

Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate



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Editors' Note

We are sad to learn that John M. Steadman has passed away in March 2012. He was a founding member of the editorial board of *Connotations*. Professor Steadman's research mainly focused on Renaissance literature and particularly on the poetry and work of John Milton. We are grateful for the expertise he has offered our journal and will remember the work he has done for *Connotations* over the years.

Matthias Bauer

For the Editors of *Connotations*

Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate

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Each issue consists of articles and a forum for discussion. The forum presents, for instance, research in progress, critical hypotheses, responses to articles published in *Connotations* and elsewhere, as well as to recent books. As a rule, contributions will be published within six months after submission so that discussion can begin without delay.

Articles and responses should be forwarded to the editors. Articles should not exceed 12,000 words and follow the MLA Handbook. Responses should be limited to 4,000 words. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail; they should be in English and must be proofread before submission.

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Poetic Economy: Ellipsis and Redundancy in Literature

Poets and writers, artists in general, have time and again given evidence of their desire to get things right. The careful attention they pay to processes of revision, for example, may show that they want their work to meet certain ideas of what it should be like, and that they want it to achieve a most intense effect. But what does that mean when it comes to the actual composition? Writers and critics reflecting on poetic production have frequently answered that question by focussing on the necessity of avoiding superfluity; every single element of a work is to fulfil its function in the best possible way. Thus Aristotle says about the action of tragedy that “the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole” (*Poetics* 8). With a somewhat different emphasis, but still sharing the notion of every element being necessary, Sir Philip Sidney maintains that “one word cannot be lost but the whole work fails” (*An Apology for Poetry* 122). The concept is not restricted to classical and neoclassical aesthetics. When Virginia Woolf says that “[e]very ounce of fat has been pared off” (“On Not Knowing Greek” 44) she refers to classical Greek drama but makes us realize that “nothing superfluous” is a notion very much relevant to her own, modernist, view of art. The concept of functionality (each part is required and what is not functional is not required) combines organic as well as economic principles, as it is based on the assumption that there is no waste in nature. “Economy” becomes no less relevant when we take a step from considering inherent structure (elements in relation to the *organon* as a whole) to considering the function of a work as a realization of its author’s ideas, as an image of life, or as having a particular

effect on its audience. Eugene O'Neill, for example, recommended the use of masks in theatre because it entails "the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means" ("Memoranda on Masks" 154). He was concerned with making visible conflicts of the soul and looked for the most telling and effective way of doing so.

This very limited range of examples already shows that while the principle, in its broadest terms, is ubiquitous, many questions remain. What exactly is the relationship, for example, between the idea that there should be no word that can be left out without risking the collapse of the whole work and the idea that much (a complex idea or subject matter) should be expressed by sparing means? The German word for poetry, *Dichtung*, fancifully indicates this very notion of density or compression, of much in little, but this is not the same as the idea that a work is not to be diminished (or added to) without destroying its very nature. Furthermore, does this mean that notions of economy work better with short works, the *haiku* for example? What about the economy of *War and Peace* and *Our Mutual Friend*? Condensation may go too far, a too compressed or too elliptical style may lead to (at best mysterious) vagueness or utter meaninglessness.

Furthermore, we may ask whether both these aspects of economy in literary creation are in any way related to literature as an image of life, as a response to or model of the world, etc. As regards "relevance," it is remarkable that the index to the 2500-page *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* does not have a single entry relating to aspects of poetic economy. Still, its relevance to life seems to have been seen from the beginning, as we come to realize that the *locus classicus* of the concept is to be found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (and not just in the *Poetics*): Aristotle speaks of "the common remark about a perfect work of art, that you could not take from it nor add to it—meaning that excess and deficiency destroy perfection, while adherence to the mean preserves it" (2.6.9). Art thus becomes the evidence of virtue having "the quality of hitting the mean" (2.6.9); poetic economy, in this variant, turns out to be the model of ethics (cf. Leimberg, "What May Words Say...?" 38n111, 124, 154).

During our 11th International *Connotations* Symposium in the Black Forest from July 31 to August 4, 2011, we addressed these and other questions by mainly considering the economy of means or devices used in the production of literary texts. The means or devices comprise everything involved in the process of composition, i.e. diction, syntax, prosody and all kinds of rhetorical devices—but not just style in this more narrow sense, for genre, subject matter (themes, motifs), the evocation of specific contexts, etc. come in as well (for example, allusion can serve poetic economy). Ellipsis and redundancy concern all those features, that is to say, we use the terms not only in their linguistic and rhetorical sense but also to denote everything that Aristotle calls deficiency (ellipsis) and excess (hyperbole).

The papers and discussions during the conference showed that it seems to make sense to distinguish three interrelated contexts in which the economy of “too much” vs. “too little” is to be considered. In each case the rhetorical criterion of *decorum* or *aptum* comes in, for we ask, “too much” or “too little” with regard to what?

The first area with respect to which both writers and readers ask that question is representation. Is a certain subject matter too big or too small, does it involve too many aspects, agents, backgrounds etc.? And when we ask too big or too small for what, genre is to be considered, too. We may come to realize that we learn too much or too little about a subject (a character, an action) or that it is just right, but all this depends on the genre in which it is presented. Aristotle, we remember, demanded that tragedy should represent an action of a certain size. Similarly, the “small-room” (Samuel Daniel 138) or “narrow room” (Wordsworth) of the sonnet may represent complex ideas but certainly only a very limited number of characters. The function of detail also very much depends on genre and its extension. Jean Paul recommended a certain dramatic density (“dramatische Gedrungenheit,” 252) to the novel, which may thus become the “race-course of characters” (“Rennbahn der Charaktere,” 252) rather than ample scope or playing field of the story (“Spielraum der Geschichte,” 252).

Jean Paul's reason for recommending a certain degree of stringency even to the novel has to do with the looseness of prose form. And here we see the second area always to be taken into consideration when asking about poetic economy. This is the field of internal organization, which concerns both the *dispositio*, the general arrangement of parts, and every detail of verbal realization. In this perspective, the affinity of poetry (or literature in general) and music comes to the fore. In order to build up the musical structure not just of a line of verse but of a literary work as a whole, each syllable must be in its right place (which is just another way of saying that there shouldn't be a syllable too many or too few): "But Poetry with rule and order strange / So curiously doth move each single pace, / As all is marr'd if she one foot misplace," as Sir John Davies put it in his didactic poem *Orchestra* (stanza 93). This does not mean monotonous regularity; the very deviation from the metrical norm, for example, may be the most economical way of establishing a rhythm. The economy of organization, while falling under the general head of "form," is by no means independent of conceptual considerations; it is never "just" an aesthetic principle, for it is connected to ideas about the structure of the world, of which the *musica humana* and *musica mundana* (cf. Leimberg, "'Kein Wort darf fehlen'") are striking examples. Principles of iconicity (form imitating or reflecting meaning) come in here as well; the shape of George Herbert's poem "Easter Wings," for example, is strictly economical with regard to its subject matter.

A third area we should take into consideration besides representation and organization—I do not aim at completeness but am merely trying to open up the dimensions of our topic that are also addressed in the contributions to this volume—is communication and effect. When we think of Horace's basic aims of poetry, serving to either teach or delight (or to do the first by means of the second, as Sidney has it), we see at once that poetic economy is to be taken into account. There is definitely a "too much" and a "too little" when it comes to the ways and means of achieving those and other ends. When Roman Jakobson's concept of the poetic function is summed up by Vincent

Leitch in the statement "Poetry seeks to *maximize* redundancy; ordinary communication seeks to *minimize* it" (1256), I do not think I can agree. It is wrong with regard to representation and organization, but also with regard to communication and effect, for only think of the dramatic effect that may be achieved by *aposiopesis*, a form of elliptical breaking off. "A little month, or ere those shoes were old / With which she follow'd my poor father's body, / Like Niobe, all tears:—why she[, even she]—O, God, [...]" (*Hamlet* 1.2.147-50). This is surely poetry but the very disruption of the syntax becomes most effective with regard to the fear and pity to be evoked by this tragedy. There is redundancy (in the repetition of "she" in the Folio text) but it is definitely not maximized; it is rather part and parcel of an economy of effect.

The symposium—and the articles assembled in this issue—showed that in most cases the three areas come together, or at least two of them, and it seems likely that poetic economy is, more often than not, achieved not only by trading off, say, a too detailed account of a character's motivation against a too cryptically allusive one, or by achieving a balance between an emotionally striking picture and phrases marked by an ironical detachment which is to enhance the reader's critical reflection. In the complex reality of literary texts, such a thing as poetic economy is also to be seen in the possible balance between the economies of representation, organization and effect.

We would like to thank the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for their generous funding of the symposium and of the editing of this issue.

Matthias Bauer

For the Editors of *Connotations*

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In Their Own Words: On Writing in Second Person^{*}

JOSHUA PARKER

Some fifteen thousand years ago, when a painter at Lascaux or at Trois-Frères took brush to cave wall, it was with the consciousness of designing images not only for himself, but, we today assume, also for an Other. Whether or not these images were autobiographical, their author conceived of an experiencing point of view other than his own. If the painted faces of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses later peered back from the darkness of temples at visitors, this, too, was by an artisan's design. Such skill in bringing viewers into "contact" (albeit with a suspension of disbelief) with another lifelike level of existence, metaleptically, through a sort of mimesis of dialogical gaze, long held for viewers something akin to magic. Surely a goal any writer working today might likewise pursue. Or so we might imagine.

In literature, narrators since Beowulf's first "Hwaet!" have underlined both their own and readers' participation in texts by addressing us through apostrophe. The novel's birth pains (along with, in sixteenth to seventeenth century England, the melding of "thou" and "you" into the singular *and* plural "you" of contemporary English) allowed for the further extension of experiments with apostrophe, with authors like Sterne and Fielding playing with texts' focus between diegesis (the story itself) and extradiegesis (the story's telling). Extensions of this personification and animation of the "you" of apostrophic second person address can be traced over the course of western literature through the nineteenth century.¹ The twentieth century

^{*}For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debparker02123.htm>>.

took things further, introducing a technique grammatically placing “you” in a story world as if “you” yourself were an active character, blurred² somewhere between the diegesis and extradiegesis. “Perhaps,” wrote Gérard Genette, the story itself, as opposed to narrative discourse, “is already, for us [...] a thing of the past, and we should hurry to consider it as it retires, before it has completely disappeared from the horizon” (Genette, *Figures I* 69; my translation). As narrators again began insisting on their own place, along with that of the narratee, in the story, it has yet, nearly half a century later, to disappear from our literary horizon. Yet fiction over the past decades has more and more insistently emphasized its dependence on discourse.

In this progressive insistence on the act of enunciation itself in creating narratives, Genette notes that it also opens the narrator’s metaleptic “capacity to intrude in the diegesis”—a capacity which can also extend to the reader. Genette notes Sterne and Diderot’s “incidental call to the reader,” which makes of the reader a “sort of acolyte of the author”—yet in a very general sense only. In Balzac’s *La Peau de chagrin*, for example, this “you” is a generalized figure that might be the individual reader or “human beings in general” (Genette, *Métalepse* 94-95). This “‘you’ of participation” returns, but only erratically (96). Its extension for any length results in extreme form in the most “notorious” case of this kind of thing—Michel Butor’s *La Modification* (1957), in which, “by the same means” as Sterne and Diderot’s apostrophes, this “you” takes the form of a flesh and blood hero (96). By being consistently defined, however, Genette writes, any identification on the part of the reader with the character is excluded (97-98). Genette sees this as a simple extension of the “‘you’ of participation” already present in the late eighteenth century, which (at least according to Genette’s historical examples) progressively extends to longer and longer sections of text over two centuries, until turning back on itself in closure—entirely self-referential. But referring to what self?

Roland Barthes furnished one of the first critical responses to a novel written entirely in second person. “Personally,” he in no way believed the second person address Butor used in *La Modification* was

“an artifice of form, an avant-garde variation on the traditional novel’s third person.” This second person address seemed to Barthes literal: “it is the address of the creator to his creation, named, constituted, created in all its acts by a generative judge.” In Butor’s novel, he wrote, this address is of capital importance because “it institutes the hero’s conscience: it’s in hearing himself described by a look that the hero modifies himself” (103).³ If the death of the author ushered in what we today call reader response theory, one finds, in the above lines, the seeds of an eventual “writer response theory.”

While Butor’s own comments on his reasons for employing the form were consistently somewhat enigmatic,⁴ Georges Perec three years later both substantiated and complicated Barthes’s assumptions in commenting on his own recently published *Un homme qui dort* (1967). Using second person in a novel, Perec said, finally “mixes the reader, the character and the author.” “I directly address the reader, [...] I directly address the character,” Perec admitted, but insisted most emphatically that “this ‘you’ is also an ‘I.’” Perec was, he said, trying to speak of himself “in a very personal way, but with a certain distance” (my translation).

As reader response theory indirectly influenced much theory accounting for second person since the 1970s, most studies aimed at understanding how we read “second-person fiction” have developed linguistic or narratological theories focusing on its effects on readers, rather than inquired into why authors themselves choose the form. Yet if *l’auteur* has been effectively dead for nearly half a century, there remain men and women still very much alive, with professional experience as writers, who are capable of speaking quite eloquently on their own reasons for writing in second person. Many of their statements hint at a surprising dissonance between what theorists often tend to assume about the form and what authors themselves experience in creating it.

In the late twentieth century, as American authors, perhaps first inspired by works of Perec, Butor and Calvino, as well as their own Robert Coover, Donald Barthelme and Richard Brautigan, had begun

experimenting with full-length “second-person fiction,” Brian Richardson proposed that second-person fiction was “arguably the most important technical advance in fictional narration since the introduction of stream of consciousness” (327). What had begun as experimental was soon popularized during the 1980s and 1990s by writers like Jay McInerney, Russell Banks, Stanley Crawford, Alice Munroe, Chuck Palahniuk, Tom Robbins, Pam Houston, Lorrie Moore and Melissa Bank. And while novels written entirely in second person remain a limited genre, the potential for drawing readers seemingly directly into a plot has made second person increasingly popular in introductions to novels and in the short story.

Much theoretical wrangling with “second-person fiction” has examined how the pronoun “you” posits the reader as a character in a diegetic situation—often illustrating, like Genette, how this “trick” of playing with narrative levels, when extended for any length, is “naturalized” by readers so that the “you” is finally “read” as a third person “he” or “she” (cf. Booth 150; Fludernik, *Towards a “Natural” Narratology*; Passias 199; Bal 216). Eric A. de Haard compares intermittent but fairly descriptive narratorial apostrophe to complete second person narration in *La Modification*, reminding us of critics’ repeated comments that the “you” in Butor is soon ignored and read as “he.” De Haard proposes that, while Butor’s work is technically “true second person,” more intermittent second person use (de Haard gives the example of Tolstoy) is actually more powerful in provoking a reader’s identification with the figure created through its use. This article will not take up the traditional field of full-length “second-person fiction” texts (a fairly rare bird, in any language or genre) but instead deal with cases falling under Helmut Bonheim’s more open definition of second-person narration: narration in which “the ‘you’ is frequent enough in a section of text that the narrative effect is essentially modified” (73-74). Taken this way, it’s little wonder Monika Fludernik has noted that second person used to address “the reader” in contemporary fiction has, in our time, finally reached a point of “conventional inconspicuousness” (“Test Case” 472), contemporary

readers growing so comfortable with extended narratorial apostrophe that they now often go barely remarked on. One possible explanation of this increasing use might be simply the imitation of the vernacular rhythms of spoken word. Eric Hyman, in a linguistic study of second person use in spoken and journalistic American English, notes that it has increasingly become the preferred form (taking precedence over a number of other pronouns and even proper names), falling into overlapping categories he places on a continuum: the vocative-deictic “you,” the anaphoric “you,” the semi-coreferential “you,” the indefinite “you,” and the existential explicative “you.” Slips into second person in spoken American English are, in effect, according to Hyman, fast becoming the norm in oral story-telling and conversation. Indeed, the “you”-designated protagonist in a text often seems to develop out of an author’s desire to give an effect of spoken word, or *skaz*, to the text. Chuck Palahniuk describes his early experimentation as an attempt to move his writing closer to that of spoken language:

I went into Tom [Spanbauer]’s [writing] group still trying to write in third person, and Tom said, “You know, this is not even very good for what it is. Third person isn’t very powerful. [...] Why don’t you write the way you speak, write closer to how you tell stories.” And that made all the difference in the world for me. I remember going home that night and writing in a vastly different way. (Bures 30)

Yet while part of Palahniuk’s notoriety comes from a style which often includes instructions directly to the reader, in interviews, he has denied that he imagines his readers themselves during the writing process: “I have to pretend that I write in a vacuum. I can’t write knowing that someone is going to read it. So I have to sort of get to the place where I’m writing as if no one will ever see what I’m writing [...] I have to get to that place where I can’t be thinking about the people reading it” (Bures 30). Likewise, the narrator of Denis Johnson’s *Jesus’ Son* shows himself interested in direct contact with his readers, and seems fascinated by his power to help or manipulate them.⁵ Yet Johnson, whose apostrophe even references violent physical contact with readers, casts doubt on the same technique in the work of other writ-

ers. "What I first require of a work of art is that its agenda [...] not include me. I don't want its aims put in doubt by an attempt to appeal to me, by any awareness of me at all" (Johnson, *Name of the World* 73).

For many authors writing in second person seems to provide a middle-ground, as Philippe Lejeune has conceived it (36-37), between the "owning" of an experience by writing in first person, and the stance of complete alterity from it implied by third person. Many admit that second person is a disguised first person, a way of putting distance between themselves and an embarrassing or traumatic past experience—and not always out of any particular concern for their flesh and blood audience's opinion. Authors may use second person to treat subjects closely drawn from personal experience simply because second person allows themselves to hold an experience at a certain distance. David Foster Wallace described "one of few autobiographically implicated things" he had "ever tried" to write as being the fictionalization of an "excruciatingly" shameful personal experience. It was his "desire for an Alienated Narrative Persona" that led him "to use the second-person point of view" to distance himself from the memory as it was recalled while writing. He later worried readers would think he was "just some McInerney imitator in a black turtle-neck, a copy of Kierkegaard under my arm," for the story seemed even to himself stereotypically "like the product of a young writer who was ashamed of a personal trauma" (Wallace 374-75).

Pam Houston describes her short story "How to talk to a hunter" similarly. If "[n]ow," Houston has explained, "what I like about the story is the rhythm the second person created, the cadence, and the sound" (in effect, one might assume, like Palahniuk's early experiments with the form, its tone of *skaz*), it was originally "a story so frighteningly close to my own structures of fear and pain and need that I had to write it in the second person [...] even though (and also because) second person is the most transparent disguise" (Houston 349).⁶ Admitting her place as narrator to her public, while psychically avoiding it herself, she transforms her own experience into something "fictional," an ironic disguise, frighteningly close, but othered. By

editing their own narratorial identity out of situations previously experienced first-hand, some writers describe a freeing of themselves from these situations that is necessary for describing them more completely, objectively and, perhaps, more honestly. Writing in second person thus gives them a degree of alterity from their own experiences (or desires) without having to “own” them as an authorial persona. In Palahniuk’s novels, it systematically appears during sections written as instructions for preparing terrorist attacks, for how to walk out of a restaurant without paying for a meal, or for splicing pornographic images into films played in cinemas—all activities from which an author might want to distance his public persona.

As Lolo Houbein writes of her novel *Walk a Barefoot Road* (1988), sections where the protagonist shifts from first or third person into second person “may have” occurred during the writing process “in moments of embarrassment, when distance-taking is necessary for self-preservation, or to keep unpleasant things at a distance in one’s thoughts” (Houbein 1992). In Melissa Bank’s stories of dating experiences in Manhattan, it appears most markedly during an episode of an unsuccessful encounter with a married man. In Denis Johnson’s stories, it appears during the protagonist’s most desperate moments of disillusionment. Other writers insist clearly that the “you” in their fiction is, as Peter Bibby called it, a “counterfeit first person” which allows them some distance from a situation of “disgust at the self,” creating a position where “you stand (raging) outside yourself [...] of wanting almost to not be that person” (Bibby 64-65). According to John Encarnacao, the “you” in one of his stories “has been the id in me all along. Maybe it is pride that won’t permit me to cast the whole story in first person; maybe it is shame, fear or even arrogance” (39).

Seeing the self as “other” often only takes place during descriptions of certain events or over periods of text. This self, like its experiences, is unstable. What is inscribed in second person, then, is the author’s relationship to this self, a relationship often in flux. Temporary second person episodes are often distinctly separated from other parts of the text, either by chapters or by other breaks, as in Russell Banks’s *The*

Book of Jamaica (1980), or in the short story collections of Pam Houston and Melissa Bank.

Identification itself is “the psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property, or attribute of the Other and transforms him or herself, wholly or partially, after the model the Other provides” (Laplanche and Pontalis 187; my translation).⁷ Or, as Martin Buber wrote, “I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou*” (Buber 11). To write “I” in a text is not necessarily to underline a narrator’s own existence as an enunciating source (an “I” can just as easily refer to the historical character of the first person narrator in the diegesis, described—at a distance—by the narrating voice). But when an author writes “you,” he insists on both a reader’s existence and on his own, putting his narrator in relation to an Other, and defining his position as narrator by this relationship. If this may be imagined as illustrating a desire to fill in an essential lack on the author’s part through the creation of an ideal listener, then the creation of this ideal listener proceeds, finally, from the author’s own desire to be ideal. A “you” addressed to the self creates alterity between a described situation and the enunciating voice, fortifying the author’s identification with an *extradiegetic* narrator, helping to guide the story along during descriptions of trauma. In other words, by creating a narrator who directly addresses “someone else,” a writer is in these cases able to put himself more “in the place” of the story’s “telling” position rather than in that of the “experiencing” position. By projecting the rejected self onto the text, an author is mercifully removed from the story-world and now instead controls it. If much third person writing presumably works similarly, writing in second person has the advantage of keeping this distance indeterminate, offering a comfortably adjustable level of alterity. In their own words, by separating their narratorial identity from certain situations, these writers find themselves better able to describe them. What on the surface seems simply changing a pronoun is actually a complex reconfiguration of the writer’s relationship with her own experiencing self.

Curiously, in disassociating their own authorial personae from an experience, slipping into second person allows the emergence of a blank textual figure with which readers often feel encouraged to identify. It is always a memorable moment when we, as readers, identify with something in a literary text. Perhaps even more memorable is the moment in which we can say not, "That's me!" but instead, "it *could* be ..."—something which second person texts, much like slips into second person in oral narration, would seem to promote. As a form of apostrophe, second person is usually also written in present tense, further increasing the reader's sense of immediacy. As David Herman has noted, "second-person narrative suggests that there can be an addressee just because there *could* be other addressees [...]. In this (postmodern) economy of speech, [...] [w]e are eavesdroppers on the discourse that addresses us and beckoned by discourse addressed to others (Herman 410). Or, as John Ashbery wrote, "we are somehow all aspects of a consciousness [...] and the fact of addressing someone, myself or someone else, is what's the important thing [...] rather than the particular person involved" (Bloom and Lasada 123-24).

In the opening of Mavis Gallant's "The Concert Party" (1988), an explanation for a narrator's slip into second person is found in the story itself. "I remembered advice my Aunt Elspeth had given me: 'Put yourself in the other fellow's place,'" begins Gallant's narrator (32)—before putting *herself* "in the place" of a diegetic character with seven subsequent pages in second person. If readers empathize with these "you" characters, it is because, like many literary techniques, they put us and the narrated self in a position of a seemingly shared subjectivity. The writers cited here interpret the self as other, while their readers in turn imagine the other as self. Second person protagonists, whether stable, identifiable characters whose actions range over the full course of a text, or fleeting near-impromptu figures for a few apostrophic lines, would often appear to do double duty. Writing in second person certainly illuminates the polyphonics of language and our readerly roles as participants in the text. But perhaps its authors'

joke is on us: most clearly underlining our own persistently human need to put ourselves “in the other fellow’s place.”

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NOTES

¹Wayne Booth’s study of *Tom Jones* (1749) was probably the first to note the narrator’s increasing familiarity with the narratee over the course of Fielding’s novel (Booth 216-17), but a similar technique of narrowing or tailoring general (often pluralized) narratees into more specifically characterized narratee figures was not uncommon during the following years, both in Fielding’s own work including his *From This World to the Next* (1749), and in the work of other English novels like *The History of Fanny Seymore* (1753) and Laurence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-67). The technique can be attested even a century earlier, however, in Francis Kirkman’s *The Unlucky Citizen* (1673). To cite two of the best-known examples in American literature, Hawthorne’s short story “The Haunted Mind” (1835) presents a highly specified second person protagonist which develops out of an originally generalized narratee, and Melville frequently “animated” the figure created by his apostrophe to the reader, so that the figure (“you”) was described as moving through the diegesis as an observer to introduce new settings in *Moby Dick*.

²See David Herman’s concept of double deixis, in which the pronoun “you” simultaneously refers to both a character and the narratee.

³“Je ne crois nullement, pour ma part, que le vouvoiement employé par Butor dans *La Modification* soit un artifice de forme, une variation astucieuse sur la troisième personne du roman, dont on doit créditer ‘l’avant-garde’; ce vouvoiement me paraît littéral: il est celui du créateur à la créature, nommée, constituée, créée dans tous ses actes par un juge et générateur. Cette interpellation est capitale, car elle institue la conscience du héros: c’est à force de s’entendre décrite par un regard que la personne du héros se modifie [...]”

⁴In an essay, he would write, “Tout langage est d’abord dialogue, c’est-à-dire qu’il ne peut être l’expression d’un individu isolé” (*Essais sur le roman* 104). While hinting at his reasons over his lifetime, most explanations were, like this one, typically Bakhtinian, focusing on dialogue and polyphonics as the basis of language.

⁵With perhaps his most searing example: “Will you believe me when I tell you there was kindness in his heart? [...] It was only that certain important connections had been burned through. If I opened up your head and ran a hot soldering iron around in your brain, I might turn you into someone like that” (Johnson, *Jesus’ Son* 51).

⁶If the "you" in second-person texts is sensed by readers to be a "disguised 'I'" (Capecci 42-52), and thus a nonfictional, confessional mode, this is perhaps part of the reason it has become increasingly common.

⁷See Laplanche and Pontalis: "le processus psychologique par lequel le sujet assimile un aspect, une propriété ou un attribut de l'autre et se transforme, totalement ou partiellement, sur le modèle de celui-ci."

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Leaps and Bounds: Hawthorne's Strategies of Poetic Economy*

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Nobody, I think, ought to read poetry, or look at pictures or statues, who cannot find a great deal more in them than the poet or artist has actually expressed. Their highest merit is their suggestiveness.

(Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, *The Hawthorne Treasury* 1351)

Nathaniel Hawthorne's works, especially his late romances, display an innovative form of poetic economy which engages the philosophical thought resulting from some major advances of science in his time, incorporating, not so much the discoveries themselves, as the new paths they open in interpretation.¹ Hawthorne's case is particularly interesting not only because of this incorporation, but also due to the author's conscious use of them coupled with his moral resistance to them. His critical view goes indeed against the general enthusiasm with which the majority of his contemporaries welcomed the advances in fields of science deemed dubious by him, and the moral and metaphysical issues they seemed to tackle.

Hawthorne liked experimenting with the structure of his narratives.² His works are often structured in clusters of passages or scenes overloaded with minute, even seemingly redundant, information, bordering on the superfluous, which are connected with each other in an elliptic and often abrupt way. Against this background I would like to map the stylistic strategies Hawthorne uses to bridge those gaps, in an attempt to illustrate how these connections, which at first glance

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debanastasaki02123.htm>>.

seem like arbitrary leaps,³ function within the narrative, giving an interesting effect of plush economy, of profusion emanating from these elliptical connections, paradoxically achieving the effect of excess. Hawthorne's poetic economy gives a sense of overabundance of expression in a narrative in which at times—in a constant play on too much versus too little—so much has been omitted that, if closely inspected, his late romances stretch, and could even be viewed as almost defying, the definition of the genre.

A Closed Circuit:

Electricity, Mesmerism, and the Romantic Aesthetics

Romantic aesthetics heavily drew on electrical science as an analogy for figuring poetical creation and aesthetic experience as both material and transcendent.⁴ Hawthorne thus came into an already subsisting network of thought, well established within English Romanticism and enthusiastically received in the new continent by the Transcendentalist movement. It has been observed that in Hawthorne's romances, "each event of the story is like an electrical junction, where circuits of metaphor of varying size and function are joined" (Gable xiv). This structure could be viewed as the basis for the way Hawthorne bridges the "gaps" in his narrative, using several stylistic strategies which reflect this notion of connecting things without getting them into contact, so to speak, but through a kind of immaterial but specific and systematic way which is primarily stylistic. These include, among others: a vocabulary working suggestively (either by clustering around significant semantic fields or through evoking associations of ideas); a web of connected metaphors that give a sense of coherence by implication of a hidden system; auto-referential stylistic patterns within the work itself; recurring patterns in characterization and symbolism as well as in the structure of scenes, and even at the level of the structure within sentences. The notions of secrecy and of hidden

connections by means of a hidden force are strong underlying elements to many of those stylistic strategies.⁵

In Hawthorne's time, the electric imagery had already been appropriated not only in literature, but also in the rhetoric of a variety of discourses ranging from religious to political abolitionist visions, and even in expressing aesthetic power.⁶ Electric imagery runs through the Transcendentalist writings, and Emerson even links it specifically to the function of the artistic creation; in his 1844 essay "The Poet" he incites him with these words:

Doubt not, O poet, but persist: Say "It is in me, and shall out." Stand there, balked and dumb, stuttering and stammering, hissed and hooted, stand and strive, until at last rage draw out of thee that *dream*-power which every night shows thee is thine own; a power transcending all limit and privacy, and by virtue of which a man is the conductor of the whole river of electricity. (283)

Hawthorne did indeed feel like he was undertaking this role of "conductor" and, feeling the weight of the responsibility this entailed, often expressed his reservations. The electrical analogy was more than mere imagery to Hawthorne, who combined it, in his view of the artistic production and its relation to its audience, with another discovery of his time around which a lot of dubious practitioners were attracting a credulous crowd, the discovery of animal magnetism.⁷ Hawthorne was sceptical towards this new pseudoscientific craze and mistrusted this practice, believing magnetizers to be manipulators imposing their own will on their patients through their powerful intellect.⁸ For Hawthorne the soul was sacred and had to be approached with reverence; and mesmerism, closely connected to spiritualist practices, could be violating it. Therefore, when he refers to the artist's function as one similar to a mesmeric medium, Hawthorne is expressing his fears that something unwholesome and dangerous is inherent to his activity.⁹ As Samuel Chase Coale mentions, Hawthorne, who viewed the mesmerist as a domineering master overpowering the medium as a victimized slave,

regarded this despicable master-slave relationship as [...] morally repellent. As a writer of what he called romances, he often saw himself as a kind of mesmerist/medium in which he used the very forces he himself morally opposed to describe and produce the techniques and strategies of his art. His writing exhibits significant parallels with mesmerism and examines the psychology of idolatry—the compulsive veneration of certain objects as icons—that he sees operating within it. The structure and development of his romances, the texts themselves, participate in the very dark forces he despised. (Coale 3)

Art's mesmeric influence and its effect, likened often, in an enthusiastic way by the artists themselves, to the effect of electricity, "rather than suggesting art's potential to foster the transcendence of individual identity, [...] exemplified for Hawthorne the danger that it might become merely a means to control other people, that it might allow the artist to infiltrate the individual's sacred spiritual self" (Gilmore, *Aesthetic Materialism* 66). Thus, his moral conflict treated thematically in many of his writings—starting with "The Devil in the Manuscript," where the artist is viewed as a cold observer committing the "unpardonable sin" of breaking his tie of sympathy with the rest of humanity—also has its counterpart in the actual impact the artist's production might have on its audience, and it is similarly reflected in the narrative structure.

Both electricity and mesmerism are conceptual frames of analogies conveying the sense of an invisible, unifying material (electricity, magnetic fluid, ether), which is exactly what Hawthorne needed, not only to fill the gaps between the disconnected scenes that form the narrative of his romances so as to create the illusion of continuity, but also to impart the influence of his mind on his audience in order to lure them into his magnetic field,¹⁰ which was the realm of his work. To do this, Hawthorne developed a number of narrative strategies based on these kinds of electric and mesmerising connections.

Language and its function and power are at the centre of this view of the artistic creative force as a mesmeric activity. Transcendentalists viewed language as a symbolic reflexion of the truth where "the literal meaning of a word refers to its physical meaning, and its figurative

meaning expresses a corresponding spiritual, moral, or emotional meaning" (Roger 450). They "advocated the 'spiritual' view in their theories about the nature of language. They proposed that by recognizing the correspondences between nature and spirit and the way in which language connects nature to spirit, we would see the unity of all things" (Roger 438). Hawthorne did not share this optimistic view and explored all through his work the limits of language to convey the truth, as well as the dangers arising from its inherent insufficiency and even deception. In a letter from May 19, 1840 to his future wife, Sophia Peabody, he expresses his mistrust in the following terms:

I have thought a thousand times, that words may be a thick and darksome veil of mystery between the soul and the truth which it seeks. Wretched were we indeed, if we had no better means of communicating ourselves, no fairer garb in which to array our essential selves, than these poor rags and tatters of Babel. Yet words are not without use, even for purposes of explanation—but merely for explaining outward acts, and all sorts of external things, leaving the soul's life and action to explain itself in its own way. (*The Letters 1813-1843* 462)

And in his *American Notebooks* he writes: "When we see how little we can express, it is a wonder any man ever takes up a pen a second time" (250). With this view in mind, we can perceive Hawthorne's narratives as a basic frame supporting what is left unsaid, either by choice or by impossibility of expression. As Gordon Hunter has demonstrated, the wilful omissions, "the positing of the unsaid as a vital feature of novelistic discourse, creates a manifold rhetoric for interpreting Hawthorne's romance art" (3), bringing the rhetoric of secrecy at the centre of Hawthorne's narrative production. However, I would argue that, rather than being an intentional further blurring of clarity on the part of the author, this rhetoric of secrecy should be viewed as an attempt to turn the tables on the language's inherent impossibility of expressing "the soul's life and action," in order to convey the unsayable by accentuating its absence, and creating in his work "the sense that more is being said than the words can account for" (Gable xi).

The author achieves this effect with a variety of narrative “tricks” which create an expanding effect while they are functioning as agents of poetic economy. I will focus on the most recurring strategies which are: the use of objects/images as concentrators of meaning and carriers of the sensation of “wholeness”; the metafictional comments drawing attention to the narrative structure and its “gaps”; the use of silence as a means of bringing to the fore the unsayable; and the “dream mode” as a reading frame where indeterminacy can be maintained allowing contradictory interpretations to coexist. Needless to say that those are not clearly separated methods but are interrelated and combined in order to achieve the overall intended effect.

The first of the narrative strategies mentioned above, the use of a central dominating image or object, is a well known characteristic of Hawthorne’s works. I will attempt here to elucidate how it works as a device of poetic economy. As Samuel Chase Coale has noted, “[a]t the center of Hawthorne’s fiction, the main focus of his art, a mysterious image or object, teases and glowers. It suggests an impenetrable mystery, a kind of immense vacancy or presence that no amount of moral scrutiny can ultimately define or explain” (77).—Indeed, we are all familiar with the scarlet letter and its function in Hawthorne’s romance. For these objects/images to work in such a complex way, Hawthorne needed to go beyond the mere conventional symbolism of things, as well as move away from allegory as a frame in which those objects/images would operate.¹¹ Of course, conventional symbolism is extensively used, since it has the advantage of affording the author a springboard for his further development.

Thus, for instance, in *The Marble Faun*, while part of the characterization of Miriam does not follow conventional patterns but is rather implied by an abundance of the dark female prototypes which inhabit her artistic work, Hilda’s characterisation is drawing heavily on the purity symbolized by the dove. On closer inspection, however, we realize that Hawthorne “overuses” this symbol—a whole chapter is dedicated to it, Hilda lives in a “dove-cote,” she is presented in a white dress amidst doves in flight “like a dove [...] herself, the fair,

pure creature," and is called by her friends "the Dove." Hawthorne also combines this imagery with the figure of the Virgin—the title of the chapter describing her studio is "The Virgin's Shire," and she is "sacrificing herself" in her art by a selfless cult to "Raphael, whom she loved with a virgin's love" (*The Hawthorne Treasury* 1133-39). The author blends these two images in such a way as to make the word "dove" a cluster of meanings far more complex than the mere symbolism of purity and innocence, giving a sense of roundness of character, paradoxically, by hiding as much as the word charged with all those connotations is supposed to reveal. Any subsequent reference to that image then brings into play this enriched, specific and intricate net of associations, allowing for a denser meaning.

The main object/image running through each of Hawthorne's romances has long been viewed by critics as the unifying element of his works. Edward M. Clay points out that in his "best romances this dominating symbol is equated with the *permanent* and *universal* values of the human heart. The Scarlet Letter, the Pyncheon House, and St. Peter's Cathedral are explicitly referred to as 'hearts,' and these symbols become what we might call 'time-filaments' which join all men—past and present—who are capable of experiencing these heart-felt values into a single 'magnetic chain of humanity'" (Clay 506). In addition to this function, however, those objects/images also act simultaneously as unifying agents within the plot and between literal and metaphorical meanings—and Hawthorne tries to lead the reader to such a reading of them¹² (we will return to this point later)—, but they also act as clusters of condensed meaning which serve the poetic economy of his work, while enriching it with multiple layers of interpretation. An interesting case in point is the image of the snake; Hawthorne used it in a symbolic way in his short story "Egotism; or the bosom serpent" (1843), but the use he makes of it in his last unfinished work, *The Dolliver Romance*, shows how much further he developed this technique towards the end of his literary career. In this romance, the serpent in the opening scene dominating Dr Dolliver's chamber is charged with multilayered and contradictory, benevolent and malevo-

lent, symbolisms. From the tempting serpent of Eden, to the symbol of Asclepius (Dr Dolliver is an apothecary), or even the Ouroboros snake (symbol of the cycle of life, of unity, of eternity, of auto-sufficiency, but also of everlasting life, which is the central theme of Hawthorne's last romances), not to mention the allusion to the Bible in the chapter title: "The brazen serpent."¹³ Thus, once the richly charged nuances of the object/image are lavishly set in place, the image of the serpent is used to continuously shift the reader's perception of both character and plot, permitting the author to bring into play all those nuances with a single word.

Hence, Hawthorne's narratives, when closely inspected, are discovered to be a series of disconnected scenes which are often strung together in a disjointed way. Hawthorne was conscious of this, and often had recourse to posing as someone retelling a real story, gathering and piecing together fragments of true reports, and apologetically avowing his awkward attempts to fill in the missing connections with his own conjectures. In *The Marble Faun*, in a chapter aptly called "Fragmentary Sentences," he is describing his narration as

a task resembling in its perplexity that of gathering up and piecing together the fragments of a letter which has been torn and scattered to the winds. Many words of deep significance, many entire sentences, and those possibly the most important ones, have flown too far on the winged breeze to be recovered. If we insert our own conjectural amendments, we perhaps give a purport utterly at variance with the true one. Yet unless we attempt something in this way, there must remain an unsightly gap, and a lack of continuousness and dependence in our narrative; so that it would arrive at certain inevitable catastrophes without due warning of their imminence. (1159-60)

These "unsightly gap[s]" are more often emphasized than not, sometimes even seeming to be gratuitously provoked. Hawthorne presents *The Marble Faun*, his last completed novel, in 50 short chapters with titles, thus fragmenting the romance structurally as much as in terms of content and constantly drawing attention to its structure and narrative. The structural break of chapters is sometimes placed when a scene is still developing, disrupting even dialogue (see for instance ch.

4), and metafictional comments pointing to the disjointed nature of the narration (such as "continuing the conversation which was begun, many pages back," 1140; and "we forbore to speak descriptively of Miriam's beauty earlier in our narrative, because we foresaw this occasion to bring it perhaps more forcibly before the reader," 1131) are scattered throughout the novel, paradoxically bridging gaps by over-emphasising them, or even creating gaps in narration where they were not likely to be found given the continuity in content at the moment they occur (i.e. the example of disrupted dialogue). In fact, the function of this artificial breaking is two-fold: on the one hand it is taking the attention away from the real gaps, and on the other hand it is disrupting continuity, allowing for new connections of a different kind to be established, connections based on gaps and omissions.

The Rhetoric of Silence

We have seen how Hawthorne viewed language as a particularly powerful manipulative tool which, however, had certain limitations in conveying internal and abstract things, mainly "the soul's life and action"; those, in Hawthorne's work, are paradoxically expressed through silence. The mesmeric power of language is emphasized in *The Marble Faun* in its capacity to alter exterior events and relationships which can remain dormant but productively present only for as long as silence is kept:

Nothing is more unaccountable than the spell that often lurks in a spoken word. A thought may be present to the mind, so distinctly that no utterance could make it more so; and two minds may be conscious of the same thought, in which one or both take the profoundest interest; but as long as it remains unspoken, their familiar talk flows quietly over the hidden idea, as a rivulet may sparkle and dimple over something sunken in its bed. But speak the word, and it is like bringing up a drowned body out of the deepest pool of the rivulet, which has been aware of the horrible secret all along, in spite of its smiling surface. (1250)

That is indeed the way Hawthorne's narratives "flow quietly over the hidden idea, as a rivulet"; his deliberate drawing attention to the gaps are these "sparkles" and "dimples" calculated to make known that there *is* something underneath the surface hinted at by a tangled web of implications which gives Hawthorne's work an "almost postmodern indeterminacy" (Roger 433). But, despite Hawthorne's much studied rhetoric of allusions to alternative possibilities, his strategy for an all inclusive narrative is one of silence. Silence is indeed the mode that allows for multiple possibilities; the only way to make missing pieces present, to include "everything," is to bring them into the narrative by their absence, either through "hints"—by means of those objects or images we have discussed as concentrators of "what is not present"—, or by the silencing of anything that would bring the "drowned body" to the surface, inducing chaos and bringing the narrative to a stop.

Author and reader are like those two people described in the quote above, whose "familiar talk flows quietly over the hidden idea" as long as "it remains unspoken." It has, however, to be constantly present to both conversing minds, and that is the goal towards which Hawthorne's narratives are always aiming: to maintain the mystery, while feeding the desire to have it revealed, but only to the extent of keeping the sparks. Thus, an overabundance of detail is given around an idea, but never enough so as to disclose it. This balance between too much and not enough needs to be constantly maintained, and in order to do so Hawthorne has to strategically place his "spark generators," objects or images allowing simultaneously for poetic economy and implication of overabundance in terms of layers of meaning. In the second edition of *The Marble Faun* his disappointment in failing to keep that balance, at least for a sizable portion of his audience, is evident.¹⁴ His added "Conclusion" opens thus:

There comes to the author, from many readers of the foregoing pages, a demand for further elucidations respecting the mysteries of the story.

He reluctantly avails himself of the opportunity afforded by a new edition, to explain such incidents and passages as may have been left too much in the dark; reluctantly, he repeats, because the necessity makes him sensible that

he can have succeeded but imperfectly, at best, in throwing about this Romance the kind of atmosphere essential to the effects at which he aimed. [...] The idea of the modern Faun, for example, loses all the poetry and beauty which the Author fancied in it, and becomes nothing better than a grotesque absurdity, if we bring it into the actual light of day. He had hoped to mystify this anomalous creature between the Real and the Fantastic, in such a manner that the reader's sympathies might be excited to a certain pleasurable degree, without impelling him to ask how Cuvier would have classified poor Donatello, or to insist upon being told, in so many words, whether he had furry ears or no. As respects all who ask such questions, the book is, to that extent, a failure. (*The Marble Faun* 1407)

This "certain pleasurable degree" of curiosity, keeping the reader pondering on the unspoken idea without feeling the compelling need to be "told in so many words," is what Hawthorne is aiming for in weaving his web of those charged object/image concentrators, modelled on the way electricity and mesmeric powers work invisibly on an added layer over the seemingly flowing continuity of life which is represented, in terms of narrative, by the plot. This simultaneity distinguishes Hawthorne's pattern from allegory giving it "an organic structure [...] filled with the same vital principle with which nature is filled" (Gable 38).

"Then there will be readers who will know how to read"

In order for both of the above mentioned levels to run parallel, Hawthorne's texts require an analogous way of reading, which is one of constant shifting of perspective. In a passage from his *American Notebooks* Hawthorne develops his view of the relation between literal and figurative meaning as a question of perspective: "Letters in the shape of figures of men, &c. At a distance, the words composed by the letters are alone distinguishable. Close at hand, the figures alone are seen, and not distinguished as letters. Thus things may have a positive, a relative, and a composite meaning, according to the point of view" (183). But Hawthorne is asking for an extra capacity in the reader, the one of seeing simultaneously from *both* perspectives (the "composite

meaning" mentioned above), which is modelled on the electrical pattern we have discerned in his writings. Schlegel had already foreseen such a reader for the new

lightning on the horizon of poetry [...] soon it won't be simply a matter of one thunderstorm, the whole sky will burn with a single flame, and then all your little lightning rods won't help you [...]. Then there will be readers who will know how to read. In the nineteenth century everyone will be able to savour the fragments. (269)

The idea of a kind of fluidity connecting things as before unconnected, combined with the stimulating abrupt shocks and jerks afforded by the electricity metaphor, correspond to this dual reading pattern which, in order to fully apprehend the text, requires to have both modes running parallel. It is that aspect of Hawthorne's works that lead Deborah L. Jones to see "Rappacini's Daughter" (1844) as a "paradigm of the 'autodeconstructive' narrative" (155). From a slightly different perspective, but noticing the same aspect of Hawthorne's works requiring a different reading than the conventional one, Patricia M. Roger sees this same tale as a reflexion of Hawthorne's concerns with the theories and debates of his times concerning language and its ability to fully convey meaning and points out:

The paradox of Beatrice's position as apparently physically poisonous and spiritually pure illustrates Bushnell's idea. The tale's contradictory interpretations of poison as repellent yet alluring and deadly yet invigorating are also instances of coming near "to a well rounded view of any truth." In order to reach a "well rounded view" of truth we must try a number of different perspectives and determine possibilities for meaning by combining the insights gained from different viewpoints, as Hawthorne suggests in his *Notebooks* entry on the "letters in the shape of figures of men." (Roger 451-52)

In this same tale, Hawthorne incorporates a semi self-derisory editorial note, presenting his tales as the works of M. de l'Aubépine¹⁵ and inciting the reader who wishes to take any enjoyment out of his tales to "take them in precisely the proper point of view," a point of view

similar to his example with the letters mentioned above; that is a vantage point from which one can *simultaneously* see both interpretations run parallel so as to be able to discern a new picture being formed when combining the interpretations supported by the text. For, otherwise, the author warns us, "they can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense" ("Rappaccini's Daughter" 387).

In his last unfinished romance, Hawthorne further elucidates this way of reading so as to extract the true meaning of a text which, in his view, cannot be conveyed in the conventional way. His main character, Septimius, is pondering for months over an ancient manuscript containing the secret of the elixir of life; the text is described as written in a simple language but having recourse to some sort of cipher every time something important is to be disclosed, mirroring the way Hawthorne's own texts are written. The text is said to have a "magnetic" influence on Septimius's mind, who, as a student in theology, is well acquainted with all the traditional methods of interpretation—the literal, the allegoric, the moral and the anagogic.¹⁶ However, the first sentence Septimius manages to decipher is revealed to him in a mystic way, illuminating itself suddenly on the manuscript and in his mind in a non-sequential way, that is, without being written word for word in the manuscript; it is a kind of creative revelation. In order to take full possession of the manuscript's secrets, Septimius needs to combine all those different readings together.

This schooling of the reader into a new way of reading has also been detected in Hawthorne's prefaces. In his *A Thick and Darksome Veil* Thomas R. Moore has shown how:

By presenting polar oppositions in his prefaces, he [Hawthorne] requires his reader to consider two positions, two terms, two concepts, and to choose between them, that is to say, he forces an interpretative role on the reader, an ultimately empowering position. A methodology for the reader to derive meaning evolves from the imposed choice between opposed terms, from the attempt to remove veils, and from the confrontation with ambiguity. (76)

Emerson speaks also of a similar way of reading in his "American Scholar" and affirms: "There is then a creative reading as well as a

creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world" (*Nature and Selected Essays* 90).

