received values preached at Sybylla II by her elders, first appear in ordinary type and endless upper case repetition then ironically emphasizes her interrogatory resistance. Upper case is similarly used to indicate her interrogation of social reverence for notable people, onomastically flattened into their public personae: the "GREATEST AUSTRALIAN WRITER," the "Greatest Australian Writer for Girls," the "GREATEST AUSTRALIAN POET," the "GREAT AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHERS," "AUNT." Upper case is sometimes used alternately with italics (e.g. "OTHER WOMEN!," "*Other women!*" 74). Movements into *Post* imagery and cliché-diction, and their greater, more personal power over the narrated Sybylla II's imagination, are usually marked by italics (118, 121, 122), inverted commas (121, 179), or both (e.g. "*cynosure*" 121, 122).

The *Penny Post* High Society Heroine: a False Ideal, a Disappointing Reality

Sybylla II's early life in 'Possum Gully evokes the *Post* only with reference to her jettisoned draft (34-35, 75) and the reading of the district (62, 95, 107). Her Sydney trip, a characteristic *Bildungsroman* movement from countryside to city, initiates a different order of references, which gathers momentum as a plethora of *Post* words clusters around Sybylla II's naïve perceptions of Sydney people *and* their presentations of themselves.

When Sybylla II said that bush reality was to a book as a swagman was to Government House, she shifted the terms contrasting life/art and Australia/England to the classes and spheres within Australia. Similarly, the *Post* castle belongs in the English countryside, but because its gravel and champagne glass suggest *citified* rich aristocratic life, *Bung* assimilates that castle to the grand house of the Australian city and its leisured

plutocrats. Both are the opposite of the drought-stricken Australian bush homestead and bush peoples' hard-working, poverty-stricken lives, and thus both are equally suspect. Mrs Crasterterton's shibboleth "SOCIETY" (124, 125, 138, 146, 148, 149, 157, 163, 186), can apply as well to fictional *Post* High Society England as it does to actual High Society in anglophile Sydney. The roses on the castle wall correspond to Sydney houses' lush ferns, bamboos, daphne and camellia bushes (116, 121). The pasteboard titled *Post* English aristocrats correspond to corrupt and pretentious parvenu titled anglophile Australians like the late Mr Crasterterton (112) and the Sir James Hobnobs, "able to do things rather well for the Colonies" (134).

Old Harris taught that Australian literature on the model of the English *Post* novel will be imitative, unreal, false, worthless; Sydney more cruelly teaches that an Australian woman on the model of a *Post* heroine will be similar. Edmée Actem, Mrs Crasterterton's other young guest, sophisticated, anglophile, is a dark parody, a false copy, of that heroine. *Without knowing the Post*, she has constructed the persona of a beautiful, suffering "womanly woman" like that heroine. Sybylla II, "little me from 'Possum Gully" (164) so strongly desires to experience, even at second-hand, what she has hitherto only read about and imagines actually exists outside the bush, that Emma-like, she wilfully misperceives Edmée as a *Post* heroine incarnate, fulfilling her desire. She "dote[s] and gloat[s] on" her (118, similar phrases 119, 120, 122, 123); in her there is "no jealousy" of the girl who "blot[s]" her out, she is sure that Edmée is "true to" her (127). Simultaneously, and as mistakenly, Sybylla II delights in mentally using fancy *Post* words to delineate her new life. Much of the fun in *Bung* stems from the ironic gap between Sybylla's desire and delight and the actuality of Edmée lending herself to them to dupe a country bumpkin, and the gap's gradual closure.

Since Edmée's act attracts *Post* diction to describe her (then naïvely and now critically) she is the most obvious and ludicrous part of *Bung's* genre-parody. Her pretensions are underlined by direct *Post* references, "SOCIETY," marked or obtrusive cliché and French words, all in sharp contrast with both Sybylla II's plain style and her own odd phrases—a probably deliberate device, though Franklin's prose was always

idiosyncratic. Edmée's first appearance at Sybylla II's door sets the tenor for all subsequent passages. Sybylla II sees a "beautiful young lady" with "a most gorgeous smile" and feels that "Life must begin for me too after meeting her, so lovely and romantic—the very girl of my dreams" (117, 118), a phrase ominously echoing the imaginary heroine of Sybylla II's novel, Sybylla I, as the "girl of my admiration." Edmée takes for granted that Sybylla I, a simple, lonely country girl who had aspirations other than marriage, is the same as her author, and initially, adopts the role of Sybylla I: "I'm a bush girl too," gushing that Sybylla II's novel has spoken for all such bush girls as flat reported speech undercuts her affected longings: "She knew I would not misunderstand her, and it was a relief to speak soul to soul without humbug"; she "was hungry and dissatisfied in her soul, just as I was, and was seeking for something other than a mere man. She craved an affinity" (117, 118, 119).

Edmée is as much a fabrication as Sybylla I and the *Post* heroine proper, whose role she now assumes, as Sybylla II is struck by "all the heroines embodied by" her (120). But the established locus of positive value against which all these fake *Post* heroines are measured is Sybylla II's capable, acid Ma, who was earlier "a deserted heroine" running the property alone, "a genuine heroine" when Sybylla II's novel caused neighbourly ostracism (51, 64). Marked *Post* words on beauty, dress and sexual attraction in grand settings cluster round Edmée. She has "big bluish grey eyes that she rolled most arrestingly," chestnut curls, her "dress showed off her figure in a SOCIETY manner. She was tall 'yet voluptuous,' just like the heroines in *The Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, and she could languish and cast appealing glances" (117-18). She speaks in stilted cliché-diction, "promis[ing] more anon" (119). Then "she 'swept into the room.' Her hair was a *coiffure* in which was a pink rose. She was enveloped in a cloak of gold tissue and chiffon and lace." She departs, making "lovely flirtatious eyes at Gaddy," Mrs Crasterton's brother, as Sybylla II thinks "much of a ball room with an orchestra playing gay waltzes and Edmée and Derek [Mrs Crasterton's son] the 'cynosure of all eyes'" (121).

Next day, Sybylla II watches Edmée make "her *toilette* . . . She and Derek had been the *cynosure* [at the ball], just as I had thought," "her dress congested me with superlatives. It was filmy stuff such as worn by the

heroines in the *Penny Post*, over a bright colour that *shimmered*," "a spreading picture hat of pleated tulle and feathers, and what she called a *broolly* to match," as much other expensive finery goes with her "perfect figure," "beautiful face," small waist and full bosom (122-23, "*toilette*" again marked 160). Typographical markers are unnecessary at a subsequent party, when everyone sees Edmée "make her entry," standing at the doorway in a pale sleeveless satin dress, gored skirt, train, with a low cut bodice, so that Aphrodite-like, her bosom rises out of green "creamy foam," her ostrich feathered satin cape "slip[s] off in the most exciting way" and she "languishe[s] and distribute[s] her glances" (127). The stilted marked *Post* phrases insensibly blend into Sybylla II's own exaggeration of the eye-rolling, languishing, and cape-slipping; and again, while the French and dress-related words fit Edmée's *accoutrements*, Sybylla's Ma, unrewarded and poor, is actually skilled in the *work* relating to them, excelling "a fashionable *couturière* and equal[ling] a *chef* and baker" (219).

To Sybylla II Edmée "looked as if she had all kinds of lovers—quondam, hopeless, distracted and those who would even try to be *clandestine*, and propose to her in *conservatories*, or find her monogrammed handkerchief in the *shrubberies*"; she feels that "Every man who met her must fall madly in love with her." Edmée obligingly "confirm[s]" "in confidence" (and *Post* diction) "some of the burdens of her fascination," of being "so conspicuous for her fatal beauty," for (in colloquial contrast) "Derek was very troublesome," "Gaddy too was a silly old thing," and "there was a new man who was mad about her" (118, 123).

Edmée's parodied pretensions indicate in sequence that the *Post* heroine in the *grand house* is *simple* (*pure*), *beautiful*, *richly dressed*, *pursued and persecuted by many unwanted importunate lovers*, involved in a *clandestine affair*, *aristocratic*. In actuality, in a grand house that is not hers, Edmée is canny, impure, aging, narcissistic, despised as being in desperate pursuit of a husband, snobbish. But just as Sybylla II ignores the implications of her Ma's worth, she ignores the contraindications to Edmée's avowed indifference to society humbug and men, ignores the implications of her own social insights, and uses *Post* terms to explain away others' opinions and retain Edmée as a calumniated *Post* heroine.

Sybylla draws no conclusions on acute social truckling or sexual immorality when Edmée signals that Sybylla II should drink the uncomfortable equivalent of *Post* champagne, wine that Sir James Hobnob rudely presses upon her, and condemns her "provincialism" in refusing it (135, 138); when Edmée makes sure Sybylla II knows that celebrity Renfrew Haddington's visit is a "high honour" (207); when Edmée "reflectively" muses that "it must be no end of sport to be safely married and then seek a little diversion" and relishingly recounts how married women throw themselves at philandering Goring Hardy (160-63). Sybylla II knows that high birth, riches and English social superiority are of no account, that "many genuine ladies" live in remote bush humpies while "females of feraboracious manners" live in Sydney mansions; that Mrs Crasterton's snobberies about her "pedigree" are ridiculous (123, 126, 159); that English officers, whom even Mrs Crasterton calls "suet dumplings," are no whit superior to Australian bullock drivers (198, 149). Yet Sybylla II ignores it when Edmée says that Mrs Crasterton's fine family is "slightly inferior to the Actems," when she admits she teaches Sunday School to meet distinguished English people who have introductions in church circles, when she angles after the visiting English officers, using Australian Big Ears as a foil to set against them (124, 139, 198).

The registers and world-views of Sybylla II's colloquial real world and stilted *Post* novel parody come into conflict when party guest, loud suited Big Checks, Gaddy, Derek, Sunday School teacher Big Ears, and friend Zoe de Vesey all condemn Edmée. They use vulgar terms for the age of a "filly . . . too long in the stable" who will soon be "passée" (128, 199); for her "beauteous" appearance, "exposing the salt-cellars around the clavicles" (169, 139); for her flirtatiousness, ogling so hard that her eyes may fall out (128, 139); for her fake religiosity to snare Big Ears (125); and for her self obsession, "exercising charm" though everybody but herself recover from the delusion that she is "lovely" (139, 199). They condemn the persistent husband-hunting of a "pestiferous creature," a Woman Friday who would sue for breach of promise (120-21, 199), an inconvenience who "camps" at Mrs Crasterton's, "tryin' to bag" Gaddy and Derek and "hook a husband" (128, 132, 148, 199). Zoe warns that Sybylla II is "taking Edmée at her own valuation" (148). They sneer at her stories about

her importunate lovers—Sybylla II hears Gaddy and Big Ears contemptuously warn each other about Edmée, and Gaddy laughs that since Edmée's claim on Big Ears left Gaddy's own way open to court Sybylla II he will give Edmée a present (169-70).

But Sybylla II determinedly counters everything with interpretations in the terms of a *Post* novel plot, and sometimes in its language. For her Big Checks is "a poisonous old man," a suitor whom Edmée has snubbed (128, 130). She insists that Derek "sounded as if he were dissimulating his passion for Edmée," the "burden" of "his hopeless passion for Edmée's fatal beauty," his desire to "hold her in his arms" (120-21, 147, a marked *Post* phrase). For her, Big Ears is "unmistakably infatuated with Edmée," has a "hopeless passion for Edmée," who will reject him when he proposes, and she leaves them together to further their imaginary romance (125, 128, 142, 156, 165). She insists to Zoe that Gaddy is "silly about Edmée [who] cannot be bothered with him" (148). She is amazed at the face-saving "workings of male vanity" of Big Ears and Gaddy, and cannot follow Gaddy's joke on his gift (169, 170).

There is no distinct turning point at which Sybylla II wakes up to Edmée's falseness (or the *Post* novel's), but the naïve narrated self starts to catch up with the more aware narrating self. Sybylla II's feminist values start to modify her sense of Edmée's perfection, as she appropriates Edmée's words to tell Big Ears that she herself is a bad girl, an atheist, and that "It is as bad for a woman to be without religion as a flower to be without perfume. That is the companion-piece of love being for men a thing apart, but for women their whole existence" (*Don Juan* I, st. 194) (129, 170). Simultaneously, Sybylla II's relation to Goring Hardy initiates increasing awareness of Edmée's self-interest, flaunting beauty, pushiness, self-flattering rumour-mongering and lack of friendship, while Sybylla II still oddly retains her loyalty and her delusions about Edmée's sex appeal in *Post* novel diction. When admiration starts to alternate with sarcasm, the mixture *cannot* be explained by transfer of sympathy alternating with a later perspective, for both seem to belong to the narrated Sybylla II, whose naïveté thus modulates into affectation and minxish self-gratulation not wholly unlike Edmée herself (and all Franklin's heroines).

For sarcasm seems to inform nominal admiration of how Edmée “unselfishly” (very selfishly) —“gave up her dinner engagement” to meet Sybylla II’s visitor Goring (160). Overt awareness of Edmée’s self-advertisement seems to dawn when she appears again “in her grand pale green satin with the foamy cloak half-slipping from her shoulders, [with] soft coo-ing explanations” (162). Outright statement of Edmée’s selfishness starts a *Post*-ed passage, when Goring ignores Sybylla II and

Edmée took it as a matter of course that he should. I was twittering internally to realise that little me from ‘Possum Gully was in a SOCIETY scene at last. Here was a belle who drove men to distraction, palpitating her snowy bosom and twitching her shoulders so that no contour was wasted, and languishing and ogling in the exercise of sexual attraction on a man who had been clandestinely loved by a titled married lady (there were always *clandestine* affairs in the novels of lords and ladies I had read) and wearing silk socks. I had never before seen a man wearing silk socks. (164)

There was always something stylistically odd about Edmée’s “effort to keep pace with” her fatal beauty (117), “the burdens of her fascination,” her “luscious love affairs” (117-18), an oddity now foregrounded in her “palpitating . . . and twitching,” “the exercise of sexual attraction,” and the bathetic “silk socks.” And Sybylla II also begins openly to praise her little self in contrast to Edmée. When Goring flirts with Sybylla II, she worries that he would not treat “Edmée or any girl who knew the ropes” similarly (168). When Goring grows troublesome, Sybylla II imagines how placed similarly, “Edmée would revel,” and “achieve glamour,” “histrionically” let “all Sydney know”—in *Post* phrases—that Goring “had been madly in love with her, that he had kidnapped her and shut her up with him,” that “her heart too had been just a little touched” (189).

When Big Ears had first proposed to Sybylla II, she was shocked, “What would Edmée think—when she had been so kind to me!” (156). She still persists to Gaddy that Edmée might think Big Ears’s proposal her fault (170), that she had been underhand—though she now at least knows it would be because Edmée’s “vanity would be upset,” and that Edmée is “no good” as the friend for whom she longs (192). Yet, when Gaddy himself proposes to Sybylla II, she continues to mourn that she is “misplaced in SOCIETY,” where admirers make a fool of her, while “Edmée carried off

admirers" whom *she* makes fools of "so that they were for ever muttering around town about her, and trying to make out that she pursued them" (196). She still says to Derek (disingenuously?) that that Edmée is "lovely" (199).

However, as Sybylla II is about to leave Sydney, she pities and praises herself for her own "supersensitive" sensibility, in contrast to and overt irritation with the sleeping Edmée snoring as loudly as Mrs Crasterton, in enviable "royal self-satisfaction" born of life-long adulation, an ability to note praise and disregard criticism, and being a beauty unagitatedly accustomed to "[a]ll the lovers raging for [her] or misconstruing her actions" (*Post* phrases 202).

In 'Possum Gully Sybylla II reads her real-life equivalent of the *Post* novel, Lady Jane's newspaper society column, which deals with the corresponding social sphere and is as quite as untruthful: "No Australian girl had been able to interest [Goring], but one beauty of the glorious eyes and velvety shoulders" And she comments "Easy to discern this as Edmée. She was surely destined for a brilliant career matrimonially unless she was too ambitious and stayed too long in the table, as Big Checks put it" (216-17). In succession come its "tales" from which "glamour oozed" of Big Ears's marriage to a SOCIETY girl, then the "bobbery" (a colloquialism) of a BEAUTY marrying a CONFIRMED BACHELOR in a SOCIETY wedding of OLD FAMILIES.

Her awakening to the truth of the incarnate *Post* heroine and of her quondam lovers is completed when she does "not envy Edmée her bridegroom," Gaddy, her "satin and orange blossoms filling the newspapers with her success," but envies "her suitability to success, her disregard of consistency, her obliviousness of personal detractors." She finally realizes that "Edmée could put Gaddy in the position of the romantic lover and affinity she had gushed about. Gaddy, who had scoffed at Edmée, succumbed to her, Big Ears who was going to commit suicide for love of [Sybylla II] forgot in a day." In a final cynical awareness, Sybylla II's "respect for romance" itself goes bung, since "Marriage evidently was a piece of trading: one took the best animal procurable and got on with it" (219-20). Thus social satire through literary parody suggests the falsity of the English literary model as a guide to the world, the worthlessness

of the Anglophile, aristocratic social persona of the womanly woman crammed into that model, and the literary/social chimera of fulfilled romantic love.

The *Penny Post* Hero: False Knights

When the bush people disapprove of Sybylla II's accurate novelisation of local character types, she thinks tartly that they "may have imagined that in fiction they would be transmogrified into cavaliers like those in the stories in the *Penny Post*" (107), which is thus linked to an imitation-medieval courtly love register. But Sybylla II thinks that this cavalier-hero may indeed exist in the city, for she concludes that Edmée has snubbed "broken-down swell" Big Checks for getting in the way of "more interesting cavaliers" (130). A series of grotesque parodic versions of this *Post* hero, romantic, chivalrous "cavalier," "knight" or "prince," enter her life, but only Derek and Edmée captivate Sybylla II's imagination (132); with the rest she does not make the same mistake. Literary parody for direct feminist social satire shows that what looks like knightly chivalry is usually false and oppressive.

The first of the parody knights is Old Grayling, a senile farmer neighbour who writes condescendingly and lewdly to propose to Sybylla II in response to her notoriety after her novel is published. His proposal is a "desecration" of all she "had ever thought of love, of all the knights that were bold and heroes in lace and gold and that sort of thing" (69). "The Graylings were renowned for gallantry" (72), so ludicrously, when Old Grayling calls, Sybylla II takes the direction of the outside lavatory so that he must pretend he has not seen her. The second, darker parody knight suitor is handsome, manly, domineering Henry Beauchamp, a "conceited lord of creation," "my lord Henry" (86, 87) whose reactionary ideas about motherhood, female suffrage, women's writing, man-haters and old maids (224-29) make Sybylla II privately determine, "Ah, no, m'lord" (232).

Sydney's city knights are fatherly, brotherly, not suitor-material, suitor-material but uninterested, and caddish. Pompous paternal, illiterate, chauvinist Sir James Hobnob, the only titular knight and an "ill-bred old

toad" (134-36), an ex-colleague of Sybylla II's father, was one of the "fellows who carried [a public swindle] through" and "were knighted" when Sybylla's father was abused for trying to prevent it (74), a corrupt "vulture" rewarded by royal favour at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle (219).

