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EDITORIAL ADDRESS

Professor Matthias Bauer, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen,
Department of English, Wilhelmstr. 50, 72074 Tübingen, Germany
Email: editors@connotations.de http://www.connotations.de

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Authorship, Gender, and the Modern Muse in Edith Wharton's Vance Weston Novels: A Response to Judith P. Saunders*

MARGARET TOTH

Edith Wharton's last two completed novels, *Hudson River Bracketed* (1929) and *The Gods Arrive* (1932), together trace the life of aspiring writer Vance Weston across roughly a decade.[1] Mobilizing a common device of the *Künstlerroman*, Wharton parallels Vance's authorial education with his sexual one. The nineteen-year-old's first effort at writing stems from heartbreak: upon learning that his grandfather is having an affair with his own former girlfriend, Floss Delaney, Vance channels his despair and sexual jealousy into a short story, "One Day." Encouraged by this experience—"at last he had found out a way of reconciling his soul to its experiences" (*HRB* 31)—he determines to become a writer and travels to New York, settling with distant relations in the Hudson River Valley. There he meets a cultured young woman, Halo Tarrant, who serves as muse, literary advisor, and writing partner to him for the rest of the novel. While Vance makes several attempts on the literary scene, his romantic life suffers: an ill-advised marriage to his unsophisticated young cousin, Laura Lou, leaves him restless, and, not surprisingly, he falls in love with the married Halo, his intellectual equal. In fact, his friendship with Halo results in the only substantial work he writes in *Hudson River Bracketed*, the historical novel *Instead*.

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*Reference: Judith P. Saunders "Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* and Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan': Re-Creating Xanadu in an American Landscape," *Connotations* 24.2 (2014/2015): 187-216. For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/whartons-hudson-river-bracketed-and-coleridges-kubla-khan/>.

The Gods Arrive opens with a recently-widowed Vance and Halo—who is now separated from her husband—sailing for Europe to pursue, in earnest, Vance's literary career. As they travel to such places as Cordova, Spain, and Oubli-sur-Mer, France, Vance works on and publishes two more novels, but, though he depends upon Halo in several material ways, he no longer desires her literary advice. These tensions, along with the social pressures of traveling as an unmarried couple, culminate in a mutual agreement to part ways, with the two returning separately to the United States. This break coincides with the failure of Vance's most recent novel, *Colossus*, written partly while under the infatuation of his old flame, Floss. *The Gods Arrive* concludes with Vance reuniting with Halo, who, unbeknownst to him, is pregnant with their child. While Wharton provides no definite resolution—on the closing pages, it is unclear if Vance has truly learned from his interwoven sexual and artistic experiences—she does suggest a correlation between the imminent birth of the couple's child and the rebirth of Vance's creative abilities.

Judith P. Saunders's thoughtful article, "Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* and Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan': Re-Creating Xanadu in an American Landscape," focuses less on these *Künstlerroman* tropes and more on the novel's allusions. Specifically, arguing that Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" fundamentally informs the first novel in Wharton's diptych, Saunders looks closely at both Wharton's overt allusions to the poem and the more subtle ways that Coleridge resurfaces at various points throughout the novel. Perhaps most compellingly, Saunders argues that "Wharton goes far beyond the usual parameters of literary reference and allusion: her novel *enacts* the poem" (204). That is, the narrative arc of the novel—the content and chronology of its major events—mirrors the structure of the "Kubla Khan." As Saunders points out, this renders *Hudson River Bracketed* "unique" within "Wharton's oeuvre," because, although the author often relies on allusion, "nowhere else does it play such a structurally central role" (205).

Saunders's article enriches existing Wharton scholarship in important ways. For one, it asks us to reevaluate how Wharton comments on the state of modern authorship through *Hudson River Bracketed*; while critics have noted that Vance often serves as a placeholder for Wharton's frustrations with modernist writing, less attention has been given to the ways in which he acts, at key moments, as her surrogate. Indeed, Vance's epiphanic moment of discovering "Kubla Khan" echoes Wharton's own experience when reading Coleridge as a child, which she describes in her autobiographical piece "A Little Girl's New York" (1938). Saunders's essay, then, identifies an important affinity between Vance and his creator and, as such, works toward a more precise understanding of how Wharton both engages and disengages with a transforming, post-war literary scene in her late works. Moreover, Saunders's essay is no mere exercise in locating places where Coleridge and "Kubla Khan" appear in the novel. Instead, she uses those allusive moments as vehicles for exploring a rich set of ideas within *Hudson River Bracketed*, including the role that inspiration plays in the writing process, publishing cultures, and the literary functions of place and nature.

Saunders limits her analysis to *Hudson River Bracketed*, which is understandable; her objective is to lay bare "the intricate role" that "Kubla Khan" plays in the first novel, which, as she states, "has yet to be adequately analyzed and appreciated" (187).[2] Saunders does mention *The Gods Arrive* in endnotes, but she is less interested in the sequel, since, as she points out, the allusions to Coleridge disappear (213n16) or, more precisely, evolve into allusions to Goethe (212n10). In the following response, I explore what happens when we extend Saunders's arguments to *The Gods Arrive*. Why might Wharton shift her allusions away from Coleridge—and I agree with Saunders that, for the most part, she does—and toward Goethe? What work do the latter allusions perform? Do the major themes that Saunders treats—namely, inspiration, writing, and place—figure in *The Gods Arrive*, and, if so, do they figure differently? I argue that these subjects get reworked, sometimes radically, in the second novel, revealing

Wharton's views on such interlaced issues as modern authorship, gender, and tensions between past and present.

The Modern Muse

In a discussion of how Halo inspires Vance's writing in *Hudson River Bracketed*, Saunders explains that scholars tend to offer "sharp criticism of the selfless role Halo plays in ministering to Vance's talent and career" and therefore overlook how "the mythological idea of a Muse" governs their relationship (211n7). In Saunders's opinion, this is a mistake. In her reading, Wharton's mobilization of "the muse-like function" through Halo connects the novel not only to ancient literary traditions but also to Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." Halo, who, in a crucial episode early in the first novel, introduces Vance to the inspirational Thundertop mountain in the Hudson River Valley, is akin to Coleridge's "'damsel with a dulcimer' [...] 'singing of Mount Abora'" (200). Saunders goes on to claim that "the most striking parallel with Coleridge's 'damsel' manifests itself in Halo's assistance, as 'monitress and muse,' with the writing of *Instead*" (200-01). Focusing on the muse in this way allows Saunders to examine the productive and creative bond Vance and Halo share in *Hudson River Bracketed*. Put bluntly, Vance could not have written *Instead* without Halo. As Saunders states, Vance, like "Coleridge's artist-speaker," "re-create[s] Khan's pleasure-dome" with and through his muse: "With Halo's help, he is representing the Willows in fictive form, re-imagining the history of the house, its grounds, and its owner. [...] Without the inspiration and encouragement supplied by Halo [...] that act of re-creation could not have come to fruition" (201). In making this argument about the muse, Saunders demonstrates just how indebted Vance's authorship is to Halo, also revealing, albeit indirectly, one way in which Wharton undermines modern conceptions of the individual Genius.

As such, Saunders offers a corrective to current scholarship on the novel, since, as she argues, critics are "less inclined than Wharton or her contemporaries to take serious interest in the mythological idea of a Muse"; instead, they focus "what now may appear to be an unequal and gender-biased relationship" (211n7). While Saunders makes a valuable point here, she passes up an opportunity to grapple with the ways in which Wharton was not only relying upon but also attempting to redefine the concept of the muse in a post-war, modern era. That is, aligning Halo with the Romantic "damsel with the dulcimer" or mythological muse has its limits, since Wharton takes pains to show us that Halo is not a passive vessel, inspiring or serving as a repository for masculine fantasies, but rather a savvy agent working in Vance's best interests.

Indeed, Halo provides Vance with factual information for his novel, reads his drafts, gives him incisive feedback, and, more practically, makes available the space in which he writes. She also, I would argue, becomes his unofficial—and unremunerated—literary agent and publicist. In several places in the novel, she performs quasi-professional tasks, passing along Vance's poetry to the critic George Frenside, for example, or serving as mediator between Vance and her husband Lewis Tarrant, who is Vance's editor. She even enlightens Vance about industry etiquette after he stands up Lewis: "'Editors are busy people, you know, Vance. [...] If you make another appointment you must be sure to keep it'" (*HRB* 218). Therefore, in *Hudson River Bracketed*, Wharton, through Halo, experiments with updating Coleridge's "damsel with the dulcimer," giving us a portrait of what we might call the Modern Muse. Put differently, she reworks a pre-war literary construct—specifically, Coleridge's Romantic muse, which itself relies upon much earlier antecedents—so that it accommodates the agency and aspirations of the New Woman.

However, and here it is essential to extend Saunders's focus and turn to *The Gods Arrive*, this experiment ultimately miscarries. On the one hand, it fails because of the hypocrisy of the bohemian artists with whom Vance and Halo fraternize in Europe, a group that,

though "free and jolly and clever" (*GA* 94), holds conventional views. Halo and Vance find themselves figuratively homeless, lacking a community in which their unorthodox relationship, both working and romantic, can develop. On the other hand, and more important to my argument, it fails because of problems inherent in the muse device itself. Halo cannot outrun its traditional trappings, as, in the second novel, Vance increasingly views her as an empty construct rather than an actual individual. In his more punctilious moments, Vance recognizes this: "'Funny ... ' he reflected ... 'when I go away anywhere I always shut up the idea of her in a box, as if she were a toy; or turn her to the wall, like an unfinished picture ...'" (*GA* 122; ellipses original). I submit that this objectification of Halo—she becomes a mere thing to Vance, by turns an idea or a material article—is a logical, though unfortunate, endpoint to the Romantic muse narrative that Saunders identifies in *Hudson River Bracketed*.[3]

Through Halo, accordingly Wharton attempts to modernize the paradigmatic muse, but too many obstacles stand in her way, including, most conspicuously, her main character Vance, the novel's chief representative of post-war authorship. Vance seems perfectly content with both the traditional archetype and the gendered power structures it underwrites. When, in *The Gods Arrive*, Halo resists this arrangement, Vance seeks a muse elsewhere, either in strangers—as in the episode where he stumbles upon a sleeping young woman in a forest, which recalls not "Kubla Khan" but *Endymion* (see *GA* 117-18)—or in women like Floss Delaney, who are satisfied with passively inspiring rather than actively participating in his art. In the episode where Halo learns that Vance has been spending time with Floss and other unsavory individuals, Wharton powerfully records her heroine's anguish:

> It was bitter to think that these were the companions he had chosen, the people who had been sharing his pleasures, listening to his talk, perhaps receiving his confidences and laughing at his inflammable enthusiasm, while she, who had given him her life, sat alone, forgotten, as utterly cut off from him as if she had never had any share in his existence. (*GA* 328)

In passages like this one, which we discover through turning to sequel only, Wharton exposes the devastating emotional consequences of forcing an individual to perform Coleridge's "damsel with a dulcimer."

This tension surrounding inspiration might explain why, as Saunders points out, Coleridge all but disappears in *The Gods Arrive*. Wharton exchanges "Kubla Khan" for *Faust*, as Vance replaces one literary muse—Coleridge's damsel, which the living, breathing Halo uneasily and never fully occupies—with another, Goethe's mythological underworld Mothers. While Vance is still "sure that he loved [Halo] as much as ever, was as happy as ever in her company," in the sequel to *Hudson River Bracketed* "the deep workings of his imagination" are "no longer roused by her presence" (*GA* 111). Instead, he becomes increasingly preoccupied with "the scene where Faust descends to the Mothers," a "passage [...] which had always haunted him" (*GA* 23). Goethe's set piece serves as a model for Vance's own writing process, as he "exultantly" realizes: "'You have to go plumb down to the Mothers to fish up the real thing'" (*GA* 121). Critics have interpreted Wharton's use of these Goethe allusions in various ways while recognizing that they describe, as James Tuttleton put in in an early reappraisal of the Vance Weston novels, the "formal epistemology of the creative imagination" (342).[4] In Tuttleton's estimation, the Goethe allusions demonstrate that "the artist's task is to sound the depths of his imagination, to energize the union of the finite and the Infinite, in a form and vision projecting the image of man in his web of being" (342). In this respect, Vance seems to be evolving, both as a writer and as an ethical being; instead of exploiting Halo—relegating her to the status of muse, object, or construct—he turns to a source that will at once inspire him and place him in relation to others in a cosmic "web."

However, Vance's "pursuit of the Mothers" is ultimately misguided, "since he construes them as his own subjective depths, the walled-in well of his soul" (Kim 164). Vance's supposed quest for the Moth-

ers, as Sharon Kim astutely claims, is really a journey into his own interiority. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the book that results from Vance's new muse is the ego-driven, masturbatory *Colossus*, a thinly-veiled parody of Joyce's *Ulysses*, which Wharton, in an oft-cited letter to Bernard Berenson, described as "pornography (the rudest schoolboy kind)" (*Letters* 461). Therefore, Wharton ultimately reveals that these two inspirations, as Vance uses them, are proverbial sides of the same coin. Both expose, though in different ways, the narcissistic impulses undergirding the very idea of the muse.

Moreover, in *The Gods Arrive*, Wharton shows that Vance's interiority lacks authenticity, for *Colossus*, the novel that he writes under the inspiration of the Mothers, is highly derivative. He does not "fish up the real thing" but rather a confused mixture of modernist techniques he has internalized while reading trendy authors' works. He realizes, too late, that "'Colossus' was not his own book, brain of his brain, flesh of his flesh, as it had seemed while he was at work on it, but a kind of hybrid monster made out of the crossing of his own imaginings with those imposed on him by the literary fashions and influences of the day" (*GA* 393). This is precisely the criticism Halo articulates earlier in the novel when she reads a draft of *Colossus*. As she tells Vance, "'I have an idea you haven't found yourself—expressed your real self, I mean—in this book as you did in the others. You're not ... not quite as free from other influences ... echoes ...' (*GA* 342; ellipses original).

As Halo implies, *Instead*, though written in collaboration with her, is a purer form of self-expression than the parthenogenetic *Colossus*, and, indeed, what Vance thought would be "his masterpiece" becomes instead a "heavy lifeless production," a grotesque stillborn work that "died on his hands" (*GA* 393). Saunders argues that through *Hudson River Bracketed* Wharton illustrates that "[t]he artist must command remarkable inner strength in order to grapple successfully with" the act of creation, which takes place in an interior "realm fraught with contradiction and paradox" (202). Here Saunders references the binaries that organize Xanadu, including "height and

depth, calm and tumult, sun and ice" (202), and that get echoed through seasonal patterns in *Hudson River Bracketed*. We might add to this list of contradictions isolation and communion or independence and dependence, since Wharton shows, especially in *The Gods Arrive*, that the modern author also must reconcile these contradictions if he or she hopes to succeed as an artist.

Authorship, Place, and History: Wharton's Midwest

At the end of *The Gods Arrive*, Vance still has not achieved success, but Wharton does suggest that he is headed toward it. Significantly, she signals this not only through the reconciliation of Vance and Halo, his romantic and erstwhile professional partner, but also through geographical settings, which serve as yet another type of muse. Saunders identifies the complex role that place plays in *Hudson River Bracketed*, stating that "[f]rom the outset" of the novel, Wharton "emphasizes the importance of place, indicating that setting will serve not as mere backdrop for action but as subject" (188). Saunders deftly analyzes the ways in which Wharton contrasts Vance's Midwestern hometown with the East coast. The Midwest evokes cultural poverty and historical amnesia, while the East—particularly Halo's ancestral home of the Willows in the Hudson River Valley—connotes erudition and a rootedness in the past. Vance, Saunders writes, "finds himself in a natural environment more fertile and luxuriant than that of the Plains states, one more varied in terrain, more majestic in effect" (193). This place becomes critical to his development, since his "encounters with Halo at the Willows and at Thundertop bring [him] into contact with precisely the elements his early background has denied him: cultural history and natural glory" (Saunders 193). Therefore, Vance's flight from the Midwest to the East announces a forward progression in his character even as it takes him back into the past.

Once again, it is instructive to apply Saunders's arguments to *The Gods Arrive*, since, in the sequel, Wharton continues to parallel

Vance's relationship to place and his development as an individual and author. Indeed, plotting out his various travels reveals a map of not only his literal journeys but also his emotional and artistic ones. Significantly, *The Gods Arrive* opens, as the first sentence tells us, on a "big Atlantic liner," with Vance and Halo leaving New York for Europe. It is as if Vance needs to continue pushing eastward in order to gain access to more remote histories, ones that will enrich his imagination and make their way into his writing. And this is precisely what happens: Vance's next major work, *A Puritan in Spain*, is a historical novel set in a Spanish port town in the 1830s. However, while the book meets with positive reviews, Vance is dissatisfied: "The thing had come too easily; he knew it had not been fetched up out of the depths" (*GA* 73). Vance writes his next work, *Colossus*, in various European cultural centers as well, but it also, as I discuss above, disappoints Vance, not to mention the critics and his general readership. Wharton suggests that Vance's experiences in Europe, particularly the way he inhabits place, are too superficial. The towns and cities he occupies inform neither his deep consciousness—the "depths" that he plumbs during the creative process—nor his writing in any meaningful or authentic way.

In Book V of *The Gods Arrive*, the closing section of the diptych, Wharton suggests that Vance must travel West, not further East, in order to achieve his personal and artistic goals. Moreover, and this is key, I argue that returning to the Hudson River Valley is not enough: he must push past the East Coast and back into the Midwest. Saunders states that through "allusive patterns of iteration, echoing, and recursion," Wharton uses "Kubla Khan" to "celebrate" the Hudson River Valley as "a cornucopia of generative energies, natural and aesthetic, a place sustained by cultural-historical roots that North American otherwise conspicuously lacks" (210). This is absolutely the case. It should also be noted, as Saunders does (209), that it is the Hudson River Valley that originally inspires Vance's projected novel *Magic*, the work that Wharton implies will become his masterpiece if it is ever written.

But Wharton also suggests that the Midwest is as important as, if not more important than, the Hudson River Valley; this geographical setting fundamentally shaped Vance's identity, and he must appreciate it if he is ever to write an authentic work like *Magic*. Book V takes Vance back to his hometown of Euphoria, where, during a public reading, he abruptly comprehends his attachment to the Midwest: "his self had come out of Euphoria, been conceived and fashioned there, made of the summer heat on endless wheat-fields, the frozen winter skies [...]; the plants budding along the ditches on the way to Crampton, the fiery shade of the elm-grove down by the river ... he had been made out of all this, had come out of all this [...] " (*GA* 387). This is a crucial scene, for though Vance feels alienated from the town's inhabitants—the audience "wriggled in its seats, and twitched at its collar-buttons, and didn't understand him" (387)—he embraces the place itself, full of secret beauties that rival those of the Hudson River Valley.

This is no one-off scene in the book. When Vance later loses his beloved grandmother, he takes solace not in the magnificent settings of the Hudson River Valley but rather the more subdued splendors of wintry Midwestern woods. Wharton overtly codes this trip to the wilds of Wisconsin as a pilgrimage: Vance stays at the "Camp of Hope," reads *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, and nearly dies from an illness before being figuratively reborn, walking again with legs "like a baby's" and "look[ing] out with eyes cleansed by solitude on a new world in which everything was beautiful and important" (*GA* 419). The Midwestern environment is elemental to Vance's rebirth; even before he grows ill and convalesces, the "austere setting of hills and forests" (*GA* 413) restores his "vigour of mind and body," and he begins "to crave for a conscious intelligence [...] moulded on the large quiet lines of the landscape" (*GA* 415). Moreover, Vance, in "a mood of deep spiritual ardour such as his restless intelligence had never before attained," begins work on a new book that recalls his abandoned ideas for *Magic* (*GA* 416). Therefore, while Vance later thinks to himself that the Willows is "where his real life had begun" (*GA* 423),

Wharton shows that his identity is rooted in the Midwest, a place that he must evolve from, to be sure, but not reject altogether if he is to write his masterpiece.

The Past with a capital P—represented by Europe or, as Saunders argues, the Hudson River Valley—is important to Vance's literary endeavors, but so is his own, personal past, which is more intimately and mysteriously shaped by the Midwestern landscape. The struggle to reconcile personal and historical pasts, particularly pre-war pasts, with the present is a thematic tension that runs through much of Wharton's works from the 1920s and 1930s. In novels like *The Mother's Recompense* (1925) and *Twilight Sleep* (1927), it takes the form of inter-generational conflict and, more specifically, sexual competition between generations of women. By contrast, in the Vance Weston novels it gets encoded, through the device of the muse, into the dramas of modern authorship and gendered power. It even informs the various geographical settings in which those dramas unfold.

Manhattan College
New York

NOTES

[1]Some inconsistencies exist with respect to the novels' time frame. For example, Vance is nineteen at the beginning of *Hudson River Bracketed*, and at the end of *The Gods Arrive* he muses that "he was still in his twenties" (*GA* 426), implying that ten or less years have passed; however, Halo, who is unmarried when she first meets Vance in *Hudson River Bracketed*, lives with her husband Lewis Tarrant for ten years (*GA* 5) and then for nearly three years with Vance (*GA* 423).

[2]For brief discussions of how Coleridge's poem and Romanticism more generally influence the novel, see Toth; and Tuttleton.

[3]Horner and Beer make a similar point when they argue that "Wharton's purpose [...] is to show how Vance's masculine poetic sensibility derives from a cultural mythicising of women that blinds him to their individuality" (123).

[4]See also Kim; Horner and Beer; and Singley.

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A Course in Ghost Writing: Philip Roth, Authorship, and Death[*1]

DAVID HADAR

In an interview with a French magazine published in October 2012, Philip Roth (b. 1933) admitted that he had not written any fiction since *Nemesis* (2010), and that in fact he retired from fiction writing altogether ("Dernier Livre"); about a month later the news reached the English-speaking world through a short piece in *Salon* (see Daley). I interpret Roth's decision to announce his retirement, especially in such a roundabout manner, as representing an attempt to be absent and present at the same time. Roth, whose novels have dealt extensively with what it means to be a writer, has been contemplating, representing, and enacting these two possibilities for much of his career. He has cultivated his public image as a partial recluse, paradoxically making himself available to the public as someone famous for avoiding the public: "Fanfare for Agoraphobia" as Mark Shechner puts it (179). Shechner explains this paradoxical performance by looking at Roth's celebrity and the way any celebrity needs to be protected yet recognizable. But Roth's absent presence has its roots in a more literary context as well: his decision to retire is part of an overreaching dynamic within his oeuvre and public image. This dynamic has often been enacted by invoking the meeting points between life and death.

Critics who have written about Roth's retirement in the general press pick up on this matrix of life-death-presence-absence. One of the responses to his announcement carries a title resonant with my argu-

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/philip-roth>.

ment here: "Philip Roth: A Eulogy for a Living Man" (Gianopoulos). What is registered by titling a piece about a living man "A Eulogy" is that Roth's retirement is also a way for Roth to proclaim the death of Philip Roth as author. Adam Gopnik, a *New Yorker* critic, fancies that Roth is producing a novel about a writer who decides to retire, where Roth writes something like: "To stop writing had turned out to be the one final way to make his writing matter! Absence had provided a keener presence than the past ten years of books." As Gopnik describes in terms close to my argument to follow, Roth secures posthumous authority even while he is alive. He has been doing so at least since 1979 with *The Ghost Writer*, the novel that will be at the center of this paper.

For Philip Roth, the author's death, or the semblance of death, can be a source of prestige or even authority. That there is a connection between death and writing is a commonplace in literary criticism. There are numerous thinkers who make this link in nuanced ways, with examples ranging from critic Helen Sword's study of the modernists' fascination with ghosts and spirit mediums, to Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood's almost mystical description of authors as *Negotiating with the Dead*, the title of her nonfiction book on writing,[2] and to French philosopher Maurice Blanchot's dense rewritings of the Orpheus myth in *The Space of Literature*. I do not mean to rehash this issue. Before going into my reading of Roth it is, however, worth considering one of the most influential marriages between death and authorship. When, in the 1968 essay, Roland Barthes wished to describe the extent to which traditional authors are no longer relevant for the reading of their works, he famously pronounced "The Death of the Author." In Barthes's essay, which I am not treating here as a theoretical argument but as a source for an expression that has been widely circulated, death signifies the end of authority over the meaning of the text. Roth complicates the perception of death as a loss of authority by showing that, if it coexists with life, it may, in fact, increase authority.

A sense, voiced by several critics, that the images and names of authors (but not necessarily their production) are omnipresent in contemporary media is an important context for the Roth's fascination with absent presence. Roth experienced this phenomenon as a celebrated author and has become a prooftext for discussions of it. Particularly around the publication of *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), Roth became a household name, and his personal life became the matter of public interest to such an extent that he was the subject of gossip and talk show jokes. Even when looking at the time when Roth's celebrity was at its height, we should not forget that star authors are a common phenomenon in the contemporary literary world. As British cultural scholar Joe Moran notes in a book published in 2000, "there is no avoiding authors in contemporary American culture" (1). This sense of the ubiquity of literary authors and the disquiet about this over-presence was visible in the 1970s, when Roth was experiencing the height of his celebrity and writing *The Ghost Writer*. For example, in a 1975 *New York Magazine* piece, prominent critic Alfred Kazin complains that the successful authors are "public figures […] playing the role of confessional prima donnas" (36). The main target for Kazin's critique is Norman Mailer, but Roth is also listed as a culprit. Kazin pits Mailer, Roth, and others against less successful writers who are rarely seen. One of his examples for such writers is Bernard Malamud, who some identify as the inspiration for E. I. Lonoff, a central character in *The Ghost Writer*. But Kazin also invokes the more dramatically reclusive Thomas Pynchon and J. D. Salinger. The title of Kazin's piece, "The Writer as Sexual Show-Off: Or, Making Press Agents Unnecessary" suggest that writers do enough self-promotion to make press agents redundant. It also exhibits the moral distaste Kazin feels for such showing off. He represents many other critics, intellectuals and writers for whom this over-presence is a problem. Or, as Moran formulates it: "There is a danger then that the anti-individualizing effects of the literary marketplace—the creation of the author as a 'personality' by a vast network of cultural and economic practices—will actually threaten the whole notion of authorship […]

taking away agency from the author" (*Star Authors* 61). This sense that authors are overly available and that this availability may be detrimental to their power provides some of the impetus for Roth's contemplation of authors as absent, so absent that they are dead.

Loren Glass argues a similar point in his reading of the entire range of Roth's Zuckerman books from *The Ghost Writer* to *Exit Ghost*, the final installment when Zuckerman is in his seventies. Glass writes that Zuckerman, and the deaths and near deaths he faces in several of the novels, were "conceived as a way of managing the conflict between […] posthumous fame and the instantaneous contemporaneous celebrity" (224). In imagining the death of an author-character, Roth can supply an image of himself as already dead and therefore eligible for "posthumous fame." Glass's "fame" is associated with death because it is usually granted by posterity long after the author is dead. Still, it seems that, for Glass, Roth's interest in death is mainly a result of a desire for literary immortality, not a focus of interest in and of itself. I will show that death itself is crucial in Roth's conception of authority by giving a more extensive reading of *The Ghost Writer* than Glass provides.

Roth's Living-Dead Writers

In *The Ghost Writer*, the aspiring writer Nathan Zuckerman invents a story in which Anne Frank survives the Holocaust but still has the world continue to think she is dead. One crucial reason why Zuckerman could come up with such a narrative is that in the course of the novel he learns that living authors may gain power by seeming dead and alive at the same time.[3] *The Ghost Writer* presents a portrait of an artist as a young man at the same time as it parodies the tradition of artistic coming of age narratives. Unlike James Joyce's paradigmatic novel, Roth's text depicts only one episode in the process of its protagonist's coming of age: Nathan Zuckerman, a Jewish American writer just starting out, visiting E. I. Lonoff, the experienced but reclu-

sive writer, in his New England home, where they discuss literature. Later, marital disputes between the Lonoffs ensue, partly because of Zuckerman and partly because of Amy Bellette, an ex-student of Lonoff's who is also staying over. During the night, Zuckerman discovers that Bellette and Lonoff were lovers. He then imagines or writes a narrative in which Bellette is in fact Anne Frank under a false name. The narration of the story of Anne Frank makes up the "Femme Fatale" section, while the other three sections of the novel are about Zuckerman's evening, night, and morning at the Lonoffs'. The novel as a whole is narrated by Zuckerman in hindsight roughly twenty years after the events, but the "Femme Fatale" section can be seen as written during the visit to Lonoff, or soon thereafter.

The trope of the author as both dead and alive appears in other novels by Roth as well, especially those featuring Roth's alter-ego, Zuckerman. In *The Prague Orgy* (1985), Zuckerman travels to Czechoslovakia in order to retrieve literary manuscripts written by a victim of the Nazis. In one of the sections of *The Counterlife* (1986), Zuckerman dies, is commemorated in a eulogy he wrote himself, and comes back to his lover as an authorial ghostly interviewer; in the next section, Zuckerman is alive again. In *I Married a Communist* (1998), Murray Ringold is an author-like figure because he narrates much of the novel. His narrating voice comes to Zuckerman's ears, haunting and disembodied in the dark; and, by the end of the novel, we hear of his death. In *Exit Ghost* (2007), Zuckerman, who seems to be near death himself,[4] encounters a dying Amy Bellette who imagines the writer E. I. Lonoff's ghost speaking and dictating to her.

We find dead authors in non-Zuckerman books as well, such as in *Operation Shylock* (1993), where the protagonist is named Philip Roth. The fictional Roth discovers that there is a man in Israel who is presenting himself as Philip Roth the novelist and is advocating the return of Jews to Europe. "Roth" travels to Israel and at one point enters the imposter's hotel room and looks at him sleeping. He muses: "So this […] is what I look like sleeping […] This is what I would look like if I were to die tonight in bed. This is my corpse. I am sitting here

alive even though I am dead. I am sitting here after my death […] I am sitting here and […] I do not exist. I left half an hour ago. I am here sitting *shivah* for myself" (183). While staring at his own uncanny double, his thoughts almost inevitably reach death and nonexistence. From contemplating his double as a corpse, he moves to thinking of himself as a ghost, invoking the cinematic image of a spirit departing the body and looking back at its former home.[5]

Lessons from Lonoff

In *The Ghost Writer*, Zuckerman is searching for a lesson on how to gain literary authority, the power to influence people through literature, and one's role as an author. The novel helps us see why the need for authority is urgent for the young Zuckerman. Just before leaving New York for the Berkshires where the opportunity to meet Lonoff arises, Nathan Zuckerman enters into a conflict with his father, Dr. Zuckerman. Nathan has written a story, "Higher Education," based on an old family feud over money. Dr. Zuckerman demands that his son refrain from publishing this story. He argues that a tale depicting greedy Jews will provide fuel for anti-Semites. Nathan refuses to heed his father's demands (these demands are backed up by a letter from a prominent Jewish judge), and Dr. Zuckerman is attacking Nathan's right to publish and thus undermining his authority. The family troubles receive extensive treatment only in the second section of the novel. However, it is important to note that Zuckerman (as the older narrating I) makes sure to insert a reference to it into his exposition of Lonoff's character in the first section of the novel. By presenting the conflict over "Higher Education" early on in *The Ghost Writer*, Zuckerman shows that it determines his reasons for visiting Lonoff. Zuckerman needs to learn how to gain enough literary authority to defend himself from his father and the judge. He thinks that the teacher he needs is the reclusive E. I. Lonoff.

Lonoff is a figure of both literary authority and death. He is associated with authority and status by the high regard Zuckerman affords him. Unlike his authority, Lonoff's deathliness is hinted at rather than pronounced explicitly. Zuckerman describes how Lonoff was at one point so well-hidden and unknown that some assumed he was dead: "Even among his readers there had been some who thought that E. I. Lonoff's fantasies about Americans had been written in Yiddish somewhere inside Czarist Russia before he supposedly died there […] from injuries suffered in a pogrom" (*The Ghost Writer*/*GW* 10). The stories project a distant author figure. One expression of this sense of remoteness is that some readers imagine the stories were written by a man who was not only a Yiddish author from Russia but who must already be dead. Furthermore, the only picture Zuckerman sees of Lonoff before their meeting is a "watery sepia portrait" (10), taken before 1927. Sepia photographs with their red tint obscure the view of the subject, making it seem ancient and otherworldly (even more than black-and-white pictures, which are often sharp). When the only photograph existing of a person is as a young man, the reason is usually that he died an untimely death. This image makes Lonoff's authorial production and existence after 1927 figuratively posthumous. If the sepia image is not enough to suggest Lonoff's death, then consider that the portrait in question is on the flap of a book called *It's Your Funeral*. Through these moments, Lonoff is presented to us as a person who is both alive and dead at the same time.

The novel links reclusiveness and seeming death, and Lonoff's seclusion is part of the power of the dead author. The out of the way Berkshire home is described in the first sentence of the novel as a "hideaway" (3). The draw of reclusiveness is irresistible by the time Zuckerman examines Lonoff's living room: "Purity. Serenity. Simplicity. Seclusion. All one's concentration and flamboyance and originality reserved for the grueling, exalted, transcendent calling. I looked around and I thought, This is how I will live" (5). A list of nouns separated into different sentence fragments for emphasis in describing the living room is followed by another list of Lonoff's qualities (con-

centration, etc.), and rounded off by adjectives (grueling, etc.) describing the writer's calling. All these descriptors culminate in one thought: "This is how I will live." The capitalization of "This" signifies the beginning of a new sentence-thought, but it also functions to reify the above description into a unified way of life, a "This" that Zuckerman plans to imitate in order to become an author.