This peculiar way of reading by making "mental leaps" described early by Schlegel, and then by Hawthorne and Emerson, and which seems to be required in order to fully grasp the entire meaning of the text, was also what caught Hawthorne's attention in a peculiar work forwarding a bold theory concerning the writings of Shakespeare which eventually got published with his help and prefaced by himself. This was written by Delia Bacon who advanced the so-called Shakespeare-Bacon theory, shocking literary circles with the premise that Shakespeare's plays were in fact written by a group of English Scholars, a secret club, who included Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh and Edmund Spenser. Emerson was converted to her theory and helped her meet Hawthorne in 1856, while the latter held the position of American consul in Liverpool, a meeting that led to him financing and prefacing the publication of her book *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* in 1857. In his preface, Hawthorne put emphasis on the unorthodox way of reading that prompted Delia Bacon to come up with her theory, a way of reading similar to the one Septimius is engaged when reading the manuscript:

She had been for years a student of Shakespeare, looking for nothing in his plays beyond what the world has agreed to find in them, when she began to see, under the surface, the gleam of this hidden treasure. It was carefully hidden, indeed, yet not less carefully indicated, as with a pointed finger, by such marks and references as could not ultimately escape the notice of a subsequent age, which should be capable of profiting by the rich inheritance. [...] Finally, the author's researches led her to a point where she found the plays claimed for Lord Bacon and his associates,—not in a way that was meant to be intelligible in their own perilous times,—but in characters that only became legible, and illuminated, as it were, in the light of a subsequent period. ("Preface" ix)

In this process, the author's "mesmeric influence" is the conductor providing the direction towards which the reader's own creativity will move in order to reach such a reading.

The secret of such a reading should thus be looked for in the way a particular text is structured. As Coale suggests, in Hawthorne's works, "[t]his dynamic dialectic, which involves his 'fetishized iconology' and psychological conceptions, underscores the structure and helps generate plot" (23). In his notes concerning one of his aborted romances Hawthorne indeed mentions the way the plot clusters and expands around a central scene or image which constitutes the core of the narrative: "I have not yet struck the true key-note of this romance, and until I do, I shall write nothing but tediousness and nonsense. I do not wish it to be a picture of life; but a Romance, grim, grotesque, quaint, [...]. If I could write one central scene [...] all the rest of the romance would arrange itself around that nucleus!" (*The American Claimant Manuscripts* 58). Plots are thus created as concentric propagating circles around the objects/images dominating the story, rather than as linear narratives.¹⁷

Hawthorne's intention is indeed not to give "a picture of life," for that would put demands on the narrative which would exclude his electric connections and his mesmeric transportations. In order for author and reader to blend those two perspectives into one and still keep an illusion of flowing continuity while drawing attention to the gaps, Hawthorne has recourse to the kind of narrative (dis)continuity that we experience in dreams. Dreams, when we try to narrate them, are indeed perceived as texts and almost always lack continuity; their gaps are revealed as soon as we try to retrace the story and give an account of it. The mode Hawthorne's romances are written in is modelled on that of dreams,¹⁸ and, as Joseph C. Pattison has successfully argued, it is also the adequate point of view for their reading: "The logic form of dream language make these electrifying transformations clear and credible [...]. Dream works by the principles of intensity and association, not the laws of space and time. Picture dominates all else in dream. It makes abstract ideas tangible and animates otherwise

dead metaphors" (366). As Hawthorne himself has expressed it in his preface to *The Blithedale Romance*, his aim is to create a similar atmosphere to the way he viewed his own stay at Brook Farm as "essentially a daydream, and yet a fact" (*The Hawthorne Treasury* 853). This dream-like quality permeating Hawthorne's narratives allows not only for the abrupt discontinuity in the narrative but also for the double—literal and metaphorical—interpretation of key events to run in parallel, mutually exclusive and yet both valid. This drawing from the jolted sequence of events that governs dreams allows for a poetic economy which appeals to a narrative experience with which the reader is familiar and which calls for a blending of both rational and associational interpretative methods.

Hawthorne's indeterminacy is what allows for this double reading that, in order to be achieved, needs to remain unsaid, to vaguely appear through the gaps without ever being brought to the surface. Poetic economy in Hawthorne is thus more than just the right amount of disclosure, it is the very characteristic of narrative his works are dependent on in order to communicate the unsayable; for Hawthorne's messages lie in the gaps.¹⁹ However, taken to its extreme, this mode has within itself its own annulment, suspending everything in the forever frozen time of the undetermined narrative, it is deferring resolution and, ultimately, meaning. Once we step out of the dream mode, the lack of decisive meaning threatens to bring the whole narrative edifice down. Hawthorne at his best is managing to keep the reader's curiosity levels to that "pleasurable degree" which keeps interlocutors locked in a vicious circle, never venturing further, but always conversing over the "hidden idea" in which they take "the profoundest interest" not despite, but because of, its inherent impossibility of verification. And to that, Hawthorne is not ready to make any concessions. Thus, after having clarified in his added "Conclusion" many points of the plot left undetermined in *The Marble Faun* by means of an interview with the characters, in his seemingly earnest last question to Kenyon about whether Donatello did indeed possess furry ears, he has him replying mysteriously "I know, but may not

tell, [...]. On that point, at all events, there shall be not a word of explanation" (*The Hawthorne Treasury* 1409). Some things are simply best left unsaid.

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NOTES

¹The art of telling a story revolves around "gaps," at least this is what various theorists claim, and it depends on the successful bridging of these gaps whether a story is considered to be well-crafted or not. Wolfgang Iser asserts that "[e]ven in the simplest story there is bound to be some kind of blockage, if only because no tale can ever be told in its entirety. Indeed, it is only through inevitable omissions that a story gains its dynamism. Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself." Noting that, "since this formulation is carried out on terms set by someone else, whose thoughts are the theme of our reading, it follows that the formulation of our faculty for deciphering cannot be along our own lines of orientation" (Iser 55 and 68). Frank Kermode also draws attention to the subject: "Blanks and gaps: to read is to fill them on the evidence of conflicting and ambiguous clues"; he goes on to talk about "indeterminacy gaps" (Kermode 109). The more successful the bridging of those gaps, the tighter the structure of the narrative and the more successful the poetic economy of the text, which lies mainly, in a sense, in disguising itself, that is in making those gaps promote rather than obscure the narrative by smoothing the breaks they introduce and by covering up their existence. The ways of creating the illusion of continuity and of an uninterrupted flow of narrative time vary according to an author's personal style, but they are also influenced by cultural ideas and constructs. Poetic economy, despite its abstract nature as a formative tool in the process of artistic creation, is also subject to cultural context.

²The case of "The Haunted Mind" (1837) and its second person narrative is one example of many.

³It is to this first impression of Hawthorne's narrative structure, as well as to the innovative nature of his devices, that my title makes allusion.

⁴As Paul Gilmore points out, since Schlegel both the process of artistic creation and of its reception had been seen in terms of an electrified circuit; an idea that found fruitful soil in England, too. As early as the 1790s, "Coleridge became friends with Sir Humphrey Davy, the leading English electric scientist of the age, and was deeply engaged with both the mechanical associationist thought of David Hartley and Priestley and the radical politics of Priestley and William Godwin. [...] As a subtle aether permeating the universe, electricity offered a

bridge between the physical and the spiritual, between the inanimate world of Newtonian physics and life itself" Percy Shelley would later take Schlegel's "electrical poetry" a step further, in his "A Refutation of Deism" (1814) hinting at electricity as "an imponderable, physical force analogous to, if not identical with, thought itself" (Gilmore, *Aesthetic Materialism* 20, 25, 73-74). See also Jason R. Rudy, *Electric Meters*.

⁵Secrets are always interwoven in Hawthorne's plots, be it a family secret, like in *The House of the Seven Gables*, or a personal secret like in *The Scarlet Letter*; a strategy culminating to the introduction of the secret of the text itself, as it is exemplified in the ancient manuscript in Hawthorne's unfinished novel *Septimius*. For further discussion on the theme of secrecy in Hawthorne's work see Gordon Hunter, *Secrets and Sympathy*.

⁶Cf. Gilmore, "Aesthetic Power: Electric Words and the Example of Frederick Douglass."

⁷Around the Boston area there was much mesmeric activity. According to contemporary estimates, by 1843 there were more than two hundred professional magnetisers. Cf. Gable 14.

⁸Hawthorne exposes his views on the matter in a letter from October 18, 1841 to his future wife, Sophia Peabody, after she had expressed her intention to visit a professional magnetiser: "Now, ownest wife, I have no faith whatever that people are raised to the seventh heaven, or to any heaven at all, or that they gain any insight into the mysteries of life and beyond death, by means of this strange science. [...] I think that they are to be accounted for as the result of a physical and material, not of a spiritual, influence, *Opium* has produced many a brighter vision of heaven (and just as susceptible of proof) than those which thou recountest. They are dreams, my love [...]. And what delusion can be more lamentable and mischievous, than to mistake the physical and material for the spiritual? What so miserable as to lose the soul's true, though hidden, knowledge and consciousness of heaven, in the mist of an earth-born vision [...] but do not degrade high Heaven and its inhabitants into any such symbols and forms as those which Miss Larned describes—do not let an earthly effluence from Mrs. Park's corporeal system bewilder thee, and perhaps contaminate something spiritual and sacred. [...] And thou wilt know that the view which I take of this matter is caused by no want of faith in mysteries, but from a deep reverence of the soul, and of the mysteries which it knows within itself, but never transmits to the earthly eye or ear" (*Selected Letters of Nathaniel Hawthorne* 96).

⁹In Hawthorne's works the power of the artist is described more often than not in mesmeric terms. A good example of the artist's power to dominate the mind of the other is the description of Holgrave's power over Phoebe in *The House of the Seven Gables*: "Holgrave gazed at her, as he rolled up his manuscript, and recognized an incipient stage of that curious psychological condition, which, as he had himself told Phoebe, he possessed more than an ordinary faculty of production. A veil was beginning to be muffled about her, in which she could behold only him, and live only in his thoughts and emotions" (211). In *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne's romance dedicated to art and the artist, the magnetism of the artist is

mentioned sometimes as a sign of genius: "by the spell of a creased, soiled, and discoloured scrap of paper, you were enabled to steal close to an old master, and watch him in the very effervescence of his genius. [...] Raphael's own hand had communicated its magnetism to one of these sketches" (ch. 15, 1190); sometimes it is mentioned as a dangerous influence, like in the dialogue between two of the artistic figures in the romance, the pure Hilda and the dark Miriam: "Your powerful magnetism would be too much for me. The pure, white atmosphere, in which I try to discern what things are good and true, would be discoloured. And therefore, Miriam, before it is too late, I mean to put faith in the awful heartquake which warms me henceforth to avoid you" (ch. 23, 1237).

¹⁰In his *Septimius* manuscripts, where Hawthorne often links the mesmeric effects the ancient manuscript has on his main character with the power of the artist's work over the reader, having his protagonist escape its malevolent influence for a brief moment, he comments in a personal confession-like tone: "I know well what his feeling was! I have had it oftentimes myself, when long brooding and busying myself on some idle tale, and keeping my faith in it by estrangement from all intercourse besides, I have chanced to be drawn out of the precincts enchanted by my poor magic" (*Elixir of Life Manuscripts* 130), thus presenting himself as simultaneously the mesmerist and the mesmerised subject, falling for his own tricks, so to speak.

¹¹"The allegorical writer distorts reality to give it an imposed meaning; Hawthorne wished to clarify and refine reality, to allow us to see the meaning that is already inherent in it" (Gable 38). See also Deborah L. Jones, "Hawthorne's Post Platonic Paradise: The Inversion of Allegory in *Rappaccini's Daughter*."

¹²In one of his unfinished romances, *Septimius Felton*, Sybil interprets her own story of "The Bloody Footstep" spiritually, stressing the view that "everything, you know, has its spiritual meaning, which to the literal meaning is what the soul is to the body" (*The Elixir of Life Manuscripts* 95).

¹³See Numbers 21:1-9.

¹⁴Hawthorne had anticipated such a reaction of his audience and had tried to appease the reader within his narrative in the last chapter of *The Marble Faun*, flattering him while pretending to appeal to his sagacity and reminding him of the "rules" of the game: "The gentle reader, we trust, would not thank us for one of those minute elucidations, which are so tedious, and, after all, so unsatisfactory, in clearing up the romantic mysteries of a story. He is too wise to insist upon looking closely at the wrong side of the tapestry, after the right one has been sufficiently displayed to him, woven with the best of the artist's skill, and cunningly arranged with a view to the harmonious exhibition of its colours. If any brilliant, or beautiful, or even tolerable effect have been produced, this pattern of kindly readers will accept it at its worth, without tearing its web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how the threads have been knit together; for the sagacity by which he is distinguished will long ago have taught him that any narrative of human action and adventure whether we call it history or romance—is certain to be a fragile handiwork, more easily rent than mended. The actual

experience of even the most ordinary life is full of events that never explain themselves, either as regards their origin or their tendency" (1401).

¹⁵One of Hawthorne's assumed *alter egos* (Aubépine in French meaning hawthorn).

¹⁶These are the four principles of reading Holy Scriptures. The literal reading corresponds to a mimetic narrative which relates a clearly discernable story. The allegorical reading is a reading of spiritual conversion, a presentiment of the mystery. In the moral reading the literal meaning is converted into a moral virtue and invites the reader to feel concerned. Finally, the anagogic reading is the ultimate principle of all these conversions, the mystic sense *par excellence*; its finality is not to restrict sense but to diffract it.

¹⁷In a letter to Charles Putnam, Hawthorne wrote concerning his works : "there is one idea running through them like an iron rod, and to which all other ideas are referred and subordinate" (qtd. in Gable 39).

¹⁸Hawthorne even entertained the idea to "write" a dream, a narrative "which shall resemble the real course of a dream, with all its inconsistency, its strange transformations, which are all taken as a matter of course, its eccentricities and aimlessness—with nevertheless a leading idea running through the whole." (*American Notebooks* 240).

¹⁹In *The Marble Faun* he has Kenyon, one of his artist-characters, refuse to interpret the world in words because of their insufficiency to do so; the only means of conveying that message is a particular view of the whole, a view the artist can only capture in his work and which can only be perceived by the audience if he perceives that work as an "hieroglyph" to be interpreted: "'Nay; I cannot preach,' said Kenyon, 'with a page of heaven and a page of earth spread wide open before us! Only begin to read it, and you will find it interpreting itself without the aid of words. It is a great mistake to try to put our best thoughts into human language. When we ascend into the higher regions of emotion and spiritual enjoyment, they are only expressible by such grand hieroglyphics as these around us'" (1270).

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“Mistah Kurtz—he dead” in Company: Redundancy and Ellipsis^{*}

WILLIAM HARMON

Let me start with five texts that have a good deal in common and try to proceed inductively to arrive at some general observations about poetic economy. The choice of this material was prompted by the announcement of the topic for the 2011 meeting of the *Connotations* Society—“Poetic Economy: Ellipsis and Redundancy in Literature.” My starting point was: Lexical lists typically involve redundancy, repetition, and reduplication; syntactic strings typically involve ellipsis and dissimilation. Against this background, I would like to focus on five particularly interesting specimens of redundancy, ellipsis, or both together:

“THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT”

“Softly, softly, catchee monkey”

“Mithridates, he died old”

“Mistah Kurtz—he dead”

“Long time no see”

These are arranged chronologically from 1891 to 1900. Two come from prose fiction, two from prose non-fiction, and one from poetry. All represent utterances spoken by rustic, marginal, or liminal characters, sometimes in liminal situations; all have some association with a western region; and all happen to be four words long. Those temporal, social, and geographic points of resemblance have prompted me to speculate about the general properties of what structural linguists have called “the axis of selection” and “the axis of

^{*}For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debharmon02123.htm>>.

combination,” and in particular about Roman Jakobson’s notion that poetry (or “the poetic function” in general) represents the projection of the properties of the axis of selection onto the axis of combination.¹ Such projection constitutes a provisional definition of one sort of poetic economy. Ordinary discourse favors the horizontal, successive, or syntagmatic presentation of language, which is the norm of speech and prose. Extraordinary discourse favors the vertical, simultaneous, or paradigmatic display of language, which is the norm of most poetry and some poetic prose. Discourse in general combines both dimensions, and what is called the “poetic function” is a matter of relative preponderance and not of anything absolute or exclusive.

The sources of the five exemplary utterances are Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (79; orig. published 1891), R. S. S. Baden-Powell’s *The Downfall of Prempeh: A Diary of Life with the Native Levy in Ashanti 1895-96* (13; 1896), A. E. Housman’s *A Shropshire Lad* (poem LXII; 1896), Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (78; original magazine publication 1899), and W. F. Drannan’s *Thirty-One Years on the Plains and in the Mountains: Or, the Last Voice from the Plains* (514-15; 1900).² The settings are in a western region of England, Africa, and the United States. Much of Hardy’s Wessex is included in what is now known as South West England; Baden-Powell’s Ashanti is now in Ghana in West Africa; Housman’s Shropshire is in the West Midlands, on the border between England and Wales; *Heart of Darkness*, although it rather coyly avoids saying “Brussels” or “Belgium” or any specific place in Africa, is clearly set in what was then called the Congo Free State (now, after several changes, the Democratic Republic of the Congo); and Drannan’s supposed encounter with Captain Jack, the Modoc chief, took place near Yreka, in north central California. Captain Jack had been hanged for murder in 1873.³

“THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT” (especially in homely oversized red capitals) displays the redundancy of unnecessary commas that convert the string of the scriptural sentence (an adaptation of 2 Peter 2:3: “Their damnation slumbereth not”) into a virtual list of equally spaced items. “Softly, softly, catchee monkey”

and "Long time no see" both involve ellipsis of the subject and omission of articles, prepositions, and pronouns, as well as certain lexical repetitions and deformations. The lexical repetitions are reinforced acoustically by syllabic patterning (four trochees, four stressed monosyllables). "Mithridates, he died old" and "Mistah Kurtz—he dead" both involve the common sort of redundancy known as "noun-pronoun pleonasm." "Mistah Kurtz—he dead," furthermore, also involves ellipsis of the verb, for which the full form and its paraphrase would be "he is dead," "he died," or "he has died." Moreover, "Softly, softly, catchee monkey" and "Mistah Kurtz—he dead" involve both redundancy *and* ellipsis of one sort or another.

It is also possible that the omission of the copula "is" between "he" and "dead" represents not an error but a common feature of many languages, including Hebrew, Chinese, and several West African dialects. It is interesting that Conrad's *Nigger of the "Narcissus"* uses eye dialect and misspelling for the speech of a villainous white character Donkin: "The ragged newcomer was indignant—'That's a fine way to welcome a chap into a fo'c'sle,' he snarled. 'Are you men or a lot of 'artless cannybals?'" (14).

The quotations from Hardy, Housman, and Conrad are from canonical literary texts, two from fiction and one from poetry.⁴ Those from non-fiction prose texts by Baden-Powell and Drannan represent the earliest record of vernacular expressions that probably date from some earlier period but have not been attested.⁵ Moreover, these five four-word texts from 1891-1900 represent the utterance of a socially marginal or marginalized personage. The utterance in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is the work of an eccentric itinerant painter of religious graffiti on outside surfaces, in red capitals with commas after every word "as if to give pause while that word was driven well home to the reader's heart" (88). Baden-Powell's saying comes from "The Author's Apology to the Reader": "I will here at once say that the moral may be summed up thus. A smile and a stick will carry you through any difficulty in the world, more especially if you act upon the old West Coast motto, 'Softly, softly, catchee monkey'" (13). The

quotation from Housman is the utterance of Terence Hearsay, the Shropshire Lad himself. In *Heart of Darkness*, the four-word obituary is spoken “in a tone of scathing contempt” by “the manager’s boy” (77). Drannan’s quotation—actually in the five-word form “Long time no see *you*”—is spoken by Captain Jack, “the chief of the Modoc tribe” who “made a very good stagger towards talking the English language” (481). In any event, two of the speakers are so-called natives and three are obvious rustics with little schooling. That is, they are, in their original contexts, marginal figures in a marginal situation on a margin of civilization.

All five utterances exhibit some kind of departure from the normal syntactic “string” of discourse, so that the customary horizontal flow is somehow interrupted and, partly at least, reverts instead to the status of a vertical “list.” In other words—words drawn from such structural linguists as Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson⁶—what should be arrayed on the syntagmatic axis of combination behaves more like what is usually arrayed on the paradigmatic axis of selection. This shifting of poles, so that the habits of the axis of selection are projected onto the axis of combination, is defined by Jakobson as the hallmark of the “poetic” function of language, with “poetic” often extended to include “literary” and “aesthetic” (in “Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics”). Paradigmaticity, as it were, can convert any ostensibly syntagmatic string into a virtual poem.

The rearrangement in the quotations can be represented graphically. Thanks to the redundant commas, “THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT” (originally in large red capitals) becomes

THY,
DAMNATION,
SLUMBERETH,
NOT.

What we call noun-pronoun pleonasm is common in both formal and informal situations (“Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me”). The

quotations from Housman and Conrad, very similar in structure and substance, become

Mithridates,
he died old,

and

Mistah Kurtz—
he dead.

And the dissyllabic and monosyllabic formulations from Baden-Powell and Drannan become

Softly,
softly,
catchee
monkey

and

Long
time
no
see.

In most printed poems, especially those with rhyme, measured lineation may suggest a vertical dimension, although most lines are printed horizontally with an unjustified right margin. Some poems graphically represent such an array, as in Pound's Canto LI:

Shines
in the mind of heaven God
who made it
more than the sun
in our eye. (*Cantos* 250)

Here the extra spaces after “heaven” and the short lines underscore the resonant effect of the long vowel in “Shines,” “mind,” and “eye.” Similar quasi-paradigms occur in Canto LXXVIII:

there
are
no
righteous
wars
(497)

and Canto LXXIX:

aram
nemus
vult
(506)

Likewise with many of E. E. Cummings’s layouts:

l(a

le
af
fa
ll

s)
one
l

iness (673)

In some prose, even without any reliance on layout, a rhythm of lexical and acoustic repetitions suggests a paradigmatic axis:

Dencombe lay taking this in; then he gathered strength to speak once more. “A second chance—*that’s* the delusion. There never was to be but one. We work in the dark—we do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is

our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art."
(Henry James, "The Middle Years" 105; emphasis in original)

My observations here have spun off from a project I began some years ago that was stimulated by aimless miscellaneous reading. I probably started with the morphological notion of the complementary relation between reduplication and dissimilation.⁷ Reduplication is a morphological doubling to indicate a change of meaning, as between present and perfect (Latin *do* "I give" versus *dedi* "I have given"). Dissimilation is a modification of sounds to avoid repetition, as between earlier "femininist" and "pacifist," on the one hand, and later streamlined "feminist" and "pacifist." Sometimes spelling remains constant but pronunciation may dissimilate, as when "chimney" is sounded "chimbly" or "chiminee" (both avoid the repeated voiced nasals in *mn*). Earlier Latin *medīdiēs* "mid-day" was dissimilated into *merīdiēs*, surviving in such modern forms as "meridian."

The contrast of reduplication and dissimilation is at some point connected with Jakobson's model of the poetic function. Other homologous binary sets include metaphor versus metonymy (important to Jakobson), synchrony versus diachrony (important to Saussure and many others), simultaneous versus successive (important to Lessing), charisma versus bureaucracy (important to Max Weber), and redundancy versus ellipsis (important to *Connotations*).

For a while, I entertained a three-tiered model of discourse, whereby a level of ordinary dissimilation is flanked by layers of extraordinary reduplication (with onomatopoeia on one side and proper names on the other; cf. my essay on "Bashō and Proust"). In poetry, the intellectual and emotional message may be stated as discourse, but the ritual significance is suggested by extraordinarily redundant onomatopoeia ("Jug Jug," "Twit twit twit / Jug jug jug jug jug jug," "Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop," "Co co rico co co rico," "DA"), exclamations and informal speech or echoic song ("O O O O," "Ta ta," "Weialala leia / Wallala leialala la la"), reduplicative names

("Sosostris"), and lexical repetition ("Burning burning burning burning," "swallow swallow," "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. / Shantih shantih shantih"; T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* passim).

And then, after I caught my breath, all that speculation crystallized untidily around a passage in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, where the narrator names some colleagues working in an abbey library and adds: "The list could surely go on, and nothing is more wonderful than a list, instrument of wondrous hypotyposis" (73; "L'elenco potrebbe certo continuare e nulla vi è di più meraviglioso dell'elenco, strumento di mirabili ipotiposi" [218]). A list as such is paradigmatic, and its marvelousness may be a function of its appropriation of the poetic function (a concept no doubt familiar to Eco, a semiotician as well as a novelist).

Just how, I asked myself, can hypotyposis—the casting of a vivid image before the eye—be effected by a list? The list in *The Name of the Rose* is not in itself very vivid: "Thus I met Venantius of Salvemec, translator from the Greek and the Arabic, devoted to that Aristotle who surely was the wisest of all men. Benno of Uppsala, a young Scandinavian monk who was studying rhetoric. Aymaro of Alessandria [...] and then a group of illuminators from various countries, Patrick of Clonmacnois, Rabano of Toledo, Magnus of Iona, Waldo of Hereford" (73).

It may be that both "elenco" and "ipotiposi" in the Italian original are technical terms, although "elenco" has been the more general, non-technical word for "list." Besides, one obsolete meaning of "elench" in English is "[a]n index, analytical table of contents." ("So Greek ἔλεγχος; compare Italian *elenco*, Spanish *elenco* in same sense"; *OED*, s.v. "Elench"). As it happens, the first use of that sense of "elench" is in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* of 1570 ("Certeine notes or elenchs upon this epistle"); and the first use of "hypotyposis" is in the same work, in a comment on Chaucer's "The Ploughman's Tale" ("Vnder whiche Hypotyposis or Poesie, who is so blind that seeth not by the Pellicane, the doctrine of Christ, and of the Lollardes to bee defended agaynst the Church of Rome?"). In a peculiar way, Foxe's

easy equation of “Hypotyposis” and “Poesie” prefigures Jakobson and Eco by about 400 years.

In later works, when Eco writes about lists, he uses “lista” (*Vertigine della lista*, *The Vertigo of Lists*, eventually in American English *The Infinity of Lists*). But I can imagine Eco and his translator William Weaver objecting that you won’t have a best-seller if you use too many words like *hypotyposis*, *elenchus*, and *vertigo*.

But let us return to lists and strings in general. The graph of language production shows a vertical axis of selection, like a drop-down menu of options. At every point, a speaker selects an item from this axis, which is also called the paradigmatic axis. The paradigms are lists—some definite, some not—and a typical utterance, such as “Today is Thursday, August 4, 2011,” represents a string of items chosen from lists, such as this:

Yesterday	had been	Sunday	January	1	
Today	was	Monday	February	2	2005
Tomorrow	has been	Tuesday	March	3	2006
	is	Wednesday	April	4	2007
	will have been	Thursday	May	5	2008
	will be	Friday	June	6	2009
		Saturday	July		2010
			August	31	2011
			September		2012
			October		2013
			November		
			December		

At every point, the speaker chooses only one item. In passing, we might note that the paradigms are typically marked by certain repetitions of phonemes and morphemes—some items rhyme (Sunday/Monday, January/February), some have the same ending (-day, -ber), some have the same beginning (Today/Tomorrow, March/May, June/July), many have the same rhythmic pattern—and we

don't mind that. Some items have even undergone reshaping to conform to a prevailing pattern: that is the case in English with "Wednesday," which is not pronounced Wed-nes-day but rather /'wɛnzdeɪ/, /'wɛnz,deɪ/, or /'wɛnzdi/, or "February," pronounced indeed by some /'fɛbru:əri/ but metathesized by many, including me, into /'fɛbr(ər)ri/, /'fɛbjəri/, /'fɛbjʊəri/, /'fɛb(j)ə,wəri/, /'fɛbrə,wəri/, /'fɛbu:rəri/ or /'fɛbrəri/ (all from the *OED*). What is projected from the paradigmatic axis onto the syntagmatic axis is exceptional repetition of just the sort that speakers and writers usually avoid. The occurrence of some sort of lexical or acoustic repetition on an axis of combination, as in "Softly, softly, catchee monkey," arrests the customary horizontal flow and brings things to a momentary halt, as though to signal, "This is special: pay attention."

Repetitions, duplications, and reduplications are the norm on the paradigmatic axis. Verb paradigms in Latin, as we have seen above, sometimes contain a reduplicated preterite: *cado-cadere-cecidi* ("fall"), *do-dare-dedi* ("give"), *tango-tangere-tetigi* ("touch"), *pango-pangere-pepigi* ("fix, fasten"); such reduplications are known across the Indo-European spectrum. The norm of word formation in Indo-European languages tends to avoid repetition and stress difference. We stay away from repetitions like *medīdiēs* and reshape them into *merīdiēs*. I can testify that I feel awkward when I come to repeated elements in speech—in locutions like "edited it" and "statistics" and in occasional doublings such as "had had," "that that," and "her her" ("He handed her her hat"). These are not ungrammatical but they seem awkward to many speakers. Typical tongue-twisters involve an unusual degree of repetition ("Zehn zahme Ziegen zogen zehn Zentner Zucker zum Zoo"; "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers").

But in two areas we freely welcome repetition—in proper names (George, Barbara, Miami, Toronto, Jojo, Toto, Lulu, Mimi, Fifi, Gigi) and in uninflected onomatopoeia and exclamations (bow wow, quack quack, oink oink, gr-r-r-r, zzzzzzzzzzzzz). "Barbara," indeed, can be a proper name but also ovine onomatopoeia (*baa baa*).⁸ We also make exceptions for baby talk and non-Indo-European words like

"ukulele." An ancient sentiment among Indo-European speakers seems to oppose such reduplications in common, ordinary words, and also in syntactic strings (Cicero in *Orator* 47.158 calls reduplications "insuavius"). It is in such cases that we see the opposite of reduplication, which is dissimilation. Dissimilation works, sometimes over hundreds of years, to reduce or eliminate repetitions. That has happened to what begins millennia ago in Greek as something like *marmar*, then into Latin as *marmor* (subsequently borrowed into German), then into French as *marbre*, and on into English as *marble*, in which the second syllable *-ble* has completely dissimilated the earlier *-mar*. The replacements are rational: *b* for *m* remains in the bilabial group, *l* for *r* in the liquid.

In general, then, the axis of lexical lists and paradigms freely welcomes duplications and repetitions, but the axis of syntactic strings, even at the level of individual words, resists and opposes such repetitions. As we have seen, Roman Jakobson came to suggest that poetry, or the poetic function, involves the projection of the repetitive habits of the axis of selection onto the axis of combination, so that what ought to be a horizontal string—a line of poetry—may behave more like a vertical list. That is the case acoustically with monosyllabic "long time no see" and dissyllabic "softly, softly, catchee monkey." It is the case lexically with the noun-pronoun pleonasms in "Mithridates, he died old" and "Mistah Kurtz—he dead." With the painted inscription from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* several factors contribute to the conversion of the syntagmatic "Thy damnation slumbereth not" into the quasi-paradigmatic "THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT": the syllabic chiasmus (1-3-3-1), the bold capitals, the red paint, and the introduction of redundant commas, all of which stop traffic and arrest the forward linear motion of the utterance.

One awkward region in daily discourse has to do with consecutive possessives, which most speakers stumble over. This is an instance of reduplication on the syntagmatic axis, where it does not normally occur. Accordingly, it seems hard to say things like "my husband's

cousin's funeral," because what ought to be syntagmatic threatens to become paradigmatic. But just such constructions can be an ornament of poetry, as the conclusion of Gerard Manley Hopkins's "The Wreck of the Deutschland" demonstrates:

Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.
(128)

We can see and hear the repeated consonants in pr-r-pr-h-h-pr and the echoes between "rose" and "hero," "hearts'" and "hearth's." "Chivalry" answers "charity," as "throng's" answers "thoughts." Alongside all these acoustic and lexical quasi-paradigms come the grammatical quasi-paradigms of two triple possessives, whereby the horizontal line of the sentence in effect tips over ninety degrees to become a most percussively emphatic paradigm.

This, then, may be what Adso of Melk, the narrator of Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, means when he calls a list "instrument of wondrous hypotyposis." Since a list is paradigmatic and not syntagmatic, it represents Jakobson's projection. Lists tend to elide verbs, which are the "time-words" in a sentence. Without verbs, time stands still for a list, so that the items seem to shine with their own radiance, a still point of a turning world—and that could be what generates "wondrous hypotyposis."

In this context it is interesting to look at William Weaver's translation of Eco. For one thing, it seems crudely echoic to put "wonderful" and "wondrous" so close together. (Although that is less crude than another version I have seen: "there is nothing more wonderful than a list, instrument of wonderful hypotyposis."⁹) The original reads: "L'elenco potrebbe certo continuare e nulla vi è di più meraviglioso dell'elenco, strumento di mirabili ipotiposi."

"Mirabili" does contain the element of wonder, but "meraviglioso" could be rendered by its cognate "marvelous." We might excuse a certain awkwardness, since this is after all the narrative of Adso, a naïve Benedictine novice, although the work was supposedly not

written or dictated until he was old. And we might take a cue from that very rare word "hypotyposis," for which the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers no example later than 1897. And I wonder, given a context that has room for "hypotyposis," if the repeated "l'elenco" might not be better rendered as "elench" or "elenchus," the English cognates, which are as rare as "hypotyposis"; we are, after all, witnessing the exercise of an apprentice scholastic who plays with the trendy vocabulary of 1327. So maybe the best translation would be "there is nothing more marvelous than an elenchus, instrument of wonderful hypotyposis."¹⁰

This brings me to a paper I delivered in 2010 called "Strings That Move and Lists That Don't" for a conference devoted to "That Which Moves: The Kinetic Nature of Language and Literature," and, a little later, another paper called "Eliot: Lists, Tallies, Catalogues, Inventories, Paradigmata (Moments Minus Momentum)." And it was then that I received the *Connotations Society's* announcement about a conference devoted to "Poetic Economy: Ellipsis and Redundancy in Literature."

Well, I already had amassed more than enough material for seven or eight thirty-minute papers, and I even had a fairly long master list of lists from all over. I looked over my list of lists—with some pleasure, recalling Auden's self-indulgent poem "Lakes," which ends "Moraine, pot, oxbow, glint, sink, crater, piedmont, dimple ...? / Just reeling off their names is ever so comfy" (563). I could feel much the same way about my list (though I doubt that I would ever say "comfy"): Homer, Ovid, Snorri Sturluson, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Milton, Doughty, Hopkins, Maugham, Frost, Stevens, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, T. E. Lawrence, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Hart Crane, Nabokov, Borges, Salinger, Snyder, Updike, Pynchon... but I could also feel misgivings. How to get things down to a manageable paper?

By some fortuitous (and fortunate) visitation, I noticed that five items on my list stood out together: they all came from the same ten-year period (1891-1900), all were four words long, all presented some sort of syllabic symmetry, all represented diction somewhat removed

from standard speech, and all could be associated with a western region. And all could be said to have achieved a special status. The dialectic of redundancy and ellipsis defines the essence of poetry and creates an extraordinary charismatic moment that stands out from its ordinary bureaucratic surroundings (in terms appropriated from Max Weber).¹¹ An earlier obituary line from Poem LXII of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* shows this operation clearly: "The cow, the old cow, she is dead," wherein the first six words constitute a paradigm of multiple noun-pronoun pleonasm:

The cow
the old cow
she—

the sort of thing from which we usually choose just one. Here, however, it is projected onto the axis of combination.

The cow
the old cow
she—

Without explicit predication, such a sentence may turn into a caption, motto, or slogan. The title of the first poem in Hardy's first book of poetry, "The Temporary the All," juxtaposes two abstractions, as though from a paradigmatic list, without overt predication, and the reader or hearer has to fill in what is missing from the ellipsis. It is not difficult to do, but it involves more active work than does passive reading. (Eco suggests that such interactive involvement is the purpose of hypotyposis: it is up to the reader to complete the picture that is begun with the mere list.¹²)

Only one specimen from the list—"Mithridates, he died old"—comes from a poem proper, but all the others stand out from their prose context, whether fiction or nonfiction—with the vivid distinctness of a poem. "Mistah Kurtz—he dead" would reappear as an epigraph to T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" (and that is where I, for one, first encountered it); and "Long time no see" and "Softly, softly,

catchee monkey" have taken on a life of their own in the vernacular, such that few speakers of English know where they may come from. Hardly a day goes by when you do not hear one or the other in public discourse or over a broadcast medium.

These specimens suggest that the most distinguished texts—those most literary and memorable—involve not just ellipsis or redundancy, not just an affair of lists or strings, but an artful combination of both. The context of "Mistah Kurtz—he dead," with its subtle mixture of redundancy and ellipsis, includes two other vivid four-word utterances spoken or written by Kurtz: "The horror! The horror!" (77) and "Exterminate all the brutes!" (55).

I suggest that certain types of redundancy and ellipsis may be related to contexts that involve such ideas as "western," "native," "rustic," "alterity," and "marginal"—all as possible sites of the poetic in many forms. The west of Britain was in some ways late to be subdued. The Roman, Danish, Saxon, and Norman invasions all occurred in the east and then pushed toward the west, driving the earlier Celtic peoples into enclaves in Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and over into Ireland. This western boundary was possibly a "wild west" like that of America. Hardy's Wessex is defined by being western: it is the West Saxon realm, as Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex are the eastern, southern, and middle realms. Such an advancing frontier tests the theory, published by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893, three years after the superintendent of the American census declared that the frontier was closed and the expansion complete, argued that the western frontier and the westward expansion explain the distinctive egalitarian, democratic, aggressive, and innovative features of the American character, along with uncouthness, rude humor, lawlessness, and general eccentricity. The Frontier Thesis, also the Turner Thesis, acknowledges how frontier life involves "breaking the bonds of custom, offering new experiences, and calling out new institutions and activities" (38). The bonds of custom may be so broken by marginal figures, such as an itinerant fanatic painting apocalyptic scriptures on stiles and walls and an

unlettered versifier who has heard of Mithridates but has not heard of the rules governing pronouns. With Africa, the European encroachments moved from the outside in, but it remains possible that the western region in general retained its ruggedness after the relative urbanization of the east coast. With all three, the “West” provides a credible scene for a more robust exercise of human wit and resourcefulness, including pushing the limits of polite language.

It is possible to generalize that our five four-word texts have much in common. The authors of the texts themselves occupy a complex and ambiguous social space: a middle-class man writing about a working-class woman, an upper-class English officer among Africans, a middle-aged English scholar from Worcestershire writing in the voice of a country lad from Shropshire, a Pole writing in English about Belgians and Africans, and an aging bureaucrat inventing colorful stories of frontier life some decades in the past.

The temporal and spatial settings of all five utterances are somehow liminal, that is, they involve thresholds in time and space (the 1890s amounted to a liminal or transitional decade between centuries, a western frontier is a liminal place between levels of civilization and cultivation). Such figurative thresholds can be the powerfully charged scene of heightened meaning, so that what is spoken or written can take on extra symbolic or ritual significance. In some cases, the four-word utterance in a liminal setting becomes *literally* liminal: the text from Hardy is painted on a stile, that from Conrad is spoken in a doorway. With Baden-Powell and Housman, the liminal text comes at a liminal point in the work itself: the beginning of Baden-Powell’s and the end of Housman’s.¹³

Let me end by sketching a further fanciful extension of those concepts. The norm of word formation in Indo-European languages tends to avoid repetition and stress difference. In certain extraordinary circumstances, however, locutions seem exempt from the usual protocols of dissimilation, as if a vertical paradigm arises out of the horizontal plane of discourse and demands attention for itself, in an act of what Foxe called hypotyposis-poesie. The proper

names, you might say, are above the plane of discourse, the onomatopoeia and so forth below the plane. A total piece of discourse, then, would have the upper limit in proper names, the lower limit in raw noises, and possibly a center in a first- or second-person pronoun. Five examples (one of them was inspired by David Fishelov's brilliant paper at Freudenstadt, "The Economy of Literary Interpretation" during the 2011 *Connotations* Conference; forthcoming in *Connotations* 22):

Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum

Matsushima ya!
Aa Matsushima ya!
Matsushima ya

Old MacDonald had a farm, EE-I-EE-I-O

Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r—you swine!

pcheek pcheek pcheek pcheek pcheek

.....

Our little lane, what a kingdom it was!
oi weih, oi weih¹⁴

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NOTES

¹Jakobson explored this range of topics in several places: *The Sound Shape of Language; Language in Literature*; "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry"; *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning* (the French title is entertainingly redundant: *Six leçons sur le son et le sens*); "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics."

²Page references are provided for recent editions of Conrad, Hardy, and Housman. For original editions, cf. Works Cited. For Baden-Powell and Drannan page references are to the original editions. Drannan's *Thirty-One Years on the Plains* is also available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5337>, as well as Baden-Powell's *The Downfall of Prempeh* at <http://www.pinetreeweb.com/bp-prempeh.00.htm>.

³Although Drannan's claims have been discredited, his book remains the earliest attestation of "Long time no see." See Bate.

⁴Hardy knew both Housman and Conrad, but there seems to be no record of a meeting between Housman and Conrad.

⁵I have cited the earliest known examples of "Softly, softly, catchee monkey" and "Long time no see," but both no doubt existed long before the 1890s. H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* includes an aside: "But, 'sutjes, sutjes,' as the Boers say [...] softly does it" (14). (The modern Afrikaans form is *soetjies*.) Some lexicographers, including Eric Partridge, connect "long time no see" to Asian origins. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. "long") cites Drannan as the source of "Long time no see," but its citation for "softly, softly, catchee monkey" is from 1907. I came across Baden-Powell in a Google search. According to Wikipedia, the phrase "long time no see," although not used as a greeting, has been found in James Campbell, *Excursions, Adventures, and Field-Sports in Ceylon* (1843) 254.

⁶See Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature*; Ferdinand de Saussure (with Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and others), *Course in General Linguistics*; Derek Attridge, *Peculiar Language*.

⁷See W. B. Lockwood, *A Panorama of Indo-European Languages and Indo-European Philology: Historical and Comparative*.

⁸Audible doubly in the opening of Fred Fassett's popular song "Barbara Ann": "Ah, ba ba ba Barbara Ann." According to the *OED*, the repetitive "barbarous" comes from a Greek word that "had probably a primary reference to speech, and is compared with Latin *balbus* stammering."

⁹The phrase "wonderful hypotyposis" occurs in Weaver's translation of Eco's *Baudolino* (129). The original reads "mirabili ipotiposi".

¹⁰Umberto Eco made further theoretical and practical contributions with discussions of hypotyposis in *On Literature* (2005) and *The Infinity of Lists: An Illustrated Essay* (2009), which I mentioned earlier. The original Italian title is *Vertigine della lista*. In the U. K. the English version of the same book by the same translator, Alastair McEwen, was called *The Vertigo of Lists: An Illustrated Essay*.

¹¹See Max Weber, "Charismatic Authority."

¹²In addition to *The Name of the Rose*, see Eco's *On Literature*.

¹³See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*; and Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. I am indebted to my Chapel Hill colleague Professor James Peacock, an anthropologist who once said in a public lecture, "Thresholds are charged with meaning."

¹⁴Opening of *Beowulf*; Matsuo Bashō, 1689; traditional children's song, early 18th century; Robert Browning, "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," 1842; Galway Kinnell, "The Avenue Bearing the Initial of Christ into the New World," 1960. "Gardena," "Matsushima," and "MacDonald" are proper nouns; "Virgo" is a divine title; and kingdom is a special word of power.

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Elegance and Poetic Economy in John Crowe Ransom and F. T. Prince*

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In this essay I take up the notion of poetic elegance as a specific instance of the general idea of poetic economy. The kind of elegance I have in mind mediates between elliptical and redundant uses of language by combining urbanity of tone with a style that is not afraid of cultivating mannerisms. The result in the two cases I cite as illustrations—John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974) and F. T. Prince (1912-2003)—is a type of personalized elegance that manages to appear elliptical while remaining committed to a principle of stylistic redundancy.¹

In mathematics, science, and engineering, elegance refers to the directness and simplicity of the solution to a complex problem.² In linguistics, elegance refers to the capacity to explain the largest set of linguistic phenomena with the fewest rules.³ In architecture, elegance signifies a balance between grace, economy, and strength. In poetic writing, elegance is mediated as achieved style, though hardly anything so obvious to the understanding could be more difficult to realize in practice. In classical rhetoric, *elegantia* constitutes one of the three qualities of style (along with *compositio* and *dignitas*) from at least as far back as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c. 90 BCE).⁴ A surplus of affect, and a style degenerates into eccentricity; too little individuation, and a style sinks into anonymity. A balance between the extremes of the stylized and the prosaic is hard to find, and even harder to sustain. When that balance is accomplished with flair and panache, we have elegance; when it combines ellipses of thought and feeling with redundancy of words and images, we have poets like Ransom

*For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debpatke02123.htm>>.

and Prince: authors whose appeal might remain confined to a minority among readers of poetry, but who deserve the kind of appreciation and attention devoted ordinarily to more well-established reputations.

Ransom is known less as a poet than through his association with American New Criticism, the *Fugitive* group of writers from the American South, the Agrarian Movement, also of the South, and his editing of *The Kenyon Review*.⁵ Prince, who was born in South Africa, but lived most of his adult life in England, is better known for his scholarly work on Milton and Shakespeare.⁶ Each has suffered the fate described by John Ashbery as being “somewhat known and a little read, if only so that he may be all the more quickly dismissed without the slightest twinge of conscience” (“F. T. Prince” 33).⁷

I aim to show how the idea of poetic economy finds a variety of elegant materializations in their best poems through a commensuration of lexical and syntactic means with semantic ends. The two poetic styles are by no means similar. Nor does syntax or diction play a similar function in their poems. In one respect Ransom is more consistent than Prince: he cultivates a style that depends heavily on seemingly archaic words and motifs; and his syntax helps reinforce the desire to establish a distinctive poetic persona through style. In Prince, each poem creates its own, unique stylistic microcosm. That makes it difficult to infer a singular stylist behind an almost bewildering variety of tones, prosodic forms, and variations in syntax and diction. He voices a host of implied speakers, whereas Ransom voices versions of himself, each indicative of how he would like to present a singular persona to his readers. The point of bringing them together is to indicate the wide scope for stylistic choices in the management of word-choice and word-order, punctuation, pauses and silences, the rhetorical energies of poetic form and meter, and the ability to use tropes and figures to turn language to unexpected but fascinating and insightful ends.

In Prince, elegance of poetic writing is an effect to be realized in acts of reading that are attentive to how stylizations can inflect meaning. In Ransom, it is a rather more self-conscious characterization of a

poetic persona that stands in for the poet, giving scope to explore the interface between stylizations and what I have described as types of commensuration. The interface is manifest either as a form of lexical and syntactic redundancy or as forms of ellipsis. If redundancy is a mode of profusion, ellipsis is its converse: a mode of withholding. While both are common in ordinary speech, ellipsis functions more like short-hand (a way of saying things economically, taking what is omitted for granted, or implying that it can be inferred from the context); whereas, redundancy is often a matter of inefficient and superfluous communication. Redundancy evokes pejorative connotations in ordinary language-use, whereas ellipsis does so only when taken to the point where it seriously compromises the communicative intent. Neither functions quite the same way in poetry.

Redundancy in poetry raises the question of efficacy, since it is part of an intention. One might want to be deliberately redundant in ordinary language-use as well, but such cases are rare. In the context of poetry, what might be the ends that justify a profusion of means? Ellipses raise a related but different question: what does withholding accomplish that might not be managed by words?

Redundancy and ellipsis are linked: each, in its way, signifies a type of situation in which the idea of “more than might be expected” or “less than what might be expected” does not work as in ordinary speech. In the kind of poetic elegance I wish to identify, the “more” and the “less” (each in its unique way) produce new insights and nuances. Likewise, in writing that I here describe as elegant, the effect of the “more” is transmuted into the “just right.” In ellipsis, too, when used elegantly, the “less” can be “just right.” That this should be possible violates conventional expectations of adequacy in expression and communication: the supposition that what is apt in relation to the norm of communicative situations is just the right words for what is to be said, neither less, nor more (rather like Swift’s definition of good style as “Proper Words in proper Places,” 65).⁸ In that sense, elegant forms of redundancy and ellipsis work as paradoxes: they turn ordinary ideas of commensuration upside down.

Numerous twentieth century writers and critics have agreed with Ezra Pound that “good poetry should be at least as well written as good prose” (345). Nevertheless, the notion that good poetic style, like good prose, or like good conversation between people of civility and sense, could share in the quality of elegance, does not have currency in contemporary literary practice. When A. E. Housman’s *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (1933) extols the virtues of eighteenth-century prose in comparison to the “cumbrous and decorated and self-admiring prose of a Milton or a Jeremy Taylor” (18), it does so through the metaphor of “athletic prose.” Housman’s idea of athleticism, and its implied notion of masculinity, might well consign the idea of elegance to the realms of the feminine, alongside narcissism, ennui, indolence, preciousness, and decadence.