Short, fat, kindly Gaddy corresponds to Old Grayling. He is "instantly ruled out as an object of romance. Knights of the imagination are straight and slim, preferably tall and beautiful" (115). Sybylla II's interaction with Edmée shows her pushing a person into *Post* terms and seeing her mistake; but her interaction with Gaddy first has her reject *Post* terms, then be accused of pushing life into *Post* terms, then see that she was perfectly right. Be it discounted or accurate, the *Post* is always a source of trouble. Though Sybylla II refuses to accept other clothing, she accepts a sash from fraternal Gaddy (142-43). She has wondered at a party why "women can be led astray by others' husbands or have any traffic with them" (129), and worries in a comic gender role-reversal that "Mrs Crasterton might think that [she] had led her brother astray" when he too makes a shockingly unexpected proposal, and she flees (194-95). He says that she has "returned the sash like a novelette," that his proposal was a "little bit of spoof," that she is "an inexperienced child" for whom he feels only friendship (201). But her "novelette" interpretation and behaviour were *appropriate*; he had protected his vanity by pretending that his advances were spoof (220).

Big Ears, as a silly religiose "minor poet" (142), enacts the maddened, ever-faithful dying Petrarchan lover of a cruel fair with bathetic literary love-letters that "thickened the plot" (156, 177, 192). Handsome Derek corresponds to Henry; Sybylla II sees him as directly a *Post* image, "the beau—the counterpart of all the heroines embodied in Edmée" (120), and wishes that he would "champion" her (138). Derek praises her to a judge and does like her, but he also humiliatingly laughs at Sybylla II behind her back and emphasizes his "brotherliness" to her (192, 199-202).

War correspondent, "sizzling imperialist" Goring Hardy combines Old Graylings lewdness, Henry's chauvinism, Sir James' crookery, Gaddy's "leading astray," Big Ears's authorship, and Derek's *Post*-edness. He is "on his way to a title and all that" (158), a "dress-coat knight" (161), who behaves with public "knightly tenderness" with Mrs Crasterton (166). Just as Edmée adopts the public persona of innocent *Post* heroine; similarly

dark parody *Post* hero Goring becomes "a different man" with an ersatz English aristocratic "tenor drawl" only in company (162). Edmée finds him "fascinating," for immoral SOCIETY people with false *Post* -ed personae understand each other—as she replaces the camellia in his button hole with flickering glances, she suggestively laughs about the "white flower of a blameless life," Tennyson's phrase for Prince Alfred in the Preface to *Idylls* (164, 165).

Goring's anglophilia is more marked than Edmée's: "On going to London he had not stressed his Australian origin but played the game on London lines. He had outdone the Londoners in Londonness through having more of England known in knowing Australia too" (alluding to Kipling's line in "The English Flag"), and had become "a SUCCESS . . . just reeking with EXPERIENCE," "a man of the London world, a society idol who had achieved money and réclame" (157, 186). The Australian version of this or that English writer, Goring links the *Post* novel to its dramatic equivalent of drawing-room comedy, for he writes novels and "comedies of duchesses, and high ladies who knew all about *amour* . . . [.] the last word in being risqué without being bannable," "comedies of sultry duchesses and adulterous clubmen—Piccadilly clubmen" (157, 186). He lives the life he depicts, and the newspapers and society columns tell of his *Post* novel-like clandestine adulterous affair with Lady Hartlepool, whose husband has threatened to name him as divorce co-respondent, and then of his association with Edmée (160, 163, 198, 216).

Sybylla II "drink[s] in . . . titillating news" of Goring (157), but she does not make the same mistake with him as she does with Edmée. As with Henry, with Goring too she knows immediately that chivalry, real or feigned, is patriarchal oppression: "Mr Hardy made orthodox remarks with orthodox politeness, that politeness called chivalry, which women are expected to accept in lieu of their rightful control of the race and the ordering of life with sanity and justice for their children" (163).

The *Penny Post* novel plot: narratorially unconscious ironic parodic stylization

Through *Post* novel contrast and parody, the narrating Sybylla II signals the gap between older English cheap stylisation of High Society formula fiction and its wornout motifs and the newer, better, original Australian bush realism of her *novel*, and the incongruence between formulaic, stylised English art and the Australian real life she lives and records in her *autobiography*. But both author and narrator (disingenuously?) claim *Career's* realism to be *tongue-in-cheek*, so small slippages from claims about its simultaneous *photographic realism* and its *fictive invention* arrive at a point just short of outright comic flatness, stylization and irreality, via authorial "sardonic" amusement and humour, in showing how ridiculous depicting bush life and reality are as story material (Franklin 5, SII 38), the author as a "jokist" engaging in "embellishment . . . heighten[ing] or lower[ing]" its "flat colourless[ness]" (39), "make-believe reality . . . piled on with a grin" (55), "exaggerated fabrication" (57) making "fun of general reality" (63, cf. 75), the accusation of being "not being a bit like" actual bush people (62), "taking two photographs on one plate" in depicting "life-like people" and simultaneously inventing a "burlesque," "spoof" and "fake" autobiography" (37, 34, 36; 54; 154, 162; also 30, 31, 70, 130).

Sybylla II's autobiography, the bright "companion volume" Old Harris requested (58), is by definition even more true to life than her novel, tells of another poor, middle-class Australian bush girl, does *not* set out jokingly to show the unsuitability of Australian bush life for a novel, and has no conventional happy ending. But there are similar and more overt slippages between *Bung's* own nominal adherence to realism and its actual stylization. First, even though Sybylla II is a bush girl, and *Career* is a *bush* realist narrative, over half her autobiography satirizes a milieu which transplants something like the *Post* novel setting rejected for *Career*, so *Bung* is actually an *urban* novel of manners. Then, *Bung's* world of Hobnobs, Big Checkses and Thrumnoddys (somewhat like Saki's or Firbank's) presented in an odd colloquial diction, is *as* stylised and unreal as the *Post* novel's, though *Bung's* stylization is comic, self-conscious, parodic, whereas the *Post* novel's is melodramatic, straight, stilted.

And thus, *Bung* actually replicates the stock roles and *partially* the formulaic plot of a *Post* novel, though Sybylla II does *not* realise it (Franklin certainly does). Sybylla II herself, apparent foil, is the actual equivalent of the *Post* heroine; Edmée, apparent heroine, of the jealous lip-biting rival beauty; Gaddy and Goring, self-presented knights, of the gravel-scrunching villain-seducer; and there is indeed *also* a true knight. Through the congruence of the Sydney characters with *Post* novel roles other than those Sybylla II assigns, *Bung* signals, as *Northanger Abbey* does, that sometimes life is indeed like a novel, that Sybylla II's "real" autobiography is Franklin's second novel after all, both "lifelike" and now an *overtly* stylised, playful "spoof." But unlike *Northanger Abbey*, through ironization of the formulaic plot-resolution, as the knight cannot be rescuer-hero and the heroine purposefully rejects marriage which is kept for the villainess, *Bung* makes a feminist literary comment on the old normative marriage-ending motif and a social one about a modern woman's new aspirations.

Sybylla II *says* she is content with second-hand experience and selfless admiration of Edmée, but she longs, in *Post* words, to be "coloured by a little of the romance that swirled around Edmée," to be "so beautiful that men would love [her] to distraction" (147, 118), and combines the social catchphrase, *Post* register and her own odd diction to ask Zoe, "as she knew all about SOCIETY and LIFE and LOVE would she tell me how the fascinating belles managed to refuse to marry men and retain them for QUONDAM LOVERS. I was ambitious for such possessions" (186). More pathetically, she wants to have even one evening dress "to show [her] *decolleté*" rather than her "plain white dress" which conceals her "bath-room charms" (147, 127-28, 118, 121, 171, 202); to have dancing lessons from Derek (121, 147); to play tennis (147); "to have some fun" in the company of "young people like Derek and Edmée" (121; 147, 202). She feels like a mere piano-playing, plainly dressed foil to them (147, 127-28), a bush Cinderella excluded by her "lack both of clothes and accomplishments" (168) from Edmée's parties (122, 126-27, 168, 204).

But though she never recognizes it, Sybylla II fits all the criteria for a Australian modern version of the *Post* heroine much better than Edmée. Sybylla II shares her admired father's and Gaddy's egalitarianism, but she herself is genuinely "of the old squattocracy" (148, 138). In High

Society, she is the centre of more important parties than Edmée, even to growing "tired of high officials" (147), and in remaining inoffensive while retaining her integrity, she actually deals well with her new milieu. She is so attractive in her home-made clothes and Gaddy's sash that she unwittingly captivates all the men around, and she indeed "goes through tophet" first in being sneered at for her simplicity by Edmée, Derek and the newspaper columns (139, 145); then in having "plenty of practice in love—in being loved" after her fake autobiography (154). Though modish *Post* French words control her imagination in relation to Edmée, at other times *she* is firmly in satiric control of *them*: when her Pa and she speak of her *work* and possible *nom de plume* (65, 230), when the grotesque sight of corpulent Sydney matrons in evening dress, the "very pronounced human form *au naturel*," destroys her "*méchante* idea" that bare arms and chests increase feminine attraction (126-27), when the "whole toot" (i.e. "*tout suite*") go to a "*recherché*" dinner in Sydney (134).

Edmée is not only *not Post* heroine, but very much the lip-biting champagne-glass snapping jealous rival beauty, for her mask of friendship imperfectly hides denigration and spite. She starts by pretending that her own fine dress is an old rag and that because Sybylla II is "only a little girl from the bush," not the "type" that men would "love to distraction," her lack of an evening dress dose not matter (118). Edmée publicly embraces besotted Sybylla II to use her as a contrasting foil while she pretends to ignore the men around (127). Edmée laughs at Sybylla II behind her back as a rustic "*enfant terrible*," a "prodigy" who had "better make the most of [her] furore while it lasts," whom Goring only visits because "it has become the thing to do" (132, 165, 160). She mocks her as "a little softy," "[g]etting [her] heart cracked right at the jump" by a Goring who would not love her, and a "doll awake[n]g[s] from petrification" (163, 207).

Edmée tells the stories of her conquests "in confidence" so that Sybylla II will not check (123), and while she claims that Derek is too young, Big Ears too importunate, and Goring too poor and old for her (118, 198, 207), she attempts to entice away or claim all Sybylla II's admirers. Edmée explains, when Big Ears brings a small box of chocolates for her and a large box for Sybylla II, that he knew she hated chocolates and she arranged the gift; so the gullible Sybylla II even concludes that his subsequently

lending her his mother's jewellery is "another kindness *grace à Edmée*" (125, 141). Edmée says that Big Ears is "so dead gone" on her, that she wishes to "dish" him with Sybylla II, as Gaddy says (125, 141, 170), though Sybylla II still sees Edmée's attempted annexation of Big Ears as an attempt to "rescue" her from him (198). Edmée says she cannot bother "distracting" the "haw-haw" "great man" Goring, but gloats that he stayed with her rather than Sybylla II, telephones around her "triumph" in captivating him (165, 163), "languishe[s]" and "splendidly" succeeds in suggesting "that she had not exerted herself" in conquering him, and certainly convinces the newspapers (198).

Though Sybylla II is unfeignedly anxious about her unwanted conquests, her own hopeless quondam lovers, Derek, no full-fledged suitor, does actually rescue her from Big Ears (199 ff.), and all the grotesque, bathetic or false knights do indeed want to rescue her: Old Grayling from notoriety and atheism (69), Henry from old-maidhood (84), Sir James (no suitor) from rural unsophistication (135), Gaddy from bush poverty (195), Big Ears from atheism (177), Goring from being stuck in Australia (188-89).

Edmée claims to have captivated and been smitten by Goring, but the "mystery" and "glamour" of the oft-mentioned *Post*-ed clandestine affair with him are actually Sybylla II's. Villain-seducer Goring literally asks to show Sybylla II his etchings, she refuses to take clothes from him, but, "clinically interested" in whether he too will "lead her astray," she allows him to "devour" her arms and lips in secret meetings (167, 174, 179, 190). He even says he would like to marry her but cannot. But she does "not get the enjoyment" to which she is entitled, does "not know how to handle the situation," resents Goring regarding her as he would a chorus girl (188-89). In the process, *Post* heroine's aspiring nominal foil and true form of *Post*-like heroine, at an even further level of (narratorially *and* authorially unseen?) parody, Sybylla II is jealous (of Edmée), and faux-naïve, even smoother-operating sophisticated rival beauty herself. For Gaddy thanks God that Sybylla II is "crude," unlike a sophisticated girl "inciting *amour*," who knows how to dampen it and put a man in the wrong (155). But Sybylla II does just that unwittingly with Gaddy, and then, consciously, smoothly dismissing Goring by saying she will be hurt, so that her virginity

remains the “invulnerable” mock-medieval “maidenly citadel” to the sham-chivalrous knight (161, 191, 215).

Sybylla II rescues herself from Gaddy and Goring and does not want condescending deferred rescue from the false knights who offer it. But then, comic parody of the *Post* novel unexpectedly modulates into an ironic modern gendered reversal of Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristram and Isolde. For Sybylla briefly meets one true knight from outside both ‘Possum Gully and Sydney, writer Renfrew Haddington, a war correspondent like Goring, and a handsome, manly, older man like her beloved well-born father. He “refill[s]” her “with the false hope of youth that happiness could come to [her] some day with shining face as a prince or knight and that a struggle to remain available for such an advent would be worthwhile” (206). But the irony of fate ensures that “The one man of our dreams would be sure to rush into marriage early” (208-09).

When even the narratorially unconscious parody of the *Post* novel ironically provides a true, understanding knight who cannot rescue Sybylla II, *Bung* goes beyond simply rejecting the falsity of the *Post* novel model to a new truth, as she continues to rescue herself. She manages to do down the newspaper journalist who insulted her (177); then, in effect, scorns to produce *Post*-like clichéd untruths about worthless anglophile High Society (203-04) when she rejects Sydney’s offer of a pointless job of society columnist along with its worthless men, to continue her own writing.

The *Penny Post* Image of England: Destined Disappointment?

Back in ‘Possum Gully, a kind editor takes Sybylla II’s pieces, but then leaves for another sort of paper (218, 230); her original Australian pieces are rejected in Australia because readers prefer English stories (220-21). At the beginning of *Bung* Sybylla II looks at the road which leads to Sydney and beyond, her novel serves as “reticule” for her longing to escape to other lands (34-35). At the end, she hopefully determines to take the same road again, this time to move from anglophile Australian cultural periphery to England, cultural centre (211, 214), a characteristic *Künstlerroman*

trajectory. For her parents incorrectly thought that Australian bush realism would have just a "local interest" (36, 56). England indeed welcomed and financially rewarded her first "homespun" effort (novel), and might welcome her second (autobiography) and future ones (218, 230). That is, an Australian work again seeks an English audience.

Those who have examined *Bung's* Australian would-be expatriate theme (Modjeska 1981; Perosa 1985, 26-27; Bennett 1995), take no account of how the English *Post's* cheap, formulaic, clichéd misleading stylization, seemingly first conquered by the Australian worth, realism and originality of Sybylla II's novel and then by the conscious critical parody of her autobiography, remains as another narratorially unseen (authorially conscious?) threat. For the *Post* novel casts a shadow beyond Sydney and *Bung's* terminal confines; it *still* seems ominously able to inspire Sybylla II's desire and perceptions and thus possibly determine a replication/transference to England of Sydney's pattern of romantomaniac delusion, excitement at its apparent fulfilment, then disappointment.

For Sybylla II, narrating *after* her time in Sydney, the ugly bush Australian scenery her novel depicted was a "raw contrast to the English scenery" on which she "thoroughly doted" in the past tense (38), and she now seems aware of the naïvete of her past delight in imagining the *Post* champagne glass in parenthetically adding "(though I had not yet seen a champagne glass)" (75). But a tell-tale slippage into the present tense when she simultaneously writes "I *love* the stories in the *Penny Post*" (75) shows that her love continues. Her draft's English castle, roses, moor come from the *Post* novel, and resurface in *Post* diction, unmarked, replicated rather than clearly parodied, in initial *and* terminal reveries of England, sans any overt awareness that Sybylla II is still ignoring the larger implications of Old Harris's advice, still valorizing untested images and diction from her reading.

Initially, when she tells of her novel's Australian setting her mind moves to its contrast with the doted-upon English scenery, a rural jumble of "thatched cottages, trailing roses, gabled farm houses, towered ancestral halls with Tudor chimneys amid oaks and elms and cawing rooks and moors and downs, wolds, woods, spinneys and brooks" (38-39). In her

last chapter, "There is England," she determines to put aside her refuge of "daydreams" for the solidity of England:

I picture her cool green fields, her misty downs, her bare woods under the snow, her young leaves and soft flowers in spring. Her castles and cathedrals, her ivied towers, her brooks are as clear to my nostrils and closed eyes as the scents and features of Possum Gully. And there is London with its romantic fogs, its crowds and ceremonial pageants, Rotten Row and the Mall, the British Museum, the Mansion House, the Tower and Westminster. I know London much better than I know Sydney. Through song and story it has permeated every fibre of my mind since I could first scan a pictured page, while I have spent scarcely a month in but one corner in Sydney. London—THE BIG SMOKE—London, where our dreams come true (232).

The first lines, in the same register, have the same flowers/roses, castles/halls, moors/downs, as Sybylla II's mind first turns to the English *countryside*, though she is going to London—because *all* England is for her a version of literary wish-fulfilment pastoral. As she transfers her hopes of a career, the career-providing London she "knows" so much better than the career-disappointing Sydney, is still part of a literary-cliché England of the imagination, all derived from the child's "pictured page," then "song and story"—like the *Post* novel. These *Post* images and diction initiate and ground larger (authorially unconscious?) negative networks linking England with *Post*-ed people, negative images and patterns of insubstantiality and disappointment.

Old Harris called the draft's rose-bedecked castle a Quixotic "castle in Spain" (34-35), directly quoting Adam Lindsay Gordon's poem "The Old Leaven": "For a castle in Spain, though it ne'er was built, / For a dream, though it ne'er came true." When Sybylla II returns home the same quotation recurs in her thoughts of the contrast between Big Ears's literal grand tour to Spain and her own "dream tho' it ne'er came true" about Renfrew (220). She continues to think of escape, she knows that she has "had to take refuge in dreams—dreams of the distant [English] fields so green because they were far away" (223); but her England-reverie disregards her own insight as she "pictures" England as a place where dreams are fulfilled. Yet "dream"-England is more likely to be an image for unfulfilled than fulfilled dreams, because many things that seem about

to fulfil day-dreams and dreams disappoint: in the bush a career in acting, Henry (42, 95), in *Post*-ed Sydney, Edmée (118), Derek (118), Renfrew (208, 220), Sydney Harbour (209).

England as the "BIG SMOKE" (an Australian idiom), complements dream in being insubstantial, evanescent, obfuscatory, deceitful, overlaps with the other ironic catchword for England, "HOME" (131, 154, 156), and originates from the untrustworthy advice-giving English critics of Australian writers. Old Harris, in a letter from England (93) and Sydney critic Mr Wilting (151-152) recommend Sybylla II's "transplantation" to write in England. Both kind, educated Englishmen, both tipplers (13-14, 93, 154, 177), they associate England with drunkenness (delusion), criticism/journalism, and suspicion by association with the *Post*, for the journalists for the *Post* who stay with the Melvyns are also drunken failures, as Sybylla II thinks an English critic who praises her novel must also be (85). Old Harris dies just after going to England (211), which does not recommend it. Mr Wilting, decaying, anticolonial cultural imperialist, says that Australia has no background, which Gaddy countered by saying Australia's foreground is better, and England has too much background (155), just the background of castles that is attracting Sybylla II. Mr Wilting does not pay Sybylla II for the writing he commissions (171); England may not either.