However, the full lesson for Zuckerman is not that authors need to be truly dead or even *seem* absolutely dead in order to have impact. In fact, the novel also features the opposite idea that authors must also seem alive and present. These are not contesting points of view but they complete one another. Ironically, Lonoff, who embodies the ideal of the absent author, tries to show Zuckerman that absence is not sufficient for literary authority. Though he himself is distant enough to seem as good as dead, he wants something else for Zuckerman. When Zuckerman expresses his desire to live permanently in a rural setting as a recluse, Lonoff cautions: "Don't try it […] If your life consists of reading and writing […] you'll wind up like me. Fantasy for thirty years" (*GW* 30). As he presents it, Lonoff chose an unexciting personal life, one that seems like a living death. He describes his way as unsatisfactory and restricting "his range of imagination." Addressing his wife, but at the same time advising Zuckerman, he says: "an unruly personal *life* will probably better serve a writer like Nathan […] His *work* has turbulence—that should be nourished" (33; emphasis added). Lonoff speaks of the creative process and not about influencing readers, but his advice also suggests that authors need to present themselves as alive, or at least as people who have lived. The important point here is that the living authors in *The Ghost Writer* will not find it in their interest to be perceived as fully dead, but rather as both dead and alive at the same time.

The idea that the liminal space between life and death can be a source of authority is already present in Roth's early story "The Conversion of the Jews" (1958; *Goodbye Columbus*). In this story the twelve-year-old Ozzie runs to the roof of the synagogue after Rabi Binder, the socially sanctioned authority figure, has hit him (the con-

text of an argument about God's ability to impregnate a woman without intercourse). On the roof, Ozzie gains so much authority that he is able to make his mother, Rabi Binder, an elderly Jewish custodian, his classmates, and a group of firemen get on their knees and admit the feasibility of the Immaculate Conception. This is possible because the adults believe that Ozzie is threatening to commit suicide. On the level of realistic motivations, the adults' fear for the child and/or their reputations gives him power over them. The story, though, also invites a figurative reading by way of its religious overtones and by setting the scene in the moments when day turns into night. Roth secures dusk's place as a figure for the border between life and death when he writes: "If one should compare the light of day to the life of man: […] sunset to—the dropping down over the edge to—to death; then […] that moment the day ways fifty years old" (*Goodbye, Columbus* 157). The religious overtones of the authority of the dead come to fruition when Ozzie's mother worries that her son will become a "martyr" (155). On this figurative level, Ozzie is invoking the power of placing oneself on the brink of death, a power that seems to have held interest for Roth since early in his career.

Henry James's "The Middle Years" (1893), a story Zuckerman reads "two times through" during the night spent at Lonoff's study (113), offers Zuckerman an additional lesson about the power of a dying author, one who is between life and death, not simply dead. James's story, which Zuckerman summarizes as part of the text of the novel, shows the power a dying novelist, Dencombe, has over one adoring reader, Dr. Hugh, a personal physician to a wealthy countess. Hugh attends Dencombe's sickbed out of admiration for the writer's craft. Doing so, he neglects the countess, who disinherits him just before she dies. Hugh pays dearly for his devotion but is not sorry for his choice. R. Clifton Spargo, writing about Roth's novel, argues that James's story is an "allegory about the dangers of literary devotion and overly receptive reading" (97). Making readers more receptive to the author is exactly what literary authority, as I have defined it, does. Significantly for my argument here, Hugh's sacrifice happens at the time

when Dencombe's health is failing rapidly, and his death seems eminent. Part of Dencombe's power over Hugh derives from his place on the threshold between life and death.

Dencombe seems to exert power not only over Hugh but over the characters in *The Ghost Writer* as well. Zuckerman reads "The Middle Years" because he finds a quote from its final deathbed scene above Lonoff's writing desk.[6] Zuckerman first writes that he "could understand why [Lonoff] might want these three sentences hanging over his head while beneath them he sat turning his own sentences around" (76-77). This observation suggests that these sentences about the task of the artist are important, a kind of motto for Lonoff. That the sentences "hang over his head," the constant danger of the Sword of Damocles, is ominous, and—even before we learn that they came from the mouth of the dying novelist—suggests how connected they are to dying. Lonoff endowed these sentences with great authority. Before quoting the death scene verbatim (signifying that he too paid close attention to it), Zuckerman writes that "down both margins of the final page describing Dencombe's death, Lonoff had penned three vertical lines […] the six surgically precise lines seemed to simulate the succession of fine impressions that James's insidious narrative about the novelist's dubious wizardry had scored upon Lonoff's undeluded brain" (115). The lines on the page reflect physical impressions on Lonoff's brain. The medically tinted vocabulary, perhaps inspired by Dr. Hugh's profession—"surgically," "insidious," "brain"—suggests this physicality is mixed with the fantastic "wizardry" and the aestheticist's "fine impressions." The powerful impressions made by this scene are the reason why Lonoff has a quotation from it "hanging over his head." Zuckerman understands that the author-character's dying is part of what makes the story and that quote impressive, especially for Lonoff. Zuckerman learns from the story that the liminal position between life and death might give a story and its author power.

The dying author and the author thought of as dead when he is in fact alive both inhabit the border between these two states. The title of

the novel *The Ghost Writer* gives us a perfect image for this state: the ghost. In the novel none of the characters works as ghostwriters; no one here produces texts that will be published under somebody else's name. At the same time, all writers in the novel seem to be to some extent ghosts, both in this realm and in one that is beyond mortal reach, or, as in Zuckerman's case, aspiring to such a state. In American popular culture as well as a variety of literary traditions, the ghost is a figure stuck between two worlds, having powerful effects on reality without being tangible or fully present. Zuckerman learns that authors can have such a power as well.

Zuckerman's Higher Education

Up till now I have been describing the novel in terms of an educational experience. I have chosen to do so because the novel returns again and again to themes of teaching and learning. For instance, Lonoff is a part-time creative writing teacher, and the title of the section which describes Lonoff is "Maestro," a word not only suggesting a mastery of an art form but also a role as a teacher.[7] Beyond the content of the novel, there is the context of its writing to justify a focus on education. Mark McGurl's influential history of post-1945 American literature, *The Program Era*, demonstrates the crucial place universities and especially creative writing programs have had in shaping American fiction. In an intentional hyperbole, he suggests that perhaps all contemporary literary novels "must be considered campus novels" (47). He furthermore connects this trend to the prevalence of authorial self-reflexivity, "autopoetics" as he calls it, in postwar fiction (see esp. 46-56). *The Program Era* uses Roth as a prime exemplar for this autopoetic impulse, though it does not give *The Ghost Writer* significant attention. McGurl's argument shows that some of the most fruitful questions to ask of a contemporary novel would revolve around education and its relation to writing. It is, therefore, important to examine the process of

learning about the power of the liminal space between life and death (and not only the forms taken by this power in the novel).

Lonoff is not the only source through which Zuckerman discovers that death and absence are important for literary authority. In fact, this sense is rooted in a specific context in the history of approaches to literary reading and education. This context is enacted in the novel through Zuckerman's descriptions of his undergraduate education at the University of Chicago, where Roth was briefly a graduate student. There, Zuckerman was exposed to the idea that authors are absent and should remain so. The years in which Zuckerman (and Roth) studied at the University of Chicago were the years in which New Critical Formalism was the dominant movement in American academia. W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley had published the first version of their now famous "The Intentional Fallacy" in 1946, urging scholars to disregard even the clearest statement of intentions by the author when assessing and analyzing their work (see Wimsatt 3-21). Even if an author is still with us there is no reason to call on him to explain his writing, they insist. In a somewhat mocking tone they suggest that we should not, "in the spirit of a man who would settle a bet […] take advantage of the fact that [T. S.] Eliot is still alive" and write "to ask what he meant" (18). In essence, they suggest that all writers should be considered as already dead, and they should always be seen as beyond reach. Their continuing physical presence is severed from their roles as authors.

New Criticism, which is never mentioned in the novel, resembles in some ways two other views of literature and education that *are* cited in the novel: the one put forward in E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, and the philosophy of education which Robert Maynard Hutchins preached and put into practice at the University of Chicago. These surely left their mark on Zuckerman, otherwise the older narrator would not have mentioned them at all. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, first published in 1927, is closer to New Criticism, even if it is less important to Zuckerman's development. This collection of lectures enters the novel in a roundabout fashion. Zuckerman calls his class-

mates in the creative writing course "orthodox Forsterites" because they criticize Zuckerman's story for not having a "round" narrator (63), thereby alluding to Forster's well-known distinction between flat and round characters (see Forster 73-89). In *Aspects*, "flat" is not always a derogatory term—some novels (those by Dickens, for instance) are best served by a fair share of flat characters. However, the orthodox Forsterites seem to be more strict than the letter of the law. Zuckerman is not an infidel, but more of a reform or non-practicing Forsterite. He is influenced by the British novelist's views, even as he recognizes their limitations and potential for being ridiculed. This last point is expressed when in the same scene, Zuckerman thinks of a certain voluptuous woman as being round; in Forster's terms, she would be considered a flat character, of course.

Setting aside this sexist joke, Forster adds to our understanding of Zuckerman's education because *Aspects of the Novel* is manifestly ahistorical, striving to see all novelists as if they exist outside of "the stream of time" (14). Indeed *Aspects* as a whole puts great emphasis on technical choices and largely ignores political, cultural, historical, or even literarily-historical contexts. Indeed, the introductory lecture is explicit about this choice in a way that encourages thinking about dead authors as alive, and living ones removed to the realm where dead authors exist. While halfheartedly apologizing for not being a true scholar, not being one who might contextualize the novels in their historical moment or in literary development, Forster suggests a better way to think of the writing of novels:

> We are to visualize the English novelists *not* as floating down that stream [of time] […] but as seated together in a room, a circular room, a sort of British Museum reading-room—all writing their novels *simultaneously*. They do not, as they sit there, think "I live under Queen Victoria, I under Anne, I carry on the tradition of Trollope, I am reacting against Aldous Huxley." The fact that their pens are in their hands is far more vivid to them. They are half mesmerized, their sorrows and joys are pouring out through the ink, they are approximated by the act of creation […] (9; emphasis added)

Before giving theoretical justification for this move, Forster bases his rhetoric on a vision of authors as they write. In this vision, history is canceled and all novelists who have ever lived (at least those he considers as worth reading) sit and work in the same room. He asks us to insert the authors into a sphere beyond time, where *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and *Ulysses* (1922)—both mentioned earlier as extreme points of reference for defining what a novel can be—are being written at the same time. In this vision, authors are not spirits: "The fact that their pens are in their hands is far more vivid to them." They have hands; they feel the tool of their trade. Indeed, they even have personalities and personal histories: "their sorrows and joys are pouring out through the ink." However, when Forster says "they are approximated by the act of creation," his audience is meant to understand that when they write all novelists are together, that sharing a craft is far more meaningful than personal lives or even the fact that some are still living, while others are dead. Authors *qua* authors are always locked away in this spiritual timeless British Museum reading-room. One can imagine Zuckerman reading this text as part of his higher education and wondering how exactly one finds his way to this intangible room.

The second view of literature and education encountered by Zuckerman, Robert Maynard Hutchins's philosophy of education, sometimes called Secular Perennialism, also promotes the author as an absent presence. Hutchins was the president and then the chancellor of the University of Chicago between 1926 and 1951.[8] In broad terms, his theory of education stressed the role of the great books of the Western tradition as basic to the education of all students and as crucial to their functioning as citizens of a democracy. Zuckerman describes how, when leaving his parents' home for Chicago, he "was ready as any adolescent could be to fall headlong for Robert Hutchins' Humanities One" (12). In this introductory class, known as Humanities One, canonical texts, mostly in philosophy but also literature, would have been discussed *not* as historical artifacts valued as a way of learning about the past, but as pertinent ethical teachers for the

present and the future, "perennial" as the approach's name suggests. This course is mentioned in the novel as contrasted to the Jewish education Zuckerman's parents gave him, an education Zuckerman satirically describes as "discussions […] about […] the perils of intermarriage, the problem of Santa Claus, and the injustice of medical school quotas" (12). Their teachings concern the preservation of ethnic uniqueness. "Humanities One" would suggest to the students that cultural particularism is something they should leave behind if they want to be proper citizens of the West. Almost a century after Hutchins first implemented his ideas, it is almost too easy to see how he is particularistic in his own Eurocentric way. But, in his course, Western was the same as universal. This kind of ahistorical view as to what it is to be an educated person would prepare a young intellectual for the prospect of abandoning his particular—for Zuckerman—Jewish social connections for what he sees as a higher realm.[9]

One of the ways in which we can see that Zuckerman was affected by this set of ideas is found in the college essay he wrote about Lonoff. There, he "'analyzed' Lonoff's style" (8), marking his Russian origins by comparing him to writers from a general Western canon who are also Russian: Chekhov and Gogol. Donald Kartiganer sees this interpretation as a reading that occludes Lonoff's strength as a Jewish author. Taking a note from Harold Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence, Kartiganer claims that Zuckerman's misreading protects his creativity from Lonoff's influence (38-39). In my view, Zuckerman's essay does not express his real view of Lonoff. In fact, Zuckerman's discovery of Lonoff is almost simultaneous with his analysis of him as a Jewish writer. Kartiganer acknowledges (without drawing the same conclusion as I do) that Zuckerman's paper is the kind of formalist reading that was encouraged by his teachers, a reading dealing with language but not identity (either the reader's or the writer's). Zuckerman's fascination with Lonoff is actually due to their common Jewish background. However, the "feelings of kinship" is something that the young Zuckerman had to partially repress in his student essay in order to succeed in college (13). I am led to suspect

that, like many a good student, he wrote what his teachers wanted to read. In the process of summarizing this paper, he gives readers an idea of what he learned in the literature classroom.

A Final Paper on Anne Frank

Zuckerman shows that he has learned and internalized this connection between authority and absent presence when he goes on to write a text that can be described as a final paper. I am speaking of the "Femme Fatale" section of the novel, the narrative of Anne Frank as Zuckerman reimagines her. "Femme Fatale," it is clear, should be read as part of the story of Zuckerman's coming into being as a writer. Indeed, in a letter to his editor, Aaron Asher, describing crucial revisions, Roth writes "Anne Frank is all Zuckerman's invention – he needs to invent her, to save himself from the world of his fathers and judges" (qtd. in Hayes 172).[10] In the context of my paper, "Femme Fatale" is a text about an author who decides to make it appear as if she was dead, even though she is in fact alive. She inhabits the authoritative position of absent presence, under the extreme circumstances of pretending to be dead.

The starting point for Zuckerman's reimagining of Anne Frank is Amy Bellette. When he first sees Bellette, before finding out that she is or was Lonoff's lover, he thinks she might be Lonoff's teenaged daughter. Because of her looks and imagined family connections, he is willing to wait seven years to marry her. From Zuckerman's point of view, Bellette is—both sexually and intellectually—a titillating blank, inviting him to fill it with his fancies. In his most elaborate fictional account of her, he imagines that she is in fact a fellow Jewish writer, "the most famous" of all Jewish writers, Anne Frank (152). A creature of Zuckerman's imagination, this Anne Frank is a living author.[11]

In "Femme Fatale," Anne, having changed her name to Amy Bellette, immigrates to the United States where she becomes a student at Athena College, taking Lonoff's creative writing class. Meanwhile, as

was in fact the case, her father, who she was sure had perished along with the rest of her family, survives. The transformation of the diary, a private text, into a book, the *Diary*, with a potential for influencing the public, was based on the assumption that she is dead. This logic is apparent in a 1972 draft of what much later became *American Pastoral* (1997), where a surviving Anne Frank lives in Prague and writes in a diary entry dated "Monday, Sept. 11, 1979": "if I had 'lived,' there would have been no 'Diary of a Young Girl,' because Daddy and I would not have to memorialize me" (qtd. in Shostak 125).[12] The importance of death to Anne Frank's status as a published, even canonical, author can help explain what Amy/Anne thinks of as "the improbable part" of her story (*GW* 129): why she does not come forward as Anne. Instead of reuniting with her beloved father, she decides to let "Anne Frank," a name that now also signifies a public figure, be seen as a dead author.

Some readers may think that the way Roth treats Anne Frank as a literary author is problematic. At face value, the fact that she was a diarist may suggest that she did not mean to publish and influence readers. However, in 1944 Anne Frank already wanted to publish a book about her experiences and started rewriting the diary with this end in mind (Stroom 60-62; Frank 578, 647). In describing her time in hiding, Roth makes sure his readers are aware of this intention, when he writes: "of course it had to eventually occur to any girl so *mad on books and reading* that for all she knew she was writing a book of her own" (137). He also quotes Anne Frank: "*my greatest wish is to become a journalist someday and later on a famous writer*" (138).[13] Even without knowing the historical Anne Frank's literary intentions, it is clear that in *The Ghost Writer* Anne Frank is treated as a fellow author: she takes a creative writing class with Lonoff, she is said to be the most famous Jewish author, and she compares her diary to notable books.

Amy/Anne believes that public knowledge of the fact that she survived will diminish the power of her text. Zuckerman's version of Anne's story, the only section of the novel to use the third-person focalized narration and not the first-person, begins several years after

the *Diary* is published, with Amy/Anne travelling to New York in order to view the Broadway production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. After seeing the play, she wants to call her father. However, she does not, because, as she explains to Lonoff, she can think of emerging from death only in terms of how it might impact the performance of the play (see *GW* 123). She is afraid that as a survivor her image will not be as powerful.

The possibility that coming out as a survivor would weaken her status as author first occurs to her after she spends a day in Boston reading her diary for the first time since the war. This scene takes place a short while after its publication in Dutch and before it appears in English.[14] When thinking about the reasons to remain hidden, she returns again and again to "the power of her book" and its ability to influence readers. But her power would work "only if she were believed dead" (145). Her seeming death is the precondition for her role as literary author: "dead she had written, without meaning to or trying to, a book with the force of a masterpiece to make people finally see" (145-46). Being dead or being thought dead in the present is what enables her to have written a masterpiece in the past. The present can affect the past, thereby showing how death and the semblance of death can foster literary authority. In the end, she decides to remain in hiding, dead to the world.

Significantly, Anne's writing seems ghostly even to herself. On first reading her published diary, the sight of her name on the cover makes her feel that it is "Her book. Hers" (GW 134). But this perception of the book belonging to her quickly fades. In some ways, Anne's position is the same as that of a reader encountering a book for the first time: "She still remembered most of what happened to her in the achterhuis [sic; Dutch for the house behind, known as the secret annex], some of it in minute detail, but of the fifty thousand words recording it all, she couldn't remember writing one [such page]." When she encounters her diary in Boston she feels like reading "whole pages of her tribulations as new and strange to her as her native tongue" (134). The Anne who wrote the diary has disappeared.

She is not even available to herself. All that remains are traces etched on the page. This sense of alienation of Anne even to herself is part of what enables her to go on living as Amy and remain dead as Anne.

Of course, the estrangement is not complete. For Anne, the book is as "strange […] as her native tongue." This is an ambivalent simile because one's native tongue is not "strange" to most people. However, for Anne, who has not read or spoken Dutch for many years, it is without a doubt strange but still not completely beyond her experience. Here Roth may be invoking Freud's famous essay about E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," where Freud deciphers the German word "*unheimlich*" as signifying a frightful feeling of "something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (241).[15] Anne, in fact, writes "uncanny" in the margin of her book, echoing the English title of this essay. The passage from *The Diary* that elicits this feeling most powerfully is one where the real Anne Frank used text as a metaphor for self-alienation, putting her name into quotation marks: "*I view the affairs of a certain 'Anne' at my ease, and browse through the pages of her life as if she were a stranger*" (135). While the real Anne imagined herself as a character in a book in order to find some distance from herself, Zuckerman's Anne feels the uncanny estrangement by actually finding her past self in a book. The *unheimlich* is what one would feel encountering when encountering a ghost or an authorial voice that seems available and intangible at the same time.

I have written earlier that, according to *The Ghost Writer*, authors gain authority by seeming both alive and dead at the same time. If this is the case, why does it seem desirable to Anne as Zuckerman imagines her to be perceived as only dead? The answer is that, in the *Diary*, Anne, as she characterizes herself, seems alive. This sense of her being alive means that, in order to seem both dead and alive, she must be perceived as dead outside of the *Diary*. The impression that Anne Frank is alive is shared by many readers, including Roth. In a letter about Anne Frank to his friend Jack Miles on December 2, 1977,

Roth writes that "She was, in the simplest and most attractive sense of the word, alive. And that is what is so crushing, and so representative, about her death" (Pierpont 116). Most of what Roth knew about Anne Frank comes from the *Diary*, so I assume that he is referring to her image there. Here, Roth highlights the contradiction that is crucial for his representation of Anne.[16] Part of the reason she seems so alive in the book is that, by the ending of the *Diary*, Anne is, of course, still not dead. Only in a postscript do readers learn about her murder. Because the *Diary* is not about death, but about life, Anne as Zuckerman imagines her thinks that she needs to remain dead. She cannot afford a postscript that says she is still present.

* * *

As a conclusion, I want to open the possibility that "Femme Fatale" and *The Ghost Writer* as a whole can be seen as Zuckerman's bid for authority. By writing about Anne Frank and Lonoff, Zuckerman intimately connects himself with the dead and thus gains some of the power of being both dead and alive. In Roth's short novel *Everyman* (2006), the unnamed protagonist (Everyman) encounters a gravedigger, who by describing his craft helps Everyman commune with his dead parents and face his own mortality (see 171-82). Like this gravedigger, Zuckerman is alive but in touch with the dead. He builds his authority from this position. The same can be said of Roth. Readers know Roth, and not Zuckerman, is the one who wrote about these ghostly writers. Through associating himself with real and fictional authors who are at the border between absence and presence, life and death, Roth fosters his own persona as a partially available author and partially beyond reach. This association, which has roots in *The Ghost Writer*, emerges in Roth's management of his authorial image up to, and including, the announcement of his retirement. With this announcement, he presents himself as being alive as a private

person, but dead as an author. Unlike some other forms of retirement, this position has the potential of helping maintain authority.

Freie Universität Berlin

NOTES

[1]This paper is based on my PhD dissertation carried out at the Hebrew University Jerusalem; its writing was supported by the Open University of Israel. I am thankful to the many people who have read and commented on my dissertation and paper. I am most grateful to Prof. Emily Miller Budick, who supervised my dissertation and was a wonderful mentor. Emily passed away while I was still working on this paper. It is dedicated to her memory.

[2]Cf. the *Connotations* debate on Atwood and "The Return of the Dead" in her fiction: www.connotations.de/debniederhoff01613.htm.

[3]In focusing on the life-death duality, my reading runs in parallel to other readings of the novel that highlight such conflicts or binaries. For example, Ogden shows through close analysis of the novel's opening how "life cannot be absorbed into fiction, as if one is contained within the other. Rather, the relationship between life and fiction is characterized by some kind of antagonism" (88).

[4]This was captured by a special issue of *Philip Roth Studies*, *Mourning Zuckerman* and the obituary that was included in it (Pozorski, "Mourning"; Jaffe-Foger, "Eulogy"). Some critics, however, have emphasized that Zuckerman does not actually die in *Exit Ghost* but rather reaches the end of the novel with some life left in him (Brühwiler 131; Shipe 203).

[5]The importance of death in Roth's work has been widely discussed by academics as well as reviewers. A few examples would include: Glass; Jaffe-Foger, "Death"; E. Moran; Pinsker; Pozorski, "Confronting"; Wood.

[6]The quote is: "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" (77).

[7]Maestro, of course, carries a musical charge. However, the role of other art forms, including music, dance, visual art, embroidery, and film in the novel's negotiation of absent present authorship is beyond the scope of this paper.

[8]Zuckerman meets Lonoff in 1956, three years after his last year in college (1953). This means that Zuckerman started school in 1949, having two years to study with Hutchins.

[9]More information about Hutchins and his "great books" courses can be found in Dzuback, especially 65-67. Gerald Graff discusses Hutchins in the context of the history of literary higher education in the U.S. (see 133-36, 163-67).

[10]Hayes's source is Roth's Letter to Aaron Ascher, Nov. 22, 1978. Box 97, Folder 6. Philip Roth Papers, Manuscript dept. Library of Congress.—Several critical readings of "Femme Fatale" see it in a similar way: Norman Ravvin sees Anne Frank as a "secret sharer capable of understanding [Nathan's] divided loyalties" (84), while Hana Wirth-Nesher writes that "Nathan has projected his own wishes and identity onto Anne/Amy" (26). Debra Shostak describes Frank as one of Roth's counterlives, a fictional self in dialogic relation to his other fictional selves. Reading drafts of an unpublished manuscript from 1972 where the idea that Anne Frank is still living first appears, and other unpublished material, Shostak deduces that Frank had had this role in Roth's thinking for many years (123-24).

[11]I will add that, in emphasizing Anne Frank's role as author, I do not mean to suggest that interpretations stressing her role as a victim of the Nazis are mistaken; they are not. However, reinventing Anne Frank is useful for Zuckerman for reasons having to do with authorship.

[12]Shostak's source is "Original 1972 version of *American Pastoral*, PR 1998." Box 3 of 17, Accession 21, 771. Philip Roth Papers, Manuscript dept. Library of Congress. This manuscript can now be found in Box 39, Folder 1.

[13]The italics are in the original. In this context they signify quotations from the Dutch *Diary*, not emphasis.

[14]This day is narrated as part of a third-person paraphrase of Amy/Anne's story told to Lonoff after she has attended the play. In other words, the day in Boston is depicted later in the novel even though it predates the play and the confession of her true identity to Lonoff.

[15]See David Gooblar's essay for an extensive discussion of the importance Freud had for Roth during the period before and during the writing of *The Ghost Writer*.

[16]Roth is far from idiosyncratic in this view of Anne as "alive." As Rosenfeld argues, she is seen by her readers as "a young […] vivacious girl full of life" (248). Or, as Spargo puts it, in connection with the production of the play: "If early reservations about the stage-worthiness of the *Diary* had turned on the morbidity of its subject matter, as well as on the more fundamental question of whether audiences could reasonably be expected to identify with characters who were already dead, Anne's youth and romantic hopefulness seemed to offer a way out for all involved with adapting the *Diary*." Accordingly, "the *Diary* was read through the most recognizable of everyday plots—the coming-of-age love story, or a tragically interrupted romance of two young lovers" (Spargo 99). It makes sense to turn the *Diary* into a play because Anne Frank seems to be recognizably alive even as we know she is deceased.

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Black Ekphrasis?
A Response to Carl Plasa[*]

JANE HEDLEY

In "Ekphrastic Poetry and the Middle Passage," Carl Plasa re-purposes Adrienne Rich's assertion that for writers who are women, "entering an old text from a new direction" is "not just 'a chapter in cultural history' but 'an act of survival'" (Rich, "When We Dead Awaken" qtd. Plasa 314). This obtains "When We Dead Awaken" Plasa suggests, for poets of African descent who identify as black, an identity that is fraught with awareness of the degree to which the tradition of European art has been inflected by Euro-American traffic in African bodies. The "acts of survival" that claim Plasa's attention in this essay are twenty-first century ekphrastic poems by three black women poets: Elizabeth Alexander, Olive Senior, and Honorée Fanonne Jeffers. In each instance, the black poet is responding to a work of visual art whose creator is white. In each instance, Plasa finds the poet thematizing the slave trade and its legacy in the western social imaginary.

Early in the essay he also claims to have a larger purpose, that of "correcting the biases intrinsic to much of the existing criticism on ekphrastic poetry" (Plasa 291). The existing criticism is biased, he argues, insofar as "the dominant analytic paradigm remains that of texts where both the poet's gaze—and its object—are white" (291). But what are the biases endemic to a "white" analytic paradigm? Plasa

[*]Reference: Carl Plasa, "Ekphrastic Poetry and the Middle Passage: Recent Encounters in the Black Atlantic," *Connotations* 24.2 (2014/2015): 290-324.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/ekphrastic-poetry-and-the-black-atlantic/>.

does not explain what they are, or how a "black" gaze approaches its objects differently. Is this largely a question of what the poet chooses to thematize in the painting, or are the dynamics, perhaps when the very premises, of the ekphrastic encounter somehow different? "What we see, we see / and seeing is changing," observes Rich in a feminist poem from the early 1970s ("Planetarium"); is this the case when "we" are black, as well? In what follows I will speak to these questions and then close by calling attention to a book-length poem that takes a post-ekphrastic approach to the relationship between word and image. Such an approach, I will suggest, offers a compelling alternative to the more conventionally ekphrastic projects of the poems Plasa discusses.

In a footnote Plasa cites *The Gazer's Spirit* by John Hollander and *Museum of Words* by James Heffernan as "influential examples" of the dominant analytic paradigm. These two books have indeed been influential, but in quite different ways. John Hollander's approach does not yield an analytic paradigm for the ekphrastic encounter: his ostensibly more modest goal is to walk the reader through a "notional gallery" of ekphrastic poems (Hollander xi). And while his commentaries yield an expansive taxonomy of ekphrastic tropes and tactics, he does not proffer a theory of ekphrasis—e.g. why poets do it, what motivates ekphrastic writing. James Heffernan does address the "why" of ekphrasis, and so does W. J. T. Mitchell, whose highly influential theory Plasa has not cited. For Mitchell and Heffernan, as for Grant Scott, Wendy Steiner, Paul Fry, and others, ekphrasis is typically *paragonal*: it constructs a relationship of antagonism or rivalry between the poem and the visual text it reads or "envoices." The poet, whose medium consists in words, envies and/or feels menaced by the painting's or the sculpture's wordless immediacy. The work of visual art possesses a "quietness" he is tempted to "ravish," or else it threatens, Medusa-like, to "turn the gazer's spirit into stone."[1] At the root of the poet's response, according to both Mitchell and Heffernan, is a stereotypically masculine hunger for "mastery."

This hunger for mastery, Mitchell suggests, stems from anxiety—the fear and fascination—aroused by social others. Yet neither he nor Heffernan takes an interest in the ekphrastic forays of poets who have themselves been "othered" by the dominant tradition of European art. Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux points out, however, in *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts*, that although "few poets of color appear in discussions of [ekphrasis]," it does have "a healthy tradition in African American poetry" (Loizeaux 173). In the work of African American poets we might expect a stance that is not only paragonal but "charged with racial politics" (173). And yet one of the things Loizeaux finds remarkable about African American ekphrasis is how "little anxiety […] [it] displays […] about word and image relations." "From the beginning," she observes, "the conception of the ekphrastic endeavor as a mutually helping hand runs especially deep in African American ekphrasis" (175).

In the light of a "helping hand" tradition of ekphrasis, the first of the three poems Plasa discusses, "Islands Number Four" by Elizabeth Alexander, appears susceptible to a different account of its project from the one Plasa proposes. "'Islands Number Four' is […] a poem in which allusion plays a central role," as Plasa points out (299). But that is not to say that allusion plays a central role in the painting, an abstract expressionist work by the Canadian artist Agnes Martin. The painter, while she might be intrigued by Alexander's response, was in no way inviting or anticipating the connection Alexander's poem makes between her painting and a notorious piece of abolitionist iconography. That is not to accuse the artist of not knowing what her own painting is really about. By connecting Martin's painting with a set of images whose deployment of abstraction was de-humanizing and did enormous harm, Alexander's poem sets up a relationship between poem and painting, word and image, that is expansive and surprising, thereby opening up a larger conversation about the uses of abstraction.

Allusion is an unstable device, as Plasa's discussion of his second example also shows. "A Superficial Reading" is Olive Senior's ek-

phrasis of a late seventeenth-century portrait of a female slave and her white mistress. Plasa's reading of both the poem and the painting is informed by his own deep knowledge of the tradition of representation associated with the Middle Passage. But is Senior's poem as fully aware of that tradition as Plasa himself? She has called attention to the visual image's "surface opulence," both in her poem's title and in its opening line (qtd. in Plasa 301). But is she meanwhile using allusion to foster a deeper reading? "How we read Senior's allusion depends," Plasa suggests, "on how her poem's speaker reads" a more recent painting to which he thinks the poem's ekphrasis also refers. If she reads that other painting "superficially," the poem's speaker "reveals the limits of her own knowledge" (Plasa 306). But what if these are the limits of the poet's knowledge, as well? If so, then Plasa is over-reading Senior's poem, just as Alexander could be said to be over-reading Martin's painting. Should this trouble us? Perhaps not; as an interpretive strategy that can expand an art work's field of reference in surprising, unanticipated ways, allusion has the potential not only to assert but also to disarm "mastery."

In the third poem discussed by Plasa, allusion is deployed both more conventionally and more explicitly by the poet herself. The painting Jeffers's poem reads is an unusual depiction of "interracial sisterhood": an eighteenth-century portrait of half-cousins brought up together in the household of a British earl with anti-slavery leanings. One of the cousins, Dido Elizabeth Belle Lindsay, was the illegitimate daughter of the earl's nephew and an African slave. Her given name affords an opportunity for the poet to hint at a tragic destiny for this young woman, even while ostensibly trying to fend it off: "Let her be. / Please." says the poem's speaker: "No Dying Mythical Queen / weaving a vivid, troubled skin— // but Dido, full of girlhood […]" (ll. 27-31). The relationship between word and image is more conventionally paragonal here than in the other two poems discussed by Plasa: not only this portrait, but portraiture itself becomes subject to critique. Whereas the painting's "walled garden" fosters an illusion of protected enclosure and timeless immediacy, Jeffers's ekphrasis

brings history back into the picture: the history of women's, and especially black women's, dependence and vulnerability. The poem's epigraph cites the diary of a visitor to the estate who recalls that "A Black came in after dinner and sat with the ladies […] Lord M […] calls her Dido, which I suppose is all the name she has." Can the earl's "fondness for her," which his visitor says "he has been reproached for," protect his foster child from the larger society's more conventional view of her anomalous status in his household? The epigraph's language, attesting as it does to societal attitudes that were contemporaneous with this portrait, gives the lie to the poem's—and by implication, the painting's—aspirational present tense. "Forget history. / She's a teenager," says the ekphrastic speaker (ll. 15-16)—but history, as this poem full well knows, cannot be so easily wished away.