All the more reason therefore to revive the idea of elegance as one among several virtues desirable in poetry, on the evidence of two fine poets different from each other in the way they fashioned styles. The paradox subsidized by their deployment of style is no different from that referred to by Prince when he writes of Milton’s *Comus* that it is a poem at once “tumultuous but ordered” (Milton 150). He might have been speaking of his own early poem from the 1930s, “An Epistle to a Patron,” first published in *The Criterion* (January 1936) with the title “Letter to a Patron,” which begins:

My lord, hearing lately of your opulence in promises and your house
 Busy with parasites,⁹ of your hands full of favours, your statutes Ad-
 mirable as music, and no fear of your arms not prospering, I have Con-
 sidered how to serve you and breed from my talents
 These few secrets which I shall make plain
 To your intelligent glory.
 (*Collected Poems* 13)

Geoffrey Hill points out that, when it first appeared, the poem was accompanied by a note that was removed from subsequent editions: “the rather Poundian ‘Note’ placed after the text in the *Criterion* version. What Davie treats as inadvertently loose writing reads: ‘Letter from Leonardo da Vinci to Ludovico il Moro, c.1483. / Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*. / Alberti and Sigismundo Malatesta of

Rimini. / Luciano Luarana and Federigo de Montefeltro of Urbino. / Michelozzo and Cosimo de Medici'" (Hill 28). The kind of Renaissance patronage Prince evidently had in mind combined enormous power that could be at once both generous and capricious. The omission of the original epigraph from subsequent editions suggests that he preferred in later years to bury the historical allusion rather than wear it openly on his sleeve. The decision came at a cost: modern readers are not likely to pick up on the wealth of historical detail implicit in the original epigraph.¹⁰

Donald Davie cites the opening pages of "An Epistle" admiringly in *Articulate Energy* (1955), only to remark: "And so this splendid poem goes on. There is no reason why it should ever stop" (93). For him, the "sounded rhythm of that poem is very loose indeed" (32). The alternate view, which I would propose, is that Prince dramatizes a persona who appears verbose, but only as a semblance of looseness which is studied and elegant in its dramatic mimesis of sensibility. What Davie treats as inadvertently loose writing could be read instead as purposely so.

In a 2002 commemorative essay on Prince, one of his publishers, Anthony Rudolf, reported that Prince reacted to Davie's reading with the claim that the poem does have "a beginning, middle and end" (Rudolf 26). I am inclined to agree. I regard the poem's effect of redundancy as possessing an order in its apparent disorder: a supplicant both needy and cheeky whose begging letter underlines the logic, amidst all its verbal extravagance, that the greatness of a patron (his "intelligent glory") resides in the discernment he might apply to supporting dependent artists. The seemingly headlong rush of encomium, flattery, arrogance, and wheedling that takes up the ninety sprawling lines of the poem is held in place by an implied or tacit emphasis: the power to bestow patronage is enhanced by the merit of the supplication. The overarching ellipsis concealed in the poem's semblance of pell-mell dishevelment has its beginning, middle, and end: I can serve thus and thus ... but only if you save me from the abject poverty that can become the lot of the unsponsored artist ...

and then you shall be rendered service that will be apt to your merits. The overall logic of the plea is rather like the syllogism of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress," which hinges on the grammar of: if we had time ... but since we don't ... therefore let us....

One could say of the lavish yet subtly dissonant aspects of "An Epistle" what Prince wrote of the young Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, that the poem represents "the conflict between desire and its object, between mortal flesh and immortal, yet helpless, passion" (Shakespeare 9), or what he says of *The Rape of Lucrece*, that here the author works with a handicap, "if we can call exuberant genius a handicap" (Shakespeare 13). Consider the casual sweep of the very beginning:

My lord, hearing lately of your opulence in promises and your house
Busy with parasites [...]

To tell a potential patron that his house is full of parasites is a high-risk enterprise: if it works as a form of forthright cheekiness, the patron might well think twice before rejecting this suppliant; but if it were to backfire, that would be the end of all hopes of winning commissions through mixing honesty with hyperbole.

Curiously enough, other observations by Prince about Shakespeare's poem are almost equally applicable to "An Epistle." For example, that it is "a brilliant, uneasy, luxuriant work, and its greatest beauties can hardly compensate for its obvious faults. Some of these faults lie in exaggerated and superfluous detail" (Shakespeare 15). The redundancy Prince discovers in Shakespeare's poem is analogous to the linguistic surplus with which he endows his artist-suppliant:

[...] I know

What wood to cut by what moon in what weather
Of your sea-winds, your hill-wind: therefore tyrant, let me learn
Your high-ways, ways of sandstone, roads of the oakleaf, and your sea-
ways.

(Collected Poems 14)

Consider the use of the word "tyrant" in the specific context of what is otherwise respectful and flattering to the point of obsequiousness. The

etymology might well be relevant (as suggested by Robert Crosman when the paper was presented at a *Connotations* Symposium).¹¹ One has to invoke more than irony to account for its role in the poem. Why should the artist-suppliant tell his potential patron the exact opposite of what any person in his situation might want to say? Rather than think that the poet characterizes his artist-suppliant as extravagantly rash or prone to error, I propose that we think of such instances as a form of condensed ellipsis which inverts the kind of claim made in a reference book on stylistics, which says that “[e]llipsis is possible in normal discourse because of the latter’s redundancy or surplus and predictability of meaning” (Wales 139). Prince’s speaker uses “tyrant” elliptically. He elides the explanation for why he does so, but the context suggests what that could be. Since it remains at the level of implication, it remains ambiguous between several interpretive possibilities. In choosing one of these possibilities,¹² I would like us to keep in mind a general caveat offered by Prince in the context of interpretation: “The interpretation of works of art can never be a matter of rational or scientific demonstration, however much knowledge or method we may need on our way; to arrive at some understanding we need rather to draw upon the whole of our being, and have a feeling for reality which cannot be taken for granted” (*Shakespeare* 22).

Prince invites readers to wonder if his artist-suppliant risks appearing foolish and self-destructive for a reason. The aim could be to make a complex point using syntactic redundancy to smuggle in a pungent ellipsis. The artist submits his flattery to the intended patron in a way that might seem like an insult but invites reading as a paradox. Its resolution, condensed to the point of elision, needs an elaborate explanation which, it is implied, the patron will be intelligent enough to understand without the need to have it spelt out in actual words: that “tyrant” might even be apt in a context where the power and caprice of patronage is involved. The poem, as Geoffrey Hill observes, is meant to be read as circling “around an unshifting fulcrum which is the power of patronage, which in turn is worldly power” (28-29). Drawing attention to uncanny parallels between Prince’s discussion of

Milton verse style, and the influence on it of Italian poets like Tasso and della Casa, Hill provides a very perceptive insight into the style of Prince's first volume: "mannered statements" that "are simultaneously instances of cloaked, equivocal speech and of naked revelation" (Hill 29).¹³

Even in the act of receiving the proffered flattery, the patron is being urged to recognize that patronage is a tyrannically compelling system: it has power to enforce from supplicants the kind of flattery that the artist here offers with tongue-in-cheek hyperbole. He does so trusting that his patron will accept the compliments while recognizing the inequity of a system that requires and elicits such encomia. It is as though the ellipsis surrounding the word "tyrant" were claiming silently: "the patronage system of which you and I are a part, which forces me to play the role of supplicant, also forces you to play the role of the one who exacts praise, and though we are both victims of a tyranny, we play our parts adeptly, so we may as well admit between ourselves that my naming you as tyrant merely transfers the agency of the system to its principal beneficiary, you in your role of patron." This reading of the use of "tyrant" in the poem is meant to support the kind of general claim made by a linguist such as Robert J. Stainton that even single "words (as opposed to sentences) can be used to state complete thoughts" (4).¹⁴

The single word "tyrant," as used by Prince's speaker, in his context, might bring some of us to the realm of what we recognize after Paul Grice as "implicature," which entails a situation in which we have reason to believe that "what a *speaker* means differs from what the *sentence* used by the speaker means" (Davis). Whether in fictional speech acts or real, our interpretations of implicature are, as Kent Bach reminds us, "presumptions made in the course of the strategic inference involved in communication" (155). "Tyrant," we infer, is intended by Prince to be read as deliberately, and not as an error, on the part of his speaker. In context, its seeming inappropriateness invites conjecture, even if we take on board that it might be an arch allusion to the Greek etymology lurking behind the more straightforwardly

pejorative Latin source for the word. Grice associates his “Cooperative Principle” with being informative, truthful, perspicuous, and otherwise appropriate: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (“Logic and Conversation” 45). This is where the literary use of language parts company with the non-literary uses that Grice has in mind. Our fictive speaker may well be truthful, and he is certainly informative, but he is hardly either appropriate (*aptum*) or quite beautiful (*pulchrum*), as the rhetorical tradition from Cicero to St Augustine formulated the terms of reference for their ideal of rhetorical efficacy.¹⁵

This is where I would like to introduce a specifically nuanced idea of elegance into the analysis: a form of daring economy, where a decisive and risky signification is handled with deftness; an effect so glancing that it might almost pass attention, but grows in import once noticed for what it is, a piece of calculated effrontery. Ordinarily, to say *other than* (and the exact opposite of) what might be apt or tactful can be a form of insensitive rudeness, irony, or sarcasm; but here it is none of those affects. Nor does it read more plausibly as a Freudian slip; an inadvertent blurting out of what is felt but ordinarily repressed. It is more like an invitation asking to be read for a sense that is ordinarily concealed, but here willingly declared. The dramatic point of the difference between what is said and what is implicated is that the speaker hopes to persuade patronage—not *despite*, but—*because* of this piece of effrontery. To have created that dramatic plausibility is elegant. The redundancy in Prince’s poem is syntactic. It grows through apposition. Phrase piled upon phrase, each a partial duplicate and subtle variant of the next. The parallelism multiplies instantiations of what the artist can do for his patron; but it conceals an ellipsis that runs against the weave of the redundancy: underlining the mutual dependency between patrons and artists would be unremembered by posterity if not for the humble artists they patronize (in both senses).

In Ransom, redundancy is a matter of diction and deliberate archaisms, and ellipsis a matter of admonitory implications kept latent or subliminal. Here, for example, is the beginning of “Blue Girls”:

Twirling your blue skirts, travelling the sward
Under the towers of your seminary,
Go listen to your teachers old and contrary
Without believing a word.
(*Selected Poems* 11)

New wine in old bottles, new teeth to old saws: the mix of *carpe diem* and *memento mori* themes is given a playful twist through the mischief played by the poet with diction and rhyme. The archaic “sward,” its less than full rhyme with “word” (even if uttered with a Southern intonation, as in Ransom’s audio recording of the poem), the jaunty suggestion that skirts could be twirled, the subversive idea that old teachers are merely contrary and can be listened to but safely ignored, all combine to create an effect that mixes light urbanity of tone with a style that seems to relish its own mannered qualities. The danger is self-evident: the manner can slip into the arch or the coy, relish can become off-putting when it begins to feel like self-regard. The gain is just as obvious: a style that is unmistakable, a poetic voice and identity that is distinctive and Southern in its elaborate courtesies, its old-world archaisms, and its deliberate contrariness. There is no great surprise in being told by Ransom that he prefers “rich obscure poetry” to “thin pure poetry” (*The World’s Body* 61).

The poem also emblemizes something far more elliptically regional and culturally specific. In 1930, Ransom contributed the lead essay to a compilation in which a dozen representatives of the American South provided a set of cultural and ideological self-representations. There, a chip-on-his-shoulder Ransom describes his stance as that of a “reconstructed but unregenerate” Southerner, who hopes that he will not be so entirely taken for granted (presumably by readers of the North, in this continued civil war of the mind) that people will fail to notice that his style of reproach “might bear a barb

and inflict a sting" ("Reconstructed" 1). The sting in this case concerns the gently caustic observation that Northerners "sometime send their daughters to the Southern seminaries," but not their sons, because, while they want their sons to be "sternly educated in the principles of progress at progressive institutions of learning," there is little expected of young women beyond "virtue and the domestic duties," for which the South serves its purpose, given that the North attributes "a sort of glamour to the Southern life" ("Reconstructed" 2).

From this perspective, Ransom's poem is elliptical. The "blue girls" need expect to learn nothing from the seminaries of the South, and the old teachers there, if we go by the prejudice of their own fathers. But the poet would have them know, *sotto voce*, that the poet is being ironical rather than cynical. The persona Ransom so studiously cultivates, "a gentleman in a dustcoat" (*Selected Poems* 9), a type of the courteous old-world Southerner "who persists his regard for a certain terrain, a certain history, and a certain inherited way of living" ("Reconstructed" 1), sticks with unregenerate pride and a "fierce devotion" ("Reconstructed" 2) to a cause which others are too readily wont to believe has long since become a lost cause: the values of the Southern way of life. In this poetry, we have elegance combined with grieving and a self-consciousness that is only superficially self-effacing, because its urbane manner conceals a hurt pride that can sting: this ellipsis affects the entire poem with a sense of its own belatedness of posture.

Consider the third stanza:

Practise your beauty, blue girls, before it fail;
And I will cry with my loud lips and publish
Beauty which all our powers shall never establish,
It is so frail.
(*Selected Poems* 11)

The accumulated effect of the clauses is to reinforce a moral almost to the point of redundancy: "cry," "loud lips," and "publish" reinforce virtually the same sense, only for the next two lines to undercut that declaration of poetic function with the Platonic idea that what is frail

cannot last, cannot be true, and cannot be established at all, regardless of how loud the poet sing its praise. One way of reading the lines, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer of this essay, is to treat the poem “as a witty variation on standard Renaissance love-poetry topics,” in the spirit of an ardent neo-Platonic lover such as Pietro Bembo. This reading does not find the accumulation of clauses redundant. It takes them to be “a careful step-by-step conduct of the argumentative process.” The alternative approach adopted here interprets the poem as bitter rather than simply witty, allusive not only with reference to Renaissance love poetry, but antithetical to its doctrine that poetry can keep from perishing that which is subject to mutability. Ransom’s “establish” proclaims the girls’ beauty, but his point in making such a declaration is to stress that he is unable to affirm the Keatsian ideal of an equation between truth and beauty. Whether the blue girls might realize it or not, they are being told more than merely to make hay with their beauty while the sun shines upon them; they are also being told, elliptically, that what they are blessed with—their blue eyes—is hardly real to someone such as the poet who has already established a contrary truth, that even greater brightness falls from the air. This is an elegance that is at once mannered and well-mannered, and it can scratch. The thematic and stylistic redundancy is laden with ellipses of latent signification.

There are other ways of mixing mannerisms with urbanity. Here is Prince’s short poem “The Token”:

More beautiful than any gift you gave
 You were, a child so beautiful as to seem
 To promise ruin what no child can have,
 Or woman give. And so a Roman gem
 I choose to be your token: here a laurel
 Springs to its young height, hangs a broken limb;
 And here a group of women wanly quarrel
 At a sale of cupids. A hawk looks at them.
 (*Collected Poems* 25)

The syntax is anything but simple, although the overall rhythm is smooth, and the pauses and ellipses of thought induced by the carefully unwinding syntax remain thoughtful and enigmatic. An eight-line poem comprising two tightly-packed sentences followed by a terse final sentence gives us a degree of syntactic inscrutability that manages to withhold a large part of the poem's import, as if the alternative of revealing the intent more clearly would constitute some kind of inelegance. Decorum in ellipsis; tact in circumspection; pointed, but veiled in emblematic obliqueness. The poetic voice adopts a deliberately riddling manner. It elides and omits several kinds of connective. It chooses not to be clear about why a child who is more beautiful than any gift she gives has to "promise ruin" (and does that mean or imply, "promise *to* ruin?"). Is it feared that she might ruin herself or others? Ruin the giving or the having? And what might it be that "no child can have, / Or woman give"? And the difference between having and giving? The poem withholds far more than it proffers.

That is what makes the semantics elliptical, though the syntax and imagery practice a kind of redundancy: we are told a lot, it might seem, and yet we have found out very little. The manner of telling and showing has raised more questions than the telling and showing can answer. What is the emblematic significance of the token referred to by the title? In choosing the gem as token, is the poet giving her a gift or naming it as an apt metonymy? And what makes the token apt: its beauty or its capacity to provoke strong reactions? The *mise-en-scène* with which the poem ends retains a mysterious quality, which provokes both reflection and frustration. In a manner quite different from Ransom's—less playful, less overtly stylized—the poem manages to remain somber and quizzical.

For our final example of the tense collaboration between ellipsis and redundancy, I would like us to consider one of Ransom's finest poems, "Prelude to an Evening." It was first published in 1934. When he revised it in 1963 (as became his disastrous habit in later years), he added a gloss on the domestic situation dramatized by the poem

which is useful (even after we remind ourselves not to confuse a retrospective account of intention with the poem):

Here is a man returning in the evening from his worldly occupations to his own household. He has had plenty of encounters with the world's evils, and his imagination is immoderate and wayward [...] he is a man pursued by Furies. [...] The poem is the man's soliloquy as he approaches his house. He is addressing the mother of his children, who awaits him, as if rehearsing the speech he will make in her presence in order to persuade her to share his fearful preoccupations and give him her entire allegiance. He seems to think that he will win her over; there is no intimation that it may turn out quite differently. But suppose he succeeds: will not that be a dreary fate for the woman? And what of the children? Those are not his questions. But they came to be mine. (*Selected Poems* 151)

Now let us consider the poem:

Prelude to an Evening

Do not enforce the tired wolf
Dragging his infected wound homeward
To sit tonight with the warm children
Naming the pretty kings of France.

The images of the invaded mind
Being as the monsters in the dreams
Of your most brief enchanted headful,
Suppose a miracle of confusion:

That dreamed and undreamt become each other
And mix the night and day of your mind;
And it does not matter your twice crying
From mouth unbeautied against the pillow

To avert the gun of the same old soldier;
For cry, cock-crow, or the iron bell
Can crack the sleep-sense of outrage,
Annihilate phantoms who were nothing.

But now, by our perverse supposal,
There is a drift of fog on your mornings;
You in your peignoir, dainty at your orange cup,

Feel poisoning round the sunny room

Invisible evil, deprived and bold.
All day the clock will metronome
Your gallant fear; the needles clicking,
The heels detonating the stair's cavern

Freshening the water in the blue bowls
For the buck berries, with not all your love,
You shall be listening for the low wind,
The warning sibilance of pines.

You like a waning moon, and I accusing
Our too banded Eumenides,
While you pronounce Noes wanderingly
And smooth the heads of the hungry children.
(*Selected Poems* 147-48)

I will be concise in locating what I interpret as the moment of decisive ellipsis: decisive for the dramatization and for its interpretation. The dominant element of the poem—using the word “dominant” to imply a central concern or preoccupation that determines all other detail—is the speaker’s frame of mind. If we grant the premise of the poem’s self-reflexivity, a crucial ellipsis occurs when he appears to shift the grammatical address which begins with a reference to himself in the third person, suddenly, by the third line of the second stanza, to the second person. The ellipsis hovers over the ambiguity it creates: does the “you” entail the man talking to himself? Or has the wife he proposes to address already become a part—even the primary referent—of the “you”? The phrase “your most brief enchanted headful” blurs the reference. The image of a man returning home with his head full of disturbing thoughts and feelings seems to mutate into the image of a man thinking about his wife as the one whose head is full of disturbed and disturbing thoughts and feelings.

In the third stanza, the image of a “mouth unbeautied” crying against the pillow makes it plausible to suppose that it is the wife who has by now become the primary or sole referent of “the invaded mind” and the “enchanted headful.” But how (or where, or when) did

the transference from the speaking voice to the wife take place? I would identify that moment or place as the decisive ellipsis of the poem: a speech act on the part of the speaking voice performed silently, without words, but enabling an inner state to have been projected onto the poor wife. Note that by stanza five, the “he” and the “you” have now resolved their focus into “*our* perverse supposal” (emphasis mine). That is the second decisive ellipsis in the poem. Everything after that is a series of unclenching redundancies until the final stanza, by which time, the “we” has split again into “you” and “I,” and the “you” is now definitely the wife. The degree to which the man is, and is not, a true friend to the mother of his children is the exact nuance of meaning the poem strives to capture, its achieved undecidability. To have left this undecidability (between the ways in which he is true to her and the ways in which he is not) within a zone of ambiguity could be said to be the peculiar and perverse nature of Ransom’s elegance.

Given the slippery nature of the slope on which such poems sustain their balancing acts, it is as well to recognize that the habit of being mannered can slip easily into self-indulgence and eccentricity. And while being mannered is in some ways distinct from being a mannerist, the two are not unrelated. Both provoke negative responses, one in the general sphere of affects and affectation, the other in the narrower sphere of European art history, where the Mannerist style in painting (or architecture, or music) is treated either as a transition or as a descent and divagation from the accomplishments of the Renaissance arts, and the equipoise, harmony, and balance of Renaissance classicism. John Ashbery, alluding to Parmigianino’s Mannerist self-portrait in a convex mirror, concedes that this type of art projects “[a] perverse light whose / Imperative of subtlety dooms in advance its / Conceit to light up: unimportant but meant” (*Self-Portrait* 70).

What does Mannerism evoke?¹⁶ Delicacy, sophistication, a certain degree of melancholia; also, ornamentation, complexity, an allusiveness that has something of belatedness to it. All these can be found in Ransom and Prince. Any style that can be called mannered—whether

in writing, painting, music, or architecture—requires its admirers to adopt a defensive or expostulatory stance, obliged to defend their endorsement of the mannered as a predilection which makes concessionary allowances for elements of the extravagant, the eccentric, and the self-indulgent. However, their best poems enable one, I think, to present mannered poetic styles in a more favorable light, not forgetting the connection between being mannered and being mannerist. Their best verse (which happens to be their earliest) is characterized by incredibly inventive verbal ingenuity, whose self-reflexive poise is managed without sacrificing the elliptical element that lends it a curiously impersonal charm that manages to imply both reserve and candor. The surplus of affect provided by such styles never obscures the degree to which such writing withholds rather more of sense and significance than the seeming profusion of words might imply.

We can approach the notion of poetic elegance from the perspective of a poet's choice of diction; then move on to consider the distinctive aspects of syntax and rhythm, and how these elements interact with the choice of verse form. Donald Davie's account of *Purity of Diction in English Verse* (1952) underscores the closeness between the notions of purity and chastity in the selection principle at work in poetic language. He derives from Oliver Goldsmith an antithetical relation between chastity and frigidity, in such a way that Goldsmith's "frigidity" corresponds nearly with what we might associate today with eccentricity, exuberance, or extravagance, which are all effects of style that Goldsmith regarded as "unchaste." In endorsing Goldsmith, Davie takes chastity to represent a principle of restraint and economy in the use of metaphor, working differently in different genres, implicitly based on judgment and taste, requiring closeness to the language of prose and "careful conversation" (*Purity of Diction* 20), and based on tacit correspondences between writers and their readers about what keeps a language close to its centre, "conversational not colloquial, poetic not poetical" (27).

Frigidity, in contrast, represents for Goldsmith "a deviation from propriety owing to the erroneous judgment of the writer, who, en-

deavoring to captivate the admiration with novelty, very often shocks the understanding with extravagance" (18). Davie makes the application of the antithesis explicit: the Romantic poets were mostly unchaste (although he finds cause later in the book to admire Shelley's "urbanity"), and whatever his many merits, no one could claim for Shakespeare that his poetry had the effect of "a valuable urbanity, a civilized moderation and elegance" (27). Likewise, the "prolific and unequal output" (28) of modern poets such as Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens, and Allen Tate is treated as "impure," in contrast the best poetry of Yeats and Eliot, while "minor modern poets on both sides of the Atlantic," such as Graves, Moore and Ransom, are described as having "employed successfully for their limited ends a personal diction deliberately impure, eccentric and mannered" (29).

What we have seen of the early poems of Ransom and Prince confirms Davie's point: that each chose to adopt a style that could be regarded as "unchaste." But where one might part company with Davie is in deciding if the "impure" necessarily sacrifices elegance. My short answer to that question foregrounds the interplay between semantic ellipsis and syntactic redundancy. Their combination fascinates, because it serves fresh, cognitive ends. It entitles such poets to claim that they thus give access to "the kind of knowledge by which we must know what we have arranged that we shall not know otherwise" (Ransom, *The World's Body* x).

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NOTES

¹The paper owes a debt of gratitude to my colleague Dr Susan Ang who has saved me from many errors, and to several participants in the *Connotations* Symposium where a shorter version was first presented on August 1, 2011. Their comments and questions have helped enrich details. I owe an even more sustained debt to the anonymous reviewer consulted by *Connotations*, who helped eliminate several errors and offered a tonic scepticism about my use of the notion of syntactic redundancy. I hope it has been put to constructive use here.

²In *The Elegant Universe*, for example, Brian Greene evokes the idea of elegance as equally applicable to “an order and a coherence in the workings of nature” (167), and to the theories developed by modern physicists, which have “an elegance and beauty of structure on par with the world we experience” (165).

³The view of language developed in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* by Noam Chomsky, for example, treats the grammar of a language as a set of rules capable of generating all the possible grammatical sentences in that language.

⁴Cf. Kennedy 125. Bizzell and Herzberg note about the notion of *elegantia* in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (IV.12): “The Theophrastan scheme is here modified. The four qualities in Theophrastus’ system were Purity, Clarity, Appropriateness, and Ornamentation, this last embracing Correct Choice of Words, Artistic Composition, and the figures. Thus for our author, *elegantia* comprises two primary qualities of Theophrastus’ scheme; Appropriateness is here missing; the ornamentation residing in the choice of words is left unconsidered [...]; Artistic Composition is a primary quality, and is not treated as a branch of Ornamentation; finally, Ornamentation, represented by *dignitas*, is limited to the Figures” (252n62). The Latin treatise *Ad Herennium* exercised an enormous influence throughout Europe. For example, in 1444, Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantiae linguae latinae* continues to use the notion of *elegantiae* as in the Latin treatise, in order to contrast the elegance attributed to Cicero and Quintilian with the Latin of the medieval Church.

⁵Ransom’s critical works include *God without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy* (1930), an essay in *I’ll Take My Stand* (1930), *The World’s Body* (1938), *The New Criticism* (1941), *Beating the Bushes: Selected Essays 1941-1970* (1972), and *Selected Essays* (1984).

⁶Prince’s academic writings include *The Italian Element in Milton’s Verse* (1951), an Arden edition of Shakespeare’s *Poems* (1960), a British Council pamphlet on the *Poems* (1963), and annotated editions of Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* (1957), *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II (1962), and “*Comus*” and *Other Poems* (1968).

⁷Ransom’s poetic career was brief and spread over four volumes published in less than a decade: *Poems about God* (1919), *Grace after Meat* (1924), *Chills and Fevers* (1924), and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (1927). After the age of forty, Ransom revised some of his poems, but wrote little that was new. His role as influential critic and literary editor came into its own when his career as poet was virtually at an end. In contrast, Prince wrote throughout his life, but not regularly. The early work was admired by many writers, including T. S. Eliot, who helped publish his first

volume, *Poems* (1938). The poem "Soldiers Bathing" became famous, but many tended to think of Prince as a one-poem-anthology-poet. In 1979 Donald Davie wrote in *The New York Times Book Review*: "Setting aside Eliot's 'Four Quartets,' F. T. Prince's 'Soldiers Bathing' is perhaps the finest poem in English to come out of World War II; and this is widely acknowledged. Why has he never since done anything so good?" (quoted from Pace). Although his other poems have not lacked admirers among poets (including John Ashbery and Geoffrey Hill), Prince is far less known as a poet than Ransom.

⁸I am grateful to Frank Kearful for drawing my attention to Swift's remark from "A letter to a young gentleman, lately enter'd into holy orders."

⁹Maik Goth points out that the "parasites" of the second line could be an allusion to a letter from Augustus to Maecenas, which refers to "parasitica mensa": "Before this I was able to write my letters to my friends with my own hand; now overwhelmed with work and in poor health, I desire to take our friend Horace from you. He will come then from that parasitic table of yours to my imperial board, and help me write my letters" (Suetonius 461-63).

¹⁰Cf. "Political blunders aside, Ludovico was enthusiastic about learning and the arts. He penned the lives of illustrious men and was the patron of Leonardo da Vinci who, while in his service, painted the *Last Supper* (1497-1498) for the Dominicans living in the Monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, favored by Ludovico. He also painted the portrait of Ludovico's mistress, Cecilia Galleriani, called the *Portrait of a Woman with an Ermine* (c. 1485; Cracow, Czartoryski Museum)" (Zirpolo 403). In her 1899 biography of Beatrice D'Este, Julia Cartwright pointed out: "the more impartial judgment of modern historians, together with the light thrown upon the subject by recently discovered documents, has done much to modify our opinion of Ludovico's character. The worst charges formerly brought against him, above all, the alleged poisoning of his nephew, the reigning Duke of Milan, have been dismissed as groundless and wholly alien to his nature and character. On the other hand, his great merits and rare talents as ruler and administrator have been fully recognized, while it is admitted [...] that his generous and enlightened encouragement of art and letters entitles him to a place among the most illustrious patrons of the Renaissance. To his keen intellect and discerning eye, to his fine taste and quick sympathy with all forms of beauty, we owe the production of some of the noblest works of art that human hands have ever fashioned. To his personal encouragement and magnificent liberality we owe the grandest monuments of Lombard architecture, and the finest development of Milanese painting, the façade of the Certosa and the cupola of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, the frescoes and altar-pieces of the Brera and the Ambrosiana. Above all, it was at the Milanese court, under the stimulating influence of the Moro, that Leonardo da Vinci's finest work was done" (11-12).

¹¹Cf. *OED*: "tyrant, *n.*: [a. OF. tyrant (12th c.), tiran (13th c.), F. tyran (14th c.) = Prov. tiran, Cat. tira, Sp. tirano, Pg. tyranno, It. tiranno, a. L. tyrannus, Gr. τύραννος. [...] 1.1 One who seizes upon the sovereign power in a state without legal right; an absolute ruler; a usurper." The more neutral sense of the Greek

word may be the reason for the obsolete meaning "†2. A ruler, governor, prince. Obs."

¹²In tracing the models for Milton's "magnificent style," Prince draws attention to several devices used by the poets of the Italian Renaissance, especially Torquato Tasso (1544-95), who learnt from the sonnets of Giovanni Della Casa (1503-56), and Pietro Bembo (1470-1547): (1) an elaborate syntax built from relative clauses spread over several stanzas, creating an effect of "reflection and deliberate utterance, yet a certain abruptness" in which "the flow of the sentences overrides the division of the stanza" (*Italian Element* 17), producing the effect of "*asprezza*, 'roughness' or 'difficulty'" (*Italian Element* 27), (2) "the placing of strong pauses within the lines" (27); and (3) "the deliberate accumulation of elisions" (27).

¹³Cf. Stainton: "a semantically elliptical sentence encodes a proposition, but it does so without adopting the form of a sentence" (81). Stainton distinguishes between three kinds of semantically elliptical sentences: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic, of which the first type is referred to here and is defined as an expression with a certain kind of structure/form.

¹⁴"Hellenistic aestheticians distinguished between the 'appropriate' (*aptum*, decorum) and the 'beautiful' (*pulchrum*) in the narrower sense, but Augustine was perhaps the first (in his early work) to contrast them clearly" (Tatarkiewicz, Harrell, Barrett and Petsch 2: 51).

¹⁵Cf. Roman Jakobson, "The Dominant": "the *dominant* [...] was one of the most crucial, elaborated, and productive concepts in Russian Formalist theory. The dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure" (751).

¹⁶"Mannerists purposely denied the strict classicism and emphasis on the pleasing aesthetics of the High Renaissance and instead embraced an anticlassical mode of representation that entailed the use of illogical elements, jarring colors and lighting, contorted figures, and ambiguous iconographic programs" (Zirpolo 260).

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Pinter's Fractured Discourse in *The Homecoming**

MAURICE CHARNEY

Pinter liked to play the role of deist dramatist, who set his characters out on stage and let them pursue their autonomous destinies.¹ As he wrote to Peter Wood, the director of *The Birthday Party*, in 1958: "The play exists now apart from me, you or anybody. [...] Everything to do with the play is in the play" (*Various Voices* 9).² Pinter strongly objected to providing any narrative justification, or verification, for what happens, and refused, on principle, to explain what his plays were about (although he said quite a good deal about them in interviews). Like Pirandello's, his characters seem autonomous. He claimed not to have any superior knowledge about why his characters moved in the ways that they did, and he was dismayed by naturalistic and causative explanations, especially among reviewers but also by established literary critics.

In October 1958 he wrote eloquently to the editor of *The Play's the Thing*:

The desire for verification is understandable but cannot always be satisfied. There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false. The assumption that to verify what has happened and what is happening presents few problems I take to be inaccurate. A character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experience, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives is as legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all of these things. The more acute the experience the less articulate its expression. (VV 18)

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debcharney02123.htm>>.

Pinter's preference for non-verifiable experience is crucial to his dramatic method, and it is significant how skeptical he is of articulate expression, as in the well-made play. Pinter thought of his dialogue as naturalistic speech, but not completely so. It also has to express truths that lie behind and beneath language.

Stylistically, Pinter belongs with the elliptical writers, although he is also sometimes redundant, as in the long, interpolated narratives of Lenny in *The Homecoming* that might at first sight seem pointless. In my title, I have called this style "fractured" because the logical breaks in it seem so deliberate. In other words, the characters do not seem to act from obvious, plot-oriented motives. They are illogical and we cannot take their explanations (or lack of explanations) at face value. That is why Pinter's plays seem, to John Russell Brown, all exposition ("Mr Pinter's Shakespeare" 251), without the development and the resolution of the well-made play. The characters do not seem to understand their own motives, nor does the author—at least the author does not tell us what we are aching to know, and the author pretends not to know himself. Pinter's experience as an actor, director, and screen-writer shows him how to make the characters consistent only as a texture of possibilities, not as a collection of understandable motives. The play seems to move on its own momentum.

Pinter engages in what is sometimes called "non-poetic poetry," as in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, when Lear exclaims so movingly at the end: "Pray you, undo this button" (5.3.309). We expect a big, eloquent speech at this very climactic moment. Is Shakespeare throwing away an important occasion for eloquence? Or what constitutes eloquence anyway? I argue that the eloquence arises from the emotional pressures of the dramatic context. It doesn't seem to matter an awful lot what the characters say.³

There is a striking example in *The Homecoming* when Ruth is dominating (and infantilizing) Lenny, as she also does with Joey and Max. Lenny has just been engaging in some pseudo-philosophical, pseudo-Socratic speculations about the nature of a table as a material object: "Well, for instance, take a table. Philosophically speaking,

What is it?" (52). And further: "All right, I say, *take it, take a table*, but once you've taken it, what you going to do with it? Once you've got hold of it, where you going to take it?" (52). Lenny is making fun of his brother Teddy, the professional academic philosopher who has just arrived: he "*looks at him and laughs*" (52).

Ruth picks up the discourse and overwhelms both Lenny and Teddy with her fractured, highly sexual observations:

Don't be too sure though. You've forgotten something. Look at me. I ... move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear ... underwear ... which moves with me ...it... captures your attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple. It's a leg ... moving. My lips move. Why don't you restrict ... your observations to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant ... than the words which come through them. You must bear that ... possibility ... in mind. (52-53)

Ruth's pauses (indicated by three dots) are extremely important in Pinter's play and they are accompanied by gestures that are highly sexualized. This is part of the essential fabric of the non-verbal play. There is a silence (longer than a pause), and then Ruth suddenly blurts out: "I was born quite near here" (53). This announces that the play is also about Ruth's homecoming.

Peter Hall, who directed *The Homecoming* (with the help of Pinter) in London in 1965, writes eloquently about these various kinds of pauses:

There is a difference in Pinter between a pause and a silence and three dots. A pause is really a bridge where the audience think that you're this side of the river, then when you speak again, you're the other side. That's a pause. And it's alarming often. It's a gap, which retrospectively gets filled in. It's not a dead stop—that's a silence, where the confrontation has become so extreme, there is nothing to be said until either the temperature has gone down, or the temperature has gone up, and then something quite new happens. Three dots is a very tiny hesitation, but it's there, and it's different from a semi-colon, which Pinter almost never uses, and it's different from a comma. (Itzin and Trussler 144)

Hall even had pause, silence, and three-dot rehearsals, which the actors found very helpful.

"I wear ... underwear" (53) is hardly poetic—it sounds comic out of context—but in the play it is tremendously powerful. We have to remember that it occurs at a certain crucial moment, when Ruth's domination of Lenny is almost complete. Not only as a writer but also as an actor, Pinter was particularly interested in the non-verbal language beneath the words. Sometimes the words are only a smokescreen for meanings that are implicit.

Pinter speaks eloquently about this subterranean language or subtext in "Writing for the Theatre" (1962):

Language, under these conditions, is a highly ambiguous business. So often, below the word spoken, is the thing known and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations, their motives, their history. Between my lack of biographical data about them and the ambiguity of what they say lies a territory which is not only worthy of exploration but which it is compulsory to explore. You and I, the characters which grow on a page, most of the time we're inexpressive, giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive, obstructive, unwilling. But it's out of these attributes that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what is said, another thing is being said. (VV 19)

This continues Pinter's idea of dramatic characters separate from their author, but Pinter would even deny the intentionality of the words. That beneath the ostensible words of the play "another thing is being said" is a crucial statement of the characters' autonomy of expression, hidden even from the author—especially from the author.

John Russell Brown writes well about Pinter's use of subtext, which is Stanislavski's term in *Building a Character*: "The spoken word, the text of a play is not valuable in and of itself, but is made so by the inner content of the subtext and what is contained in it. [...] Without it the words have no excuse for being presented on the stage" (*Theatre Language* 27). Andrew Kennedy also defines subtext from this same book by Stanislavski: "the inwardly felt expression of a human being in a part, which flows uninterruptedly beneath the words of the text, giving them life and a basis for existing. The subtext is a web of innumerable, varied patterns inside a play" (Kennedy 20). Pinter claimed to have no independent knowledge of Stanislavski, nor does he have much use

for theoretical speculations. But we cannot deal with ellipsis in a play by Pinter without connecting it with context and subtext; in drama they form an inseparable entity.

Ruth dominates *The Homecoming*. She plays mind games and language games with Lenny, Joey, Max, and Teddy and subdues all of them to her will. Most important is Ruth's conflict with Lenny, which serves as a model for all of her other conflicts with Lenny's brothers and with Max. When she returns from her walk, she greets Lenny and they introduce themselves to each other. Despite all appearances to the contrary, Lenny immediately tries to impress her with his pretended sophistication and refinement: "Would you like something? Refreshment of some kind? An aperitif, anything like that?" (28). Ruth politely refuses, and Lenny continues his discourse in a parody of genteel, upper-class conversation: "I'm glad you said that. We haven't got a drink in the house. Mind you, I'd soon get some in, if we had a party or something like that. Some kind of celebration ... you know" (28). The three-dot break is followed by a full pause. Then Lenny says: "You must be connected with my brother in some way. The one who's been abroad" (28). He is obviously trying to reach out to Ruth and to make a strong first impression with his exaggerated and mysterious high style, full of unanticipated gaps. Ruth answers matter of factly: "I'm his wife" (28).

Lenny then suddenly launches into an irrelevant, pseudo-philosophical discourse about his clock and its annoying tick:

Eh listen, I wonder if you can advise me. I've been having a bit of a rough time with this clock. The tick's been keeping me up. The trouble is I'm not all that convinced it was the clock. I mean there are lots of things which tick in the night, don't you find that? All sorts of objects, which, in the day, you wouldn't call anything else but commonplace. They give you no trouble. But in the night any given one of a number of them is liable to start letting out a bit of a tick. Whereas you look at these objects in the day and they're just commonplace. They're as quiet as mice during the daytime. So ... all things being equal ... this question of me saying it was the clock that woke me up, well, that could very easily prove something of a false hypothesis. (28)

Lenny adopts a confidential, even intimate tone with a woman he has never seen before. His questions are all rhetorical without any thought of an answer. Ruth is being asked for her opinion about a matter that remains essentially mystifying. In Lenny's mock-philosophical scheme, it is not just a question but an hypothesis.

He pours Ruth a glass of water and takes one for himself. He watches her drink and asks a number of pointless but erotically tinged questions: "Isn't it funny? I've got my pyjamas on and you're fully dressed" (29). I think these observations are designed to get the upper hand of Ruth or at least to show her who is in charge. The point is that this is not the conversation of a well-made play. It is fractured in the sense that it is full of disconnected hints and subterranean suggestions that do not appear in the words of the dialogue. Lenny deliberately chooses to play obtuse: "What, you sort of live with him [Teddy] over there [in America], do you?" (29). Ruth gives the obvious answer: "We're married" (29). When Lenny says: "Well, the old man'll be pleased to see you, I can tell you" (29), Ruth answers straightforwardly "Good," but why does Lenny then ask: "What did you say?" and Ruth answers "Good" again (all 29). It's a very small point, but why does Lenny insist that Ruth repeat herself? Surely he has heard her the first time. There is some sort of language game afoot that piques our curiosity.

When Lenny learns that Ruth and Teddy have been visiting Venice, he embarks on a much-repeated but puzzling fantasy-discourse about Venice:

Not dear old Venice? Eh? That's funny. You know, I've always had a feeling that if I'd been a soldier in the last war—say in the Italian campaign—I'd probably have found myself in Venice. I've always had that feeling. The trouble was I was too young to serve, you see. I was only a child, I was too small, otherwise I've got a pretty shrewd idea I'd probably have gone through Venice. Yes, I'd almost certainly have gone through it with my battalion. (30)

What is Ruth to think of these wild suppositions, except that Lenny is trying to impress her with his worldliness?

But then, as a sudden bombshell, he asks: "Do you mind if I hold your hand?" (30). This is not really a *non sequitur* because it follows from the unstated sexual theme. Ruth is not shocked (nor even impressed), but only asks "Why?" (30). Lenny tries to keep it light by saying, "Just a touch," "Just a tickle" (30), but Ruth again asks "Why?" Lenny's answer is a long, tedious, seemingly irrelevant non-explanation:

One night, not too long ago, one night down by the docks, I was standing alone under an arch, watching all the men jibbing the boom, out in the harbor, and playing with the yardarm, when a certain lady came up to me and made me a certain proposal. [...] Well, this proposal wasn't entirely out of order and normally I would have subscribed to it. I mean I would have subscribed to it in the normal course of events. The only trouble was she was falling apart with the pox. So I turned it down. Well, this lady was very insistent and started taking liberties with me down under the arch, liberties which by any criterion I couldn't be expected to tolerate, the facts being what they were, so I clumped her one. It was on my mind at the time to do away with her, you know, to kill her, and the fact is that as killings go, it would have been a simple matter, nothing to it. (30-31)

Lenny obviously wants to impress Ruth with his macho insouciance, but Ruth asks only: "How did you know she was diseased?" (31) to which Lenny replies: "I decided she was" (31).

So the power games between Ruth and Lenny are now at a standstill, with Lenny blocked at every turn. Ruth refuses Lenny's sexual gambits—he is going out of his way to dominate her. Lenny then tells another totally irrelevant story about an old lady who asked him to move her mangle, but this story also falls flat, although it is longer and more detailed than the first. The conflict between Ruth and Lenny moves out of language and into the demonstrative realm of physical objects. Right after Lenny's narration, he has a new approach: "Excuse me, shall I take this ashtray out of your way?" (33). Ruth continues to resist Lenny's invitations and says only: "It's not in my way" (33). But Lenny insists, hoping to gain a distinct advantage:

It seems to be in the way of your glass. The glass was about to fall. Or the ashtray. I'm rather worried about the carpet. It's not me, it's my father. He's

obsessed with order and clarity. He doesn't like mess. So, as I don't believe you're smoking at the moment, I'm sure you won't object if I move the ashtray. (33)

There is nothing in the play to suggest that Max is worried about the carpet. Lenny is speaking redundant nonsense, but it has a purpose that has nothing to do with language—rather with the language that is beneath language.

Lenny seems now to have given up on words as a way of cowing Ruth. The action next shifts to a struggle over physical objects. He takes away the ashtray and asserts: "And now perhaps I'll relieve you of your glass" (33). Ruth protests and in the dialogue that follows we see how thoroughly Lenny is disconcerted:

RUTH. I haven't quite finished.

LENNY. You've consumed quite enough, in my opinion.

RUTH. No, I haven't.

LENNY. Quite sufficient, in my own opinion.

RUTH. Not in mine, Leonard. (33)

This is another bombshell, which disturbs Lenny the same way that Ruth's calling her husband Eddie, instead of Teddy, does at the end of the play. Pinter had a special irritant about proper names, as the number of different names for Goldberg the Jewish gangster indicates in *The Birthday Party*. But why does the name "Leonard" disturb Lenny so powerfully? We have to accept, for whatever its implications, his own explanation: "That's the name my mother gave me." This is only one among many significant links between Ruth and the extremely ambiguous figure of Jessie, Lenny's mother.

After a meaningful pause, Lenny now wants to be in control of Ruth's glass: "Just give me the glass" (34), but Ruth refuses. There is another significant pause in which the two antagonists take stock of each other (as if they were boxers in the ring):

LENNY. I'll take it then.

RUTH. If you take the glass... I'll take you. (34)

Ruth is now aggressively sexual and Lenny seems beaten down:

LENNY. How about me taking the glass without you taking me?

RUTH. Why don't I just take you. (34)

The sexual meaning is quite obvious to Lenny, but it undercuts his macho posturing. Ruth now has the upper hand.

This is not the kind of intellectual discourse one finds in Shaw, but it is both intriguing and penetrating. It is the kind of seemingly nonsensical dialogue that actors write and that one can find abundantly, for example, in David Mamet. Once she has begun so successfully to subdue Lenny, Ruth continues her domination game with the glass. The dialogue here is brilliant and shows Pinter at his best, although it has no detachable poetic meaning. Quite a good deal takes place in the non-verbal stage directions:

She picks up the glass and lifts it towards him.

RUTH. Have a sip. Go on. Have a sip from my glass.

He is still.

Sit on my lap. Take a long cool sip.

She pats her lap. Pause.

She stands, moves to him with the glass.

Put your head back and open your mouth.

LENNY. Take that glass away from me.

RUTH. Lie on the floor. Go on. I'll pour it down your throat.

LENNY. What are you doing, making me some kind of proposal?

She laughs shortly, drains the glass.

RUTH. Oh, I was thirsty. (34-35)

Ruth exits at this point, but Lenny calls after her: "What was that supposed to be? Some kind of proposal?" (35)

We know from Lenny's earlier speech about the woman down by the docks that "proposal" is a specifically sexual word. Ruth completely overpowers Lenny in this scene, not only overpowers him but

also infantilizes him. He is disconcerted and at a total loss for words. Ruth seems like Lenny's mother and calls him like she used to do—and he is completely in her power. She prevails over him sexually, although, like Joey, he doesn't go the whole hog with her or any hog at all. The eloquence is in the action and definitely not in the words.

Ruth's relations with Lenny's brother Joey more or less resemble her encounter with Lenny. With Max the father Ruth has no significant interchanges until the very end of the play, where Max is caught up in the same network of sexual sharing as his sons. *The Homecoming* ends with his long soliloquy, supported by significant stage action. He is preoccupied by his age—he is “*a man of seventy*” (5) in the list of characters. He is anxious that Ruth will not find him attractive, and also that she will be undependable in her new sexual role—to be specified in a formal contract—as a prostitute on Greek Street:

I'm too old, I suppose. She thinks I'm an old man.

Pause.

I'm not such an old man.

Pause.

(To RUTH.) You think I'm too old for you?

Pause.

Listen. You think you're just going to get that big slag all the time? You think you're just going to have him ... you're going to just have him all the time? You're going to have to work! (81)

Max's repetitions and his pauses convey his preoccupations. He keeps repeating things that he feels are slipping out of his control. Presumably Lenny, to whom all of his remarks are addressed, is “that big slag” who Max thinks is usurping his dominant male role.

For the first time in the play, Max is a pitiable figure. In the closing moments of the play he berates Lenny (ignoring Joey entirely):

You understand what I mean? Listen I've got a funny idea she'll do the dirty on us, you want to bet? She'll use us, she'll make use of us, I can tell you! I can smell it!

You want to bet?

Pause.

She won't ... be adaptable!

He falls to his knees, whimpers, begins to moan and sob.

He stops sobbing, crawls past SAM'S body round her chair, to the other side of her.

I'm not an old man.

He looks up at her.

Do you hear me?

He raises his face to her.

Kiss me.

She continues to touch JOEY'S head, lightly.

LENNY stands, watching. (82)

There is no doubt that, from "her chair," Ruth dominates the scene, but Max's intense repetitions clearly define his subservient, uncertain, pleading role.

Teddy the husband seems like an anomalous figure in this play; he doesn't fit in with the rest of his family nor with Ruth. Despite his stated optimism about his homecoming, he remains an outsider who is eager to cut short his visit. He readily consents to leave his wife behind to take up her new career as a prostitute. It is interesting that there is no erotic energy between Ruth and Teddy. Their conversation is abstract and impersonal. Teddy, for example, says to her:

You can help me with my lectures when we get back. I'd love that. I'd be so grateful for it, really. We can bathe till October. You know that. Here, there's nowhere to bathe, except the swimming bath down the road. You know what it's like? It's a urinal. A filthy urinal.

Pause.

You liked Venice, didn't you? It was lovely, wasn't it? You had a good week. I mean ... I took you there. I can speak Italian. (55)

Teddy's repetitions and pauses mark an uncertainty in his relation to his wife—he talks in totally bland clichés. What relevance does it have that he “can speak Italian”?