Anglophile, *Post*-ed Goring also advises going to England, but does not suggest how Sybylla II should find the means (215), and he associates writing in England with fairytale and pagan/worship imagery, which always suggest unfulfillment in atheist Franklin's oeuvre. When Sybylla II plays the "magic game" of dallying with literary "great god" Goring, he "would sometimes lay out a fairy-tale" of writing with her in England (183, 157, 189). "[W]ords flew like fairies" while Sybylla II wrote her novel (34), which took her to "enchanted" Sydney, place of culture, replete with fairy and worship imagery (115, 116, 120, 127, 162, 185, 207, 209), while in the bush, the "phantom" moonlight "enchantment" transforms the appearance but not the reality of the drought; the sunlight "magic" cancels God's trivial church image, not the church's power (210, 219, 234). The fairy tale of joint writing in England, the fairy-worded novel, fairytale, culture-claiming but actually uncultured Sydney (117; 112, 132) all held out unfulfilled

hopes; similarly unfulfilled may be an atheist's hope of going to write *alone* in England, place of culture, castles and cathedrals.

Sybylla II prizes personal female independence and Australian literary independence (144, 150-53, 180). In the actual local and national "home" of the bush and Sydney, both individual men and institutions—churches, the literary establishment (66, 220), even the kind Australian editor (218, 230), have welcomed her and her first work, then set out to "erase" their "difference" (181). In England, Goring started with sycophantic Australian work, but his great success only came with his work as "Londoner." He represents the "literary world in London" which welcomed her work's Australian and directed him to see what she was like (160), then, just like Henry, he too wanted to "squash [her] into the groove of the noodles" (226, 158). Thus the "HOME" of the Old Country, too, which has celebrated Sybylla II, contains patriarchal men and culturally imperial institutions which may set out to remould her.

Old Harris's first suggestion resulted in Sybylla II's sad novel, about experience at a temporary, disappointing place of culture (a grandmother's estate) and an unrealized wish to get to Sydney. It brought Sybylla II notoriety, money, and a disappointing Sydney trip. Old Harris's second suggestion of a happy companion volume, is resulting in Sybylla II's autobiography, about experience at a temporary and disappointing place of culture (Sydney), and the fame and money from it may bring her a similarly disappointing English trip. Just before Sybylla II's account of her draft's *Post-ed* castle, she tells how she wondered whether she would ever be as homesick for wattle and gum trees as she was wild to escape to "castles and chateaux and Gothic cathedrals" (34); then Lady Jane Hobnob tells of her own "long weary way" through English high life, longing for the Australian bush tracks, birds, and moon (137). Just these features appear in *Bung's* last sunset, focussing on re-greening after the drought, on moving outwards, the bridle-track and train, the call of the "great world" overseas (223-24). It is a terminal set-piece which structurally corresponds to and is even more hopeful than *Career's* final sunset transforming the drought-stricken landscape. But the *Post*-initiated augury may be more powerful than the final hope of England.

Conclusion

Bung's tension between realism and stylization corresponds to the tensions between literary and social Australian and anglophilia. Australian conquers anglophilia in relation to a cheap literary model; in a parody's rejection of the untruth to life of its formula fiction prototype; and in the accompanying social satire involved in awakening from naivete to the falsity of beautiful anglophile ladies and fake chivalrous knights. But anglophilia partially conquers Australian in that Australian writings are still directed at an English audience; and in the nominally realist but self-consciously stylised/irreal parody resembling its formulaic stylised prototype (albeit ironically). Australian parodic retention of its English prototype's traces may signal the unconscious continuation of that prototype's power, to hint that the heroine's *Bildungsroman* growth is incomplete, that England may offer only more disappointment to the budding Australian female *Künstler*.

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Civil Journey: Mediating the Personal and the Political in the Essays of Storm Jameson

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Storm Jameson is perhaps best known today as a socially committed novelist of the 1930s, interested in pioneering a "fiction of fact" (*Women's Writing in English* 94). Like Winifred Holtby, Phyllis Bottome and Lettice Cooper, Jameson's concern for modern writing centred on producing traditional novels that explored materiality in the changing modern world, emphasising community over individuality, content over form. Jameson's essays continue her pursuit of a socially committed writing but while the individual in her novels is woven into the fabric of the wider community, the use of autobiography in her essays and in her essay collections foregrounds a more personal engagement with politics and writing.

The line—"the personal is political"—has been, and remains, important in feminism's radicalizing of the private, domestic sphere. Yet, Janet Montefiore has also been calling attention to the need to explore women's relationships to mainstream politics.

... feminist scholars and historians of women's writing during this period have not been idle. . . . But because all of these books concentrate on women's writing primarily for its representation of women's lives and stories, they have relatively little to say about women as historic subjects, and nothing about the political role of women writers between the wars, except in terms of their feminism, which is only indirectly relevant to hunger marches and the Popular Front. (*Men and Women Writers of the 1930s* 20)

Links should be made between women writers and the public world of politics. After all, committed feminists like Winifred Holtby and Vera Brittain were also committed Labour Party members. Storm Jameson herself was a writer who worked hard to raise awareness of the pressing political issues of the day and as President of the British section of International

P.E.N. helped Continental writers in exile from Fascism. Montefiore's comment is a pertinent reminder that feminist critics should not limit themselves to the private sphere, lest women be effaced "through the implicit but unquestioned assumption that women and their writing are part of the private world," no matter how political that private world may be in gender terms (20).

However, it may not be enough to shift one's focus and examine women writers in the public sphere of politics as a complement to women in the private sphere of domesticity. The private/public, personal/political binaries have to be deconstructed from both sides. If the personal is political, there is also a sense that the political is also personal, that the public world of politics is subject to and motivated by personal motives and private fears. I would like to suggest here that Storm Jameson's *Civil Journey* attempts to blur these boundaries. Ostensibly a collection of literary and political essays from the thirties, *Civil Journey* is also an autobiographical narrative. Here, autobiography acts as the unconscious of Jameson's political and literary writing, repressed in her socialist theories of literature but constantly returning to disturb the separation of private and public, personal and political. This paper will thus examine *Civil Journey* in two moves—the first, taking after Montefiore's suggestion, will be to explore Jameson's essays for its strategies of bringing together literature and politics in a crisis-ridden decade; the second will be to demonstrate Jameson's method of disturbing the private/public binary through her use of autobiography.

As a political activist and a writer, Jameson was deeply concerned about the role of the writer in politically precarious times. The essays in *Civil Journey* reveal her struggle through the thirties to come up with a theory of literature that could encompass an active political function as well. Jameson's awareness of crises within society, politics and literature is constantly emphasised throughout *Civil Journey*. The crises, as Jameson sees it, are manifold. With modern life, it is the problem of modernity itself—the rapid advancements and changes of the age creating havoc with the flow of human life and traditions, making "an old countryman, with his rich instinctive knowledge, a foreigner to his grandson. The break with a living tradition is complete or nearly completed" (*Civil Journey* 18). Blame

is also laid on the First World War, which has irrevocably broken many links with the past. Filled with nostalgia, Jameson recalls the pre-war atmosphere amongst her young contemporaries.

Never to have known anything about war, and so never to have feared. Indeed, to fear nothing except that with so many roads to our feet, we might not be able to walk on all. To walk? To run. (23)

Those roads have since been closed, those running feet cut down. Neither has the one road that lay open, the one that led to war, initiated a better world as the "old men" in charge have only re-made the new world in the image of the old (8).

Literary life, as a result of the severe hammer blows of modernity and war, has also been fractured. Literary traditions and values have been destroyed, leaving writers to write in a vacuum, without "the support of a hierarchy of values" (91). Compounding the problem is the commercialisation of literature and literary tastes in favour of the escapism and cheap emotions of pulp fiction and films—sentiments that swear optimistically that "all is for the best" (92). Such developments leave Jameson particularly concerned.

You hear that such and such a writer is very pleasant, very fertile. You go to this pleasant-sounding place. Alas, the only thing you find there is a factory, blackening the earth with clouds of newspaper articles, novels of two hundred thousand words, scenarios and the rest of it. (18-19)

For Jameson, the commercialisation of literature is as nasty an event as the industrial revolution. The pure country fields of good writing are giving way to polluting, word-minting factories. The erosion of literary values and political awareness is a cause for concern as the flood of escapist literature inundates the population, numbing them to the numerous crises around them.

The solution, despite the poverty of literature, remains literature still. In "Culture and Environment," Jameson, tenacious as ever, hopes to recuperate the novel and the novelist for better ends. Jameson's theorising takes on a Leavisite colouring, advocating literary tradition, the need to educate taste and the promotion of discrimination in order to combat the

commercialisation of literature. The role the novelist has in holding together the literary past and the chaotic present, and in creating the shape of the future is extremely important to Jameson.

Since, by the rapidity and violence of the industrial change-over, the continuity of experience has been broken, it becomes all the more vitally necessary for the writer . . . to maintain touch with what is valuable in the past at the same time that he helps to create the future by exalting one set of values and decrying others. (119)

The influence of Leavis and his belief in the poet as the preserver of cultural values are perceptible here. Seeing that Jameson was a friend of the Leavises and a contributor to *Scrutiny*, the Cambridge journal associated with them, this is perhaps not surprising. There are moments when Jameson's rhetoric echoes Leavis's. Indeed, they both shared a sense of crisis that was extremely acute. As Iain Wright has noted in "F. R. Leavis, the *Scrutiny* Movement and the Crisis,"

. . . the war was above all a rupture—'the great hiatus,' he called it once. It had broken the 'continuity' of national life, irreversibly, and had made history alien and meaningless . . . Disintegration, fragmentariness, things falling apart as the centre ceases to hold; the loss of firm shapeliness and hierarchical order in both society and literary language, each exacerbating the other . . . (41)

The touchstones are familiar—the war, the loss of traditional ways of life, the loss of order and in other instances, the threat of the machine and the problem of industrialisation and commercialisation. Leavis's response was to propose "Spenglerism plus resistance" as Wright puts it (42). Although decline and atrophy are acknowledged, they are not allowed to be the final word. Leavis intends to resist this downward slide by preserving tradition, which, under the sway of I. A. Richards, implies literary tradition because the poet is grandly deemed "the most conscious point of the race" (43). The poet, together with the highly educated elite, works to set and maintain literary standards in a time of disintegration and confusion, and in doing so, helps preserve "the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age" (38).

Replace the poet with the novelist as "the most conscious point of the race" and you have Storm Jameson's creed of faith for the novelist in modern times. With the Leavisite stress on the seriousness and importance of the role of the writer, Jameson finds a response to the crises of modernity that offers her a useful model for bringing together literature and politics. But unlike Leavis, who refuses to recognise that his programme of literature and literary criticism for the sake of cultural renewal is political in any way, Jameson goes as far as to claim that this work of safeguarding traditions and literary inheritances is a form of crucial political intervention, believing the "storm which is now breaking on the world . . . to be more the business of the artist than of other men" (*Civil Journey* 165). The political role of the novelist is not one of propaganda, but the sustaining of humane values through literature. In a political atmosphere of unreason and a lack of respect for the virtues of equality, the novelist has to come to the defence of reason and humanity.

In 1937, with "New Documents" and "The Novel in Contemporary Life," Jameson begins to develop her own theory of modern literature further, gradually moving on from Leavisite ideas.¹ Leavis's extravagant ideal for the writer to be poised at the vanguard of civilisation has become a humble "receiving station for the voices coming from every corner of the society he lives in," sensitively absorbing and recording the social and political transformations going on all around (290). The writer as the preserver of cultural values becomes the writer as chronicler of the times, taking "soundings," as Jameson describes it (301). But what would these "soundings" look like?

They would be a new form of literature, though unlike the new forms promulgated by the modernists. James Gindin has characterised Jameson as an "anti-modernist," and seeing her dismissals of James Joyce's *Work in Progress* (eventually published as *Finnegan's Wake*) and surrealist literature, Gindin would not be far wrong (*British Fiction in the 1930s* 205). Yet, her antipathy to modernism should not obscure the fact that she herself was searching for new forms of writing to suit the modern times, a form of writing that could accommodate socialist politics.

Jameson's desire to make writing new leads her to a genre outside of literature itself. Perhaps the nearest equivalent of what is wanted exists already in another form in the documentary film. (270)

The analogue with documentary film is an interesting choice. In the 1920s documentary film began to emerge and assert itself as an alternative to the cinema of Hollywood. The fact that several schools can be identified attests to the vibrancy of the documentary film scene. There were the experiments of the Soviet school, combining history and revolution, the work of Cavalcanti and Ruttman in their meditations on city life and the work of Flaherty with his successful *Nanook of the North* and *Moana*, bringing together anthropology and narrative. Under the leadership of John Grierson, British documentary film however moved in a direction distinct from the various schools present in the 1920s. Grierson wanted documentary film to be inspirational, a source of information to involve the average person on the street as citizens. In a sense, it was a form of propaganda, but one that sought to engage the ordinary citizen in political issues, to encourage deeper thought about political involvement. As such Grierson's idea of documentary film had the function of exhortation but inspirational as it should be, it was neither to be melodramatic nor romanticised, nor associated "with the private, the realm of self-expression, personal indulgence, art for art's sake and social irresponsibility" (*Studies in Documentary* 29). For Grierson, it was about the everyday and the ordinary, the "drama of the doorstep" ("Cinema in the Thirties" 250). It was to be a form of realism and one that tended to focus on the working-classes.²

While no doubt Jameson's literary documents were to be focused on the working-classes as well, that was not to be its only scope. The net was to be cast wider. Jameson recommends documents from a Nottinghamshire mining village, a factory, a family of five living in the West End, or in Paddington, in Hoxton, or in Lambeth. For Jameson, this new form of socialist writing will involve an analysis of change that will not limit itself to only the lower levels of society.

The process of change, of decay, of growth, is taking place everywhere all the time: it does not matter where you open up the social body if you know what you are looking for. (263-64)

The life of a Lord Invernain is apt material for a document as well.

Documents are thus not to be class-bound, like the proletarian novel Jameson calls "that latest weakest version of the naturalist's 'slice of life,'" but texts that emerge from an intimate experience of the subject, just as camera and sound recorder are brought and placed within the midst of their subjects (297). Contemptuously, she declares that these documents are not meant to be superficial journalistic reports based on nothing more than a visit to "the distressed areas in a motor-car," nor official reports written up after an hour's visit (270).

We do not *see* the woman stripping the filthy, bug-ridden wallpaper from the thin wall of her attic; nor the pregnant woman waiting for her turn for the lavatory which serves eight families (forty people); nor the gesture of the woman setting on the table the little pie she has bought for her consumptive child; nor the workless man looking at the soles of his shoes when he comes home. It is necessary that a writer should have lived with these things for him to record them Something can be discovered in an hour's visit, but not the quick. (*italics original*, 268-69)

Jameson's documents demand an intimate gaze that can identify the unspoken, the gestural. For Jameson, like Grierson, the ability to record the appearances of everyday life is a means to enter the nature of that life.

However, records are not made by innocent simple acts. Though she insists that documents be almost transparent pieces of writing that act as conduits of information, records written "simply and coldly, even brutally," Jameson recognises that this process is actually an art (268). After all, she acknowledges that there are elements of selection and arrangement involved in the making of documents so as to highlight what is of significance. Jameson's enterprise is not a naive attempt to get at the truth, but a promotion of a style of writing that foregrounds physical detail at the expense of the individual writer and that allows the concreteness of details to imply everything: "No commentary—the document is a comment" (272).

Critics who have noticed this contribution of Jameson's, however, have tended to understand Jameson's theory of documents rather too simplistically. This inclination is perhaps best illustrated by following the usual critical path of reading "Documents" in conjunction with Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, bringing together a theory of socialist literature and the classic thirties text of middle-class social conscience in the heart of the proletarian world. *The Road to Wigan Pier* is a book of conflicts. In part, it can be seen to fulfil Jameson's demand for documents that deal with facts alone, and not emotions. Again like Grierson, she shies away from the personal.

The first thing a socialist writer has to realise is that there is no value in the emotions, the spiritual writhings, started in him by the sight, smell and touch of poverty. The emotions are no doubt unavoidable. There is no need to record them. Let him go and pour them down the drain. (265)

The ego is not to protrude and as Samuel Hynes notes, *The Road to Wigan Pier* is filled with lists, tables and case histories, making it look "rather like a census report or the minutes of a committee on public welfare" (*The Auden Generation* 273). However, cold facts are only one part of Orwell's story. There are also his expressions of revulsion, his "spiritual writhings," and in particular his honest but controversial confession that he was brought up to believe that the lower classes smell. Middle-class breeding clashes violently and irrationally with a political and social conscience in the process of development, and *The Road to Wigan Pier* is the story of that conflict and its resolution. For Hynes, the intrusion of feelings into Orwell's plot and his struggle with middle-class preconceptions is *the* story. Cunningham, though he admires Jameson's tough-minded briskness, believes that Jameson, raised with fewer middle-class pretensions, has underestimated the problem. It is impossible for Orwell to simply pour his emotions and assumptions down the drain; they are so deeply ingrained that he has to contend with them openly. The defence of Orwell by Hynes and Cunningham indicates an upper middle-class bias in constructions of thirties writing as they privilege the upper middle-class experience of male writers struggling to come to terms with the realities of working-class poverty and their own prejudiced breeding.

But it is precisely this sometimes embarrassing spectacle of middle-class narcissism that Jameson deplores and wishes to address, not from a naive insistence on facts but because the focus should plainly be on the working-classes. She illustrates why such self-absorbed emotions should be avoided in "The Novel in Contemporary Life."

Perhaps he watches a poor woman, the wife of an unemployed man, giving some little extra food she has got to her half-fed child. He is seized with pity, with rage. He says so, and at once the image of the mother is obscured. (302)

The "straight dark bar" of the first person pronoun casts its looming shadow on the landscape and like Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, Jameson is dodging left and right to catch sight of the woman behind it. The moment is uncannily similar to Woolf's reading experience in *A Room of One's Own* as she catches a glimpse of a woman, Phoebe, behind the letter "I", only to have her obliterated by the dominating presence of Alan and his many, many opinions (90). Although Jameson's other is the working class, Woolf's feminist argument still stands; the effect of the dreaded "I" in socialist literature is boredom and aridity. Jameson is struggling to bring the other into focus here, not the middle-class ego. *The Road to Wigan Pier* demonstrates that any attention on the other only reverts to attention to the self. For Jameson, who is interested in social change, preventing that reversion is part of her agenda. The focus is to be firmly held on the other.

In her insistence on facts and objectivity at the expense of subjectivity, Jameson's theory of documents can be seen as "symptomatic of a spirit of scientific enquiry which characterised the 1930s" (*Literature and Culture*, 17). This was, after all, the decade of Mass Observation as well. Founded in 1937 by Tom Harrison and Charles Madge, Mass Observation set out to report and record "almost every aspect of daily life and social behaviour" (18). It was an anthropological exercise, an attempt to understand thirties society in all its bewildering multiplicity. In its emphasis on the factual and the objective however, it problematised the position of the observing subject.

... the findings of the various scientific enquiries showed that what was observed was far from passive and could exert a determining influence on the observing subject. (18)

Subjectivity re-emerges in spite of the objective discourse much as in *Road to Wigan Pier*. The return of repressed subjectivity is a difficulty that Jameson too faced but her methods of handling this problematic return are significantly different.

Civil Journey, as a collection of essays, can be seen as the narrative of her increasing politicisation and emphasis on objectivity, culminating in "New Documents" and "The Novel in Contemporary Life." But *Civil Journey* as a volume is also implicated in a narrative other than the working out of her literary and political responses to the crises of modernity and the thirties. *Civil Journey* closes with an autobiographical essay, "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography." It is the story of her coming to writing from her hapless start in writing theses for her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to her first novel, written in familiar female fashion—over several years with time snatched from household chores and caring for her son. Her story is both familiar and unfamiliar. Her novel is eventually accepted for publication and where one expects jubilation is instead indifference.