The visual texts these poems have entered are all paintings; all three poems are classically ekphrastic, in that each subjects a single work of art to a close, detailed reading. A more recently published poem in which visual images figure tellingly but differently is *Citizen: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine. Rankine's book-length poem incorporates many different kinds of visual images—paintings, photographs, televisual news images, screen grabs, sculptural collages. The poem is not "about" these images: they are part of its fabric, in dialogue with the verbal text on either side of them. Some are also verbal texts, including an etching by the conceptual artist Glenn Ligon that consists entirely of one repeated line from Zora Neale Hurston's "How It Feels to be Colored Me": "I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background" (Rankine 52-53).[2] *Citizen* may thus be the harbinger of a new kind of traffic between word and image that will render traditional ekphrasis obsolete. Instead of using her words to read or "envoice" a single visual text, as ekphrastic lyrics typically do, Rankine stages less tightly scripted, more open-ended interactions between the visual and verbal materials of which her poem is comprised. Her practice is consistent with the "helping hand" tradition identified by Loizeaux, more so than with the "mastering

gaze" that other theorists have found to be central to the received canon of ekphrastic poetry.

How people of color are seen and at the same time unseen by whites is a central theme of Rankine's lyric meditations, many of which explore "the quotidian struggles against dehumanization every brown or black person lives simply because of skin color" (Rankine 24). There is thus an obvious thematic continuity between *Citizen* and the poems Plasa discusses. Arguably, however, an increasingly promiscuous intermixture and interaction of verbal and visual texts is a quotidian experience for twenty-first century readers as well. One of the thoughts Rankine's book provokes and leaves us to struggle with is that we may have come to a place in the history not only of race relations but also of word-image relations in which it is no longer useful to hypostasize a gaze that is "white" or "black." We see ourselves as others see us: "And you are not the guy and still you fit the description" (Rankine 105). Every black or brown person has the experience of "feeling you don't belong so much / to you—" (146). And is this not everyone's quotidian experience, to some degree? Another suggestion Rankine's poem pessimistically broaches is that "All our fevered history won't instill insight" (142). If she is right, then we do stand in need of a post-ekphrastic approach, one that, if not post-racial, is premised on hybridity.

In *Citizen*, the traffic between word and image has "suffered a sea change / Into something rich and strange." Has Rankine's poem thereby sounded the death knell of ekphrastic poetry as such? I would be interested in what Professor Plasa and other readers think about this.

Bryn Mawr College
Pennsylvania

NOTES

[1]Keats begins his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by apostrophizing the urn as "Thou still unravished bride of quietness." "To turn the gazer's spirit into stone" is a line from the poem Mitchell suggests we think of as the "primal scene" of ekphrasis, Shelley's "On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci" (172). I have said some of this already in my Introduction to *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler* (cf. esp. 21-26).

[2]"This appropriated line, stenciled on canvas by Glenn Ligon, who used plastic letter stencils, smudging oil sticks, and graphite to transform the words into abstractions, seemed to be ad copy for some aspect of life for all black bodies" (Rankine 25). This ekphrastic comment is fuller than Rankine gives to most of the visual texts her poem incorporates; the etching itself does not appear for another twenty-five pages.

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Is Timon Mad? An Answer to Beatrix Hesse*

THOMAS KULLMANN

In her response to Maurice Charney's and my own interpretations of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, Beatrix Hesse comments on the supposed similarity between Shakespeare's Timon and Nabokov's Charles Kinbote. While I do not wish to take issue with Hesse's remarks on Nabokov, her assessment of the mental state of Shakespeare's Timon challenges me to some comment. Hesse disagrees with my statement "that Timon perceives reality all too acutely," to suggest that "Timon clearly also shows a mind maladjusted to reality" (115) and that his speech on the moon's snatching "her pale fire [...] from the sun" (4.3.438) "strongly suggests delusions of grandeur aligned with persecution mania" (114). Hesse goes on to state that "Timon's mental operation of projecting his personal experiences and emotions onto the universe strangely resembles Ruskin's concept of 'pathetic fallacy' described in *Modern Painters*" (115) and may be considered an instance of the psychiatric condition called "referential mania" (116).

I should like to argue that this interpretation of Timon's character neither does justice to the text of Timon's speech nor to the uses Shakespeare habitually makes of madness, cosmology, and rhetoric. The Shakespearean passage in question is part of a long speech Timon addresses to a group of bandits who encounter him in the woods,

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*Reference: Beatrix Hesse, "On Poets, Poets' Critics, and Critics' Critics: A Response to Maurice Charney and Thomas Kullmann," *Connotations* 25.1 (2015/2016): 108-34.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/shakespeares-timon-of-athens-in-nabokovs-pale-fire/>.

where he, after having lost his fortune and been abandoned by his friends, has chosen to live as a hater of mankind:

> I'll example you with thievery:
> The sun's a thief and with his great attraction
> Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,
> And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;
> The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
> The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief
> That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
> From gen'ral excrement; each thing's a thief. (4.3.435-42)

My first point is that this speech refers to a number of scientific facts: The sun indeed, by "his great attraction," makes particles of sea-water rise from the sea; the light of the moon can indeed be identified as the reflection of sunlight, and excrements (like carcasses) do indeed contain life-giving substances. The "resolving" of the moon "into salt tears" may be the subjective impression of a human observer, but it is brought about by an optical phenomenon subject to the laws of physics. There is nothing "fallacious" (in the sense of Ruskin's concept) about Timon's pronouncements. Timon (or Shakespeare) rather shows himself to be up-to-date in matters of scientific (meteorological, astronomical, and biological) knowledge.[1]

It is true that we do not usually consider the sun, the moon, the sea, and the earth to be persons, but I do not think Timon does either. His use of personifications is obviously part of a rhetorical exercise such as may have been common in Elizabethan grammar schools. As the introductory sentence indicates, Timon is going to deliver a series of examples specially designed for his audience of professional thieves. His speech is well-composed and does not constitute a spontaneous outburst.

What is striking, though, is the choice of images used to describe the interaction of celestial bodies and natural elements. The idea of the sun stealing water from the sea is rather peculiar; we could also imagine the sun generously lifting and purifying the water, to send it back to thirsting nature in the form of rain. As to moonlight, the moon

could receive it as a gift from the sun, or at least "borrow" it, as in *Hamlet* (3.2.157), or as Timon says himself in a passage quoted by Hesse (4.3.70). The reflection of the moon on the sea could be perceived as glittering sparkles rather than "salt tears." The idea of the earth feeding and breeding by a composture of excrements may remind us of Hamlet's "sun" breeding "maggots in a dead dog" (2.2.181), but elsewhere these biological phenomena are referred to more generously, as by Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*: "The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb; / What is her burying grave, that is her womb" (2.3.9-10), and by Timon himself who earlier in the scene refers to nature as "common mother [...] / Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast / Teems and feeds all" (4.3.177-79).

My suggestion is that, while Timon's view of the world is certainly informed by his recent experiences with his "friends" and his consequent state of mind, his cosmology neither testifies to a "delusion of grandeur" nor to referential mania. In fact, establishing analogies with the cosmic order is a procedure quite common in Shakespeare. Many characters refer to the world (or to life, or mankind) as a whole, e.g. to make an ethical point, like Luciana in *The Comedy of Errors* (2.1.16-24) or Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* (5.1.58-65) or to give voice to a particular state of mind, like *Hamlet* (1.2.133-37 and 2.2.297-310) and *Macbeth* (5.5.19-28). The habit of relating individual issues to the cosmic order obviously proceeds from concepts of analogies between microcosm and macrocosm as found, for instance, in Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (1528, translated 1561),[2] Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593),[3] Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96),[4] and Sir John Davies in his *Orchestra* (1596), which can be related to what E. M. W. Tillyard believed constituted the "Elizabethan World Picture."[5]

If we assume that sanity is tantamount to a belief in cosmic harmony, the negative view of the world which Timon shares with Hamlet and Macbeth may well be indicative of a disturbed mind. If this is madness, however, it should rather be classified as a form of melancholy (as with Hamlet and Macbeth)[6] than as a failure to perceive reality. Indeed, it appears to be a common feature of Shakespeare's

mad characters that they give voice to aspects of reality which their sane friends have failed to grasp: mad Ophelia reveals sexual fantasies which had been suppressed before (*Hamlet* 4.5.46-66 and 171-72), the Fool in *King Lear* tells Lear the truth about his daughters (1.4.102-04, 171-72) and himself (1.4.231), mad Lady Macbeth confesses to the murder of King Duncan (5.1.33-68). In the state of madness none of them is "deluded," while they may have been victims of delusion before.

This capacity of perceiving certain aspects of reality appears to me to be particularly striking in the case of the tragic heroes, Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth. We may not agree with Hamlet's view of the world as an "unweeded garden / That grows to seed" (1.2.135-36), but we certainly cannot deny that this image aptly summarizes some aspects at least of real life. It is during his spell of despair on the heath that Lear comes to realize that he had taken "too little care" of the "poor naked wretches" (3.4.28, 33) of his kingdom. Macbeth's view that life is "a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (5.5.26-28) may be contradicted by the new king's reassuring speech in the end (5.9.26-41), but Macbeth's words certainly give shape to feelings which most of us will have shared at some stage of our lives.

It is in this context that I would like to place Timon's words on universal thievery. Like Hamlet, Lear and Macbeth, Timon has somehow woken up to an acute perception of certain tragic aspects of life. He may not reach the degree of Lear's self-discovery, but he certainly "sees through particular shams and injustices" he had been blind to before (cf. Ure 46-47 and J. C. Maxwell, qtd. by Ure 47). To Timon, whose "dreams of human fellowship" are "destroyed" (Alexander 184), avarice and hypocrisy appear to be so universal that he cannot help but consider them a natural law, and perhaps "most people some of the time, and some people most of the time" (to borrow Christopher Ricks' phrase; Ricks 1) feel the same. That Shakespeare's contemporaries often felt like this seems to me to be evidenced by the fact that Shakespeare returns to the topic of flattery again and again.[7] A

central passage is certainly Duke Senior's speech in *As You Like It*, in which the banished Duke appreciates the discomforts of nature: "This is no flattery: these are counsellors / That feelingly persuade me what I am" (2.1.10-11).[8] Like Duke Senior, Timon perceives his previous life as unreal or fake, but unlike the Duke he does not wish to return to it. As gold was the agent that falsified reality and corrupted his "friends," he now proudly refuses to accept gold, stating that he cannot eat it (4.3.101; cf. Bailey 48).

To interpret *Timon of Athens* as a psychological case study of a person suffering from referential mania would render Shakespeare's tragic universe ridiculous and nonsensical. *Timon*, like *Hamlet*, like *King Lear*, like *Macbeth*, is not about a crazy nobleman of the remote past—it is about us. As with the three heroes of the "great tragedies" mentioned we are invited to follow the career and the thoughts of an alter ego of ours whose tragic flaw, his boastful generosity, causes his downfall and brings about his cynical world view. As with the characters of Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth we are invited to empathize with the protagonist and experimentally share his view of the world, perhaps to overcome and be cured of it at the end.[9]

Universität Osnabrück

NOTES

[1]The mechanisms of the water cycle had been widely discussed in the sixteenth century. Usually Bernard Palissy is credited with having first discovered the correct facts in 1580 (Dooge 5). The phenomenon of the evaporation of water had been known from antiquity but was rediscovered and put into a more precise form in the sixteenth century (Brutsaert 12-36).

[2]See, e.g., Pietro Bembo's speech in Book 4; Castiglione 316-22.

[3]See, e.g., Book I, ch. 9.1.

[4]This particularly applies to the "Mutabilitie Cantos"; Spenser 714-35.

[5]Both concept and term have justly been challenged as this world picture was by no means a general one in the Elizabethan Age. It should rather be considered as part of a particular intellectual, and aristocratic, discourse which was informed

by the Italian Renaissance and by Italian Neoplatonism; cf. Kullmann, "Courtliness and Platonism" 203-08.

[6]The image used by Timothy Bright to describe the effects of melancholy is quite pertinent: "[...] the body thus possessed with the vnchearefull, and discomfortable darknes of melancholie, obscureth the Sonne and Moone, and all the comfortable planets of our natures, in such sort, that if they appeare, they appeare all darke, and more than halfe eclipsed of this mist of blacknesse, rising from that hidious lake [...]" (106).

[7]Cf. Wilson Knight's remarks on Shakespeare's "obsession" with ingratitude (117-20).

[8]On further parallels between *As You Like It* and *Timon* see Nuttall (109-10).

[9]As Wilson Knight points out, "Timon's nihilism does not, in fact, have a nihilistic result" (133), as the bandits after listening to Timon's speech decide to give up their trade (4.3.450-57). Knight further comments on "Timon's magical personality," whose "poetry acts on us" (133). Cf. also my article on "Pagan Mysteries and Metaphysical Ironies," esp. 49-51.

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Poetics of Injustice: The Case of Two Mockingbirds[*]

RALPH GRUNEWALD

Introduction

In November 1989, Jeffrey Deskovic[1] was convicted for the rape and murder of his classmate, Angela Correa, in Peekskill, NY. With his conviction justice was served and not served at the same time. Justice was served in the legal, procedural sense because Deskovic was convicted by a jury, which overcame reasonable doubt as to his guilt based on a compelling case made by a prosecutor. And yet, *substantive* justice was not achieved. Deskovic was innocent. At the time of the trial, DNA evidence, which was found in the victim, excluded him as the perpetrator but the prosecutor could explain its probative value away. Deskovic became a suspect because investigators had grown suspicious of him when he was late to school the day after Correa went missing. They also found it suspicious that he went to her wake three times and appeared overly distraught about her death, although he was not close friends with her. It took 16 years for him to be exonerated.

What the verdict of this and many other cases of wrongful convictions shows is the power of narratives, narratives that can be stronger than even the best evidence. These verdicts were based on fictitious narratives lacking any direct evidence incriminating the defendants. Prosecutors could convince juries by developing narratives of guilt based on conjectures, circumstantial evidence, and their imagination.

[*]For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/poetic-in-justice-and-the-law/>.

Understanding how imagination and a poetic sense of justice can influence the outcome of a case is one of the tasks this article tries to address. This is particularly relevant since most wrongful convictions have their causes in the early stages of an investigation when unreviewable imagining is possible and even necessary.

Thinking and writing about poetic justice from a legal perspective must appear as a paradoxical endeavour since poetic justice is *poetic* justice after all and thus refers to an aesthetic and ideal concept of justice that is not achievable in "real" life.[2] Poetic justice is not bound by procedural rules and as a concept works within an individual text within a specific time but not as a system[3] because the standards by which we determine good or evil character are not defined or generalized. And yet, poetic justice ultimately refers to a sense of justice preexisting in a reader or an audience. This preexisting (and not legally determined) sense of justice influences everyone, including those who investigate or adjudicate crimes. Many wrongful convictions show that an investigator's early belief of having identified the guilty person was crucial for everything that followed.

Since law cannot regulate intuition nor the way how an investigator assembles evidence, imagination and a feeling for what a just outcome would look like is a necessary element in each case. As Martha Nussbaum argues, the work of the prosecutor, the police officer, the judge, and the lawyer in general is to a great extent "literary art" that calls for "social and narrative imagination, a capacity to envision different versions of the future" (208).[4] It has been argued that, today, the law is more than ever a device that responds to perceived injustices and is hence to ideas of poetic justice.[5] In this regard, the literary and the legal discourse have much in common, which is why Nussbaum calls for a greater awareness of how literature addresses questions of justice. It would be important (especially for judges) to "think of people's lives in the novelist's way" (99), because the "full, precise, and judicious imagining of the human facts […] would possibly make at least some difference to the result" (116). Nussbaum looks primarily at the adjudication process and does not address in detail the poet-

ics that are at play in the earlier stages of a case. Those early poetics will be the focus of this paper.

In what follows, I will contrast two types of justice—poetic and procedural. I will argue that, within the legal, mainly procedural framework, questions of the poetic construction of a narrative[6] are often disregarded, although they are in use when a criminal case develops. This might lead to wrongful convictions. However, literary texts that appear to be poetically just show less awareness of the importance of procedure. Procedure provides many safeguards for the individual defendant and the justice system as a whole. An outcome that satisfies the sense of justice of any audience is not a goal for most justice systems. Even guilty defendants might be acquitted if illegal evidence was used in a trial or if a jury deemed a conviction unjust (this is called jury nullification). I do not attempt to resolve the tension between justice and procedure; what I would like to try and stress is that both disciplines—law and literature—can learn from each other. A judge with an awareness of how narratives are constructed poetically will be better equipped to safeguard against wrongful convictions and gain a better understanding of a case in general. Vice versa, literary critics who learn to recognize the value and legal importance of procedure will expand their understating of a text. So, I will not argue that either concept—poetic or procedural justice—is better or worse than the other but that we need an awareness of both poetic justice and the importance of procedure.

I will develop my argument in three steps. First, I will contrast poetic and legal ideas of justice. I will then discuss in more detail how legal and literary discourses differ, i.e. how justice is narrativized. Then I will demonstrate how poetic and procedural elements affect two exemplary cases, each a wrongful conviction—those of Jeffrey Deskovic and Tom Robinson in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Justice in Poetics and in Law

Different genres contextualize justice differently. This section is meant to clarify ideas of justice as they pertain to the literary and legal genres. For that I will distinguish between substantive, procedural, and poetic justice. Substantive justice is based on the traditional distinction between substantive and procedural law, where substantive law defines rights and duties, such as crimes and punishments, in the criminal law. Substantive justice is achieved when facts and law are in congruence, when the *factually guilty* and blameworthy are convicted. The concept of procedural justice stresses the importance of fair treatment in the administration of justice because only "through the criminal process can the state's most serious sanctions […] be applied" (Feinman 305). Procedure is crucial in providing defendants with fair trials and for upholding constitutional rights. No one should face any penalty, stigma or serious loss by government unless he or she is provided with specific procedures, which involve, for example:

- a hearing by an impartial tribunal;
- a legally-trained, independent judicial officer;
- a right to representation;
- a right to confront witnesses against the detainee;
- a right to an assurance that the evidence presented by the government has been gathered in a properly supervised way;
- a right to present evidence on one's own behalf;
- a right to hear reasons from the tribunal when it reaches its decision, which are responsive to the evidence and arguments presented before it; and
- some right of appeal to a higher tribunal of a similar character. (Waldron 6)

Procedures are a criminal justice system's "philosophic core" (President's Commission 7) and primarily aim at the fair application of laws so that only the *legally guilty*,[7] those whose guilt has been established through proper proceedings, shall be punished, even if it means that a guilty person goes free.[8] It can also mean, however, that a substantively and factually innocent person can be found legally guilty if proce-

dure is followed. Niklas Luhmann sees the importance of procedural justice in the formal equality it provides through the application of rules. Justice is then based on the value of the (formally) equal treatment of individuals, on legal certainty and peace under the law (see Osterkamp 131).

Procedures alone are not sufficiently effective tools to provide justice in a broader sense because they do not cater to ideas of higher or natural justice, nor are they able to filter out intrinsic biases in those involved in a case. The idea underlying procedural justice is that a criminal justice system must constantly be demonstrating its legitimacy to the public it serves (see Gold). The more transparent the system with regard to the process that leads to a specific outcome, the easier it is for people to consider the outcome as fair (see Tyler 6). A decision is just because the system follows its own rules. Does that make the decision just in a poetic, natural, or in a substantive sense? Not necessarily. First, because the conviction of an innocent person is legally acceptable if procedures are followed. And, second, because law and procedure themselves can be at odds with ideas of "natural" (poetic) justice, they can be unjust or unfair but still legitimate. Under the Third Reich, for instance, many formally valid laws were enacted that violated (what we now call) human rights. In the aftermath of the Third Reich, German courts tried to resolve the conflict between written ("positive") and higher ("natural") law by stressing that written law becomes void when it *intolerably* violates ideas of justice. The basis for their decisions were the ideas of the legal scholar and politician Gustav Radbruch, who argued that positive law must be followed "even when its content is unjust and fails to benefit the people, unless the conflict between statute and justice reaches such an intolerable degree that the statute, as 'flawed law,' must yield to justice" (7). Most laws that exist and are applied (even unfairly) every day are not so severely "flawed" that they have to be considered void. The flaw has to be significant and of relevance for the whole legal system. This means that it is difficult in individual cases to argue the violation of higher law—or poetic ideas of justice. In that sense, a

criminal trial (and the process in general) is an example of "imperfect procedural justice," because "it seems impossible to design the legal rules so that they always lead to the correct result [and] there is no feasible procedure which is sure to lead to a correct outcome of a trial" (Rawls 85-86).

In the trial of Tom Robinson, the black field worker who was falsely accused of sexually assaulting Mayella Ewell, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, all of the procedural requirements were obeyed. Robinson had skilled counsel, had a right to confront witnesses, had the right to an appeal, and, for all we know, was judged by an (in the eyes of the law) impartial jury. Although the reader is aware that the jurors are racially prejudiced, their impartiality is not questioned because, after the jury selection, process jurors are simply assumed to be impartial. When it comes to the influence of race in a case like Tom Robinson's, an attorney would have to prove that the jury based a guilty verdict not on the facts of the case but on their racial prejudice. This has been and still is an almost impossible task. In the end, when fair procedure is afforded, "criminal process will be found lacking only where it offends some principle of justice so rooted in tradition and conscience as to be ranked as fundamental" (Medina v. California 445-46). This is such a high bar that procedural justice usually prevails over substantive justice.

What can be seen in Jeffrey Deskovic's and Tom Robinson's convictions is that procedure is inherently imperfect and limited. Through procedure lawyers try to provide for a balanced discourse, but as important as that is, procedure does not regulate how individual actors in the system construct their narratives. Procedure can address the criminal investigation and lay out the important rules of the game, but it cannot address the imagination of a detective, prosecutor, or juror and their sense of justice. The assembly of the narrative is *poetic* in the sense that it allows for imagination and a form of literariness in the reconstruction of a case. Imaginative freedom permits an investigator to look at all sides of a case and to be careful in presuming someone guilty too early. In wrongful conviction cases, however, the

opposite could be seen—law enforcement was driven by a specific narrative agenda, to tell the story that incriminates the suspect—regardless of actual guilt or innocence.

In his essay *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd* (1678) Thomas Rymer coined the term "poetical justice."[9] Those of good character should be rewarded and the evil and vicious should be punished[10] so that in the end a form of homeostasis is achieved (see Höfler 192). In another representation of poetic justice, George Bernard Shaw (in a critique of Henrik Ibsen) wrote that the audience of a text or play wants

> to be excited, and upset, and made miserable, to have their flesh set creeping, to gloat and quake over scenes of misfortune, injustice, violence, and cruelty, with the discomfiture and punishment of somebody to make the ending "happy." The only sort of horror they dislike is the horror that they cannot fasten on some individual whom they can hate, dread, and finally torture after reveling in his crimes. […] Ibsen […] sends away his audience with their thirst for blood and revenge unsatisfied and their self-complacency deeply wounded. (Shaw 262-63)[11]

Poetic justice, it appears, is dependent on whatever an audience feels is just. Good and evil, right and wrong are subjective and based on the audience's sense of justice (*Rechtsgefühl*).[12] However, a layperson's view of justice is not derived from moral philosophy or a complex value system but rather from "intuitive notions" that people think are "shared by the community of moral individuals" (Robinson and Darley 1). What if the community's values are racist or otherwise biased? The jury's decision in *To Kill a Mockingbird* shows the pitfalls of *Rechtsgefühl*. Our sense of justice is influenced by individual or societal prejudices as they exist at that moment. What we think is good today might be frowned upon tomorrow.[13] It just feels right in that moment. Legal questions often have multiple dimensions and are therefore too complex to be subjected to *Rechtsgefühl*. The lack of a standardized system of right and wrong is one of the weaknesses of the literary discourse, but that weakness is also a strength since, in contrast with the legal discourse, it is more open and does not divide a case, person, or situation into specific simplified requirements.

Literary texts have the potential to explore a character or a question of justice more broadly. How the legal and literary discourses differ with regard to the narrativization of justice will be explored in the following section.

The Legal and the Literary Discourse

The legal or philosophical discourse seeks to formulate actual definitions of justice, whereas the literary is based on metaphors or situational context. Legal narratives are concerned with a (re)construction of a historically true image of reality. Law presents its narratives *as if* they represented reality and assumes that what underlies a verdict is *as if* it had happened, whereas literary fiction does not make the same claim.[14] What strikes many first semester law students is how exclusive law is. As Stanley Fish explains, "the law does not wish to be absorbed by, or declared subordinate to, some other—nonlegal—structure of concern" (141). Law desires that the components of its autonomous existence be self-declaring and not in need of piecing out by some supplementary, non-legal, external, discourse.[15] The legal discourse goes beyond terminology or procedure; it includes a complex set of values, procedures and ethics, which are ultimately defined by the legal system. To maintain its own environment, law depends on a high degree of self-referentiality. Subjecting what is genuinely legal to a literary discourse can even cause harsh reactions from legal professionals.[16]

In a similar vein as Fish, Niklas Luhmann has developed a theory on the self-referentiality of the legal discourse. According to Luhmann, conflicts between a victim and an offender are institutionalized by procedure and the system. Outside influences are shielded because "[l]ike all systems, court procedures constitute themselves by differentiation, by strengthening borders to their environment" (59). In Luhmann's eyes, agents like judges or prosecutors act on behalf of the system and not as individuals that try to understand the nature of the act or the mind and heart of the offender—and often the victim. This

is why "in the criminal trial, an all too friendly tone can lead to bitter disappointment" and dissonances when a judge, who appears to be understanding, makes a decision that does not reflect understanding. The way any system works is that we assume a decision has to be made: "it must be considered as something that already exists but is still unknown" (Luhmann 109; author's translation).

In contrast to literary texts, in law, questions of guilt and justice are often reduced and simplified to procedural questions. A person's blameworthiness is dependent on a set number of variables with little room for individualization. Despite their differences, both law and literature share certain ideas about justice: only the guilty should be punished, laws should be applied uniformly and equally, procedures should be fair, etc. A deeper understanding of justice—poetic or legal—is dependent on the discourse each concept is part of. According to Dorrit Cohn, the main difference between fiction and other genres is that a work of fiction is non-referential in the sense that it creates the world "to which it refers by referring to it" (13). Fiction does not have a reference to historical reality. That must not be understood as if fiction never refers to the real world outside the text; most literary texts do, but they do not *need* to (see Cohn 15). Referential narratives, such as those which are historical or legal, are subject to judgments of truth and falsehood (15), fictitious texts are immune to that: "The producer of a historical text affirms that the events entextualized did indeed occur before entextualization" (15). That is of particular relevance in the legal context where a police officer or prosecutor, for instance, affirms that the events as entextualized in his or her narrative actually did occur or were very likely to have occurred. During the narrative reconstruction of a case, imagination plays a role when pieces of evidence are connected, when motives are constructed, or when the overall meaning of a specific action is developed. While a scientist or historian is accountable for when he or she fills gaps in a story with assumptions or a hypothesis, the prosecutor is not responsible to the same extent.[17] A case is presented as if there is no other alternative, at least not a likely one. A similar kind of imagi-

nation is needed for, as Cohn calls it, the "inner lives" of characters (16). A reader of a novel written in the third person is aware that the narrator knows "what cannot be known in the real world" (Cohn 16). In the legal discourse, "inner lives" are likewise crucial for the determination of the degree of intent the defendant had. Prosecutors can only speculate about the state of mind of a defendant but have to be assertive when they address the jury. What this shows is that the line between literary and (in the broadest sense) historical representations of (justice) narratives is blurry. The process of the narrative reconstruction of a case is not scientific; it is used by the attorneys to create meaning. Facts, like evidence, do not tell a story on their own, they are just part of, to use Hayden White's historical methodology, a chronicle, an unsorted collection of events, which is then arranged into "a hierarchy of significance by assigning events different functions as story elements in such a way as to disclose the formal coherence of a whole set of events considered as a comprehensible process with a discernible beginning, middle and end" (7). The last step is then to imbue the story with meaning and explain what the events actually signify. Through "emplotment," stories are compared to archetypical or stereotypical stories, such as "romance," "tragedy" and others (White, *Metahistory* 7). This is the point when legal and literary parts overlap and when elements of the case might be, as Dershowitz calls it, "dramatized," which means that (in retrospect) these elements did not bear any relevance or vice versa: "[F]act finders employ the canons of literature and interpretation in the search for truth, generally without any conscious awareness that they are doing so" (Dershowitz 102).

Another difference between the literary and legal discourse is that the latter reduces the complexity of life to elements that are either given or not given. There is little in between. The vagueness and the many facets of the human condition are difficult to account for in law since vagueness is hard to codify or adjudicate.

> [Legal language] operates by reducing what can be said about experience to a series of questions cast in terms of legal conclusions ("legal issues") which

> must be answered simply "yes" or "no"; it maintains a false pretense that it can be used as a language of description or naming, when in fact it calls for a process of complex judgment, to which it seems to give no directions whatever. (White, *Legal Imagination* 112-13)

The question of "Who is this man?" (White, *Legal Imagination* 111) is rarely asked in legal discourse, which in its pursuit of uniformity and clarity "trivializ[es] the human experience" (White, "What's an Opinion For?" 1369). When a judge has to decide whether someone committed a murder, he or she does not have to ponder the philosophical, linguistic or literary connotations of the term "murder." The law defines it, and it also describes what elements need to be proven in order for a specific action to be considered murder or any other crime. In the American criminal justice system, a prosecutor has to prove *actus reus* (human conduct), *mens rea* (the guilty mind, i.e. intent or negligence), concurrence (*actus reus* and *mens rea* have to concur at the same time), causation, and harm. For some crimes (so-called strict liability crimes) *mens rea* does not need to be proven, which means that, for example, in a case of statutory rape, it does not matter if the defendant thought the victim was of age, if they were in love, dating, or if the victim expressed "consent." What might be a complex scenario of intentions, motives, and circumstances is reduced to a few elements which preclude considerations that are relevant outside of the law. For example, whether a pharmacist is killed because he insulted the killer's mother or because the killer does not have the money to buy medication for his very sick wife does not matter for the determination of the crime itself. It might matter during the sentencing process, but unless substantive law explicitly states that certain motives are aggravating or mitigating factors, they do not play a role. Under the law a judge would not even be able to increase complexity and, for example, use the vagueness or incompleteness of a law as recourse: a judge

> cannot be released from exercising his function as a judge, claiming either that the facts of the case are not sufficiently clear to him (factual doubt), or that the norm to be applied in the specific case cannot be determined (judicial doubt), or even that there exists no fixed norm for the determination of

> the case (lacuna in the law). Thus the Code Civil des Français (or Code Napoléon) [The French civil code from 1804; RG] lays down explicitly: "A judge who refuses to decide a case, on the pretext that the law is silent, obscure or insufficient, may be prosecuted as being guilty of denial of justice." (Rabello 1)

This shows that law can be (and perhaps must be) very rigid and, hence, a judge must disregard elements which might be important to the individuals involved but are not part of the discourse. For as long as a specific situation that reduces someone's accountability is not regulated, that situation cannot be assimilated into the discourse.[18] There are reasons why judicial discretion is limited, and the idea expressed in the Code Napoléon exemplifies that law has a preference for procedural justice, achieving fairness in and through procedure (see Friedrichs 76) and, for the purpose of making cases decidable, might be willing to sacrifice truth and substantive justice for it.

Literary texts are less concerned (if at all) with questions of the correct procedure because procedure might be one of the reasons for inequity and injustice (see Corcos 23). One of the most prominent examples is Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock, a rich Jewish moneylender, agrees to lend Antonio three thousand ducats for three months on the condition that, should Antonio default on the loan, Shylock may cut off a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio cannot pay Shylock in time, and the case goes to court. Here, Shakespeare does not concern himself with technical questions of the fundamental distinction between criminal and civil procedure (the trial started out as civil and ended with consequences that are usually the result of a criminal verdict).[19] Through Portia, a legal scholar taking the position of the judge, the play seems to openly criticize a positivist, formalist approach towards questions of justice.[20]

Because law has to reduce the complexity of the human condition to binary requirements, it is designed to make specific assumptions that cannot be questioned.[21] The early twentieth-century philosopher Hans Vaihinger described the nature of jurisprudence as being rooted in creating artificial relations:

> Jurisprudence deals with the problem of bringing a single case under some law in order to apply its theory of rewards and punishment. In both instances a relation which cannot be realized is represented as actually realized. Thus the curved line is regarded as straight, the adopted son as the real son. Actually both are absolutely impossible. A curved line is never straight, an adopted son never a real son. To give other examples: […] in jurisprudence the defendant who does not put in an appearance is regarded as if he admitted the charges. (Vaihinger 50-51)

And, so one might continue, an innocent defendant who is tried through proper proceedings and convicted by a proper fact-finder (jury or judge) is regarded as being guilty under the law. Jurisprudence is not bound by mathematical logic and therefore has "an easier task in dealing with its fictions than has mathematics, for its cases are covered by arbitrary ordinances and a transference is easily made. We have only to think of the case *as if it were so*" (Vaihinger 51). That law does not follow a mathematical logic opens the door for poetic considerations. There is no logic that helps law enforcement link a dead body to a suspect or a jury calculate guilt. Much of these processes is guided by intuition, comparisons to internalized stereotypes, or simply hunches. The feeling that is important for recognizing what is poetically just in a literary text might also be responsible for focusing on a specific suspect or finding someone guilty or not guilty. In the following, I will show how ideas of poetic justice affected the case of Jeff Deskovic and then expand on procedural justice in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Poetic and Legal Justice in Two Cases:
1. The Wrongful Conviction of Jeffrey Deskovic

Jeffrey Deskovic's case provides insights into how poetical thinking may contribute to a wrongful conviction. It shows that, first, even in the age of DNA, narratives and an underlying idea of poetic justice can be stronger than scientific, exculpatory evidence. Second, the main narrators of a criminal case follow poetic (literary, imaginative) strategies in how they conduct their investigation.