As a philosopher Teddy is cold and academic. He refuses to engage with his brother Lenny, even though Lenny is only pretending to tackle central issues of belief. When Lenny asks: “Do you detect a certain logical incoherence in the central affirmations of Christian theism?” (51), Teddy can fob him off with a rigid, professional answer: “That question doesn't fall within my province” (51). Later Teddy is even more assertive in separating himself from his family. To Lenny he says contemptuously:

You wouldn't understand my works. You wouldn't have the faintest idea of what they were about. You wouldn't appreciate the points of reference. You're way behind. All of you. There's no point in sending you my works. You'd be lost. It's nothing to do with the question of intelligence. It's a way of being able to look at the world. It's a question of how far you can operate on things and not in things. I mean it's a question of your capacity to ally the two, to relate the two, to balance the two. To see, to be able to *see*! I'm the one who can see. That's why I can write my critical works. (61-62)

Teddy's repetitiousness is again a marker of his uncertainty and vagueness. What is the philosophical distinction between being able to “operate on things and not in things”? I suggest that this is a typically pseudo-philosophical statement that Pinter must have enjoyed writing as a way of undercutting Teddy.

Besides, Teddy deliberately steals Lenny's cheese-roll, which Lenny takes as a very serious infraction of family values:

And so when you at length return to us, we do expect a bit of grace, a bit of *je ne sais quoi*, a bit of generosity of mind, a bit of liberality of spirit, to reassure us. We do expect that. But do we get it? Have we got it? Is that what you've given us? (65)

Teddy answers "Yes" (65), and that is the end of the matter. He is soon proposing to distribute cards advertising Ruth's sexual services on his American campus. When he takes his leave, why does Ruth call him "Eddie," just as she calls Lenny "Leonard"? Some sort of insult seems intended.

Many critics have raised the question of *The Homecoming* as a Jewish play. Pinter seems to have based the idea for the play on the story of his childhood friend, Moishe Wernick, who brought his Christian wife home from Canada to meet his father in England in 1964—with disastrous results. Also, in an early version of the play Max's friend, MacGregor, is called Berkowitz (and Berki for short; cf. Billington 164-66). So Pinter in revising it tried to make it a less Jewish play than in its original conception.

A number of actors in the original Royal Shakespeare Company production in 1965 still thought that the play had a very Jewish feeling, especially Paul Rogers who played Max. He comments that the play has a very North London, Hackney orientation (cf. Lahr 160). Max's speech is Jewish-English, and thus

foreign, in the way that English is foreign to a Welsh tongue. [...] In the sound of it. It's stylized and there's a suspicion of a lisp, which is very much to the point for a man of his age. [...] The Jewishness came out of the rhythm of the speeches and the way that the speeches were put together. The repetitions, the emphases upon certain aspects. The ironies, that curious, very unEnglish working of the mind. (Lahr 160)

Two Israeli authors, William Baker and Stephen Ely Tabachnick, go so far as to claim that *The Homecoming* "represents Pinter's attempt to shed the nightmare of Hackney, to exorcise it from his system by definitively commenting on its most important and powerful institution, the family" (123-24).

It's interesting that Pinter asserted that the play was "about love and lack of love. The people are harsh and cruel, to be sure. Still, they aren't acting arbitrarily but for very deep-seated reasons." They act out of "the texture of their lives." Pinter was obviously stung by opinions of reviewers about Ruth: "The woman is not a nymphomaniac as

some critics claimed. In fact she's not very sexy ... Certain facts like marriage and the family have clearly ceased to have any meaning" (Page 30). Finally, Pinter, in an interview with Mel Gussow, says definitively that "Ruth in *The Homecoming*—no one can tell her what to do. She is the nearest to a free woman that I've ever written—a free and independent mind" (Gussow 71). Pinter makes these assertions in order to counter the comments of critics and reviewers, who, to his way of thinking, badly misunderstood the play. It is significant that these opinions are from an author who never claimed to know what his plays were about or where his characters were heading, and who steadfastly refused to answer any questions about the meaning of his plays.

What does Pinter mean when he says that the play is "about love and lack of love"? The discourse about love in *The Homecoming* is certainly fractured. Yet the characters—even Lenny and Ruth (and Max and Joey, too, but not Teddy)—are pushing for something meaningful in their lives. Love and the lack of love go together because the play offers very inadequate models of what we would call love. But despite the violence, the grossly sexual speech, and the deliberate deception (and self-deception), most of the characters in the play are looking for a significant fulfillment in their lives.

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NOTES

¹This is a revised version of a paper presented at the 11th International *Connotations* Symposium "Poetic Economy: Ellipsis and Redundancy in Literature" on August 3, 2011.

²Quotations from Pinter's *Various Voices* are abbreviated in the text as *VV*.

³See my discussion in "Shakespeare's Eloquence."

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Literary Allusion and Poetic Economy: Billy Collins's "Albany" and William Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud"*

JUDITH P. SAUNDERS

A versatile and variform literary device, allusion serves a wide range of purposes in imaginative writing. As part of his 2007 historical analysis of allusion studies, Gregory Machacek presents a useful conceptual model, distinguishing between two basic types of allusion: "learned or indirect reference," on the one hand, and "phraseological appropriation," on the other, i.e., "playful and creative adaptation of a precursor's language" (526, 528). While both types can contribute to thematic and linguistic economy in a literary work, the second tends to foster richer and more intricate compression. Learned references require only that author and reader share a cultural tradition, a body of knowledge. "In the case of phraseological adaptation, however, the nature of this shared tradition is a little more complex," as Machacek explains. "Author and reader must have been exposed to the same text, which therefore must be highly valued by the author's and the reader's cultures—valued, moreover, in a way that encourages minute attention to verbal detail and remembering of such detail" (526). Invited to remember the original context of borrowed, or reprised language, readers bring to the new literary work a host of associations—historical, thematic, and tonal, for example—which instantly expand its potential range of significance.¹ Yet these associations occupy no space on the written page.

In exploring allusion in works by poets from John Dryden to David Ferry, Christopher Ricks consistently emphasizes the economical effects of this device: when handled ably, allusion achieves more than

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debsaunders02123.htm>>.

the sum of its parts. "The calling into play of the words or phrases of a previous writer" serves as more than mere flavoring or homage (156). The second writer is actively engaged with the source material, creatively manipulating its language and thereby establishing a relationship to it. Readers are encouraged to explore the tension between two different sets of auctorial design, the second of which in some manner includes or acknowledges the first, thereby discovering "a newly true combination of similitude and dissimilitude" (85). "What was so well said has now become part of my way of saying," the second writer seems to insist, and instead of merely repeating a predecessor's words, the maker of an allusion is "rotating them so that they catch a new light" (33). Allusion functions paradoxically in that it wrests new meanings from used materials: it is "a way of looking before and after, a retrospect that opens up a new prospect" (86).

A recent poem by Billy Collins (U.S. Poet Laureate 2001-2003) illustrates the efficiency with which allusion can trigger recollection of an existing text. Throughout "Albany," published in *Nine Horses* (2003), Collins alludes unobtrusively to "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (1807), a poem written by William Wordsworth almost two hundred years earlier. Engaging playfully with a highly recognizable literary artifact, the allusion effectively extends purpose and statement in Collins's poem, together with its historical reach. Collins is well known for his humorous send-ups of famous poets and poems, "Taking off Emily Dickinson's Clothes" (1998), for instance, or "Lines Composed Over Three Thousand Miles from Tintern Abbey" (1998). Less elaborately, he offers occasional nods to well-known works by Yeats, Frost, Emerson, Coleridge and others. An academic career has preserved the immediacy of literary classics for him, he explains: "I keep teaching *The Norton Anthology*, and many of my poems show an awareness of that" (qtd. in Plimpton). By means of repeated rereadings of canonical texts ("taking that ride again and again"), a potpourri of well-wrought phrases, images, and rhythms has insinuated itself into his mental landscape. Collins has observed, too, that his allusions to earlier texts tend to be straightforward, "open [...]"

instead of veiled" (qtd. in Plimpton). "Albany" may qualify as something of an exception in this respect, however: its reprise of Wordsworth's poem, though clearly deliberate, is both subtle and artful. The first hint of the allusion emerges in the opening stanzas:

As I sat on the sunny side of train #241
looking out the window at the Hudson River,
topped with a riot of ice,

it appeared to the untrained eye
that the train was whizzing north along the rails
that link New York City and Niagara Falls.

But as the winter light glared
off the white river and the snowy fields,
I knew that I was as motionless as a man on a couch

and that the things I was gazing at—
with affection, I should add—
were really the ones that were doing the moving ("Albany" 1-12)

Likening himself to "a man on a couch," Collins launches what readers may not identify as allusion until this first reprise has been augmented with further examples of phraseological adaptation from "I wandered."

The allusion is supported by more general commonalities in subject matter, as a quick overview of the two poems reveals. Both poems address the topic of visual perception, exploring its potential significance and value. More grandly phrased, both poets are concerned with the relationship, philosophical and psychological, between the Me and the Not-Me.² In each case, a personal speaking voice, apparently autobiographically grounded, locates phenomenological musings in a subjective, readily accessible framework. Wordsworth proclaims the benefits, direct and indirect, of his perceptual experience. He derives a twofold gain from the sight of a field of daffodils, which delights him once in the initial perceptual act and then again, potentially many times over, through the operations of visual memory. He concludes that optical confrontation with things outside himself (par-

ticularly features of the natural world) contributes importantly to his emotional well-being. Relying on “the act of seeing” as “a gateway into the world of nature,” he is “storing up imagery and emotions for future benefit” (Salvesen 72). Collins, in contrast, describes an experience of perceptual frustration: objects outside himself resist his efforts to examine them adequately. His desire to give thoroughgoing visual attention to things of this world is repeatedly thwarted. In theme and in tone, Collins’s poem operates in clear counterpoint to Wordsworth’s: fulfillment is countered by its absence, joyful gratitude by baffled disappointment.

Speakers in both poems are journeying. Wordsworth’s is engaged in an amorphous, apparently aimless *wandering*, “lonely as a cloud,” while Collins’s defines himself as a train traveler (cf. line 1). Employing a modern mode of transportation, one not available at the time “I wandered” was written, he locates himself on a particular train, #241, moving north from New York City to Niagara Falls and now “somewhere below Albany” (39). Despite the specificity of such details, he resembles Wordsworth’s speaker in that his destination, like his purpose in traveling, remains undefined. Collins’s attention is focused instead on the landscape visible from the train’s window; what is important for purposes of the poem is not where he is going but what he can see. His attempts to study individual objects (evergreens, puddles, and water towers, for example) are rendered ineffectual by the speed with which the train is carrying him. Before he can take in any one image properly, the train has borne him past it. He highlights his frustration by presenting as literal fact an optical illusion commonly reported by train travelers: the disorienting sensation that the vehicle is standing still while things glimpsed through the window go speeding by. He is sitting, Collins asserts, on an “absolutely stationary train” (38). It is not #241 that is “whizzing north” but the objects outside that are “really [...] doing the moving” (5, 12).

His insistence that what cannot actually be happening *is* happening, that the optical illusion corresponds to reality, is underlined by his initial borrowing from Wordsworth’s poem: “I knew that I was as

motionless as a man on a couch" (9). There is amusing reversal in this reprise, since Wordsworth's speaker lies on his couch only when his journeying, together with his initial joyous perception of the daffodils, is done: "oft, when on my couch I lie" (19). Relaxing indoors, no longer positioned to see flowers, hills, lake, and trees directly, he rejoices in the secondary but infinitely renewable "pleasure" of perceptual recall, enjoying the flowers once again via the "inward eye" (23, 21). Collins places his speaker in a passive, "motionless" position at the outset; despite his location on a fast-moving train, the journeying person is paradoxically immobile, helpless to bring his perceptual efforts to a satisfying conclusion. If the "man on a couch" phrasing does not immediately trigger recollection of Wordsworth's poem, the reprise that quickly follows is likely to do so. In Stanza 5, Collins names "the things [he] was gazing at— / with affection" (10-11), choosing the same verb Wordsworth employs so emphatically when he is enjoying the spectacle of the daffodils: "I gazed—and gazed" (17). As Wordsworth *gazes*, he is drinking in his fill of a glorious sight: "sparkling waves" and "fluttering [...] flowers" (14, 6). Collins's gaze, in contrast, brings him all-too-brief glimpses of things that seem to be eluding his inspection intentionally, "dashing forever from [his] view" (19). Reprising a crucial verb, he emphasizes his inability to replicate the earlier poet's gratifying experience *even when engaged in the very same action*, i.e., observing the phenomenal world.

Just a few lines later Collins extends the allusion by mentioning "flashing puddles" as an element of the landscape he is trying unsuccessfully to fix in his vision (18). He calls to mind the most potent statement in Wordsworth's poem: in recollection, the daffodils "flash upon that inward eye / Which is the bliss of solitude" (21-22). Here, again, lexical adaptation sets up a comparison which underlines the second poet's more negative experience. Wordsworth's daffodils "flash" in the positive sense of sudden illumination: they present themselves to that man on the couch with vivid immediacy, even in recollection. The puddles Collins sees *flashing by* are merely moving too rapidly for proper inspection; his participial use of "flash" here

emphasizes the elusiveness of the observable world. He then brings into his poem two items that play a crucial role in his predecessor's experience: "eye" and "flower." Announcing that he is "a devotee of things," an "admirer" of particulars, he avers that it is "unfair" for his attentiveness to be repaid so meagerly (29, 28, 22). He asks if he has perhaps not "stopped enough times along the way / to stare diligently / into the eye of a roadside flower" (34-36) but his question appears to be teetering on the edge of the rhetorical. Acknowledging that close observers are repaid with vivid and enduring images, he asks himself whether he may be guilty of insufficient perceptual attentiveness, even as he assures himself and his readers that this surely is not the case. Like Wordsworth, he has looked long and "diligently" at flowers, but he has not obtained the same benefits (35). To appreciate the high degree of poetic economy at work here, it is crucial to remember that the contrast between the two poets' experiences rests entirely upon readers' ability to recall portions of "I wandered" not recapitulated in "Albany." As Machacek points out, allusion operates by means of "recontextualized" verbal snippets: an "incorporated fragment [...] discernibly excised from its original situation" invites readers to recollect that which has been *omitted* (527). The alluding poet exploits this omitted material, which is located in the databank of a reader's memory rather than in the new text.

Readers encounter a final reprise from "I wandered" in Stanza 14, as the objects careening past the speaker's gaze are said to exit from his view with a "kangaroo-like sprightliness" (42). After mentions of the "man on a couch," of earnest "gazing," of things that "flash," of "eye" and "flower," readers certainly will not regard selection of the term "sprightliness" as accidental. The daffodils that entranced Wordsworth with their "sprightly dance" have been replaced by objects bounding buoyantly away from a yearning observer (12). The coupling of "sprightly" with "dance," to describe the movement of flower blossoms in a breeze, seems unexceptional and quaint beside the bold wit of "kangaroo-like sprightliness" to personify objects eluding human observation. Collins helps himself to Wordsworth's adjective,

using it to create an exotic and whimsical image. The comic effect of his new phrasing is enhanced by the implied comparison with both wording and context in "I wandered": readers who recognize the reprised language enjoy an intertextual in-joke.

In making copious use of personification throughout his poem, Collins imitates his predecessor, but he infuses the device with conspicuous hyperbole. Wordsworth animates the scene he observes, certainly: flowers congregate in "crowds"; they "toss their heads" and, together with the waves, they "dance." Wordsworth also attributes human feeling, chiefly "glee," to both flowers and lake water; the verb "dance" clearly implies joyful as well as aesthetically pleasing movement. The personification dominating the poem serves to suggest a cosmic unity: vegetative growth (flowers, trees), elemental and astronomical phenomena (water, stars), and human being imitate and repeat one another's actions, coming together in joyful "dance."³ The personification in "Albany" serves no such harmonious end; contrastingly, it emphasizes heterogeneity and incongruity. A hodgepodge assortment of objects, some natural, some manmade, is "dashing" past the would-be observer. The personified phenomena (ice, swing set, trees, tractor) bear no apparent relationship to one another. They appear briefly, one after another rather than all at once, in random sequence. The train track serves as ironic equivalent of the "never-ending line" of daffodils "stretched [...] / Along the margin of a bay," creating a visual pattern that is arbitrary rather than significant, frustrating rather than cheering (9-10). The objects fleetingly visible to the rail rider are said to "flee" and "forsake" him, "running as fast as they could / on their invisible legs" (27, 13-14). The poet attributes deliberately evasive "purpose" to non-human things (both natural and manmade): "how unkind of them [...] to forsake an admirer such as myself." His choice of the verb "forsake," with its quasi-religious overtones, heightens the disappointment that is central to his reported experience—and so different from the straightforward expression of gratitude and praise characterizing Wordsworth's. Behind his hyperbole lurks an unstated question, together with a self-admonitory

response, namely, “why *should* the world submit to his desires or accommodate his investigatory urges?” The sportive energy of the personification throughout “Albany” attests to his reluctance to take his own frustrations all too seriously.

With his slightly desperate but nonetheless witty depiction of “things” racing by so quickly that they escape apprehension by the human senses, Collins vividly illustrates the brevity of life, a topic that does not form any part of Wordsworth’s contemplations in “I wandered.” There is, of course, nothing novel about the theme of human mortality *per se*, but its ordinariness is effectively countered by the playful inventiveness of Collins’s imagery. Speeding through the landscape, a train evokes an exaggerated appreciation of the rapidity with which the individual human is progressing toward death. No matter how intently we attempt to explore the physical universe with our human senses, Collins avers, life goes by too swiftly for us to assimilate its details to our satisfaction.⁴ The very time we spend contemplating the “unfair[ness]” of this situation, moreover, further undermines our attentiveness, distracting us from our efforts to know the world. The last line of the poem underlines this realization: even as the thwarted observer articulates his problem, another small piece of reality, “a trestle bridge,” is irrevocably vanishing, or “flying by” (48). The metamorphosis of “the twigs / of the moment into the open sky of the past” is inevitable and unstoppable (20-21). The human gaze, so often described as *arresting*, proves unable to interrupt the ceaseless flux of existence by seizing images for present, or future, contemplation.

In making this point, Collins takes the topic of visual perception, as well as the relationship between observer and observed, in a direction unanticipated by his predecessor. Time plays a role in “I wandered,” to be sure, but Wordsworth associates its passage with purely benign effects. Having perused the daffodils with leisurely satisfaction (devoting twelve lines to fulsome description), the poet-speaker later is able to summon up both the image and the “glee” it communicates (14). The elapsed time between initial perception and remembered

image is “relatively unimportant,” as Geoffrey H. Hartman notes, for it does not diminish the psychological boost gained by the observer: “renewal” (of both “image” and “inner person”) occurs “despite time” (269-70). The “golden” color of the flowers is transmuted into “wealth” that is neither tangible nor time-bound, a stored memory to be recalled repeatedly (“oft”) as an antidote to “vacant or [...] pensive mood” (4, 18, 20). Wordsworth brings his readers glad tidings: we can be re-energized, cured of unproductive (“vacant”) introspection, through visual engagement with the natural world in all its glorious vitality, i.e., by experiencing “the power that beautiful or gigantic or terrifying sights have to rivet our attention, taking us out of ourselves” (McConnell 100). And what we see has the ability to raise our spirits over and over again. This after-the-fact effect of perceptual engagement, which Hartman appropriately names the “after-image,” is the principal focus of the poet’s praise (269-70). Wordsworth salutes the power of visual memory (perception assisted by something like imagination) to re-create reality for us, and so to provide important sources of emotional sustenance (Joplin 68). The creative force of memory, as it replays scenes from the past, might be said to lengthen the subjective experience of living via repetition: thus considered, Wordsworth’s poem takes a stand precisely opposite to Collins’s. “Seizing and immobilizing a fragment of time” (Benston 13), he points to a human capacity that effectively challenges the negative effects of temporal process.⁵

In Wordsworth’s poem, furthermore, there is a before, a during, and an after: first the “lonely” wandering, then a mood-altering perceptual experience, and finally the pleasurable recollection of an indelible image (see Milstead 89). Collins’s poem remains stuck in the “before” stage of this process. Because his perceptual intent is thwarted, he never gets to enjoy the two-stage benefits his predecessor reports. By means of the implied comparison to “I wandered,” he highlights his failure to achieve perceptual satisfactions that Wordsworth presents as natural, easy, and universal. The “wealth” the nineteenth-century observer accrues from his sensory engagement with the world is

replaced by "a vast store devoted to the purveyance of speed" (45). In this "store" nothing is accumulated, and the reason for its emptiness is the inaccessibility, or resistance, of the phenomenal world to human examination. The allusion thus serves to underline Collins's rejection of well-known nineteenth-century claims, emphasizing instead "the speed and distractions of our time" that interfere with "profound recognition of place" (Brackett 323). In lieu of Romantic ideas of connectedness, Collins offers his own postmodern experience: a fast-paced trip through a world of incongruous and apparently unrelated appearances. The Me derives no comfort, no "bliss," from its breathtakingly brief visual encounters with the Not-Me, though not for lack of trying.

Collins portrays himself as eager to establish closeness with the things he glimpses; in yet another reversal, he packs his poem with far more particulars than Wordsworth supplies. Readers know his geographic location, the number of the train on which he rides, the name of the river that flows beside the tracks. The un-Romantic nature of many of the individual things entering briefly into his field of vision is emphasized by the detail with which they are named. While Wordsworth speaks very generally of "stars" or "waves," Collins offers more exact delineation: "blue oil drums," "duck blinds," "a trestle bridge," "train #241" (17, 49, 1). There is an amusement factor, no doubt, in such specificity: readers are bound to wonder how the human spirit might benefit from establishing connections with things so banal. Collins appears to be questioning the ease with which Wordsworth stumbles upon a beautiful and inspiring sight; mundane objects such as abandoned tractors or duck blinds prove far more common, he hints, than dancing daffodils.

"I wandered" has generated plentiful controversy and comment from the time of its first publication, from Coleridge through post-colonial voices, eliciting reactions ranging from admiration to derision, but it is evident that Collins does not seek to join in this critical fray.⁶ He is not commenting on the merits of the poem, but using it, playfully and non-judgmentally (with the same "affection" he lavishes

on the “things” surging past his train window) as a cultural and personal reference point. Probing the never finally explainable relationship between self and environment in the larger context afforded by literary allusion, he indicates the ongoing nature of the inquiry to which his poem contributes. The economy with which he executes his allusion is unmistakable: he works with a small number of significant, immediately recognizable spurs from “I wandered,” employing them with maximum impact in a new context. Belying complaints that he indulges himself and his readers in “the easiest possible references” (Merrin 206), Collins handles this allusion with understated elegance. Scattering his carefully crafted reprises fairly evenly throughout “Albany,” rather than clumping them, he in effect layers his poem atop Wordsworth’s, inviting readers to compare the experiences of two poet-observers moving through the sensory world.⁷ In layout and length, Collins’s poem makes a more elongated appearance than Wordsworth’s. With its forty-eight lines, “Albany” is exactly twice as long as “I wandered,” and its tercets create a choppy, less compact shape on the page than do Wordsworth’s sestet. The shortness of the stanzas helps to convey the sense of a world rushing by in bits-and-pieces. Other formal choices, including sporadic, unpatterned rhyme and the free-verse rhythm, reinforce the impression of a physical environment largely insusceptible to the ordering forces of perception and memory.

The allusion to “I wandered” emphasizes the thwarted purpose of Collins’s poet-speaker, who seeks but does not find the “wealth” enriching Wordsworth’s “solitude,” but at the same time, paradoxically, it lightens the load of the poet-speaker’s existential frustrations. Implicitly measuring his own dissatisfaction against Wordsworth’s reported “bliss,” he emphasizes his sense of deprivation. Yet the very literary device that establishes this dismaying contrast also works to undermine its negative effects: one of the chief functions of literary allusion, after all, is to create—and exhibit—bonds among writers. In excising well-known fragments from precursors’ texts and incorporating them into their own, writers defy time and space. They extend

greetings across the generations, as it were, resurrecting their predecessors' writing by introducing it into new contexts. Even though Collins is unable to establish a satisfying or lasting connection between himself and the *things* around him, he can at least forge connections to the art of William Wordsworth (a poet who earns frequent mention in his prose as well as in his verse) and, by extension, to the larger world of his literary heritage.⁸ By his own admission, Collins revels in the companionship afforded him by a host of predecessors: "the poet is never alone when he writes because he is always accompanied by all the lines of other poets that are stuck in his head" (Collins, "Poetry, Pleasure" 32). Readers are invited to renew their companionable connection, via this new composition, to a poet and a poem already present in the scrap-bag of the "involuntary memory" (Collins, "Poetry, Pleasure" 30). Since allusion inevitably works to create cultural-historical connectedness of this kind, if Collins had wanted to present his experiences in an unremittingly tragic light, he would not have put Wordsworth's phraseology into play in his poem.

Collins has written an entertaining poem on a disquieting subject. With its focus on the short span and fast pace of life, the resistance of the world to human examination, and the thwarting of expectations inherited from earlier generations of poet-observers, "Albany" puts forward an apparently troubling set of ideas. Yet the poem does not exert a primarily dispiriting effect upon readers, nor is it intended to do so. Consistently the poet-speaker counters the potential bleakness of his musings with deflating wit. Because "the wilfully comic can be so much more serious than the willedly funereal" (Ricks 77), Collins can poke fun at his foiled purposes without dismissing their legitimacy and importance. The contrast he implies, via allusion, between his experience and Wordsworth's enables him to increase the historical and philosophical resonance of his poem's statement, while his creative adaptation of his predecessor's language opens the way to otherwise unobtainable humorous effects. Mocking his dissatisfactions in the very act of formulating them, Collins communicates an earnest wryness—or rueful amusement—that could only be the product of a

late twentieth-century sensibility. His exuberant employment of the device of allusion adds to the distinctly postmodern impression his poem is bound to make, with its heterogeneous mixture of phenomenological complaint, existential anxiety, self-ironizing wit, and linguistic exhilaration. With its many-layered and thought-provoking range of suggestiveness, "Albany" demonstrates a central principle of allusion, namely, that "one way of being brief is by compacting one's own words with another's" (Ricks 300).

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NOTES

¹Following I. A. Richard's lead in coining the terms "tenor" and "vehicle" to identify the two parts of a metaphor, Machacek (528-30) addresses the "terminological deficiency that plagues the study of allusion" by offering the terms "spur" (original language, or source) and "reprise" (borrowed or adapted language).

²David Ferry, for example, identifies "the relations of the poet's mind to the universe" as the foundational subject matter of Wordsworth's poetry (41).

³Many commentators have addressed the intimate relationship between Wordsworth's "way of seeing" and his "feeling of unity with nature" (Salveson 70), his conception of "the whole of nature as involved in the tonality of the particular instance" (Whitehead 23). David Ferry, for instance, points out that "I wandered" is not an ode "to mere daffodils" but rather a "celebration of the metaphysical, the eternal, and one." The flowers, "so humble and modest in the great scheme of things," are to be read "as symbols of man's relation to the eternal" (40, 41). The human observer is implicitly caught up in the universal "dance" of flowers, waves, and stars (Schwab 145). Indeed, as Matthew C. Brennan spells out, "the poet perceives the unity not only of the dancing flowers themselves but of the whole panorama, which includes both 'the waves' dancing 'beside them' and himself as he 'gazed—and gazed.'" In this moment of sublime vision, his imagination sympathetically unites him and the scene" (142). Harold Bloom discusses in similar vein Wordsworth's preoccupation with "a primal unity manifested simultaneously in all subjects and all objects" (99).

⁴Mortality is a persistent theme throughout *Nine Horses*. A number of the poems included in the collection address aging and death, e.g., "Obituaries," "Birthday," "Writing in the Afterlife," "The Parade." "Velocity," in particular, explores themes and images familiar from "Albany." In that poem Collins addresses the brevity of mortal existence, again using a train-ride to illustrate passage through life; "the locomotive [...] was pulling me / toward Omaha and whatever lay

beyond" (23-24). As in "Albany," the rapidity with which the journey is proceeding amazes and unsettles him: we "rush along the road of the world, / as we rush down the long tunnel of time" (32-33). Even those who are not literally moving, "the man reading by the fire" or "the child asleep on a summer night," appear in his imagination to be surrounded by cartoon-like "speed lines" (35, 39, 36). The related preoccupation with observing "the scenery of the world," so central to "Albany," emerges in "The Parade" and even more strongly in "Roadside Flowers." Taking as his title a phrase from "Albany" ("Had I not stopped enough times [...] to stare diligently / into the eye of a roadside flower?" [34-36]), the poet jokes about the clichéd injunction to take to *stop and smell the flowers*, that is, to take time out of practically productive, goal-oriented activities to enjoy the small pleasures life affords us by the way. "These are the kind you are supposed / to stop to look at," he begins, but adds that he has given short shrift to this obligation (1-2). He has paused "just long enough / so as not to carry my non-stopping / around with me all day" (3-5). He assures the flowers that he will compensate for his neglect by writing about them later; he will "make it all up" to them by recording details of their existence (14). This poem takes as its starting point a feeling of guilt only faintly discernible in "Albany." Reproaching himself for neglecting particulars in his immediate environment, he implies that greater attentiveness on his part might create a more positive relationship between Self and Other.

⁵Wordsworth scholars have addressed his treatment of memory and time in a variety of contexts, typically mining richly pertinent materials in *The Prelude* and "Tintern Abbey." Christopher Salvesen's *The Landscape of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry* and Frank D. McConnell's *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude"* offer especially thorough examination of these intertwined topics.

⁶Lionel Trilling points out, for instance, that Wordsworth's poetry is "often thought to be rather absurd and even a little despicable" (45). J. Edward Chamberlain summarizes the history of criticisms leveled at "I wandered," beginning with Coleridge's complaint that the speaker's emotional response is excessive, incommensurate to the occasion. Chamberlain goes on to discuss the negative reaction of many readers to Wordsworth's "(unacknowledged) appropriation of his sister Dorothy's journal description of the daffodils, and his (acknowledged, though the source is unidentified) appropriation of two lines ('they flash ... / ... of solitude') suggested by his wife Mary" (157). Chamberlain further explains how the poem "has somehow come to represent English literary imperialism, not to mention white male privilege" (154). He points out that despite its flaws, or supposed flaws, the poem remains much anthologized and widely known: "most people who know any poetry at all can recite some of its lines" (153).

⁷Elizabeth Bishop alludes to "I wandered" in "Crusoe in England" (1971), offering an illuminating contrast in method and effect. She signals her allusion conspicuously by framing the borrowed language in quotation marks. The speaker in her poem expresses his desire to comfort himself by "reciting" remembered texts but finds that his memory is "full of blanks" (95, 93). Quoting from the final

stanza of Wordsworth's poem, he forgets a critically important word: "'They flash upon that inward eye, / which is the bliss ...' The bliss of what?" (96-97). Stating that "One of the first things that [he] did / when [he] got back was look it up," he prompts readers to do likewise, should they be unable to supply the ironically missing "solitude" (98-99). Neither the title of "I wandered" nor its author is named, but there is nothing covert about Bishop's method: she incorporates a chunk of Wordsworth's text into her own with word-for-word fidelity. She does not modify the language she appropriates, and the one-word omission is flagged as such. The effect of her allusion is chiefly local, i.e., it does not extend by means of additional reprising from "I wandered" into other portions of her poem. Collins's allusion to the very same text in "Albany" is lexically leaner than Bishop's (he borrows fewer words) and far more unobtrusive. Because he reprises "I wandered" at several points in his poem, however, and because he is pondering subject matter similar in large outline to Wordsworth's, the allusion to "I wandered" assumes more importance in his poem than in Bishop's. This remains true even though some readers may fail to perceive the allusion in "Albany" and none will overlook that in "Crusoe in England." Collins surely is familiar with Bishop's much admired and frequently anthologized poem, but it seems unlikely, given the differences in topic and theme, that he had it in mind when composing "Albany." Chance appears to have led these two twentieth-century poets to mine the same well-known poem for very different purposes and, consequently, to employ very different methods in crafting their allusions.

⁸In addition to his elaborate, spoofing engagement with one of Wordsworth's best known poems in "Lines Composed Over Three Thousand Miles from Tintern Abbey," published in 1998 in *Picnic, Lightning*, Collins refers to the earlier poet in interviews (see Plimpton) and in prose commentary. He discusses Wordsworth in historical context in "My Grandfather's Tackle Box," for instance, considering Romantic influences on the confessional impulse in contemporary poetry (279-80, 285).

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The Homosexual Temptation of the Son in Milton's *Paradise Regained*: A Reply to John T. Shawcross and Claude J. Summers^{1*}

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In "Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* and the Second Temptation," John T. Shawcross engages Claude J. Summers's discussion of the "homosexual implications" of the "[t]all stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hew / Then Ganymed or Hylas" who attend the banquet with which Satan tempts Milton's Son in Book 2 of *Paradise Regained*. Shawcross states that "this sexual interruption subtly recalls the widespread rumor of Jesus's homosexuality, which persisted into the seventeenth century, as Milton must have been aware" (35; Shawcross cites *Paradise Regained* 2.352-53). Shawcross's mention of this "widespread rumor" is made in a matter-of-fact manner, but his only evidence for this affirmation appears in an endnote that follows his statement: "Summers cites references to this allegation; see 60-61 [of Summers] and notes 10 and 11" (39). However, an investigation of Summers's article reveals two important problems: firstly, Summers never claims that any such rumor was "widespread"; and secondly, Summers's own evidence for this rumor ranges from dubious to misleading.

First, Summers briefly discusses in his article "a *little-known and even less frequently acknowledged* heresy that posits a homosexual relationship between Jesus and John the Beloved Disciple, who describes himself throughout his gospel as the best loved of the disciples" (60; *italics mine*). Summers, therefore, never represents any perception of

*References: John T. Shawcross, "Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* and the Second Temptation," *ANQ* 21 (2008): 34-41, and Claude J. Summers, "The (Homo)sexual Temptation in Milton's *Paradise Regain'd*," *Reclaiming the Sacred: The Bible in Gay and Lesbian Culture*, ed. Raymond-Jean Frontain (New York: Haworth, 1997) 45-69.

For other contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/deburban02123.htm>>.

Jesus's alleged homosexuality as being "widespread." Second, the various pieces of evidence that Summers gives to demonstrate the existence of this "heresy" are each problematic in their own ways. Summers begins by suggesting that the "heresy may have influenced, or, perhaps more likely, been influenced by the association of St. John with an idealized Ganymede, as in the fourteenth-century *Ovidius moralizatus* by the monk Petrus Berchorius" (60). Summers cites James A. Saslow to support this assertion. But Saslow's book, although it discusses Berchorius's treatise—which portrays Ganymede as "the pure childlike soul seeking after God" (Saslow 6)—never once mentions any sort of rumor or heresy regarding a homosexual relationship between St. John and Jesus.

In his next paragraph, Summers cites John Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* and its discussion of St. Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-67), who, Boswell writes, "gave love between those of the same gender its most profound and lasting expression" (221) and used the "heavenly marriage" (qtd. in and trans. by Boswell 226) between Jesus and St. John as the ultimate example of the spiritual unity possible between two men. But, as the passage from Aelred, which Boswell translates and Summers quotes, makes clear, Aelred celebrated Jesus and John's "virgin love" (Boswell 226)—a love removed from carnal expression and certainly quite different from the sexual temptation implicit in the "[t]all stripling youths" who appear before Milton's Jesus in *Paradise Regained*.²

Summers's next piece of evidence for the alleged heresy of Jesus's homosexuality is the portion of the infamous "Baines note," in which Christopher Marlowe allegedly asserts "[t]hat St. John the Evangelist was bedfellow to Christ and leaned always in his bosome, that he vsed him as the sinners of Sodoma" (qtd. in Kocher 35). But one would be hard pressed to argue that the Baines note could support any belief that could even cautiously be described as an established "heresy," however rarely mentioned. We should remember that the Baines note was not actually written by Marlowe but allegedly transcribed from Marlowe's conversation by his accuser, Richard Baines,

and given to government authorities after Marlowe's arrest in 1593. Indeed, David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen call Baines's document "unreliable testimony" (viii) that "need[s] to be discounted for [its] exaggeration and for [...] having been produced under legal circumstances we would regard as a witch-hunt" (ix). Moreover, the Baines note contains so many outlandish allegations surrounding Jesus and Christianity that it can hardly be considered serious evidence for any sort of heresy; it is not a document of religious significance but rather a litany of shamelessly bawdy blasphemy.³

Summers also cites, as a piece of seventeenth-century evidence for the heresy, James I's defense, which Summers claims was known to Milton, of "his homoerotic attachment to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, by reference to the relationship of Jesus to John. As James told his council, 'Christ had his John, and I have my George'" (61).⁴ But the context of James's words does not involve sexual matters between himself and Buckingham. Rather, James made this statement in the context of defending his favoritism toward Buckingham in court matters.⁵ Moreover, whatever the specific nature of James and Buckingham's relationship,⁶ it is difficult to imagine that the politically astute James—who wrote in *Basilikon Doron*, his instruction manual on kingship to Prince Henry, that sodomy is one of "the horrible crimes that yee are bound in conscience never to forgive" (qtd. in Young 49)—would simultaneously proclaim to his council both his own sexual relationship with Buckingham and Jesus's sexual relationship with John. Indeed, Maurice Lee goes so far as to argue: "It is really impossible to suppose that if James had engaged in physical sexual relations with his George, he would have drawn this parallel" (248).

While these four pieces of evidence are unconvincing but acceptable, Summers's final argument is genuinely problematic. In an endnote, Summers makes the following striking assertion:

In *Michael and the Dragon, or Christ Tempted and Satan Foyled* (1635), Daniel Dyke implied a homosexual temptation of Jesus when he advised his readers to develop "this same Stoicall eye of our Saviour, that we may see eye-

pleasing and tempting objects, and not be set a-gogge, [...] as he with the beauty of a young boy, to whom it was answered, that the Praetor must have continent eyes, as well as hands." (66)⁷

The above passage presents Dyke's quotation in a way that gives readers the impression that both the "he" after the ellipses and "the Praetor" are references to Jesus. But examining Dyke's quotation in its context and with ellipses removed reveals something entirely different:

[B]ut get that same *oculum irretorum*, and this same Stoicall eye of our Saviour, that we may see eye-pleasing and tempting objects, and not bee set a-gogge, as the Disciples, Luke 21. [sic] with the beauty of the Temple; and as he with the beauty of a young boy, to whom it was answered, that the Praetor must have continent eyes, as wel as hands. (318; italics original)

In the left column of Dyke's page, next to the section following the semi-colon, is the following reference regarding the aforementioned Praetor: "Cicer. *offic.* I" (318). Clearly Dyke is using two separate negative examples here, separated by a semi-colon. The first example concerns Jesus's disciples in Luke 21; the second occurs in Book I of Cicero's *De Officiis* (ca. 44 BC), in which the Praetor in question is not Jesus but Socrates.

What Summers has done is to selectively quote from Dyke's reference to Cicero, in order to give the impression that it was Jesus, not Socrates, who was being admonished for his implicitly sexual attraction to a "beautiful boy."⁸

In conclusion, it seems highly unlikely that there was any "widespread rumor" or circulating "heresy" during or before the seventeenth century regarding Jesus's homosexuality. Certainly, neither Summers nor Shawcross, who quotes from Summers, demonstrates the presence of such a rumor or heresy either in early modern or in high medieval times. Given the paucity of the evidence, it seems best to read the "[t]all stripling youths" in *Paradise Regained* as, in the words of Barbara Lewalski, part of "the panorama of refined sexual pleasure offered to Christ" (224), something included amidst

the sweep of fleshly temptation that Milton's Son experiences to demonstrate that he "was *fully* tempted in every way that a human being can be tempted" (Rollinson 32).

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NOTES

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²Boswell's book has been criticized as inaccurate by scholars of various perspectives. These include gay scholars who accuse Boswell of "seeking to minimize the unbroken ascetic and antihomosexual crescendo of the Biblical, patristic, and later Scholastic teaching on homosexuality" (Johansson, Dynes, Lauritsen, par. 9). Also noteworthy is Oxford University lecturer James M. Houston, who calls Boswell's depiction of Aeldred "surely historical anachronism in the worst sense" (3).

³The Baines note's claims include "that all the new testament is filthily written"; "[t]hat the woman of Samaria & her sister were whores & that Christ knew them dishonestly"; and "[t]hat the Angell Gabriell was Baud to the holy ghost, because he brought the salutation to Mary" (qtd. in Kocher 35, 36).

⁴Summers cites Willson (384) for James's quotation.

⁵See Lee 248.

⁶Scholars have differed on this matter. Lockyer cautiously suggests there were physical sexual relations between James and Buckingham (22), but Lee firmly argues against this (248-49). More recently, both Croft (98) and Young (48-50) affirm a physical sexual relationship between James and Buckingham, although Young equivocates regarding whether or not sodomy actually occurred. Smith's statement that the degree to which their relationship "was actively physical will probably never be known" (56) seems appropriate.

⁷Summers credits Joseph Wittreich "for calling my attention to this reference" (66).

⁸Here is the relevant quotation from *De Officiis* in its larger context, employing a translation that appeared in 1902: "When Pericles had for his colleague in the praetorship Sophocles the poet, and as they were discoursing upon their joint official duty, a beautiful boy by chance passed by, Sophocles exclaimed, 'What a charming boy, Pericles!' but Pericles very properly told him, 'A magistrate ought to keep not only his hands, but his eyes under restraint'" (106).

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Re-reading Gulliver as Quixote: Toward a Theory of Quixotic Exceptionalism*

AARON R. HANLON

In 1726, the year in which *Gulliver's Travels* was published, *Craftsman* editor Nicholas Amhurst was among the first to compare *Gulliver's Travels* with *Don Quixote*. Amhurst hinted at the relationship between quixotic protagonist and object of critique in both texts when he commented on "the same Manner that *Cervantes* exposes Books of *Chivalry*, or Captain *Gulliver* the Writings of *Travellers*" (Amhurst 80; qtd. in Paulson 136). In more contemporary readings of *Gulliver's Travels*, however, such comparisons between Gulliver and Don Quixote are largely overshadowed by historicist preoccupations with Swift's political life, and by those instances in which one can assemble enough evidence to plausibly locate in Swift's writings certain direct analogues of historical figures and events in and around the life of Swift.¹ Frequently lost amid this diligent historicizing are Swift's characters, who, it could be argued, often amount to more than mere stand-ins for the nonfictional victims of Swiftian political satire. This essay aims to recover Gulliver as a character who is novelistic enough in his development throughout the narrative to be considered a quixote, and thus a figure whose idealism and naïveté are as important to the political thrust of Swift's narrative as are the historical persons and circumstances to which Gulliver's surrounding cast of characters is so often compared.

The terms of this argument are fourfold: first, that a long tradition of rigorous historicism in Swift studies has directed us away from crucial novelistic elements of *Gulliver's Travels*; second, that Gulliver bears the

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debhanlon02123.htm>>.

characteristics of a quixote, and behaves like one; third, that, novelistically, Gulliver's quixotism evolves coherently throughout the narrative; and fourth, that Gulliver's quixotism functions as a kind of exceptionalism, whose import is central to the political tenor of *Gulliver's Travels*. Accordingly, this reading moves toward a theory of "quixotic exceptionalism," by which the bookish and fantastic worldview typical of the quixotic figure—a figure widely represented in eighteenth-century literatures in English—underwrite the quixote's ideological claims while shielding such claims from the scrutiny and reality of the wider world. In its rendering of this fuller account of the political implications of quixotism, *Gulliver's Travels* is an especially apposite text for examining the decoupling of the quixotic from the allusive. *Gulliver's Travels* anticipates the development of the quixotic as a political concept in eighteenth-century literatures in English that transcends directly or immediately allusive ties to *Don Quixote*. Gulliver is something of a prototype for this emergent, eighteenth-century notion of quixotism operating as exceptionalism: as with subsequent quixotes who have since been placed more firmly within the quixotic narrative tradition (Henry Fielding's Parson Adams, Charlotte Lennox's Arabella, Royall Tyler's Updike Underhill, and Tabitha Gilman Tenney's Dorcasina, among others), Gulliver's quixotism is marked not merely by immediate allusions to Cervantes or to *Don Quixote*, but by the use of exceptionalist arguments to justify fantastic ideological conclusions in the face of demonstrable counter-evidence.

Reading Gulliver's Travels "Novelistically"

If one could point to a dominant consideration in the study of *Gulliver's Travels*, it would be its relation to politics, of both Swift's era and Swift himself.² The seminal source linking occurrences in Swift's writings with specific persons and political events of his day, Sir Charles Firth's 1919 British Academy lecture on "The Political Significance of *Gulliver's Travels*," has guided much of Swift studies to the present day, even where Firth's approach is treated critically. For

example, Phillip Harth's critique of reading political allegory into Part I of *Gulliver's Travels*—based on the contention that “reading the voyage to Lilliput as a continued allegory or dark conceit [...] is a recently acquired habit,” as “readers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not read the story in this fashion”—disputed a particular political allegory, but not allegorical approaches to the text in general (Harth 40). F. P. Lock's inquiries into Swift's political life during the rise of party politics—his contention that Swift was “by temperament [...] a Tory, inclined to pessimism, to a distrust of innovation, and to a nostalgic attachment to the values (including the political values) of the past” (Lock 127)—have been exceptionally influential in subsequent studies of *Gulliver's Travels*, prompting widely-cited reactions from the likes of Ian Higgins (“Swift's Politics: A Preface to *Gulliver's Travels*”) and J. A. Downie (whose essay on the subject takes the same name as Firth's initial British Academy address, but challenges “political allegory” readings).³ Much of the work that Higgins and Downie address focuses on contexts and relationships between minute historical occurrences in the political and religious lives of Swift and his contemporaries, and fictional allusions or references in Swift's writings. This markedly (if not zealously) historicist tradition in Swift studies, frequently applied to sections of *Gulliver's Travels* (particularly Part I, what Downie calls the narrative's “traditional hunting ground for political allusions” 2), could be contrasted with more “thematic” readings by scholars like Michael McKeon (“Parables of the Younger Son: Swift and the Containment of Desire”) and Claude Rawson (*God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492-1945*); however, Swift's political intervention in *Gulliver's Travels* has not been considered in relation to quixotism, nor has Gulliver been read, in contemporary criticism, as a quixote. Why is this the case?⁴

If political allegory, considered in the work of Charles Firth, J. A. Downie, and more recently Deborah Armintor, David Womersley, and others, has been the primary focus of scholars writing about *Gulliver's Travels*, considerations of genre have not been far behind in

frequency or importance. The question of whether Swift's narrative can be called a satire, a fantastic voyage, a picaresque travelogue, a novel, or a proto-novel has preoccupied Swift scholars for decades. The reasons for the lack of critical responses to *Gulliver's Travels* as a quixotic narrative are at once historical and methodological. Swift gives no overt indication in *Gulliver's Travels* that *Don Quixote* was a literary source for his narrative, either by title (as in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*), front matter (as in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*), or direct thematic allusion (as in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*). As Christine Rees suggests, however, Swift, a master of weaving together the comic and the ironic, was certainly an admirer of Cervantes, "whose genius was for comic irony" (123). While we do know that Swift was very familiar with *Don Quixote*, so much so that he began a translation of *Don Quixote* in the 1730s, the influence of that narrative would not seem to have found its way into *Gulliver's Travels* in any of these traditional signals of authorial influence.⁵ Additionally, no statements or correspondences of Swift's tie *Gulliver's Travels* directly to *Don Quixote*. This lack of overt contextual and paratextual evidence—"overt" in such a way as to historically link the two texts in a chain of authorial influence—has led critics away from prominent elements of *Gulliver's Travels* that, wittingly or not for Swift, are strikingly quixotic.

The lack of direct historical cues for placing *Gulliver's Travels* within the quixotic narrative tradition is compounded by the dominant methodological practices among both those who study quixotic narratives and those who study Swift. As with Sarah Wood's *Quixotic Fictions of the USA, 1792-1815*, perhaps the most telling example of the former, critics tend to identify the quixotic narrative as a genre, or something like a genre, defined by the proof or perception of the direct influence of *Don Quixote* (the influence of its formal characteristics) or *Don Quixote* (the inclusion of a Quixote-like character). "Quixotic" is, by this methodology, a relational term used to describe a certain kind of intertextual relationship largely dependent on the demonstrable historical circumstances of authorial influence, as well

as direct textual allusions to Cervantes or *Don Quixote*. With its heavily historicist approach to classification, in other words, the study of the quixotic narrative is a species of the same methodological genus that predominately informs readings of *Gulliver's Travels* as political allegory. Beyond the prevalence of such an approach, the larger question of whether *Gulliver's Travels* is a novel, or is novelistic enough to present a character who resembles Don Quixote, has precluded considerations of both *Gulliver's Travels* as a quixotic narrative and Gulliver as a quixote.