I suppose I was pleased when I knew certainly that my book was going to be published. I have forgotten. But I am sure I took it coolly. (321)

Similarly, any anguish expected from her as chunks of her manuscript are excised by her publisher is notably absent.

After dinner I went through the manuscript and drew my pencil through passages he said were silly and must come out. My half-realised contempt for novel-writing made this easy to do. (321-22)

Becoming a writer is not exactly a triumph for Jameson, but a lament. Finding an old reader's report on her first novel that claimed (assuming her a man) that "the man can write and is worth watching," Jameson responds witheringly:

The man' could *not* write. Being denied other uses for his mind he fell into the habit of writing. A pity. (327)

This almost bitter self-contempt highlights Jameson's usual discomfiting disdain for her own achievements. Autobiography becomes a rather punishing mode for her as she evaluates with brutal honesty where her own half-conscious decisions have taken her. Autobiography is also the means by which Jameson recontextualises her literary and political essays.

The fact that *Civil Journey* ends with an autobiographical piece signals Jameson's enormous investment in and her troubled relationship with the autobiographical mode. While her political and literary essays stress the importance of leaving the ego aside when writing, like the return of the repressed, autobiography is a mode Jameson constantly returns to. "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography" could have quite easily been a fragment of Jameson's eventually written autobiography. Made up of brief chapters, *Journey from the North* echoes much of *Civil Journey*. Fragments of text from her essays are dispersed throughout the two volumes of her autobiography and sometimes used almost word for word. Large portions of "City to Let—Berlin 1932" and "The Youngest Brother," first published in *Civil Journey*, are recycled and inserted into the text of *Journey from the North*. Jameson constantly re-writes her life-story with events from her life, such as her experiences working in an advertising agency and her devastation on realising her husband's infidelity, finding their way in different transparent guises into her fiction. The curious thing is that Jameson should call the closing piece in *Civil Journey* "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography" (my italics), for by 1938 when she wrote this autobiographical essay, she had already rehearsed her autobiography twice in published form—in *That was Yesterday*, written in the third person, and in her thirties memoirs *No Time Like the Present*.³

Jameson has a certain obsession with autobiography and it constantly infiltrates her writing practice. With her novels, this autobiographical impulse is tightly regulated. In the "Mirror of Darkness" trilogy, Jameson's self-portrait, Hervey Russell, is never allowed to dominate the entire narrative. Instead she shares the stage with characters from both ends of the class spectrum, from the working classes to newspaper magnates, providing a panoramic view of literary and political London in the 1920s. With her essays, however, Jameson is free to attempt new ways to relate the autobiographical with the world at large. What is unusual about *Civil*

Journey as a volume are the autobiographical prefaces that provide contextual glosses on the origin of each essay. In her preface to the whole volume, Jameson notes that the essays have a dual interest. Published because she believes in their intrinsic worth as criticism, they also serve as part of another project. The essays mark, as Jameson puts it, "the stages of a mind, my mind" (5). *Civil Journey* is placed within an autobiographical framework and Jameson even suggests a reading plan for the "friendly critic"—a plan that moves from the latest to the earliest pieces—in an effort to provide an authorial structure for the reader's experience of her mind (5).

Civil Journey, thus, works on two levels—the literary-political and the autobiographical. The prefatorial glosses to each essay create another time frame, drawing attention to the current moment of compilation from which Jameson looks back on her essays with hindsight, as opposed to the original moment of writing. This doubling of selves allows her to return and review her decisions and beliefs, picking out the changes and differences that have occurred since. Thus, in the preface to "The Defence of Freedom," Jameson recognises the changes in her thinking through the years that have passed since the essay was first published. Her belief that a writer must defend his/her right to think and write freely has shifted from an insistence that *all* writers "must descend into the arena and fight there in the dust" to a less absolute position (151). The meeting of her contemporary self and her old selves as manifested textually also brings to the surface the threads that link past and present selves together, revealing the continuities and coherence of her personality through the years. Looking back on her essays, Jameson in her prefaces often finds themes repeatedly cropping up. Re-reading "The Craft of a Novelist," Jameson sees how her own steadfast fears have persistently permeated her life and writing.

I see that the lasting obsession of my life since the War—the fear of another—crept into it. The fear that another will kill my son as brutally and uselessly as the last killed my brother in his nineteenth year. It gets, you see, even into an essay on the novel. (53)

In "Technique for Living," an essay full of exemplary notions with Jameson attempting to run away from anxieties over her son and the coming war, the recognition that the repressed will return is even more startling.

It is as though one threw a few shells into a box and found a year or two later that they had arranged themselves in the form of a skeleton. (237)

This dialogic process is also echoed in *Journey from the North*, where Jameson sometimes works with a double time-frame, inserting her present writing self into her text. Such moments are marked in the text with a date, as if Jameson is keeping a sporadic diary within the text itself as she writes her autobiography. At the end of chapter thirteen in volume one, she includes a postscript dated "14th of January, 1963" where she discusses how her education in iconoclasm, via the class of 5b and the King's College group, the Eikonoklasts, has shaped her present self.

The disadvantages of having been a member of Class 5b, and an Eikonoklast, were brought home to me today. I found myself the only person in the room not in ecstasies over a copy of *The Private Eye*. . . . I felt out of things, but took heart: it is not my fault, it is the fault of 5b and the Eikonoklasts. (71)

At the end of chapter thirty-six, which details her entry in the twenties into literary society and her self-consciousness with company, another dated entry appears. Marked "14th of January, 1962," it describes a moment of realisation that her old awkwardness amongst clever people had gone.

The evening before I had listened to arguments tossed between four or five enormously intelligent people, and had realized, suddenly, that I was not afraid of them. Remoteness had taken the place of diffidence and my instinctive fear of punishment. (162)

Such entries dotted throughout the two volumes introduce a level of dialogue to her autobiography, bringing to focus the differences and continuities in her different selves. This process of evaluating her life often features in her autobiographical practice and is best seen in *Civil Journey*. Indeed, *Civil Journey* is a unique example of the public and the personal being brought together. Impersonal essays on the crises of the modern age, literature and politics directed towards the public are, through the

framework of autobiographical prefaces and fragments, contextualised and re-connected with Jameson's personal traumas and development. In an individual manner, Jameson has managed to link her public persona with her private self. The civil journey of the title is not only a political one towards greater involvement and engagement, but a personal one towards greater self-understanding. The two are inextricably linked.

It is this strategy of connecting the personal with the public that Jameson takes advantage of again in 1970 with the double publication of volume two of her autobiography and *Parthian Words*, a collection of literary essays. This time she places autobiography side by side with literary, instead of political, convictions.⁴ Published as an opportunity for Jameson to fulfil her frustrated ambition to be a serious critic, *Parthian Words* also acts as a companion piece to her completed life-story. While *Journey from the North* concentrates on her personal dilemmas and actions, *Parthian Words* brings to the view Jameson's balanced, but tough critical values. Indeed, *Parthian Words* is seen by Jameson as "the moral autobiography of a writer as well as an essay in criticism" (8). In it, she grapples with post-war contemporary writing from the *nouveau roman* to erotic pornographic novels—an amazing demonstration of contemporariness by a literary woman in her late seventies. Yet it gradually becomes clear that Jameson is unable to stop herself from reverting to now "lost standards of values," and is still waiting for the novel that will articulate modernity, a novel whose arrival she prophesied as early as 1928 in *The Georgian Novel and Mr. Robinson* (153). Being brutally honest with herself in the Epilogue of *Parthian Words*, she admits as much.

My situation as a writer is the unenviable one of a survivor Certainly my birth colours my outlook on life and letters, even against my reason . . . I write from the still warm ashes of a society given me by my birth and growth in it, I cannot write in the language of any other. (152-56)

The autobiographer confronts the critic, just as in *Civil Journey* the autobiographer and the political, literary essayist intertwine. Mediating the literary and the political, the public and the private, Jameson constantly insists on being both simultaneously. Combining literature and politics through her own theory of documents, bringing private and public together

with autobiographical discourse, Jameson deconstructs any binary separations by finding the means to blur the categories. As an essayist, she never fails to show us that literature and politics are inextricably entangled, that the public and private spheres are joined at the hip. The pity is that her example of bringing seemingly oppositional discourses into relation has been lost amidst critical categorisations that do her little justice. We need a way of “expressing, in such a way that they are at once seen to be intimately connected, the relations between things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex” (274). This prescient remark of Jameson’s at the end of “New Documents” is still valid today.

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NOTES

¹‘New Documents’ was first published as ‘Documents’ in the ‘Writing in Revolt’ issue of *Fact*, 4 July 1937, 9-18. The addition of ‘New’ to the essay’s title is puzzling as the reprinted version in *Civil Journey* has not been altered or revised in any way. Jameson adhered to a policy of non-revision for *Civil Journey*, refusing, as she put it in the prefatorial gloss to ‘The Defence of Freedom,’ ‘to arrange my past to suit my present’ (151).

²Film realism and literary realism overlap interestingly in the example of H. G. Wells, an Edwardian realist writer who wrote novels dealing with social problems. He took an interest in documentary film and once commented that ‘he was learning from documentary film-makers’ (*Studies in Documentary* 19).

³*That was Yesterday* (London: William Heinemann, 1932) covers the early years of her marriage to the point, when away from her weak husband, she begins to take her life into her own hands, leaving her son in Yorkshire to go to London to work. The preface to this book even acknowledges that some lines of conversation were lifted from an earlier, less read novel. *No Time Like the Present* (London: Cassell, 1933) focuses on an earlier section of her life, rehearsing her mother’s life, her own childhood in Whitby and her life at Leeds University and at the University of London. The latter half of the book analyses her own personality and character.

⁴Parthian horsemen used to baffle their enemies with their quickness and an unusual strategy that turned defensive retreat on the battlefield into an offensive move. In real or pretended withdrawal, they would continue to fire projectiles backwards in the direction of their pursuers, fighting as they fled. In that sense, *Parthian Words* may be read as Jameson’s fighting last words as she retreats into old age and death.

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Impertinent Matters: Lancelot Gobbo and the Fortunes of Performance Criticism

ALAN ROSEN

I

Shakespeare criticism and performance has vacillated considerably in its approach to minor characters, ranging in its estimation of the significance of these characters from superfluous to essential.¹ A subset of these minor characters are those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, clowns and servants—a class of characters often viewed as primarily for entertainment, and hence as inessential to a sophisticated response to the plays. Guided by this criterion, many Restoration and early eighteenth-century (and some modern) productions eliminated the parts altogether.

Nineteenth-century productions, motivated by a belief in Shakespeare's genius, and a corresponding conviction that his writing produced nothing superfluous, attempted to bring production of the plays in conformity to text, thereby reclaiming these minor characters. In the last half-century, moreover, this process of reclamation has been taken even further by those productions and critics who emphasize the relation of theatre to festival. By redirecting attention to popular culture and by focusing on the inversionary forces inherent in festival, production has not only reinstated clowns and servants but has often marked them for special appreciation.²

Modern criticism on Lancelot Gobbo, the clown in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, replays this margin-to-center pattern through its shift in emphasis from text to performance. Initially, Lancelot's joking and monologues were seen to be detached from the plot, to be, in Frye's phrase, "curiously aloof" from the main thrust of the play.³ Consequently, Lancelot was viewed as thematically and theatrically superfluous. This position was countered, however, by those critics who argued that Lancelot's role was not superfluous but rather integral, reinforcing and legitimizing

For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debrosen00802.htm>>.

themes and incidents central to the play. This argument commonly either focused on Lancelot's rejection of the Jew Shylock in preference to the Christian Bassanio, noting its parallel to Jessica's flight from and abandonment of her Jewish father,⁴ or analyzed the relationship of Lancelot and his father, Old Gobbo, in the context of the other parent/child relationships in the play.⁵

The third, and most recent, critical formulation circles back to the first, with a difference. Performance-oriented critics reject the integrationist reading of Lancelot's role, arguing that the role is indeed detached from the main flow of the play. But rather than viewing this detachment as a liability, these critics see it as a way to exploit the potential of the theatre, the special meaning of Lancelot's role deriving from his capacity to stand back from the narrative movement of the play and to obtain a metatheatrical position.⁶

I want to consider three critics—Walter Cohen, David Wiles, and James Bulman—who draw on performance-oriented strategies in order to comment on Lancelot's role and to distill its contribution to *The Merchant of Venice*. To be sure, the three critics vary considerably in the degree to which they foreground these strategies: for Wiles and Bulman, performance is more central, for Cohen less so. But I suggest that their remarks on Lancelot, and the critical strategies they deploy in making them, reveal contradictions both in their own critical practice and in the effort of literary criticism to revise its text-based orientation and vocabulary in favor of a performance-oriented one.⁷

I will argue that this is more problematically the case with Cohen and Wiles, each of whom attempt to give a reading of the play—and of Lancelot's role in it—guided by performance issues. Cohen invokes Lancelot to support his claims about Shakespeare's subversive theatre. But the focus on Lancelot both generates conservative critical strategies and enforces the play's devotion to a conservative social agenda. I therefore see Cohen's turn to performance—to that which is beyond or before the text—as leading him to embrace the very text he ostensibly wishes to circumvent. In the case of Wiles, theatre history seemingly enables a view of Lancelot-as-clown that is at its foundation performance-centered. But his attempt to give a reading of Lancelot's role in the play shows, I believe,

how resistant the text of the play is to Wiles' historical construction of the character.

I will claim, then, that Cohen and Wiles illuminate the gap between performance and text when they offer their own reading of the play. In contrast, Bulman does not venture a reading, but sees Lancelot as symptomatic of early modern theatrical issues in general. By bracketing a "reading" of the clown's role in the play, Bulman is more successful at sustaining a performance-oriented critique of Lancelot. But Bulman's stance, abrogating a reading of the play, still leaves the tension between performance and text intact. I therefore conclude by first indicating how Lancelot's role mirrors the fortunes of performance criticism, inviting us to see the status and issues of the one linked to those of the other. And second, I suggest that by paradoxically having Lancelot engage in an act of reading *himself* as a text, Shakespeare uses Lancelot's clowning role to arbitrate the uneasy relation between performance and text.

II

Walter Cohen's article, "*The Merchant of Venice* and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism," has been influential on several fronts.⁸ For our purposes, Cohen gives substantial consideration to the "function" of Lancelot. Indeed, although Cohen's examination of Lancelot consists of approximately a page, it is the lengthiest review Cohen offers of any character in the play.⁹ His discussion of Lancelot, furthermore, contains his most extensive use of the strategy of close reading. I will try to account for why Lancelot warrants these special considerations.

The focus on Lancelot is initially provoked by Cohen's shift from sociological to performance critique as a means to get at the play's deep structure. Specifically, examining "matters of stage position and dramatic speech" promotes an understanding of the tensions that disrupt the play's neo-classical surface. These tensions, according to Cohen, are produced by two dimensions: on the one hand, the play's "popular heritage," and, on the other, the "contradiction between artisanal base and absolutist superstructure in public theatre." Cohen also implicates the Elizabethan

audience in the tensions that disrupt the surface, following those, particularly Weimann, who emphasize that the audience at the Elizabethan theatre celebrated a "festive occasion."¹⁰

With regard to "stage position," it is Lancelot who has the greatest "proximity to the audience," proximity here understood as social and linguistic identity. Though Cohen does not spell out the significance of this identification of clown with audience, the association apparently justifies Lancelot's importance in Cohen's analysis. Because he most closely embodies the features of the audience, Lancelot serves as a conduit for the artisan-based subversive strategies the play clandestinely promotes. While Cohen does not make explicit his reasons for privileging a minor character, one can suggest that this tactic best dramatizes Cohen's point because Lancelot's histrionic marginality seems to pose little threat to the main workings of the plot and the play.

Cohen deploys close reading to show that Lancelot's erratic language actually and purposefully demystifies the play's dominant aristocratic discourse. Specifically, while from the standpoint of aristocratic discourse malapropism represents the inappropriate use of language, from the standpoint of popular discourse it signals a subversive "impertinence." Cohen thus recuperates the very linguistic cues that seem to indicate Lancelot's ineffectiveness.

As I mentioned above, Cohen's recourse to close reading to examine Lancelot's function is his most extensive use of this strategy. This is of interest on two fronts. First, he indicates early in his essay that his concern is with "innovative critical strategies [such] as symptomatic reading, metacommentary, and the elucidation of the ideology of form."¹¹ Close reading thus stands out as a more conventional and conservative strategy in contrast to the more innovative ones of which Cohen speaks here and which generally inform the methodology of his essay. Second, close reading emphasizes the authority and stability of the text at the same time that Cohen wishes to feature elements associated with performance. Thus, in his expressed concern with "stage position and dramatic speech" as a framework for analysis of Lancelot, Cohen has silently yoked the two venues, theatre and text, which have been set at loggerheads in recent disputation over the appropriate mode of analysis for drama criticism.¹²

Cohen's turn to close reading may have been motivated by his foregrounding of Lancelot. Other critics argue that the Elizabethan rendition of Lancelot, probably first acted by Will Kemp, made the most of the clown's "stage position," which included generous opportunities for extemporization.¹³ Additionally, critics note that Lancelot's extemporizing suggests an unstable text.¹⁴ Invoking performance terminology ("stage position") and foregrounding a role (Lancelot) which embodies the possibilities and difficulties of performance criticism, Cohen, feeling vertigo, may have turned to close reading to try to stabilize an object of analysis growing ever more unstable.

The problem presented by this turn to close reading to analyze a performance role is further demonstrated by the questionable close reading that Cohen offers. Referring to Lancelot's attempt to leave his employ with Shylock and gain a new position with Bassanio, Cohen writes: "In seeking service with the understandably bewildered Bassanio, the socially mobile clown explains that 'the suit is impertinent to myself' (II.ii.130). Having *somehow* obtained the job, he revisits his old employer to invite him to dinner with his new one" (emphasis added). Cohen implies by this paraphrase that Lancelot's verbal and social incompetence ought to lead Bassanio to reject him for the position and therefore that Bassanio's acceptance of Lancelot can only be explained by a "somehow," explained, in other words, by something—chance, charm, fate—that cannot be explained. But Shakespeare provides a reason, articulated by Bassanio in this scene: "I know thee well, thou hast obtained thy suit. / Shylock thy master spoke with me this day, / And hath preferred [i.e. recommended] thee" (2.2.119-21); Shylock soon after corroborates the arrangement (2.5.47-49).¹⁵ Lancelot, then, enters Bassanio's service not by means of his own qualifications but rather on the basis of a prearranged agreement between his masters. The "somehow" that Cohen uses to describe the transaction does not square with the text. To be sure, the notion of chance implied by the "somehow" supports Cohen's emphasis on the subversive function of Lancelot, for chance functions here as an irrational force that eludes the pervasive control of those in power. In contradiction to Cohen's resort to chance, however, the text shows that even servants who take initiative are only carrying out what their superiors have foreordained.

Whereas Cohen argues that Lancelot manifests a subversive function that escapes and challenges the dominant aristocratic discourse of the play, the text here suggests that even the subversive and popular is guided and controlled by the aristocrats and their associates.¹⁶ Hence, the conservative critical strategy of close reading that Cohen invokes to try to recruit Lancelot to a subversive cause leads, inadvertently, to a conservative reading of Lancelot's place in the play.