Jeffrey Deskovic became a suspect for the rape and murder of his classmate when police found that he was allegedly absent from school at the time of the victim's estimated death, that he had attended all three wakes for Angela and had seemed distraught and had been crying over her death. They also found Deskovic's own "investigation" into the case and his desire to help the police problematic. Deskovic was interrogated and lied at (which is acceptable under American law) before he succumbed to the pressure and confessed to a crime he did not commit. When the DNA analysis of the semen that was found inside the victim's body came back, it excluded Deskovic, but the prosecution continued regardless. During the trial, the prosecutor suggested that the semen might have originated from the victim's boyfriend (that nobody knew of). The jury convicted Deskovic of second-degree murder and first-degree rape ("Jeff Deskovic"). Legal guilt was thus established. He was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison in 1991. In January 2006, the Innocence Project took on his case and re-examined the DNA, which was then linked to Steven Cunningham, a convicted murderer, who has since pleaded guilty to also murdering Angela Correa. Deskovic's conviction was overturned in 2006 and he was released from prison after serving almost 16 years.

This case presents many similarities between the poetics of law and fiction. In actual cases, a story has to be reconstructed almost in the way a historian would reconstruct history. That process is not objective; it is influenced by individuals who, especially in the early stages of an investigation, think poetically, in the dimension of stories and justice. While they acknowledge procedural rules and the constitutional rights of a defendant, there is also the desire to make an early arrest of the right person—without questioning how "right" that person is. The adversarial process allows for little review of how a story is reconstructed, and there is no audience that leaves the courtroom "unsatisfied and their self-complacency deeply wounded." The audience will not know until years later. The reconstruction of the story is in the hands of the adversaries (prosecutor and defense), and a jury then creates its own narrative based on what it hears from these

adversaries.[22] Comparable to ancient drama with the courtroom being similar to the classical Athenian theater, the American trial rests on the assumption that factual "[t]ruth is best discovered by powerful statements on both sides of the question" (United States v. Cronic 655). Lawyers in adversarial systems are trained to keep the story dimension in mind, and are often more committed to winning the contest than discovering the truth. At this point, the demands of truth and demands of story can collide (see Kaiser 164). Prosecutors look for a narrative that will convince the untrained jurors.[23] The American Prosecutors Research Institute stresses how closely justice and conviction are related: "Most jurors want to reach a fair and just decision. Your job is to help them achieve that goal by finding the defendant guilty" (Gilbert 7). Factual "truth" and accuracy are not prerogatives of adversarial storytelling, at least not to the same degree as they are in more judge-centered (so called inquisitorial) systems (see Grunewald 372). The narrative a jury hears is the product of a reconstruction process that begins with the discovery of the crime. Since police and prosecutors have a specific agenda, they might (consciously and often unconsciously) look for evidence that fits their suspicion and their understanding of the events. This is where they depart from the work of a true historian, at least in the Aristotelian sense, because they need to be creative in order to imagine a potential explanation for the crime.[24] Poetics are at play in the imagination of the case as well as in its construction. Even random and unrelated events can become part of a narrative that in the end incriminates a suspect. In Deskovic's case police did not have any direct evidence. They were looking for potential suspects, and as the prosecutor explains in his opening statements,

> In any case, in a case like this, anyone and everyone becomes a possible suspect. You name it, a suspect. Family members, everyone is interviewed, young and old, and the students. (Tr. 31)

With the need to bring a suspect (i.e. any suspect) to trial, investigators become suspicious of everything. During the trial, investigators stated that they had grown suspicious of Deskovic's behavior. Despite

the negative DNA test, the police agents remained suspicious, and when Deskovic was sent to the polygraph examination, the agents who conducted the examination were instructed to "get the confession" (Morrison 12; Tr. 630)—which they did.

When the DNA results came back and police learned that it did not match Deskovic's, they contended that it was likely from a prior consensual sexual partner of the victim's (see Morrison 15; Tr. 1089). The story the State tried to prove was based on the assumption that Deskovic raped and murdered the victim in a jealous rage because she was romantically interested in another person, Freddie Claxton, a classmate, who was dating another woman (see Morrison 16; Tr. 1088). This alleged motive was based exclusively on a note that began with "Dear Freddie" found at the crime scene and Deskovic's statement to the police that he had found the victim attractive. There was no evidence that he had any romantic feelings for the victim, or had ever expressed jealousy of her relationship with Claxton or any other young man (see Tr. 1126 where in his closing argument the prosecutor only asks but does not answer, "Is there a hint of jealousy here?"). Surprisingly, Claxton was never ordered to give a DNA sample.

One crucial point in the development of the narrative of the "jealous rage" was during the interrogation of a detective by the prosecutor. The interrogation was about a note written by the victim, stating in part, "Dear Freddie, those eyes, they kill me." It was found under the victim's body. Later police determined that the intended recipient was Freddie Claxton. But how is that note related to Deskovic, and how could it possibly incriminate him?

The note was brought up during the cross examination of one of the detectives. The prosecutor asked: "[W]hat, if anything, can you tell us about Freddie Claxton's eyes?" (Tr. 903 [499]). The defense attorney objected, and the judge summoned a side bar, a *sotto voce* discussion out of the hearing of the jury between the trial judge and the competing trial lawyers in which the conflicting claims of narrative and legal procedure were argued and adjudicated (see Malcolm 106).[25] After a brief conversation about how special Freddie Claxton's eyes were, the

prosecutor stated, "the arguable relationship of who this particular victim had a crush on was Freddie Claxton, and perhaps she had known him before and perhaps done certain things before" (Tr. 905 [501]). The defense pointed to the speculative nature of that claim but the judge now understood and explained, "[W]hat I'm beginning to see now, he's trying to tie in to Claxton and jealousy" (Tr. 906 [502]). This was the moment when the note was emplotted, when archetypical meaning was created and a potential motive developed.[26] With that motive in place, even the DNA evidence found in the victim could be explained away.

The detectives in Deskovic's case convinced themselves that they had found the right person, that they did the right thing, and that they would punish vice. In order to achieve substantive justice, they created facts (coercing a confession) and ignored pieces that contradicted their theory (DNA evidence). Out of their desire to serve justice, random events (like being late for school, being overly distraught, etc.) were given significant meaning. Deskovic became a character in their plot, and the jury was now empowered "to choose the most satisfying resolution to the tale" (Kaiser 166). This most satisfying resolution is a poetic but not necessarily a truthful one. Put very generally, rules of criminal procedure are meant to provide a fair investigation and trial to every suspect, but (at least in adversarial systems) they promote substantive truth to a lesser extent. I do not argue that every wrongful conviction is the result of a biased and partial investigation or that every police officer follows his or her own desire for justice regardless of the evidence. However, many wrongful convictions have arisen from one-sided police investigations that result in coerced or false confessions and unreliable identification evidence, suppression of exculpatory evidence, and an inadequate screening of the decision to charge (see Griffin 1245). Deskovic's case exemplifies many of these elements and also the lack of awareness for the poetic construction of justice on all levels. Criminal procedure with all its protections against coercion and all the rights for those who are subjected to a trial does not effectively safeguard how the

state crafts its narrative. That does not render procedure useless, it simply shows its limitations. The next section addresses the role of procedure in a literary text. As was noted earlier, literary texts do not always concern themselves with questions of procedure. Although procedure can fail and disregard how narratives are created, it is crucial to the fair application of law and promotes a specific type of justice.

2. The Wrongful Conviction of Tom Robinson

One of the best known texts that centers on an innocent defendant is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel lends itself to discussing questions of procedural and poetic justice mainly through the protagonist, Atticus Finch. Finch has become the epitome of the ethical lawyer in America's perception, and he might even be the most famous lawyer in literature (see Knake 44). What makes Finch so outstanding is that he applies his belief in the rule of law and due process not only to his work but also his private life. Despite his strong conviction in law and procedure, he abandons due process at the end of the novel, and it is the purpose of this section to contrast his sense of procedural and poetic justice.

Central to the understanding of the novel are the allegations against Tom Robinson and his trial. Tom Robinson, the black field worker, is falsely accused of having raped Mayella Ewell, a young, white woman living with her abusive father, Bob Ewell, and her siblings. Despite only circumstantial evidence, Mayella's accusations—the accusation of a white woman against a black defendant in the racist Jim Crow era—are sufficient for an indictment and a conviction to death by an all-white jury. When Robinson attempts to escape from prison he is shot dead. At the end of the novel, Mayella's father tries to kill Finch's children but the reclusive Boo Radley comes to help and kills the attacker in self-defense.

Although very skilled, Atticus Finch, who is the assigned counsel for Tom Robinson, cannot sway the jury. Early in the novel, Finch

expresses that he never actually thought he could win the case. Racism was so prevalent in his community that he could not expect the jurors to acquit the black defendant. When Tom helped Mayella Ewell one particular afternoon, and when she made advances towards him, Tom got into a "predicament" (Lee 260): "[Tom] would not have dared strike a white woman under any circumstances and expect to live long, so he took the first opportunity to run—a sure sign of guilt" (260-61).

This is why "in the secret courts of men's hearts Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed" (323). And yet, Finch takes the case because of his conviction that it would be right to "see it through no matter what" (149). Finch's arguments in court unravel how much people in the community are prejudiced against blacks and how that racism thwarts the workings of justice—procedure is pointless if the narrative is fixed, but Finch's belief in the court system is stronger than his conviction that he will lose. All of Finch's arguments, including the ones that illustrate how difficult, if not impossible, it would have been for Tom to cause Mayella's bruises, do not convince the jury. Even when he reminds the jurors of their role as the "great levelers," the ones who make the poorest equal to the richest, they would not overcome their prejudice. When the guilty verdict is delivered Finch takes some consolation in the fact that it took longer for the jury to deliberate than he expected. In that alone, that maybe one juror was not as biased as the rest, he is able to see a "shadow of a beginning" (297). Finch thought he had a "good chance" (293) to win on an appeal, where he might be able to argue that the weight of the evidence does not support the verdict. However, arguing that the jury was racially biased (in the way it was constituted and how bias might have guided its decision) has up to this day been almost as difficult to prove.[27] Tom Robinson's death is eventually avenged when Bob Ewell is killed by Boo Radley in the defense of Jem and Scout. Through that death, poetic justice is achieved.[28] In the words of Sheriff Tate, "There's a black boy dead for no reason, and the man responsible for it's [sic]

dead" (Lee 369). Although Finch sees both Bob and Mayella Ewell responsible for the trial and in the end Tom's death,[29] it troubles Finch to "let the dead bury the dead" (369), to let things stand as they are. Others, like Gladwell (*The Courthouse Ring*), have criticized Finch for not "brimming with rage" after the guilty verdict and being more concerned about accommodation than reform, but Finch is not a reformer or rebel; he is a proceduralist, someone who does his best within the existing legal framework by using available instruments and by trying to teach these values.[30] He accepts the law and does not even consider initiating a legal reform that would give judges the power of fixing the penalty in capital cases.[31] Finch does not "have any quarrel with the rape statute […] but he did have deep misgivings when the state asked for and the jury gave a death penalty on purely circumstantial evidence" (Lee 294). More generally, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is not an illustration of laws that preserve the white power structure in the Deep South[32]; to me, Finch stands out because he is concerned about procedural fairness and procedural justice even in times of racial unfairness. His conviction about procedure goes so far as to even (potentially) put his children on trial. Finch initially thinks his son Jem is responsible for Bob Ewell's death so he wants to see his son in court rather than letting him, as the sheriff suggests, get away uncharged. Finch does not "want to start anything like that" (Lee 365), meaning "hushing this up" (365). He is concerned about his children's future and wants the case to be out in the open, in the community he lives in. He also believes that his children might lose their trust in him and the way he taught them:

> I don't want my boy starting out with something like this over his head. Best way to clear the air is to have it all out in the open. [...] I don't want him growing up with a whisper about him, I don't want anybody saying, 'Jem Finch… his daddy paid a mint to get him out of that.' Sooner we get this over with the better. (366)

Throughout the book Finch communicates the importance of the rule of law—both at home and in town.[33] One of the most prominent examples is a conversation between Finch and Scout, where he ex-

plains that "[y]ou never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view […] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (Lee 39). That idea (*audiatur et altera pars* / "listen to the other side as well") is crucial in legal procedure and has been followed since antiquity to promote impartiality. The adversarial system incorporates that concept through cross-examination and zealous advocacy on each side. In practice, though, it is excessive adversarialness, overzealous representation that turns a trial into a contest and not a forum for understanding. Finch strongly believes in the court system and its leveling function: "In our courts all men are created equal" (Lee 274). Substantive justice is dispersed in courts, because courts act in disregard of class and race and gender. He realizes that "a court is no better than each [juror] sitting before me on this jury. A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up." (274). In the end, equal justice is safeguarded institutionally by the court and personally by the people who make it up. But Finch is not an idealist and is aware that people in Maycomb, including the jurors, are racist.[34] Change, in his eyes, can only happen through changed people, and he represents that possibility of change.[35]

However, despite Finch's strong belief in due process, he sacrifices his values and his belief at least partly by not insisting on having Boo Radley tried. Bob Ewell does not carry much sympathy, and his death is portrayed as just. But who represents his side, who tries to understand him, who walks in his skin? Should it not be the "great levelers" who make a decision about whether his death was justified? The risks for Boo Radley to be unfairly judged and convicted would have been comparatively low. Regardless, Sheriff Tate is adamant about not charging Boo Radley. He signals that, if Finch does not see it his way, "there's not much you can do about it. If you wanta try, I'll call you a liar to your face" (369). Tate stresses that it would be just to not charge Boo Radley, that he "never heard tell that it's against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed" (369). But even such a case should be brought before court. Malcolm

Gladwell's sarcastic comment that Finch and Tate obstruct justice "in the name of saving their beloved neighbour the burden of angel-food cake" has a point: while poetic justice might have been achieved, procedural, legal justice is harmed. Although Finch does not explicitly and verbally endorse a "legally subversive conspiracy" (Markey 22) between him and Tate—Tate leaves without a word of agreement or disagreement from Finch— Finch does in fact accept Tate's decision.[36] This becomes clear again in the following conversation with his daughter. He asks her what appears as a rhetorical question, "Scout," he said, "Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?" (Lee 370). When Scout answers that she in fact does understand and that Tate was right, he is surprised and asks what she means. Finch's fear that his children would catch his inconsistency is alleviated by Scout's response in which she brings back the mockingbird paradigm. Tate is right because bringing the case into the open would be "sort of like shootin' a mockingbird, wouldn't it?" (370). Positive law would require Boo Radley to stand trial for the killing of Bob Ewell. Finch choses pragmatism over procedural justice.[37] To argue that "[i]f real justice is thwarted by following the law, then the law has failed, and reason mandates that the law be ignored" (Markey 179) relativizes Finch's upright nature and his belief in law and due process. Taking the law or its enforcement into his own hands would be (and is in fact) out of Finch's character.

Conclusion

All convictions begin with the imagination of a probable story of guilt. An initial suspicion is turned into a narrative of incrimination, which is then presented in court and finally turned into a narrative of guilt by the fact finder (the judge or jury). The imaginative parts of the narratives are difficult to review later on because the law does not provide narratological safety valves for a potentially misguided or erroneous narrative. Questions of the correct procedure are reviewable but only occasionally does a judge question the integrity of a

narrative. Therefore, increased poetic and narrative awareness among police officers, prosecutors, judges, and jurors can be a first step to a better understanding of how we incriminate individuals and find them guilty or not.

This paper attempted to create that awareness and contrast two types of justice, poetic and procedural. The former is more prevalent in literary texts; the latter dominates legal discourse. The legal discourse, with its aim to provide a voice to every participant, to ensure that the process is fair, that individual rights are observed and that everyone plays by the rules, lacks awareness of poetic elements on (at least) two levels. On one level, law, with its tendency to reduce the complexity of life and people to subsumable elements, misses what might be behind a crime or the person committing it. The literary imagination, however, is an "essential ingredient of an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are distant from our own" (Nussbaum xv). Therefore, thinking poetically is necessary to be "fully rational," so "judges must […] be capable of fancy and sympathy. They must educate not only their technical capacities but also their capacity for humanity" (Nussbaum 121). At the same time, poetic thinking might corrupt justice. If an officer has an understanding of a poetically just outcome of a case and thinks he or she has the right person and the imagination to tell that story, then justice is not served. I used the case of Jeff Deskovic as an example in which the police crafted a story of a "jealous rage" based on only circumstantial evidence in order to incriminate an innocent person. The legal discourse allows that kind of imagination, and as a matter of fact, law needs imagination. And yet, there is no instance that would review whether this particular imagination was the only possible. Police and prosecutors follow narrative agendas which guide their imagination and influence their understanding of justice. Admittedly, wrongful convictions are the exceptions to the rule that only the guilty will be convicted. Most cases (as far as we know) are based on a solid factual foundation. That does not mean these cases are not imagined to some degree, it just means there is more direct

evidence. Many factors influence why an innocent person may be falsely convicted, and most of them have been discussed extensively in the legal literature. My goal in this article was to look at the role of poetic justice as it can influence participants in the legal discourse.

Literary texts are not bound by the strict rules of procedure and do not necessarily need to adhere to questions of venue, the exclusionary rule, jurisdiction, etc. A reader is satisfied for as long as the result of a trial or process feels just and homeostasis is achieved. Literature can confront us with aspects of the legal world that are usually not addressed in the legal discourse. I used Atticus Finch as an example of someone believing that procedure is crucial for justice. And yet, Finch finally gives in to an idea of poetic justice, something exceptional to his character as a lawyer. Our *Rechtsgefühl* is satisfied when we see that Boo Radley does not have to stand trial, but from a legal perspective procedural justice suffers because things that, according to Finch, ought to be out in the open are resolved by individuals and their sense of justice.

I have criticized procedure for not being aware enough of poetic elements that can have a crucial impact on a case, and I have also criticized literary texts for missing aspects of procedural justice. The idea behind this seeming inconsistency was to raise awareness of the procedural dimension of a case, even if it is a literary one, and also to stress the importance of a poetic awareness in lawyers and those who work in the legal field. Within the legal profession there is a certain degree of discomfort with resting arguments and decisions on points of rhetoric or poetics (see Brooks 9). It would be a mistake, however, to disregard the literariness of legal cases. Poetic strategies are at play in both disciplines, and nothing will further law's understanding of justice more than this kind of a mutual discourse.

University of Wisconsin
Madison

NOTES

[1]In this article, I will occasionally refer to transcripts of Deskovic's Trial (The People of the State of New York v. Jeffrey Deskovic; quoted as "Tr. page number"; referring to the numbering inserted by the Innocence Project). The transcript is made available through the Innocence Project. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the Innocence Project or of the law firm Winston and Strawn, who provided case documentation.

[2]This is also why a clear distinction between different meanings of "poetic" is difficult. In *poetic justice* it alludes to an idealized concept of justice whereas *poetic* generally understood refers to an exercise of imagination or intuition. What will be pointed out with more clarity below is that the construction of crime narratives is imaginative in nature and that this imagination is or can be guided by a sense of idealized justice. The concept of imagination itself has received "surprisingly scant attention in philosophical discussions" (Kind and Kung 1). It would go beyond the scope of this article to map out the various facets of imagination in different disciplines. Imagination as a concept will be used in a more general way referring to the human capacity to form new ideas, images, and stories without direct input from the senses.

[3]In his overview, Zach (28) summarizes the various facets of poetic justice and notes that most definitions stress the rewards-punishment paradigm; others, however, focus on the importance of punishments.

[4]See also Bruner: "[C]ases are decided not only on their legal merits but on the artfulness of an attorney's narrative. So if literary fiction treats the familiar with reverence in order to achieve verisimilitude, law stories need to honor the devices of great fiction if they are to get their full measure from judge and jury" (13).

[5]Bernhard Schlink speaks of the permeation of ideas of justice into society and societal processes. He uses the term "Vergerechtlichung" (literally "justization") to explain that society has developed a strong expectation of justice, and that the law is the instrument through which these expectations ought to be realized (11).

[6]I will work with the common distinction between events and their representation. A narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse. A story is an event or sequence of events (the action); and narrative discourse is those events as represented (Abbott 19). A story is always mediated and not seen directly, so that what is called the story is something we construct; we put it together from what we read or see, often by inference (Abbott 20). This distinction is of particular relevance in the legal context. A crime or any legally relevant event does not present itself on its own, it must always be mediated and reconstructed. That process is complex and vulnerable to all kinds of interference like biases or presumptions.

[7]"[A]rriving at the truth is a fundamental goal of our legal system" (United States v. Havens 626) but that goal is not as protected as procedural rights.

[8]Mistakes during procedure (the wrong venue, the wrong judge, a missing warrant for the only piece of evidence that proves the guilt of the defendant, etc.) can lead to an acquittal because the defendant cannot be found legally guilty. This might be one of the reasons why to most laypersons procedural aspects of the legal system lead to inequity and injustice (see Corcos 548). "Ever since the 1960s, the right has argued that criminal procedure frees too many of the guilty" (Stuntz 5).

[9]The concept of poetic justice itself is at least as old as Aristotle; see Curzer 245; and Zirker.

[10]Comedy is seen as the genre that best expresses this ideal by "depicting the rectification of error as a triumph of love over injustice" (Kertzer 51); see also Fishelov and Niederhoff. But, as Höfler (191) argues, themes of poetic justice permeate all genres.

[11]See Zach (385), who provides more context for Shaw's criticism of the "old conventions of right and wrong" under the poetic justice paradigm.

[12]Höfler (199) considers a person's sense of justice (*Rechtsgefühl*) as a "Wertorgan" (an organ that enables us to recognize values that are hidden from the rational discourse), which contains implicit knowledge of what is right and wrong.

[13]See how, for example, Richard Posner changed his opinion on Portia in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. In the second edition of his *Law and Literature*, Posner describes Portia as personifying "the spirit of equity." In the third edition, he becomes critical of the "people's justice" (168), and describes her as a trickster and being "unscrupulous" (149). He concedes that his former assessment "as a comment on Portia's character […] is not correct" (149).

[14]"[N]ovels present us with a semblance or illusion (Schein) of reality that we don't take in a conditional sense, but what we accept as a reality so long as we remain absorbed in it"; Käte Hamburger in Cohn (6).

[15]See Fish 141. Brooks explains that the "legal discourse wishes to see itself as complete, autonomous, and hermetic." Expertise foreign to itself has to "pass through the narrow gate watched over by the judge—at trial, and then at the appellate level—who is supposed to know the judicial from the extra-judicial" (20).

[16]A current example is Thomas Fischer's biting criticism of Ferdinand von Schirach's play "Terror." Fischer, a German Federal Judge, attests von Schirach incompetence and legal ignorance and critizes how the play asks the audience to participate in the verdict. That is a "insufferable manipulation of the public," which is not equipped to judge the complex legal and ethical questions of the case.

[17]Rules of professional conduct require that a lawyer may never knowingly make a false statement of fact to a tribunal or third party (Kaiser 165). At the same time, however, in wrongful conviction cases law enforcement and prosecutors repeatedly lie or mislead jurors about their observations, make misleading argu-

ments, allow untruthful witnesses to testify, etc. What, if not the desire to construct a narrative of guilt, would be the motivation for that?

[18]An example is the battered woman defense. Women who killed their spouses after a long period of having been abused could not claim self-defense before courts developed a specific defense.

[19]According to Posner, from a procedural and legal perspective the play appears as "absurd" (142) and lacking realism (145). That criticism does not diminish the literary qualities of the play; it simply illustrates how differently justice can be contextualized.

[20]Contrary to how the term "justice" is commonly used, in *The Merchant of Venice* it represents positive law more than ideals of equity and fairness. For instance, Shylock asks the Duke grant him "justice"—by which he means the letter of the contract including the promise of the pound of flesh. In her "quality of mercy" speech, Portia suggests that Shylock's plea for justice must be "seasoned" with mercy, meaning that law must be considered within a frame of equity. When Shylock refuses that demand, Portia explains, "For, as thou urgest justice, be assured / Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st" (4.1.314-315). Portia beats Shylock by applying the law in a formal sense, disregarding anything (like Shylock and his position) but the law.

[21]One such assumption is, for instance, free will. In United States v. Lyons (995), the Court decided that "historically, our substantive criminal law is based on a theory of punishing the viscious [sic!] will. It postulates a free agent confronted with a choice between doing right and wrong, and choosing freely to do wrong."

[22]In "The Narrative of Innocence," I argue that the narratives of the wrongfully convicted are exemplary for the narrative blueprint of adversarial trials.

[23]The American Prosecutors Research Institute suggests that prosecutors choose "a theme that resonates with the average person. Whenever possible, choose a theme that motivates your jury to convict. Create a catch phrase that captures your theme that you can use throughout the trial" (Gilbert 3).

[24]Aristotle in his *Poetics* (9.2-4) argues that "[t]he true difference (between history and poetry) is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen." In a criminal case (and potentially even in general), the reconstruction has to consider what may have happened as well.

[25]From a discourse perspective, the side-bar is interesting in that it safeguards the jury's suspension of disbelief by making the shelter soundproof. Malcolm compares attorneys to "actors sitting around the dressing room putting cold cream on their faces and arguing points of craft and turning to the director to decide who was right. […] The juror, no less than the reader of a novel, needs to be protected from disbelief. Law signals its acknowledgement to the power of imagination" (108).

[26]Deskovic's story was transformed into an "archetypical journey," which is a tool every legal writer is encouraged to use (see Kaiser 167).

[27]The Civil Rights Act of 1875 includes a provision outlawing race-based discrimination in jury service. But to this day illegal exclusions of racial minorities from juries persist (Stevenson).

[28]Poetic justice has an element of irony here. Ewell was killed with his own knife, he, who accused wrongly, died through his own hands. This dramatic irony "emphasiz[es] the gap between real justice and ideal justice"; see Corcos 602.

[29]Technically, it was the prison guard who killed Tom and not Mayella or her father. One could even argue that Tom provoked his own death, knowing that he would be shot at if he tried to escape. But an all too technical analysis leads away from the actual ethical responsibility of Mayella and Bob Ewell, who brought Tom into this situation in the first place.

[30]Gladwell criticizes Finch for being a "good Jim Crow liberal," "looking for racial salvation through hearts and minds." As of today there is no law that eliminates racism or any other kind of bias. Gladwell does not make clear what alternatives there are to changing racism where it begins: in people.

[31]"You'd be surprised how hard that'd be. I won't live to see the law changed, and if you live to see it you'll be an old man" (Lee 295).

[32]Markey (164) makes that point. The historical background of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the Jim Crow South but the Jim Crow laws themselves are not addressed directly. Not a single time does Finch claim that Tom Robinson has been subjected to institutional, legal racism. Mr. Underwood in his editorial wrote that "Tom had been given due process of law to the day of his death; he had been tried openly and convicted by twelve good men and true"; Scout, who is reading the editorial, realizes that there is distinction between the law and the people who execute it. The jurors had lost their innocence, "something had come between them and reason" (Lee 295). But that something is not the law, it is racism, and "resentments [that people carry] right into a jury box" (Lee 295).

[33]"I can't live one way in town and another way in my home" (Lee 367); see also Johnson (499).

[34]"'If you had been on that jury, son, and eleven other boys like you, Tom would be a free man,' said Atticus. 'So far nothing in your life has interfered with your reasoning process. Those are twelve reasonable men in everyday life, Tom's jury, but you saw something come between them and reason'" (Lee 295).

[35][I]f I didn't [defend Tom] I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again" (Lee 100).

[36]"[Atticus Finch] abrogates the law and obstructs justice when he is complicit in the lie about the death of Bob Ewell" (Markey 195).

[37]Markey (178) juxtaposes the two kinds of justice that are evident in that scene: "Finch colludes with Sheriff Tate, not to obstruct justice, but to make sure that justice is achieved, by preventing the creation of any more victims of the racist society in which he and the sheriff live." The justice that is obstructed is procedural justice and the justice achieved by not prosecuting Boo Radley is poetic.

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Overwhelming Questions: An Answer to Chris Ackerley*

EDWARD LOBB

In his response to my article on "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Chris Ackerley objects to several points in my discussion of the poem and makes some observations of his own about Eliot's poetry. The observations, on subjects as diverse as orthography and Eliot's use of Wagner, have nothing to do with the argument of my article. I shall therefore limit myself to replying to his criticisms.

I shall deal first with what seems to me his principal objection. Ackerley writes that my "insistence that 'it is always and only Prufrock himself who provides the link'" between Prufrock's various concerns is "surely implicit in the very notion of the dramatic monologue" and "leads to an assumption that the 'overwhelming question' must therefore be Prufrock's 'non-metaphysical obsession: women and sex.' (Lobb 170)." He adds that this is "reductive and unfounded" (237). I agree entirely that the idea is reductive and unfounded, particularly because I neither stated nor assumed any such thing. A few lines above the passage that he cites, I wrote that "the question involves the meaning of life and the existence of God, not simply because the question must be overwhelming, but because the historical and literary figures in the poem—Dante, Michelangelo, St. John the

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*References: Chris Ackerley, "The 'complicit we': A Response to Edward Lobb," *Connotations* 24.2 (2014/2015): 231-38; and Edward Lobb, "Ellipsis and Aposiopesis in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,'" *Connotations* 22.2 (2012/2013): 167-86.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/ellipsis-in-the-love-song-of-j-alfred-prufrock/>.

Baptist, Lazarus, Hamlet—are all associated with religious and philosophical themes and narratives" (170). Elsewhere, Ackerley refers with equal inaccuracy to "Lobb's [...] assertion that the 'overwhelming question' concerns 'the gap between sex and metaphysics'" (234). He might at least be consistent in his misrepresentation of my argument.

Since Prufrock's personal and sexual insecurities are foregrounded and the overwhelming metaphysical question is repeatedly invoked, although never directly stated, the obvious critical question is why these two things are juxtaposed, and I tried to explain why this strange pairing of sex and metaphysics makes poetic sense and is one of the keys to the poem's meaning. Ackerley's idea that the relationship of subjects in a speaker's mind is "implicit in the very notion of the dramatic monologue"—that is, that the link is always a personal one—is simply not true. In the classic Victorian dramatic monologues of Browning, Tennyson, and Arnold, for example, the relationship of the issues in the poem is more or less obvious; in Browning's "An Epistle of Kharshish," to take another poem in which Lazarus plays an important offstage role, the possible resurrection of Lazarus leads quite naturally to considerations of the nature of God. The link between subjects here is not primarily personal, then, but one that most people would make, and even in cases where the link is more obscure, it is rarely bizarre or purely personal. In Prufrock's case, on the other hand, there is no immediately apparent reason for his simultaneous obsessions with sexual and metaphysical questions, and it is the very oddity of the pairing that causes us to probe more deeply into the omitted links between them. A man who looks at the evening sky and thinks of "a patient etherised upon a table" clearly thinks in highly individual ways.

Ackerley not only ignores my clear statement of the "overwhelming question" but claims that "Lobb's thesis may be summarized in terms of his insistence that sex and metaphysics are analogous" (235). This at least acknowledges part of what I said but mistakes the extended discussion of one example for my "thesis" and conclusion. If that conclusion was unclear to Ackerley, allow me to re-state it briefly

here. Ellipsis and aposiopesis function in "Prufrock" as means of omitting "connections between the tenor and vehicle of a simile or metaphor, between the large subjects of discussion (sex and metaphysics), and between incompatible aspects of Prufrock himself: male *vs.* female characteristics, the desire for sexual pursuit *vs.* inertia and fear of failure, the need to discuss large metaphysical issues *vs.* the fear of mockery, miscommunication, or solipsism, as well as the vital need to keep all possible conclusions in play" (181-82). The various omissions do justice to the complexity of and conflicts in Prufrock's mind and personality, but they also illustrate what I called "a positive agenda of avoidance" (180). "The failure to conclude either sexually or metaphysically" becomes a source of actual good: "the important thing is to go on talking, keeping alive a sense of the complexities of any issue, forestalling or disrupting consensus, which can become deadening in the intellectual sphere and tyrannical in the political" (180). This refusal to conclude, which is at the furthest remove from deconstructionist "deferral," is Prufrock's and Eliot's way of maintaining at least the possibility of meaning and God in a world of discourse which has largely, to its loss, ceased to take such concepts seriously.