The problem with such an approach, which not only classes *Gulliver's Travels* outside the realm of the quixotic narrative, but also threatens to reduce it to mere political allegory and to minimize its novelistic elements, is that it loses sight of important narrative themes and strategies that are not only expressly quixotic, but are in any case central to the development of Gulliver as a character and to the progression of the narrative itself. The primary impetus for a direct-allusion-based approach toward the quixotic narrative (or toward *Gulliver's Travels* as political allegory or satire) is taxonomic: to construct a list or a corpus of quixotic narratives (or to construct a list of correspondent points of political affiliation in the text of *Gulliver's Travels*). A divergent reading of Swift's narrative as a quixotic narrative picks up on its quixotic elements and on Gulliver's quixotism (naturally), but also calls attention to the process by which Gulliver's quixotic thinking becomes a key site of the narrative's political intervention, understanding quixotism as something more than a genre-signal.

It is curious that a writer as famously adept at satire and narrative misdirection as Swift has provoked such a large and rich body of scholarship focused on aligning his slippery fiction with allegedly corresponding historical figures and events, and, concomitantly, that this tendency has resulted in the minimizing of *Gulliver's Travels's* novelistic aspects. Though there exists, in the decades following Sheldon Sacks's discussion of *Gulliver's Travels* in *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, a reasonable critical consensus that *Gulliver's Travels* is not a

novel, its novelistic elements cannot be denied. Notably, arguments aimed at strict definitions of genre are bound to find *Don Quixote* a difficult text as well, which is why a quixotic narrative may be a novel in many cases, but need not necessarily be a novel in all of the strictest senses of what J. Paul Hunter calls “that slippery term” (23).

In *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, Sacks painstakingly differentiates between apologue, satire, and novel (represented action), suggesting that “no literate man in the western world would hesitate for a moment if asked what sort of work *Gulliver’s Travels* is: it is a satire” (5). Positing that “the variant principles of organization of coherent prose fictions limit the way in which a writer may embody his ethical beliefs, opinions, or prejudices in them” (7), Sacks considers ridicule of the world beyond fiction the driving purpose of satire, and the central organizing principle of *Gulliver’s Travels*. A consequence of this, for Sacks, is that the “fictional creations”—including characters—of a satire like *Gulliver’s Travels* “can never themselves be satirized,” because, as components of a satire, they necessarily operate toward the ultimate end of ridiculing objects outside the text (7). “Only by considering [*Gulliver’s Travels*] a satire,” argues Sacks, “may we legitimately ask how Swift might have embodied his beliefs, opinions, prejudices in it” (11).

The problem with Sacks’s exemplary definition of satire in *Gulliver’s Travels* is that it borders on *petitio*: we cannot legitimately know Swift’s “beliefs, opinions, and prejudices” in *Gulliver’s Travels*—which, in any case, would be of and oriented toward the world of Swift, not merely the worlds of his fiction—unless we assume from the outset that character development and “represented action” in *Gulliver’s Travels* are necessarily subordinated to external ridicule, or the aims of satire. In other words, we know the central purpose of a narrative through its form, yet its form is also what opens up for us its central purpose. Arguably, however, in addition to satirizing figures and institutions in the outside world, *Gulliver’s Travels* contains *internal* satirical portrayals of Gulliver and Gulliver’s interlocutors, which considerably complicate Sacks’s absolute definition of Swift’s narra-

tive as a satire. Beyond Swift's portrayal of cultural conventions and political systems analogous to the world of Swift, we can see plainly that Gulliver, perplexed, sycophantic, and all too beholden to human and bodily needs, is one of Swift's primary objects of ridicule. Swift's progressive *characterization* and satirization of Gulliver throughout the *Travels* runs counter to Sacks's definition of a satire as entirely outward-oriented in its ridicule and suggests that the line between satire and novel or novelistic narrative is not as absolute as Sacks claims.⁶

Indeed, as Maximillian Novak reminds us in an essay on the picaresque elements of *Gulliver's Travels*, "we have to recognize that during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, works of fiction, particularly those written in the first person, tended to mix all kinds of elements that we might prefer to believe ought not to be there" (27). Thus, straitjacketing *Gulliver's Travels* with readings that overdetermine the protean rules of genre, just as critics have periodically done with *Don Quixote*, is not only historically untenable, as Novak points out, but can also cause us to misfile as "misreadings" those readings that consider Gulliver seriously as a novelistic character. Though Novak alleges that "the reader could hardly be involved with Gulliver as a character in the same way he or she becomes involved with a Pip or a Dorothea Brooke" (24), I will argue that Gulliver behaves more like a character than these critics have suggested. While Swift is the generator of irony in *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver is an absorber of it, a character who proceeds with the comic bewilderment of a quixote. Even if *Gulliver's Travels* is not a novel, it is, as Hunter suggests, "so conceptually dependent upon the novel that it is almost impossible to imagine the existence of the *Travels* outside the context of the developing novelistic tradition" (56).

More recently, David Fishelov compared *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels*, arguing that parody and satire are related to sympathy in these narratives. While Fishelov claims that the association between parody, satire, and sympathy in *Gulliver's Travels* is Cervantic (gesturing toward what could be understood, or misunderstood, as a quix-

otic element of the text), he does not go so far as to argue that Gulliver is a quixote. In fact, however, Gulliver exhibits a number of characteristics that place him squarely within the realm of the quixotic, and justify readings of Gulliver not just as a character (as opposed to a stand-in or an engine of satire), but as a quixote. As Novak claims, "*Gulliver's Travels* made possible a type of fiction based on artfully constructed systems of fantasy," though readers can certainly find in the quixotic narrative, including Cervantes's seventeenth-century original, a framework for "artfully constructed systems of fantasy" (35). This association of Swift's narrative with the construction of fantasy, along with Gulliver's participation in such a project, further opens up *Gulliver's Travels* to readings attentive to its quixotic elements. Crucially, then, *Gulliver's Travels* can be read "novelistically" because Gulliver is indeed a complex character, an object of satire, whose role within the narrative is not merely to further Swift's satirization of the external world, but also to develop directly the ethical and political messages of *Gulliver's Travels*.

Gulliver as Quixote

At the outset of *Gulliver's Travels*, we learn that Gulliver is a character of noble-class origins, having been raised on his father's "small estate in Nottinghamshire," and having also received an education at "Emanuel-College in Cambridge" (*Gulliver's Travels* 15).⁷ Like Don Quixote, who is an *hidalgo* rather than a *pizarro*, Gulliver's nobility (his family estate) is not enough to provide for his needs, so he undergoes a practical education with a view to embark on an itinerant lifestyle. As Frank Boyle notes, "when his father's land cannot support him through his university studies, he turns or is directed to the New Philosophy's most practical discipline, medicine, and to sea as a ship's surgeon," a reflection of, for Boyle, "the cultural path by which the traditional aristocratic order is first altered and finally determined by a new and powerful commercial order" (29). Though not educated specifically in literature or in the Romance tradition, he does, after becoming an apprenticed surgeon, spend allowances sent from his

father on “learning Navigation, and other Parts of the Mathematicks, useful to those who intend to travel, as [he] always believed it would be some time or another [his] Fortune to do” (15). Gulliver’s quixotic idealism is best understood as a “quixotism of travel,” and this quixotic affinity with travel is both reinforced and made literary by the fact that, in addition to writing a book of travel in *Gulliver’s Travels*, he also delighted in reading them in his youth, before his traveling imbued him with a quixotic sense that his accounts of the lands he visits are the only true accounts, or that his vision is self-justifiably true:

I have perused several Books of Travel with great Delight in my younger Days; but, having since gone over most Parts of the Globe, and been able to contradict many fabulous Accounts from my own Observation; it hath given me great Disgust against this Part of Reading, and some Indignation to see the Credulity of Mankind so impudently abused (272).

In addition to his travel reading in youth, we learn that Gulliver is also a bookish type more generally, passing his “Hours of Leisure” amid his earlier travels (before landing in Lilliput) “in reading the best Authors, ancient and modern; being always provided with a good Number of Books” (16). Although Swift makes passing and comedic reference to the pitfalls of romance reading while describing the cause of the fire in the Lilliputian queen’s apartment—“by the Carelessness of a Maid of Honour, who fell asleep while she was reading a Romance” (49)—we receive no indication that Gulliver, as a quixote is wont to do, reads romances himself. However, Gulliver’s continual tendency toward “service” and courtly manners—as when the Brobdingnagian queen takes interest in him, and he vows that “if [he] were at [his] own Disposal, [he] should be proud to devote [his] Life to her Majesty’s Service” (91)—is not unlike Don Quixote’s imitation of chivalric code.

Gulliver’s “quixotism of travel” is also, beyond its literary manifestation in his travel narrations, highly romanticized. The belief that traveling is his “Fortune to do” is recapitulated each time he returns to England from a journey that, however fascinating and adventurous, proves also to be perilous and life-threatening. After voyaging to

Lilliput, Part II of the narrative, which treats Gulliver's adventures in Brobdingnag, begins: "Having been condemned by Nature and Fortune to an active and restless Life; in two Months after my Return [to England], I again left my native Country" (75). Gulliver leaves for Brobdingnag on account of his "insatiable Desire of seeing foreign Countries" (71). After returning from Brobdingnag and before embarking on a trip to Laputa in Part III, Gulliver ends Part II with an admission that "my Wife protested I should never go to Sea any more; although my evil Destiny so ordered, that she had not Power to hinder me; as the Reader may know hereafter" (137). And, at last, after returning home for the third time after yet another long and dangerous journey, and finding his "Wife and Family in good health" (203), Gulliver remains home with his family "about five Months in a very happy Condition" before leaving a final time for his most fateful journey to the Country of the Houyhnhnms, his wife "big with Child," musing "if I could have learned the Lesson of knowing when I was well" (207). In each of these passages Gulliver behaves as if compelled by a force greater than his own will, such that travel becomes not just an itch in need of scratching, but a romantic call of duty. Against the rational understanding, at which Gulliver hints in the above passage before joining the Houyhnhnms and forever altering his orientation toward humankind, that his perpetual journeys could at some point estrange him from country and family, Gulliver proceeds quixotically, chasing a romantic ideal as if duty-bound to fate or destiny, travel being his "Fortune to do" (15). Just as Don Quixote's romantic idealization of knight-errantry renders him duty-bound to its conventions, Gulliver's romantic idealization of the traveling life causes him to understand his recurrent journeys as pre-ordained duty, to be carried out above the needs and desires of his wife and children, and those who would advise him to remain at home after testing his "Fortune" so many times, each time narrowly escaping an unfortunate end. Though Gulliver shares with Robinson Crusoe the need to travel despite the protests of his family, it is less his faith and industriousness than his romanticization of desire that propels his journeys.

Though travel is a quixotic ideal in itself for Gulliver, the broader ideal that Gulliver quixotically seeks is described concisely by Fishelov as a quest for utopia, one of the primary objects of Swift's satire, illustrated in Part IV in the Country of the Houyhnhnms. For Fishelov, Part IV "is mocking the genre of utopia, especially some of its underlying optimistic ideological assumptions concerning human nature" (130). Fishelov goes on to compare with "sympathetic satire" (131) in *Don Quixote* the dynamic in *Gulliver's Travels* that allows for a sympathetic portrayal of the Houyhnhnms' utopia alongside the satirical current running through this portrayal. This analysis stops short, however, of tracing the connection between the predispositions of mind and behavioral modes of the quixotic, illustrated in *Don Quixote*, and comparable qualities in Gulliver, which enable the same kind of quixotic duality in Swift's narrative that is present in *Don Quixote*: the quixote is at once a madman who does material wrong and a well-meaning, sympathetic character capable of drawing attention to the flaws of the people and societies around him. Gulliver's outward-oriented idealism, which precipitates his continual need to travel and to risk his life to explore the far ends of the globe, morphs gradually throughout the narrative into a full-on quixotic quest for a utopian ideal (which he eventually finds, though perhaps without the results he desires, in the land of the Houyhnhnms). As the narrative progresses, Gulliver develops a greater vocabulary (quite literally, as he learns the languages of foreign lands) and facility in his criticisms of the political systems and ways of life most familiar to him, this progression hitting its nationalist crescendo in Gulliver's conversation with the King of Brobdingnag, and its culmination in the outright rejection of his own nationality (less his own humanity, and his own wife and children) upon returning from the Country of the Houyhnhnms.

A case can thus be made for reading Gulliver as a quixote, and taking the quixotic as a framework for better understanding Gulliver's actions and Swift's satirical potency in *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver comes from a class background that allows for both education and

quixotic idealism, and his education is inextricably connected with the obsession (or call to duty) that he develops (travel). As with Don Quixote, this obsession is both literary (insofar as it relates to the reading and writing of travel narratives) and romanticized (insofar as it is understood as a function of his destiny). The telos of this romanticized, outward-oriented obsession with travel is a utopian ideal, or the discovery of a land, culture, and political system capable of addressing the cumulative set of problems that Gulliver registers with the known world (Europe) throughout his journeys, and capable, perhaps, of materially enriching him in the process (notably, Don Quixote pursues fame and riches as well as justice). Finally, in quixotic fashion, Gulliver also continually constructs and deconstructs exceptionalist arguments and justifications throughout his travels, culminating in a “quixotic conversion” at the end of the narrative—what Michael McKeon calls “a decisive island conversion”—that further demonstrates his quixotism (199).⁸ As McKeon posits, Gulliver is “able to disown responsibility and project his desire for a fortune onto Fortune” (199). While *Gulliver’s Travels* is certainly, as Fishelov notes, Cervantic in its slippery, satirical narrative style and approach, its protagonist is also quixotic in his brand of exceptionalism, his tendency to continually separate himself from the reality of his (nationalist) worldview, or to simultaneously defend and expose his national identity. Gulliver illuminates England’s flaws even to himself as he defends them to foreign peoples.

Gulliver in Lilliput, or, The Anthropological Quixote

Having made a case for Gulliver’s quixotism and its character, I will now trace this quixotism and its manifestations throughout the text, aiming to demonstrate how the quixotic idealism with which Gulliver begins his travels undergoes a number of important phase-changes. Gulliver travels with a removed, anthropological perspective on the world around him. He enters lands and engages with the foreign peoples who occupy them not with the imperialist air of Robinson Crusoe, but with a scholarly sense of wonder or bewilderment and a

default sense of respect for the various creatures he apprehends. As many readers of *Gulliver's Travels* have observed, Gulliver frequently finds occasion to behave deferentially, to bow, or find means otherwise to indicate courtly respect and even admiration for his foreign hosts.⁹ Even among the Lilliputians over whom he towers in size, Gulliver expresses his gratitude for being released from his initial captivity in a graceful and deferential manner: "I made my Acknowledgements, by prostrating myself at his Majesty's Feet" (39). And as Neil Chudgar has recently pointed out, Gulliver proceeds mainly with gentleness, which is largely shared with, if not mimicked from, those around him. "Though the Lilliputians expect violence of Gulliver, and though he expects violence of himself," writes Chudgar, "both are mercifully disappointed" (139). His "gentleness and good Behaviour" gain him favor with the Lilliputian king and court (*Gulliver's Travels* 33). And later, while Gulliver is rendered small and fragile among the Brobdingnagians, he finds he is made immediately sympathetic to the conditions of handling upon which he agreed with the Lilliputians, to "Care not to trample upon the Bodies of any of our loving Subjects [...] nor take any of our said Subjects into his Hands, without their own Consent" (38). Gulliver's gentle and respectful handling of situations large and small while abroad marks his anthropological way of relating to foreign peoples, which is, from the outset of the narrative, a primary feature of his understanding of the Other as a source of amusement, fascination, and sometimes terror.

Among the Lilliputians in Part I, England emerges as a reference point, rendered uncannily small by Swift's satirical approach. The Lilliputians build weapons of war (unlike the Houyhnhnms), are engaged in perpetual battles with a geopolitical rival, possess their share of conniving ministers, and are occasionally preoccupied with gossip and court scandals. As Rees notes, "the institutions of Lilliput represent [Gulliver's] own culture, shrunk in the negative mirror, but reproducing all the adverse effects of party politics and court life" (127), which Gulliver had not experienced first-hand in England. Having been raised in an England that would have looked much the

same from Gulliver's removed, middle-class perspective—and this is no doubt why Part I of the *Travels* is so often fodder for political allegory readings—the enthralled Gulliver only realizes amid his travels in Lilliput “never more to put any Confidence in Princes or Ministers, where [he] could possibly avoid it,” after finding himself in the middle of the latest squabble between the rulers of Lilliput and Blefuscu (69). Apart from this rare lesson learned, while in Lilliput, Gulliver tends to apprehend the political and foreign policy affairs of the locals as little more than a bizarre and unsettling version of what he might take to be common practice in England, distantly and anthropologically taking neither a strong position against Lilliputian society, nor an especially strong admiration for it. Part I of the *Travels* sets a descriptive tone for the narrative that will persist, though without the more salient tests of judgment that Gulliver later endures both in Brobdingnag and among the Houyhnhnms. The first phase of Gulliver's adventures could thus be described as the anthropological phase, a proto-quixotic introduction to his manner on the road. He is the pre-1745 image of the quixote, the naïve butt of the satirical joke.¹⁰ Swift demonstrates in Part I a mirror image of eighteenth-century England that is presented without strong value judgment from Gulliver, positioning Gulliver as a neutral figure who, in neutrality, is complicit with Swift's objects of satire.

In Lilliput, Gulliver is thrown into a strange world, pinned down, pricked with tiny arrows, freed, then roped into court scandal and geopolitical battle alike, all while remaining (despite his size advantages) deferential, respectful, and very much unaware that the joke is on him. Like Don Quixote before the innkeeper, preparing to stand night vigil over his shoddy arms, Gulliver's idealistic pursuit of travel and of foreign curiosities blind him to the absurdity of his newfound use in a strange land. It is this mode of rather innocent idealism in the absence of a credible threat to his person that renders Gulliver incapable of fully understanding in Part I what he does not fully acknowledge until terrified by his first sighting of the Brobdingnagians in Part II:

In this terrible Agitation of Mind I could not forbear thinking of *Lilliput*, whose Inhabitants looked upon me as the greatest Prodigy that ever appeared in the World; where I was able to draw an Imperial Fleet in my Hand, and perform those other Actions which will be recorded for ever in the Chronicles of that Empire, while Posterity shall hardly believe them, although attested by Millions. (78)

Gulliver is, in other words, a crucial participant in Swift's send-up of English society, despite his removed, anthropological description of what transpires in Lilliput. He is presented as a chivalric, idealistic, amiable quixote whose early-narrative temperament will become a referent for comparison with quixotic developments that intensify as the narrative progresses.

Gulliver in Brobdingnag: The Emergence of Quixotic Exceptionalism

As McKeon argues, "Gulliver's first travels are undertaken in default of a more settled and upward mobility at home. After the voyage to Lilliput, however, the idea of physical travel takes on more [...] financial and moral ambiguity" (199). Gulliver makes way to Brobdingnag with hopes of material gain, but also with quixotic zeal, aiming to "improve [his] Fortunes," and succumbing to the "insatiable Desire of seeing foreign Countries" (*Gulliver's Travels* 71). Accompanying the continued emergence of Gulliver's quixotism of travel is the comparative emergence of his native England as a distinct referent for the new lands he occupies. By the time Gulliver makes it to Brobdingnag, a separate sense of England and English customs and politics begins to emerge more substantively in the narrative, forcing Gulliver to defend his Englishness while at the same time reckoning with its flaws. Part I is not without humorous comparisons to Gulliver's native land—the "peculiar" manner of Lilliputian writing is "aslant from one corner of the Paper to the other, like Ladies in *England*" (51)—though Part II is the site of the much-discussed interactions with the Brobdingnagian king, in which Swift positions a fuller, comparative portrait of Gulliver's impression of England against Swift's rendering of

Brobdingnagian ideals. Even before this exchange, however, Gulliver apprehends the Brobdingnagians with a heightened sense of otherness, compared to his early reactions to the Lilliputians. For example, upon first sighting, Gulliver describes the Lilliputian as “a *human* Creature not six Inches high,” whereas the Brobdingnagian giant is a “Monster” (17, 77; emphasis added). Despite Swift’s portrayal of the Lilliputians as sometimes threatening and conniving, the diminutive Lilliputians appear to Gulliver as nothing more than miniaturized humans, apprehended, after the initial moments of terror, captivity, and arrow-discharging, as sympathy-evoking creatures. On the other hand, the Brobdingnagians, on account of *their* size, appear foreign and distorted up-close, before Gulliver reflects on his experience with a Lilliputian gazing up-close at him. As Gulliver writes:

I remember when I was at *Lilliput*, the Complexions of those diminutive People appeared to me the fairest in the World: and talking upon this Subject with a Person of Learning there, who was an intimate Friend of mine; he said, that my Face appeared much fairer and smoother when he looked on me from the Ground, than it did upon a nearer View when I took him up in my Hand, and brought him close; which he confessed was at first a very shocking Sight. He said, he could discover great Holes in my Skin; that the Stumps of my Beard were ten Times stronger than the Bristles of a Boar; and my Complexion made up of several Colours altogether disagreeable [...] I could not forbear, lest the Reader might think those vast Creatures were actually deformed: For I must do them Justice to say they are a comely Race of People. (83)

The shock of initial appearance and destructive potential that attends their relatively large size certainly contributes to the Brobdingnagians’s intensified otherness for Gulliver. At the same time, Gulliver also, finding himself in a more precarious situation in Brobdingnag than in Lilliput, expresses a heightened yearning to return home to safety, a yearning he does not express so urgently while in the company of the Lilliputians. Fearing his destruction upon his first encounter with the scythe-wielding Brobdingnagian reapers, Gulliver writes “I lamented my own Folly and Wilfulness in attempting a second Voyage against the Advice of all my Friends and Rela-

tions" (78), seemingly aware of the idealistic impulse to travel that placed him in such life-threatening circumstances. "I slept about two Hours, and dreamed I was at home with my Wife and Children," Gulliver later tells us while in the possession of the Brobdingnagian farmer, "which aggravated my Sorrows when I awakened and found my self alone in a vast Room" (83). We still get superficial, comedic references (often at the expense of women) to Gulliver's native England in Part II in Brobdingnag—the farmer's wife "screamed and ran back as Women in *England* do at the Sight of a Toad or a Spider" (80) when she sees Gulliver—yet, in Part II, Gulliver's own growing sense of foreignness and disquietude appears alongside a starker recognition of the Brobdingnagians as pleasant, though dangerously different creatures from those of Gulliver's England. From their size and appearance to their politics, as we learn once the king engages Gulliver in conversation about the land from which he came, the Brobdingnagians magnify Gulliver's quixotism by rendering him defensive, just as Don Quixote's forthrightness becomes more pronounced when interlocutors question or challenge his worldview. The journey to Brobdingnag evinces Gulliver's early tendencies toward quixotic-exceptionalist justifications for imprudent travel, fortune-seeking, and the political practices of his native country.

As I have suggested, Gulliver's quixotism is best characterized by his wanderlust, which is not only a desire to travel for its own sake, but an understanding of travel as his pre-ordained means toward amassing personal fortune and worldly knowledge, and ultimately locating a foreign utopia. Though he returns to England from Lilliput with souvenirs, he returns from Brobdingnag with a size complex, mimetically looking "down upon the Servants, and one or two Friends who were in the House, as if they had been Pigmies, and [Gulliver] a Giant" (137). Gulliver's perspective undergoes significant change in Brobdingnag, not just in terms of his relation to his fellow English, but also in relation to the wider world of political possibility. Though early interactions with the Brobdingnagian king depict Gulliver as a patriot, gushing "a little too copious[ly] in talking of [his]

own beloved Country; of [English] Trade, and Wars by Sea and Land, of [English] Schisms in Religion, and Parties in the State" (96), the king's counter-perspective leaves Gulliver at a loss, compelling him to defend England and broader Europe with exceptionalist arguments.

When prompted by the king to give an account of his native England, Gulliver provides a list of superlative descriptions: "the Fertility of our Soil"; "an illustrious Body called the House of Peers" (as well as "that extraordinary Care always taken of their Education," and their "Valour, Conduct, and Fidelity"); the House of Commons "*freely* picked [...] by the People themselves, for their great Abilities, and Love of their Country, to represent the Wisdom of the whole Nation," among others, along with a summary of English history, military and otherwise. The king's series of questions and points of contention—asking about the qualifications of new Lords, the potential for political corruption and conflicts of interest, the existence of national credit and national debt, among others—lead him to conclude, famously, "the Bulk of [English] Natives, to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth" (116-21).

Confronted with such judgments, Gulliver finds himself "forced to rest with Patience, while [his] noble and most beloved Country was so injuriously treated" (122). Ashamed to admit his inability to offer a substantive counter-argument to the king, Gulliver, "heartily sorry as any of [his] readers can possibly be, that such an Occasion was given," admits in this attempt to excuse himself, that he "artfully eluded" many of the king's questions, "and gave to every Point a more favourable turn by many Degrees than the strictness of Truth would allow" (122). Hence, Gulliver begins to construct an exceptionalist argument against the accusations of the Brobdingnagian king in the absence of a substantive one, alleging that Brobdingnag, unlike Europe, is too isolated to have knowledge of such things as cannons (widely known and understood in Europe) or to have "reduced *Politicks* into a *Science*, as the more acute Wits of *Europe* have done" (124). Gulliver laments the possibility that "a *confined Education*" and a

"certain *Narrowness of Thinking*," such as those which he ascribes to the king in the absence of a solid counterargument to the king's critiques of English society, "be offered as a Standard for all Mankind" (122). The anthropological quixote of Part I becomes a quixotic exceptionalist in Part II, paradoxically defending his own nation as a utopia only after departing from it to seek knowledge and better opportunity abroad. In the same vein, Gulliver ironically extols that presumed characteristic of Europe—a broad range of knowledge, derived from intercultural experience and relations—that he seeks for himself through leaving Europe, indulging his quixotism of travel.

At the same time, Gulliver's admitted inability to defend his country before the king—his arguments in this endeavor "failed of Success"—renders him vulnerable to the kinds of utopian notions that he will eventually embrace wholeheartedly among the Houyhnhnms in Part IV. Even before the Brobdingnagian king successfully makes his arguments against Gulliver's account of Englishness, his first encounters with the king produce in Gulliver a critical outlook on his own country, along with significant doubt over his previously unquestioned patriotism and English identity:

But, as I was not in a Condition to resent Injuries, so, upon mature Thoughts, I began to doubt whether I were injured or no. For, after having been accustomed several Months to the Sight and Converse of this People, and observed every Object upon which I cast my Eyes, to be of proportionable Magnitude; the Horror I had first conceived from their Bulk and Aspect was so far worn off, that if I had then beheld a Company of *English* Lords and Ladies in their Finery and Birth-day Cloaths, acting their several Parts in the most courtly Manner of Strutting, and Bowing and Prating; to say the Truth, I should have been strongly tempted to laugh as much at them as the King and his Grandees did at me. (96-97)

Once thrust into the situation of having to think critically about both the practices of his native country and the ways in which his perspective, frequently changing amid his travels, can affect how he views England and his English identity, Gulliver doubles-down on the single-mindedness of English (and European) exceptionalism.

Thereafter he is hurdled with fragile nationalist baggage and magnified force into his quixotism of travel, believing still that, despite his willingness to bend the truth and skirt the Brobdingnagian king's criticisms of England, his destiny is not an English utopia, but a utopia abroad. After his time in Brobdingnag, before setting sail yet again for Laputa, Gulliver writes: "I could not reject [Captain William Robinson's] Proposal; the Thirst I had of seeing the World, notwithstanding my past Misfortunes, continuing as violent as ever" (141).

The European exceptionalism that Gulliver puts forth to counter the Brobdingnagian king's critiques posits both the demonstrably false notion (falsified by the very presence and experience of Gulliver in a foreign land) that England "and the politer Countries of *Europe* are wholly exempted" (122) from the prejudices of limited knowledge, as well as the ideal of universal knowledge through travel. Gulliver avails himself thereby of quixotic exceptionalism to simultaneously construct an ideal (universal knowledge through travel), and to position himself (by and of his English heritage and his quixotism of travel) as an example of this ideal. This constitutes the second phase of Gulliver's quixotism of travel: the exceptionalist substitution of the European ideal of universal knowledge, counterintuitively, for the quixotic ideal of universal knowledge through travel. Gulliver's quixotism is thus characterized in Part II of the narrative by a more traditional Anglo-European idealism—for Gulliver, a form of quixotic exceptionalism stemming from his nationalism and naïveté—to which Gulliver holds fast, despite the skillful counterarguments of the Brobdingnagian king. By the end of Part II, we have witnessed Gulliver's transition from the first phase of his quixotism, a proto-quixotism marked by an aloof, anthropological approach to the foreign societies and peoples he apprehends, to the second phase, marked by his circuitous, nationalist defense of England and wider Europe as particularly enlightened nations.

Gulliver in the Land of the Houyhnhnms: Quixotic Exceptionalism, Full-Circle

After witnessing the Laputan dystopia in Part III and returning home to England once more as a quixote whose travel-idealism has not flagged, but become stronger, Gulliver sets out in Part IV and arrives in the Country of the Houyhnhnms, a utopian land that is ultimately responsible for Gulliver's final moments of quixotic conversion, not from mad quixote to rational English citizen, but from an apologist for England and Europe to an apologist for a foreign utopia. The merits or shortcomings of the Houyhnhnms aside, Gulliver is clearly impressed by the rational horses, their innovative child-distribution policies, their stoic attitude toward death, and the absence of words in their language to express "*the Thing which [is] not,*" or "any thing that is *evil*, except what they borrow from the Deformities or ill Qualities of the *Yahoos*" (223, 257). Gulliver's utopian vision of the Houyhnhnms is further expressed in his description of his own life while among them: "I enjoyed perfect Health of Body, and Tranquility of Mind; I did not feel the Treachery or Inconstancy of a Friend, nor the Injuries of a secret or open Enemy" (258). While in the land of rational horses, Gulliver also begins to speak more critically of his native country, explaining wars resulting from "the Corruption of Ministers," and the soldier as "a *Yahoo* hired to kill in cold Blood as many of his own Species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can" (228-29). These impressions lead to Gulliver's final conversion in the land of the Houyhnhnms, at which point Gulliver admits that "those excellent *Quadrupeds* placed in opposite View to human Corruptions, had so far opened my Eyes, and enlarged my Understanding, that I began to view the Actions and Passions of Man in a very different Light; and to think the Honour of my own Kind not worth managing," resolving then "never to return to human Kind" (240).

Alas, Gulliver is forced by the Houyhnhnms, by edict, to return home anyway. When he does, he is repulsed by his wife and children and the rest of his own species; and he is, despite his conversion, still

quixotically mad. Whereas Don Quixote begins as a madman and returns to sanity upon his deathbed, Gulliver's madness progresses in the opposite direction. He purchases two horses upon return, whose smells he finds comforting, and with whom he "converse[s] at least four Hours every Day," never rides, and considers partners "in great Amity" with himself and each other (271). When he launches what appears to be a final exceptionalist apologia for England, its government and its occupants—a seemingly out-of-place hangover from his pre-conversion sentiments in Part II—we can comfortably read these notes with irony (275). In the elusive, mocking tone of Morus's final comments at the end of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, Gulliver writes of his previous denouncements of European colonialism: "this Description, I confess, doth by no means affect the *British* nation, who may be an Example to the whole World for their Wisdom, Care, and Justice in planting Colonies" (275). After this passage he goes on to affirm the psychological conditions of his utopian conversion, attempting to "apply those excellent Lessons of Virtue which [he] learned among the *Houyhnhnms*" in slowly conditioning himself to tolerate his family and, perhaps, "a Neighbor *Yahoo*" (276).

In Gulliver's relation of his travels we can see, then, a progression of his quixotism and the ways in which this alters his quixotic exceptionalism. Gulliver embarks on his travels under the inspiration of a romanticized, quixotic ideal—the ideal of the life of travel, understood as his absolute destiny—which is derived from a childhood fascination with books of travel, and the pursuit of a travel-oriented education. Despite early encounters with the Lilliputians and the Brobdingnagians—including an ability to appreciate some of the foreign things he witnesses—his quixotism of travel carries with it an idealistic belief in the supremacy and utopian potential of his native English culture: Gulliver encounters difference and is fascinated by it, yet his quixotism prevents him from dwelling on the wonders of Lilliput or Brobdingnag, or developing a critical outlook on his own country. After passing through Laputa and its neighboring lands intrigued but still unmoored from his default nationalism, he

undergoes a form of quixotic conversion in the Country of the Houyhnhnms, through which his quixotism remains, but its focus shifts. After living among the rational horses, Gulliver holds quixotically fast to the cultural model of the Houyhnhnms, despite the fact that they evict him from their society, and despite the fact that his own family, still healthy and loyal, have long since awaited his return.

This progression of quixotism not only illuminates aspects of Gulliver's character—his anthropological aloofness, his failure to compromise grand ideologies for smaller bits and pieces of useful knowledge he picks up amid his travels, and his stubborn inability to learn the flaws in his worldview through experience—but also directs our attention to one of the most critically underdeveloped yet important implications of Swift's narrative. In Gulliver's meandering and sometimes self-contradictory quixotism, Swift illustrates the dual ways in which exceptionalism operates as apologia for both nationalist (Gulliver in Brobdingnag) and utopian (Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms) ideologies. This mode of exceptionalism—the shielding of one's idealistic worldview from the scrutiny and harsh reality of the surrounding world—is expressly linked with quixotic qualities and characters in eighteenth-century prose fiction, from Gulliver's contorted argument with the King of Brobdingnag, to Parson Adams's shock and dismay at England's treatment of the poor, to Arabella's insistence that her gardener is really a gentleman suitor in disguise. The fictive and fantastic elements of quixotism make possible each quixote's denial of surrounding realities, and are as such the *sine qua non* of quixotic exceptionalism.

Though quixotes were increasingly understood, through the middle of the eighteenth century, as heroic visionaries rather than foolish objects of satire, Gulliver's character progression preempts this shift in its foregrounding of Gulliver's exceptionalism, inviting our consideration of a third possibility for understanding quixotism. Whether Gulliver's quixotic naïveté, idealism, and stubbornness frame him as an admirably determined dreamer—a gentle and well-meaning hero—or, perhaps more likely, the misguided butt of the joke who continually

fails to learn his lesson, Gulliver's quixotic characteristics underlie his exceptionalism, which is in either case central to the politics of *Gulliver's Travels*. For it is not only the allusions to persons and policy issues that Swift pillories that define his political intervention in *Gulliver's Travels*, but also the manner in which Gulliver-as-character frames these issues. Gulliver's quixotic exceptionalism leads him, most notably, to willfully ignore arguments that he acknowledges to be superior to his own, to prioritize tribalism over reason (whether identifying with the English or the Houyhnhnms), to estrange his family, and to repeatedly jeopardize his life. Gulliver's exceptionalist justifications for each of these decisions undoubtedly say as much about fractious, vitriolic party politics, political corruption, militant nationalism, utopian beliefs, and misplaced social and domestic priorities as do Swift's more minute political allusions.

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NOTES

¹Studies like J. A. Downie's "The Political Significance of *Gulliver's Travels*" and David Bywaters's "*Gulliver's Travels* and the Mode of Political Parallel during Walpole's Administration" were part of a late-twentieth-century focus on *Gulliver's Travels* as political allegory. More contemporary work in this lineage includes David Womersley's "Dean Swift Hears a Sermon: Robert Howard's Ash Wednesday Sermon of 1725 and *Gulliver's Travels*" and Deborah Armintor's "The Sexual Politics of Microscopy in Brobdingnag."

²For a comprehensive view of the history of the "political" mode of Swift scholarship during a heightened period of debate in the 1980s, see Downie.

³In addition to Lock's characterization of Swift as nostalgic for the values of the past, Frank Boyle notes in the preface to *Swift as Nemesis* that "the earliest citation for the term *modernism* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from a letter Jonathan Swift wrote to Alexander Pope in 1737. He used the term to refer pejoratively to the proliferating invention of words accompanying the rise of modernness as a positive intellectual value" (xi). Boyle notes the Swiftian irony in inventing a term as part of a critique of invented terms.

⁴Paulson's inclusion of Amhurst's comparison between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Don Quixote* appears in *Don Quixote in England: The Aesthetics of Laughter* as an

aside in Paulson's discussion of Hogarth's oppositionalist political prints. Curiously, then, Paulson's brief discussion of the Gulliver-Quixote comparison appears in the context of a wider discussion of art and fiction as political tools, rather than a discussion of Gulliver's quixotism (136).

⁵Evidence that Swift began a translation of *Don Quixote*, and probably contributed to a preface for it, appears in Elias.

⁶Critics have maintained that *Gulliver's Travels* ought not to be read novelistically. Jenny Mezciems declared in 1977 that "fortunately the days are over when problems of misreading arose chiefly from mistaken assumptions that *Gulliver's Travels* was a novel and Gulliver a novel-character" (243); and by 1991, one year after Frederik N. Smith published *The Genres of Gulliver's Travels*, collecting essays on the very subject of the genre-multiplicity of Swift's narrative, Douglas Lane Patey affirms, "readers by now generally agree not to identify Swift's book as a 'novel,' and so do not look to it for the kinds of consistency and progressive development of character and narrative that we expect in longer works by Fielding, Richardson, and even Defoe" (Patey 219). More recently, essays like David Womersley's and Deborah Armintor's reflect this approach.

⁷All references are to the edition by Rawson and Higgins.

⁸"Quixotic conversion" refers to the moment, typically occurring toward the end of a quixotic narrative, in which the quixote is compelled to alter or renounce altogether his or her quixotism, thereby choosing a side of the a central conflict that quixotism was meant to illuminate or expose (as with, for example, Arabella in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*).

⁹Michael McKeon calls Gulliver an "obsequious sycophant who seems always in the act of 'prostrating' himself" (200).

¹⁰Ronald Paulson locates at the time of the Forty-Five the "Romantic turn" in how *Don Quixote* was perceived (184-85), marking the Forty-Five as the point at which readers and writers identified with Quixote as an imaginative, Romantic hero who exposes the societal problems around him, as opposed to a buffoon, an object of satire, thought to embody the problems Cervantes wanted to expose.

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On the Shore of Interpretation: The Theory and Reading of the Image in Imagism*

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All seeing is essentially perspective, and so
is all knowing.

(Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* 255)

[...] in-itself the image is matter: not something hidden behind the image, but on the contrary the absolute identity of the image and movement.

(Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* 58)

When contextualised in the history of Modernism, Imagism might seem to be little more than an ancillary concept. The various “-isms” that comprise “Modernism” are consistently implicated in a reconfiguration of images across different artistic modes and genres.¹ Within the context of Imagist poetics, however, visibility involves an inter-relationship between the pseudo-visual and related interpretative faculties. As M. H. Abrams notes, “[i]mages not only convey what things look like, but direct us, by their patterns of associated and involved feelings, in our reactions to what is being represented” (2513).

The qualification of *pseudo*-visual becomes necessary in this context as a result of the relationship between Imagism’s visual precepts and its prosody. Although an image ostensibly connotes visibility *ipso facto*, its application in poetics is twofold: the visual is mediated

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debhay02123.htm>>.

through language. As William Empson recognises (comically) in *The Structure of Complex Words*:

No doubt the seeing of the "image" need not be done by a picture, but you do not even possess the almond simile till you "see" (till you realise) that this eye is *shaped* like an almond; only in a parrot could the mere thought of an almond "intensify emotion." (3)

The intensification of emotion is, of course, a longstanding and much theorised area of poetics.² Yet the correlation between an intensification of *feeling* as intimately linked to the sensory immediacy of *seeing* is transformed in Imagistic practice, which places the emotional engagement of the reader outside its poetic efficacy. For example, William Carlos Williams's "Portrait of a Lady" exploits metaphor in its presentation of the lady of the title:

Your thighs are appletrees
whose blossoms touch the sky (90.1-2)

The choice of concrete metaphor over a more lexically extraneous vehicle such as simile, coupled with natural associations (the "blossoms" and "appletrees"), resonates with the Imagist emphasis on natural tropes and lexical compactness. However, this compaction is more than a formal feature of Imagism's particular stylistic mores. It relates to the ontological and semantic tensions in the ability of poetry to capture and present instantaneousness, as famously embodied in Archibald MacLeish's instruction that a poem "should not mean / But be" (135.23-24).

The ontological primacy of Williams's image hinges on its declarative character: "Your thighs *are* appletrees." The directness of this image makes no gesture towards emotional connotation or denotation, and its clarity, concordant with the Imagist theory of poetry, thus becomes the most salient feature of the lines. The aesthetic prescription for the need for clarity in the poetic line was promulgated most

vehemently by Pound in his 1918 essay, "A Retrospect," alongside more overt expressive prohibition:

Don't use such an expression as "dim lands of *peace*". It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.
Go in fear of abstractions. (5)

Pound's identification of the abstract and the concrete as poetically incompatible suggests that, if William Carlos Williams's poem had invoked a metonymic or adjectival association between the poetic subject's "thighs" and the "appletrees" then the effectiveness of the poem would be abrogated. Pound's aesthetic prescription makes some sense; in order to function as an effective image, the referent must be capable of being visualised clearly. However, the stress on clarity is an aesthetic strategy designed to move beyond the pleonastic Edwardian line in verse.

The reification of the "hard" image into the locus for the conceptual and stylistic distinctiveness of the Imagist poetic school could be seen as an overly determined concern with poetic effect, leaving little room for interpretative complexity. But does the Imagist conception of the image in the poem suppress the reader's interpretative faculties, beyond the rigid descriptive intentions proffered by the poem's maker? The clarity of the Imagist aesthetic is intimately associated with a desire to move beyond the alleged faults and inadequacies of previous poetic and artistic styles. This is perhaps most polemically put in T. E. Hulme's foundational "Romanticism and Classicism": "I want to maintain that after a hundred years of romanticism, we are in for a classical revival" (68). The association between classicism and clarity is thus predicated on a rejection of Romanticism, and this underlies Pound's assumption that abstraction is incompatible with the clarity of Imagism. However, for Wilhelm Worringer, an important influence on T. E. Hulme's poetic theorisation, the beauty of abstraction (*Abstraktion*) in Oriental culture is commensurate with "the life-denying, inorganic [...] the crystalline" (4), all of which are aesthetic

concerns of Imagism itself.³ Here, abstraction offers an antidote to the empathy (*Einfühlung*) that is figured as a necessary condition of the organic and natural. Furthermore, this empathy reflects a reconciled view of mankind within the world—in Worringer’s words, “a narrow view” (4).

In contrast, Hulme aims to situate the relationship between poet and the world in the poet’s visual acuity, while its expression in verse is the primary indicator of the poet’s communicative power. Indeed, the visual, as an aesthetic element, is symptomatic of the modern *par excellence* in poetry. His 1908 “Lecture on Modern Poetry” stipulates that:

[...] the poet is moved by a certain landscape, he selects from that certain images which, put into juxtaposition in separate lines, serve to suggest and evoke the state he feels. To this piling-up and juxtaposition of distinct images in different lines, one can find a fanciful analogy in music. A great revolution in music when, for the melody that is one-dimensional music, was substituted harmony which moves in two. Two visual images form what one may call a visual chord. (64)

Although Hulme might seem to formulate a disjunctive use of images “put into juxtaposition in separate lines,” an underlying union exists in his quasi-musical analogy of the “visual chord.” The image assumes a unifying function within Hulme’s modern poem, while also encompassing the representational aims of the poet. In identifying the “state” the poet “feels” as integral to poetic production, Hulme’s schema appears reminiscent of earlier formulations on the powers of the poet as a privileged seer, or one gifted with the ability to articulate perception.⁴

But it should also be noted that the modernity of the image in Hulmeian aesthetics is in the expression of the *visual* perception of the poet. His primary mode of articulation is through the image as distinct from the verbal prolixity or sublimity of earlier poetic traditions. As Hulme puts it in his poem “The Poet”:

Over a large table, smooth, he leaned in ecstasies,
In a dream.

He had been to the woods, and talked and walked with trees.
 Had left the world,
 And brought back round globes and stone images,
 Of gems, colours, hard and definite. (49.1-6)

The descriptive analogue of “hard” and “definite” gems with “colours,” alongside the later invocation of “stone images,” demonstrates visual and textural clarity as a significant part of Hulme’s aesthetic intentions. But certain Imagists were considerably more polemic in relation to the discursive means whereby the poet conveys perception. Indeed, Pound makes direct prescriptions regarding the image, representation and what is suitable therein: the poet is prompted to use the image in order to avoid reproducing what is seen. The image should not, in Pound’s view, be purely representational and should not correspond directly to its visual referent: “The image is the poet’s pigment [...]. He should depend, of course, on the creative, not upon the mimetic or representational” (Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* 86). The corollary of such an assertion would seem to be that the purely mimetic image is uncreative. But can a poetic image so consistently associated with visuality—as in Imagist theory—ever escape the mimetic?

The relationship between the image and mimesis highlights the problems emerging when any group of poets is subsumed under a generalising stylistic or conceptual aegis. Although the fissile nature of the Imagist movement is well-documented,⁵ an examination of its foundational aesthetic assumptions evinces disparate reactions to the nature of the image in poetic usage. Where Pound’s rhetoric prescribes the image in poetic practice as distinctly non-representational, Hulme’s insistence upon clear visuality as the stylistic apotheosis of the best new poetry means that the poetic is fundamentally and inescapably intertwined with the mimetic. For Hulme, however, the emphasis on the visual and the sensory in modern poetry is indicative of a movement in the nature of poetic tradition. Thus, in “Romanticism and Classicism,” Hulme writes that “Poetry that is not damp is not poetry at all” (75).

Hulme eschews Romantic concern with the transcendental in favour of “accurate description” (75). This enables him to interrogate the effectiveness of the best new poetry—Classicist verse—in the form of a question: “Did the poet have an *actually realised* visual object before him in which he delighted?” (81). His valorisation of “accurate description” suggests mimesis; moreover, Hulme situates the skill of the most accomplished poet in his ability “to make you continuously see a physical thing” (“Notes on Language and Style” 57). Such an endeavour suggests as much about the use of language in Imagist poetics as it does about the visual: how does the poet “make” the reader “see a visual thing”? Addressing this question, Hulme turns to language in “Notes on Language and Style,” remarking that:

Perhaps the nearest analogy is the hairy caterpillar. Taking each segment of his body as a word, the hair on that segment is the vision the poet sees behind it. It is difficult to do this, so the poet is forced to think up new analogies, and especially to construct a plaster model of a thing to express his emotion at the sight of the vision he sees, his wonder and ecstasy. If he employed the original word, the reader would only see it as a segment, with no hair, used for getting along. And without this clay, spatial image, he does not feel that he has expressed at all what he sees. (38)

Language is placed in conjunction with the poet’s vision and visual models that best express “what he sees.” Specifically, it is the clarification of the communicative powers of poetry *through* the image which Hulme values. His rhetoric continually reinforces a heightened relationship between the poet’s vision and the recreation of the visual in poetry. *Pari passu*, this analogical relationship implies that poetry is to be *viewed* rather than read. The continual stress on the poet’s “vision” coupled with the necessity of constructing a “plaster model” and the use of “clay” to conjure a “spatial image” suggests as much. Thus, the *tenor* of the image (its abstract meaning) and the *vehicle* of the image (the concrete picture) must coalesce. The desired visual clarity of Imagism would seem to efface any visual ambiguity, but the nature of a clarified/reified visual technique raises questions in terms of the essential differences between the visual and linguistic.

The ekphrastic simulacrum between poetry and the visual which Hulme vehemently expounds is long-standing (Horace's maxim "*ut pictura poesis*" [125], in its coupling of the painterly and the poetic, is one kind of example). Yet for many critics, the primacy of vision (whether in painting or other visual art forms) is not entirely consistent with the linguistic constitution of poetry. Writing and reading may indeed be visual in terms of the orthographic units placed in syntactic order and processed visually, by the eye. But the *interpretative* process involved in reading is different from the temporo-parietal immediacy in vision (although both factors might be related, separately, to intellection).⁶ As Michel Foucault avers in *The Order of Things*:

It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see. What we see never resides in what we attempt to show by the use of images, metaphors, similes. (10)

Foucault asserts the possibility of a methodological disparity between the visual and the linguistic, two entities long held to be analogous within Imagism (although his assertion pertaining to the futility of saying "what we see" is arguably rather overstated).⁷ For example, R. P. Blackmur inscribes a synonymy between the visual and the linguistic in his pejorative assessment of Imagism as "a mere lively heresy of the visual in the verbal" (374). Blackmur's quip, although intended to be derogatory, need not necessarily be seen as such; Pound himself asserts "the point of Imagisme is that it does not use images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech" ("A Retrospect" 4).

Yet in "A Retrospect," Pound posits the image as much more than a halfway point between the figurative and the locutionary. Rather, Pound suggests that images link multiple interpretative faculties:

An "Image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. [...] It is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom

from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest work of art. (4)

The image corresponds to a pattern in its ability to shape temporal instantaneity, while also mediating the intellectual and the emotional. However, this also suggests an aesthetic intention on the part of the poet (who does the patterning). Pound's use of the collectivising pronoun in his description of the efficacy of the image, as what "*we* experience in the presence of the greatest work of art" (my italics), signals a determinism of both the artwork and its experience.