III

Whereas Walter Cohen's appreciation of Lancelot's subversive role is brought to support a marxist appreciation of popular culture, David Wiles' consideration of Lancelot in *Shakespeare's Clown* is boldly performance-centered, examining Lancelot in the context of the roles that Shakespeare wrote for the Elizabethan clown Will Kemp.¹⁷ More generally, Wiles' extensive historical review of Will Kemp and the clown tradition in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre serves as a means by which to refocus drama criticism, privileging not "the unity of the text" but rather "the unity of theatrical experience."¹⁸ Thus Lancelot works to support this call for a major theoretical adjustment.¹⁹

Wiles argues that understanding the shift from text to theatrical experience depends upon understanding the significance of the jig as an element of Elizabethan theatre. The appreciation of the jig's significance comes both from material other than the plays (Kemp's autobiography) and from patterns existent in the plays themselves, particularly the role of the clown. Kemp's clowns, including Lancelot, do not obtain closure within the play but only after it, dancing the jig that followed the play proper. In order to gain the proper perspective on the clown's position, Wiles contrasts English with Italian theatre. Where in *commedia dell'arte* the marriage of the socially privileged is repeated by servants/clowns, in Elizabethan theatre the clown does not marry. Shakespeare, for example, deliberately does not allow Lancelot to be married off: "Three parallel weddings conclude the play [*Merchant*] . . . but, at the bottom of the social ladder, there is no resolution for Lancelot, and the pregnancy of the

mooreess is forgotten.”²⁰ Both marriage and jig, according to Wiles, are theatrical signs of physical satisfaction. Since the clown is conspicuous by his absence from the marriage which brings closure to comedy, his physical satisfaction must be located elsewhere, outside and after the play.

Wiles’ formulation for Lancelot’s special status in this context is that “sexuality is always suggested, never demonstrated.”²¹ Lancelot’s name has sexual connotations (“Lance,” indicating a sharp instrument, has phallic associations),²² but because Shakespeare refuses to marry him off, the satisfaction is not forthcoming. More than that, Lancelot embodies an almost ascetic figure, one who is desexualized, Lenten, and anti-carnival. Strikingly, though Wiles appropriates and extends the assumptions of the critics who valorize festival, he also inverts these assumptions. While Cohen, for example, views Lancelot as the embodiment of the festive, working within the play to demystify and subvert, Wiles believes that such forces are curbed within the play itself, and are liberated only after the play is over and the dance begins.

There are two ways, however, that Wiles’ foregrounding of Lancelot runs into trouble. First, the categories by which he interprets Lancelot’s role stand in contradiction. We have seen that, according to Wiles, Lancelot embodies the “Lenten” clown. Yet Wiles also argues that Lancelot must be viewed in the tradition of the Vice, which means, among other things, that he is predisposed to gluttony and lechery.²³ Though Wiles invokes the association with the Vice mainly to reconsider the clown’s relation to the audience, this association leads him to implicitly represent Lancelot as both lecherous and Lenten. The second problem is that the text resists the Lancelot that Wiles’ performance-oriented criticism constructs. According to the text, Lancelot does not seem at all Lenten. Wiles himself refers to the most egregious counterexample, in which Lorenzo notes that Lancelot has made pregnant a “mooreess.” This example of promiscuity, among others, suggests that, in contrast to Wiles’ claim, Lancelot demonstrates an unusual degree of sexual [i.e. physical] satisfaction, perhaps more than any other character in the play. It is indeed this transgressive promiscuity that Lorenzo seizes on to shame Lancelot while defending his own illicit marriage to Jessica.

It is indeed possible that Wiles applies aristocratic standards of pleasure to a character for whom they simply are not warranted; it is not within but outside the conventions of marriage that the lower-class Lancelot might well be presumed to satisfy his wants.²⁴ In any event, Wiles' attempt to resituate his clowns, drawing on the specificity of performance material to gauge their full contribution, runs aground on a reading that wishes to remain in touch with (if not anchored to) the text.

IV

My third example again uses Lancelot to foreground performance issues. In *Shakespeare in Performance: The Merchant of Venice*, James Bulman comments on Lancelot within the context of a characterization of the special "multi-consciousness" of Elizabethan theatre, a multi-consciousness that, in contrast to the bifurcated production of *Merchant* in modern theatre, allows for an appreciation of the play's complex integrated structure.²⁵ Bulman's assumption is that what gave the Elizabethans the capacity to interpret *Merchant* rightly is no longer readily (or perhaps at all) accessible to modern theatre. Nevertheless, as an anthropologist describing a hot culture to a cold one, Bulman attempts to retrieve and present the essential nature of Elizabethan theatre to a (post)modern world. To this end he distills the essence of Elizabethan theatre as the interaction between bare stage and imagining audience, the minimalist stage encouraging and benefiting from the impressive (and seemingly lost) resources of the Shakespearean audience.

As with Cohen and Wiles, Lancelot here receives only brief consideration. Nevertheless, Bulman views Lancelot's role as paradigmatic in this excavation of Elizabethan theatre. Bulman's point of departure is the dissonance Lancelot's role evokes in modern, naturalistic theatre, for his monologue creates a "stumbling block" to production. Of any role in the play, Lancelot's is the one most profoundly lodged in its historical milieu, and thus also most profoundly resists being translated effortlessly into the superficially similar but fundamentally different language of modern stage production. Various exotic features of Lancelot's role, then, serve as a basis for the reconstruction of the Elizabethan theatre experience;

furthermore, Bulman implies that the unassimilable nature of Lancelot's role enables what Weimann refers to as a way to negotiate the divide between past and present.²⁶

It is striking that, unlike Cohen and Wiles, Bulman does not, at some point in his performance critique of Lancelot, recruit the text or the plot of the play. In contrast, he emphasizes those features of Lancelot that indicate how the role functioned outside of and unconstrained by the text or even the play. By championing Lancelot's "flexibility" to move in and out of character, and by underscoring his extemporization, Bulman questions and limits the authority of the text or plot as a basis from which to judge theatrical experience. What Bulman loses, of course, by steering clear of text or narrative is the possibility of offering a reading of the play enriched by the consideration of Lancelot; Bulman himself makes no gesture toward such a reading. What he gains, on the other hand, is a consistent performance critique which is not compromised by the often unconvincing effort to integrate textually or thematically based interpretations.

Bulman shares with Cohen and Wiles an appreciation for the interpretive lever provided by Lancelot's lower class status. Bulman justifies his foregrounding of Lancelot because Lancelot's lower class status allows a clear revelation of crucial theatrical elements, elements shared in more muted fashion by other characters or roles. Significantly, however, Bulman does not refer to Lancelot's lower class in order to place him in a different category from these other characters; the difference between Lancelot's role and that of others is to be measured not in kind but degree. For Bulman, the minor character becomes symptomatic of what every character in performance had to offer.

V

Though different in their performance-oriented approaches, Cohen, Wiles and Bulman transform this minor character into a major one, or at least one with major significance. Yet there is a way in which Lancelot must actually remain minor in order to generate this major significance. Since his role seems marginal to the play, it falls to the critic to present a

framework which contravenes this impression. In order to reverse the initial assumption of marginality, critical practice simultaneously insists on its importance; the fact that Lancelot is lower class, is a servant, is a clown, constitutes the very basis on which his importance rests. This kind of critical practice, to be sure, seems to share features with the kind of ironic reading engaged in by Richard Levin's close readers, correcting a surface reading in favor of a deeper one.²⁷ But the critical process I am describing differs in that it parallels and recapitulates what it analyses: just as Lancelot subverts what is status quo, showing the marginal to be central, so do critics engage in an equally subversive endeavor.

Furthermore, Lancelot's ascendancy to a position of some critical significance has taken place over the same period of time that performance criticism has come to the fore. Hence, the attraction that Lancelot holds for performance critics may be because his own fate resembles theirs. Prior to coming into critical vogue, performance criticism was viewed as instantiating an almost vulgar side of literary study. Similarly, Lancelot's rustic features previously suggested that he was not worthy of serious attention; but these same features, framed within a theory of festival, have been used to establish for him an alternative kind of cultural legitimacy. Tellingly, the prestige accorded the notion of festival and the festive in Renaissance studies has enabled an elevation in status common to Lancelot and performance criticism.

In addition, there may be other ways in which performance criticism sees its own concerns reflected in Lancelot. Often in the role of playing roles, and frequently being flippant with—and thus interrogating the status of—words, Lancelot is also regularly associated with texts. As with many servants in Elizabethan drama, he acts as a courier for letters of the nobility. But he seems especially scrupulous to make sure he does not open letters, even when it would seem he had the authorization to do so (2.4.9-11). Hence the letters he carries are read only by the nobles to whom he delivers them.²⁸

Significantly, the only text that Lancelot himself reads in the play is his hand.²⁹ After being accepted by Bassanio, Lancelot goes to take leave of his "old master," and on the way attempts to decipher the lines of his palm. His readerly gaze paradoxically focuses on the hand, turning attention toward the equipment of the actor's body. But his appreciation for the

quality of the text he discovers links body to book: "Well, / if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer / to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune (2.2.132-33)." The metaphorical situation Lancelot imagines is the taking of an oath, requiring his hand ("table") laid upon a bible ("book"). One text is next to another, establishing a kind of solemn interplay between hand and bible, actor and script, theatre and text. Both texts are meant to be read; both here unite to produce a third text, the oath. It is a striking image of creative interdependence between, in a slight rephrasing of Terry Eagleton's formulation, the two "distinct formations" of text and performance.³⁰

As Lancelot's reverie continues, however, his meditation again drives a wedge between text and performance:

Go to, here's a simple line of life, here's a

small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing, eleven widows
and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man. And then to
'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge
of a feather-bed: here are simple 'scapes. (2.2.134-38)

What Lancelot (mis)reads in the lines of his palm is a kind of performance, a set of fantasized sexual adventures that seems greater than any single person could enact and that, moreover, constantly place him in life-death situations. As he does in other places, the clown seems to project himself into a theatrical world of his own conjuring. The difference in this scenario is the carnal text (the palm) that gives rise to, or legitimates, his imagined performance. The layering of the text/performance connection is worth spelling out: Shakespeare's text (*The Merchant*) occasions the performance of the play, which in turn highlights as a text the actor's body (Lancelot's hand), which occasions the fantasy of a performance (the many wives) which, we assume, could never be performed. To have a text that scripts an unrealizable drama questions the authority of Lancelot's carnal text. Hence, the notion of a text-driven drama—the notion, as W. B. Worthen has recently put it, that dramatic performance is dependent on and receives its impetus from a prescriptive text—is here placed in considerable doubt.³¹ Lancelot cannot possibly fulfill what the text has predetermined.

Moreover, what "drives" Lancelot's erotic fantasy of unrealizable performance is only ostensibly the lines of his palm that spell out his fortune. The more likely prod that shapes Lancelot's desire is the love affairs of the nobles. Mahood suggests that the adventures that Lancelot contemplates parody Bassanio's own romantic adventures—a fitting identification, one may add, as Lancelot transfers his allegiance to Bassanio.³² But one might also see here a parody of Portia's surplus of suitors and the risky contest that they agree to take part in, a contest which, if not ending in "peril of [one's] life," most often concludes for the suitor in a shameful silence and irrevocable celibacy. And if Lancelot's own "simple" surplus parodies that of the nobles, so their values and actions set the standard for his own. Indeed, Lancelot's prospect of a "small trifle" of fifteen wives lets him casually, if excessively, take part in the performance—marriage—that within the terms of the play and of Shakespearean comedy, helps to distinguish the noble characters from the common ones. In any case, the mix of comedic parody and class-driven fantasy demystifies Lancelot's text, exposing its derivative nature.

My own strategy, then, has been to look intensively at what happens when Lancelot represents himself as a text. It may be that by invoking the actor's body or reading closely Lancelot's fantasy (if not his libidinal palm) or seizing on a single moment, I commit sins similar to those with which I charge Wiles, Cohen and Bulman respectively. Yet I have attempted to show how Shakespeare, using a character particularly suited to evoking the sticking point between performance and text, sets forth a more complex model of the relation between them, a model on the one hand sympathetic to the kind of revisionary practices performance criticism wants to install, while on the other hand alert to how texts infiltrate, if not prescribe, performance. Indeed, even with this character who most epitomizes performance, the text is insistently (perhaps impertinently) present. To be sure, for the clown to read himself as a text parodies the text he reads, emphasizing its instability. But texts are there nonetheless, indeed a plurality of texts, claiming a place for themselves, as it were, in Shakespeare's theatre.

NOTES

¹From a different set of concerns than mine, M. M. Mahood deftly surveys the significance of minor characters in *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1998).

²My focus here is not on production history but on critical response in performance studies. Nonetheless, production and criticism seem consonant in many respects. A sketch of the production history of *The Merchant of Venice* indicates that Lancelot's fortunes seem to follow those of minor characters generally. The earliest adaptation on record, Granville's in 1701, cut the role entirely: "Granville also eliminated many secondary characters as either superfluous to the action or too lowly comic to be appropriate for it. The Gobbos were first to go . . ." (Bulman 23). The Gobbos were restored in Macklin's 1741 production, but several of Lancelot's key scenes were again cut in Irving's famous staging of *Merchant* in 1879. The apotheosis of Lancelot took place in Komisarjevsky's 1930s production: Lancelot is the first and last figure on the stage, the Gobbos appear not in less but rather more scenes than the script indicates, and the events of the play are meant to be viewed as Lancelot's dream. Most productions of the last half-century appear to include Lancelot; those productions that emphasize the festival dimension of the play also highlight his role. Strikingly, Bulman's critical survey of production of *The Merchant* implies that the more that is made of Lancelot, the more the antisemitic aspects of the play come into view. See James Bulman, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Merchant of Venice* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991) and the bibliography therein. Compare Jay Halio, introduction, *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare (New York: OUP, 1993).

³Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956) 93. See also H. B. Charlton, *Shakespearean Comedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1938) 128.

⁴Frye 97.

⁵See, for example, Rene Fortin, "Lancelot and the Uses of Allegory in *The Merchant of Venice*," *SEL* 14 (1974): 259-70, and, more recently, Judith Rosenheim, "Allegorical Commentary in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Studies* 24 (1996): 156-210.

⁶John Russell Brown, "Mr. Pinter's Shakespeare," *Critical Quarterly* 5 (1963): 251-65.

⁷The issues are set out in Richard Levin, "Performance Critics vs. Close Readers in the Study of English Renaissance Drama," *MLR* 81 (1986): 545-59; contested in Harry Berger, Jr., *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989) and "Text against Performance in Shakespeare: The Example of *Macbeth*," *The Power of Forms*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1982) 49-81; summarized in Anthony Dawson, "The Impasse over the Stage," *ELR* 21 (1991): 309-27; and framed more broadly in W. B. Worthen, "Drama, Performativity, and Performance," *PMLA* 113 (1998): 1093-1107.

⁸"*The Merchant of Venice* and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism," *ELH* 49 (1982): 765-89. The article has most frequently been catalogued and responded to as an important contribution to Marxist and/or political approaches to Shakespeare. See, for example, Michael Ferber's assessment in "The Ideology of *The Merchant of Venice*," *ELR* 20 (1990): 431-464.

⁹Cohen 779-80.

¹⁰Cohen 779.

¹¹Cohen 765.

¹²Again, see Levin, Berger, Dawson and Worthen.

¹³David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987); on Elizabethan extemporization more generally, see David Mann, *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Representation* (London and NY: Routledge, 1991).

¹⁴Bulman, 7; E. A. J. Honigsmann, *The Stability of Shakespeare's Text* (London: Arnold, 1965); Jonathan Goldberg, "Textual Properties," *SQ* 37 (1986): 213-17.

¹⁵All quotations from the play follow *The Merchant of Venice*, ed., M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: CUP, 1987).

¹⁶Shylock does articulate what might be viewed as a subversive agenda for letting Lancelot go into Bassanio's service:

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder,
Snail slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat. Drones hive not with me,
Therefore I part with him; and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. (2.5.44-49)

But in this case, I see Shylock on par with the aristocrats in the play, acting as one of the masters who determines the fate of the servant in his employ.

¹⁷Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*.

¹⁸Wiles 56.

¹⁹In general Wiles, of course, considers various roles played by Kemp, including Lancelot. To a certain degree, then, I am supplying the focus on Lancelot. Yet it is also the case that Wiles singles Lancelot out for special consideration. See, for example, 7-10.

²⁰Wiles 53-54.

²¹Wiles 111.

²²Wiles 8.

²³Wiles 8.

²⁴I am indebted to Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky for this observation.

²⁵Bulman 6-7.

²⁶Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) xiv.

²⁷Levin 546.

²⁸Lancelot may of course be illiterate. According to Mark Thornton Burnett, however, at least some male domestic servants were able to read. See *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (London: Macmillan, 1997) 96.

²⁹Performance criticism, among other critical strategies, often foregrounds the significance of the actor's body. For a witty recent example see Anthony Dawson,

"Performance and Participation: Desdemona, Foucault, and the Actor's Body," *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance*, ed. James Bulman (London: Routledge, 1996) 29-45. For an analysis of acts of reading that address issues similar to those I take up here, see *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David Bergeron (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1996).

³⁰Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1978) 66. I have modified Eagleton's "text and production" to text and performance. And, of course, the substance of my conclusion points in a direction different than that of Eagleton's remarks on these terms.

³¹"Both disciplines [performance studies and literary studies] view drama as a species of performance driven by texts; as a result, drama appears to be an increasingly residual mode of performance." Worthen, "Drama, Performativity, and Performance," 1093-94. Through a critique of speech-act theory, ethnography, and Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, Worthen's essay tries to rethink this relation.

³²See her comments on "wives" 2.2.135.

Are Jonson and Rabelais Elegant or Grotesque? A Response to Rocco Coronato*

YUMIKO YAMADA

Reflecting on Rocco Coronato's "Grotesque" reply to B. Boehrer and me, I noticed that despite our agreement on the post-Bakhtinian prejudice against Jonson and "Bakhtin's de-classicising 'castration' of Rabelais," the gulf between us is wider than had been expected. Since my critical remarks against the Russian authority from the view point of classicism¹ seem to have provoked him to make de facto profession of his faith in Bakhtianism, I hold it my responsibility to make my anti-Bakhtinian standpoint clearer, by answering some of the new questions raised there, including whether Plautus was a classical or an obscene author (370). Coronato argues that if I insist that in his use of the terms "grotesque" and "carnavalesque,"² he is under a "Bakhtinian spell" I am left behind in a "desolate area" of "the conventional moralism of Renaissance literature" (370). My moral-hunting or value-seeking attitude, he says, is nothing more than "revamping the same intrusion of the moral sphere into literature," which senselessly obscures "the self-contradicting results" of the Renaissance moralism (369-70). What Coronato proposes, instead, is to "salvage the most precious part [do not the words 'salvage' and 'precious' connote value-seeking orientation as well?] of Bakhtin's theory," as a sort of web server, who provides end users with "the idea of getting us into connection with the relatively undiscovered domain of the grotesque, without implying that its aim was a ritual regeneration or even liberation," to be used as "textual strategies of adaptation" which is alienated from "a flamboyant poetics or philosophy" (371).

*Reference: Rocco Coronato, "A 'Grotesque' Reply to Y. Yamada and B. Boehrer," *Connotations* 7.3 (1997/98): 368-71.