As the examples above suggest, I am mystified throughout Ackerley's response by his apparent unwillingness to pay attention to what I actually wrote. In addition, he frequently makes disparaging remarks about points in my article without indicating in any way why he finds them unsatisfactory. He writes of my analysis of the Marvell reference, for example, that "having presented this image, Lobb's conclusion rings hollow: that the response of Prufrock's 'would-be mistress' (unlike Marvell's) suggests that 'she is far more interested in sex than he is'" (234). This was not in fact my "conclusion;" it was one part of a developing argument about Prufrock's gender identity. But exactly how does it ring hollow? Ackerley does not say. Again, after mentioning the parallel of sex and metaphysics, which I discussed at some length, he tells us that: "In my reading of the poem, this places the wrong emphasis on matters that are infinitely more subtle than

this" (234). "Infinitely more subtle" would seem to allow for extensive development, but this lofty assertion is not followed by any reading at all, much less an infinitely subtle one. A third example: when Ackerley accuses me of "privileging the universal over the particulars that generate it" (237), I look in vain for any evidence to support this curt pronouncement. I make no apologies for bringing up the "overwhelming question"—if that is what Ackerley means by the universal—because it is central to the poem, and part of my project in the article was to show precisely how such a question is reflected in Prufrock's other, more personal concerns, his "particulars." I could produce further examples of Ackerley's dismissiveness, but these are enough to make the point. Everything I wrote was solidly grounded in the words and details of the poem; Chris Ackerley is welcome to disagree with anything I said, but to do so without countervailing evidence or an alternative account of the point in question is easy, arbitrary, and entirely unhelpful.

"I intensely dislike the use of what I (frequently) call the curse of the 'complicit we,'" writes Ackerley; "that is, the kind of approach to the purpose that treats the reader as 'mon semblable, mon frère' and walks him (or her) down the garden path to look at (let 'us' say) 'the evening […] spread out against the sky'" (233). He finds that "the use of the 'complicit we' bullies or cajoles or persuades [him] into acceptance." This objection is important enough to Ackerley to provide the title of his response, but I find it odd that he feels bullied by a convention as transparent as this one. To write criticism without using "we" or "I" or "the reader" is to imply truth claims unmediated by the actual experience of readers, which is central to critical discussion. But then, the use of "I," except when unavoidable, brings problems of its own. When Ackerley and I began writing criticism several decades ago, the use of "I" in criticism was considered not only egotistical but also trivializing: it suggested that your observations were merely personal. The inclusive "we," in contrast, evoked the "common reader" dear to critics from Dr. Johnson to Virginia Woolf. With the rise of political correctness and the need of some scholars to con-

fess their "subject positions," often at great and anxious length, the "I" returned with a voluble vengeance; those of us who continue to avoid it believe that it is still possible to articulate a view of a poem or novel which would be shared by most intelligent readers once the evidence has been put before them. Chris Ackerley believes this himself, or he would not bother to write articles of his own. His dislike of the communal "we" therefore strikes me as pointless at best.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" remains the most important long poem in English of the twentieth century. Prufrock's anxieties are deeply and vividly personal but also imply a larger frame of metaphysical discourse, and the poem conveys this without becoming discursive or "ruminative," Eliot's descriptor for the overt discussion of ideas in Browning and Tennyson. A century after the poem's first appearance, its evocation of individual and cosmic loneliness remains moving, disturbing, and contemporary. The gaps, omissions, and discontinuities of the poem suggest the increasing incoherence of modern consciousness, and my discussion of ellipsis and aposiopesis was an attempt to demonstrate the centrality of these tropes to the poem's technique and themes. What I called the Grand Ellipsis in the poem is the unstated but omnipresent "overwhelming question" itself. The grand ellipsis in Ackerley's response to my article, the thing omitted, is any real engagement with what I wrote.

Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

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Edith Wharton's Geographical Imagination: A Response to Judith P. Saunders*

GARY TOTTEN

Judith Saunders's article, "Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* and Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan': Re-Creating Xanadu in an American Landscape," is a thoughtful study of Wharton's literary influences and their effects on her geographical imagination and aesthetic practice. Saunders's examination of the role of poetry in Wharton's work is especially welcome as this aspect of her work, and her body of poetry itself, has yet to receive sufficient critical attention.[1] Saunders illuminates the various ways in which Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" (1797-98) influences theme, characterization, and setting in Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* (1929). Her attention to allusion in the novel contributes to scholarship on the subject of allusion in Wharton's work by, among others, Helen Killoran, Emily J. Orlando, and Rocki Wentzel.[2] Saunders claims that, while Wharton "wields the device of allusion effectively and prolifically in all her fiction," in no other work "does it play such a structurally central role" (205) as in *Hudson River Bracketed*. The article raises important questions about literary influence and aesthetics; the role of the East and West; and the relationship between technology, art, history, and the natural world in Wharton's work. All of these ideas combine in a valuable analysis that contributes to the spatial turn in American studies.

Saunders thoroughly examines the influence of Coleridge's poem on the structure and themes of Wharton's novel, finding many paral-

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* Reference: Judith P. Saunders, "Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan": Re-Creating Xanadu in an American Landscape," *Connotations* 24.2 (2014/2015): 187-216. <http://www.connotations.de/debate/whartons-hudson-river-bracketed-and-coleridges-kubla-khan/>.

lels and resonances between the two works. Her most distinctive argument about this influence is that Wharton "borrow[s]" the "[m]agically transformative properties" of Coleridge's poem specifically, and those of "the world of poetry" more generally, to represent the Hudson River Valley as a setting that engenders the artist's creative energy and vision (187). In a cogent and comprehensive close reading of correspondences between the poem and the novel, Saunders demonstrates the rich connections between the two: for example, details about the landscape, such as the "verdant landscape" and natural splendor of Wharton's Hudson River Valley, and Coleridge's Xanadu (198); similarities in architectural detail (198-200); the presence of a female muse (represented by Halo Spear in *Hudson River Bracketed*; 200-01); and an examination of the violent forces of creativity and the inner strength of the artist (201-04).

Since a number of critics find autobiographical links between Wharton and the novel's protagonist, Vance Weston, an examination of these connections in relation to Coleridge's ideas about artistic vision can provide insights into Wharton's own artistic life. As one example, Saunders notes that, in the preface to "Kubla Khan," Coleridge describes the "fragile and ephemeral nature of the artist's visions," and she references Vance's unpleasant interactions with editors and artists in New York City as evidence of "how 'business' can frustrate creativity" (207). Wharton, too, experienced the tensions between creativity and commercialization in the literary marketplace.[3] She was a strong advocate for her own work and thus was sometimes involved in disagreements with publishing professionals before and after the publication of *Hudson River Bracketed*. Her correspondence with her editor at Appleton, Rutger Jewett, highlights some of these disagreements and the effects that they had on the shape and content of her work.

In this correspondence, Wharton emphasizes both her concerns about the effects that business matters might have on her creative work and her frustration when prior agreements are not upheld. Writing to Jewett on 5 January 1920 about the *Pictorial Review*'s con-

cern that *The Age of Innocence* (1920) would be too long, she refers to the agreement that the novel would not be less than 100,000 words and emphasizes that she "cannot consent to have [her] work treated as if it were prose-by-the-yard" (*Letters* 428). In a 15 July 1929 letter about *Hudson River Bracketed*, Wharton refers to the fact that the *Delineator* had begun the serialization of the novel without warning and earlier than agreed upon. In February 1929, Wharton had expressed to Jewett that this "inexcusable action" had done harm to her and the novel (521), and in the July 1929 letter, she is indignant at the magazine editor's suggestion that it would be "the last straw" to cut the novel short as she had proposed. She writes: "When I consider what the Delineator is, and what the poorest of my work is in comparison, I confess that I feel indignant at such a tone, and I will never again willingly give a line of mine to the Delineator" (521). In a letter from 31 January 1931, she balks at a request from the *Ladies' Home Journal* to make more explicit the ending of her story "Pomegranate Seed" (claiming that a group of friends found the story's implications obvious; *Letters* 532), although she acquiesced to the changes. Then on 29 April 1933, she voiced her concern about the magazine's attempt to reduce the agreed upon price for her reminiscences: "No doubt the L. H. J. is hard up, but so am I, and I imagine that they have larger funds to draw upon than I have" (560). Wharton also expressed indignation when Gertrude Lane, editor of the *Woman's Home Companion*, refused to print her story "Duration," despite having paid for it. Wharton notes that she is "really staggered at the insolence of her letter" (571) and, in a statement that highlights the crux of the issue, contends that "I am afraid that I cannot write down to the present standard of the American picture magazines" (572).

Some of this correspondence also reveals Wharton's wish for privacy, suggesting an additional toll on the creative life incurred by the business of writing. After receiving a letter from a woman asking about her private life, she writes Jewett on 25 February 1925 asking that Appleton not give out her address (Jewett replied that she should not "shoot the organist," and the woman had not received the address

from them; 479). She also wrote to him on 10 August 1928 to emphasize that she did not wish to be involved in a film celebrating women's accomplishments in various fields (515), for which the filmmakers hoped to film Wharton at her home in France (516). We find an apt fictional representation of Wharton's sense of the cost of public fame on oneself and one's work in "Copy: A Dialogue" (1900). In this story, two writers, Mrs. Dale and Paul Ventnor, reflect on the emotional cost of their writing. Reflecting on "the old days" when they were "real people," Mrs. Dale insists that her real self died years ago, and she is now only "a figment of the reporter's brain" (658). When Ventnor replies that they are indeed "public property," Mrs. Dale laments that "the last shred of [her] identity is gone" (659). Here, Wharton seems to suggest that the business of writing not only depletes the artist's creative energy but also threatens her very self. We might view Wharton's representation of commercialization's negative impact on Vance's creativity as an expression of her own frustration and dismay at similar effects in her life as a writer.

Saunders further explores the idea of Vance's creative energy through her discussion of how the lush and creative setting of the Hudson River Valley feeds this energy and works as an antidote to Vance's sterile Midwest home. The novel emphasizes the "importance of place," which is not a "mere backdrop for action" in the novel, but, indeed, becomes its very "subject" (Saunders 188). Distinctions between East and West occur with frequency in Wharton's works, and these comparisons often emphasize negative aspects of western US life and culture. Her earliest published story, "Mrs. Manstey's View" (1891), establishes this pattern, representing the elderly and titular protagonist's perspective and limited prospects in relation to the setting sun in the West and emphasizing her loneliness by way of an estranged daughter in California, who refuses to visit. Wharton's subsequent fiction is replete with similar images: she lampoons the gullibility of western audiences in "The Pelican" (1898) and associates the West and Midwest with sordid business deals and unsavory personal deficiencies in "A Journey" (1899), "Afterward" (1910), and

Bunner Sisters (1916). Crass nouveau riche Western characters populate "Charm Incorporated" (1934) and *The Custom of the Country* (1913), the kind of "big money-makers from the West" who Wharton viewed as infiltrating Old New York culture beginning in the late nineteenth century (Wharton, *Backward* 6).[4] Of course, it would be just such nouveau riche characters from which F. Scott Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) would flee *back* to the Midwest to recuperate after his traumatic experience in the East. Nick reflects that, as Westerners, perhaps he, Jay Gatsby, Jordan Baker, and Daisy and Tom Buchanan "possessed some deficiency in common which made [them] subtly unadaptable to Eastern life" (Fitzgerald 184). After Gatsby's murder, Nick views the East as "haunted" and "distorted" (185) and seeks refuge in his Midwestern home. An emphasis on the cultural and natural deficiencies of the Midwest in *Hudson River Bracketed* suggests both differences to and connections with the theme of East versus West in novels such as Fitzgerald's, placing Wharton's novel and her body of work in provocative new literary-geographical contexts.

Wharton emphasizes the "physical and cultural flatness" of the Midwest in *Hudson River Bracketed* and draws our attention to how even the names of the towns from which Vance hails (Hallelujah, Missouri, and Euphoria, Illinois) underscore the region's "worship of materialism" (Saunders 188) or, as Wharton has it, "religion of business" (*Hudson* 43). As Saunders observes, "Wharton makes no attempt to be even-handed in her presentation of the American Midwest," and, through her focus on the many "artificially engineered booms in real estate and stocks" (188), Wharton ignores the geography of the West that "might make some claim on readers' aesthetic sensibilities" (189). Wharton's intent, instead, to "rain ridicule on the complacent anti-intellectualism and 'social insipidity' ([*Hudson*] 13) of […] [Vance's] early environment" (Saunders 189) allows her to draw sharp distinctions between the supposed natural and cultural sterility of his Midwest home and the verdant environment of the Hudson River Valley.

This distinction draws our attention to Wharton's engagement with historical and technological forces in *Hudson River Bracketed*. Saunders's analysis suggests that there is less movement in the novel toward a reconciliation of these two forces than we find in Wharton's other work, such as her travel writing, for example. Technological forces are represented by the "technophilia in which Vance has been indoctrinated" (Saunders 189), something which also seems to indicate the cultural paucity of his Midwest background. On his arrival in the Hudson River Valley, he feels the absence of technological culture: horse drawn buggies have replaced automobiles, dilapidated houses and rutted lanes have replaced modern buildings and roads, and homes in the area lack electricity, running water, and telephones. The "lushness and fertility in the natural environment" (189) compensate for this lack, and the creative possibilities of these new surroundings are evident on his first morning when, "his imagination already fired" (190) by the Hudson Valley, he composes a poem.

In addition to the inspiration of his natural surroundings, Vance also experiences the influence of the past, what we might consider a historical force in the novel. Wharton establishes a connection between the pull of history and the lush natural surroundings of the Willows, the ancestral home in which Vance is staying. His curiosity about the history of the Willows is "stirred by the luxuriant foliage of the grounds and strange intricacy of its exterior" (190), and Wharton represents Vance's efforts to compensate for his lack of aesthetic education in relation to both his natural and built environment. Saunders notes: "His first fevered attempts 'to hack a way through the dense jungle of the past' ([Wharton, *Hudson*] 126) take place at the Willows, in the private library that serves as a treasure trove for his imaginative explorations. He responds to the literary legacy preserved in this library as eagerly as to the fantastical architecture and overgrown garden of the 'old house' containing it" (191). She claims that Vance's "encounter" with "Kubla Khan" is informed by "the legacy of 'the Past,' the power of poetry, and the guidance of [his muse] Halo Spear," and that this combination of forces "lends critical shaping

momentum to his vocational and personal energies" (191). But the novel also emphasizes how art and history become linked to nature—a "central web of connection to which 'Kubla Khan' serves as key" (192).

The combined generative influence of art, history, and nature on the mind of the artist is especially pronounced in Wharton's travel narratives. This dynamic often plays out in her travel writing as a dialectic between history and technology, which, among other effects, demonstrates her belief in the cultural power of the past. The natural world also plays a key role in this dialectic in Wharton's travel narratives. For example, Wharton gestures toward a resolution of the dialectical opposition between history and technology in *A Motor-Flight through France* (1908) as she appreciates the ways in which her motor-car allows her to engage with spectacles of both history and nature (see Totten, "Dialectic" 134). Her reflections in her travel writing on natural splendor often provide a segue to her discussion of an area's history (138), and, in some instances, she invokes the historical by describing the landscape using images of and references to great works of art (139). Similar to her stance on artistic creation in her travel texts, in *Hudson River Bracketed* Wharton emphasizes Vance's realization (underscored by what his Midwest education lacks) "that art is not produced in a cultural vacuum" (Saunders 192). Further, he learns that both "the rich and multifaceted legacy of past generations" and "the creative vigor, the self-renewing beauty, inherent in elemental and organic forces," all contribute to "the development of both the appreciative and the imaginative faculties" (192). In her travel narratives, Wharton acts as a sort of guide to how one might interact with art, history, and the natural world, providing the same kind of mentorship to other travelers in enhancing one's appreciation for Vance.

This distinctive and significant aspect of Wharton's oeuvre reminds us of the complex manner in which her geographical imagination worked and of the uniquely American space, both physically and philosophically, that she traversed across the body of her work. As Saunders concludes her essay, she notes that the "Mid-Hudson region

figured significantly in Wharton's own life," including her development as a young woman (210), and, in her portrayal of the importance of the region to Vance's growth as an artist, she signals the important connections between landscape and artistic potential. Saunders calls attention to Wharton's singular celebration of the region through the imagery of "Kubla Khan" in *Hudson River Bracketed* and her emphasis on the region as "a cornucopia of generative energies, natural and aesthetic, a place sustained by cultural-historical roots that North America otherwise conspicuously lacks" (210).

These points suggest Wharton's participation in a tradition of US writers asserting the distinctiveness of American landscape and the specific influence it exerts on the American literary tradition. Walt Whitman argues forcibly in "Democratic Vistas" (1888) for the value of uniquely American spaces, themes, and conditions to the development of a flourishing US literary tradition; the "central point in any nation," Whitman claims, "is its national literature" (6). Speaking of the development of US culture more generally, Whitman insists that a "programme of culture" should have "an eye to practical life, the west, the working-men, the facts of farms and jack-planes and engineers, and of the broad range of the women also of the middle and working strata" (43). Hamlin Garland's *Crumbling Idols* (1894) also calls for authentic and local American art situated in a Western space and ethos. He complains that the "mighty West" has been ignored in literature (16), and notes specifically of Pacific-Coast literature that it will be unique to its geographical location and moment in time, the markers of a "national literature" (26). Indeed, US literature does not come into its own, Garland insists, until writers feel "the influence of our mighty forests and prairies" (51).

When Wharton considers in a July 1927 essay what constitutes "The Great American Novel," she seems to offer a somewhat different perspective. Wharton argues that current critical attitudes in the United States about what constitutes an American novel (similar to Whitman's and Garland's) constrain novelists socially and geographically (151), offering "to the artist's imagination a surface as flat and

monotonous as our own prairies" (154). She does not view an emphasis on the life of the folk or regional details as key markers of distinctive American fiction. Observing that US technological innovation has "internationalized the earth" (156) and considering of the modern American's "intense social acquisitiveness and insatiable appetite for new facts and new sights" (157), Wharton insists that the great American novel will seek a wider field, both philosophically and, in some cases, geographically: "Its scene may be laid in an American small town or in a European capital; it may deal with the present or the past, with great events or trivial happenings; but in the latter case it will certainly contrive to relate them to something greater than themselves. The ability to do this is indeed one of the surest signs of the great novelist" (158). Such a pronouncement seems to echo the rather banal adage that great literature will tap into something larger than the artist herself.

Thus, Wharton's theory of the great American novel, at least in this essay, does not insist on the distinctions that Whitman and Garland emphasize. Their celebration of the natural and cultural features of the West, specifically, as central to the development of US literature contrasts with Wharton's more general theory about what constitutes worthy American fiction and with her decidedly unromantic representation of the US West in *Hudson River Bracketed* and elsewhere. Yet in her fiction, and in apparent contradiction to her 1927 theories about the great American novel, Wharton demonstrates the profound influence of geography on the writer's imagination. Indeed, Whitman's and Garland's larger points about the defining influence of the landscape on US writers are brought to life in Wharton's examination of Vance Weston's creative process and geographical influences. The play of Wharton's geographical imagination in *Hudson River Bracketed* allows us to better appreciate the spatial and cultural parameters of both Vance's and Wharton's artistic journeys.

University of Nevada
Las Vegas

NOTES

[1]Wharton's poetry will receive renewed attention with the forthcoming critical edition of her poetry as part of the *Complete Works of Edith Wharton* from Oxford University Press.

[2]See Helen Killoran's *Edith Wharton: Art and Allusion* (1996), Emily J. Orlando's *Edith Wharton and the Visual Arts* (2007), and Rocki Wentzel's "Classical Reception in Edith Wharton's Late Fiction" (2013).

[3]For more on Wharton's relationship to the literary marketplace, see Edie Thornton's "Selling Edith Wharton: Illustration, Advertising, and *Pictorial Review*, 1924-1925" (2001), Jamie Barlowe's "No Innocence in This Age: Edith Wharton's Commercialization and Commodification" (2007), Sarah Whitehead's "Breaking the Frame" (2008), Elsa Nettels's "Serialization" (2012), Bonnie Shannon McMullen's "Short Story Markets" (2012), Sharon Shaloo's "Wharton and Her Editors" (2012), and Gary Totten's "Selling Wharton" (2012), among other studies.

[4]For more on Wharton's negative representation of the western US, see Gary Totten's "Images of the American West in Wharton's Short Fiction" (2012).

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"An Unparalleled Plethora of Idiocy": Len Deighton's Political Skepticism in *The Ipcress File*[*]

ROBERT LANCE SNYDER

A widespread critical bias holds that the spy story, which at its inception drew on elements of adventure romance and detective fiction, is formula-driven. Despite John G. Cawelti's efforts to illuminate the cultural significance of literary formulas,[1] the genre still tends to be regarded with a certain degree of suspicion in academic circles. Part of its discredited status is owing to the spy story's continuing association with the word "thriller," a tag, as Michael Denning points out, that was adopted in the late nineteenth century "together with 'shocker' as a designation for the proliferating cheap sensational fiction which emerged at the moment when a mass-produced culture started to come into being in Britain" (18). He therefore supplements "Cawelti's somewhat neutral term, 'formula,'" with Fredric Jameson's concept of an embedded "ideologeme" or unifying *topos*, emphasizing that "formulas in popular fiction never appear inertly, simply to be catalogued, but emerge as part of antagonistic collective discourses" (15). A fictional narrative critiques, then, what Jameson in *The Political Unconscious* refers to as a "pseudoidea—a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice—or [...] protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy" (87). The target of that critique in the spy thriller, according to Denning, is the Manichean binary of "Us" versus "Them," or "Good" versus "Evil," inherited from its antecedents.

[*]For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/len-deightons-political-skepticism-in-the-ipcress-file/>.

Consistent with this understanding of the genre, the main dynamic of Len Deighton's *The Ipcress File* (1962) is a profound skepticism about all political ideologies regnant during the Cold War. Not only does this undervalued author expose the inanity of Western capitalistic materialism, linked primarily with America's postwar boom economy, but he also deprecates the vacuous rhetoric of communist socialism or, more accurately, those who mouth it. At the root of his critique is the extradiegetic conviction of a liberal humanist who recognizes, in the tradition of Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and John le Carré, that "groupspeak" is invariably the refuge of scoundrels.

Much of *The Ipcress File*'s originality consists in its *not* framing the story's conflict around ideologically opposed antagonists or nation states. Instead, the narrative begins and ends with two complicit traders in classified information, and its human sources, as a marketable commodity. The first of these brokers is Dalby, a "languid public[-]school Englishman of a type that can usually reconcile his duty with comfort and luxury" (11), who supervises a covert intelligence unit in London known only by the unexplained acronym of WOOC(P). Reporting directly to the Cabinet, this shrewd bureaucrat directs the protagonist to make contact with a man code-named Jay, who has masterminded the abduction of several British scientists with top-grade security clearances, and pay him £18,000, with the option of going up to £23,000, on behalf of the government in exchange for a recently kidnapped biochemist. Not anxious to risk "another [Guy] Burgess and [Donald] Maclean shindy" (88), an allusion to notorious double agents of the Cambridge Five spy ring exposed during the 1950s, Dalby figures as "one of the most powerful men in England" (90), excels at securing annual budgetary appropriations from Parliament, and drags his feet on approving payment of back salary owed to the narrator. Jay, on the other hand, is an international rogue with a far different vita. Born Christian Stakowski, he was "recruited into Polish Army Intelligence in London" (72) during World War II before betraying his chain of underground cells to the German Abwehr. By

1947, a note in his file indicates, this émigré was working for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, after which he fled to the United Kingdom where he played off expatriate political factions against one another while launching his entrepreneurial "brain drain" venture. When the novel opens, Jay's cover is that in Switzerland he runs a research facility funded by "various industrial foundations to investigate what they call 'synthesized environment'" (58). Despite their divergent backgrounds, both of these nominal adversaries are essentially businessmen guided by adherence not to any ideological doctrine but rather to the dictates of pragmatic expediency. Each is adept, moreover, at camouflaging his commitment to espionage for personal profit.

Dalby's front, given his privileged status, is an almost parodic elitism,[2] a persona that suggests an inverted form of Marxian "false consciousness."[3] That is to say, Dalby presents himself as steeped in the ideology of a dominant managerial class, although he is also capable of chameleonic adaptation when not in an Establishment setting. Ruthlessly efficient in field operations, as when he metamorphoses into a "natural hooligan" (50) while leading a commando-style interception of the biochemist Raven in Lebanon, Dalby reverts to mandarin condescension when presiding over his staff at WOOC(P)'s headquarters in Charlotte Street. Because Deighton's anonymous protagonist (hereafter "I.")[4] hails from Burnley, a rural town in Lancashire, and has spent the last three years in Military Intelligence, his civilian boss is fond of baiting him: "You are a bit stupid, and you haven't had the advantage of a classical education. [...] But I am sure you will be able to overcome your disadvantages" (85). For his part, I. typically counters with anti-authoritarian and sardonic quips. "It doesn't take much to make the daily round with one's employer work smoothly," he remarks at one point, "but it takes about 98.5 per cent more than I've ever considered giving" (178). Notwithstanding his autocratic rigidity, the duplicitous Dalby can be unpredictable, as when, in order to throw the narrator off his secret partner Jay's trail, he burdens him with a statistician laboriously searching for forensic clues and then

appoints I. as his replacement during a protracted leave of absence. Dalby's tactical success in this maneuver can be gauged from the fact that his subordinate becomes bogged down by presupposing an ideological binary. "What chance did I stand," he opines, "between the Communists on the one side and the Establishment on the other—they were both out-thinking me at every move" (116).

When halfway through the novel its setting shifts to Tokwe Atoll in the Pacific, Deighton introduces a sharp contrast between America's prosperity and England's struggling economy in the 1950s. Invited there by the U.S. Department of Defense to witness the test-firing of a fifty-megaton neutron bomb with approximately 2,500 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima blast on 6 August 1945, Dalby urges the narrator and his attractive assistant, Jean Tonnesen, to travel with him. Upon arriving near the detonation site, they see an impressive outpost of a new postwar imperium.

> In ninety days they [the Americans] had equipped the islands with an airfield, suitable for dealing with both piloted and non-piloted aircraft; two athletic fields, two movie theatres, a chapel, a clothing store, beach clubs for officers and enlisted men, a library, hobby shops, vast quarters for the Commanding General, a maintenance hangar, personnel landing pier, mess hall, dispensary, a PX, post office, a wonderful modern laundry and a power plant. At one time during the test we were told there were ninety baseball teams in ten organized leagues. The telephone exchange could handle more than 6,000 calls per day; one mess alone served 9,000 meals per day, and a radio station operated around the clock, and buses across the island did likewise. I wish that London could match it. (156)

While in this multi-million-dollar overseas installation, described as an "apogee of twentieth-century achievement" (184), Dalby embraces the prevailing off-duty dress code. Shortly after landing at Tokwe he abandons his usual London attire of dark grey suit with a St. Paul's tie and, having had his longish hair trimmed at the local barber's shop, appears for dinner in "a red Hawaiian shirt with large blue and yellow flowers across it." Comments the protagonist: "Dalby had this knack [...] for sinking into such a combination without looking different from all the Americans wearing it" (171). A few days later, at a

party hosted by General Y. O. Guerite, Dalby poses as staunchly anti-Communist while in conversation with a lower-ranking U.S. brigadier. The implication in both cases is that this trader in negotiable intelligence gravitates toward whichever corporate entity promises the best protection of his private interests.

Meanwhile, Dalby sets about making his underling a target of the Americans' suspicion in connection with a spate of information leaks from their scientific labs. After the death of Lieutenant Barney Barnes, who earlier had warned of Dalby's "forked tongue" (189), he does so by framing I. for the electrocution of a corporal guarding the Tokwe bomb tower. Already impugned as a possible KGB agent, the narrator has discovered that his supervisor is preparing to radio an offshore Russian submarine monitoring the nuclear test, but he is arrested, drugged, interrogated, and told that he is being deported to Hungary. After thirty-four days of sensory deprivation and physical abuse, at the end of which he is read an indictment filled with such slogans as "'enemy of the State', 'high treason', 'plotting for the illegal overthrow of Peoples' Democracies' and [...] a few 'imperialisms' and 'capitalisms' thrown in for good measure" (249), the protagonist manages to escape, only to find that all along he has been incarcerated in a house located in the north London district of Wood Green.

From this point onward *The Ipcress File* reprises the man-on-the-run motif of John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) and other thrillers before revealing the full extent of Dalby's collaboration with Jay. The novel begins to come to a head when, after the murder of Charlie Cavendish, a deceased friend's father who had been providing him with sanctuary, I. makes his way to Dalby's home and, peering through a window, sees his department head chatting amiably with "the prince of evil" (283). As that epithet suggests, his perceptions are still being shaped by a reductive binary.[5] The shock that the narrator registers upon witnessing this scene makes the point explicit by means of two similes: "How can I tell you the impact this made on me? It was like seeing Mr. Macmillan drop a CP [Communist Party] card out of his wallet; it was like discovering that Edgar Hoover was

Lucky Luciano in disguise" (283). I.'s disillusionment, however, soon leads to a keener insight in the novel's climax that revolves around his one-on-one confrontation with Jay, who until now has been an elusive and shadowy figure lurking in the background.

During the face-off between these adversaries Deighton underscores the hollowness of ideological rhetoric while simultaneously using its ventriloquism to reinforce earlier observations about England's post-war consumerist culture.[6] Because of its importance to the work as a whole, the episode warrants some brief staging. After leaving Dalby's residence, I. follows Jay's chauffeured Rolls Royce to a converted Victorian mansion near Brompton Oratory. Having expected his visitor, Jay engages him in conversation while basting a lobster and sharing a bottle of champagne in the kitchen. Upon I.'s quoting a culinary analogy by Chinese philosopher Lao-Tze, his host warms to "the English patriot" and admits to running "a very big business" that involves brainwashing, which he describes as a weapon "more terrible than nuclear explosions" (293, 296). When his guest seems nonplused by the revelation, Jay launches into a long-winded peroration about the superiority of socialism to capitalism that is intended to provoke some ideological counterargument. A key part of their exchange is the following passage:

> Behind Jay's voice I could hear the radio playing very quietly. An English jazz singer was even now Gee Whizzing, Waa Waa and Boop [B]oop booping in an unparalleled plethora of idiocy. He noticed that I was listening, and his attack veered. What of the capitalist countries themselves? What of them then, racked with strikes, with mental illness, with insular disregard for their fellow men. On the brink of anarchy, their police beset by bribes, and by roving bands of overfed cowards seeking an outlet for the sadism that is endemic to capitalism, which is in any case licensed selfishness. [...] He'd timed his speech well, or he had luck, for he switched the radio across to the Home Service. It was time for the news. He went on talking, but I didn't hear him. (297-98)

Recognizing that Jay's harangue is only a spiel by a man who "has spent his life amidst changing political scenes" (307) and come through them all "like a plastic duck going over Niagara—by floating

with the current" (308), I. responds: "Cut out all this [...]. Who killed Charlie Cavendish?" (298). Already forewarned by a telephone call that he is about to be apprehended by Colonel Ross's men, Jay quietly replies, "We all did [...]. You, me[,] and them" (298).

The answer blames Charlie's death on what Allan Hepburn calls "the sacrificial logic of espionage" (18), the institutionalized system of distrust that pits nations against one another for ascendancy in the name of domestic security and sanctions murder for the sake of a "greater good." Although Deighton seems to share this negative view of espionage's corrosive effect on moral values,[7] the spokesman who conveys it declares only moments before his arrest that brainwashing, the erasure of human autonomy and agency, is "the greatest step forward of the century" in "dealing with anti-social elements" such as criminals (298), then presses a nuclear-disarmament badge into the narrator's hand without saying another word.

What exactly are we to make of this climactic scene and particularly Jay's speech in light of his equivocal views regarding brainwashing? I. dismisses the declamation as mere rigmarole and equates it to the jazz vocalist's "unparalleled plethora of idiocy" heard on the radio, but the peroration's illocutionary effect, as already suggested, allows Deighton to acknowledge the "licensed selfishness" (297) of Western capitalist culture. In terms of *The Ipcress File*'s plot, the antagonist's monologue is meant to draw "the English patriot" out and convince him that they can transcend the ideological divide of their age by not choosing sides, thereby avoiding interpellation as subjects. Intuitively, however, the narrator appears to recognize how specious is this pitch by a practiced opportunist. He also understands that Jay's readiness to extol brainwashing, or "thought reform" (302), as "the greatest step forward of the century" aligns him with the perpetrators of what prominent Cold War psychologist Joost A. M. Meerloo, no doubt influenced by the dystopian vision of Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), termed "menticide."[8]

Jay's initial description of brainwashing as a weapon "more terrible than nuclear explosions" (296) coincides with widely shared attitudes

toward mind control during the preceding decade. As David Seed's comprehensive book on the subject points out, the term *brainwashing* was coined in 1950 by journalist Edward Hunter to denounce indoctrination "methods being used by the Communist authorities on Chinese citizens and [...] the treatment of U.S. captives in the North Korean prison camps set up along the Manchurian border" (27). The neologism caught on almost immediately, fanned in part by CIA Director Allen W. Dulles, who on 8 May 1953 warned in *U.S. News & World Report* that "brain warfare" was "Russia's secret weapon" and, in Seed's words, "a covert analogue for nuclear war" (29). Less than a month earlier, in order to counter this perceived threat, Dulles had ordered the start of MKULTRA, the cryptonym for a now infamous project to develop a program of psychedelic drugs and hypnopedic techniques for use against the enemy. Well before Richard Condon's bestselling novel *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) and director John Frankenheimer's well received film adaptation (1962), then, the notion of induced conditioning known as brainwashing had captured the attention of both the American public and the nation's espiocrats for whom it represented a powerful tool in what William Sargant, writing in 1957, referred to as a Cold War "battle for the mind." The vexing worry, though, was that, in going down the MKULTRA path, the U.S. and its allies were resorting to the tactics of totalitarianism. As George F. Kennan, while serving as Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, warned fellow policymakers at the end of his "Long Telegram" on 22 February 1946: "Finally, we must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping" (Etzhold and Gaddis 63). Both sides in the global conflict were thus replicating each other's strategies in a process that theorist Luc Boltanski terms "*symmetrization*" (160), which occurs in situations where "[t]hreats of conspiracy [...] result in the maintenance, through fear, of a diffuse belief in the presence of an enemy that is at once threatening, concealed[,] and multiform" (167).