If historicised, Pound's concern with the experiential nature of the image seems overtly Bergsonian in nature. The validity of such a conflation between philosopher and poet is suggested not only by the similarities in each writer's understanding of the function of the image, but also by the well-documented fact that Henri Bergson's theories of evolution, temporality and spatiality were at the very forefront of intellectual debate at the time Pound's "A Retrospect" was published.⁸ In *The Bergsonian Heritage*, Thomas Hanna points out that *L'Évolution Créatrice* (published in English as *Creative Evolution* in 1911), was "one of the rarities of philosophical literature, a smash" (16).⁹

Despite Pound's hostility to Bergson's theories,¹⁰ an examination of his conception of the image alongside Bergson's points to parallels between their respective conceptions of the image in terms of its function as a focal point for temporal intuitions and consciousness. Bergson stresses that:

While no image can replace the intuition of duration, many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may be the convergence of their action and direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized. (Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* 8)

The Bergsonian image—albeit not directly poetic—is implicated, like Pound's image, in a phenomenological process that structures the perceptive or intuitive faculties of the reader/subject in relation to space and time.¹¹

A reading of Pound's quintessential Imagist poem, "In a Station of the Metro," could be seen as a poetical enactment of Pound's image theory proffered in "A Retrospect". In the poem the reader is presented with:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough. (*Poems* 53.1-2)

The poem's timeless instant, not dissimilar to Bergson's sense of *la durée*,¹² functions through a superimposition of one image onto another. The conceptual *raison d'être* behind such an aesthetic manoeuvre lies in the very nature of the relationship between Imagist theory and the way in which the poem might be read. The poem certainly follows Pound's stylistic injunctions in "A Retrospect"—particularly the use of "no superfluous word" and "direct treatment of the thing" (3), together with the lack of any personal pronoun, verbs, comparatives or conjunctions. Moreover, the static imagery of the final line usurps the spectral mass motion of the first. Thus, the lines exist in opposition to each other.

A certain kind of movement, however, is necessitated on going from indeterminacy to a concrete image. The Imagist precept of stasis highlighted by Hulme's insistence upon the mind "arrested" is negated through the very process of reading Pound's poem. Shifting between the first and second lines of the poem invites an active movement from perception to object. The static imagery thus becomes animated, and while Pound's Imagist theory might posit the image as exempt from the limits of temporality and spatiality, the poem must be read—and is done so within the temporal framework of the reader's instant. Consequently, it might seem that there is an asymmetry between the theory that informs the poem and the actual reception and experience of that poem. And yet "In a Station of the Metro" is self-referentially concerned with the movement between two different states *in* reading; might it be possible to avoid the bracing either/or of past/present as the basis for the poem?

This allegedly atemporal movement of Imagistic theory becomes more problematic within the context of contemporary accounts of temporality in reading. The liminality of “In a Station of the Metro” lies in the movement between the quasi-spectral “apparition of these faces” to the more concrete referent of “Petals on a wet, black bough.” But movement, as Jacques Derrida suggests, is problematic in textuality:

[W]e talk about “movement” in the very terms that movement makes possible. But we have been always already adrift in ontic metaphor; temporalization is the root of a metaphor that can only be originary. The word *time* itself, as it has been understood in the history of metaphysics, is a metaphor which *at the same time* both indicates and dissimulates the “movement” of the auto-affectation. All these concepts of metaphysics—in particular those of activity and passivity [...] *cover up* the strange “movement” of this difference. (26)

Derrida’s invocation of the Heideggerian “ontic metaphor”¹³ means that movement itself is the depiction of movement; movement efficaciously creates its own conditions to move *through* temporality, while never departing from an originary point. The temporal representation of movement inexorably inches forward, indicating its own progression, while simultaneously covering its tracks. By asserting the “originary” centrality of metaphoric temporality, Derrida can disseminate what he regards as besetting binaries that plague metaphysical thinking about time: those of activity and passivity.

“In a Station of the Metro” also contains a movement that pivots around a binary; namely the movement from the liminal (the apparitional) to what in Heideggerian parlance might be termed the ontic (objects in-the-world). But by resisting the desire to fix the image movement of the poem as *active* or *static*, as a precondition to the authorial foisting of one reading valence upon the reader, the poem can offer an alternative to the trap of Imagist temporality where readers passively reinforce the poem’s intended effect. Pound himself declared that the poem represents “the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward

and subjective" (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 89). His intention seems to be to enact a strange movement in the transformation of the objective into the subjective. But this movement from the objective to the subjective is in fact a trans-categorical movement which depends upon the unions which the image can effectuate, temporally and experientially. Both the internality of the reader and the onticity of the image conjoin in this movement; they are simultaneously conditioned by the sublation of each element through their interdependence. In reading the poem, both the reader (as a localisation of subjectivity) and the image (as a vehicle of intention) are interrelated and depend upon one another. Just as the Romantic symbol necessitates a union—whether it is the contingent and the absolute, or the temporal and the trans-temporal—Pound's poem works through a yoking together of different contingencies: the reader and the image.¹⁴ The image seems to invite a movement of the indeterminate into the experiential which grants the poem its duration. Of course, the image serves authorial intentionality, but this intention sits alongside the faculties of the poem's reader.

Assigning equal importance to the existence of authorial intention within the image *and* readerly inference avoids granting either a dominating role. While the critic John Gage acknowledges both authorial intention and readerly subjectivity as parameters for reading Imagism, he presents Imagist authorial intention—with its artifice of temporality and excessively static quality—as belying a more negative interpretative fixity; thus:

The temporal activity of reading may be manipulated in such a way as to give the reader the illusion of instantaneity. What we seek, then, are the ways in which structure may be used to give the reader the illusion of "no process." The Imagists chose structures which allowed them to convince the reader that the mind is "arrested with a picture" by manipulating the way in which the reader's experience "runs along to a conclusion." (Gage 107)

To borrow Derrida's terms, Gage alleges that Imagism attempts to "cover up" the manipulation of temporality and the reading process by subsuming the reader and driving him or her towards "conclusion."

Within the context of T. E. Hulme's poetic theory, however, poetry is valuable precisely because it lacks the supererogatory qualities of prose, which is presented as the true manipulator of consciousness towards conclusion:

The direct language is poetry, it is direct because it deals in images. The indirect language is prose, because it uses images that have died and become figures of speech. The difference between the two is, roughly, this: that while one arrests your mind all the time with a picture, the other allows the mind to run along with the least possible effort to a conclusion [...]. One might say that images are born in poetry. They are used in prose [...]. Now this process is very rapid, so that the poet must continually be creating new images, and his sincerity may be measured by the number of his images. ("A Lecture on Modern Poetry" 66).

In Hulme's terminology, the image "arrests," but such an idea merely reinforces the inanimate nature of the static active/passive binary in which Imagism has been implicated by Gage. Are there no other interpretative options? The Derridean complexities inherent when premature binaries are imposed on the movement within textuality suggest the necessity of adopting a more complex notion of movement in relation to Imagist aesthetics. In this way, Imagism appears to be a far more heterogeneous practice. Furthermore, it becomes a practice that fails to fit or coalesce with its own theoretical precepts.

By examining the poetics of the (supposedly) paradigmatic Imagist, Hilda Doolittle,¹⁵ slippages become apparent within the conception of Imagism as a practice and as a poetics with a vexatious relationship to movement and poetic reading. While the static quality expounded in Imagist theory might seem particularly applicable to an image-centred poem like H. D.'s "Sea Poppies", there is also movement. The poem presents:

Amber husk
fluted with gold,
fruit on the sand
marked with a rich grain
(21.1-4)

The fecund imagery in the opening stanza certainly seems static, but movement is suggested at the conclusion of the short poem as the reader is presented with a flower:

Beautiful, wide-spread,
 fire upon leaf, what meadow yields
 so fragrant a leaf
 as your bright leaf?
 (21.13-14, 16)

The rhetorical question draws the reader into an interrogative process, and the poem seems more of an exchange between speaker and reader. In a parallel to “In a Station of the Metro,” the reader needs to actively make the connection between the disparate images of the poem. *Contra* the passivity of reflecting upon an image, Philip Nicholas Furbank adduces the active nature of the phenomenality of the poetic image in the fact that:

You can never stand back and scrutinize a mental image, since you are fully occupied in creating it—it represents your consciousness in action. (13)

The imbricating action of consciousness is similarly invoked in Pound’s “L’Art, 1910,” where the lack of any syntactic contiguity implicates the reader in joining the antithetical images of the poem; indeed, the poem signals its own referentiality as a lexical and visual object by conflating scene-setting and scene-setter with the reader through juxtaposition:

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white coth,
 Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes.
 (*Shorter Poems* 118. 1-2)

The imperative to “feast our eyes” collapses the subject/object binary of the poem and prompts the reader into a simultaneity of the visual realm, and the stasis of the image is abrogated by the reader. Recognition of the active nature of the consciousness of the reader is not only

a counter to the stasis of the image but, in conjunction with a more complex notion of temporal movement, it also erodes the boundaries of the Imagistic “instant,” temporally entrapping the reader.

What I am trying to suggest is that, despite their temporal conflation in the inauguration of Imagism and an interlarding personal and professional trajectory, both Pound and H. D. exhibit a far more inter-subjective aesthetic within the reading mechanics of their poetry than Imagist theorisations of reading might permit. This is not to disallow aesthetic theorising within the context of Imagism’s self-situation, nor to delimit pertinent theorising of an Imagist aesthetic, but rather to urge a productive and generative tension between theory and practice, collectivisation and singularity. In H. D.’s “Sea Gods,” the reader is situated in the present as the speaker tells that:

They say there is no hope—
sand-drift-rocks-rubble of the sea—
the broken hulk of a ship,
hung with shreds of rope,
pallid under the cracked pitch.
(29.1-5)

The speaker’s declaration “They say there is no hope,” which functions as an animating voice, although it never employs the personal pronoun, suggests the futility of the enterprise the poem expounds. Such an atmosphere of hopelessness is heightened by the Imagistic description of a ship “broken” and “cracked.” However, the tonal movement from hopelessness to a certainty that “you will thunder along the cliff— / break-retreat-get fresh strength— / gather and pour weight upon the beach” (31.45-47) makes the absent sea gods present. The earlier absence of the “Sea Gods” is negated through prolepsis as expressed by the repetition of “you will”...“you will.” In a mantra-like anaphora the speaker envisages that:

you will come,
you will answer our taut hearts,
you will break the lie of men’s thoughts,
and cherish and shelter us. (31.57-60)

"Sea Gods" employs numerous verbs—come/answer/break/cherish—in traversing from present to future; the movement in temporality is echoed in the proliferation of the various verbs. The poem is far more complex than prescriptive Imagist ideas of stasis can account for. It seems more apt to say that there exists a salient tension *between* movement and stasis within the poem.

The recurrence of such binaries in Imagism—animate/inanimate, active/passive, dynamic/static—is given a suggestive gloss by Daniel Tiffany in *Radio Corpse—Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound*. Tiffany situates the inanimate as a significant thematic preoccupation of Pound's Imagism and links this with the posthumous. As a result Tiffany argues that Pound is engaged in "necrophilia of the image." Tiffany continues:

Indeed, by constructing the Imagist movement as an empty crypt, Pound wrote into history the return of the phantom inhabiting that empty place. In this regard, there is a fundamental correspondence between the fictional character of the Imagist movement and the phantasmagorical properties of the mythic image [...]. Occasionally, the poet assumes the voice of a dead person, but more frequently he is visited or haunted, by the *images* of the dead, by ghosts. Thus Pound's earliest conception of the Image not only emerges from the grave but presupposes a profound state of passivity. (53)

Tiffany's ostensibly startling correlation of spectral imagery with a more deep-seated concern with the deadly seems less idiosyncratic when read alongside an inverse exposition of the nature of the image. As Remy de Gourmont writes in 1902:

Without the visual memory, without that reservoir of images from which the imagination draws new and infinite combinations, there is no style [...]. It alone permits us to transform [...] every second-hand metaphor, even every isolated word—in short to give life to death [...]. Language is full of clichés which originally were bold images, happy discoveries of metaphorical power [...]. A great step has been taken towards simplification [...]. But the progress is greater still when the world of signs does not appear before our eyes in any perceptible form, when the words confined in the brain pass, as if by some distributing apparatus, directly from their pigeonholes to the tip of the tongue or the pen, without any intervention of the consciousness. (115; my italics)

The delineation of consciousness as an intrusion upon the process of creating style might similarly be seen to de-animate the poet.¹⁶ Gourmont's revivification of metaphor through the visual memory points towards another discipline where the image and spatiality/temporality are prominent factors. Furthermore, this discipline offers interpretative possibilities which run contrary to such overdetermined readings of the image as static and the reader as passive that plague Imagism. Indeed, just as Tiffany invokes the discourse of radioactivity, surgery and psychoanalysis *inter alia* in his explication of the posthumous in Pound's Imagism, this art form offers a different account of the image.

Photography, like Imagist poetics, is directly concerned with capturing images in an apparently static state. In a thematic parallel to Daniel Tiffany's linkage of the Poundian image with death, photography has also been seen as a *memento mori*. As Roland Barthes famously puts it in *Camera Lucida*, the photograph is concerned with "the return of the dead" (9). Indeed, just as Gourmont envisages metaphor via the visual memory as breathing "life into death," Barthes conceives of the photographic image as traversing the boundary of death through an inter-subjective engagement with the temporal moment of the photograph. Such a temporal moment is present via the photographic referent, but in reality, past. Writing about a photograph of his dead mother, Barthes expounds his notion of how "it animates me and I animate it" (20). The viewer thus has a revivifying power that transcends the binaries of space and time, subject and object. The inter-subjective nature of the Imagist poem is thus more suited to a paradoxical notion of the temporal moment as simultaneously present and deferred. Moreover, accommodating readings of the Imagist poem as a temporally contingent aestheticized form that also works within an exponential development of readerly temporality ensures that both readers and critics avoid the reduction of Imagism to an aesthetic *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*.

Writing on the photograph, Geoffrey Batchen suggests that:

The photograph presumes to capture, as if in a vertical archaeological slice, a single, transient moment from a linear progressive movement made up of a numberless sequence of just such moments. Photography apparently figures itself as a progressive linear movement from past to future. The present during which we look at the photographic image is but a staging point, a hallucinatory hovering that imbricates both past and future. (93)

An example of an Imagist subverting “linear” movement is to be found in H. D.’s “Mid-day” where a myriad of heightened moments suggest the presence of an overwrought subjectivity: “a split leaf crackles on the paved floor,” “A slight wind shakes the sea-pods,” “the shrivelled seeds / are split on the path” (10.3, 5, 13-14). Each moment of the poem corresponds to the speaker’s emotional state, thus “I am startled,” “I am anguished—defeated” (10.2, 4). The poem interlards temporality, emotive inflection and image. However, the moments of action and the emotional typology of the speaker develop into something more negational as:

My thoughts tear me,
I dread their fever,
I am scattered in its whirl
I am scattered like
the hot shrivelled seeds. (10.8-12)

The temporal specificity of the poem as represented by the title “Mid-day” intimates a moment of temporal demarcation, but the more immediate present of the speaker’s utterance creates a more continuous present that transcends the boundaries of one emotive refraction, or, indeed, of one moment. The disparate moments of the lyric-confessional “I” become disjunctive, vacillating between positions and locations:

yet far beyond the spent seed-pods,
and the blackened stalks of mint,
the poplar is bright on the hill,
[...].
O poplar, you are great
among the hill stones,

while I perish on the path
among the crevices of the rocks. (10.18-20, 23-26)

H. D.'s realisation of an inter-subjective framework is based upon her speaker's compaction of a painful emotive state and the more transcendent potentiality of location. "Mid-day" shifts the boundaries of self and object in order to play the immanence of natural conjunction against more cruel individuation.

Such a technique is far from uncommon in H. D.'s Imagist writing. "Oread," like Barthes's notion of an inter-subjective realm between viewer and dead object, co-mingles the disparate realms that the poem expounds. Although the poem's title alludes to an individual nymph in Greek mythology, the determiner "*our* rocks" coupled with pronoun "*over us*" hints, mysteriously, at some collective (55.4-5; my italics). The sharp images, as concurrent with Imagist poetic theory of "direct treatment of the thing," involve no expository, comparative or figurative linkage between the realms of sea, tree and self; but the borders between these areas are erased, as exemplified by "pools of fir" (55.6). In "Oread" sea becomes "pines" and pines "splash [...] on our rocks" (55.2-4). The fusion of the seemingly incongruous elements of the poem—sea and tree—into an inter-subjective realm of perception evokes fusion and interconnectedness; there is no first person pronoun in "Oread." The inter-subjective moment of this Imagist poem defies the static aesthetic of Imagist prescription while losing none of its clarity. To re-introduce Worringer's terminology, "crystalline" might seem more apposite as a description of its quality.

Yet, that adjective connotes a de-animated state; the image is by no means static in H. D.'s early Imagist poetry. In "Sea Rose" the reader is presented with the "Rose" of the poem in a static focus:

Rose, harsh rose,
marred and with stint of petals,
meagre flower thin,
sparse of leaf, (5.1-4)

However, the stasis is undercut when:

You are flung on the sand,
 you are lifted
 in the crisp sand
 that drives in the wind. (5.10-13)

"Sea Rose" involves the reader in an analogous interrogative process to that of "Sea Poppies." The concluding question of the poem animates the earlier descriptive stasis of the poem by implicating the object/image of the poem within the rhetorical question projected towards the reader, as the speaker asks:

Can the spice-rose
 drip such acrid fragrance
 hardened in a leaf? (5.14-15)

While such an ending might suggest an over-determined manipulation of the image by subsuming the reader within the framework of the poem, the interpretative dynamic is more accurately—and actively—described as one of *exchange*. Like the Barthesian photograph that defies causality, temporality, and subjectivity in an inter-subjective moment, H. D.'s "Sea Rose"—along with her aforementioned Imagist poems—defies the imposition of a unilinear or static framework.

Complicity with certain Imagist traits might be seen as an affront to interpretative autonomy, but ultimately this confines poetic individuality. By using the image as both a poetic and conceptual tool (which problematize the theoretical tenets of Imagism in various ways), H. D.'s poetics cast new interpretative light on her Imagist compatriots. By suggesting the usefulness of re-examining the function of the Imagist image against the grain of authorial or theoretical intentionality, and simultaneously applying interdisciplinary methods of interpretation, the reader can (to borrow an image from H. D.'s in "Sea Gods") stand on the "shore" of interpretation, where poetic intentionality and reading practice interconnect. By recognising the relative ephemerality¹⁷ of Imagism as a "school," and resisting the urge to inscribe a false correlation between voluminous Imagist theory and the more diverse Imagist

practices, the critic can avoid the perils of the Imagist “crypt.” Indeed, just as Imagism gives way to a Vorticist notion of the image as an “idea”—while not detracting from its historical importance—the proliferation of labels in Imagist theory gives way to a more diverse form of poetic practice, with multiple conceptual/interpretative possibilities. Finally, the images of Imagist poetry are as active as the interpretative energies of that poem’s reader.

Cologne

NOTES

¹For a discussion of visual arts in Modernism see Glen Macleod.

²A notable example can be found in William Wordsworth’s desire to elicit a “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (498). Also see the first chapter of William K. Wimsatt’s influential *The Verbal Icon*.

³Hulme applies Worringer repeatedly in his essay “Modern Art and its Philosophy” (1914). For a contextualization of Hulme’s reading of Worringer, see Beasley (esp. 4-5). Worringer’s explication of the “life-denying,” “inorganic” and “crystalline” neatly aligns with Imagism’s aesthetic concerns regarding stasis, energetics and the adamantine in poetic texture, all of which will be traced in Hulme, Pound and H. D. throughout the course of this essay.

⁴In *The Defence of Poetry*, Shelley situates the role of the poet as an interpreter of both how things are and should be; thus, “Poets were called, in earlier epochs of the world, legislators or prophets [...] he beholds the present intensely as it is and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered” (5). The similarity is particularly ironic within the context of Hulme’s vehement attacks on Romanticism in his “Romanticism and Classicism.”

⁵See the volume *Imagist Poetry*, edited by Peter Jones (esp. 13), and William Pratt describing Pound’s coinage “The Amygists” in *The Imagist Poem* (30).

⁶For a cogent exploration of the visual-verbal analogy in contemporary aesthetic and cognitive theory, see Hans Lund, *Text as Picture*.

⁷Immediate sense and comprehension, which is privileged in the naturalisation of the meeting of the pictorial with sight, is also a valorisation of concision that underscores many disciplines, but not always in terms that exalt the immediacy of the pictorial. For example, the mathematical jest—an equation tells a thousand pictures.

⁸For a discussion of the importance of Bergson’s theories in relation to Modernism see Richard Lehan’s chapter “Bergson and the discourse of the Moderns” in *The Crisis in Modernism*. See also Mary Ann Gillies’s “Bergsonism: Time Out of

Mind" in *A Concise Companion to Modernism*, and her *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*.

⁹It must also be pointed out, however, that Bergson attracted vociferous criticism, as in the case of Wyndham Lewis's polemical attack in *Time and Western Man* (102).

¹⁰Hugh Kenner expounds such disagreement in *The Pound Era* (242).

¹¹Such a feature relates to Modernism's most famous—arguably quasi-Romantic—innovations in relation to aesthetic transcendence. Examples would include James Joyce's practice of the epiphany in *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" or the *souvenir involontaire* of Marcel in Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann*.

¹²In Bergsonian metaphysics, *la durée* is subjective, psychological, non-spatial time; cf. his *Creative Evolution* (23).

¹³Heidegger's fullest account of the ontic as "is-ness" is located in section I, "Exposition of the question of the meaning of Being," subsection H.11, part 4: "The ontological priority of the question of Being," in *Being and Time* (32).

¹⁴For an elegant exposition of the epistemological assumptions within the Romantic symbol across different national traditions of Romanticism, see Nicholas Halmi's *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (1-26).

¹⁵Hugh Kenner reports the—quasi-mythic—incident in *The Pound Era*, when "Pound, with a slashing pencil, made excisions from her [Hilda Doolittle's] 'Hermes of the Ways' and scrawled 'H. D. Imagiste' at the bottom of the page before sending it off to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry*" (171-74).

¹⁶Gourmont might be more correctly seen as an influence upon Imagism rather than as Imagist. See Pound's "Remy De Gourmont" in his *Literary Essays*.

¹⁷For a discussion of the historical importance of Imagism, see Stephen Spender *The Struggle of the Modern* (110), and T. S. Eliot's 1953 speech, "American Literature and American Language" in *To Criticize the Critic*.

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“As I have heard Jeeves put it”:
A Response to Lawrence Dugan’s
“Worcestershirewards: Wodehouse and the Baroque”*

LAURA MOONEYHAM WHITE

Lawrence Dugan’s very interesting attempt to draw a clear line between P. G. Wodehouse’s achievement in the first-person narratives of Bertie Wooster and in the rest of Wodehouse’s work is worth the notice of all Wodehouse scholars. Dugan is right that we have not fully explored the gap between Bertie’s babbling stew and the language Wodehouse uses elsewhere, both as a third-person narrator (as in most of his fiction) and in the dialogue he creates for other characters in the Jeeves-Wooster saga and elsewhere. It is Dugan’s contention that Bertie represents a unique development in Wodehouse’s work, and possibly a modernist achievement in its own right. In my response, I would like to focus on one of the markers of Bertie’s speech that Dugan finds as constitutive of the true, the rare, the real Bertie: his “misquotations” (241).

Dugan is correct to argue that what marks Bertie’s allusiveness as peculiarly his own follows in large part from Bertie’s status as a first-person narrator. Here a basic problem of narrative emerges: how to draw a believable line between the knowledge of the author and that of his characters. Wodehouse has read everything that Bertie has, and more, and Bertie shows off a good deal of Wodehouse’s reading, yet Bertie cannot be depicted as erudite. Wodehouse does a better job with this problem than some of his fellow writers in the modernist era. When one reads Virginia Woolf, for example, one feels that the

*Reference: Lawrence Dugan, “Worcestershirewards: Wodehouse and the Baroque,” *Connotations* 20.2-3 (2010/2011): 228-47. For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debdugan02023.htm>>.

consciousness presented in character after character is basically Woolf's own, or that it is at least the consciousness she hopes the reader will *believe* is hers. Similarly, for all the large cast of works like *Absolom, Absolom!* or *As I Lay Dying*, there is a sameness in Faulkner's mode of representing first-person thought, underpinned by the reader's sense that Faulkner must himself have thought this way, luxuriating in his word choices and piling on descriptive clauses, each more redolent than the last. The problem Wodehouse faces is how to mine the rich repository of classical, Biblical, and English literature in the Bertie narratives without damaging our sense of Bertie as a fool.

Bertie's education in this regard is key: some explanation of his wide if deeply errant knowledge of literature can be explained by his attendance at Malvern House (fictional), Eton (real), and Magdalen College, Oxford (real), and we are further to understand that at Malvern House Bertie once received the yearly prize for Scripture knowledge. Admittedly, at the comic climax of *Right Ho, Jeeves*, the drunken Gussie Fink-Nottle claims Bertie's prize was not fairly earned:

"[O]f course, Bertie frankly cheated. He succeeded in scrounging that Scripture-knowledge trophy over the heads of better men by means of some of the rawest and most brazen swindling methods ever witnessed even at a school where such things were common. If that man's pockets, as he entered the examination-room, were not stuffed to bursting-point with lists of the kings of Judah—" (503)

But Gussie's charge aside, there is ample proof that Bertie knows his Bible, even though his quotations of Scripture are usually partial, inapposite, or mangled. Here from the opening chapters of *How Right You Are, Jeeves* are several moments in which Bertie brings the language of the *King James Bible* to the fore:¹

At this moment of nervous tension the telephone suddenly gave tongue again, causing me to skip like the high hills, as if the Last Trump had sounded.

(32; the reference is to Psalms 114:5-6, "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? / Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?")

Anyway [...] he poured out his soul to me, and he hadn't been pouring long before I was able to see that he was cut to the quick. His blood pressure was high, his eye rolled in what they call a fine frenzy, and he was death-where-is-thy-sting-ing like nobody's business.

(36; from 1 Corinthians 15:55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?")

Years ago, "Kipper" Herring and I had done a stretch together at Malvern House, [...] the preparatory school conducted by that prince of stinkers, Aubrey Upjohn M.A., and had frequently stood side by side in the Upjohn study awaiting the receipt of six of the juiciest from a cane of the type that biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, as the fellow said.

(7; from Proverbs 23:32, on wine: "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder").

Bertie's Scripture knowledge does not seem to mark him as learned, however, because he applies it with such steadfast infelicity. And this tonal gap is just one of the devices by which Wodehouse camouflages Bertie's allusiveness. In fact, an essential feature of Bertie's ready employment of literary gems, including Biblical passages, is his disregard of source material; considerations of the original's history, plot, tone, or theme are wiped away. The reader is not allowed the time to weigh and remember the source material; instead, one simply registers the comic gap between the seriousness of the original text and its new employment in the service of farce.² After all, Wodehouse's favorite incidents from Scripture seem to be the narratives concerning Jezebel (eaten by dogs), the boys who mocked the prophet Elisha (eaten by bears), and Herod's slaughter of the innocents. Any sober reflection on these incidents, it need scarcely saying, would occasion somber and even spiritually provoking thought, but serious reflection is exactly what the farcical pace of Bertie's speech and the pell-mell development of plot preclude.

Bertie's allusiveness is also rendered believable by his incapacity to think historically. Though he quotes authors from Solomon to Conan

Doyle, he has no sense of the past. One of Wodehouse's running gags links Bertie's ignorance of the past to his presumption that knowledge begins and ends with his own time and his own set of friends. For instance, Kipper Herring asks Bertie if he knows Thomas Otway, and the response is typical: "I don't believe so. Pal of yours?" (*How Right You Are, Jeeves* 98). If by chance Bertie seems to get something right, he will most often backtrack immediately: "So we were, you might say, rather like a couple of old sweats who had fought shoulder to shoulder on Crispin's Day, if I've got the name right" (7).

The surest way to make the reader believe Bertie has grounds for quoting this or that is for Bertie to cite Jeeves as his authority, and this device is Wodehouse's favorite way of rendering Bertie's erudition plausible. Thus, his accuracy, or partial accuracy, can be explained away because we are invited to imagine that Jeeves ladles out historical information as an adjunct to his duties as a valet; Bertie's statement that "[it is o]dd how all these pillars of the home seem to be dashing away on toots these days. It's like what Jeeves was telling me about the great race movements of the middle ages" marks a common theme (10). In fact, this latter technique is one Wodehouse relies upon perhaps too much in the later Jeeves/Wooster tales, but it is still funny to hear Bertie employ complicated tropes while giving credit to Jeeves: "I stood outside the door for a space, letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,' as Jeeves tells me cats do in adages, then turned the handle softly" (78). This rhetorical strategy can work with great economy, as we see when Bertie prepares to push Aubrey Upjohn into the lake: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune. Not my own. Jeeves's" (133). Or the joke can stand a lavish deployment, as when Jeeves is there in person to correct and/or complete the allusions Bertie half-remembers. Passages such as the following occur in every Bertie/Jeeves narrative:

[Bertie:] Do you recall telling me once about someone who told somebody he could tell him something that would make him think a bit? Knitted socks and porcupines entered into it, I remember.

[Jeeves:] I think you may be referring to the ghost of the father of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, sir. Addressing his son, he said, "I could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres, thy knotted and combined locks to part and each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porpentine."

[Bertie:] That's right. Locks, of course, not socks. Odd that he should have said porpentine when he meant porcupine. Slip of the tongue, no doubt, as so often happens with ghosts. (*How Right You Are, Jeeves* 116)

And to revert to Bertie's Scripture knowledge, in the following dialogue Wodehouse combines Bertie's putative Biblical familiarity with Jeeves's instruction for the following delicious colloquy:

[Bertie:] I know if anyone called me a carrot-topped Jezebel, umbrage is the first things I'd take. Who was Jezebel, by the way? The name sounds familiar, but I can't place her.

[Jeeves:] A character in the Old Testament, sir. A queen of Israel.

[Bertie:] Of course, yes. Be forgetting my own name next. Eaten by dogs, wasn't she?

[Jeeves:] Yes, sir.

[Bertie:] Can't have been pleasant for her.

[Jeeves:] No, sir.

[Bertie:] Still, that's the way the ball rolls. Talking of being eaten by dogs, there's a dachshund at Brinkley who when you first meet him will give you the impression that he plans to convert you into a light snack [...]. (118-19)

Jeeves thus serves as the primary cover for Bertie's allusions, and where Jeeves's role as tutor cannot explain Bertie's knowledge, Bertie's dog's breakfast of an education must perforce serve as explanation enough. In *How Right You Are, Jeeves*, Bertie cites Shakespeare (*Henry IV, Part II*, *Henry V*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Hamlet*, the latter multiple times), Omar Khayyam, Pope, the Psalmist, Matthew Arnold, the Brothers Grimm, Wordsworth, Robert Browning, Poussin, Burns, and Pater. Something of his education evidently stuck. And where his retention is least likely, plausibility is maintained by other comic devices. For instance, when Bertie gives us bits of the famous quotation about the Mona Lisa from Pater's *The Renaissance*, the credibility of the moment is made more credible by the comic device of

hyphenation; describing Aunt Dahlia's unhappiness, Bertie says "Quite a good deal of that upon-which-all-the-ends-of-the-earth-are-come stuff, it seems to me" (174). A similar trick is worked to justify Bertie's citation of Pope's *Essay on Man* when he describes Brinkley Court: "There's far too much of that where-every-prospect-pleases-and-only-man-is-vile stuff buzzing around for my taste" (18). And if all else fails, Wodehouse can make Bertie's scholarship plausible by inflicting him with a healthy dose of amnesia. Here is Bertie trying to remember Scott's *Marmion*, Canto VI, stanza 30, as he describes Roberta Wickham's reaction to the sufferings of her beloved, Kipper Herring:

She was, in short, melted by his distress, as so often happens with the female sex. Poets have frequently commented on this. You are probably familiar with the one who said, "Oh, woman in our hours of ease tum tumty tiddly something please, when something something something brow, a something something something thou." (142)

I would argue that Bertie's distinctive voice is strongly marked not merely by his allusions but by the many comic means Wodehouse employs to make them at all conceivable. Thus does Wodehouse distance himself from Bertie, for there is nothing Bertie knows that Wodehouse doesn't know as well. And Jeeves stands guard to keep Bertie from knowing too much, sometimes interfering in Bertie's affairs to keep him from certain paths of reading. Here is Jeeves explaining why he brought about the end of Bertie's engagement to Florence Craye: "I have had it from her ladyship's own maid [...] that it was her intention to start you almost immediately upon Nietzsche. You would not enjoy Nietzsche, sir. He is fundamentally unsound" (*Carry On, Jeeves* 33). But Wodehouse stands guard for Bertie as well, and thus every allusion Bertie makes comes through the complex comic sieve I have described in this response; these techniques are employed both to make the allusions plausible and to make them funny. Ultimately, it is important to recognize this sieve as one of the main techniques by which Bertie-speak is fashioned and by which

Wodehouse creates Bertie as a linguistic fashioner apart from all others of his creations.

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NOTES

¹Throughout the rest of this essay, I take most of my examples from the relatively late *How Right You Are, Jeeves* (1960) because by then Bertie's narrative practices are fully codified and predictable—though Wodehouse continues to display remarkable ingenuity within these self-chosen constraints.

²Wodehouse presumed most of his readers would recognize most of his quotations. Readers who do not do so are in a curious position, in that it is conceivable that they might infer that Bertie himself has come up with the various striking phrases he borrows. But if a reader catches some of the more obvious references, say, to *Hamlet*, then he or she learns to presume that when Bertie veers out of the vernacular, he is probably quoting—or misquoting—some venerable source.

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The Family Reunion: Eliot, James, and the Buried Life: A Response to Edward Lobb*

MIRIAM CHIRICO

One associates T. S. Eliot with his poetry far more than one remembers him as a playwright. This general lack of approbation makes it all the more rewarding to respond to Edward Lobb's essay about Eliot's play *The Family Reunion* (1939), a play whose poetic dialogue and modernist themes play a significant role in understanding Eliot's work as a whole. Lobb focuses on the use Eliot makes of a short story by Henry James, arguing that this intertextual connection proves fundamental to understanding the action of the play, a play where seemingly very little transpires save for the main character's spiritual conversion. In James's ghost story "The Jolly Corner" (1908), Spencer Brydon returns to his childhood home in New York after being away for years in Europe and confronts his alter ego, a corrupted version of himself that represents the person he could have been had he remained in America. Lobb demonstrates how Eliot's central character, Harry Monchensey, resembles Spencer Brydon in three specific ways: firstly, the protagonists' return to a childhood home provokes an examination of their "shadow" selves; secondly, both protagonists understand the construction of their identities as inherently divided; and thirdly, both come to terms with the innate evil that exists within them. However, their experiences contrast on one final point: while Spencer Brydon's journey ends in romance, Harry Monchensey repudiates romantic love in order to follow an austere, spiritual devotion.

*Reference: Edward Lobb, "*The Family Reunion*: Eliot, James, and the Buried Life," *Connotations* 18.1-3 (2008/09): 104-22.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/deblobb01813.htm>>.

Although the plot device of being reacquainted with a former self is mirrored in the works of these two writers, their respective genres of narrative fiction and drama differ; thus it is worthwhile to consider Eliot's depiction of the divided self as shaped by his preoccupation with the dramatic form as well as his philosophical conceptualization of time. Eliot's long-standing use of the theatrical metaphor to depict the self as wearing a mask appears in several dramatic monologues, not the least of which is "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." When Eliot turned to playwriting, he wrote his plays in verse for he believed that poetry could represent the deeper recesses of the human psyche, the waking consciousness that lay beneath the layers of the mask: "The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse" ("Dialogue" 34). Furthermore, by situating this exploration of the hidden self within a family reunion, Eliot depicts how the individual constructs a self in relation to the response of others, much as Prufrock is sensitive to the imagined commentary of his social set. In responding to Lobb's article, I wish to expand upon Eliot's ability to dramatize the internal consciousness upon the stage through a circular model of time, as well as to question Lobb's final point about Eliot's aim to depict multiple consciousnesses upon the stage.

In *The Family Reunion*, Harry Monchensey, the eldest son of Lady Amy Monchensey, returns to the family estate of Wishwood after years abroad, to join his aunts, uncles, and cousin Mary in celebrating his mother's birthday. Harry's wife has mysteriously died during their voyage at sea and some suspect that Harry pushed her overboard, an accusation he endorses because of his private longing to be rid of her. In his guilt, he from time to time envisions a silent group of watchers who stare at him with incrimination, designated as "The Eumenides," or "The Kindly Ones" in the list of characters. By referring to this group as the goddesses who protected the domestic sphere once they had been transformed from vengeful Furies by Athena, Eliot clearly indicates that he is re-writing or adapting the third play of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, *The Eumenides*. In Eliot's Christian overlay of the myth, Orestes's journey in exile¹ becomes Harry's penitential

wandering, as Harry discovers that the spectral accusers from whom he runs away can serve as his spiritual guides, pushing him towards salvation.

At the end of his essay, Lobb points out that what interested Eliot in James's work was the shift from the "depiction of the isolated consciousness to the interplay and conflict of multiple consciousnesses" (119), but it is quite difficult to depict the point of view of stage characters, much less their consciousnesses. Modernist poets and novelists frequently played with various means of penetrating the surface of realism and depicting life as perceived from subjective viewpoints. Rather than describing external details and factual events as the nineteenth-century realist writers had done, modernist authors described inward moments of feeling and perception, and thus their characters shared with readers the inner landscape of their minds. Virginia Woolf's novels, as one example of modernist experimentation, exhibited her technique of creating "tunnels" under each character filled with individual memories that colored his or her subjective responses to an event,² rendering in narrative form the model of consciousness that William James defined as an amalgamation of each human being's experience. Though novelists could portray this deeper psychological penetration through shifting points of view, free indirect discourse, or the technique of stream-of-consciousness, dramatists were limited in how they could represent a character's subjective experiences. In *Expressionist* plays the central character's inner psyche could be represented upon the stage through the use of foreboding settings, stilted language, as well as the practice of reducing supernumerary characters to their occupational or societal roles (e.g. "Guard" or "Husband"); these anti-realistic devices provided the central character's anguished vision of the world, but could only represent his limited perspective. In constructing a play about a family reunion, Eliot wished to depict not only Harry's spiritual turmoil, but his family's bewilderment in the face of his torment. Drawing upon the tradition of symbolist dramatists like Maeterlinck, Eliot used the suggestive qualities of poetic language to invoke the sensation of a

spiritual realm or a double-world on stage that only characters with a heightened consciousness could access. The term “double-world” is derived from Arnold Hauser, who, in *The Social History of Art*, describes this aesthetic development as the means of simulating a “second reality” that co-existed with the “ordinary, empirical reality”; artists such as Joyce and Kafka constructed a “double-sided existence” (235-36) in their stories, based on the overriding principle that “behind all the manifest world is hidden a latent world, behind all consciousness an unconscious” (220). In revealing his admiration for Dostoevsky’s characters, Eliot acknowledges this sensation of a double world, describing characters who seem to be “living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality from which we are shut out: their behavior does not seem crazy, but rather in conformity with the laws of some world that we cannot perceive” (“John Marston” 190)—a description that aptly characterizes Harry, who complains that his relatives “don’t understand what it is to be awake, / To be living on several planes at once” (*The Family Reunion* 266). In order to depict these multiple worlds dramatically, a feat difficult to achieve in fourth-wall realism, Eliot resorts to the flexible quality of verse poetry and alters the poetic diction of the characters’ dialogue.

Attesting to the limitations of prose dialogue, Eliot wrote that “what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once” (“John Marston” 189). Eliot’s language in *The Family Reunion* can be categorically divided into quotidian language and sacred language, or as Andrew K. Kennedy describes it, the naturalistic “speech of our time (‘the dialect of the tribe’)” and the liturgical “speech out-of-time (‘the musical order’)” (89). These two kinds of speech, juxtaposed throughout the play, create a double-layered structure to the world, the bourgeois surface reality and the deeper, subconscious reality of Harry’s spiritual quest.³ Lobb remarks that Mary’s descriptive comments about Harry allow us to gain an external, third-person perspective on his behavior, that “his self-loathing [might be] pathological in its extremity” (118), and illustrates how revealing multiple points of view

is a trait Eliot adopts from James (119). However, I would like to argue that Eliot cannot alternate between points of view as one does in fiction, but rather that he uses contrasting metrical forms and diction to dramatize the varying degrees to which his characters can access the subconscious realm. Even the characters' varying abilities to see the Furies that pursue Harry reveal the extent of their intuition, but the point of view is still Harry's.⁴

Writing in verse enabled Eliot to establish dramatically the distinction between actual, ordinary life and what could best be referred to as a sense of "felt life," according to Henry James. For Eliot, verse plays work on an audience on two different levels simultaneously, one which gives the play meaning and one which "intensifies our excitement by reinforcing it with feeling from a deeper and less articulate level" ("Need" 944). The conventional, drawing-room setting of the play reflects the empirical reality in which the characters reside; the mystical double realm is only accessed by certain characters in moments of lyrical intensity and indicates a shift from ordinary consciousness to a spiritual plane. Using a line of blank verse with four stressed syllables⁵ and colloquial diction, the aunts and uncles discuss the banalities of newspapers and telegrams, the English clubs, military widows, flower arrangements, inoculations, train schedules, life in a tropical climate, and "the strong cold stewed bad Indian tea" (*The Family Reunion* 225). Eliot then moves the same group of people into choral passages where they discard their individual identities and articulate darker fears that they dare not admit on a conscious level:

We do not like to look out of the same window, and see quite another
landscape.

We do not like to climb a stair, and find that it takes us down.

We do not like to walk out of a door, and find ourselves back in the
same room.

We do not like the maze in the garden, because it too closely resembles
the maze in the brain. (*The Family Reunion* 218)

In other words, the chorus of aunts and uncles collectively experience the same psychic fears, but refuse to acknowledge it, preferring

to live life superficially and disregarding the religious fear Eliot deems imperative for attaining “religious hope” (*Idea* 62).⁶ This alteration between naturalistic language and the choric imagistic language signifies aurally the double world and indicates moments when characters attain a sense of heightened consciousness; however, it is not the “interplay and conflict of multiple consciousnesses” that Lobb indicates (119) due to the limitations of the stage medium. The only psychological space represented in the play is Harry’s. On occasion, Mary and Agatha enter his inner turmoil as indicated by their rune-like, incantatory passages; Mary confirms the emotional undercurrents Harry experiences, detailing “the ache in the moving root / [...] / The slow flow throbbing the trunk / The pain of the breaking bud,” hinting at romantic interest in Harry, while Agatha cryptically intones the curse Harry must undo: “The eye is on this house / There are three together / May the three be separated” (*The Family Reunion* 257). The subconscious realm depicted upon the stage is Harry’s alone and represents his isolation.

Akin to the self-encounter experienced by James’s character Spencer Brydon, Harry’s reconstruction of his past self is influenced by returning to key childhood sites of his ancestral home, but his process is governed more by temporal influences than geographical ones. Agatha explains that the estate will awaken memories of his younger self, and that the current man will encounter “[...] the boy who left” (*The Family Reunion* 229), and Mary notes that here, at Wishwood, he will locate his “real self” (250). Even Harry acknowledges that his spiritual torment comes from a sense of judgmental fragmentation: “The degradation of being parted from my self, / From the self which persisted only as an eye, seeing” (272). But whereas Brydon’s alternate self appears like an “evil twin left behind at some fork in the road” (Lobb 114), Harry returns to a series of different selves he associates with the estate: a childhood self who met his cousin Mary by the hollow tree at midnight, or an adolescent self who returned from school to find this hideaway demolished, or the “day of unusual heat” when he learned as a child about the death of his father (*The Family Reunion* 260). Aga-

tha explains this “loop in time” that permits Harry to confront events from his past, when “[t]he hidden is revealed and the spectres show themselves” (229), and the chorus confirms this sense of temporal layering: “whatever happens began in the past, and presses hard on the future” (270).⁷ The ambiguity behind Agatha’s term “spectres” suggests that Harry could encounter a former self or former *selves*; he is not limited to finding just one “Harry.” Influenced by Henri Bergson’s metaphysical lectures at the Collège de France, Eliot depicts the self as existing multitudinously over time, as if a person’s life could be punctuated at intervals like a “loop in time” and contain a series of selves existing simultaneously.⁸ Bergson drew a contrast between the scientific view of time as a linear, mathematical measurement and a fluid model of time as *durée*, or real duration. He offered an image of a snowball, rather than a stream, to explain the connection between consciousness and time: “My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing—rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow” (171). With this model of time as cyclical in nature and amalgamating a series of experiencing selves, we can perceive how Eliot’s character does not simply encounter an *alternate self*, like James’s Brydon, but returns to reintegrate past selves.

In Henry James’s story, what frees Brydon from the burden of the criminal self he could have become is the presence of another person, the housekeeper Alice Staverton, who “sees” this black stranger as a ghost in a dream and acknowledges him. In her willingness to allow for this darker side of Brydon, she “performs a therapeutic, even a religious role; she accepts that the ghost is not the present Brydon [...], but tries to bring him to a recognition that it represents a real part of his present psyche” (Lobb 112). The words that Lobb uses, *therapy*, *religious*, *recognition* (also known as *anagnorisis* in Greek tragedy), and *psyche*, are reminiscent of the deep connection between religion and psychology that Eliot likewise underscores with the mythological background of his play. But more important is the social construction of identity that both authors depict, that is, how identity depends on

an interactive process with another individual; Alice demonstrates mature love, Lobb explains, by embracing Brydon despite all his faults, an action that propels him towards self-acceptance. And certainly Eliot's emphasis on a family re-*union* serves as a reminder that Harry's individual consciousness is not an atomic unit, but part of a social whole. Therefore, it is especially significant that Harry rejects Mary's romantic overtures because he feels a relationship with her would anesthetize his soul. Instead of the possibility of sexual fulfillment, he elects solitary, penitential wandering in order to absolve the ancestral home of its foundational sin: his father's adulterous liaison with Agatha and the homicidal wish to murder his wife.

Eliot is only able to dramatize Harry's spiritual sensitivity and acceptance of sin by shifting from the naturalistic plane that the relatives observe, to the psychological time of Harry's inner action, illuminating the difference between the secular and the sacred through ritualistic language and gesture.⁹ In order for Harry to understand his role in alleviating the family curse, he must step back in time to the origination of the sin; that is, he must recuperate his father's illicit emotions by temporarily adopting his father's role. Harry and Agatha begin a conversation in lyrical verse that contrasts with the dominant verse pattern. Agatha reveals to Harry the adulterous relationship she shared with his father and his father's intention to kill his wife while she was pregnant with Harry. Agatha furthermore informs Harry that he is the "consciousness of [his] unhappy family" and that he must "resolve the enchantment under which we suffer" (*The Family Reunion* 275) by undertaking a journey. But this conversation moves beyond simply imparting information; as the two engage in a quasi-ritualistic dialogue, they appear to enter a hypnotic state, and they both step outside of time so that Harry can speak dialogue *as if he were* his father:

I was not there, you were not there, only our phantasms
And what did not happen is as true as what did happen
O my dear, and you walked through the little door
And I ran to meet you in the rose garden
(*The Family Reunion* 277)

The reference to the “rose garden,” a symbol of desire in Eliot’s poetry,¹⁰ indicates that Agatha and Harry’s father consummated their adulterous relationship years earlier and that this sin lingers upon the House of Monchensey. As the two temporal planes of the present moment and the past intersect, Harry takes on the role of his father in the scenario that Agatha recreates. William James observed that a person “*has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind*” [294; emphasis in original],¹¹ postulating that a person’s self may consist of the multiple images his friends and associates possess of him. Harry, who is told by several characters how much he resembles his father, discovers that both he and his father shared the same murderous intentions towards their wives. The moment when Agatha addresses Harry *as if he were his father*, he steps into his role and ultimately into his father’s errant self. Describing the process of transubstantiation in the theater, that is, the actualization of mystical phenomena, Carla Dente underscores this moment as the point when Harry discovers his “identity in sin” (143) through “a process of total identification with place [...] and [with his father’s] position” (142). Eliot’s own criticism speaks to such anachronistic movements in time, when he notes how a writer must compose with “the whole of literature in his bones” and maintain a sense “not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence” (“Tradition” 4); or how the practice of writing literary criticism “does not so much require the power of putting ourselves into seventeenth-century London as it requires the power of setting [Ben] Jonson in our London” (“Ben Jonson” 128). Through this communal interplay with Agatha, he transfers onto himself his father’s transgressions in a gesture that corresponds to Orestes’s inheritance of the sins of the House of Atreus, and begins his penitential journey.