Amazed as I am at the high-tech evolution of literary criticism, I cannot but still wonder if it might lead in time to the "castration" of Bakhtin to process his "most precious part" into an electronic version, say, of Samuel Beckett's *L'Innommable*. I understand that Bakhtin's chief concern is "poetics," as is indelibly inscribed in the title of his *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1929; revised 1963), which contains the germ of his argument on carnival later developed into *Rabelais and His World* (1965), and that his charismatic effect owes largely to his "philosophy" of "carnavalesque" rite, which promises ecstatic communion with primal unity between "cosmic life and the life of the human body" in the hope of eternal rebirth. In my attempt to "rescue" Rabelais and his supporter Jonson from [post-]Bakhtinian prejudice, I was unable to think of any better way than to match a "classical" counterpart against his "poetics or philosophy." It is equally difficult, in the first place, to deal with Rabelais, who, like any other physician of the day, took primary pride in being a scholar, without mentioning philosophy, distinctively that of Aristotle, which did form the core of the teaching at Padua, Bologna and his Montpellier.

Nor do I think that "the conventional moralism of Renaissance literature" always incurs "self-contradicting results." Indeed we have had enough of futile controversies over the moral code in the *Poetics* or the *Ars poetica* for centuries past, yet Renaissance "moralists" knew better than to reduce literature to insipid "instruction." Frequently they had a definite purpose to be no more "moralistic" in the strict sense of the word than, for instance, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is "ethical," or his *Metaphysics* "metaphysical." If we are to take issue on this point, it is Bakhtin, rather than Renaissance "moralists" including Jonson and Rabelais, who carries the problem of "self-contradiction"; in this respect his "relatively undiscovered domain of the grotesque" may be well worth our research. What seems most clearly to reveal his oxymoronic frame of mind is the very concept of "grotesque realism," which, I suspect, has been originated from his "inherently anti-materialist religious drive" suggested by Coronato (369). As far as Jonson and Rabelais were concerned, they could not have brought themselves to believe that whatever is real, materialistic and existent in nature should be "grotesque," which predominantly imported distortion or unnatural combinations (*OED*), apart from its original meaning.³

My last argument remained in the stage of opposing the idea that those who engage in medical science—or have some knowledge in the field—could find any parts of the body or any bodily functions “grotesque.” This time I will make a step forward to postulate that Rabelais would have considered—and most probably Jonson as well—Bakhtin’s catalogue of bodily matters (save “dismemberment” and “swallowing up by another body”) “beautiful,” and that the epithet “elegant” ought to be substituted for “grotesque” in describing the selfsame physiological images from the viewpoint, again, of classicism. Bakhtin may prove, in the process, to be far more “moralistic” in his domain of the unconscious than Jonson and Rabelais.

Let us begin with Rabelais’s verses to the readers prefixed to *Gargantua*, in which he proclaims himself innocent of causing depravity among them:

Good Friends, my Readers, who peruse this Book,
 Be not offended, whil’st on it you look:
 Denude your selves of all deprav’d affection,
 For it containes no badnesse, nor infection:
 Tis true that it brings forth to you no birth
 Of any value, but in point of mirth;
 Thinking therefore how sorrow might your minde
 Consume, I could no apter subject finde;
 One inch of joy surmounts of grief a span;
 Because to laugh is proper to the man. (1-10)⁴

Far from inviting his readers to share “deprav’d affection” (a Bakhtinian equivalent of “grotesque” feeling), he is warning them against it as a breeder of mind-consuming sorrow. What he prescribes for it is joyful laughter, on the ground that man has an innate power of healing himself of depression, by being the only animal that laughs.

It is noteworthy that in pointing out “to laugh is proper to the man,” Rabelais is citing Aristotle’s *Parts of Animals*, which deals with comparative anatomy.⁵ Along with Aristotle’s other treatises on animals which constitute the fundamental tenets of his philosophy, this book had given a decisive influence upon the Galenic system of physiology, and was required of medical students of those days. As is clearly reflected in his definition of man as “an animal that walks on two feet” (*Topics* 1.7), the

virtue of Aristotle's biology consists in his attempt to seek constitutional and functional analogies between man and other animals, rather than to differentiate the former as the lord of creation.

In the *Parts of Animals* Aristotle declares that he will treat all animals alike including man, "without omitting, to the best of our ability, any member of the kingdom, however ignoble," and warns us not to "recoil with childish aversion from the examination of the humbler animals," for that ultimately amounts to self-hatred:

If any person thinks the examination of the rest of the animal kingdom an unworthy task, he must hold in like disesteem the study of man. For one can not look at the primordia of the human frame—blood, flesh, bones, vessels, and the like—without much repugnance. (1.5)

"The primordia of the human frame" here includes Bakhtin's catalogue of the "grotesque," e.g. "the genital organs, the anus and buttocks, the belly, the mouth and nose" and "dismembered parts." The best way to overcome our "childish aversion" or preconceived "repugnance" to their seemingly "grotesque" appearance, which can cause what Rabelais called "deprav'd affection," according to Aristotle, is to "have eyes to discern the reasons that determined their formation"—to understand that the shape, size and position of each organ of the animal body, after all, indicates its purpose and function in the whole system.

Once we succeed in tracing "links of causation," Aristotle guarantees in the same chapter that those things which had "no graces to charm the sense" come to "give immense pleasure":

... so we should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful. Absence of haphazard and conduciveness of everything to an end are to be found in Nature's works in the highest degree, and the resultant end of her generations and combinations is a form of the beautiful.

Hereby we may assume that Aristotle's homological attitude in dealing with man and the lower animals equally and alike as living creatures is closely related to his concept of imitation in the *Poetics*, the ultimate guide for those engaged in literature:

Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and dead bodies. The cause of this again is, that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, "Ah, that is he." (ch.4)

Here we may realise that it is this kind of "positive realism" that gives birth to comedy:

Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type—not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. (ch.5)

As soon as we have convinced ourselves that things seeming "ugly" at first sight—whether they are parts of animals, or deeds or characters of men—do have their own *raison d'être* or functional indispensability they cease to be "painful or destructive" to our eyes, and fill us with relaxation and laughter, which "belong to the class of pleasant things" (*Rhetoric* 1.11). If man has a privilege denied the rest of the animals, it is, as Rabelais highlights in his preface to *Gargantua*, his being able to laugh.

While Aristotle encourages us to find natural beauty by keeping our eyes to "their composition, and the totality of the form, independently of which they have no existence" (*Parts of Animals* 1.5), Bakhtin shows a marked tendency to "dismember" the whole system and pay attention to "the parts," whose "ugly" or "grotesque" forms alone simply engender a certain degree of "repugnance" in the mind of the observer. This, I suspect, is the primary cause that makes Bakhtin's interpretation of Rabelais smack more strongly of tragedy than of comedy. It may be helpful to remember that he was strongly influenced by Nietzsche, as well as by Freud and Marx. Bakhtin's strong concern about sporadic violence in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, such as "bloodshed, dismemberment, burning, death, beatings, blows, curses, and abuses," which he avows to be "steeped in 'merry time,' time which kills and gives birth," as well as "the laughing chorus of the marketplace" to celebrate their immortality as a mass,⁶ faithfully reflects Nietzsche's "image of the larger, eternal drama of

Dionysus," which is enacted "on this macrocosmic stage," "where the god dies and is reborn, cyclically and forever, and where ecstatic unity will always, by turns, conflict and find a balance with an Apollonian dream image of solitary selfhood."⁷ Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, after all, may be regarded as a comical version of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).

Nietzsche's alliance of Dionysus with tragic character is based on "a recognition that whatever exists is of a piece, and that individuation is the root of all evil; a conception of art as the sanguine hope that the spell of individuation may yet be broken, as an augury of eventual re-integration."⁸ The early Nietzsche's—and Bakhtin's—antipathy towards "the Apollonian *principium individuationis*" and desire to shatter it⁹ is quite contrary to the Aristotelian or Rabelaisian spirit of comedy, which roots in the strong belief in the state of individuation as the "true" form of living:

In generation both the individual and the class are operative, but the individual is the more so of the two, for this is the only true existence. And the offspring is indeed produced of a certain quality, but also as an individual, and this latter is the true existence. (*Generation of Animals* 4.3)

In addition to Bakhtin's hatred of individuation under Nietzschean or Marxist inspiration, Freud seems to have contributed to his tendency to see bodily matters as "grotesque," by instilling a certain sense of guiltiness about the image of regeneration. There seems to be good reason to suppose that the Freudian theory of discussing all human activities from the viewpoint of sexual libido is largely responsible for Bakhtin's seeing physiological phenomena not as natural but as "scandalous" and "eccentric." First used in *Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, these two notions, which savor strongly of Aristotle's "aversion" and "repugnance," are to be crystallised into his "grotesque realism" in *Rabelais and His World*. Freud's self-reproaching struggle with libido also runs counter to the Aristotelian principle of self-preservation that "the production of another like itself" is "the goal towards which all things strive," and "for the sake of which they do whatsoever their nature renders possible" (*On the Soul* 2:4).

It has been pointed out that in the *Poetics* Aristotle frankly admits that the origin of comedy is in the phallic procession and dance, without the

least indication of censure, and that nowhere in his extant works does he object to the Aristophanic comedy,¹⁰ which contains "grotesque" elements no less than the books of Rabelais, who was considered to be a direct descendant of the Greek poet.¹¹ Still more remarkable is that the Old Comedy including that of Aristophanes was sometimes regarded as "elegant" by posterity, just as "the primordia of the human frame," which may cause "repugnance," had been esteemed as "beautiful" by Aristotle.

Let us take Quintilian's comment as an example:

The old comedy is almost the only form of poetry which preserves intact the true grace of Attic diction, while it is characterised by the most eloquent freedom of speech, and shows especial power in the denunciation of vice; but it reveals great force in other departments as well. For its style is at once lofty, elegant, graceful¹²

We can see how the writer embraces the characteristics of the Old Comedy as a whole, including its "indecenty" ['in other departments']. Nor did Cicero show any hesitation in praising it as "the representative of liberty and refined style of wit," and Aristophanes as "the wittiest poet of the Old Comedy" (*De legibus*, 2.15.37).¹³

Jonson also held a similar attitude towards Plautus, who, according to Cicero, was the Latin representative of the type of liberal humour affected by the Old Comedy.¹⁴ In the *Discoveries*, Jonson introduces the opinion of M. Varro, who pronounced Plautus "the Prince of Letters, and Elegancie, in the Roman Language," approving this by granting Varro the epithet "the most Learned" (2551-54); he furthermore regrets Horace's harsh opinion of Plautus as a degenerate writer (2600-24).¹⁵ As for Aristophanes, Jonson was thinking of becoming a satirist of his type early in his career, and several of his works reflect Aristophanic influence, retaining no less obscenities, indecencies and personal abuse.¹⁶ Although in the *Discoveries* Jonson translated Heinsius' critical remarks concerning "obscene" and "aggressive elements in the Old Comedy," deepdown he seems to have shared the view, with Varro, Cicero, Quintilian and others, that both comic writers possessed enough "*Elegancie*" to vindicate themselves from the charge of indecency and licentiousness.

Precisely the same is observed in Whibley's defence of Rabelais. He points out that Rabelais "does not leave his impropriety half covered" but "always drags away the veil with a strong hand," lest it should "prompt his reader to a filthy curiosity"; by staying within "the high domain of intellect," Rabelais has succeeded in transforming many a passage containing "impropriety" and "bawdry" into "a mere burlesque of what is called 'sexuality,' without being obscene [or "grotesque"]".¹⁷ This reminds us of Aristotle's words that the intellectual perception of the "links of causation" reveals every thing in nature to be "something natural and something beautiful." To this we may add the "masterful lucidity" of Rabelais's style; based on the popular language of France haunted by memories of the classics, it never ceases to impress us with its "elegance."¹⁸

Whether it refers to tasteful correctness, or harmonious simplicity in the choice of words, or ingenuous simplicity, convenience, and effectiveness in scientific processes, with the skill of careful and correct choice (*OED*), what is described as "elegant" by Varro and Quintilian—and as "beautiful" by Aristotle—seems to require full emotional maturity, the intellectual ability to grow out of "childish aversion," which enables us to see reality as it is and cope with it without losing our intellectual composure. Hence Aristotle allows only persons of mature age to worship "those Gods at whose festivals the law permits even ribaldry," while he prohibits youngsters from being spectators of *iambi* or of comedy until they are of age (*Politics* 7.17). We do recognise this sense of maturity inherited in Rabelais's "Pantagruelism"—"to live in peace, joy, health, making yourselves alwayes merry" (*The Second Book* ch.34) after the manner of his hero:

... he (=Pantagruel) was the best, little, great Good-man that ever girded a Sword to his Side; he took all things in good part, and interpreted every Action to the best Sense: He never vexed nor disquieted himself with the least pretence of Dislike to any thing; because he knew that he must have most grosly abandoned the Divine Mansion of Reason, if he had permitted his Mind to be never so little grieved, afflicted or altered at any occasion whatsoever. (*The Third Book* ch.2)

Thus Bakhtin's self-contradicting notion of "grotesque realism," which is "inherently anti-materialist," accounts a great deal for his failure to enjoy Rabelais's robust yet innocent mirth. Bakhtin's way of thinking betrays the typical symptoms of the syndrome called *horror victorianorum* by David Stove: appearing as a part of the religious reaction of the nineteenth century against the Enlightenment of the preceding century, it is characterised by the tendency to escape the burden of social responsibility as adults and of accumulated scientific knowledge (19-25), and is shared by Marxists and Freudians, whose thought is virtually "modern idealism."¹⁹ Nor is Nietzsche's image of Dionysian dismemberment dissimilar to Marxism and Freudianism, in furthering the ongoing modern diminishment of the individual by portraying the self largely as a construct and consequence of impersonal systems.

Truly Bakhtin's "grotesque" may be effective in studying modern, pathologically hypersensitive writers like Dostoyevsky, yet it is an idea quite foreign to those blessed with "strong stomachs and strong heads,"²⁰ such as Jonson and Rabelais, who, as "champion[s] of sane and active life,"²¹ most valued "health" of mind and body.²² And if they are to be called "moralists" at all, their *ethos* or *mores* had first and foremost the meaning to observe and accept the way that things are, which, I believe, forms an important part of the "elegant" classicality they strove to hand down to posterity.

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NOTES

¹Yumiko Yamada, "Deeper into the Bakhtinian Labyrinth: A Response to Rocco Coronato's 'Carnival Vindicated to Himself?'" *Connotations* 7.2 (1997/98): 220-39.

²See Coronato, "Carnival Vindicated to Himself?: Reappraising 'Bakhtinized' Ben Jonson," *Connotations* 6.2 (1996/97): 180-202.

³Jonson uses the word to indicate something unnatural and monstrous by quoting Vitruvius's *De architectura* and Horace's *Ars poetica* in the *Discoveries* 1565-71. Citations of Jonson's works refer to *Ben Jonson*, eds. C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1925-52).

⁴English quotations from Rabelais are taken from *Rabelais: Gargantua and Pantagruel*, ed. Charles Whibley, trans. Thomas Urquhart and Peter le Motteux, 3 vols. (1653-94; New York: AMS, 1967).

⁵*Parts of Animals* 3.10. Citations of Aristotle's works refer to *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984), except for those of the *Poetics*, which refer to *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics*, ed. and trans. S. H. Butcher (1895; London: Macmillan, 1923).

⁶Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolski (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984) 211, 407.

⁷William Storm, *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998) 23.

⁸Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956) 66-67, cited in Storm 23.

⁹Nietzsche 50, 52, cited in Storm 22.

¹⁰Lane Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy* (1922; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969) 20-21.

¹¹By Joachim du Bellay: see Whibley xvli.

¹²*Institutio oratoria* 10.1.65-66, first pointed out by Cooper (92). The quotation is taken from *Quintilian*, trans. and ed. H. E. Butcher, 4 vols. (1922; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1979).

¹³First pointed out by Cooper (91). The quotation is taken from *Cicero*, trans. and ed. C. W. Keyes, vol. 16 (1928; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1988).

¹⁴G. C. Fiske, "The Plain Style in the Scipionic Circle," *Classical Studies in Honor of Charles Forster Smith* (Madison, Wis., 1919) 77, 79, 85-86, quoted in Cooper 97.

¹⁵See Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.168 ff. and the *Ars poetica* 270-74.

¹⁶See Coburn Gum, *The Aristophanic Comedies of Ben Jonson* (Mouton: The Hague, 1969) 46-66; Gum explains, however, the obscenity and indecency of Aristophanes and Jonson only in terms of foils to their almost oppressive satire.

¹⁷Whibley lv-lvi.

¹⁸Whibley lxviii. He also points out that the real difficulty of Rabelais's book lies in the vocabulary, that the syntax is never tenebrous, and that when it sometimes falls into darkness and obscurity, he deliberately intends to befog us.

¹⁹David Stove, *The Plato Cult and Other Philosophical Follies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) vii-viii, 19-25.

²⁰See Henry Silvette, *The Doctor on the Stage: Medicine and Medical Men in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Francelia Butler (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1967) 233.

²¹Whibley lxiii (referring to Rabelais).

²²See Rabelais's Preface to the Reader, *The Fourth Book*.

T. S. Eliot's Sense of Place in *Four Quartets**

ELEANOR COOK

The word "place" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is allotted fourteen categories under four general headings (twenty-nine under seven general headings, if special uses in phrases and hyphenated words are counted). The word "locus" in Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary* is allotted nine categories, plus six kinds of transferred meanings. The word τόπος (*topos*) in Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* is allotted eight general categories, before coming to class II, "topic or commonplace." Greek *topos* in its literal signification is instructive, not least because the citations are arranged in chronological order, and go back to Aeschylus: (1) place, region (including geographical position); (2) place, position; (3) place or part of the body; (4) place, passage in an author; (5) burial-place; (6) district, department; (7) room in a house; (8) position in the zodiac. Lewis and Short divide the classes of signification a little differently, but Latin *locus* includes all the above and more. For example, *locus* comes to include in its literal meaning "a place, seat, in the theatre, the circus, or the forum" (B. 1). The *OED* again follows chronological appearance. All the main entries date from the fourteenth century or earlier, apart from technical uses (1605) and the meaning of "office, employment, situation" (1558). The need to place ourselves in various senses of the word "place"—to think of ourselves in terms of place—appears to be a longstanding human need.

There must be few other works of art to match Eliot's *Four Quartets* in its rich and suggestive sense of place, as Inge Leimberg implies in the very structuring of her article. One of the pleasures of reading dictionaries, as of reading poetry, is that we read across from one category to another.

*Reference: Inge Leimberg, "The Place Revisited in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *Connotations* 8.1 (1998/99): 63-92.

So also we read through and then across the different categories of place in this article, first visiting and then revisiting its places. Professor Leimberg also considers aspects of place that lexicographers cannot. For example, as she points out, place cannot be defined except in relation to time. Her thoughtful laying out of different ways in which we apprehend place is itself remarkably wide-ranging. In particular, she is aware of what Eliot himself brooded over: the relation of earthly place and time to the eternal in a Christian scheme of things. Her grasp of this relation is so well grounded and so sensible of implication that I have only one general observation and a few small queries.

The one general reflection on this admirably thorough exposition of place revisited in *Four Quartets* is a matter of reader's preference as to emphasis. Eliot is one of those authors capable of so describing an actual place that it comes sharply to our eyes and ears and nose and tongue and skin. This place could not be other. It is as if we had been transplanted there. Professor Leimberg is very aware of the importance of the here and now for Eliot (and the there and then, as well, for place revisited). It is of a piece with his theology.