In light of these historical developments, *The Ipcress File*'s resolution makes clear that, in the arena of contemporary geopolitics, ideologies and their grand narratives too often serve as convenient cover stories for hidden agendas including self-advancement. The rewards for dissimulation by deceivers such as Jay can also be substantial. Thus, even though he was hatching a "plan to brain-wash the entire framework of a nation" (301) through "a network of well-placed men" (308) under his direction, the British government after arresting him pays Jay £160,000, a sum nearly nine times what Dalby had authorized for bribing the opportunist, to open a liaison department with Military Intelligence. On the same day, we are told, Dalby is killed when his sports car careens off a by-pass "while going at an absurd speed" (319), the clear implication being that London's security Establishment had found him expendable.

"The day of the political philosopher is over," decides Deighton's protagonist in *The Billion Dollar Brain*: "Men no longer betray their country for an ideal; they respond to immediate problems" (297). If the word *ideology* once denoted "visionary theorizing" and "idealism," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, by the mid-twentieth century a revealing semantic shift had occurred. The *OED*'s fourth definition, in support of which it cites a 1955 article by sociologist Edward Shils, indicates "a systematic scheme of ideas [...] regarded as justifying actions, esp. one that is [...] adopted as a whole and maintained regardless of the course of events." Over the two decades immediately following World War II there emerged a growing sense that "political ideas," as Daniel Bell's influential 1960 book *The End of Ideology* was subtitled, had reached a point of "exhaustion." Nine years later scholar Giovanni Sartori glossed the operative term as meaning "a typically dogmatic, i.e., rigid and impermeable, approach to politics" (402). Well before our own age of more parochial and virulent ideologies, *The Ipcress File* recognized the obsolescence of all utopia-envisioning systems of belief, whether promulgated by the communist East or the capitalist West during the Cold War.

As a spy thriller, then, Deighton's best-selling first novel transcends its genre's stock themes and characters. *The Ipcress File*'s default ideologeme, to borrow again from Jameson's lexicon, figures as a kind of old-fashioned individualism that refuses to be overwritten by the dicta of formally encoded ideologies reliant upon the perpetuation of an "Us" versus "Them" mentality. In the case of Dalby and Jay, comparable rogues though of different stripes, such individualism takes the form of playing the political system off against itself for purposes of self-advancement. I.'s skepticism, on the other hand, is the measure of his independence and autonomy, which he will not allow to be curtailed by homage to the superstructure of a vocation that for him is only a job at which he happens to be fairly proficient. Deighton's narrator nevertheless does not betray his own side for a cynical, purely personal agenda, as do Dalby and Jay, simply because he is a man of honor. In so depicting him, ironically, *The Ipcress File*'s author is harking back to the espionage thriller's antecedents, given his suspicion of all modern political ideologies.

University of West Georgia
Carollton, GA

NOTES

[1]See, for example, his *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* and "The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature."

[2]Dalby's elitism is captured well by actor Nigel Green's supercilious demeanor in Sidney J. Furie's cinematic adaptation of *The Ipcress File*. Gary McMahon remarks of the 1965 film that "[s]tereotypes border on caricature with [the protagonist's] superiors, Colonel Ross and Major Dalby, [...] but they convince you that stereotypes do exist in Whitehall, and some of them run the country" (25). Deighton's novel, however, assigns no military rank to Dalby, who figures as a new civilian breed of intelligence mogul and not, like Colonel Ross, as a carryover from service in World War II.

[3]Although Karl Marx never used the phrase "false consciousness," Friedrich Engels deployed it in a letter of 14 July 1893 to Franz Mehring while discussing

ideology as a process that perpetrates "bourgeois illusion." Since then the concept, which suggests class-based mystification, has enjoyed wide currency among proponents of Marxist theory. See Eugene Goodheart, *The Reign of Ideology* 13-14.

[4]Only in the film version of *The Ipcress File* is Deighton's protagonist identified as "Harry Palmer." Scriptwriters W. H. Canaway and James Doran presumably took their cue for so dubbing him from the novel where the narrator remarks, "Now my name isn't Harry, but in this business it's hard to remember whether it ever had been" (43). For the sake of convenience I shall follow Nicolas Tredell's practice of referring to this unnamed agent as "I." One reason for using this abbreviation, proposes Tredell, is "its similarity to 'K.', the initial used to designate Franz Kafka's protagonist Josef K. in *The Trial* (1925) and *The Castle* (1926), [which] suggests that I.'s battle with disorientation and misdirection has a Kafkaesque quality."

[5]Despite his sporadic bouts of verbal sparring with Dalby, the protagonist, perhaps because as "a refugee from the War Office" (13) he dislikes by-the-book Colonel Ross, admits on two occasions his admiration for the WOOC(P) supervisor. In the context of referring to Dalby's "IBM machine," which in its efficiency confers his power, I. acknowledges that he was "one of the best bosses I ever had" (89). Later he speaks of his "pleasure" in "working closely with Dalby" during their first few days on Tokwe Atoll, specifically because of "his readiness to use information from his inferiors—both socially and militarily speaking" (211). The plaudits suggest that, although piqued by Dalby's condescension, I. has been conditioned by his own form of internalized "false consciousness."

[6]A few examples may suffice. In Chapter 2, after making initial contact with Jay, I. describes what he sees along a street in central London: "We walked past grim-faced soldiers in photo-shop windows. Stainless-steel orange squeezers and moron-manipulated pin-tables metronoming away the sunny afternoon in long thin slices of boredom. Through wonderlands of wireless entrails from the little edible condensers to gutted radar receivers for thirty-nine and six" (24). Later, in a passage that anticipates Jay's derisive speech, the protagonist reads in the *Daily Express*: "A policeman earning £570 p.a. [was] attacked by youths with knives outside a cinema where a nineteen-year-old rock-an'-roll singer was making a personal appearance for £600" (137). Deighton thus contrasts images of England's wartime past ("grim-faced soldiers in photo-shop windows" and "gutted radar receivers") with the gadgetry, diversions, and materialistic culture that succeeded it.

[7]I base this inference on the climax of *The Billion Dollar Brain*, Deighton's fourth novel. While in Leningrad, his serial protagonist unaccountably kills Harvey Newbegin, a freelance agent and "friend" intent on defecting to Russia, by pushing him under the wheels of an oncoming bus. When Colonel Alexeyevitch Stok discusses the incident with I., the Soviet counter-intelligence officer warns that in the world they share "[w]hat we have to fear is the loss of purity within ourselves[, ...] an abandoning of principle for the sake of policy" (282). Deighton clearly implies that moral integrity cannot remain uncontaminated by prolonged participation in the "Great Game" of espionage.

[8]For directing me to Meerloo's several publications on this subject during the 1950s, I am indebted to Timothy Melley's "Brainwashed! Conspiracy Theory and Ideology in the Postwar United States" and his subsequent book titled *The Covert Sphere: Secrecy, Fiction, and the National Security State*.

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"When Contemplation like the Night-Calm Felt": Religious Considerations in Poetic Texts by Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth*

HENRY WEINFIELD

In *Milton's Burden of Interpretation* (1994), Dayton Haskin connected Milton's Sonnet 19, "When I consider how my light is spent," to Shakespeare's Sonnet 15, "When I consider everything that grows," from the standpoint of the marked difference between the two poems. "The challenge in 'They also serve who only stand and wait,'" Haskin observed, quoting Milton's arresting conclusion, "is for the 'I' to give up on his longstanding belief in the importance of his own productions" (116). Linking Milton's sonnet on his blindness to his earlier sonnet, "How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth," Haskin added that "[unlike] Shakespeare's 'When I consider ...' sonnet, which culminates in a closing boast about the immortality of verse in the war against Time, Milton's poem suggests that the poet is struggling to make what is elsewhere designated 'That last infirmity of Noble minds' a matter of indifference" (116-17).

Haskin's interpretation eloquently speaks to the differences in the religious attitudes of the two poets, but what it leaves open is the question of why, given those differences, the initial phrase of Milton's sonnet echoes Shakespeare's. It is impossible to imagine that Milton would not have known Shakespeare's sonnets,[1] and so the question remains as to why Shakespeare's poem impressed itself on Milton's mind, even if, as may have been the case, it did so unconsciously. My contention will be that, when we examine the two poems against each

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/between-shakespeare-milton-and-wordsworth/>.

other, we shall come to recognize that Shakespeare's sonnet posed—or perhaps consolidated—a threat that Milton had to take seriously.

In the first nine lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 15, the opening quatrains and then the turn to the sestet, two main ideas, transience and fatalism, are posed against each other in such a way as to constitute a single theme, one that is actually foreign to a specifically Christian outlook (although by Shakespeare's time it had become part of the Christian inheritance):

> When I consider every thing that grows
> Holds in perfection but a little moment,
> That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
> Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
> When I perceive that men as plants increase,
> Cheerèd and check't even by the selfsame sky,
> Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
> And wear their brave state out of memory:
> Then the conceit of this inconstant stay [...] (Shakespeare, *The Sonnets* 40)

Nature in these lines is the vortex from which everything emerges and into which all things disappear. In what is probably an early elaboration of the poet's theater metaphor, all things present themselves—as on a stage—as mere appearances, and if there is an author or director behind what is shown he is completely hidden. It may be that the stars are mysteriously aligned with these appearances—in other words, that they are the occult bearers of some sort of destined order and, as such, betoken the possibility of transcendent meaning—but if so, the "influence" they impart is entirely secret and inscrutable.

The presence of Ecclesiastes, though its relevance to Sonnet 15 seems to have gone unnoticed,[2] is clearly manifested both in the poem's second quatrain and in its turn to the sestet. "Conceit" in line 9 is an elaborate pun—or indeed *conceit*: in Elizabethan English, of course, it means *concept* or *idea*, but as the *OED* indicates, pointing to a 1567 entry, it can also mean "excessive pride" or "overstatement of one's qualities." In that case it is synonymous with *vanity* (from the Latin *vanitas* for "emptiness" or "falsehood"), which the *OED* glosses,

from a 1325 entry, as "the quality of being vain or worthless, the futility or worthlessness of something." Thus, we can see how Shakespeare's "conceit" in line 9 is derived from the opening line of Ecclesiastes (in the Geneva Bible): "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher: vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The vanity of existence for Shakespeare—its nullity, the sense in which it is a mere show of transient appearances—is reinforced by the fact that men, however much they may "vaunt" their distinctiveness, are really no different from plants or animals. This idea is derived from two verses in chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes: "For the condition of the children of men, and the condition of beasts are even as one condition unto them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other: for they all have one breath, and there is no excellency of men above ye beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place, and all was of the dust, and all shall return to the dust" (3:19-20). Shakespeare's beautifully phrased idea that men, like all other beings, "wear their brave state out of memory," which brings closure to the octave through the irony of the slant rhyme, can be connected to a number of passages in Ecclesiastes, but perhaps most fully to this one in chapter 2: "For there is no remembrance of the wise, nor of the fool forever: for that that now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten" (2:16). This idea is so powerful, its truth, one might say, is so unassailable, that it almost disables the poet's attempt in the sestet to memorialize the beloved friend; or at least imparts an additional pathos of futility, so that what is memorialized, in the end, aside from the poem itself, is the futility of memorialization:

> Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
> Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
> Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay
> To change your day of youth to sullied night,
> And all in war with Time for love of you,
> As he takes from you, I ingraft you new.

Although in the couplet the poet bravely enters into a war with Time, he has already admitted that the real debate is between Time and

Decay—or in other words, given the tautology, that there is only the inexorable process by which Time lays waste to all things.

If there is a God in Shakespeare's Sonnet 15, he is the God of Ecclesiastes, an entirely hidden and impersonal deity, who, like the gods of the Epicureans, takes no interest in human affairs.[3] When we turn to Milton's "When I consider" sonnet, the religious landscape is, of course, very different—indeed, on the surface, at least, diametrically opposed. Milton's God is the taskmaster of the Parable of the Talents in the Gospel of Matthew, a personalized figure with whom the poet has entered into dialectical relations, those of the Servant to his Master:

> When I consider how my light is spent,
> Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
> And that one Talent which is death to hide,
> Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
> To serve therewith my Maker, and present
> My true account, lest he returning chide,
> "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
> I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
> That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
> Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
> Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
> And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
> They also serve who only stand and wait."
> (*Complete Poems and Major Prose* 168)[4]

Milton is at once angry with God for taking away his eyesight and angry with himself for presuming, absurdly, to be angry. Overtly in the sonnet, he is expressing the fear that God will "chide" him for failing to make use of his "Talent" (and of course, the wonderful pun is Milton's—it does not occur in Greek),[5] but actually it is Milton who is chiding God for making it impossible for him to do that. After the "lest he returning chide" clause in line 6, or in other words at the very point at which we expect God to put his oar in, it is Milton, on the contrary, who says, "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?" Though editors often change Milton's comma after line 6 to a semico-

lon, it is eminently possible (as Stephen Fallon has suggested to me in conversation) that Milton wanted to preserve the ambiguity and create a kind of "double-take" for the reader[6]; in any event, it is only when the comma is converted to a semicolon that the grammatical error of anacoluthon (logical or syntactical inconsistency or incoherence) is avoided. But whether Milton is chiding God or worrying that God is chiding him, or whether he is worrying that, in foolishly presuming to chide God, God will chide him, the drama that is enacted is clearly a personal one.

Milton's grammar is in tension with his Petrarchan form even more than usual in this sonnet, and the asymmetrical spanning of "but patience to prevent / That murmur soon replies," a clause that moves from the conclusion of the octave to the commencement of the sestet, calls attention to the fact that the poem contains a second biblical intertext in addition to the Gospel of Matthew's Parable of the Talents: namely, the Book of Job.[7] Interestingly, Milton did not capitalize "patience" in the 1673 edition he prepared of his poems, perhaps because to some extent he was conceiving of it as a virtue or psychological propensity; but personification is definitely at work in the way the poet enters into dialogue with this virtue or propensity. In any event, the passage suggests that one must have the proverbial patience of Job not to blame God, insofar as he is conceived as a personal deity, for what might be taken to be his injustice. To the extent that the Hebrew Book of Job mitigates the admonitory force of the Christian Parable of the Talents and thus offers some solace, this is because what "patience" has to say is that "God does not need / Either man's work or his own gifts." The important thing—as in the Book of Job itself—is to bear God's "yoke" (mild or otherwise) without complaining. And hence the sonnet's famous conclusion.

Even if it only involves standing and waiting, there is still in Milton's sonnet an active relationship to a personal God, a God who himself is actively shaping all aspects of human destiny either through his own actions or those of his angels ("Thousands at his bidding speed / And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest"). But as

soon as the initially consoling idea is broached that "God doth not need" anything that we do or are—in other words, to take this a little further, that he has no need of us whatsoever—we find ourselves on a slippery slope in which the God with whom we have been standing in personal relations has become more and more impersonal and is in danger of receding into the background or even disappearing altogether. True, there is no longer a reason to fear that one is being punished—as with blindness—for one's failures and inadequacies, but at the same time one is now obliged to confront the indifference of the universe. The taskmaster God of the Parable of the Talents has become the hidden God of Ecclesiastes, and so once again we are in the orbit of Shakespeare's "When I consider" sonnet.

In the philosophical meditation that begins Book 5 of *The Prelude*, not only does Wordsworth engage concerns that Shakespeare and Milton are pondering in the sonnets we have been discussing, but in this book on books he seems to be doing so in a way that focuses on those poems themselves—at least indirectly. Wordsworth refers to Shakespeare and Milton as "labourers divine," and to their books as "poor earthly casket[s] of immortal verse" (5: 164-65); moreover, as an indication that he has been thinking explicitly at least of Shakespeare's sonnets, he quotes the phrase "weep to have" from Shakespeare's Sonnet 64 ("When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced") and puts it in quotation marks (5: 26).[8] His own sonnets, including "London, 1802," which opens: "Milton! Thou should'st be living at this hour," generally follow the Petrarchan pattern that he absorbed mainly from Milton.

Though Wordsworth is writing in blank verse in *The Prelude*, the philosophical prelude to Book 5 nevertheless follows the *when / then* structure that Shakespeare's sonnets so frequently adopt, where, instead of expressing the immediacy of a moment, meditation doubles back upon itself to reflect on those occasions in which thought takes a certain form.[9] "When I consider every thing that grows / Holds in perfection but a little moment [...] Then the conceit of this inconstant stay / Sets you most rich in youth before my sight"—this is what we

might call a second-order rather than a first-order meditation. Shakespeare is not only meditating here on how everything that grows is transient, he is meditating on the shape that a thought-process of this kind, when he engages in it, takes in his mind. Wordsworth is doing something similar at the beginning of *Prelude* 5, except that there, simultaneously, in what we might call a third-order meditation, he is reflecting on the nature of contemplation itself—on the sense in which it comes to us, rather than being something that we do or pursue:

> When Contemplation, like the night-calm felt
> Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep
> Into the soul its tranquillizing power,
> Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,
> Earth's paramount Creature! (*The Prelude* 5: 1-5)

The tranquillizing power of contemplation, on which, in Wordsworth's view, the creative process depends, allows us to engage in thoughts that might otherwise overwhelm us with sadness; it imparts a kind of sublime disinterestedness (the very antithesis of an "egotistical sublime"), which is the expressive signature of this poet when he is writing at the height of his powers.

Wordsworth's sadness "finds its fuel" (5: 11) not in the fact of transience per se, as Shakespeare's does in Sonnet 15, and not in the possibility that God may either be unjust or unconcerned with human beings, as in my view Milton's does in the sonnet on his blindness, but rather in the recognition that, although human beings have created "Things that aspire to unconquerable life," those things must eventually "perish" (5: 20, 22). The pantheistic orientation of the 1805 *Prelude* is somewhat diminished in the 1850 version, but even in the latter Wordsworth identifies a "deathless spirit" that is immanent to Nature and has been "diffused" through it by a transcendent "sovereign Intellect" (5: 18, 16, 15). Consequently, if in the future a cataclysm were to destroy all earthly life, as Wordsworth assumes might actually happen (in Book 5 he seems to have secularized the apocalyptic vision of the Book of Revelation), "Yet would the living Presence

still subsist / Victorious, and composure would ensue, / And kindlings like the morning—presage sure / Of day returning and of life revived" (34-37). In that case, however, the "consecrated works of Bard and Sage," although in one sense immortal, would no longer exist.

As G. Blakemore Evans observes in his commentary on Sonnet 15, Shakespeare "sounds the Horatian and Ovidian theme of immortality assured through poetry" (*The Sonnets* 127), and this is consistent with Shakespeare's implicit sense that the human soul is mortal and not in that respect different from the souls of plants or animals. Wordsworth's perspective is diametrically opposed: on the one hand, as we have seen, he expresses the awareness that, because the works of Bard and Sage are enclosed in material form, they must eventually perish, but, on the other, he seems to take it for granted that we ourselves are immortal. This has sometimes been misunderstood. When Wordsworth writes, "Tremblings of the heart / It gives, to think that our immortal being / No more shall need such garments" (5: 23-25), he is not, contrary to what the editors of the Norton Critical Edition assume, asserting that the individual will be preserved after death as an individual soul (*The Prelude* 152); rather he is suggesting that just as in life the individual participates in immortal being, so in death he or she will be joined to immortal being—no longer as an individual, however, but as part of the oneness of being. In the 1805 version, Wordsworth phrases this as "*the* immortal being" (my emphasis); his substitution of the pronoun "our" in the 1850 version makes the conception sound more orthodox, but in actuality it amounts to the same thing (*The Prelude* 152-53). "Garments," in Wordsworth's extension of the old devotional metaphor, refers not only to the "consecrated works of Bard and Sage," as the Norton editors indicate (152), but also to the body; for in Wordsworth's conception, the individual soul simply returns to life—to the source of life itself.[10] The sad irony is that, while the works of Bard and Sage are themselves immortal and divine, in the sense of containing and participating in a "deathless spirit" (5: 18), they are also unnecessary. Although for

Wordsworth, the creator is not separate from his creation—which is why, instead of the word "God," Wordsworth employs such metonyms as "the sovereign Intellect" and "the living Presence" (5: 15, 34)—for him too, *mutatis mutandis*, "God doth not need / Either man's work or his own gifts."

All three of the poetic texts we have been considering contemplate the future—of man and of his works. Shakespeare and Milton are concerned with death as it applies to the individual (in Milton's case, to himself), and Wordsworth, remarkably, as it applies to the human species as a whole. For Shakespeare implicitly and Wordsworth explicitly, death involves annihilation (though for Wordsworth, only of the self and not of the core of our being). Milton's sonnet is mediated by Shakespeare's, and Wordsworth's text, if not specifically by those two sonnets, then certainly by the works in general of our two greatest and most exemplary poets. Ironically, among these three "labourers divine," it is only Shakespeare—and perhaps only because God does not directly enter the picture for him—who conceives of the possibility that poetry is enduring and will be salvaged, along with what it memorializes, from the ravages of Time. Unfortunately, as Shakespeare himself implicitly recognizes, over the long haul this is not very likely.[11]

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN

NOTES

[1]As Haskin observes, "Milton would probably have known the poem as it was printed in 1640, where it constitutes the third part (after Sonnets 13 and 14) of a long poem under the heading "Youthful Glory" (*Milton's Burden of Interpretation* 115). Jonathan Goldberg had earlier connected Milton's sonnet to Shakespeare's. For Goldberg, indeed, Milton's sonnet constitutes "a reading" of Shakespeare's (see Goldberg 130).

[2]There is no reference to Ecclesiastes in the discussions of Sonnet 15 contained in the editions of the sonnets edited by Stephen Booth (*Shakespeare's Sonnets* 1977),

G. Blakemore Evans (*The Sonnets* 1996), and W. G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath (*Shakespeare's Sonnets* 1965).

[3]The longstanding debate over whether Ecclesiastes was influenced by Epicureanism is still unresolved, partly because the question of when Ecclesiastes was composed itself remains so. The dates usually given for Epicurus are 341-270 BCE. Philological evidence indicates that Ecclesiastes must have been composed after the Persian conquest of Babylon (539 BCE) but before 250 BCE. The editors of the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* suggest a date of around 300 BCE because its language and style are close to that of the Mishna (841).

[4]Whereas Hughes inserts a semicolon after line 6, I have retained—for reasons discussed below—the comma that occurs in the 1673 edition that Milton prepared of his poems.

[5]Haskin, in an essay related to but independent of the study cited above, observes that "in the Koine Greek of the first-century Mediterranean world the word *talanton* did not denote natural abilities." It referred first to a unit of weight and subsequently to a unity of money. Haskin adds: "The sense of the English word designating a 'mental endowment' or 'natural ability' seems ultimately to be derived from the parable in Matthew 25. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records as the earliest instance of this sense of the word a passage from an early fifteenth-century poem. Over the course of centuries, a certain allegorical interpretation of the parable had become so widely disseminated and deeply entrenched that, not only in English but in most of the languages of Western Europe, the word 'talent' came to be used with increasing frequency to refer to natural abilities"; "Tracing a Genealogy of Talent" 71.

[6]The Modern Library edition of Milton's poetry and prose that Fallon recently co-edited preserves the comma after line 6 for this reason. See *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton* 157-58.

[7]If, as most scholars now assume, Sonnet 19 was composed in 1652, it is likely that Milton had already adopted the mortalist heresy. This is significant because the problem of why bad things happen to good people is salient, as the Book of Job itself makes clear at various points, because the ancient Hebrews had no clear dogma concerning the afterlife. If bad things happen to good people, but they are bound for Heaven, that eliminates the salience of the problem. In his edition of Milton's *Complete Shorter Poems*, John Carey observes (328) that lines 9-10 of Milton's sonnet are echoed in *Christian Doctrine* in a context at which Job 22:2 is quoted (see Milton, *Complete Prose Works* 6: 645).

[8]I quote the 1850 version of *The Prelude* throughout this essay.

[9]It is interesting to note that in "When I consider how my light is spent," Milton subtly evades the logic of the *when / then* structure that comes to him from Shakespeare. As noted above, the sonnet's conceptual turn comes not at the beginning of the sestet but from the middle of line 8 to the enjambed carry-over of the phrase in line 9: "but patience to prevent / That murmur [...]." One might even say, therefore, that the *then* clause or section that would normally have occurred is *prevented* from occurring by the lines on patience. For a discussion of

the *when / then* structure in Shakespeare's sonnets and in the sonnet tradition generally, see Waddington 97-104.

[10]I discuss these matters at greater length in my chapter on Book 5 of *The Prelude* in *The Blank-Verse Tradition from Milton to Stevens*; see esp. 98-103.

[11]This essay was originally given as a talk for a panel on Milton and Wordsworth at the IAUPE conference that was held in London in July 2016. I am grateful to the other two members of the panel, Sandy Budick and Steve Fallon, for their helpful comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to Richard Strier and to the two anonymous readers of the essay for *Connotations.*

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The Equanimity of Influence: Milton and Wordsworth*

STEPHEN M. FALLON

Northrop Frye argued that "[l]iterature may have life, reality, experience, nature, imaginative truth, social conditions, […] for its content; but literature […] is not made out of these things. Poetry can only be made out of other poems" (Frye 97). If, with some allowance for exaggeration, this is the case, it is especially true of epic, the most intensively self-reflexive genre. At least from the time that Vergil contained the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* in the two halves of his *Aeneid*, epic poets have competed with predecessors whom they seek to contain and surpass.[1] In this essay I will address how Wordsworth makes his poetry out of Milton's poetry, and particularly his *Prelude* out of *Paradise Lost*, continuing a line of argument that I introduced in an essay on Wordsworth's "Nutting." I will suggest that for Wordsworth, reading Milton's poetry is a profoundly enabling condition for writing his own.

My title of course gestures towards Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*. By recasting the relation of Wordsworth to Milton, with I hope more accuracy than elegance, as one of "equanimity of influence," I mean to suggest that in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth is in a dialogue with Milton's *Paradise Lost* that is both conscious and notably free of anxiety. Wordsworth has here, that is to say, left behind much of the anxiety that marks the Prospectus to the 1814 edition *The Recluse*, a poem dating from the turn of the nineteenth century. There

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/between-shakespeare-milton-and-wordsworth/>.

Wordsworth both boasts that *The Recluse,* by plumbing the depths of the "Mind of Man," will have more profound effects of awe and fear than Milton's poem, which navigates "Chaos" and "The darkest pit of lowest Erebus" (35-41), and worries that in describing the "lowly matter" of "the Mind and Man / Contemplating" he might be seen as engaging in "labour useless" (94-99). The dialogue with Milton here is uneasy and defensive. I want to suggest that Milton's influence on Wordsworth's poetic project in *The Prelude*, on the other hand, was enabling and less marked by defensiveness, despite the fact that Wordsworth was still in competition with Milton. At the same time, I point in my title to the astonishing equanimity in the face of sorrows and adversity achieved by the narrator of *Paradise Lost* as the deepest legacy Milton left to his successor. What Wordsworth gains from Milton in much of his best poetry, is, I suggest, a deep balance of joy and sorrow, a mental poise Wordsworth himself describes in same Prospectus as "feelings of delight […] with no unpleasing sadness mixed" (4-5). I will follow Milton's presence in the 1805 *Prelude* in what I take to be increasingly significant steps, 1) as the source of frequent allusion, 2) as a model of epic ambition, and 3) as one who has achieved and modeled the equable mind that is one of the central achievements of the *Prelude*.

The Prelude's Allusions to *Paradise Lost*: A Brief, Exemplary Catalogue

Wordsworth alludes in *The Prelude* to several of Milton's poems, but most insistently to *Paradise Lost*. Writing a blank verse epic in English, Wordsworth could hardly have avoided engagement with Milton, and his insistent allusions make clear that he welcomed comparisons between *The Prelude* and *Paradise Lost*. While Wordsworth seems to strike out on virgin ground in writing an epic of the self, I have argued elsewhere that even here he has been anticipated by Milton (Fallon, "Intellectual History" 347). *The Prelude*, like its great model, is an epic of a lost paradise and its recovery through spiritual discipline. In Milton's case, though not in Wordsworth's, that discipline is specifically moral and insistently Christian, and the great summation of that

discipline, in the words of Raphael to Adam near the end of *Paradise Lost*, is bracketed by the theological virtues of faith and love, / By name to come called charity, the soul / of all the rest" (*PL* 12.582-585). While there is a moral element in the spiritual discipline of *The Prelude*, as is evident already in the first book in the boat-stealing episode, the emphasis is more on the maturation of the imagination, and, as we shall see below, Wordsworth's goal is less the love that is "By name to come called charity" than "love more intellectual" (1805, 13.166).

The Prelude is in dialogue with *Paradise Lost* not only in its narrative and thematic arcs but also in and between its lines. One paradoxical index of how thoroughly *Paradise Lost* informs Wordsworth's poem is the incidental nature of many of the allusions. His simile in Book 8 describing a traveler's gradually expanding visual field after entering a cave ("He looks and sees the cavern spread and grow, / Widening itself on all sides, sees, or thinks / He sees, erelong, the roof above his head" [*1805 Prelude* 8.715-17]) recalls Milton's simile describing a vision of fairy elves, "Whose midnight revels, by a forest side / Or fountain some belated peasant sees, / Or dreams he sees" (*PL* 1.782-84). The borrowing here is precise and complex, at once verbal, syntactical, and prosodic. When Wordsworth credits rare individuals endowed with vital imagination as the sources of "religion, faith / And endless occupation for the soul, / Whether discursive or intuitive" (13.111-13) he employs terms introduced in Eden by Raphael to describe the soul's reason, "and reason is her being, / Discursive, or intuitive" (5.487-88). Wordsworth's lament for the imagined youth unmoved by the Alps, "Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, unraised / To patriarchal dignity of mind" (6.442-43), echoes Milton's description of Abdiel confronting Satan and his followers "Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified" (5.899), not only in being a line of negated adjectives but in the line's rhythms and phonemes (*Unchastened, unsubdued* and *Unshaken, unseduced*). Pervasive borrowings of this kind show how thoroughly and intimately Milton's verses saturate Wordsworth's.

Epic Ambition

Wordsworth announces his own epic ambition in *The Prelude* in terms borrowed from Milton's announcement of his own. And in an implicit assertion of his poem's going beyond its epic predecessor, Wordsworth splices the beginning of his epic (and both the beginning and the end of its first book) to the end of Milton's, suggesting that he will begin where Milton ended and thus go far beyond him. Milton's epic ends with the departure of Adam and Eve from the Garden, in lines to which I will return:

> The world was all before them, where to find
> Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
> They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way. (12.646-49)

A few lines into *The Prelude,* Wordsworth depends on our knowledge of these lines to orient us to his succeeding epic:

> The earth is all before me—with a heart
> Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
> I look about, and should the guide I chuse
> Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
> I cannot miss my way. (1.15-19)

The switch from third to first person announces *The Prelude* as an epic of the self as opposed to Milton's epic of creation and fall, though, as I have suggested, Milton's is also an epic of the self. The "wandering cloud" as chosen guide is a Romantic replacement for the "providence" that guides Adam and Eve. Most interesting to me, however, is the way in which Wordsworth here rewrites the end of Milton's epic, much as Richard Bentley did in 1732, to edit out the balance between sorrow and joy, consolation and alienation, a balance that Wordsworth will achieve only in the course of *The Prelude*, though, when he writes a few lines from the end of the first book that "The road lies plain before me" (1.668); he might by an allusion to Adam's and Eve's descent to the "subjected plain" (12.640) gesture toward that more measured perspective.

That the reconciliation of joy and sorrow with which *Paradise Lost* ends is also at the heart of *The Prelude* suggests that Wordsworth may have revised the epic project less than he insists. His redefinition of epic heroism as internal virtue (in both senses of *virtue*) rather than martial prowess is itself derived from Milton. When Wordsworth writes,

> how awful is the might of souls,
> And what they do within themselves while yet
> The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
> Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
> This is in truth heroic argument
> And genuine prowess (3.178-83),

he is adapting Milton's own revisionary stance in his own epic heroism. Milton will be

> Not sedulous by nature to indite
> Wars, hitherto the only argument
> Heroic deemed, chief mast'ry to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
> In battles feigned; the better fortitude
> Of patience and heroic martyrdom
> Unsung. (9.27-33)

Both Milton and Wordsworth counter the traditional emphasis on epic action. Wordsworth's poem may be more obvious in this respect, as he focuses explicitly on the "growth of a poet's mind," as *the Prelude*'s subtitle has it. But Milton also focuses on what passes within both his heroes and himself, on "patience and heroic martyrdom," which manifest themselves passively as well as actively, and which characterize a poet tried by blindness and political defeat.

Equanimity and the Paradise of Daily Life

While both *Paradise Lost* and *The Prelude* contain cataclysmic events, notably the War in Heaven and the French Revolution, the most significant actions are not martial feats in the service of nations or peoples but the education of the soul or mind as it achieves calm of mind and discovers paradise in the quotidian. When Wordsworth writes early in *The Prelude*, "I yearn towards some philosophic song / Of truth that cherishes our daily life" (1.230-31), he echoes Adam's summation of Raphael's teaching on the proper sphere of knowledge, "to know / That which before us lies in daily life, / Is the prime wisdom" (8.192-94). The daily life of Milton's readers, if not of the Adam and Eve of Book 8, unfolds in a fallen world, which, unlike Eden, holds sorrows alongside joys.