Eliot’s deliberate choice of fourth-wall realism instead of a religious setting was a call to his audience to interrogate their own faith in the “world of surface reality as a total representation of existence” (Smith 116). He wished to use poetry to elevate his audiences, a goal he articulates in *Poetry and Drama*:

What we have to do is bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theater; [that the] audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: "I could talk in poetry, too!" Then we should not be transported into an artificial world; on the contrary, our own sordid dreary daily world would be suddenly illuminated and transfigured. (31-32)

Thus the nostalgic concept of "the road not taken" that Lobb detected in Eliot's work could be expanded to include the road or avenue that poetry can provide to its listeners, that is, access into a renewed vision of their ordinary world. Rather than complete the performance with Harry's departure, Eliot envisions the audience leaving the theater with a heightened sensibility to their own surroundings, prompted by the transformative quality of poetry.

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NOTES

¹According to Robert Graves, Orestes's exile lasted for one year, which was the designated period of time a homicide must be excommunicated from his fellow-citizens (394).

²See Edward A. Hungerford's article.

³Linda Wyman further divides the play's verse pattern into three groups: naturalistic (those speeches addressed to other characters), metaphoric (speeches that have double significance), and super-naturalistic (dialogues that are particularly heightened such as choruses, runes and "lyrical duets" (Eliot's term) (164-65).

⁴Carla Dente indicates this play is solely about Harry's personal perspective in "Enter Guilt on the Stage of Conscience." She writes about this secondary, spiritual level of the play: "the exploration of the murderous impulse, and the representation of the consequent psychic tensions experienced by a man who wants to pursue his real identity through the investigation into the origins and deepest meaning of this impulse in himself" (138).

⁵Marjorie J. Lightfoot discusses the arguments concerning how to scan the dominant verse of *The Family Reunion*. Eliot refers to the lines as having three stresses, while his director E. Martin Browne hears four. Grover Smith, Jr., scanning the lines, finds the same four-stress pattern that appears in *Everyman*. Leo Hamalian and Helen Gardner also identify the lyrics as four-stress rhythm, and Lightfoot agrees with them (260-61).

⁶The full quotation, as found in *The Idea of a Christian Society*, is “We need to recover the sense of religious fear, so that it may be overcome by religious hope” (62).

⁷The lines echo the beginning of “Burnt Norton”: “Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past” (“Burnt Norton” 1-3).

⁸Bergson’s philosophy is not the only one to influence Eliot’s thinking on time; writing his thesis on the philosophy of F. H. Bradley shaped his philosophical understanding of reality and time.

⁹Several critics refer to this combination of the sacred and profane in this play; see William V. Spanos’s article where he illuminates Eliot’s own connection between poetic drama and the Incarnation, “whereby the human is taken up into the divine” (6); and Anne Ward’s description of the Furies signaling a “religious apprehension of time”; as well as Theresa M. Towner, who notes how certain ritualistic devices allow Eliot to show “the soul in the process of liberating itself from the flesh that holds it” (65).

¹⁰Scholars have interpreted the rose-garden in Eliot’s poetry in varied ways: Helen Gardner refers to it as an inexplicable moment of joy or release; Morris Weitz considers it the junction between the eternal and temporal; and F. O. Matthiessen describes it as “the birth of desire”.

¹¹The full quotation, from ch. 10 of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), reads: “Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind. To wound any one of these his images is to wound him. But as the individuals who carry the images fall naturally into classes, we may practically say that he has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares” (294).

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Tragedy and Soap: Orton's *Good and Faithful Servant**

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In his essay on Orton's *Good and Faithful Servant* Maurice Charney argues that it is, for Orton, a strange sort of play.¹ He calls it a "Laodicean tragedy," on the grounds that "there is no road that could have been taken. The characters are paralyzed, frozen, rendered incapable of any action on their own behalf" (Charney 148). Certainly it is a peculiar work in the Orton oeuvre: though not, I think, easily definable as tragedy. But, of course, tragedy itself is not easily definable. Here, as in all cases, we have to ask what sort of tragedy it might be, what its elements are, whether the whole play is governed by tragic shape, and, if not, what relationship tragedy has to everything else. Indeed the play might turn out to be interesting culturally for the ways in which it—so to speak—contains tragedy.

1.

The main character George Buchanan seems to fit into a diligently classical tragic sequence. There is his hubris at his retirement, when he considers himself, erroneously, to be a significant and valued employee of the company, a doorman who "saw the Chairman of the Board several times" (84). He experiences a change of fortune when, after a conversation with someone who claims to have remembered

*Reference: Maurice Charney, "Joe Orton's Laodicean Tragedy: *The Good and Faithful Servant*," *Connotations* 18.1-3 (2008/2009): 139-50; Yael Zarhy-Levo, "Reconsidering Orton and the Critics: *The Good and Faithful Servant*," *Connotations* 21.1 (2011/2012): 86-100. For the original article please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debcharney01813.htm>>.

him as an employee, it turns out that the other person thought he was someone different. He comes to realize that the firm to which he was so loyal has next to no memory of him and that the gifts he has been given, as tokens of esteem, are worthless. As a result of this anagnorisis he smashes them apart. From here comes the final catastrophe, when he lies in bed weeping, and then dies. Tucked into an apparently realist television play broadcast in 1967 this quotation of a tragic sequence has an unsettled relationship to what's around it.

For the typical Orton style is also very evident, as in the sequence with Buchanan's newly discovered grandson Ray after a woman has been found under his bed. Edith blames "the sex-education"; Ray says he didn't get any but learnt from other boys, which cues Buchanan's almost inevitable line: "What kind of boys are these that teach each other about the family way?" (75). So, too, there are familiar parody targets, through Buchanan's invocations of the value of a "steady" job and the importance of family, views which can be taken to have been learnt from the "firm" to which he is such a loyal servant. But to these are added other areas of parody. In her speech on his retirement, the manager, Mrs Vealfoy, recalls George taking on "extra responsibilities" at the outbreak of the Second World War: "He shouldered his share of the burden which we all had in those days" (58). This is part of a series of references back to a shared recent past which Edith first mentions, using a standard 1960s cliché: "It was the conditions. You couldn't blame them. We were so frightened in those days." Later Buchanan will also invoke "the conditions" when he contrasts his own hardship with that of Ray (54, 75).

While discourse about "those days" was recognised in the 1960s as the rhetoric of an older wartime generation who censure the young, the play's parodic activity begins somewhere much wilder than this. When Buchanan first meets Edith, "as I came along, there seemed something familiar. Something about your stance. Something that awaked memories" (52). As she scrubs the floor, he relates a meeting with a woman who was "in difficulties by the roadside." Edith gives a cry, then when he names her stands up, with tears glistening in her

eyes: "It was me!" He recoils: "You!" She pulls off her plastic glove to reveal the ring on her hand. If we are not already associating this with the language of romantic film, Edith's tale will crank up the pressure. "I was turned out by my father. I wandered for a long time until I found somewhere to have the babies." But these are now dead, "Killed in Italy." "What," asks Buchanan, "were they doing so far from home?" "They were wounded in a skirmish and taken to a peasant's hut for shelter," and there they were inadvertently given water from a poisoned well (52-53). The wartime story in combination with unlikely melodramatic reversals suggests that the TV drama's very first scene in its realist workplace setting is simultaneously a quoted romantic film, the sort of thing, as we shall see, that Orton watched on TV.

This is a new sort of satiric mode for Orton. It sits alongside some of his more regular attacks, but it also sits with that miniature tragic sequence. George Buchanan is ambivalently positioned as tragic hero and parody of tragic hero. The tragic and parodic are alike driven by a similar sentiment. Charney notes that: "The humor, what there is of it, is bitter and accusatory" (139). In making its accusation the play sets its tragic sequence in a larger formal frame that is familiar from Orton's immediate cultural context. We shall look later at what significance tragedy has within it, but first that context needs description.

2.

The early 1960s saw a new fashion for satire, in which parody was a regular mechanism. This was marked most famously in *Beyond the Fringe* and its successors and imitators. By 1962, in the form of *That Was the Week that Was*, satire came to television. Many of the targets of this satire were contemporary politics, but *Beyond the Fringe* had also provoked outrage by lampooning the recent past. "The Aftermyth of War" parodied media representation of British achievements in the Second World War. It was, in brief, an attack on nostalgia. A similar

sort of attack, this time directed at an explicit cultural target, can be seen in the radio show *Round the Horne*, first broadcast in 1965. A regular sketch had Celia Molestrangler and Binkie Huckaback delivering an absurd version of the language and posturing of the 1945 film *Brief Encounter*. The characters' names evoke both the film specifically—through allusion to Celia Johnson—and old-fashioned west end theatre more generally, through allusion to Binkie Beaumont, the powerful (and gay) producer.

Contained within this ideological target, figured as nostalgia, are two elements. The first, and ideologically most effective, is a sense of real national history, a looking back to the war effort and to an image of a society felt to be more integrated than the present. Alongside this is the more obviously fictional evocation of a past offered by artworks, and in particular old films, in which familiar situations were handled in language and costumes that implied a supposedly more gracious society than that depicted in the works of the newer "kitchen-sink" realism. A younger, and satirical, generation rejected these references back to the war and to a fictionalised past. Orton, for example, tells us of his own cynicism about worn-out filmic vocabularies when he watches the 1932 *Shanghai Express*: "Very ridiculous. Well-worn clichés [sic] all the way. And no inkling that they were using them" (*Diaries* 79). Set in civil-war China in 1931, it concerns the relationship—and undeclared feelings—between an English Captain and Shanghai Lil, a prostitute, played by Marlene Dietrich. Orton's response was not simply a rejection of out-of-date filmic language and a romanticising of an imperial past. He detects within a twist of the story a revelation of the film's racism: "We cannot have the honour of a white Aryan tart soiled by a Chinaman. So a Chinese tart got stuffed instead." For those like Orton nostalgia had to be attacked because of the values it contained. Clichés of expression, sentimental history and racism—all of this may be taken to motivate Orton's other remark: "A most foolish story which I fully intend to pinch at some time in the future" (Orton, *Diaries* 79-80).

Yet even as these clichés and their values were being pilloried by educated young satirists, a new television serial looked as if it might buck the trend, as if, indeed, it might re-state a number of the cherished truths that England told about itself. This serial, trundling from week to week, was set in an imaginary north-western town, peopled with characters drawn from an imagined urban working class. *Coronation Street* was first broadcast in December 1960. It quickly became popular with audiences, getting to top of the ratings by September 1961. From that point on *The Street* became something of a national institution. And, as such, it was a repository of particular assumptions about nation and society. Richard Dyer has noted that the values of *Coronation Street* tended to conform to those expressed in Richard Hoggart's influential book *The Uses of Literacy*: "the emphasis on common sense, the absence of work and politics, the stress on women and the strength of women, and the perspective of nostalgia" (4). As Marion Jordan put it, "the ethos is that of nostalgia for vanished virtues" (35). And the consequence is a form of conservatism: while the serial celebrates the strength of women it assumes their position is given and inevitable. So, too, the nostalgia "consigns any lingering class consciousness to something that, to all intents and purposes, is in the past" (Dyer 5). If it brought representation of the working class to television, this was a version of realism very different from the "angry" plays of the late 1950s with their images of youthful alienation. *Coronation Street* was a working-class urban landscape mediated not through politics and critique but through "common sense," gossip and personal relationships. Not so much gritty, perhaps, as *woodchip*. It was realism under pressure from the sensationalism that aims to build and sustain viewing figures. Thus, famously, on 13 May 1964 one of the central female gossips, Martha Longhurst, died from a heart attack in her traditional place in the local pub. And the story-line moved out from the fictional serial to be taken up in news media coverage.

Martha died while, it seems, Orton was working on *Servant*. Lahr tells us that it was mainly finished in June 1964. There is no evidence,

however, that Orton watched *Coronation Street*. Certainly he did watch series such as *Dr Who* and, as we know, old films. And he read the letters pages of the *Radio Times* and *TV Times* where he found the English "equivalent of fascism" (Shepherd, *Because We're Queers* 147). He was also alert to what the press was talking about, and learnt its habitual language. But if he knew nothing of *Coronation Street* then we have to concede that he was independently writing something that played with some of its features. We've already noted the nostalgic looking backward. To this might be added the emphasis on women characters, with Mrs Vealfoy being a caricature of female "strength." The industrial work of the workplace is never shown but is instead replaced by "personal" scenes. And there is certainly no element of class consciousness. Within its world *Coronation Street* contained narratives of surprising returns, marital deceptions, sudden deaths. During the first two or three years a husband re-appears after 15 years, someone else returns after 50 years, a baby is stolen, Martha dies during a party in the pub. In a similar way the narrative of Edith's past, comically condensed, is replete with sudden revelations of death and birth: "This tablecloth belonged to the mother of our grandson. She left it me in her will." "Is she dead?" "She took her own life, poor dear" (63).

Quite apart from ethos, Orton was also careful about the mode and texture of *Servant*. It is positioned very precisely in relation to what has been called "Soap-Opera Realism" (Jordan 28). The opening image is of a corridor with closed doors from behind which come the sounds of typing and, faintly, a telephone. Edith, old, scrubs the floor. Buchanan, old, walks towards her, and us, and pauses, out of breath. The choice of characters and occupations, the orchestration of sounds, the perspective disciplined by the corridor, pulling us in: all are characteristic of the sort of penetration into real-life settings that TV drama seemed to offer, with its back-office activity in police stations and hospital wards. But, having set this up, the meeting of Edith and Buchanan slides into the texture of romantic fiction, with its tale of death by poisoned water. And Buchanan's appearance, too, must have

been slightly disconcerting—real, maybe, but not appropriately so. For Orton tells us that Donald Pleasance, as Buchanan, had adopted a “ghastly pair of false teeth. Quite macabre.” By contrast Hermione Baddeley as Edith was costumed in one of the overalls worn by the real canteen staff: “Very appropriate. Exactly right,” Orton notes. When he saw the completed recording, he was very pleased because “[i]t’s been directed and acted absolutely *real*.” And he notes that this had “astonishing results. H. Pinter says it’s like *The Battleship Potemkin*. I won’t go as far as this but it’s very good” (Orton, *Diaries* 75, 77, 78). Pinter’s admiration, even with its somewhat inscrutable analogy, suggests the territory we’re in. Like his own plays at that time it is recognisable both as a real world and yet something distilled, abstracted, from that world (Shepherd, *Cambridge Introduction*). Orton’s enthusiasm for accuracy of realism is combined with dialogue which tells of confused births and death in a peasant’s hut, a real canteen overall and macabre false teeth. It is realism that refuses to vouch for its trustworthiness.

While *Coronation Street* remained carefully trustworthy in terms of the coherence and conventions of its own world, its soap-opera realism is actually a mingling of social realism with other elements. Jordan notes the artily filmic linking devices, the caricatures of appearance and speech, and the use of comic patter. In the first episode in December 1960, Elsie Tanner confronts her son Dennis about being unemployed. He explains that employers always ask about “experience.” “Well you’ve got experience,” she says. “Not the right kind though” he replies (Nown 77). It’s a small step from this to Orton’s Ray. When Buchanan says his old firm would be delighted to employ him, Ray asks: “What about my outside interests?” (71). If we miss the possible innuendo about Dennis’s “experience,” it’s hard to avoid in the case of Ray’s “outside interests.” For Ray belongs with a series of young men that we now tend to see as typically “Ortonesque,”² often viewed either as Orton self-portraits or as images of the position in early 60s culture of male homosexuals in general. But as I have argued elsewhere (Shepherd, *Because We’re Queers*), it’s not only Orton who

created these figures. And what I haven't observed before is that they are there in *Coronation Street*. In 1961 the young Jed Stone returns to the street. He has been in a borstal, where he met Dennis Tanner. Both Jed and Dennis were conceived as a slightly dark criminal element in the narrative, but this quality was in practice sentimentalised. Dennis was always trying to make amends and found himself in some ridiculous situations (such as keeping seals in Annie Walker's bath); and Jed's criminality tended towards the handling of dodgy goods in the market. They are young men with criminal pasts who are not wholly integrated into family-centred society, yet they are at the same time engaging. It may be entirely coincidental that Orton later used one of their names for the pair of lads at the centre of *Loot* (1966).

So, while it cannot definitively be established that Orton was specifically parodying *Coronation Street*, it can be said with confidence that he was attacking the attitudes of a culture which made *Uses of Literacy* into a best-seller. These attitudes included an emphasis on common sense above class consciousness, a stress on the strength of women, moral panics about young people, a sentimentalised version of the working class, and an inclination towards nostalgia. It was *Coronation Street's* business—literally—to weave these attitudes into stories replete with emotional crisis. But it was doing so in a world that had also developed scepticism about moral panic, nostalgia and even community. From a satirist's point of view the capacity of any form straightforwardly to represent contemporary emotional crisis becomes problematic, even—or perhaps especially—where that form was tragedy.

3.

The problem was articulated eloquently even while Orton was between drafts of *Servant*. In 1966, in *Modern Tragedy*, Raymond Williams described a perceived gap between the use of the word "tragedy" to reference "a particular kind of dramatic art," and the same word used to describe everyday experiences of disaster and loss. In

relation to the double usage he asks: "what actual relations are we to see and live by, between the tradition of tragedy and the kinds of experience, in our own time, that we ordinarily and perhaps mistakenly call tragic?" His book seeks to answer the question by showing how the meanings of tragedy have shifted across different cultures. He notes, for example, that "in our century" a particular, and simplified, association of tragedy and death has been established: "What is generalised is the loneliness of man, facing a blind fate, and this is the fundamental isolation of the tragic hero." This model of tragedy is that used by Orton for Buchanan. But of this sort of emphasis Williams says: "what seems to me most significant about the current isolation of death, is not what it has to say about tragedy or about dying, but what it is saying, through this, about loneliness and the loss of human connection" (Williams 14-15, 57, 58). We shall return to that observation later, but for now we have to note how it highlights the specificity of Orton's choices in handling Buchanan.

He is made comical, we know, as a loyal subject of the firm who has absorbed its values about work and family. This status is more brutally reduced in the non-verbal activity scripted for him. He is seen standing in a lunch queue, carrying his retirement gifts, ignored by all around him; taking off and handing in his uniform, revealed as "shrunk and insignificant" (62); being led to a chair after one of his gifts has exploded, hunching and coughing; waking in the morning and given his glasses and then hearing aid, his artificial arm on a table nearby; smashing the gifts given to him by the firm. These gifts have become images for Buchanan himself. Apparently valuable objects, they are badly made and cheap and break easily. These join those other objects more intimately associated with Buchanan, his glasses, hearing aid and artificial arm. With his presence comprised of a gathering of objects, he seems himself to be—always was, perhaps—a sort of physical object of limited functionality. In that the faulty toaster joins the artificial arm as an image of Buchanan's incapacity, we have to note a tendency in Orton's writing here to see physical disability as negative, reductive of the human being. Later generations have learnt

to repudiate that sort of thinking. But this wrongheadedness on Orton's part seems to be produced by a desire to make a critique of "the firm." Buchanan, its ideological subject, spouting its values, thinks of himself initially as important and fulfilled. Orton's tragic sequence works to show, instead, an actual physical dependence and vulnerability, and, going further, the sort of objecthood that comes from being absorbed into the firm.

That choice of characterisation may be informed and driven by contemporary assumptions about the effects on the individual of corporate organisations or capitalism in general. A generalised sense that human energy and imagination were repressed by dominant structures led to the late 1950s rhetoric about the need to rediscover "life," to celebrate what is "vital" (cf. Rebellato). This critique was theoretically sharpened and de-sentimentalised by the Marxist Herbert Marcuse, who in 1964 observed that "in the most advanced areas of this civilisation, the social controls have been introjected to the point where even individual protest is affected at its roots. The intellectual refusal 'to go along' appears neurotic and impotent" (Marcuse 12). In the viewpoint of *Servant*, unlike the "vitality" expressive heroes of the late 1950s, there is no position outside repression. With grim inevitability Ray, the young man literally and morally outside employment and family structure, gets drawn into the network of the firm through having made one of his partners pregnant. Debbie, the partner, becomes the mechanism for taming Ray. He will then remain inside the firm, it is implied, until he too becomes like Buchanan an object-human.

Now in most tragic sequences this focus on repression might be followed by something else. In his attempt to define common elements within the cultural variants of tragedy, Williams notes "the creation of order is directly related to the fact of disorder, through which the action moves." Although "the nature of tragic disorder" may vary, at different moments, the relationship between disorder and order persists (Williams 52). Now if disorder in *Servant* is shown as Buchanan's personal crisis, Orton's handling of it works to reduce a sense of his

full humanity. It is disorder somewhat evacuated. The reason for that, I suspect, is that Orton's text is more interested in, or fixated on, the imposition of order. As important to the play as Buchanan is Mrs Vealfoy. She is not, significantly, the firm's chief executive but its "personnel lady," the manager who oversees what we now call—ha ha—Human Resources. As such, she seems to run everything. "Should your private life be involved," she tells Buchanan "we shall be the first to inform you of the fact" (57). While we never know what products the firm makes, we have a very good sense that it produces people's lives. The first scene between Mrs Vealfoy and Debbie begins with Mrs Vealfoy at her desk. After inviting Debbie in she asks what her department is and goes to the filing cabinet. She then asks Debbie's name. Mrs Vealfoy returns with a file, sits at her desk and then smiles at Debbie: "How can I help you?" Debbie breaks down and Mrs Vealfoy asks "*(quietly and with compassion)* Are you having a baby?" She puts her arm round Debbie's shoulder as Debbie weeps. Then Mrs Vealfoy learns that Debbie barely knows the man: "Well, you must get to know him. Try to win his confidence. Has he any hobbies to which he is particularly attached?" (59-61). Note the three phases: first, the bureaucratic manner that asks for the department before the name, and only relates to the person once their file is retrieved; next, the directness of manner, both verbal and physical, with the arm round Debbie; last, a return to clearer comic tone as Debbie is manipulated to pursue Ray, with Mrs Vealfoy revealing the ignorance of her class and age in assuming that men like Ray have "hobbies." The second scene with Debbie is more straightforward. Mrs Vealfoy smiles again—she does remorseless smiling throughout the play—but the main activity of the scene is Debbie signing forms in relation to the birth. Forms cross the desk to Debbie, then return to Mrs Vealfoy. Later her distribution of paper, in the form of leaflets about the firm, arrives in Edith's house and gets to Ray's bedroom. Ray will follow their route back to Mrs Vealfoy.

When we see Mrs Vealfoy on her own she is "speaking to a recording machine," dictating memos about use of the staff lifts and the

firm's newly formed staff club for which the condition of membership is that people "must be old, lonely and ex-members of the firm." She communicates with her secretary via intercom and, before Debbie comes in, "[s]he turns to the mirror and puts on her hat" (76). The composing of her physical demeanour, the proliferation of smiles, the communication through electronic devices, the circulation of objects: all these are part of a process whereby Mrs Vealfoy doesn't simply generate material stuff but also gathers people in, such as Ray, and never lets them leave. Her new mechanism is a club for ex-employees. The closing sequence of the play illustrates her effect. It is the firm's dance, a band is playing. Mrs Vealfoy invites the employees to ask the Directors for a dance. The band plays softly while she announces George Buchanan's death, and then the dancing recommences. The band plays "On the Sunny Side of the Street," dancers fill the floor and everyone who isn't dancing sings along, including the directors and Mrs Vealfoy. In terms of a tragic sequence this might be seen as restoration of order and reintegration of community. But in structural and thematic terms it is less connected with Buchanan than it is with the project of Mrs Vealfoy. These are not just images of festivity, they are evidence of the gathering in of people. The screen is literally filled with dancing and singing, a staging of fullness.

The dramaturgic importance of Mrs Vealfoy is that she is a vehicle for the anger against repression. In the closing sequences it is suggested that the repression works in part through the construction of pleasures. While for the audience the actual fun comes from spotting double meanings and innuendo, the images of fullness here are to do with compulsory ideological and physical inclusion, the absence of doubleness, everyone singing the same song. This is not something in which the audience shares. The result is that the firm, and Mrs Vealfoy in particular, are most dislikeable, not perhaps because they repress and make lives miserable, but because they produce fullness and apparent joy.

The most savage version of this effect of the firm is the scene set in the new club for ex-employees. People in wheelchairs, blind, with

dementia sing around a piano in “[w]eary, apathetic voices” (81). Buchanan is compelled to talk to another old man. A woman falls over and is then carried off on a stretcher. Mrs Vealfoy organises and patronises everyone, laughing merrily. And it ends with more compulsory group singing. Savage as it is, though, this version of the firm’s efficacy is perhaps less subtle than the closing scenes. For the club clearly shows alienated people being compelled into mirth. The death is marked but obscured from view so that the remorseless mirth may roll on unopposed. What is staged is explicit compulsion. In the closing images of the firm’s dance, by contrast, there is apparently willing acquiescence in organised jollity. In that nobody registers alienation this is a much more effective exercise of power through mirth.

The idea of repression operating through provision of apparent pleasures is as old as the hills, or at least the hills of Rome, where the ancient rulers offered the populace bread and circuses. It was restated in the mid 1970s by Michel Foucault when he argued that what enables power to be accepted, and thus what makes it work, is that “it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault 119). Part of the effectiveness is to do with gathering people into the discourse, an operation often simplified when satiric treatments of bread and circuses enable the audience to be comfortably distanced from what is going on. In his rather careful handling of Mrs Vealfoy, an image perhaps of “non-sovereign”—corporate—“disciplinary power” (Foucault 105), Orton makes life a little more difficult for the audience in that, in her dealings with Debbie, she is figured as a somewhat enabling rather than repressive presence, one who speaks with compassion, even while she locks both Debbie, and through her Ray, into a discursive coherence. Mrs Vealfoy is a device for making things orderly. That orderliness works through pleasure: this proposition might in turn explain why tragedy is felt to have limited potential. If the model assumes that tragedy is focussed on the individual, concerned with suffering rather than pleasure, unaware that the return to order is itself precisely the problem, then as a form it may seem insufficient to engage, and too close

to, a value system packaged and sold for mass enjoyment in the form of regularly recurring individual crises. Orton's version of modern tragedy is tragedy made banal by modernity.

4.

But a concept of pleasure as repression does more theatrically than upstage tragedy. It has impact on the stage significance of festivity. Orton's group festivity is rather unusual in the context of 1960s drama. In 1963 John Arden's *Workhouse Donkey* had a scene of an art exhibition organised by the Conservative town council being disrupted by a form of carnival, with protestors entering the auditorium and fighting in the aisles. At the other end of the 1960s, after Orton was dead, the American musical *Hair* (which opened in London in autumn 1968) ended with a scene where the audience was invited to come up onto the stage and dance. Also in 1968, Ed Berman's *Nudist Campers* ended with the audience being invited to move into the playing space and take their clothes off. All these are instances of theatre being used as a mechanism for pushing back against repression. They aim to take the audience into a new space where assumed norms no longer obtain, where their bodies can experience something different from learnt everyday behaviours. Theatre makes the claim to offer emotional and bodily pleasure as an alternative to a dominant power which works through repressive discipline. By contrast, Orton's version, admittedly for television rather than theatre, has pleasure as itself a disciplinary operation of the dominant.

He re-stated this theme in *The Erpingham Camp* (broadcast 1966), a play about a holiday camp run by a militantly moralistic owner with power-crazed ambitions, and modelled on a specific classical text, *The Bacchae*. Erpingham uses entertainments to keep the holiday makers under control; they revolt nevertheless, but return at the end to submissiveness, cowed and penitent in response to the ritual of Erpingham's funeral. Despite the interest in the use of entertainment and ritual, however, this play centres on a maniacal sovereign ruler for

whom these are clearly repressive devices. Orton's wishes for the production style clarify what his target was. He wanted it done as the Royal Shakespeare Company did Shakespeare's histories. As I say elsewhere (Shepherd, *Because We're Queers* 147), he probably had in mind the nationalistic occasion of the 1964 celebration of Shakespeare's birth. The target in *Erpingham* is nationalism, and the play uses cod epic effects to send up nationalist attitudes. By contrast, *Servant* is instead locked into local and low-key incidents, and its texture refuses over-the-top effects just as it refuses the style and panache of staged epigram. Orton seemed to want to make things more complicated than the satire movement produced: he thought the American parody *Macbird* "juvenile" and "undergraduate" (*Diaries* 137). So he mingles a tragic sequence with a satiric comedy, all operating within and against the social world and languages of TV realism. This produces a play which draws new sorts of writing from Orton, addresses new targets, is tonally complex, indeed sometimes undecidable, and shuffles different quoted modes in a way which would later be known as postmodern. But there is also another consequence.

An attack on TV realism fits with Orton's views of dominant culture. We know he was conscious of, and angry about, the effects on gay men of heterosexual society. So too we know he had an interest in, and mocked, the discourses of popular journalism. His spoof letters to newspapers, as Edna Welthorpe among others, tested the capacity of newspapers, and their readers, to take ridiculous positions seriously. But his opposition becomes more complex when he chooses to satirise the social values associated with *Uses of Literacy* and their expression in mass culture, for these values are disseminated by corporate mechanisms that are designed to generate pleasure. It's not just corporate dances but mass pleasure itself that becomes a target.

If the attack is against such engines of mass pleasure as TV entertainment, then these are something bigger than any one agent. Thus, when Charney quotes Shepherd's opinion from 1989 that Mrs Vealfoy was "a horrific prophecy of Margaret Thatcher" (145), I am not sure now that this is right. Shepherd was perhaps too tied up in the mind-

set of a Britain run by Thatcher's government. Given the analysis I've tried to make here, Mrs Vealfoy falls into place as a prophecy of something different—not a single repressive figure but a machine for organising pleasures, for defusing satire and depoliticising audiences, the machine that is *X Factor*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, endless shows about things you can't quite buy, repeated adventures in making over and making good. Mrs Vealfoy is less a person than a vision of a system that maintains itself through pleasure.

And the pervasiveness of that system may be remarked in the fact that Orton himself, despite his personal feelings, was not outside it. His play seems already penetrated by the domination of the thing he resisted. Williams suggests that through ideas of tragedy, "the shape and set of a particular culture is often deeply realised" (Williams 45). We have seen that in *Servant* tragedy is ambivalently rendered, tonally unreliable, framed by what is around it. A traditional role of the tragic hero, to enter conflict with the dominant, becomes, in the loyal servant George, evacuated, showing simply, in Williams's formula, loss of human connection. So too the notion of mass festivity as route to liberation is closed off. The stage's capacity both to enact tragic challenge and to offer liberatory mass pleasure is forestalled. In its angry reflections on repression and power, *Servant*, perhaps despite itself, has already assumed that there can be no coherent challenge to the dominant. Its handling of tragedy may then, following Williams, be read as an early symptom of a cultural development which saw the spread both of mass entertainment and of postmodern pessimism.

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NOTES

¹This essay is prompted by, and in part responds to, the essay by Maurice Charney in *Connotations* 18. With thanks to my colleague Tony Fisher for his comments on an early draft of this.

²Cf. Sheperd, *Because We're Queers*; and Zarhy-Levo.

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Telling the Difference: Clones, Doubles and What's in Between^{*1}

AMIT MARCUS

1. Introduction

A common opinion is that clones are a particular type of doubles, and that both clones and doubles are replicas, copies, or imitations of an original human being.² This public opinion is reinforced by scholarly works that employ these terms interchangeably. A case in point is Maria Alina Salgueiro Seabra Ferreira's groundbreaking book *I Am the Other: Literary Negotiations of Human Cloning* (2005). Ferreira claims that "the idea of human *clones or doubles* is considered frightening, disturbing, and uncanny" (34; my italics) and cites Slavoj Žižek, who refers to a (true) clone as a "genetic double" while contending that the possibility of encountering one's double gives rise to anxiety because the double "clones the very uniqueness of my personality" (315-16). In a more positive vein, which nonetheless continues Žižek's metaphorical employment of the term "clone," Ferreira maintains that "[l]ike the double, the clone can be seen as the mirror image onto which one can project either dreams and wishes unfulfilled in one's lifetime or even socially unacceptable desires" (44). Ferreira further underscores the link of both clones and doubles to copies, claiming that the human fascination with all of these has become particularly intense in contemporary culture, dubbed by Hillel Schwartz "the culture of the copy."

Clones (as human beings and as characters in narrative fiction) are two or more approximately genetically identical individuals who are

^{*1}For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debmarcus02123.htm>>.

the result of nuclear somatic transfer;³ “clone narratives” are science fiction narratives that feature clones as their main characters.

Unlike clones, doubles are fictional entities that most likely cannot actually exist,⁴ and their definition is much more controversial. I define “double narratives” as narratives in which one of the characters (usually the protagonist) believes that another character is a (usually false, deceptive, and inferior) copy of his self, or of part of his self, and this belief is supported by some textual evidence apart from the belief itself. This definition implies that the introspective perspective of the protagonist should be complemented by an intersubjective perspective of other characters and by the Olympian perspective of a (near)omniscient narrator or an implied author (see Margolin 179-81).⁵

This definition excludes fictional narratives that feature quasi-doubles, in which significant analogies are drawn between the main character and other characters, but none of them is portrayed as a “second self” or a “derivative” of the other (two cases in point are Clarissa and Septimus in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, and Andrei Versilov and Arkadi Dolgoruky in Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *A Raw Youth*; see Herdman 14-15). It also excludes various cultural manifestations of the wide category that Milica Živković designates “[t]he archetype of universal duality,” which “reflects pagan beliefs in the primacy of dyadic structure and in the plurality of the Sacred” (123). However, my definition does include narratives in which the original and his double never exist simultaneously as two separate persons who can confront each other, such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which are excluded for this reason from the theoretical frameworks of double narratives or “second self narratives” proposed by Carl Francis Keppler (8-9) and Margolin (199-200).

Doubles have been, in one form or another, part of literature and mythology long before their flourishing in Romantic and Post-Romantic fiction of the nineteenth century. One of the main reasons for the propagation of double narratives during the Romantic period is the growing interest in the unconscious and the uncanny. Doubles

are the most appropriate fictional analogues for the Romantic imagination as a creative and a destructive faculty of the mind.⁶

By contrast, clones are a relatively new concept in both science and literature (see Ferreira 4-5). The first fictional narrative that figures laboratory genetic duplicates is, to the best of my knowledge, Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932);⁷ clone narratives proliferated in the 1970s and the 1980s, an era in which biotechnology in general and the notion of cloning in particular gained momentum. These technological and scientific developments were accompanied by a growing philosophical interest in copies, duplications, and simulacra in contemporary culture, manifested in the works of Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek, among others.

In what follows, I begin with a presentation of some thematic common denominators of double narratives from the nineteenth century and clone narratives from the last decades that buttress the equivalence between clones, doubles, and copies noted by some contemporary scholars. I then demonstrate the limitations of "the equivalence approach"—it blurs crucial differences between the representations of doubles and clones in fictional narratives. At first sight, the reader of both types of narratives can be tempted to distinguish between *political* clone narratives and *psychological* double narratives; however, I claim that this binary distinction is simplistic and cannot give a concise account of the much subtler differences between these two bodies of literature. I propose to replace this distinction with an exploration of the ways in which double narratives portray the relations between the original and his or her double as both *intrasubjective* (i.e., the double is interpreted as a part of the original's self) and *intersubjective* (i.e., the double is interpreted as a separate, autonomous person). By contrast, I claim that the relations between the clone and his or her original are first and foremost *intersubjective*: the clone's fictional existence is never questioned in clone narratives, even if in certain cases this existence shatters the self-identity of the original.

Tzvetan Todorov's analysis of the fantastic, and Otto Rank's pioneering work about the double are conducive to my argument regarding generic and thematic differences between double narratives and clone narratives.

2. Some Common Denominators of Double Narratives and Clone Narratives

Although they are often treated as identical copies of their originals, literary representations of both doubles and clones can be quite different from these. Human clones, although approximately genetically identical, would resemble each other less than identical twins: unlike identical twins, they would share the majority of their genes, but not all; they would most probably not share the same prenatal environment; they may be raised by different parents in different environments, and possibly even in different eras. Hence clones are not replicas of their originals. Fictional clones look virtually the same as human clones would actually look. Nonetheless, their personalities are prone to be substantially different, as science expects them to be. If clones are made to be "copies" of each other, as in *Brave New World* and *Solution Three*, it is the result of conditioning and indoctrination rather than mere identical genes.

The double is also never identical to his original in every respect, yet the degree of similarity between them widely varies. The particular way in which the double is different from his original "is responsible for the dynamic tension that always exists between them" (Keppler 11). Some doubles cannot be distinguished from their originals in their external appearance (they are "outward/manifested doubles") and are also remarkably similar to their originals in their personality (hence they are also "inward/experiential doubles"; cf. Landkildehus 71). James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of A Justified Sinner* (1824) is an example of what seems at first sight to be almost complete identity between the double and his original—not only in their looks, but also in their beliefs, world-view, and temperament—

whereas Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* portrays an original and a double in terms of radical opposition.⁸ *A Justified Sinner* shows more resemblance to clone narratives in the sense that clones, by definition, are outwardly (almost) identical.

Apart from portraying clones and doubles as being different in some respects from their originals, fictional narratives that feature clones and those that portray doubles share some major concerns. They both take a skeptical approach to science and technology. Some double narratives of the (post)Romantic era are marked by considerable suspicion of scientific rationality; a prominent example is Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Unlike most originals in double stories, Dr Jekyll has *deliberately* created his own double, Mr Hyde, by experimenting with alchemy. The reason for this creation, according to Jekyll's confession at the last part of the novella, is his feeling of "a profound duplicity of life" (155) and his wish to bring peace and serenity to his strife-torn soul by splitting its conflicting parts—his rational and moral faculties on the one hand and his base and cruel impulses on the other hand—into two separate entities. However, Dr Jekyll loses control of his transformations into Mr Hyde and vice versa; the crucial ingredient in his potion seems to have been an impurity in the original powder, an ingredient that is beyond his power and control. Hence instead of settling his internal conflicts, Dr Jekyll's (pseudo)-scientific experiments provoke misery and despair that culminate in his death.⁹ The failure of the experiment signals as a warning, typical of Romantic and post-Romantic literature, for scientists to avoid tinkering with human nature.

The suspicion towards science is also evinced in some clone narratives of the last decades (e.g., Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May* [1989] and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* [2005]). These narratives express their authors' belief that the spectacular scientific achievements of the modern era are not necessarily followed by similar progress in ethics; particularly, clone narratives display the anxiety about potential abuses of biotechnology by narcissistic individuals, totalitarian regimes, and dehumanizing societies.

Both double narratives and clone narratives jeopardize the idea of a unified and coherent subject and dissolve the differences between oneself and the other: "the contemporary fascination with duplication, duality, resemblance, and immortality can be said to be the millennial equivalent to the romantic attraction to the double, the dual, the alter ego [...] at the heart of the idea of human cloning is the question of identity itself, of the formation of the ego, as is also the case in narratives of the double" (Ferreira 34, 37). The next sections will delve deeper into questions of identity.

Characters of clone narratives tend to support the view of clones as a particular type of double, a replica of the original, whereas the implied authors of these narratives are apt to challenge and subvert this view. Max, the protagonist of David Rorvik's narrative, *In His Image: The Cloning of A Man* (1978), is inspired and motivated to clone himself by the putative double he once had. For Max, in contrast to most protagonists of double narratives, the idea of having someone created in his own image is neither frightening nor threatening. On the contrary, his clone brings back a part of him that he has always felt was missing. Max insists that the dreams in which his double constantly appeared were not a narcissistic fantasy, and tells the narrator-journalist of the identical twin, in his view the double, that he had once had and whose traces he lost (89-90). Joshua, in Nancy Freedman's *Joshua Son of None* (1973), is another protagonist whose notion of the double impinges on his conception of cloning, in his case, of being a clone. Joshua associates the clone with the double, and identifies both with being someone else's copy: "He remembered an old German folk tale in which it was related that every person in the world has his Doppelgänger, that each man's exact replica exists somewhere in the world" (111). Hence, the protagonist feels that his value as a unique individual is obliterated and experiences an identity crisis that he attempts to resolve.

Unlike clone narratives that explicitly tackle with the analogy between clones and doubles, Romantic double narratives do not, of course, directly refer to the idea of clones, which was nonexistent at

the time. However, some of them feature "clone precursors" (multiplied doubles), which reveal the troubled, or delusional, mind of the protagonist and his fear of complete fragmentation of the self. Such "clones," in the metaphorical sense of interchangeable exemplars of one individual, a cluster of doubles, obliterate the original's image of a stable and undivided self. In the words of Clair Potter, "the double can only be understood as at least double, if by double we come to mean that which repeats itself infinitely" (58).

Dostoyevsky's *The Double* (1846) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) demonstrate this transformation from one double into a plurality of doubles. Golyadkin, the protagonist of *The Double*, becomes ever more disturbed as his double manipulatively succeeds, both literally and metaphorically, to take his place in both the private and the public sphere. Golyadkin's anxiety about his double grows to such an extent that he imagines that his double multiplies. In one scene, Golyadkin dreams of a series of indistinguishable doubles who surround him and leave him no place to go (225). A second and similar scene occurs at the very end of the novella, a stage in which the protagonist is no longer capable of distinguishing a dream from actuality (279). In this way, the distinction between one copy of the original self and a potentially infinite number of copies is blurred. If the singularity of the self is violated and its cohesiveness impaired, it makes little difference whether this violation is effected by one double or by a cluster of "cloned doubles."

Unlike Golyadkin, Henry Jekyll does not fancy a multiplicity of cloned doubles, but rather dwells upon the idea of such multiplicity in a way that lays bare the allegorical overtones of the figure of the double. In the last part of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, in which Henry Jekyll gives his full statement of the case, he argues that his double, Mr. Hyde, signifies the essential split self of all human beings: "man is not truly one, but truly two" (157). But then he adds that the double actually signifies the possibility for many other "doubles," who can dismantle the self and engender total chaos: "I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will

follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (157). Unlike for Golyadkin, for Dr. Jekyll the existence of multiple selves remains an abstract hypothesis, but through their experience and insights they both demonstrate the devastating feeling of internal fragmentation and loss of control inherent in the topos of the double in narrative fiction.

3. Thematic and Structural Differences between Double Narratives and Clone Narratives

Double narratives and clone narratives highlight existential questions that science and rational thought cannot satisfactorily answer: what constitutes individuality? Is the human subject unified or split? What are the mental, social, and cultural processes that destabilize and dissolve the subject, and how do they function? However, with respect to these questions there are asymmetrical relations between the double narratives, which are deeply engaged with issues of individual self-identity, and clone narratives, of which not all tackle such issues. One reason for this difference is that when cloning becomes a common practice, as in some fictional societies (e.g., *Never Let Me Go*), or when it becomes the only existent or legitimized way of procreation (e.g., Ursula K. Le Guin's "Nine Lives" [1975]), the Western conception of individuality, which is based on uniqueness and singularity, is subverted. Moreover, when the clones and their originals inhabit separate worlds and never (or rarely) encounter each other, the identity of each group and each individual of that group is formed relatively independently of the individuals of the other group.

Dr. Jekyll's reference to the "polity of multifarious" doubles can serve as a temporary anchor to an analysis of the major thematic difference between double narratives and clone narratives. In Jekyll's thoughts, "polity" is metaphorically employed in reference to internal,

psychological processes. This metaphorical use highlights the fact that double narratives usually focus on one individual and his¹⁰ double rather than on issues of political authority and public policy.

By contrast, clone narratives are explicitly political, in the sense that they represent the ways in which communities of (genetically identical) individuals are formed and governed. Furthermore, cloning—combined with indoctrinate education (Naomi Mitchison's *Solution Three* [1975], Damon Knight's "Mary" [1964]) and operant conditioning (Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* [1932])¹¹—is a way to establish public order, impose discipline and obedience on the citizens, and ensure their loyalty to the leader and the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. Clones seem to be a cohesive, homogeneous, nameless and faceless mass that will easily overpower any individual who does not toe the line.

However, this description is true only for some "communal clone narratives" (such as Damon Knight's "Mary"), which display fictional worlds in which cloning is practiced as a major form, or even the only permitted form, of human reproduction. Other clone narratives, such as Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May*, are just as interested in the "depth psychology" of the protagonist as double narratives. Moreover, even these "communal clone narratives" tend to portray a protagonist who resists the foundational principles and practices of the regime and endeavors to struggle for expressing his or her ideas and achieving his or her individual aims, which do not tally with those of the leadership. Hence, a binary opposition between political-communal clone narratives and psychological-individual double narratives should be supplemented with a more subtle formulation of the thematic differences between the two narrative corpora.

One possible way of marking these differences is examining the representation of the *intersubjective* relations in both types of narratives (with the original-protagonist functioning as the subject). Todorov's literary observations about the fantastic genre and Rank's psychoanalytical insights about the double in mythology and literature will conduce to my argument that the anxiety of impending death and

self-annihilation hovers over the great majority of both double narratives and clone narratives, although the manifestations of this anxiety in the two narrative traditions are radically different.

4. Self-Identity and the Fantastic

Todorov designates one of the chief themes that characterize the fantastic genre as “the fragility of the limit between matter and mind” (120) and points to the double as a significant ramification of this theme: “[t]he multiplication of personality, taken literally, is an immediate consequence of the possible transition between matter and mind: we are several persons mentally, we become so physically” (116). This theme is related to that of “the relation of man with his desire” (139), central, as Todorov points out, to the fantastic genre. Indeed, some of the most well-known double narratives satisfy the first condition of Todorov’s fantastic—the reader’s constant oscillation between two contradicting hypotheses for explaining the events of the story. There is a natural hypothesis, according to which the double exists only in the imagination of the original, that is, as a projection of his unconscious anxieties, and a supernatural hypothesis, according to which the double actually exists in a fictional world governed by supernatural forces and laws. These two hypotheses correspond to what I have termed as “intrasubjective” and “intersubjective” relations, respectively, between the original and his double.

In double narratives, Todorov’s concept of the reader’s hesitation between two mutually exclusive readings takes the shape of an oscillation between two interpretations of the relation between the transformation of the original’s personality and the appearance of the double: the appearance of the double may be seen as the *reason* for the change of mind or the “fundamental transformation in [the] belief system” of the original (Landkildehus 65), or else it may be seen as the *result* of such change. For instance, in reading Dostoyevsky’s *The Double*, one can detect preliminary signs of Golyadkin’s mental illness

before the first appearance of his double (e.g., his paranoid suspicions, extreme lack of confidence, passivity, and self-effacement, see esp. 126, 132-33, 151-55, 160-61; his unexpected burst of sobbing, see 133; his convulsions, 132; his unclear and interrupted speech, esp. 129-37; the remarks of his physician, Christian Ivanovich, about his unhealthy loneliness, 129-30). It is therefore reasonable to claim that the double is a projection of Golyadkin's anxiety and existential self-doubt, a symptom of his insanity. Conversely, it makes sense to maintain that, since other characters, such as Golyadkin's colleague Anton Antonovich, concur in the original Golyadkin's assertion that the two are remarkably similar, in fact indistinguishable, and believe that they are twins (173-75), the double cannot be reduced to Golyadkin's deranged mind. According to the second option, the actual existence of the double in the fictional world provokes, or at least promotes, the crucial emotional, cognitive, and behavioral transformation of his original.

In Edgar Allan Poe's "William Wilson" (1839), the arguments that support each of the options of explanation are essentially different. William Wilson's double takes the form of a repressed and obstinate conscience, which does not let his original evil-doer go on with his life. The natural hypothesis (according to which the original Wilson is possessed by his purported double, which actually exists as an *alter ego* only in his mind) is supported by the fact that students who study with William Wilson do not notice that his "namesake" imitates, patronizes, masters, and manipulates him—and indeed, it is most plausible that only the narrator interprets the other William Wilson's smiles as "sarcastic" (104). By contrast, the supernatural option is supported by "the apparent omnipresence and omnipotence of Wilson" (115), demonstrated by the second Wilson's constant (dis)appearances and by his accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the first Wilson's life that could not have been natural without constant spying. However, these (dis)appearances can also tally with the natural hypothesis, if the reader assumes that the original Wilson gradually becomes delusional and fabricates the second, who haunts

his mind with guilt and penitence after the attempt to murder his double has failed.

Most double narratives portray solitary, rootless individuals, whose family ties (if they have any) play hardly any role in their lives. This state of existential alienation reinforces Todorov's "natural explanation" of these stories. The double in Guy de Maupassant's story "Le Horla" (1887) appears when the original narrating character feels most lonely, as a symptom of a mind imprisoned in itself, unwilling or unable to bond with others, and appalled by his own unconscious self.¹² The allegorical overtones of "Le Horla" become evident when the protagonist universalizes his solitary state of mind in claiming that social alienation gives rise to the emergence of doubles and other apparitions and should therefore be avoided: "Certes, la solitude est dangereuse [...] Quand nous sommes seuls longtemps, nous peuplons le vide de fantômes" (347; "Certainly, solitude is dangerous [...] When we are alone for a long while, we populate the void with phantoms"; my translation). Indeed, in Maupassant's story the "natural explanation," madness, seems more plausible than the "supernatural explanation." This renders "Le Horla" closer to what Todorov names "the uncanny" (41-57) than to the fantastic.¹³

The existential-ontological risk of losing one's self-identity and even one's life in double narratives is portrayed as intrinsically connected to the ethical risk of losing one's inhibitions. As opposed to some clone narratives, which show interest in a specific evil act or motive for cloning, double narratives are more concerned with evil as a spiritual, abstract principle embodied in an evil personality: the struggle between good and evil as (macro)cosmic powers whose microcosmic arena is the human soul. These aspects are signified in most cases by the double, who is both the cause and the result of his original's complete loss of control over his life, and of the original's inability to be treated as a moral agent responsible for his actions.