But something more is involved. It is the particular immediacy of Eliot's four places in these place-named *Quartets* that strikes me first and foremost when reflecting on his sense of place: that formal English garden in *Burnt Norton* whose plan we could sketch from Eliot's description, a plan we must enter imaginatively to make any sense of what happens there; the village of East Coker, to which I shall come, the great River (as Eliot called the Mississippi when writing of *Huckleberry Finn*) and Eliot's tour de force of the journey down to and out to sea, here at Cape Ann in Massachusetts, Little Gidding, the chapel once a community, in Huntingdon farm country. It is not simply the choice of telling detail that accounts for Eliot's immediacy, though it is partly that: "the empty alley . . . the box circle . . . the drained pool . . . dry concrete, brown edged"; "the deep lane / Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon, / Where you lean against a bank while a van passes"; "the whine in the rigging, / The menace and caress of wave that breaks on water, / The distant role in the granite teeth"; "It would be the same, when you leave the rough road / And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull façade / And the tombstone." Here, in his apprehension of landscape, we find Eliot's own form of sensuousness.

Eliot's acute response to and pleasure in the physical did not extend to the human body. Its force is expended on landscape and its flora and fauna, even more on seascape. James Merrill was once asked: "Your own way of veiling the first person there has to do with the way you present the landscape, doesn't it?" Merrill replied:

You hardly ever need to *state* your feelings. The point is to feel and keep your eyes open. Then what you feel is expressed, is mimed back at you by the scene. A room, a landscape. I'd go a step further. We don't *know* what we feel until we see it distanced by this kind of translation.¹

Merrill is right. In *The Waste Land*, human disgust and metaphysical extremity darken the palette and color the landscape itself. Only once in *Four Quartets*, I think, does Eliot's difficulty with the creatureliness of humankind impinge on his sense of place. In *East Coker* I, a faery vision at midnight shows

. . . dancing around the bonfire
The association of men and women
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
A dignified and commodious sacrament.

Eliot is quoting his ancestor, Sir Thomas Elyot, and he goes on to extend the trope of dancing (a central one in *Four Quartets*, as Professor Leimberg makes clear). Dancing provides a pattern for the rhythm of the seasons, of the harvest. And then of

The time of the coupling of man and woman
And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.
Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

The words of Sir Thomas Elyot, themselves "dignified and commodious," echo oddly against this catabasis. What possessed Eliot to shut down his rustics this way? When I actually visited East Coker, I was slightly surprised to find it a very well-to-do elegant small village. Somehow Eliot's "dung and death" had spilled into my sense of the place—something that would have surprised the high-toned inhabitants I met. Great Gidding

is much more rustic, a down-to-earth farming community, and even there "dung and death" would feel out of place.

Still, Eliot could not unmake himself and his ascetic vein ran deep, at least in its longstanding distaste for human flesh. It is all the more remarkable that he responded so fully to landscape and seascape. Those actual places come alive in Eliot's poetry, even considered simply as loco-descriptive poetry.

Interestingly enough, place in *Four Quartets* is virtually all outdoor until the visit to the chapel in "Little Gidding." To be sure, there are vehicles of transportation, and a number of them (the London Tube, boats, a train, a ship). But indoor scenes, no. There is nothing here like Eliot's tour de force of the dressing-room in *Waste Land* II ("The Chair she sat in . . . The glitter of her jewels . . . the coffered ceiling . . . the antique mantel"). Nor of the quick telling detail that evokes a room and an atmosphere, as in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" ("tea and cakes and ices . . . the cups, the marmalade, the tea, / Among the porcelain") or "Portrait of a Lady" ("four wax candles in the darkened room") or "Preludes" ("raising dingy shades / In a thousand furnished rooms"). Only in a passing glimpse do we see "the wainscot where the field-mouse trots" ("East Coker" I) or "the evening circle in the winter gaslight" ("Dry Salvages" I). It is a question whether Eliot's knife-edge fastidiousness about human flesh perhaps extended to rooms that humans ordinarily inhabit.

Some smaller observations follow, where Professor Leimberg's remarks elicited pleasure, further thought, and a query or two.

(1) The passing observation about *re-* words is a happy one. "Visions and revisions" from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" immediately comes to mind. *The Waste Land* maps itself through *re-* words, most coming in Part V: "respondebat" ("respondebat illa: ἀποθάνειν θέλω"), "remember" ("I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes"), "resent" ("What should I resent?"), "reverberation," "reforms," "reminiscent," "retract," "responded . . . responded." This last is one of the rare glimpses of possible human happiness that includes the physical in Eliot's poetry (ll. 418-22):

... the boat responded
 Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
 The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
 Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
 To controlling hands

The two "responds" themselves respond to the Sibyl's terrible opening whisper. Professor Leimberg later notes "restore" (whose immediate etymology is Latin *restaurare*), a word memorably used by Milton in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*.

(2) "That poetry and music are the same . . .": Professor Leimberg, who earlier used the precise term "analogy" of the relation between poetry and music, here means "the same" in a manner of speaking. Because much confusion can arise if we forget that music and poetry are different arts, that Mozart was not following the art of Shakespeare when he composed, it is worth re-emphasizing that word "analogy."

(3) On the objective correlative: Professor Leimberg has elucidated the metaphysical force that lay behind Eliot's idea of the objective correlative, his insistence on the here and now. It may be worth noting that, in the first instance and in context, this idea from his early essay on *Hamlet* reads like good practical advice for an imaginative writer. *Objective*, not merely subjective or personal. *Correlative*, not merely a diary. How much bad writing would never appear in print if writers followed such discipline. In fact, as Merrill suggests, working out a correlative such as Eliot's "set of objects, a situation, a chain of events" can actually light up what is personal for a writer.

(4) Professor Leimberg's remarks on "home" are finely observed. Words too, as Eliot says in some of his best lines, can be home if we structure such a place for them: "(where every word is at home, / Taking its place to support the others, / . . . The complete consort dancing together)" ("Little Gidding" V).

(5) The memorable recognition scene in "Little Gidding" II does indeed evoke Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, though of course it also evokes *Hamlet*, given the ghostly ending and the echo of Shakespeare's text. I wonder if the meeting-place perhaps recalls the crucial place revisited in *Oedipus*, the place where Oedipus met and slew Laius. That intersection was one of those portentous places "at the meeting of three roads" (*Oedipus Rex* 730). "Between three districts whence the smoke arose / I met one walking,"

Eliot writes. Considering the several poetic fathers recalled in this episode, as well as the crucial father-son relationship in *The Waste Land*, this junction of three roads is a place well revisited. Eliot alludes to the ghost of Hamlet's father at the end of this scene, which itself honours many ghosts. Yet I would argue against a tragic patterning here, for Eliot seems well past such a patterning at this stage. Or, if a tragic sense remains in this remarkably calm dream-scene, is it closer in spirit to *Oedipus at Colonus*?

Recognition or *anagnorisis* in the sense of a crucial self-recognition is frequently connected with a specific place. Sometimes recognition of a certain place itself brings about such a recognition. This is one of Wordsworth's great themes, of course, but it is elsewhere too. "Burningly it came on me all at once, / This was the place!"

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground . . .

Since then—'tis Centuries—and yet
Fells shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity—

"Whose woods these are I think I know." "This is where the serpent lives, the bodiless." "Heavens, I recognise the place, I know it!"

Each place visited in *Four Quartets* had strong personal significance for Eliot, as Professor Leimberg notes. Each is also a place revisited, if only in memory and under pressure of poetic composition (and so hardly "only"). A place revisited is a place doubly translated, in Merrill's sense of "translation." Little wonder there is a peculiar intensity to all Eliot's places in *Four Quartets*, even before we start to consider the dimension that Professor Leimberg so richly brings to bear.

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NOTE

¹"On 'Yànorinà': An Interview with David Kalstone," *Recitative: Prose by James Merrill*, ed. J. D. McClatchy (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986) 22.

A Note on Music and Form in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets**

R. J. SCHOECK

May I join the dialogue on T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*? I should like to offer a brief note on one aspect, or reverberation, of the form and sense of music adumbrated by Prof. Inge Leimberg. Eliot, to repeat—one of Eliot's favourite *re* words and practices—"had, of course, been concerned with places and musical analogies from the very beginning" (63).

Many years ago I called attention to Guillaume de Machaut's canonically written rondeau, 'Ma fin est mon commencement / et mon commencement ma fin,' which is a more powerfully evocative representation of the concept that the embroidered words on Mary, Queen of Scot's chair, picturesque though that legend is—and, if it be true, then (as I argued in 1948), doubtless Ronsard was the intermediary between Mary and Machaut (R. J. Schoeck, "Queen Mary and Machaut," *Modern Language Review* 63 [1948]: 187-88).

Throughout the beautifully wrought quartet structures of Eliot's poem there is the sense of beginning and end, and I would urge once more that we give attention to Machaut's rondeau. Asked about Machaut, Eliot (as indicated in my earlier note) replied that he was always glad to find that he had been anticipated: a posture, or principle, which bears out of Prof. Leimberg's reading.

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*Reference: Inge Leimberg, "The Place Revisited in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *Connotations* 8.1 (1998/99): 63-92.

The Uses of History in Contemporary Feminist Drama: A Response to Christiane Bimberg*

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I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to Christiane Bimberg's interesting essay "Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* as Contributions to a Definition of Culture," which appeared in the same issue of *Connotations* as my own essay on *Our Country's Good*. My comments will focus particularly on Churchill's and Wertenbaker's uses of history in their respective plays.¹

Top Girls

In *Cloud 9* as well as *Top Girls* Caryl Churchill juxtaposes figures from the past with contemporary characters. The first act of *Cloud 9* takes place in Victorian colonial Africa and the second in London *circa* 1979, though the characters have aged only twenty-five years. The first scene of *Top Girls* (1982) presents a dinner party given by the contemporary character Marlene to celebrate her promotion to managing director of an employment agency; her guests are famous women from history, literature, and art: Isabella Bird, a nineteenth-century traveller; Lady Nijo, a Japanese courtesan and later Buddhist nun; Pope Joan, legendary medieval pope; Patient Griselda, a character in Chaucer; Dull Gret, the subject of a painting by Brueghel. The remaining scenes of *Top Girls* take place in contemporary England, in the employment agency and at the home of Marlene's sister, Joyce, and her daughter (actually Marlene's daughter), Angie. In both *Cloud*

*Reference: Christiane Bimberg, "Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* as Contributions to a Definition of Culture," *Connotations* 7.3 (1997/98): 399-416.

9 and *Top Girls* Churchill demonstrates the historical persistence of the problems faced by women, in their status and relations with men in the earlier play and in balancing career (however defined) and personal and family responsibilities in the later one. One of the most crucial critical questions raised by *Cloud 9* and *Top Girls* is how an audience's reading of the scenes or characters from the past inflects their interpretation of scenes or characters in the present. Are women better off today than in the past, happier, more fulfilled? Do they face the same or different kinds of problems than their historical sisters? Has anything been lost? And, in any case, which women are we talking about?

Christiane Bimberg argues convincingly and importantly that in *Top Girls* Churchill uses the experiences of the historical women to offer a critical evaluation of what Marlene and the other "top girls" at the agency have accomplished. The professional accomplishments ("Well it's not Pope but it is managing director" [13]) and even some of the problems of Marlene and her co-workers (Nell's and Win's difficulties in finding suitable men, for example) seem trivial in comparison with those of the women of the past, who had to struggle against much more adverse conditions of patriarchal oppression, which, Professor Bimberg points out, actually provided them with an impetus for their own achievements (402).

Another important distinction, too easily overlooked, that Bimberg makes between the women of the past and contemporary women is that they define themselves differently according to the different geographical, cultural, and temporal spaces they inhabit (403). Thus, despite some common topics of conversation (lovers, babies, education, clothes), what is important for one woman is not necessarily important in the same way for another. Christiane Bimberg suggests, for example, that specifically *professional* self-definition is relatively new for women (404), though several of Marlene's guests have had careers of one kind or another: pope, courtesan, traveller. However, as Professor Bimberg points out, although Marlene has acquired a professional qualification that allows her to have a high-paying management job, she lacks the humanist education and literacy that characterize most of the other women (404). As Marlene comments, "They didn't have Latin at my school" (4). I would add that, perhaps as a corollary to her limited education, Marlene often seems to

have no real comprehension of what is important to the other women—and why—and manages by her comments to trivialize the issues that concerned them. For example, when the conversation turns to clothes, Lady Nijo describes her elaborate court costume, important to her as defining her status; Joan explains that she dressed as a boy so that she could study in the library; Isabella insists that she always dressed as a lady on her travels for the sake of her reputation; and all Marlene can say is “I don’t wear trousers in the office. / I could but I don’t” (8).

Marlene is totally selfish as well as trivial. She does not care about other women or even her own family. All of her gains are for herself. Professor Bimberg comments, “There is no trace left of the certainly doubtful, frequently enforced, but nonetheless valuable and necessary charity of the women from the past” (404). The historical women possess a little more generosity than Marlene, but I would emphasise also the ways in which they share in her selfishness. Griselda, as Bimberg notes, passively allows her husband to take away (and as far as she knows kill) her children while retaining her own status as his wife. But Nijo and Joan, too, who are presented as more admirable than Griselda, like Marlene, express relatively little regret for their lost babies. Nijo comments, “It was only a girl but I was sorry to lose it” (16); and Joan found it “easier to do nothing” (16) when, as pope, she became pregnant and seems a bit uncertain whether or not the baby died when she was stoned to death: “Oh yes, I think so, yes” (17). Isabella had no children, but she did, like Marlene again, have a sister on whose presence at home she selfishly depended in some sense for her own accomplishments: “How could I go on my travels without that sweet soul waiting at home for my letters?” (11). Marlene’s success, of course, depends on her stay-at-home sister’s caring for her daughter. The point that Churchill is making, I think, is that women have always had to pay a terrible price for their own success, not only through their own suffering and sacrifices (losing children and lovers and even life itself), but also in a degree of selfishness and dehumanization.

Of all the women in the play only Gret (and perhaps Joyce) is truly unselfish. Gret has become famous not for what she did for herself, but for bringing together other women to fight against the evil of war that has killed her children, taking the fight to the source of evil, even into hell.

Gret, however, is the least educated and the least articulate of the women at Marlene's dinner party, and, like Joyce, she has been limited (until her amazing deed) in her sphere of action to the domestic. Gret and Joyce are generous and nurturing and possess communal values. (Joyce is a socialist, unlike Marlene, who supports Margaret Thatcher.) But most women in Churchill's audience would not want to identify with Gret and Joyce because of the limitations of their education and their lack of opportunities for self-fulfillment outside the domestic sphere. Nor, however, is it possible to identify with Marlene, the central character, because of her conservative narrow-mindedness, her triviality, and her selfish disregard for her daughter.

As Professor Bimberg emphasises, Churchill dramatizes the extraordinary difficulty of balancing a professional life with motherhood; something is always wrong in one area or the other. In fact, only one woman is presented as having accomplished it all. This woman belongs to the generation that came after Marlene, and significantly she is only mentioned and does not actually appear in the play; she seems indeed to be the exception that proves the rule:

MARLENE. I know a managing director who's got two children, she breast feeds in the board room, she pays a hundred pounds a week on domestic help alone and she can afford that because she's an extremely high-powered lady earning a great deal of money.

JOYCE. So what's that got to do with you at the age of seventeen? (80)

Both the rather fantastic image of breastfeeding in the board room and Joyce's question imply that the executive Marlene admires is scarcely a possible role model for the vast majority of women. Indeed, to suggest that the balance achieved by this superwoman is a real possibility places an intolerable burden on women, implying that if they do not succeed in both the professional and domestic sphere by their own unaided efforts, the fault is their own.² In adopting such a view ("Anyone can do anything if they've got what it takes" [86]), Marlene displays the same kind of blinkered vision that causes her to be intolerant of those who are "stupid or lazy or frightened" (like Angie, Joyce points out) and whom she will

not help to get a job (86). The “stupendous” (83) future triumphantly predicted by Marlene is indeed, in Angie’s cryptic last word in the play, “Frightening” (87), in part because Churchill shows her audience no satisfactory middle ground between women who denature and dehumanize themselves to succeed (Marlene, Nell, Win, most of Marlene’s historical guests) and women who are left behind (literally, like Angie and Joyce and Isabella Bird’s sister, Hennie).³

Christiane Bimberg accurately comments that at the end of *Top Girls* there is no clear answer to the dilemma of women who desire to balance professional and family lives. While the play questions patriarchy, it also criticizes women’s adoption of stereotypically male ways of getting ahead. Caryl Churchill has said that she “quite deliberately left a hole in the play, rather than giving people a model of what they could be like. I meant the thing that is absent to have a presence in the play.”⁴ Audience members are implicitly asked to fill in this “hole” for themselves. In this respect *Top Girls* resembles *The Good Person of Szechwan*, in which Brecht explicitly leaves the solution to Shen Te’s problem of how to be good in an unregenerate capitalist society up to the audience, who are asked to consider “What sort of measures [they] would recommend / To help good people to a happy end” (109).⁵ Only in *Top Girls* it seems that the solution to the problems delineated will have to be individual as well as communal since, as the play demonstrates, every woman’s situation is both similar to that of other women and unique.⁶

Our Country’s Good

Professor Bimberg sees Timberlake Wertenbaker, like Caryl Churchill, as writing “an unofficial, ‘female’ history as a personal and subjective form” (406) in *Our Country’s Good*, which dramatizes the events leading to the first performance of a play in Australia, George Farquhar’s comedy *The Recruiting Officer*, acted by convicts in Sydney Cove in 1789. Where my own essay, “Convicts, Characters, and Conventions of Acting in Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *Our Country’s Good*,” focuses on the play’s metatheatricity and explores the complex, if somewhat ambiguous,

sociological and psychological effects on the convicts of their participation in the production of Farquhar's play, Prof. Bimberg offers what may be seen as a complementary discussion of the ambiguous relation of theatre to colonialism in producing redefinitions of identity.

Prof. Bimberg argues that the performance of *The Recruiting Officer* becomes a "test of colony and colonialism": "the play is a stage for the colony as the colony is a stage for colonialism in the world" (409). The results, she points out, are mixed. Colonialism brings disease and death to the native population. But the colony, as represented by the play, turns out to be a partial success for the colonizers (convicts and officers) in allowing them to develop new identities that cut across the "old social gender, moral, professional and ethnic identities" that they brought with them to Australia (412). I would agree with this view of the play, but I am not sure that what is true of the play is also true of the colony. In advocating the performance of Farquhar's play in the first place, certainly, Governor Phillip deliberately sets out to bridge the moral and cultural divide that typically separates convicts from the rest of society. And the convict actors Wisenhammer and Dabby and the officer who directs the play, Ralph Clark, do question old categories of social class and gender: playing Captain Brazen in the play, Wisenhammer asserts his equality with Ralph's Captain Plume, and Ralph takes Mary (Sylvia in the play) as his mistress when he realizes that she can behave like a lady; Dabby similarly questions the assignment of gender roles when she says she wants to play Kite, the recruiting officer.

I would argue, however, that although the convicts and Ralph are psychologically transformed for the better by their participation in the play, there is no indication that there will be any lasting change in social relations between convicts and officers, as Prof. Bimberg seems to suggest when she says that "the social differences between the officers and the convicts are getting blurred" (415). The majority of the officers, in varying degrees friendly or hostile to the play from the start, do not appear to undergo any change. The convict Duckling has been thrown out of Harry Brewer's tent, in which she is allowed no rights once her protector has died. Mary, both as a woman and as a convict, is still inferior to Ralph. And Wisenhammer is not allowed to read his adaptation of the prologue

to *The Recruiting Officer* because it will offend officers, like Ross, who are hostile both to the play and to the convicts.