For Milton, whose poem is set within the Christian myth of creation, paradisal innocence, a disastrous fall, our fallen current state, and the promise of regeneration, paradise is attainable here on earth through the growth in virtue enabled by divine grace. As Michael instructs Adam,

> add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
> Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
> By name to come called charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far. (*PL* 12.581-87)

The Romantic Wordsworth, writing more than a century later, would adapt Milton's story of recovered paradise through cultivation of the mind and virtues in a new context, in which nature and imagination will play the part earlier played by God and divine grace.[2] *Mutatis mutandis,* Wordsworth's poem follows a similar trajectory of innocence, fall, regeneration, and recovered paradise. *The Prelude* opens with scenes of childhood among the lakes and mountains of Cumberland. While there are intimations of guilt in, for example, the boat-stealing episode, the keynote is innocent joy. Wordsworth claims to

have been "Much favored in my birthplace, and no less / In that beloved vale to which erelong / I was transplanted" (1.307-8), a transition that resembles Adam's, first created and then himself transplanted to the "woody mountain" of Eden (8.303).

Wordsworth repeatedly describes the Cumberland of his childhood as a paradise. He recalls that he was "trained up in paradise / Among sweet garlands and delightful sounds" (3.377-78). Wordsworth mimics Milton in contrasting this paradise with mythical spots legendary for their beauty. It is a "tract more exquisitely fair / Than is that paradise of ten thousand trees, / Or Gehol's famous gardens" (8.121-23) a landscape

> gorgeous as the colours side by side
> Bedded among the plumes of tropic birds;
> And mountains over all, embracing all,
> And all the landscape endlessly enriched. (8.139-42)

The scenery of Wordsworth's youth surpasses these fabulous gardens, "lovelier far than this the paradise / Where I was reared" (8.144-45), just as Milton's Garden of Eden is more beautiful, to cite two of many examples, than "where Abassin kings their issue guard, / Mount Amara, though this by some supposed / True paradise under Ethiop line" (4.280-82), or than "those gardens feigned / Or of revived Adonis, or renowned Alcinous […] / Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king / Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse" (9.439-43).[3] And if Raphael tells Milton's Adam that "Earth hath this variety from Heav'n / Of pleasure situate in hill and dale" (6.640-41), Wordsworth yokes the landscape of his youth with both Eden and Heaven: "the sun in heaven / Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours" (1.505-06).

But there is something immature in the ecstasies of Wordsworth's remembered childhood. While paradisal recollections sustain Wordsworth in later years, the growth of the poet's mind must assimilate life's inevitable sorrows and pain, what he calls "The terrors, all the early miseries, / Regrets, vexations, lassitudes" (1.356-57). The distance between the mature and the boyish mind is measured, signif-

icantly, in a reflection on Milton as Cambridge student and mature man:

> Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
> Stood almost single; uttering odious truth—
> *Darkness before, and danger's voice behind*,
> *Soul awful*—if the earth has ever lodged
> An awful soul—I seemed to see him here
> Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
> Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth—
> A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
> Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
> And conscious step of purity and pride. (3.286-95; my emphasis)

The imagined youthful Milton bounds among the buildings and lawns of Cambridge as the younger Wordsworth bounds among the hills and vales of the Lake District. This young Milton would be tempered by "Darkness and danger's voice" and emerge as "Soul awful." There is a faint echo here of Satan's visceral reaction to Eve: "abashed the Devil stood, / And felt how awful goodness is" (4.846-47). And Wordsworth's lines unmistakably recall the invocation of *Paradise Lost* 7, where Milton voices the trials that tempered his character: "though fall'n on evil days, / On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues; / *In darkness, and with dangers compassed round*" (7.25-27; my emphasis). Wordsworth captures, in this portrait of Milton, the growth of a poet's mind through stages of innocent joy, experience of sorrow and fear, and greatness of soul and equanimity. Wordsworth expresses the fashioning of the singer in musical terms: "The mind of man is framed even like the breath / And harmony of music. There is a dark / Invisible workmanship that reconciles / Discordant elements" (1.351-54), and he marvels that "The calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself" has been made up in part of "early miseries, / Regrets, vexations, lassitudes" (1.360-61, 356-57). It is a painstaking progress, as the wayfaring poet must contend with "the weight of meanness, selfish cares, / Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in / On all sides from the ordinary world / In which we traffic"

(8.454-57). This is an ordinary world that somehow must be redeemed, a point to which I will return.

The reconciliation of joys and sorrows is the task of both *The Prelude* and the angel Michael in the final books of Milton's epic. God commands Michael:

> Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
> To Adam what shall come in future days,
> As I shall thee enlighten, intermix
> My cov'nant in the woman's seed renewed;
> So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace. (12.113-17)

There is a heavy burden of pain in "what shall come in future days," but Michael is to balance that with reminders of the covenant between God and fallen humankind. A mixture of joy and sorrow structures the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Adam's eyes are purged with "euphrasy and rue," herbs with signifying names; the freight of *rue* is obvious, the Greek *euphrasy* means "cheerfulness." Adam's discursive education by Michael and Eve's intuitive education by God in a dream leave them "though sad, / With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered / With meditation on the happy end" (12.604-06). The final books of *Paradise Lost* record the gradual tempering of Adam's violent swings between exaggerated joy and exaggerated sorrow. He is being educated toward the complex state of mind caught in the exquisite balance of the poem's concluding lines:

> Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
> They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way. (12.645-49)[4]

A similar reconciliation of joy and sorrow structures and makes possible *The Prelude*. The joyous peace of mind instilled in a youth nurtured in natural beauty is unsettled by the sordidness and moral dubiousness he observes in London and in the revolutionary France that first seemed glorious and unproblematic. As a result, he faces a crisis of faith:

> I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair. (10.897-900)

Like Adam under Michael's instruction, Wordsworth veers between joy and despair. He begins a journey back to mental health nursed by Coleridge, his sister Dorothy, and finally Nature: "Nature's self, by human love / Assisted, through the weary labyrinth / […] / Revived the feelings of my earlier life, / Gave me that strength and knowledge full of peace / Enlarged, and never more to be disturbed" (10.921-26). This enlarged perspective assimilates sorrow and pain into a higher imaginative vision, into what he calls a "love more intellectual," which

> cannot be
> Without imagination, which in truth
> Is but another name for absolute strength
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And reason in her most exalted mood. (13.166-70)

A book earlier, Wordsworth calls this "amplitude of mind" by the Miltonic name "right reason," which "lifts / The being into magnanimity" (12.26, 32).

The growth of the poet's mind for Wordsworth depends on reservoirs of deep mental vitality fostered by a childhood in nature, which provide the strength necessary to absorb the pains, sorrows, and sordidness of adult life. Both for themselves and others, Wordsworth's ideal poets imagine and thus realize a world of beauty countering the harshness of existence. Without this, there is, according to Wordsworth, a

> tendency, too potent in itself,
> Of habit to enslave the mind—I mean
> Oppress it by the laws of vulgar sense,
> And substitute a universe of death,

> The falsest of all worlds, in place of that
> Which is divine and true. (13.138-43)

The striking phrase "a universe of death" is one of Milton's names for Hell (2.622). Hell results from a failure of the imagination, a capitulation to what seems to be the case from the perspective of "vulgar sense." Avoiding it requires a kind of heroism, the heroism of the gifted poet founded on a deep sanity springing from communion with Nature. Such a figure can reconcile us to the suffering in the world as well as reconcile joy and sorrow.

This reconciliation of joy and sorrow, modeled on Milton's, allows Wordsworth to re-commit himself to his role as prophetic poet. This joy is not quite the same as the joy of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy," or the joy in the beauty of dying generations in Wallace Stevens's "Peter Quince at the Clavier"; for them, it is the brevity of beauty and joy that makes them precious. We cannot have the one without the other, so we accept the sorrow of mortality in order to have the joys of beauty. This is the luxuriance of melancholy. We hear a hint of this in Wordsworth's Book 6: "'Twas sweet at such a time […] / […] / To feed a poet's tender melancholy/ And fond conceit of sadness" (6.375-78). But the more authentic Miltonic and Wordsworthian note is an acceptance of sorrow as valuable in itself, not merely as a foil for happiness.

Another version of the acceptance of sorrow as the price of the exaltation of joy is the fortunate fall, an acceptance of sin, suffering, and death because they make possible the redemptive incarnation of the Son of God. Jonathan Wordsworth finds in *The Prelude* an echo of what he sees as Milton's articulation of the Fortunate Fall: "Wordsworth's justification of pain and fear as ultimately serving love is parallel to Milton's justification of God's ways to men, *Paradise Lost*, XII, 469 ff.: 'goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good'" (annotation to *1805 Prelude* 13.149). This is a misreading of Milton's epic and, I think, of Wordsworth's. Wordsworth ascribes his poetic and prophetic powers of imagination to "early intercourse / In presence of sublime and

lovely forms / With the adverse principles of pain and joy— / Evil as one is rashly named by those / Who know not what they say" (13.145-49). In the Fortunate Fall, the evil of sin is overbalanced by the joy of the incarnation and redemption. In Wordsworth and Milton, I want to argue, sorrows are accepted for their own sake, as part of what Wordsworth calls in "Tintern Abbey" "The still, sad music of humanity" (91), and in the "Immortality Ode" "the soothing thoughts that spring / Out of human suffering; / […] / In years that bring the philosophic mind" (183-86).

Milton comes closest perhaps to capturing in poetry the acceptance of a world of intermixed sorrows and joys in a paradoxical simile describing the cherubim descending to usher Adam and Eve out of the garden. They are "as ev'ning mist" that

> Ris'n from a river o're the marish glides,
> And gathers ground fast at the laborer's heel
> Homeward returning. (12.630-32)

At the moment that Adam and Eve are driven from the only home they have known, they are compared to the "laborer […] Homeward returning." They are driven from a home from which sorrow has been excluded, and they are yearning, by the logic of poetry, for their home in which sorrow is inescapable. It is the only home that they now know, the only home *we* have ever known, a home where greatness of soul is impossible without the experience of sorrow.

This is the world also limned in the final pages of *The Prelude*, in a passage beginning with an echo of the "subjected plain" to which Adam and Eve descend, and ending with a subtle and indissoluble fusion of joy and sorrow:

> Anon I rose
> As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
> Vast prospect of the world which I had been,
> And was; and hence this song, which like a lark
> I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens

> Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
> Attempered to the sorrows of the earth—
> Yet cent'ring all in love, and in the end
> All gratulant if rightly understood. (13.377-85)

All is "gratulant," all expresses joy in the end, even the "sorrows of the earth." Sorrow is an avenue to the depth of experience, without which one remains immature, an alien in a home in which sorrow is an essential part.

Wordsworth's chosen theme is the "very heart of man" tempered and improved by religious faith, good books, and "Nature's presence," a heart that not only endures but welcomes sorrow. He will sing

> the very heart of man
> As found among the best of those who live
> Not unexalted by religious faith,
> Nor uninformed by books (good books, though few),
> In Nature's presence—thence may I select
> Sorrow that is not sorrow but delight,
> And miserable love that is not pain
> To hear of, for the glory that redounds
> Therefrom to human-kind and what we are. (12.240-48)

In *The Prelude* Wordsworth advocates, as does Milton, a mature acceptance and celebration of the human condition.

Poets, Wordsworth insists, must

> exercise their skill
> Not in Utopia—subterranean fields,
> Or some secreted island, heaven knows where—
> But in the very world which is the world
> Of all of us, the place in which, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all. (10.722-27)

This passage, in a kind of shorthand, repeats the earlier, Miltonic passages comparing his paradise to fabulous, lesser paradises. One

might think that Wordsworth's quotidian place of happiness is a world apart from Milton's visions of Eden and of glorified life in heaven. But Milton again is closer to Wordsworth than might appear. Michael, after prophesying a grim future of sorrow and suffering, tells Adam that, before death and before potential glorification, he will achieve something worth more than "all th'ethereal powers, / […], all nature's works / […] / And all the riches of the world" (12.577-80). Here, while still on Earth, he tells Adam, "wilt thou not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far" (12.585-87). This is a paradise founded not merely on nature or contingent joys, but on a cultivated state of mind and soul, a possession of virtues that will make Adam sufficient to confront life, to absorb its sorrows, and to remain equable in both joy and sorrow, a state very much like that of Wordsworth's mature poet.[5]

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN

NOTES

[1]A miniature case in point: when Milton asserts that in *Paradise Lost* he will capture "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (1.16) he translates directly a line from the beginning of sixteenth-century romance epic *Orlando Furioso* (1.2), which Ariosto in turn borrowed from Lucretius in his *De rerum natura* (1.925-30) of the first century BCE.

[2]See Bortolotti and Hutcheon for an analysis of homologies between biological and literary adaptation and an argument for judging adaptations not by fidelity to an original but by ability to thrive in new cultural contexts.

[3]See also 4.268-71 and 4.272-74.

[4]A measure of the delicacy of this balance is Richard Bentley's misunderstanding and disastrous rewriting of these lines at the end of his edition of *Paradise Lost*: "THEN *hand in hand with* SOCIAL *steps their way* / *Through* Eden *took*, WITH HEAV'NLY COMFORT CHEER'D" (12.650-51).

[5]I am grateful to Sanford Budick, John Sitter, and Henry Weinfield, whose comments resulted in an improved paper.

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Tennyson's "Tithonus" and the Revision of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" *

JAYNE THOMAS

Introduction: Allusions and Echoes

Tennyson's 1860 dramatic monologue "Tithonus" resonates with well-tracked Wordsworthian echoes and allusions, many of which allude directly to "Tintern Abbey" (1798). Seamus Perry, for instance, notices how "Tithonus" provides a "remarkable variation" on the theme of "Tintern Abbey"'s exploration of the self in time (52): "The speaker, granted the immortality he craved, but not eternal youth, is always the same yet dreadfully mutable" (52).[1] The perpetually ageing Tithonus describes his woeful condition to his auditrix, Aurora, unable almost to recognise his younger self:

> Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
> In days far-off, and with what other eyes
> I used to watch—if I be he that watched—
> The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
> The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
> Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
> Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all. (50-56)

Wordsworth's speaker in "Tintern Abbey" also looks back to an earlier self:

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* For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/tennysons-tithonus-revision-wordsworths-tintern-abbey>.

> I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite; a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures. (75-85)

The connection between the two poems is clear; both speakers bemoan their changefulness, although for Wordsworth's speaker "other gifts / Have followed" (86-87): he has learned "To look on nature, not as in the hour / Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes / The still, sad music of humanity" (89-91). For Tithonus, by contrast, there is no such recompense: he is left to beg for restoration "to the ground" (72) as a form of release from his cycle of continuous decay.

"Tithonus" not only forms a poetic response to "Tintern Abbey" in the way Perry describes, however, but also revises the connection between memory and nature underpinning Wordsworth's narrative of "returning." As I will show, "Tithonus" contains many more echoes to Wordsworth than previously recognised, echoes that enable Tennyson to revise, rather than simply to refashion, Wordsworth's poetic trope.

I use the term "echo" itself as a viable means by which to map this Wordsworthian language in the text. Sarah Annes Brown points out that allusion

> strongly implies agency; it suggests that a later writer has deliberately referenced an earlier work, inviting the reader to notice and reflect on the connection. Sometimes the echo is so unmistakable, so distinctive, that we experience no doubt in identifying a deliberate allusion. (7-8)

Brown uses the word "echo" here to imply intentionality, but later confirms that

> [a]n echo is a more neutral word which doesn't rule out the possibility of conscious borrowing but implies that the connection isn't strong enough to prove deliberate agency or to ensure recognition in the majority of attentive readers. (8)

John Hollander also uses the term as:

> a metaphor of, and for, alluding, [that] does not depend on conscious intention. The referential nature of poetic echo, as of dreaming (or Coleridgean "symbol" as opposed to conscious "allegory"), may be unconscious or inadvertent, but is no less qualified thereby. (64)

In focusing on "echo," this essay both allows meanings to arise that would otherwise have remained hidden and makes a significant intervention in the critical analysis of Wordsworth's poetic influence in the poem.[2]

I also draw on the theory of intertextuality, of the text as engaged in unconscious dialogue with previous texts.[3] My discussion of "Tithonus" and its reworking of "Tintern Abbey" is therefore premised on the way in which historical and cultural context cannot fully account for an author's poetic and literary associations, as "literature itself has a history, […] speaks with others' words, talks back to them, and manifests authors' own histories of reading and writing" (Bruster 3 qtd. in Brown 16).

By 1860 the Wordsworthian correspondence between memory and nature had become difficult to sustain for Tennyson. In *In Memoriam* (1850), revisiting the River Wye brings only "tears that cannot fall" (Rapf 377n14), for example.[4] Nature has lost its once privileged position. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth writes of a nature that is the "guardian" (110) of the speaker's "heart, and soul" (110) and "Of all [his] moral being" (111). In *In Memoriam*, Tennyson, who is known to have been influenced by the work of the evolutionary scientist Charles Lyell (*The Poems of Tennyson in Three Volumes* 2: 370-71, note lv), acknowledges a "Nature" that is "careless of the single life" (LV 8) and "red in tooth and claw" (LVI 15). Nature has betrayed "The heart that loved her" ("Tintern Abbey" 123) in this sense. In reworking the

connection between mind and nature as it appears in "Tintern Abbey," Tennyson can release himself from a Wordsworthian narrative that privileges a psychologised relationship with nature and to which he is no longer committed.

The revisionary processes at work in "Tithonus" are evident in the earlier "Tithon," on which the 1860 "Tithonus" is based, but their effects gain in intensity in the later monologue. The monologue as a form is already establishing a difference from Wordsworth in its rejection of Romantic universal subjectivity and its adoption of a fictional and performative persona.[5] In the monologue, a silent addressee directly "reverses the Romantic ideal of the poet's private, lyrical self-expression" (Martens 9), while the dialogic language of the speaker opens up the text to time and history. Thus, in reworking Wordsworth's interaction between mind and nature, "Tithonus" is consolidating a new poetic alongside revising what has become a somewhat anachronistic poetic trope.

Wild Aurora

In "Tintern Abbey," the speaker is nourished by nature under an untroubled, "quiet" (8) sky. It is nature that provides a way for the speaker to "see into the life of things" (49), to gain "a sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused" (95-96), whatever that "something" is. This process is a product "Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create, / And what perceive" (106-07), and is casual, quotidian, yet sustaining; yet the gleams of transcendence formed in the mind are always in danger of being "half-extinguished" (58). Dorothy, the speaker's auditrix, becomes the person to whom the experiences of the eye and ear are entrusted, the guardian of those highly treasured moments of sublimity, with the speaker hoping to read his "former pleasures" (118) in her "wild eyes" (119). The adjective "wild" here has a particular significance, as "wild" in Wordsworth's poem is explicitly associated both with nature and the trans-

cendent process to which it gives rise: nature is a "wild secluded scene" (6) which engenders "wild ecstasies" (138). Dorothy is linked to this "wild" landscape, and its capacity to induce pleasure in the speaker, through her "wild" eyes. As a result of her "wildness," Dorothy becomes "nature," as well as a future custodian of the transcendent moments to which it gives rise; her "wildness" implies that her role as guardian is not a secure one, however.

In "Tithonus," Aurora is assigned a similar role to Dorothy, in that she is the speaker's auditrix but also "nature," though not in the sense of a pathetic fallacy (Shaw 87). Intertextual echoes between "Tithonus" and "Tintern Abbey" underline the connections between both Aurora and nature and Aurora and Dorothy in the latter's capacity as "nature": Aurora's beauty is emphasised in "Tithonus," for instance, by being evoked through the "beauteous forms" (22) of nature borrowed from "Tintern Abbey," with the speaker confirming that she "ever thus […] grow[s] beautiful" ("Tithonus" 43). "[N]ature and the language of the sense" (108) anchor the speaker's "purest thoughts" (109) in "Tintern Abbey": Aurora is described as having "pure brows" and "shoulders pure" ("Tithonus" 35), immersing her in the language and epistemology of the earlier poem. It is from these "pure" brows and "pure" shoulders that the "old mysterious glimmer" (34) of imaginative transcendence steals for Tithonus, confirming Aurora in her role as Wordsworth's "nature" in the poem.

Darkness releases, rather than conceals, another intertextual echo between "Tintern Abbey," Aurora and nature, deepening the sense in which "Tithonus" is reworking Wordsworth's sympathetic nature. "Tintern Abbey," like much of Wordsworth's poetry, contains darkness as well as light, as Keats notably recognises, when he writes of how Wordsworth's imagination in the poem is "explorative of […] dark passages" (*The Letters of John Keats* 280). Nature is inflected with a dark and potentially dangerous malignity in "Tintern Abbey," despite her power of being able to engender the light of transcendence in the speaker. She is Wordsworth's loving "nurse" (109), but her nurturing capability shields an incipient malevolence: the sycamore

under which the speaker sits to contemplate his beloved nature's beauty is "dark" (10); her music has the power to "chasten and subdue" (93). In "Tithonus," Aurora as "nature" unmasks this malevolence. She is lightness and lucidity (53), but also darkness: she moves in a "dark" world; her "wild team" (39) shake the "darkness" (41) from their loosened manes; she bathes Tithonus in her "rosy *shadows*" (66; emphasis added). She has the power to "scare" (46) Tithonus with her tears, to make him "tremble" (47) with the thought that the Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts; her team "beat" (42) the twilight into flakes of fire, with the echoing beat here a useful reminder of the intertextual transference taking place in the poem (see Hollander 64).

If Aurora evokes the dark and volatile nature of "Tintern Abbey," then she also evokes Dorothy in her role as nature; Dorothy, too, contains "dark passages," although these remain, like nature's malevolence in general, implicit in Wordsworth's poem. Nature produces "sensations sweet" (27) in "Tintern Abbey," and Dorothy's memory is "as a dwelling-place / For all sweet sounds and harmonies" (141-42) that nature produces, with "sweet" linking Dorothy directly to nature; Aurora's "sweet eyes brighten" (38) close to Tithonus's eyes. But the association has "darker" overtones through the presence of the adjective "wild" in both texts; just as Dorothy has "wild eyes," which link her to the "wild secluded scene" (6) of "Tintern Abbey," so Aurora is inflected with wildness: she has a "wild team" (39), as she does in the earlier "Tithon" (35). She is nature here, with the same capacity for sweetness and wildness as Dorothy, a duality neatly emblematised in whisperings that are not only "sweet" but "wild" ("Tithonus" 61).

Malevolence is related to the way in which nature is eroticised in "Tintern Abbey," as is Dorothy as "nature" through her "wildness," and this is a pattern replicated in "Tithonus": the speaker in "Tintern Abbey" describes nature as "a feeling and a love" (80), which produces "aching joys" (84) and "dizzy raptures" (85) that produce "wild ecstasies" (138) in him; it is "the thing he loved" (72). Nature's eroticism signals another potential inconstancy, to complement the potential wildness she encompasses in "Tintern Abbey," but this is a sub-

merged effect, like that of wildness: she is a lover who loves and then leaves, "the thing he *loved*" (72; emphasis added). In "Tithonus," Aurora is objectified as erotic "nature": it is her "shoulders" (35) which are pure, her "eyes" which are sweet (38), her "cheek" which is reddened (37). The erotic implications of Dorothy's "wildness" are made manifest, as what is implicit in "Tintern Abbey" becomes explicit in "Tithonus": the "wild"(39) team "love" (40) Aurora, and are "yearning" (40) for her "yoke" (40); they shake their "manes" (41) like loosened hair.

Aurora's eroticism in "Tithonus" is streaked with the artificial, a disingenuousness suppressed or denied in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." If Dorothy is "wild" nature, then she is nature with its social inscription denied. Wordsworth is often criticised for "greening" nature (Makdisi 49, quoting Levinson 24-39), for portraying her as a purely benign force, and for failing to acknowledge that she is a "construct" as much as she is an expression of natural forces. Saree Makdisi notes how in Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk*

> the straight lines of the enclosure hedges are softened, and [...] transformed into graceful "*willowy* hedgerows," anticipating *Tintern Abbey*'s "hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild." (54)

Aurora's erotic seduction of "Tithonus" makes this level of artifice and manipulation unambiguous, as she is a fully sexualised and constructed "nature." It is the "wild" Aurora of "Tithonus," with her synthetic and malign wiles, who fulfils what is inherent in "Tintern Abbey," in the inadvertent reworking of the benign and moral nature of "Tintern Abbey" taking place in the later poem.

Nature's own sounds are foregrounded in "Tintern Abbey" and are synonymous with the transcendence they produce in the mind of the speaker: the mountain-springs create a "soft inland murmur" (4); the "sounding cataract" (76) haunts Wordsworth like a passion. Dorothy is also associated with the sounds of transcendence in her role as nature; Wordsworth's speaker hears in her "voice" the language of his "former heart" (117). She will become his "voice" (148) as well as his eyes. Aurora, like Dorothy, is allied with the sounds as well as the

sights of nature. Her eyes are "tremulous" (26), and thereby infused with a sense of musically repeated notes, combining the senses of sight and sound as in "Tintern Abbey": her team "beat" (42) alongside her, which has rhythmic as well as menacing overtones. However, where Dorothy's association with nature's "sweet sounds and harmonies" (142) will ostensibly secure Wordsworth's future "immortality," Aurora's is linked to the "strange song [Tithonus] heard Apollo sing / While Ilion like a mist rose into towers" (62-63). Sweet sounds become a strange harmony in Aurora's immortal world, as the musical accord that nature produces in the mind of the speaker in "Tintern Abbey" becomes "strange" and disconnected. Dorothy is indirectly associated with disharmony in "Tintern Abbey": if Wordsworth hopes to hear the voice of nature in Dorothy's "voice" (148), then it is a voice of nature that nevertheless sings the sad music of humanity. It is left to "Tithonus" to make this disconnection explicit, with an Ilion that rises into towers from Wordsworth's "misty mountain-winds" (136).

In revising Wordsworth's poem in this way, Tennyson nevertheless replicates Wordsworth's apparent gender bias: Anne K. Mellor writes persuasively of how in "masculine" Romanticism, the six major male poets, including Wordsworth, "often subtly regender both the subject and the object as male and in the process erase the female from discourse: she does not speak; she therefore has no existence" (19). So:

> Dorothy remains a silenced auditor in *Tintern Abbey*, a less conscious being whose function is to mirror and thus to guarantee the truth of the poet's development and perceptions, even as the poem itself acknowledges the existence of an unbridgeable gap between the poet's forever-lost past subjectivity and his present self. (19)

Dorothy has a "voice" in "Tintern Abbey," yet does not "speak"; in "Tithonus," Aurora is similarly reduced to a "whisper."

In "days far-off"

Tennyson reworks Wordsworth's nature in "Tithonus," but Tithonus, in his role as Wordsworth's speaker, undergoes a similar reconfiguration. "Tithonus," as Perry suggests, provides "a remarkable variation" (52) on the theme of "Tintern Abbey"'s changefulness. And yet the echoes to Wordsworth work to question the process, and value, of the poem's "abiding" self, where the speaker "discovers he is the same, but not the same, person that he was five years before" (Perry 47). Tithonus speaks of a self able to reach moments of sublimity, but this is a self previous in time. It is in "days far-off" (51) and "with […] other eyes" (51) that Tithonus "felt [his] blood / Glow with the glow" (55-56) of transcendence Aurora as "nature" produces in him. This is a self at once itself and not itself, but it is also a moment of Tintern-esque sublimity, as "Tithonus" borrows directly from "Tintern Abbey" to describe Tithonus's experience of reencountering his former self. "[F]elt my blood / Glow" (55-56), for instance, echoes with the "sensations sweet, / Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart" (27-28) that feed the speaker of "Tintern Abbey" in his "hours of weariness" (27), replicating the intimate connection between imagination and feeling that exists in Wordsworth. Wordsworth's images of blood and heart also resonate in the "crimsoned" (56) Aurora as she suffuses Tithonus with her glowing "presence" (57). The text's replacement of an iamb with a trochee in the first foot of the line—"Glow with the glow"—captures the rhythm of the sensations "felt in the blood," while the slow pull of alliteration and assonance in the same line hints at how Tithonus's moment of transcendence is taking place out of ordinary time.

Tithonus himself does not want to transcend time in the way offered in the moment of Wordsworthian sublimity; his sensations sweet do not pass into the "purer mind" (29) with "tranquil restoration" (30) as they do in "Tintern Abbey." Rather, he wants to exist

inside time and outside of feeling, which parallels in turn his desire to relinquish his immortality for a return to the mortal world.

Tithonus views his former self, a self that was able to feel and to glow, just as Wordsworth's speaker in "Tintern Abbey" views his former self and his previous moments of transcendence, but Tithonus is tired of the "gift" (27) of transcendence now, and wants to return it and himself to the ground. Tellingly, the "other eyes" (51) to which Tithonus refers reveal that the moment of retrospective sublimity is potentially vitiated from within and therefore not worthy of being "remembered," as the phrase contains intertextual echoes of Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk*. The first of the two 1793 editions of *An Evening Walk* includes a speaker "with other eyes" (1793, 17), who looks back at his former ability to invest nature with significance, an ability he subsequently loses but recaptures. Unlike Wordsworth's speaker in the poem, Tithonus is unable to recover his lost imaginative power, and remains trapped within the process of looking back "with […] other eyes" ("Tithonus" 51). He fails to sublimate, and thus recover, his loss in the way that Wordsworth's speaker does, as the intertextual echoes at work in the poem prevent him from doing so. The double set of "days far-off" (48 and 51) of which he speaks, for instance, echo Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper," which is predicated on the speaker's observation of the Reaper's perpetual revisiting of a sorrow:

> Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
> That has been, and may be again?
>
> Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
> As if her song could have no ending. (23-26)

The double-set lines, in effect, work as a framing device, trapping the speaker within his own imaginative loss. Like the Reaper, Tithonus is caught in a cycle of revisiting an imaginative vacuum from which he wants to escape but in which he is inextricably bound. Rather than

"dreadfully mutable," the text manoeuvres toward making Tithonus dreadfully *immutable* here.

Tithonus is trapped with his own failing imagination and with his inconstant and discordant nature, Aurora. The "warmer love" (154) nature induced in Wordsworth's speaker in "Tintern Abbey" becomes "cold" and distant in "Tithonus": in contrast to the "shooting lights" (118) of Dorothy's eyes, "cold / Are all [Aurora's] lights" (67), and "cold" are Tithonus's "wrinkled feet / Upon [her] glimmering thresholds" (67-68). In another echo with *An Evening Walk*, "cold" Aurora's "tears" (45) evoke the "cold cheek" (1849, 322) and the "shuddering tear [it] retains" (1849, 322) of the earlier poem, when the speaker realises that his imaginative powers are momentarily lost to darkness. "Glimmering" specifies a "faint or wavering light" (*OED*: glimmering, n.), but the word is also suggestive of *An Evening Walk*, where it, too, indicates a weakened or wavering imagination. In Wordsworth's poem, the speaker experiences a moment of transcendence, where "music, stealing round the glimmering deeps / Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps" (1849, 303-04). The mind's imaginative power appears to be subverted in Wordsworth's poem, although the loss remains couched rather than explicit, or is displaced onto a source other than the failing power of the mind itself. For instance, with the coming of night comes the loss of imagination, where "Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar" (1849, 312), prompting the speaker to exhort: "Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay! / Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away" (1849, 319-20). Whilst the speaker acknowledges that the "glimmers" are lost and the visions fading, he nevertheless attributes this loss to the darkness rather than to the mind's failing powers. The use of the present tense "glimmering" (68), however, emphasises that Tithonus cannot break free from his cycle of yearning and fading; nor can he attribute his failing power to the "darkness" that is Aurora. Additionally, "the old mysterious glimmer" (34) that steals from Aurora's "pure" brows and "shoulders" (35) for Tithonus evokes the "burthen of the mystery" ("Tintern Abbey" 38) of the earlier poem, but whereas for the speaker

of "Tintern Abbey" transcendence acts as a powerful mystery and a pulse of warm sensational blood that feeds the purer mind, for Tithonus it acts only as an enervated glimmer that results in cold, wrinkled feet.

There seems to be no hope of escape from this post-"Tintern" world for Tithonus, no projections into or onto the future, only a perpetual present of loss and fading power, as Tennyson reworks the mind's connection with nature. Whereas the speaker of "Tintern Abbey" finds the mind's transcendence of nature rewarding, as there will always ostensibly be "food / For future years" (64), Tithonus is "consumed" by the process of "transcending." The "gloomy wood" (78) sustains the speaker in "Tintern Abbey": it is literally an "appetite" (80), a provision of spiritual nourishment. The "gloom" (37) of the dark world has an obverse effect in "Tithonus": Aurora's "cheek begins to redden through the gloom" (37), but gloom carries the sense of melancholy or depression as well as a sense of darkness (*OED*), counterpointing the "life and food / For future years" (64-65) that nourishes Wordsworth's speaker. In Wordsworth, "to deny imagination its darker food, to seek and make it a 'Shape all light,' is to wish imagination away" (see Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* 141), but in "Tithonus," the food with which the imagination is fed connotes depletion rather than nourishment. Aurora's blush—itself transient or even duplicitous—cannot feed this loss of hope for Tithonus, as Aurora herself functions as its cause, the heart of its darkness. She represents Wordsworth's speaker's repository of hope writ large, but can offer Tithonus only an etiolated present, tendering not the growth of the mind through darkness (see Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* 139-40) but merely perpetual and enervating stasis.