On the macrocosmic level, which corresponds to Todorov's "supernatural explanation," the evil double represents the devil, whose temptations, in the form of deceptive malleability, the original should

resist.¹⁴ On the microcosmic level, which aligns with Todorov's "natural explanation," the evil double is a projection of the internal irruption of the original's harmful desires and malicious impulses. The chameleon double in Hogg's *A Justified Sinner* is the most apt symbol for the two facets (or interpretations) of the evil spirit. The chameleon is the corporeal form of complete identification with the essence of another person—the deepest aspects of his soul, as reflected in his facial and corporeal features. The chameleon-double of Robert Colwan, Gil-Martin, takes the form of pure evil. He can change his appearance and take the form of any person, and even appear as the good and benevolent George, Robert's (half-) brother (170). Evil as a spiritual principle is marked in Hogg's novel by the instability of identity, which implies fickleness and unreliability; by contrast, good is stable and reliable. Good is unified and inseparable, whereas evil can be doubled, and even "cloned" in multiple forms of forgery and impersonating.

Clone narratives lack this sort of symbolism, which in double narratives originates from the status of the double as both internal and external (in other words, from the relationship of the original and his double as both intrasubjective and intersubjective). Unlike double narratives, most clone narratives are neither fantastic nor uncanny in Todorov's sense.¹⁵ The clones are actual entities in the science fictional world, whose existence is doubted neither by the characters nor by the reader. The identity crisis in double narratives originates from the belief (or the suspicion) of the protagonist that his uniqueness and self-agency were plundered by his double. Conversely, a baffled sense of self-identity in clone narratives follows the discovery of the protagonist that he or she is a clone (or has been cloned). The bewilderment of the clone and/or the original is particularly likely to arise in a society of non-cloned individuals, in which discovering that one is a clone or has a clone implies a fundamental change in one's self-image and in the conception of family relations.

However, in contrast to the split and strife-torn identity of the original in double narratives, clone narratives display a gamut of possibili-

ties with regard to the effect that the knowledge of having a genetically identical individual has on the original *and* his or her clone. I will provide brief examples for four of the many alternative combinations between the status of clones in society and the way that it impinges on the formation of their self-identity: Eva Hoffman's *The Secret* (2001) and Pamela Sargent's short story "Clone Sister" (1973) demonstrate the crisis of self-identity of a clone in an individual clone narrative and in a communal clone narrative, respectively; by contrast, Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May* (1989) illustrates an individual clone narrative and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) —a communal clone narrative, in which the clones (and, in Weldon's case, the original too) do not go through such a severe identity crisis. This gamut of possibilities demonstrates that clone narratives represent a variety of views about the connection between the loss of individuality and the identical genes of the original and his or her clone(s).

In Hoffman's novel, *Iris*, the protagonist and the narrator, is the cloned daughter of her mother Elisabeth, who treats herself and her daughter as an autarchic unit, and therefore permits Iris to have only minimal contact with others: "My mother was enough for me; she supplied all my needs. She focused on me and coddled me and loved me half to death" (5). When the protagonist turns seventeen, she uncovers her origins—the secret which her mother has persistently held. Iris's frustration, helplessness, and wrath for being deprived of her autonomous self reach their climax in her intention to murder her mother, which demonstrates not only her hostility, but also her inability to forge a separate identity as long as her "mother-double" is alive. However, Iris eventually does not murder Elisabeth and substitutes the destructive inseparability from her mother with a romantic relationship with Robert, which turns her into "an individual of the species, with proper exhilarations and proper hurts" (260). Iris's identity crisis as a clone is resolved when she and her mother inhabit separate spheres and each embarks on her own life.

Similarly, Jim, the clone protagonist in Sargent's "Clone Sister," feels that a rupture with his family is the inevitable resolution for his

baffled identity. Unlike Iris in *The Secret*, Jim is raised from the day he was born in a family of cloned brothers and sisters. Jim feels inseparable from them, and this feeling renders him diffident rather than satisfied with the harmonious and protective atmosphere that reigns in his family. His unstable self-identity catalyzes his separation from his non-cloned girl-friend Moira, who reproaches him for using her to prove to himself that he is an individual and adds, "*I've got better things to do than build up your ego*" (181; italics in the original). Eventually Jim decides that leaving home may give him better chances to establish himself as an individual.

By contrast, in Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May*, Joanna's clones are brought up separately and do not know of each other's existence for thirty years. When they meet, their identities as autonomous individuals have already been relatively stable, therefore the knowledge that each of them is genetically identical to four other women (including their original) is astonishing, thrilling, and confusing for them, but does not undermine their identities or give rise to the belief that they are interchangeable. The original Joanna, cloned by her ex-husband Carl without her consent, feels that her clones—rather than demoting her self-image as a unique individual—have made her feel even more special than she used to. She thinks of her clones as her own self, herself-as-another, her sisters and her daughters at once, and must reconsider her self in relation to them (cf. 46-47, 203). However, Joanna believes that by triggering her reconsideration of the foundations of her identity, Carl has unwittingly made her an autonomous person, and she feels she has regained control over her life (246).

Although the protagonists of Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* do not feel that they have been benefited in any way by being cloned (indeed, their lot is to serve as organ banks for others), they, too, are not deeply concerned with the issue of their self-identity as clones. Admittedly, this issue does preoccupy them for a short while, but it promptly fades because they turn out to have a very limited effect on their actual lives. The clones can only guess who their originals are according to their looks and behavior and can never confirm their conjec-

tures; hence the people whom they point out as those who may be their originals are called “possible.” The general term that the clones use for their original—“model”—is a euphemism which falsely implies that the clones should construct their lives by imitating this “model” whom they will never get to know. “The possibles theory” attracts the clones, because they believe that knowing who is whose “model” can teach them something not only about their (future) destiny but also about their (present) character: “when you saw the person you were copied from, you’d get *some* insight into who you were deep down” (127). However, the clones renounce the tracking down of their “models” with relative ease, because they realize that their attempts to learn some essential truths about themselves through their “possibles” are futile.

To summarize the last section, according to Todorov’s theory of the fantastic, the double in fantastic narratives is both a projection of the original’s unconscious and an external, supernatural element of the plot. The encounter of the original with his double is hence both a cause and a symptom of his shattered self-identity. The double, on his side, typically displays a stable and self-assured self-identity, thereby mocking the insecure existence of his original. By contrast, the encounter of the original with his or her clone is portrayed as real rather than projected, and this encounter often (but not always) brings about a temporary or permanent identity crisis for the original and/or for his or her clone, who are represented as two autonomous subjects.

5. Visions of Death, Dreams of Immortality

Self-fragmentation, or the dissolution of individuality in double narratives, is related to the conception of doubles as portending death, analyzed in Otto Rank’s renowned work *Der Doppelgänger* (1925). These narratives represent a world view according to which the corporeal unity of the individual depends on the unity, coherence, and uniqueness of his good soul (an evil soul is both a symptom and a

cause of self-fragmentation). Rank claims that the universal belief in a human soul which is separable from the body but can be incorporated in shadows, specters, mirrors, photos, portraits, and doubles demonstrates the narcissistic wish for immortality. He points out that narcissism is ambivalent, giving rise to self-love on the one hand, and fear and disgust of the rejected aspects of oneself on the other (esp. 96-117). Rank claims that the rejected self—particularly the ageing and the evil self, intermingled, for instance, in Dorian Gray's portrait (26, 96-99)—is projected onto a mirror image, of which the double is one of the most significant forms. For this reason, double narratives display the inclination of the original to commit suicide, which contradicts his wish for an afterlife and can therefore be achieved only by a murderous double (109). The ambivalence of narcissism is reflected in taboos of various cultures with regard to shadows (e.g., the prohibition to step on the shadow of the king) as well as in the representations of doubles in literature and mythology: as a guardian angel that preserves the self in some myths, and as a devilish figure that heralds impending death in others.¹⁶

As a psychoanalytic model, Rank's thesis creates an imbalance in Todorov's model of measuring the natural and the supernatural explanations. Rank's approach reduces the supernatural explanation to the natural—a delusional projection of internal reality—and therefore has less explanatory power than Todorov's with regard to Romantic double narratives. However, Rank's contribution to an explication of the connections between doubles and death anxiety has significant repercussions for this study.

It seems at first sight that double narratives and clone narratives present a radical opposition with regard to death: the first prefiguring death, the second portending immortality. If one can continue to live through his or her DNA, which is transferred from one individual to another, then this form of immortality can be achieved by cloning oneself. Some clone narratives (Greg Egan's *"The Extra"* [1990], Michael Marshall Smith's *Spares* [1996], Ishiguro's *Never Let me Go*) promise only to extend the original's life (and in Ishiguro's novel,

perhaps the lives of other “normal” people as well) by using his or her clones as “spares,” i.e., organ banks. This more limited promise is, of course, attainable, albeit at the price of dehumanizing the clones, who are generally regarded as lacking souls and therefore inferior to “normal” people. However, most clone narratives eventually demonstrate that the aim of achieving immortality through cloning is unattainable.

The wish to defeat death is thus a basic motivation for cloning in many clone narratives. In *The Cloning of Joanna May*, although Joanna was unknowingly cloned, her cloning seems to realize her fantasies of remaining forever young. However, Joanna is aware of the gap between her ideal-self and who she really is at the age of sixty. She realizes that the sort of “immortality” that one achieves by having children, regardless of whether or not they are clones, has a price: it makes you older and realize “the inevitability of age and death” (121). Hence Joanna’s more mature attitude eventually makes her accept the fact that time cannot be frozen, and that life requires compromises.

Ira Levin’s *The Boys from Brazil* is another clone narrative that highlights the senselessness of the idea of attaining immortality through cloning. The 94 “Hitler clones” created by the Nazi physician Joseph Mengele are the main part of his plot to reestablish the Nazi regime and take control of the world. The absurdity of this plan is clearly shown towards the end of the story, when Bobby, one of the clones, saves the life of the Jew Yakov Libermann, a Nazi hunter, and sets his dogs on the Nazi physician: Hitler cannot live again through his clones; they are autonomous human beings, and each of them develops his own personality.

Nancy Freedman’s *Joshua Son of None* is a significant exception to this trend of clone narratives to mock or challenge the idea of achieving immortality through cloning. In her forward to this science fiction novel, Freedman expresses her belief that cloning will place immortality within the grasp of the individual. The belief that human beings can overcome death by being cloned is repeated several times throughout the novel, both as a scientific idea and as a religious popu-

lar conception that equates the “resurrection” of the assassinated and cloned president of the USA with Christ’s reincarnation (221), and it is echoed in one of the novel’s last lines: “[t]he nightmare of death was ended” (237). Thus the novel affirms the notion that the president and his clone have the same self, in other words, that the life of the clone is a direct continuation of the life of his original. Freedman’s novel seems to realize, in its plot and characterization, the dream of immortality that most clone narratives deem an illusion, even in a fictional world that outweighs our own with regard to scientific progress. However, the notion of immortality in the novel is meager and disappointing: it is basically a repetition of the life of the original rather than a continuation of his life.

Thus, the difference between double narratives and clone narratives concerning death anxiety is ultimately not in its overt display in one type of narrative and its overcoming in another: the double is a sign of impending death for his original, plundering his original’s soul and thereby indicating the dissolution of the original’s self; therefore the original and his double eventually cannot coexist. By contrast, the original and his or her clone can coexist: the one’s survival does not necessarily entail the destruction of the other. Moreover, in some narratives the clone is conceived as forever soulless and therefore as posing no threat to the life of his or her original. However, the original cannot attain immortality through his or her clone; the promise of immortality is, in the final analysis, delusional. The next section develops a more elaborate explanation of these differences.

6. The Protagonist and his Antagonist: Rivalries and Subordination

The possibility that the double is a culturally bounded conception of the *natural* other (which can be reduced neither to the other within the self nor to the *supernatural* other) is never raised in Todorov’s study of the fantastic genre, and of double narratives as one of its manifestations. In this respect, Todorov is perhaps impeded by the structuralist

methodology of binary opposition. The double as a natural other is a Romantic image of the other *per se* as a permanent threat to one's identity. It is the other over which the self has no control and who thus demonstrates to the self the limits of his delusional self-sufficiency. In this section, I attempt to fill this lacuna in Todorov's thesis with some observations. These will provide a more comprehensive comparison of double narratives and clone narratives, focusing on the *intersubjective* relations between the self and the other, the protagonist and his antagonist.¹⁷

In double narratives, the double and his original display rivalry, since they inhabit the same territory, and constantly observe as well as interact with each other—the double follows his original like a shadow¹⁸ and always keeps him within sight. The competition between them becomes more passionate and destructive as the physical, social, and spiritual distance between them is reduced.

The double tends to desire the "objects" that are the most precious for his original: not only his job, his lover, and his status, but also – as in the more extreme cases of rivalry—his body, his soul, his life. The ambivalence that the original often feels towards his double—hostility on the one hand, awe on the other hand—can also be explicated in terms of the imitation of the double by his original: the double is at the same time admired by his original as a model (the inversion of the hierarchical relations between original and double that such admiration implies will be clarified in the next paragraphs) and despised as an obstacle in achieving the "object" of desire.¹⁹

The rivalry between the original and his double gives rise to complex relations of domination and counter-domination. The original is, in fact, ontologically prior to his double, as long as the story clearly states who is who, and the original tends to regard his ontological priority as a pretext for claiming priority over his double in other senses as well. However, the double often inverts the hierarchical relations with his original by subjugating the latter's will to his own.²⁰

The most fundamental way to undermine the hierarchical relations between the original and his double is to challenge the belief of one or

more of the characters that he is the original, and the other his double. This is done by the narrator of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Die Doppelgänger" (1816-17), who presents the two contrasting points-of-view of the two main characters, the painter George Haberland and the young traveler Deodatus Schwendy. Each of them thinks of himself as original and of the other as his double; each blames the other for being "a certain hostile entity" ("irgendein feindliches Wesen" 463) and "a devilish phantom" ("Du teuflisches Trugbild" 471), who harasses and deceives one, and steals one's lover (they do not know that Natalie is the lover of both). At the end of the story, both perspectives are undermined, when the narrator asserts that the two lads are each other's doubles and therefore none of them is ontologically (or in any other way) prior to the other: "each of them [was] the other's double, in countenance, figure, demeanor, etc." ("einer des andern Doppelgänger in Antlitz, Wuchs, Gebärde etc." 483).

In "William Wilson," the implied author (rather than the narrator) likewise undermines the relations of original to double. Since the narrator, the first Wilson, admits that other students do not recognize the outstanding similarity between him and his "namesake," the reader is likely to doubt the narrator's assertion that the second Wilson imitates him both verbally and in his conduct. Indeed, the opposite version—that the original Wilson imitates the words and behavior of his double—seems not less plausible (the two doubles may of course not be imitating each other at all, but just revealing striking similarities).

Since the original in most double narratives does not create his double of his own free will, its very emergence—which comes as a complete surprise to his original and arouses confusion, anxiety, and rage—is experienced by the original as a violent act of invasion into his private territories that denies his free will and threatens the putative wholeness of his ego. This sudden and unwelcome appearance of a double, who represents rejected contents of the original's soul, is responsible for the asymmetry that characterizes rivalries in most double narratives: the original despises and loathes his double much

more than vice versa. In Dostoyevsky's *The Double* and Hogg's *A Justified Sinner*, the double praises and flatters his original and pretends to be his humble inferior disciple, but this is soon revealed as part of his plot to take over: the originals in both narratives trust the person who seems so submissive and unconfident and do not take precautions. Both originals are also easily influenced by their doubles' advice; therefore they are an easy prey for the doubles, who suddenly become conceited, dominating, and despotic.²¹

The inseparability, which in most double narratives renders the desperate attempts of the original to release himself from his double impossible to achieve, is the reason for the harsh and violent rivalry between the two. In the most intense and violent cases of rivalry typical of the relations between doubles and their originals, the desire is aimed at the other subject's *being*.²² The original and his double are not always one and the same from the start; they *become* inseparable because they treat each other as if the one's very being were dependent upon the other.

This is most emphatically articulated by the narrator of Maupassant's "Le Horla," who says of the ghost-double who haunts him: "he becomes my soul" ("il devient mon âme" 370).²³ Similarly, the murder of the double entails suicide in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Dorian deems his portrait, painted by his friend Basil Hallward, an immanent part of himself (cf. 27), a visible emblem of his conscience (see 91-92), and "the most magical of mirrors" (106) which reveals to him the concealed facets of his soul.²⁴ When Dorian decides that he can no longer bear "the living death of his own soul" (220), he stabs the picture with a knife, thereby transferring the loathsome signs of age and sin to Dorian's dead visage. This inseparability of the original from his double also renders the ontological priority of the original over his double meaningless, since after the appearance of the double (if the double has not always been an immanent part of the original's self), the original cannot exist without him.

In Poe's story, the double Wilson pesters his original after the latter attempts to release himself from being possessed by his double,

whereas in Wilde's novel it is the original Dorian who is obsessed by his "double" and feels an urgent need to watch it after nights of promiscuity and debauchery (cf. 140). However, to the extent that the double is indeed an immanent part of the original's soul, the obsession of the original with the double and vice versa are actually two sides of the same coin: the inability to free oneself of a rejected part of one's personality—in Dorian's case, as in Wilson's, the rejected part is the demanding and unforgiving conscience. The dream of immortality and the wish to remain forever young are ultimately presented as unattainable and destructive, because they can be achieved only by paying the unbearable price of leading a double life and denying one's conscience.

The formulaic ending of murder and/or suicide in double narratives can be plausibly interpreted as an insight into the devastating consequences of a split and exceptionally bewildered self. The recurrent motif of disappearances and reappearances of doubles, often unexpectedly after the original believes that they are gone forever, can be convincingly interpreted along the same lines, as signifying the constant efforts of the original to take control of his life and restore his former illusory unified self, and the inevitable failure of such efforts. The insoluble problem that arises from some of these narratives is that the double—if he is conceived of as a symbol of either conscience or, by contrast, forbidden impulses and desires—is doomed to (re)appear and demand complete domination over the original, regardless of whether the latter strives to reconcile himself with it (as in *A Justified Sinner*) or constantly represses and denies it (as in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*).

Although double narratives typically end in a catastrophe, in which the double, the original, or both (to the extent that they are one and the same) are ruined, there are exceptions to the rule, for instance Hoffmann's "Die Doppeltgänger" and Théophile Gautier's "Le Chevalier double" (1840). Hoffmann's novella ends when Natalie, the lover of both protagonists, refuses to choose between them, and the two rivals renounce the estates of the prince that one of them was

supposed to inherit and fall into each other's arms. The rejection of rivalry is achieved when the "object of desire" (Natalie) refuses to cooperate with the two rivals, and the rivals themselves acknowledge the futility of their desire and its potential destructiveness.

Whereas the resolution of rivalry in Hoffmann's novella is external, internal reconciliation brings about the resolution of the conflict in Gautier's story. The protagonist Oluf is completely unaware of his double—the diabolical aspect of his self—until someone draws his attention to it, and even then he at first refuses to believe in its existence. Thus the original and the double in Gautier's story do not go through a prolonged and callous rivalry. Oluf's willingness to face (in both a literal and a metaphorical sense) his internal devil-double and fight him sends the latter away and solves at once the internal conflict of a previously split self and the external conflict with his beloved Brenda.

In contrast to double narratives, the clone and his original often inhabit separate worlds, radically differ from each other both spiritually and socially, and rarely or never interact with each other. Hence the relations between clones and their originals are likely to be based on either complete indifference (as in Michael Marshall Smith's *Spares* or Ira Levin's *The Boys from Brazil* [1976]) or on projection and modeling (as in "Nine Lives" and *Solution Three*) rather than on rivalry and subjugation. In several clone stories, clones and their originals inhabit separate worlds as a result of a policy that excludes clones from the "normal" world. Indeed, the best way to control the clones is to separate them not only from their own originals but also from the world of ordinary human beings. The clones in *Never Let Me Go* and *Spares* inhabit a world of their own, in which they are not permitted to meet non-cloned human beings, except for the people directly in charge of them. It is a strictly regulated world in which one is severely punished for transgressing the rules. In *Spares*, the clones are dehumanized and degraded to such a degree that, even if they could have lived among ordinary human beings, they would have never coped with each

other, because they lack language as well as any other symbolic means of communication.

In other clone stories (*Solution Three*, *Brave New World*, "Nine Lives"), the originals are no longer alive and the role that they play in the society of clones is a mythical one, namely to expound the origins of the society and unite all its members around an initiation story. Such societies are composed of many genetically identical individuals, who are not apt to show any interest in differentiating themselves from others or even strongly oppose it, since their identity is not based on the idea of uniqueness. In these narratives, the clones imitate their originals similarly to the way Don Quixote models his role of the immaculate knight on the legendary Amadís of Gaul (cf. Girard 8-9). Once again, the worlds of the clones in clone narratives are often completely separated from those of their "originals."

However, certain clone narratives do portray hostility and resentment between the clone and/or the original on the one hand and the clone's creator—the person who decided to clone the original and carried out the decision—on the other hand (the clone's creator is in most cases not the same person as his or her original). The main reason for this conflict is not rivalry between the original and his or her clone/s, but the fact that the decision to clone the original in some clone narratives is concealed from the original and/or the clone. Indeed, the slogan "knowledge is power," cited with a slight twist by Carl in *The Cloning of Joanna May* ("secret knowledge is power" 35)—is a significant aspect of several clone narratives.

Thus, Carl May conceals from Joanna the fact that he cloned her, because his motive was selfish and narcissistic: preventing the inevitable natural process of her ageing. Unable to restrain his desires, he treats his wife as a means of fulfilling his infantile wishes. The power to create the clones of his wife and keep her ignorant of their creation makes Carl feel Godlike (109).²⁵ Similarly, in Yinon Nir's story, "Didn't You Know that You Had a Sister?" (1998), Yehoshua's father is so conceited and indifferent to his son's horror of being cloned thousands of times that he does not even attempt to conceal this in-

formation from Yehoshua; he simply forgets to tell him. The father, a scientist, manufactures the clones of his talented and good looking son as a commodity, for purely economic reasons (i.e., in order to be able to pay the high expenses of his genetic research), and it never crosses his mind to ask his son if he is willing to take part in this enterprise.

The power to clone is hence often abused in clone narratives to control both the original and the clones, to undermine their self-identity, and to deny their free will to make crucial decisions about their lives. Cloning is often portrayed in these narratives as evil because it originates in evil motives: greed, the desire for revenge, and most importantly, the desire to possess another person and to treat that person as an object, a means to an end.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have presented some significant similarities and differences between Romantic and post-Romantic double narratives of the nineteenth century and science fiction clone narratives of the last decades. Both types of narratives foreground issues related to the forging, maintenance, and dissolution of self-identity, and both tend to share an ambivalent approach towards science and technology, fascinated by their achievements and anxious about their potentially destructive repercussions. These similarities are the common ground of clone narratives that tend to associate clones with a specific type of double, and of double narratives that prefigure clones, in the metaphorical sense of a potentially infinite series of identical, substitutable human beings.

Yet there are crucial differences between the representations of doubles and clones in fictional narratives. I propose two types of approaches to highlight these differences: Tzvetan Todorov's work concerning the fantastic genre, and Otto Rank's study of the double provide the foundation for my analysis of these differences in

intrasubjective terms (i.e., the relations between the original and him/herself), whereas the term “rivalry” (borrowed from René Girard’s theory of mimetic rivalry; see n17 and n19) informs my analysis in *intersubjective* terms (i.e., the relations between the original and his or her double or clone/s).

Following Todorov, I contend that the reader of double narratives hesitates between an interpretation of the double as having an objective existence in the fictional reality and an interpretation that views the double as a projection of the deranged mind of the protagonist. By contrast, the existence of clones in science fiction narratives is never put into doubt. Furthermore, the relations of doubles to their originals differ substantially from the relations of clones to their own: doubles and originals are prone to be engaged in harsh rivalry, whereas clones are most likely either to show indifference to their originals (not necessarily identical to their creators) or to consider them admirable models. Furthermore, the emergence of the double usually portends imminent death for the original (and for the double)—the ultimate result of destructive rivalry, whereas the creation of clones promises longevity, or even a form of immortality, to the original, which is nonetheless in most cases revealed as unrealizable.

In some of the analyzed clone narratives, each clone is portrayed as no more than a particle in a colony of clones conditioned and indoctrinated to function first and foremost for the maintenance and solidification of his society. Such narratives foreground the nightmare of the loss of individuality. Unlike double narratives, clone narratives exhibit this loss as the outcome not of internal fragmentation, but of the erasure of differences between individuals. Despite this significant difference, eventually both double narratives and clone narratives challenge the Western conception of a separate and coherent self and the derived conceptions of moral agency and moral responsibility.

Yet even in this regard there is a fundamental difference between the major double narratives and some clone narratives: the split subjectivity in double narratives tends to signify instability, insanity, and ultimately even death both for the self and the other-as-double. In

other words, the fragmentary self in such narratives cannot generate a complex unity, in which each of the fragments becomes a part of the whole, intricately connected to the other parts. Double narratives do not usually promise a new and better form of subjectivity. By contrast, some clone narratives, as the brief analysis of *The Cloning of Joanna May* demonstrates, trigger the clone(s) to reconsider the foundations of their identity and hence foster their sense of being autonomous subjects. Furthermore, clone narratives such as John Varley's "The Phantom of Kansas" (1997) and Michel Houellebecq's *La possibilité d'une île* (2005) (re)present alternative models of (post)human subjectivity and agency. Some of the imaginary worlds constructed in these narratives—whose survey requires a separate article (see Marcus forthcoming 2012)—illustrate these alternative models as a promising expansion of the perceptive and cognitive abilities of *homo sapiens*, whereas other imaginary worlds envision these models as heralding the diminution, or even the complete destruction, of human interactive and emotional faculties.

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NOTES

¹I would like to thank Monika Fludernik, Leona Toker, Jan Alber, and the anonymous reader of *Connotations* for their helpful comments on previous versions of this essay.

²For want of a better term, in the following pages I refer to a primary human being (or the fictional analogue of such a human being—a character) as the original.

³My use of the term of "cloning" refers only to organism cloning and does not include molecular cloning (i.e., cloning unicellular organisms and cloning in stem cell research). I define clones as "approximately genetically identical" because some DNA is contained in the mitochondria, tiny organs in the cytoplasm of the cell that provide energy (see Herbert, Sheler, and Watson 18; Morell 68; Winston 105).

⁴It is almost needless to say that fictional doubles originate from actual psychic phenomena, elaborately described and analyzed in numerous books (e.g., Olaf Koob). Yet doubles, as the human incorporation of certain aspects or parts of a

split consciousness, are "a literary, and specifically a fictional, device for articulating the experience of self-division" (Živković 122), which is based on the paradox of duality and unity (Keppler 14). My view is therefore incompatible with the mystical view of the human double (presented, for instance, in Shirley), according to which doubles exist in actual reality as etheric bodies, or as consciousnesses that can act and interact independently of the physical body.

⁵There are close affinities and partial overlap between stories about doubles and stories about multiple personality. However, if the belief of the protagonist that he has a double is not supported by any textual evidence other than his belief (a case in point is Vladimir Nabokov's *Despair* [1937]), I would rather label the story a "pseudo-double narrative." Moreover, the double in some double narratives, such as E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Die Doppeltgänger," is unequivocally represented as a supernatural phenomenon rather than a case of multiple personality (hence these narratives demonstrate what Todorov calls "the marvelous," by contrast to "the fantastic").

⁶A historical analysis of the emergence and development of the double theme in nineteenth century fiction is beyond the scope of my essay. For enlightening surveys of the historical background, see Herdman, esp. 11-20; and Schmid, esp. 33-46.

⁷In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopian novel *Herland* (1915), women reproduce through parthenogenesis, i.e., a form of asexual reproduction found in females. In this sense, *Herland* can be considered a progenitor of clone narratives. However, unlike parthenogenesis, cloning is an artificial (i.e., scientifically produced) and hence strictly controlled way of reproduction.

⁸The ambiguity of the double is similarly described by Živković: "the psychological power of the double lies in its ambiguity, in the fact that it can stand for contrast or opposition, but likeness as well. It can be complementarity, as in the Platonic conception of twin souls which seek each other in order to make a whole out of their sundered halves" (122).

⁹Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann" (1821), although not strictly a double narrative, features characters who seem to be each other's doubles (the lawyer Coppelius is identified with the Sandman [334] and later with the barometer seller Giuseppe Coppola [338]). Furthermore, the protagonist Nathanael believes that his father, who dies while experimenting with alchemy, becomes, or appears as, very similar to Coppelius—his partner for these experiments. Thus the double in Hoffmann's story, as in Stevenson's novella, originates from the dangers of alchemy, a (pseudo)science which strives to transgress the limitations of human knowledge and intellectual abilities. Double narratives share this anxiety over the loss of control of scientific investigation—particularly investigation whose aim is the creation of (pseudo or semi) humans—with other narratives of the nineteenth century, most notably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) and H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896).

¹⁰Unlike clone narratives, the most prominent double narratives all feature male protagonists.

¹¹"Bokanovsky's Process" described in *Brave New World* (esp. 15-19) is, strictly speaking, not cloning, but rather a laboratory fertilization of an egg by sperm, and the subsequent budding and division of the fertilized egg into ninety-six identical human embryos. However, the similarities between "Bokanovsky's process" and mass cloning are striking: the embryos (re)produced in "Bokanovsky's process" are genetically identical, and, like clones, they are the product of artificial rather than natural reproduction. In "Bokanovsky's process," "[t]he principle of mass production [is] at last applied to biology" (18).

¹²See also Rank (99). Astrid Schmid notes the connection between the psychological perspective with regard to the double and the sociological perspective: "[a]s well as elucidating the outsider position of the protagonist, the double also underlines the general condition of a society which forces individuals into such isolation" (55).

¹³My view with regard to Maupassant's "Le Horla" is similar to Rank's (29-33). By contrast, Todorov regards this story as a fantastic tale. Although the reader can assume that the narrating characters in fantastic stories are insane, "because they are not introduced by a discourse distinct from that of the narrator, we still lend them a paradoxical confidence" (86).

¹⁴For a thorough theological perspective to the double, see Herdman, esp. 3-10.

¹⁵Todorov believes that the supernatural elements in fantastic narratives, including those that portray doubles, are an expedient to avoid breaking taboos by raising themes such as incest and homosexuality (cf. 158-59). If Todorov's analysis is correct, then clone narratives of the last decades are no longer in need of such expedients. Todorov attributes the waning of former taboos to the rise of psychoanalysis (160-61).

¹⁶Milica Živković appositely explicates the prevalence of the double-devil in double narratives of the nineteenth century: "The appearance of the demonic double as opposed to and irreconcilable with the guardian angel marks the moment in the history of Western civilization when the archaic belief in the continuum of life and death and the exchange between man and nature was replaced by a sense of man as discontinuity leading to death and madness—a sense of man ultimately alienated from his own wishes, desires and fears, embodied in the figure of the double" (124).

¹⁷My analysis in this section is inspired by René Girard's observations about mimetic desire (also called "triangular" or "metaphysical" desire) in his seminal book, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* (1965). For a more detailed discussion of Girard's thesis of mimetic desire see Amit Marcus, *Narrators, Narratees, and Mimetic Desire*. The romantic conception of desire resisted by Girard presents desire as spontaneous, that is, as a direct, linear connection between the desiring subject and the desired object (cf. 16-17, 29-39, 269). By contrast, according to Girard's triadic model, the subject does not desire the object in and for itself, but the desire is mediated by another subject, the mediator, who possesses, or pursues, this object. I propose that the desiring subject and the mediator can also be conflicting forces within the same individual: double narratives (particularly according to

Todorov's natural hypothesis) do not suppose a whole, unified, and coherent subject of desire, but rather split this subject into two, and these two parts are personified: the self is at the same time the self-as-another. Hence I believe that my contention that one can be one's own rival is compatible with Girard's model.

¹⁸The shadow is one of the most prevalent metaphors for the double or the *alter ego*, both in popular culture and in scholarly works of psychoanalysts such as Karl Gustav Jung's and Otto Rank's. Jonardon Ganeri imputes the attractiveness of the metaphor of the shadow for the description of the *alter ego* or the double to the fact "that it establishes a metaphysical asymmetry from the outset: the shadow depends for its existence on the more solid entity, but not vice versa," and adds that "[a]n implied master-slave relationship seems to hover in the background of the metaphor" (111). However, as in Hegel's original formulation of the slave-master relationship, so in the case of doubles-as-shadows, the hierarchy becomes more complicated when the original realizes that he can never be released from his double, as any person can never release himself from his own shadow. Thus ontological priority is only one parameter in the relations of power and domination between the original and his double (see also Lizama 172).

¹⁹My explanation of the ambivalence of the original towards his double is based on Girard's observations regarding the rivalry between the subject of desire and his mediator (see also n16). This ambivalence has also been explained in other ways—for instance, by the fact that the double represents at one and the same time the evil self and the creative forces of the passionate and desiring self; cf. Andrew Hock Soon Ng 2.

²⁰I agree with Lankildehus that "there may be no criterion to distinguish an ontological priority between someone and his so-called double. Indeed, it is mere idealization to identify someone as the original and an 'other' as his double, when in non-hierarchical language both instantiations are each other's double" (67). However, double narratives typically focus on one perspective, namely that of the original, who relates to another character as his double, and it is from this perspective that one character seems to have ontological priority over the other.

²¹In some other double narratives, however, the original too is an impostor: the original who narrates Maupassant's "Le Horla" schemes in several ways to catch the formless and elusive double who haunts him. The original William Wilson is a fraud too: he treats his "namesake" with bravado in public, while at the same time fearing and envying him in his private life (101).

²²The last sentence is a paraphrase of Girard 53.

²³The process of identification of the double with his original, and vice versa, is also designated in "William Wilson": the main difference between the original Wilson and his "namesake" is the latter's defective voice. The second Wilson cannot raise his voice above a very low whisper. This difference, however, reduces as the narrative progresses: "his singular voice, it grew the very echo of my own" (104; italics in the original), and it utterly disappears at the last lines of the story: "[Wilson] spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking" (117).

²⁴*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is compatible with my definition of double narrative, although the portrait is certainly not a protagonist in the traditional sense. It is a partial animation of the inanimate: it does not speak, and it is unclear whether, and in what sense, it has a consciousness. However, "in respect to the capacity of physical growth and change the portrait is the animate one of the two, while Dorian is as inanimate as painted canvas, though only in this one respect [...]. [The portrait] is as subjectively real, for his original and for us, as Dorian himself, for the reason that he is Dorian. But at the same time he is no less objectively real, as a completely independent being" (Keppler 80).

²⁵In several clone narratives, deception is a means of dominating the people who are unwittingly involved in the process of cloning, particularly women. This is emphatically represented in Rorvik's *In His Image*, in which Max rents the womb of a young virgin in order to have his clone, while she is informed that she was paid to serve as a surrogate mother for an infertile couple. Max insists that the woman should be a virgin, probably not for religious reasons, like she is told, but because he believes that a virgin would be less likely to claim the baby (150). Sparrow, the chosen virgin, is later notified that the child she bears is destined to become the heir of a wealthy man, but still she is not told that it is Max's clone.

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Untold and Unlived Lives in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*: A Response to Burkhard Niederhoff*

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In his article on "Unlived Lives," Burkhard Niederhoff examines the trope of the "unlived life" in two rather different works of literature, namely Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* and Tom Stoppard's play *The Invention of Love*. In my response, I will focus on the use of this theme in another novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (2005), that deals with similar themes and expands on them in an unexpected direction by transposing them into a science-fictional framework.

All of the four criteria that Niederhoff lists as typical of the motif of the unlived life, namely the presence of a counterfactual course of events, a retrospective focus, a sustained concentration on the retrospective reflection about the alternative life, and a deep involvement of the character or characters in such reflection, apply to this novel. At the same time, *Never Let Me Go* takes the notion of "unlived life" into an unexpected direction by situating the work within a non-realistic framework, a parallel reality with some science-fictional features, that further stresses the counterfactual nature of the story. This allows Ishiguro to question the nature of memory both from an epistemological perspective, through a sophisticated use of an unreliable narrator that ultimately questions the notions of personal and historical

*Reference: Burkhard Niederhoff, "Unlived Lives in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* and Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love*," *Connotations* 20.2-3 (2010/11): 164-88.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debniederhoff02023.htm>>.

memory, and from an ontological one, challenging the very notion of individual identity.

In his essay, Niederhoff argues that, while the narrators' obsession with their past and lost opportunities in "unlived life" narratives may appear to be a "backward-looking, unproductive and unhealthy activity" (Niederhoff 179), this kind of narrative presents us with more than simple navel-gazing. By looking back at their life through the lens of alternative choices, the characters ultimately gain a greater degree of self-awareness. In my essay, I will build on Niederhoff's analysis and expand on it to consider the way in which in Ishiguro's more recent novel the protagonist's and other characters' retrospective look at their "unlived lives" invite a broader reflection on the connection between memory and agency (or lack thereof). In particular, I will focus on two apparently contradictory yet interrelated concepts: the idea of the inherent unreliability of memory, and the idea of memory as a source of solace in the face of disempowerment.

1. Those Aren't Your Memories

In the opening passage of *Never Let Me Go*, the narrator describes how one of the men in her care, on the verge of death, asks her to retell her childhood stories over and again, as if he wanted to make them his own:

What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to *remember* Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood. He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were my memories and what were his. (*Never Let Me Go* 6)

The connection between recollection and narration is a recurring theme in Ishiguro's oeuvre. As I discussed elsewhere, most of his works feature what can be described as an "unreliable narrator," and

such unreliability is generally premised on the idea of memory as an opaque filter between the narrator and his or her past (Suter).

With the exception of *The Unconsoled*, all of Ishiguro's novels are narrated retrospectively several years after the events, and the narrator makes repeated references to the act of remembering and its selective, biased nature. The texts are both reflective and self-reflexive, and the narrators constantly oscillate between downplaying and exalting the accuracy of their account, admitting that some of their recollections are very vague yet insisting that others are indisputably correct, which makes the reader doubt their overall reliability.

This creates a general sense of epistemological uncertainty, which sets the tone of the retrospective narrative and constructs a particular relationship with the reader, built on a tension between sympathy and distrust. One peculiar feature, which Niederhoff points out in his analysis, is that the narrators often retell episodes in completely different versions, something that further undermines their narrative reliability, while also ultimately questioning the possibility of any objective account of "facts." This retelling is an integral part of the process of reassessment of the narrator's life trajectory, and of the retrospective questioning of his choices. Yet this narrative strategy also leads to further confusion, both for the narrator and for the reader. Rather than shedding light on events, these reiterated accounts envelop them in layers of reticence and repression, making it impossible to reach any solid conclusion.

Never Let Me Go goes a step beyond the other novels in this respect, proposing memory also as a source of consolation for its disenfranchised characters. Going over memories of a happy past, even if, like in the case of the aforementioned patient, those memories are ostensibly manufactured, based on his "unlived life" rather than his actual one, becomes an important source of solace for the novel's protagonists in their attempt to cope with a tragic fate.

At the same time, similar to *The Remains of the Day*, the text also creates a peculiar connection with the reader through its use of narrative strategies, by assuming that the narratee, too, would perceive the

narrator's account "just like it had been his own childhood." This has a paradoxical effect of involvement and detachment on the reader, who cannot coincide with the implied narratee, yet is repeatedly addressed as such. *Never Let Me Go* constructs its narratee as someone who not only belongs to the diegesis, but is also a peer of the narrator. Such effect is enhanced by the general lack of information about the context, which is gradually revealed to be a fanta-historical parallel reality.

The novel begins as the account of a thirty-one year old woman, who introduces herself as a "carer" named Kathy H. While apparently not fitting Niederhoff's claim that "the retrospective criterion also entails the advanced age of the protagonists in works dealing with the un-lived life" and therefore the characters "tend to be somewhere between middle age and their deathbed" (Niederhoff 165), the narrator maintains a similar "sustained focus" on retrospection and regret. As we will later discover, she is in fact reaching the end of her life and has outlived most of her peers, of whom only memories are left. For Kathy H, thirty-one is in fact somewhere between middle age and her deathbed.

The main object of the narrator's recollection are her childhood years in a place called Hailsham. This initially appears to be a boarding school in the English countryside, and the narrator's references to experiences that may be shared by the reader seem to construct the narratee as someone who also went to a boarding school. Thus some of the addresses to the reader seem simply aimed at producing a realistic effect, such as the following: "I don't know if you had 'collections' where you were. When you come across students from Hailsham, you always find them, sooner or later, getting nostalgic about their collections" (38); "I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we definitely weren't at all kind towards any kind of gay stuff" (96).

Other addresses to the reader, however, begin to introduce an uncanny note in the description of the school, for example referring to highly frequent health checks and extremely strict policies on any-

thing potentially harmful to the body: "I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week" (13); "I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham the guardians were really strict about smoking" (67). The attention of the guardians to the students' health, which borders on the maniacal, and the strict policing of anything concerning their physical activities, contribute to arousing suspicions that this is no ordinary school, and the effect is paradoxically reinforced by the appeal to an experience supposedly shared by narratee, highlighting the distance between implied and actual reader.

2. Told and Not Told

The theme of the obsession with students' health is a first hint at the true nature of the school. Similarly vague intimations appear throughout the first half of the novel, until in chapter seven one of the "guardians" of the school, Miss Lucy, explains in a long emotional speech that Hailsham "students" are being raised in order to donate vital organs, which will be extracted from them one after the other shortly after they graduate from high school. Miss Lucy's monologue seems to be there more for the benefit of the reader than that of the characters, who are not surprised by her speech, as they already knew about their destiny.

Miss Lucy, however, explains that she felt the need to spell it out because she believes they were somehow "told and not told," made aware of the details of their tragic fate only indirectly and in installments, in such a way that, as Kathy's friend Tommy puts it, "we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information. But of course we'd take it in at some level, so that before long all this stuff was there in our heads without us ever having examined it properly" (82).

We also discover, as late as chapter twelve, that the students are clones, created specifically for the purpose of organ harvesting. This,

too, is not directly explained either to the children or to the reader, but is hinted at through discussions of sexuality and reproduction and the way they set the students apart from “people out there.” As a result of such convoluted and indirect way of offering information, several rumors and theories arise among the students regarding their origin as well as their future, as they try to make sense of their lives and cope with their inescapable fate. One of these in particular has a major impact on the narrator’s life, and the novel’s development, as we will see.

Tommy’s description of the guardians’ way of “telling and not telling” is an intriguing *mise en abyme* of the narrative mode of the novel itself: the reader, too, is constantly “told and not told,” given hints whose significance s/he can only understand retrospectively. We thus find ourselves in the same situation as the narrator, looking back at her life through the filter of incomplete and biased information, unable to fully trust anything, yet eager to discover the untold truths that are gradually offered us.

Within this context, the narrative focuses on a reflection on “what could have been” in the narrator’s life, or what Niederhoff would describe as a “counterfactual course of events.” Kathy obsessively revisits specific moments in her past in which events took an unpleasant turn, wondering if this could have been avoided. These, however, seem to revolve around minor incidents, mostly conversations that took a wrong turn, making her lose an argument, or upsetting a friend. Behind these, there slowly begins to emerge the picture of another, greater regret, namely Kathy’s unrealized romance with her schoolmate Tommy, who instead dated her best friend Ruth. Again, we are reminded of *The Remains of the Day* and Stevens’s unrealized affair with his colleague Miss Kenton.

Interestingly, towards the end of the novel, Kathy seems to be offered a second chance to live out this unspoken wish, her untold and unlived life. After leaving the school, Kathy begins to work as a “carer,” providing psychological and practical assistance to the other clones in between their organ donations. This is something many of

the clones do for a few years, until they are notified that it is time to become donors themselves. Being a carer is emotionally and physically daunting, but Kathy takes pride in performing this task at the best of her abilities, and as a result she is not only able to defer the onset of her donations until the age of thirty-one, but is also occasionally given the opportunity of choosing which donors she will take care of. Taking advantage of such privilege, she becomes Tommy's carer, and the two finally begin a romantic and sexual relationship, despite the fact that he has already donated three of his vital organs and is now mostly confined to a hospital bed.

The romance however is not the ultimate aim of Kathy's life story, but rather a trigger to reveal another, more daunting untold tale of the novel, another un-lived life. This is disclosed gradually through what Niederhoff would term "foil characters," secondary figures that find themselves in a situation similar to that of the protagonist but make different, either braver or more foolish, choices. According to Niederhoff, these characters are an object of projection on the part of the narrators, who talk about themselves indirectly by discussing the lives of others (Niederhoff 173).

In *Never Let Me Go*, these coincide with what the students call their "possibles," i.e. the real-life people they could have been cloned from. The question of "possibles" is a source of endless speculations among the characters, who become convinced that "when you saw the person you were copied from, you'd get *some* insight into who you were deep down, and maybe too, you'd see something of what your life held in store" (140).

3. Possibles and Dream Futures

The obsession with "possibles" relates to another central topic of conversation among the students, which the narrator calls their "dream futures" (138). Even after becoming fully aware that they are clones created for organ harvesting, the characters still fantasize about

the existence of exceptions to the rules, which would allow them to defer the onset of donations and enjoy a “normal” life for a few years. Thus, the students project onto their “possibles” all sorts of fantasies about their future careers as postmen, farmers, or office workers, and whenever they have a chance to go into the outside world, they look eagerly for “possibles” to catch a glimpse of these “unlived lives.” The harsh reality of their short life as prospective donors makes the characters’ emotional investment in these fantasies all the greater. Yet their “dream futures” are ultimately revealed to be mere illusions.

The most persistent rumor about delays in the beginning of donations is that couples may be offered a few years together if they can demonstrate that they are genuinely in love. To Kathy and Tommy this seems to explain one of the most puzzling aspects of their life at Hailsham, namely the fact that teachers attributed great importance to their creativity. Once again revisiting her past, Kathy remembers how producing artwork was a central part of the students’ education, and how their best drawings, sculptures, and poems were regularly collected by a mysterious authority figure known as “Madame.” Kathy and Tommy become convinced that the students’ artwork was collected as evidence to draw upon in case a couple later applied for a deferral to live out their romance. In such an instance, the students’ creative work will allow Madame to look into their souls, and determine whether they are genuinely in love or simply pretending in order to be granted a few more years to live.

Their hope is soon crushed, however, when, towards the end of the novel, they finally reach Madame and present her with their drawings. In an emotionally charged dialogue, the reader is offered the last untold truth about Hailsham and its students. The school, we discover, was created as part of a broader effort to raise public awareness and establish more humane conditions for the “farming” of clones. This was the ultimate purpose of giving the children an education and encouraging them to be creative: the works they produced were used not to look into their souls, as they naively believed, but, as the school principal puts it, “*to prove that you had souls at all*” (260; original italics).

The experiment ultimately failed, as it raised ethical questions about cloning and organ harvesting that the general public was not willing to face. The school was closed, and the unpalatable truth of the students' humanity remained untold.

We thus come to realize that, unlike Stevens, the narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, Kathy never had a choice. While she may wish now that she had acted differently on small matters such as engaging in pointless arguments with her friends, or letting her friend Ruth steal her sweetheart, in the broader picture she never possessed any agency. Her unlived lives, both the "dream future" as an office worker and the romance with Tommy, were never a possibility. The awareness she gains through self-reflection is a chilling one: her destiny was from the beginning determined by forces beyond her control, and her story was silenced by those same forces.

However, interestingly, the novel ends on a less desperate note, presenting memory as the ultimate source of consolation when all else is lost. The narrator notes how, after the closure of Hailsham, many former students went looking for it in the English countryside, and new rumors and legends developed around it, speculating that it had been turned into a hotel or a regular school. However, Kathy does not feel the need to find out where the school was located or what happened to it. It is her memory of Hailsham that she treasures, not its ruins:

But as I say, I don't go searching for it, and anyway, by the end of the year, I won't be driving around like this any more. So the chances are I won't come across it now, and on reflection, I'm glad that's the way it'll be. It's like with my memories of Tommy and Ruth. Once I'm able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I'll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that'll be something no one can take away. (287)

Throughout the novel, the narrator had used "foil characters" in the form of possible sources of cloning as an object onto which to project her fantasies of alternative paths she could have taken and fantasize about her "unlived life." Yet when it becomes evident that none of those alternative paths was ever available to her, that she never had

any agency in determining her personal trajectory, the narrator finds solace in memories of her actual life, rather than in speculations on the unlived one. While Hailsham's attempt to reveal the clones' inner soul ultimately failed, and their story remained untold to the larger audience, the memory of her fellow clones' lives survives in Kathy's mind, and it provides her not only with greater self-awareness, but also with a last source of solace as she accepts her hard fate.

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