My most serious disagreement with Christiane Bimberg's argument concerns her evaluation of Wisehammer's rewritten prologue. Bimberg argues that the prologue shows that Wisehammer "can generously claim an identification with British colonialism (the imperialism of the future) because he has made the experience that the old identification categories (geography, history, culture, language, gender etc.) do not work any more" (414). In fact, Wisehammer's prologue, written for the convict audience because Wisehammer believes it will be more meaningful to them than the classical allusions of the original, satirizes the transportation of convicts:

We left our country for our country's good;
No private views disgraced our generous zeal,
What urg'd our travels was our country's weal,
And none will doubt but that our emigration
Has prov'd most useful to the British nation. (38)

The tone of this new prologue is bitterly ironic. Wisehammer has already discussed the different meanings that "country" has for the rich and powerful and the poor and oppressed (17).⁷ "No private views" emphasises that the convicts did not come to Australia of their own choice. And the word *emigration* (not *immigration*) underscores the convicts' pain in being forced to leave their homeland rather than any sense of hope that they might have in coming to the new land. Wisehammer's prologue about leaving "our country for our country's good" (from which Wertenbaker's play takes its title), then, satirically asserts that the "emigration" of the convicts "prov'd most useful," not to the convicts themselves, but to "the British nation," that is, to those in authority and in socially superior positions who remained behind in the mother country and who were now relieved of the burden of some of the troublesome poor.⁸ Ralph Clark, while praising Wisehammer's literary talent, recognizes the explosive nature of the new prologue and does not allow it to be spoken at the performance: "it's too-too political. And it will be considered provocative" (38). Only after the convicts have been released from the penal colony and

start their own community in Australia can the prologue be spoken at the theatre that Sideway plans to establish.

Clearly the play, *The Recruiting Officer*, creates a community out of those who participate in its production. And this community, as Bimberg argues, cuts across various social, gender, and ethnic divisions among the participants. But the community created by the play extends only minimally to the colony because, as Dabby says, "the play's only for one night" (36). Dabby, an enthusiastic if at times contrary participant in the production of the play, identifies so little with the colony that she intends to escape so that she may "grow old in Devon" (36). In fact, as Professor Bimberg implies at the end of her essay, sadly, what seems most likely to create a community out of both officers and convicts, by stressing their similarities to one another, is the presence of an "Other," the native Australian population, represented in Wertenbaker's play by a lone Aborigine.

Interestingly, several of the most important women dramatists writing in England in the last twenty or thirty years (Pam Gems, Caryl Churchill, Timberlake Wertenbaker) have turned to history and rewritten historical events and characters from a feminist perspective in order to explore contemporary issues. Christiane Bimberg has usefully brought together two of the most exciting and pertinent of their plays in showing how *Top Girls* and *Our Country's Good*, though dramaturgically quite different, use history to examine and critique the ways in which identity, especially gender and class identity, is created in contemporary society.

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NOTES

¹References are to Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (London: Methuen, 1990), and Timberlake Wertenbaker, *Our Country's Good* (London: Methuen, 1989).

²Though not referring to Churchill's unseen character, Lizbeth Goodman points out that by the 1990s the myth that this superwoman has arrived is both implied in the term "post-feminist" and has percolated down into the popular consciousness

through advertisements that feature "images of successful 'new women' in functional new families" ("Representing Gender / Representing Self: A Reflection on Role Playing in Performance Theory and Practice," *Drama on Drama*, ed. Nicole Boireau [London: Macmillan, 1997] 205).

³The clients of the employment agency also fall into these two broad categories. Louise has succeeded to a limited extent at work by behaving like a man; Shona fantasizes about an aggressively male career. Jeanine, by contrast, cannot commit to a career because she wants to get married. Mrs. Kidd, the wife of an employee, has no job outside the home and is emotionally abused by her husband.

⁴Quoted in Laurie Stone, "Making Room at the Top," *The Village Voice* 28.9 (1 March 1983): 81; extracted in *File on Churchill*, compiled by Linda Fitzsimmons (London: Methuen, 1989) 61.

⁵Bertolt Brecht, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, trans. John Willett (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1994).

⁶Janet Brown argues that *Top Girls* demonstrates "the futility of individual solutions" ("Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* Catches the Next Wave," in *Caryl Churchill: A Casebook*, ed. Phyllis R. Randall [New York: Garland, 1988] 117). Certainly, some attempt to find a communal solution is desirable. But it seems to me that Christiane Bimberg's position that "every woman will have consciously to negotiate the terms of her life and struggle for an individually satisfying balance between profession and family" (405) is truer to the diversity presented in the play.

⁷See my essay "Convicts, Characters, and Conventions of Acting in Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good*," *Connotations* 7 (1997/98): 428.

⁸Christine Dymkowski, similarly to Bimberg, suggests that Wisenhammer's prologue offers an "indirect celebration of the convicts' new Australian identity" ("The Play's the Thing: The Metatheatre of Timberlake Wertenbaker," *Drama on Drama*, ed. Nicole Boireau, 128). But I cannot see how the prologue's satiric attack on the transportation of convicts for the benefit of the "British Nation," that is, the mother country, leaves any room for celebrating, even implicitly, the nascent Australian identity of the convicts.

Reply to Verna A. Foster*

CHRISTIANE BIMBERG

I regard it as a particularly happy instance of editorial planning that the editors of *Connotations* have placed two papers on Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* side by side in vol. 7 (1997/98), as this juxtaposition highlights the parallels as well as the differences in the two contributors' views. My study was concerned with exploring the contribution of the theatre to a definition of culture (and identity), putting special emphasis on the female characters and the inherent presentation of female cultural history. This was done in the form of a case study of Caryl Churchill's play *Top Girls* dealing thematically with the compatibility of profession and family for contemporary women, and of Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* discussing the origins, methods and results of colonial domination. Verna A. Foster, as I read her contribution, offered an analysis of two special aspects of the latter play (the positive effects of the theatre and the power relations inherent in this experience) seen against the background of the scholarly debate concerning the correlation of conformity as well as subversion of authority in Wertenbaker's play.

Obviously the two of us, notwithstanding our different approaches and forms of contextualizing, have arrived at similar results. Our common concern is the exploration of theatre as an instrument of culture and we agree in many respects: for example in our evaluation of Wertenbaker's presentation of the cultural and social value of theatre as well as the effects

*Reference: Verna A. Foster, "Convicts, Characters, and Conventions of Acting in Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good*," *Connotations* 7.3 (1997/98): 417-32; Christiane Bimberg, "Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* as Contributions to a Definition of Culture," *Connotations* 7.3 (1997/98): 399-416.

of theatre experience within the play; we also agree that despite Wertenbaker's metatheatrical concerns cultural colonization is omnipresent thematically, not only in the presentation of the issue of the aborigines, but also in the experience of theatrical representations in itself (cf. Foster 418, Bimberg 409). Furthermore, there is unanimity as to the "multiple voices," i.e. the presentation of diverse views on the theatre in Wertenbaker (Foster 418), and above all, the ambiguous result of the theatre and colonizing experience, the confirmation of the dangers as well as the success of the theatre project (cf. Foster 422; Bimberg 412, 415), or, in more general terms, subversion and conformity. I fully agree with Verna A. Foster's conclusion that the play endorses "the power of theatre to liberate the human spirit" on the one hand and the creation of an awareness "of the political constraints" placed on theatrical activity on the other (Foster 429), and that precisely due to a revelation of "the contradictions in Governor Phillip's idealistic enterprise, *Our Country's Good* protects itself from becoming merely a sentimental endorsement of *theatre as an instrument of culture* and renders more complex Wertenbaker's exploration of theatre's possibilities" (Foster 429/30). This insight was indeed the starting point for my own investigation, as the title of my paper suggests, that focusses on definition instead of instrumentality: "*Top Girls* and *Our Country's Good* [. . .] can be read and seen as *contributions of the contemporary British theatre to a definition of culture*. This is not done by establishing one-sided hierarchies, canons, priorities or preferences, but by showing the complex and contradictory tendencies of culture to constitute identities" (Bimberg 415, emphases all mine). We have come back to the "multiple voices" once more.

The differences in our approaches can be seen in my own emphasis on the double-face of colonialism, in Wertenbaker's concentrating on Australia as a colonial paradigm and associating it with other geographical-historical centres of social and political upheaval (413), and last but not least in my focus on the cultural critique inherent in the play. My colleague enriches the discussion through more extensive references to Australian history, more extended explorations of the intertextuality of the play (Keneally, Plato, Shaw, *Pygmalion in the Classroom* etc.), a different analysis of the aspects of cultural hegemony in the play, and an application of

Stanislavskian and Brechtian approaches to acting as well as references to Wertenbaker's own views on acting and theatre, the Royal Court production of Wertenbaker's play, and the spectators' responses concerning the correlation between theatre, language, and education.

To me, Verna A. Foster's study definitely is a source of inspiration. It caused me (not for the last time) to rethink the issues addressed in our discussions though I do not agree with her as to a number of details: (i) I cannot see, for instance, the "personal sacrifice" of Ralph Clarke for the play (Foster 416). (ii) For me, Wertenbaker highlights the fact that the colonial experience and thus the presentation of the issue of colonialism in its social, political, and cultural aspects, fuses the diverse experiences of convicts, officers *and* aborigines (Bimberg 411, 413-15). The presentation of the issue of colonialism in *Our Country's Good* is not just a phenomenon limited to the experiences of the aborigines exclusively (cf. Foster 418). (iii) Though certainly Wertenbaker's own views about the theatre may be revealed from behind the "multiple voices," the strategy of the play itself emphasizes the multiplicity of approaches and does not offer any preference of one set of views (for example Wertenbaker's) over another. Drama is a perfect medium for the transport of diverse opinions and Wertenbaker exploits this sceptical method, which concerns the essence of drama, for her own purposes.

Our two studies on Wertenbaker (and Churchill) demonstrate, I think, the quality of a complex literary or dramatic text to raise diverse questions and provoke varied approaches concerning its literary, theatrical, and cultural context. My thanks are due once more, to Verna A. Foster for her inspiring contribution, and to the editors of *Connotations*, for promoting critical debate.

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Response to "Gary Snyder, Dôgen, and 'The Canyon Wren'"*

RAJEEV S. PATKE

Gary Snyder's *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (1996) is a collection of poems which combines an interest in Zen with a commitment to the exploration of the significance of nature for the human. This can be illustrated with reference to "The Canyon Wren," a 35-line poem from Section III. The following extract provides an opportunity for an engagement with the precise accomplishment of Snyder's enterprise, and with a larger interpretive issue concerning the role of ideas in philosophy:

A single female mallard flies upstream—
Shooting the Hundred-Pace Rapids
Su Tung P'o saw, for a moment,
it all stand still.
"I stare at the water:
it moves with unspeakable slowness."
Dôgen, writing at midnight,
"mountains flow
water is the palace of the dragon
it does not flow away." (Whalen-Bridge 121)

John Whalen-Bridge's essay on the poem begins by making a claim on behalf of Snyder that "the poems of *Mountains and Rivers without End* are about how we talk to the world, and how the world talks to itself" (112). In the course of the essay, the claim narrows down to the role played by the wren in "The Canyon Wren." It is claimed that the bird's song communicates to the human, on behalf of nature, something that the human would not otherwise perceive about itself and its relation to nature:

*Reference: John Whalen-Bridge, "Gary Snyder, Dôgen, and 'The Canyon Wren,'" *Connotations* 8.1 (1998/99): 112-24.

"The wren in this poem is singing the river, catching the ever-downward motion of the water, and has directed the poet's attention to the ways in which our language and thoughts are formed by the shapes and forces of our world" (121). To me, the conduct of the argument, as illustrated in the interpretive movement of the sentence quoted above, seems to gloss over two rather different though related kinds of claim, which I shall distinguish as a "strong" or "hard" sense of what could be claimed on behalf of bird and poem, and a "weak" or "soft" sense. One can live well enough with the poeticism of the wren "singing the river" without going into what is entailed in "singing a self" (except as expressing that self through its singing). One can also accept the collocation of river flowing down a canyon and song floating down the canyon walls, without asking how the two downward movements really correspond to a "catching" except as an agreement between gravity and the turn of phrase. But that, I think, only gives us a "soft" reading.

What I mean by "soft" is that any experience, such as sailing down a rapids, or hearing bird song, can communicate an hitherto unrecognized significance which amounts to nature communicating *to* the human. The poem can be read as witness to the injunction: listen to nature, don't impose yourself on it, and don't stand separate from the oneness it offers. One can treat that as the ideological bent of the poem, and of Snyder's poetics as a whole. One could even read the poem as offering a "counter-tradition" (114) to the kind of anthropocentric humanism exemplified by the jar placed on a hill in Tennessee, in Wallace Stevens's well-known poem, to represent "the focusing mind as the active principle in a passive landscape" (113). I am not unsympathetic to this interpretive impulse, although I can see a line of argument in which the bird is just as susceptible to appropriation by human needs as the hill in Tennessee, and hence just as passive before the human mind, despite the activity represented by its song.

But what a "strong" or "hard" sense would need is more, and different: the exemplification of communication *between* nature and the human, and I do not think that the poem provides sufficient grounds for that, although the argument of the essay sometimes gives indications of a belief that it does. It follows Snyder's interest in Mahayana Buddhism to create a useful

context of ideas in which the ideal striven for could be expressed along the lines of Dôgen, in his *Shôbôgenzô*:

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others.

I think the essay embodies a will-to-belief, which wants to find the poem adequate to such non-dualism. Without wanting to get into a debate about non-dualism, I think that the poem does not do enough to exemplify or communicate a non-dualistic experience. I think that the poem achieves an exhortatory effect, which urges us to a less self-driven sense of participation in nature's capacity to alter our sense of being-in-the-world. A reader could well go along with that part of the essay that offers this interpretation. But that would be to stop at a "soft" claim on behalf of the poem. Whalen-Bridge, however, would have us read more into it, and that, in effect, forecloses meaning in a specific way. For instance, the poem speaks of purifying our ears, and the essay asks, *kôan* fashion, "Purify our ears of what?" and answers: "Of the illusion of separation" (123). But one could just as well say, "purify our ears of the memory of other sounds." The poem weaves Dôgen into its intertextuality, and that might well create a context of conformity with Dôgen's advice that "If you become utterly free you will be as the water where the dragon dwells." But we have to be careful not to allow allusion and invocation to claim more for the telling than is actually shown by the poem. I would interpret the crucial lines that refer to the perception of mountains flowing and water that does not flow away (121) as addressed to revising our fixed notions about natural identities. Dialectically speaking, water flows but it does not flow away in the sense that its movement suggests transience, but the degree to which transience is a condition of existence, it stays, and never goes away. Contrariwise, mountains might appear emblems of fixity, but in a world where nothing stays unchanged, their slow progressive alteration is like a flowing away. The resolution of the two paradoxes weaves a double shuttle into a *gestalt* in which the transitoriness and permanence of nature, or the permanence of transitoriness and the transitoriness of the seemingly permanent—the world as *Maya* (semblance, or *Schein*)—counter-balance, neutralize, and dissolve one another. But that is still to dissolve our

impermeable boundaries, not the boundaries *between nature and us*. The synæsthesia of perception works only through transposed effects. One can add that to a person sailing down a rapids, the disorienting experience of moving with the water might, relativistically speaking, alter the sense of what is moving in relation to what is stationary. One has simply to have been sitting in a train watching other trains at a railway platform, and for movement to happen, for one's orientation of what is moving and what is not to be shaken. In other words, the kind of experience depicted in the poem is certainly capable of transforming our human awareness of nature. That much we can readily grant the poem, and it goes with what Dôgen said. But that is not the same thing as dissolving the barrier between the self that perceives and the objects that it perceives. Dôgen's aim of "a casting off of the dualistic separation of subject and object" (122-23) would need, specifically, an interpenetration of the human and the natural. There are indeed poems where that is accomplished. Here, for example, is one from late Stevens. In its case, however, what it takes for the boundaries between self and the world of nature to dissolve is not Zen but mere (or sheer) old age. The irony might have pleased Dôgen.

An Old Man Asleep

The two worlds are asleep, are sleeping, now.
A dumb sense possesses them in a kind of solemnity.

The self and the earth—your thoughts, your feelings,
Your beliefs and disbeliefs, your whole peculiar plot;

The redness of your reddish chestnut trees,
The river motion, the drowsy motion of the river R. (Stevens 427)

The larger issue of interest raised by the essay is the possibility of the dissolution—not between human and natural selves, but—between our literal and our figural senses. Transpositions of the kind represented by synæsthesia are familiar to the history of poetry as anthropomorphism, the ability in the human to transpose animal and bird life and inanimate nature, through *prosopopœia*, to a personified self, which communicates to the human, in terms meant specifically for the human. For this

communication to be accomplished, the resistance to be overcome is the separation of the human from the part of nature that is non-human. In other words, personification, and the figurative realm within which it operates (in which we lend our fictions the contingent belief that we ordinarily reserve for the literal) are based on the assumption that the human is separate from the non-human. In a sense, then, a wren could indeed talk to the human, if we interpret "talking to" as communicating some—any—form of significance. But the question is, does the wren talk *with* the human? For this form of the claim to apply, the distinction between human and non-human would have to dissolve. In other words, for the "hard" sense of the poem to work successfully, the dualism that the poem would have to break down would be the barriers between the literal and the figurative. Put slightly differently, for the non-dualism to work, it would have to work *as language*, and as language it would have to make literal references indistinguishable from metaphorical ones. I am not sure if a line such as the following manages that, but at least it points the direction:

Often the moon and I sit together all night . . . (*Three Zen Masters* 115)

In any such poem, there would be hardly any need for the figurative if the literal claim were a commonplace. To say that a mountain speaks has impact as a figure of speech because we ordinarily believe that mountains do not speak in any sense that conforms to our ordinary sense of speech. I labor the point in order to emphasize the recognition that personifications of nature—including Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy"—are based on an implicit assumption of a divide between the human and a sense of nature as the non-human (including rivers, mountains, and birds). Analogy works because the realms it links through resemblance differ in most other respects:

The Buddha proclaimed countless teachings,
Each one revealing the purest way.
Just as each breeze and every drop of rain
Refreshes the forest. (*Three Zen Masters* 129)

If such a separation were non-existent, as in the ideal enshrined in the Dôgen system, the poem would have to present not a human extraction of significance from the natural, but a genuinely intercommunicative conversation between birds, mountains, and humans. Furthermore, such communion would have to be presented not as a manner of speaking but as the plain truth. It would have to be a literal claim, not a figure of speech. That much is entailed if a poem is to embody non-dualism. So the apparently “hard” claim made by Whalen-Bridge on behalf of the Snyder poem, at the start of his essay, that nature talks to the human, manifests itself in the argument of his essay, and in the cited text, as a pathetic fallacy, with the added nuance that we are urged to treat it as more than a pathetic fallacy. The outdoors as nature is treated by the poem in elegiac celebration and exhortation. In it the human voice of the poet speaks, through nature, to human beings. We have no hard evidence in the poem of the human talking to nature; it is nature that talks to us, but only as *prosopopœia*. The purpose of laboring the point is to insist that personification and the pathetic fallacy are literary devices through which we human beings use language to talk to ourselves, using the fiction of talking to nature (or of nature talking to itself, or to us) as a means to an end. The “hard” sense requires that we drop the fiction and stake the claim for talking *with* nature, and for nature to be talking with itself, or *with* us, literally. In view of what the poem offers, I think that one needs to make a more modest claim on its behalf. While it wears its Zen on its sleeve, the affiliation that it cannot conceal is part of a long and time-honored Romantic tradition of using nature to call to the human, urging it not to lose touch with its truer self. That might well be a laudable aim. It can also be contextualized within the history of modern Orientalist appropriations of the East for specifically Occidental needs, whether as in Whistler or van Gogh, or as in Yeats, Eliot, Pound, and Co. But that does not suffice to make it either non-dualist or even specifically Buddhist, except as intentionality.

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