The speaker's circular return to his moments of sublimity in "Tintern Abbey," those moments that nourish him in his loneliness but which nevertheless echo with loss are hyperbolised in Tithonus's circular return to his faded nature, Aurora. With Wordsworth, "his mind circles and haunts a particular place until released into an emancipatory idea of Nature" (Hartman, *The Unremarkable Words-*

worth 137). Tithonus's mind circles but cannot be released, as his "nature" remains suffocatingly dark rather than emancipatory. Nature as woman becomes the destroyer rather than the creator, as the text works to sunder Wordsworth's "covenant between mind and nature" (Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry* 267). In "Tithonus," nature does not remain supine, a passive partner over which the mind can continue to have an ongoing and superior control, but a wilful seductress and destroyer with the power to tease and depress as well as to feed the mind. The moral and cooperative nature which sustains the speaker in "Tintern Abbey" no longer exists, as the text works to reveal her as a recalcitrant partner. Wordsworth comes to postulate a non-cooperative nature in the 1807 "Elegiac Stanza," "Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont," but "Tithonus" specifically disassembles the imaginative promise of "Tintern Abbey," confirming and consolidating the essential vacancy at its core and laying bare the ruptured relationship between mind and nature—and the mind and itself—in the post-"Tintern" world unconsciously or inadvertently created in the text.

The evidence of an imaginative self that exists prior in time is less potent in the 1833 "Tithon," from which the 1860 version is drawn. Tithon bemoans how he was once "wooed" (47) by Aurora's charms: "Ay me! ay me! with what another heart, / By thy divine embraces circumfused, / […] With thy change changed, I felt this wondrous glow" (41-44). He recognises that Aurora's "change" is "changed," her blackness dissipated, unlike in the later version, where it continues to depress and subdue. The "wondrous glow" that ends line 44, however, while extended in its intensity via its enjambment, nevertheless lacks the connective beat to Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" of "Tithonus," suspended in splendid isolation as it is at the end of the line. The connections to "Tintern Abbey" gain in intensity in the later poem, where they also create a more persistent effect. "Tithon," for instance, is suggestive of a self-expressive lyricism, where lines 11-15 assert a "personal emotional state [that] is couched as a definitive

statement of a universal condition, outside language" (Slinn 86), although:

> [a]fter the initial self-pitying lament, the passage seeks, through rhythmic regularity and repeated infinitives, to transcend the individual predicament, depicting an ahistorical condition of mythic suffering. (Slinn 86)

"Tithonus" supplants the strategies of the earlier poem, as it becomes the "poetry of enactment" (Slinn 86), replacing the lyrical and self-expressive with the performative and dramatic. Tennyson's reworking of Wordsworth's narrative of recurrence ostensibly strengthens the form of the monologue, with its fictionalised self, as it distances it further from the earlier poet's universal subjectivity. The Wordsworthian echoes and associations in the poem simultaneously work to complicate its performative and rhetorical status, however, pulling it inexorably back to the Wordsworthian lyricism and universalism it is formulated to supplant. Tennyson's attempt to create a new poetic is compromised by the language of the very poet whose self-expressiveness he is attempting to supplant. And yet, paradoxically, it is Wordsworth's language that enables the monologue to function by anchoring its dramatic experimentation, providing the linguistic scaffolding from which the text can work its revisionary changes. Herbert F. Tucker, Jr. reveals how the subdued lyric presence in the monologue—"what you cannot have and what you cannot forget" (235)—frequently functions as a disruptive or irruptive force, breaking through the dramatic narrative in discrete acts of transgression. Tucker cites Robert Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1855) as an illustration of the disruptive lyrical patterns at work within the monologue, where "*stornelli*," "lyrical catches Englished in italics," or transgressions "into lyric" in Browning's "My Last Duchess" (1842) break into the "story" (233-34). But the absorption of Wordsworth's language in Tennyson refutes Tucker's transgressive pattern as it is woven organically into the poem. Wordsworth's narrative of the mind's interaction with nature survives despite its vitiated state, helping the poem to cohere in its dramatic form. Tennyson may wish

to free himself from both Wordsworth's imaginative investment in nature and the earlier poet's universal subjectivism, but is nevertheless dependent on both for his poetic and dramatic effects. Likewise, Tennyson's revisions do not liberate Tithonus from his cycle of endless return; they do not release him to the ground. Rather, he is as trapped by his "immutable" self as he is by the self that is forever changing.

"Resolution and Independence"

"Resolution and Independence" (1807) continues Wordsworth's preoccupation with the question of whether the failing imagination can be revivified. Tithonus has been granted immortality without immortal youth, but the echo of Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" in the poem works to draw attention to how immortal age has not only wearied Tennyson's speaker, but deprived him of imaginative power. In "Resolution and Independence," the speaker has the power to invest the Leech-Gatherer with imaginative significance, even if this is via a "troubled imagination" (O'Neill 58). Wordsworth writes on the nature of the imaginative process taking place in the poem in explanation of the image of the Leech-Gatherer as a "huge stone" (57) that lies "top of an eminence" (58) and as a "sea-beast" (62) sunning itself on rock or sand:

> In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison […].
> Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and

> governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. (*Wordsworth: Poetical Works* 754)

The Leech-Gatherer has no imaginative power, however; he functions as one of the unimaginative souls Wordsworth had in mind when writing the final version of *The Ruined Cottage* in 1804 (see Davidson 79), who are ineluctably separated from those invested with the power to transfigure their lives through the imagination (see Davidson 79). He appears, instead, to be a conduit to imaginative power, curing the speaker of the descent into the "de-sublimated" madness into which he has sunk (see Weiskel 58).Verbal connections abound between Tithonus and the Leech-Gatherer, which emphasise that Tithonus, like the Gatherer, has little or no imaginative power. Both "roam": Tithonus, a "white-haired shadow" (8), roams "like a dream / The ever-silent spaces of the East" (8-9); the Gatherer "roamed" (103), and paces "About the weary moors continually, / Wandering about alone and silently" (130-31). The Leech-Gatherer is "grey" (56); Tithonus is a "gray shadow" (11).

The Leech-Gatherer exists as one of the "ordinary men" ("Resolution and Independence" 96), one of those, like the speaker of "Tintern Abbey" and the speaker of "Resolution and Independence," who have "the power to die" ("Tithonus" 70). His "measured phrase" (95) may place him "above the reach" (95) of most, and he may be invested with mystical status by the speaker, but he remains mortal nonetheless. Tithonus lacks the capacity to die, by contrast, and has the power only to roam. He is doubly doomed in this sense: doomed to roam without the ability to die, and doomed to live without imaginative power. Echoes foreground the reverse positions here of Tithonus and the Leech-Gatherer. In "Tithonus," it is "happy men" (70) who have the power to die, like the "ordinary men" (96) of "Resolution and Independence": Tithonus is excluded from this happy, ordinary race by the gift of unwanted immortality. The speaker of "Resolution and Independence" is "a happy Child of earth" (31), as, ultimately, is the Leech-Gatherer, and was once "as happy as a boy" (18) before his

state of despondency. All are "happy" in this way, except for Tithonus.

The Leech-Gatherer might be seen as dying "into the life of nature" (Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry* 202), the very nature in which Tithonus craves to be immersed, but to which he is denied access. Tithonus cannot die into the life of Aurora as nature, as she does not provide the safety and comfort of Wordsworth's nature in "Tintern Abbey." "Resolution and Independence" exemplifies a Wordsworthian "faith in nature" (Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry* 203) that "Tithonus" works to deny, although Wordsworth's "nature" echoes through Tennyson's poem, nonetheless: in "Resolution and Independence," the air after the storm is filled with the "pleasant noise of waters" (7) and the hare "from the plashy earth / Raises a mist" (12-13); in "Tithonus," the "mists are far-folded" (10) and the air is "soft" (32). The liminality of the Leech-Gatherer, a natural, yet seemingly supernatural being, "not all alive nor dead" (64), is also evoked in Tithonus's liminal state, on the edge of the world where he was born, but consigned to a perpetual after-life from which he wants to escape. The Leech-Gatherer is a part of nature, no more so perhaps than in the description of him in the lines Wordsworth picks out to illustrate the powers of the imagination, although he is in this sense also "imagined" as a part of nature:

> As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
> Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
> Wonder to all who do the same espy,
> By what means it could thither come, and whence;
> So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
> Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;
>
> Such seemed this Man. (57-64)

Tithonus, too, was once part of nature, and is longing to be "earth in earth" (75), but is confined by the text to a state beyond nature. Tithonus, as speaker, is denied an act of imaginative revivification, such as

the speaker of Wordsworth's poem experiences through the Leech-Gatherer as a part of nature; Aurora as nature does not stimulate his imaginative powers, but depletes them.

The latter effect gains emphasis through time changes in both "Resolution and Independence" and "Tithonus." "Tithonus" looks back to a time when he could "Glow with the glow" (56), and be full of transcendent power, but that transcendent power belongs to his past, a past he appears doomed perpetually to revisit. In "Resolution and Independence," the speaker acknowledges the differences between past and present selves: he "was a Traveller *then* upon the moor" (15; emphasis added), when he "heard the […] distant waters roar" (17). The time difference replicates itself in "Tithonus" in the way in which Tithonus looks back on his former self, although Wordsworth's speaker's subsequent move into sublimity appears exhausted for him. Similarly, "Resolution and Independence" functions as a "dialogic" poem, albeit an implicit one (O'Neill, "'A Kind of an Excuse'" 57), as Wordsworth "confronts and seeks to overcome the self that experiences chilling 'thoughts'" (O'Neill, "'A Kind of an Excuse'" 57); he also steps "'outside himself' while examining his imagination at work" (O'Neill, *Romanticism* 42). Tennyson's speaker is also bifurcated in this way, as he seeks to absorb "chilling 'thoughts'" of his former imaginative self. This, combined with the sharing of linguistic phrases between the poems, confirms that if "Tithonus" is inadvertently reworking "Tintern Abbey," then it does so, in part, via "Resolution and Independence."At the same time, the revisions in "Tithonus" rework Wordsworth's own imaginative rewriting in "Resolution and Independence," which itself acts as a corrective or "answer" to "Tintern Abbey"'s doubts over the power of the imagination to continue to sustain itself. "Tithonus" advertises its dependence on a Wordsworthian narrative that it simultaneously promotes as obsolete; and as with the revision of "Tintern Abbey", the text relies on the language of the earlier poem for its dramatic and poetic effects.

Conclusion: Broken Fragments

Isobel Armstrong in her influential account of Victorian poetry claims that all Victorian poetry is a site of "endless struggle and contention" (10), struggle "with a changing project, struggle with the play of ambiguity and contradiction" (10). Armstrong avers that what she calls the "double poem" (13) is a materialisation of such struggle and contention. Whilst this essay has not argued for "Tithonus" as a "double poem" in Armstrong's sense,[6] it has nevertheless revealed the text as having a "changing project" and as supporting a play of ambiguity and contradiction. Through its analysis of Tennyson's "own history of reading and writing," this essay has revealed the "changing project" of "Tithonus" to be the revision of "Tintern Abbey"'s trope of the self reencountering itself in time. It has also revealed Tennyson's contradictory reliance on the broken fragments of a Wordsworthian narrative he has himself dismantled. Tennyson was sensitive to the claim that he "borrowed" words and phrases from other poets, claiming that critics did not "allow" him any creative autonomy (see Rawnsley 71). Yet Tennyson's creative autonomy is compromised in "Tithonus." Harold Bloom maintains that all "modern lyrics" cannot "surmount" their poetic debt to "Tintern Abbey" (17). On the evidence that this essay has uncovered, Bloom's assertion is as apposite to Tennyson's "Tithonus" as it is to any other modern lyric.

Cardiff University

NOTES

[1]Critics who have traced Wordsworth's influence in "Tithonus" include Christopher Ricks. Ricks is prompted to say of the replacement of the opening lines of the 1833 "Tithon"—"Ay me! ay me!" (1)—with "The woods decay, the woods decay and fall" (1) in the 1860 "Tithonus" that this "suggests the influence of one of [Tennyson's] favourite passages of Wordsworth" (*The Poems of Tennyson in Three Volumes* 2: 607n1). Eric Griffiths, in another essay—"Tennyson's Breath"—draws attention to the way in which "Tennyson retunes the cadence of 'immortality / Broods' into 'immortality / Consumes' as he revalues 'darkness … dark-

ness', from which in Wordsworth's ode 'we' long to escape" (139); as Griffiths says, the poem shows how "'Tithonus' and its writer live in time as Tithonus the speaker does not […] through the poem's re-setting of Wordsworth's 'Ode…' to new and dissentient harmonies" (140). Daniel A. Harris has also drawn attention to the influence of "Tintern Abbey" itself in "Tithonus," suggesting that the closing lines of "Tithonus," where monologue moves to soliloquy, are a "careful inversion" of the pattern of "Tintern Abbey," revealing the "loss of community that accompanies his [Tithonus's] linguistic inadequacy" (106).

[2]This essay accepts that Wordsworth does not have connotative ownership of all of the words and phrases at work in the poem, and that there could at times be competing allegiances or debts. "Tithonus" echoes with poets' voices other than Wordsworth's, as assorted critics have made clear. The poem alludes to John Keats, for instance: Harris examines the poem's Keatsian connections, claiming that Tennyson's rendering of the changeable Dawn develops Keats' methods in "To Autumn" (see 106); and Ricks, in his gloss to the poem, cites Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Milton as key sources (see *The Poems of Tennyson in Three Volumes* 2: 608n2; 610n49). Richard Cronin points out that Keats has long been recognised as an important precursor in Tennyson's poetry generally, as has Percy Bysshe Shelley, although Cronin suggests that Tennyson "reads Shelley through poems written by the women poets who succeeded him" (106), like Felicia Hemans and Letitia Landon. But the presence of other voices in "Tithonus" does not negate the unconscious or inadvertent Wordsworthian echoes in the poem and the effects that these generate. A longer version of this article will appear in my book, *Tennyson Echoing Wordsworth*, to be published by Edinburgh University Press.

[3]I nevertheless acknowledge "recent developments in new historicism [that] have taken onboard a post-structuralist historiography, which sees events, times, circumstances, and places as themselves textually mediated. In other words, intertextuality has come to be recognized as a function of historical consciousness […] The worlds 'behind' poems can be observed in a more complex, layered fashion by investigating the connections they make (consciously and unconsciously) with each other" (Newlyn ix). For an overview of neo-intentionalist critical approaches to intertextuality see Burke (51) and McCann (72-82); both quoted in Martens (12n43).

[4]Rapf is referring to lines 9-12 of Section 19 of *In Memoriam* here. She writes of how "Wordsworth uses the 'sylvan Wye' as a spiritual catalyst in 'Tintern Abbey,' but [how] Tennyson associates its water with his sorrow, an anguish that drowns his song" (377n14).

[5]For more on the origins of the monologue see Langbaum. Tennyson, alongside Robert Browning, was instrumental in the development of the dramatic monologue. For more on Tennyson's role in the creation of this new form see Hughes.

[6]Armstrong describes the "double poem" as a "deeply sceptical form. It draws attention to the epistemology which governs the construction of the self and its relationships and to the cultural conditions in which those relationships are made. It is an expressive model and an epistemological model simultaneously" (13).

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Connotations
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"In Another Light": New Intertexts for David Dabydeen's "Turner"*

CARL PLASA

> The sea has many voices,
> Many gods and many voices.
> T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages" (184)

Introduction: Opening the Frame

According to its "Preface," David Dabydeen's "Turner" (1994) takes its inspiration from a celebrated painting by J. M. W. Turner entitled *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhon Coming On* (Figure 1). This canvas, more succinctly known as *The Slave Ship*, was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1840 (the same year as the first World Anti-Slavery Convention) and is generally agreed to be based on the *Zong* massacre (Baucom 268)—one of the most notorious episodes in the history of the transatlantic slave trade. In this incident, which occurred in 1781, 132 sick Africans were jettisoned from the British slave ship, *Zong* by command of the ship's captain, Luke Collingwood, in order that their owners could make an insurance claim against their value as cargo lost at sea.[1]

While Dabydeen readily appreciates *The Slave Ship* in aesthetic terms—he calls it Turner's "finest painting in the sublime style" (*Turner* ix) and has recently confessed his "love" for the artist and the "epic dimensions" of his art (*Pak's Britannica* 187)—he is nonetheless perturbed by what he sees as the undercurrents to Turner's vision, as

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/new-intertexts-david-dabydeens-turner/>.

becomes clear from the "Preface"'s last paragraph: "The intensity of Turner's painting is such," Dabydeen concludes, that "the artist in private must have savoured the sadism he publicly denounced" (x).[2]

Whatever the validity of this startling assertion, the true villain of the piece, in Dabydeen's eyes, is not so much the possibly perverse artist as his admiring contemporary critic and apologist, John Ruskin, who not only gives a rapturous account of *The Slave Ship* in the chapter "Of Water, as Painted by Turner" in *Modern Painters*, vol. I (1843), but also came to own the picture when it was purchased for him by his father in December of the same year, retaining it until it was eventually sold to the American collector, John Taylor Johnston, in 1872. For Dabydeen, the problem with Ruskin's reading of *The Slave Ship* is that it emphasizes artistic technique—"dwelling on the genius with which Turner illuminate[s] sea and sky"—at the expense of the painting's outrageous "subject," the "shackling and drowning of Africans" (*Turner* ix) carried out in the name of financial self-interest. As Dabydeen suggests, such a reading is doubly problematic because it effectively renders Ruskin complicit with the actions he ignores: the atrocious historical truth of Turner's image is relegated to a casual comment in a "brief footnote" in Ruskin's text, which, as Dabydeen rather ingeniously points out, seems "like an afterthought, something tossed overboard" (*Turner* ix).

As if to mimic Ruskin's marginalizing gesture, Dabydeen ejects from his "Preface" the throwaway remark the footnote contains ("She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses" [Ruskin 572]), before proceeding in the poem proper to render slavery central by salvaging "the submerged head of the African in the foreground of Turner's painting" (*Turner* ix) and magically reawakening it to speak the text's twenty-five Cantos. At the same time, he complicates the picture, so to speak, by introducing into his poem another resurrected castaway, in the form of a "stillborn child tossed overboard from a future ship" (*Turner* x). Like the slave-captain who condemns the poem's speaker to his watery fate, this miscreated figure is also named Turner, its role as all-but-silent audi-

tor to the speaker's lengthy reverie making the text a kind of dramatic monologue.

Whether or not we accept Dabydeen's account of Ruskin's account of *The Slave Ship*, the larger point is that his engagement with his Victorian precursors alerts us to the importance of the role of intertextual dialogue in "Turner."[3] For most critics, this dialogue rarely extends beyond the poem's relationship to Turner's painting, on the one hand, and Ruskin's reading of it, on the other, and there have been numerous insightful analyses of the text along these lines.[4] As this essay argues, however, to position Dabydeen's poem solely within this particular frame of reference is ultimately reductive, missing the ways in which "Turner" draws on other materials that are just as important to the shaping of its compelling if disturbing imaginative vision.

In order to make this case, the essay is divided into three sections. The first shifts the focus from Ruskin's critically privileged set-piece reading of *The Slave Ship* to earlier parts of the chapter and explores their role in "Turner." It goes on from this, in its second and third sections, respectively, to more extended examinations of "Turner"'s links with two further works—William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987)—neither of which has to date received anything more than the most fleeting critical attention as intertexts for Dabydeen's poem.[5]

By excavating *Macbeth*'s unacknowledged presence in "Turner," the essay both tells us something new about how Dabydeen imagines the atrocity aboard the *Zong* and brings out, more broadly, the distinctiveness of his project, since, in so many writings of the Middle Passage—from Robert Hayden and Edward Kamau Brathwaite to George Lamming and Barry Unsworth—it is *The Tempest* that is invariably the dominant Shakespearean intertext that is invoked and reworked.[6] By bringing *Beloved*'s intertextual role to light, the essay at the same time helps us appreciate "Turner" not just as an example of the empire writing back to the metropolitan centre (whether Turner, Ruskin, Shakespeare or a combination of all three), but also as a text that overruns the borders of the Anglophone Caribbean literary tradition

in which it is located and that operates, instead, according to the intercultural logic of what Paul Gilroy, writing at the same moment as Dabydeen, was to call the Black Atlantic.

The Role of Ruskin

What Dabydeen construes as Ruskin's insouciance towards the bodies drowning in *The Slave Ship* has its correlate in the Victorian art critic's comments on two other of Turner's productions, the 1835 "vignette to 'Lycidas'" (Ruskin 566) and *Hero and Leander* (1837), a picture on which Dabydeen's poem draws in Cantos XII to XIV. While both of these paintings are responses to narratives in which drowning plays a central part, Ruskin approaches them, once again, primarily in terms of technique, resolutely evaluating the degree to which Turner's art is able (and occasionally unable) to reproduce particular watery effects. Just before embarking upon the reading of *The Slave Ship*, Ruskin likens "hold[ing] by a mast or a rock" in order to witness a storm at sea at close quarters to "a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through" (571). Yet, as his chapter suggests, such an experience is one that he is keen to avoid even in the second-hand context of pictorial representation.

Equally, though, the "endurance of drowning," or some kind of perilous watery submersion, at least, is something to which Ruskin is strangely attracted, especially in his chapter's opening sections. This is evident, in the first instance, in his observations on the difficulties that artists inferior to Turner have in "giv[ing] a full impression of surface" to "*smooth water*": "If no reflection be given, a ripple being supposed," Ruskin writes, "the water looks like lead," whereas, "if reflection [is] given, [the water], in nine cases out of ten, looks *morbidly* clear and deep, so that we always go down *into* it, even when the artist most wishes us to glide *over* it" (537; italics in original). This sense of falling into the water rather than skimming across it is also an effect produced by the work of artists who fail to grasp the principle that the reflection of objects (Ruskin's example is "leaves hanging

over a stream"; 542) is not "an exact copy of the parts of them which we see above the water, but a totally different view and arrangement" (542). By naively "giving underneath a mere duplicate of what is seen above," Ruskin observes, such artists "are apt to destroy the essence and substance of water, and to drop us through it" (542). Needless to say, such errors and the hazards they offer potential viewers are avoided by the "master mind of Turner" (544), whose technique is so exquisite and secure it not only delights but also protects the critic. Commenting on the water in Turner's *Schloss Rosenau* or "Château of Prince Albert" (1841), as he calls it, Ruskin states: "we are not allowed to tumble into it, and gasp for breath as we go down, we are kept upon the surface, though that surface is flashing and radiant with every hue of cloud, and sun, and sky, and foliage" (539).

Ruskin's comments on reflection are not confined within the frame of art but extend to include the natural realm the artist strives to capture, together with the organization of the eye as it switches focus between different objects. As Ruskin notes, it is this organization that is constitutive of perception and determines how things are either seen or not seen, a point he explains and illustrates, in the chapter's very first paragraph, by taking the reader turned beholder "to the edge of a pond in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duckweed floating on the surface, not thick, but a leaf here and there" (537). On this dreary brink, he tells us:

> You will […] see the delicate leaves of the duckweed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green; but, while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float, nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which to investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duckweed, and plunge down. (538)

With the insistence that the reader-spectator relinquish his or her visual grip on the "duckweed" and "plunge down" in order to "perceive [...] reflections," Ruskin's optical experiment here echoes the subaquatic language informing his treatment of such natural phenomena as they appear in the context of art.

By the end of the chapter, Ruskin has moved a long way off from this tranquil if potentially threatening rural site and into the stormy and corpse-laden Atlantic of *The Slave Ship*, from which Dabydeen rescues and reanimates his poem's speaker. Yet, Ruskin's pond nonetheless resurfaces on several occasions in the course of "Turner," where it is transformed into one of the principal elements out of which the speaker's evocation of his African boyhood is forged. The first instance of this occurs at the beginning of Canto II, where the often neologizing speaker compares the impromptu watery descent of the "Stillborn" that he witnesses in Canto I to the event of "a brumplak seed that bursts buckshot / From its pod" (II.2-3) and "fall[s] into the pond / In the backdam of [his] mother's house" (II.3-4). Just as "pond" dehisces from "pod," so this initial scene is developed and expanded in Canto III. Here the dangerous if merely metaphorical immersions of the Ruskinian spectator become actively literalized by the speaker's more daring exploits in a "pond" all his own:

> When I strip,
> Mount the tree and dive I hit my head
> On a stone waiting at the bottom of the pond.
> I come up dazed, I float half-dead, I bleed
> For days afterwards. (III.16-20)

Like the "savannah" (III.15) that "climb[s] and plunge[s] all day" (III.16), the memory described in these lines is built around the youthful delights of a repetition that seems unending—"Diving from a branch into water, swimming / About, climbing again for another go" (III.13-14)—but that is suddenly stopped. Yet even as the carefree rhythm of "Mount[ing]" and "div[ing]" comes abruptly to an end, the memory of its curtailment lingers on—like the bleeding that continues "For days afterwards" (III.20). It recurs, for instance, in Canto XII, when the speaker "drag[s] [him]self / To the bank of the pond" (XII.24-25) and it is his head that is this time imagined as a bloody "pool / And fountain" (XII.25-26). Or again, there is the example of Canto XVIII, when the "waves slapping [the] face" (XVIII.19) of the

stillborn reawaken the speaker's recollection of his own "mother's hands summoning [him] back / To [him]self, at the edge of the pond" (XVIII.20-21), a phrase that simultaneously involves a summoning back of Ruskin.

Intertextual ripples of Ruskin's pond are discernible not only in the African landscape the speaker describes but also in the complementary English landscape that appears in Canto XVI and that he can only surmise, basing his "knowledge" (XVI.4) on the "Pictures" (XVI.8) adorning the wooden wall of Turner's cabin as his "ship / Plunge[s] towards another world we never reached" (XVI.4-5). In his comments about the "water […] in the foreground" to the *Schloss Rosenau*, Ruskin describes the sensation of "glid[ing] over it a quarter of a mile into the picture before we know where we are" (539), and a similar sense of dislocation, in which spectator becomes participant, characterizes the speaker's encounters with these wall paintings, as he migrates into the shifting scenes he beholds of village life as lived in Turner's "country" (XVI.9). As these scenes take shape, it soon becomes evident that, like Ruskin's text, they too raise questions about visibility and invisibility—what, or rather who, can and cannot be seen—while at the same time giving these issues a distinctly racial slant:

> I walk along a path shaded
> By beech; curved branches form a canopy, protect
> Me from the stare of men with fat hands
> Feeling my weight, prying in my mouth,
> Bidding. The earth is soft here, glazed with leaves,
> The path ends at a brook stippled with waterflies,
> But no reflection when I gaze into it,
> The water will not see me. (XVI.18-25)

As he pursues his imaginary "path," Dabydeen's mental traveller is at first not only an unseen figure sheltered and "shaded" by a "canopy" of "curved branches" but also one who enjoys such womb-like enclosure and concealment because it defends him against the commoditizing (and covertly sexual) "stare" of the white "men" who are attracted to him and might like him to do their "Bidding." Yet, at the point where the path "ends," the speaker's invisibility becomes less boon

than burden. In the case of Ruskin's pond, the absence of reflection the spectator experiences can be resolved in the blink of an eye, but in Dabydeen's "brook" the situation is different: such absence is less an ephemeral perceptual effect than a trope for the constitutive failure of the white gaze to recognize the black subject in anything other than stereotypical terms.

This figurative blindness is subsequently replicated *en masse* by the "villagers" (XVI.25) among whom the speaker wanders and, in particular, an old woman "with silver / Hair" (XVI.29-30) who, in contrast to the corpulent-handed male bidders, does not so much stare at the speaker as "through" (XVI.33) him. It is even to be seen in the window of the "butcher's shop" (XVI.27) that will not countenance the speaker's own visage, replacing it with the gruesomely suspended carcasses of "goose and pheasant" (XVI.27), while radiantly welcoming "other faces" (XVI.29). This sense of how the visual field accommodates the white subject but excludes the black is climactically underscored when the speaker enters the villagers' place of worship and finds himself in the presence of another butchered and hanging body. Although the body in question here is that of the crucified Christ, it is mistaken by him as belonging to a less exalted master. As the speaker puts it, what he "behold[s]" on entering the local church and becoming "accustomed" to its melancholy "gloom" (XVI.38) is not God's Son but the hallucinatory figure of the slave-ship captain who has cast him seaward:

> Turner nailed to a tree, naked for all to see,
> His back broken and splayed like the spine
> Of his own book, blood leaking like leaves
> From his arms and waist. (XVI.39-42)

Such hallucinatory misrecognition is perhaps appropriate, given the speaker's struggle for acknowledgement among the local populace—"The elders and the young" alike (XVI.36)—with his own sense of invisibility and forsakenness paralleled in the disappearance of Christ's image beneath Turner's. It can also perhaps be read as wish-fulfilment, despite the "cry" (XVI.43) of "pity and surprise" (XVI.44)

that the hallucination induces, as Turner suffers amid the church's obscurity in reprisal for the unseen horrors endured by the "grown-ups [who] cried in the darkness" of his "hold" (XVI.6).

As previously observed, Ruskin's most direct acknowledgement of such horrors in his description of *The Slave Ship* is confined to a vague footnote, yet Ruskin finesses his own insight even at that safe remove, primarily by transferring the responsibility for the slaves' sufferings from the human to the inanimate. After all, in his anthropomorphizing phrase, it is the feminized "slaver" itself (or herself) rather than the male master or slave-captain that appears both to own the slaves and to engage in the act of jettison: to recall Ruskin's insouciant phrase, "She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard."

These evasive rhetorical tactics are evident not only in the footnote that so exercises Dabydeen but also in the main body of Ruskin's account, where they take the form, coincidentally, of the pathetic fallacy, an aesthetic category Ruskin himself introduced into circulation and analysed in *Modern Painters*, vol. III (1856). At the climax to his appreciation of Turner's "canvas," Ruskin writes in *Modern Painters*, vol. I (1843):

> Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship as it labours amidst the lightening [*sic*] of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight, and, cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea. (572)

In this powerful ekphrasis, the guilt in question is guilt on the move, as Ruskin ascribes it to the "labour[ing]" vessel rather than captain and/or crew, just as it is the "ship"'s "thin masts" that are "girded with condemnation."

Such guilt would be merited well enough in the general run of things but assumes additional intensity when it is remembered that the specific historical incident to which Turner's painting looks back

is that of the *Zong* atrocity, in which, as the abolitionist campaigner Granville Sharp remarks, "132 innocent human Persons" were subjected to "Wilful Murder" (Lyall 301). Yet, just as Ruskin only admits to the guilt entailed in the slave trade (and this episode particularly) by displacing it from human to non-human, so he admits to its murderous nature only through the detour of allusion, drawing his blood-red deeps from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a play in which guilt and murder interlock. As the self-questioning Macbeth soliloquizes:

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No—this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red. (2.2.59-62)

In this anxious moment, the links between guilt and murder that Ruskin does not explicitly articulate become overt, along with the limitations they impose upon Macbeth's destructive powers. He may be able to commit multiple murders (when he speaks these lines he has already just dispatched King Duncan and in so doing also "murder[ed]" the "innocent sleep" [2.2.36]), but what he cannot destroy is the torturing sense of the sinfulness of his actions (even as he will go on to perpetrate further murders). As the lines conclude, Macbeth's vocabulary changes dramatically from the polysyllabic Latinate phrase in which Ruskin revels—"multitudinous seas incarnadine"—to the monosyllabic English of "green one red." Yet, Macbeth's own homicidal trajectory swiftly takes him in the opposite direction, carving out a course from a single initial murder to a profusion of subsequent killings.

As Marcus Wood has shown in some detail, the intertextual "dialogue" between Ruskin's description of *The Slave Ship* and *Macbeth* extends far beyond the borrowing of a single phrase and "runs deep" (65). Equally, though (and this is not something Wood addresses), there is an even profounder dialogue between Shakespeare's text and Dabydeen's, as the next section of this essay will show.

From Ruskin to *Macbeth*

One of the ways in which such a dialogue is manifest is in terms of the language of cleansing and staining that marks the passage from Shakespeare's play just cited. The first signs of the presence of that language emerge in the poem in the context of the speaker's account of his pastoral childhood in Africa. In Canto II, for instance, he recalls how "each morning" (II.34) he and his two sisters "Brush [their] teeth clean" (II.35) with "twigs" (II.34) from the "chaltee tree" (II.33) and then weave games around one of the family cows that involve "decorat[ing] its heels with the blue and yellow / Bark of hemlik" (II.40-41). While this aestheticizing mischief is forbidden by the speaker's less than playful father, who sends the children "off to school" (II.44), the latter himself observes a different set of daily rituals that nonetheless run along similar lines, as illustrated in Canto IV. Here the father prays at "Dawntime" (IV.14) and "Washe[s] his fingers" (IV.15), "tongue" and "face" (IV.16), "in a sacred bowl / Repeatedly" (IV.15-16), before "smear[ing] / His forehead with green dye" (IV.16-17) and setting out for the "savannah" (IV.18). Such rituals, in turn, parallel those carried out by the enigmatic village elder and "magician" (II.45), Manu, though, in this case, they are connected not so much to prayer as divination. In Canto XVII, for example, Manu "darts his hands out" (XVII.12) at the "ancient ingredients" (XVII.8) in one of the "sacred bowls" (XVII.9) arranged around him, "Scoops up red jelly, daubs it on his face [and] / Howls" (XVII.13-14) before the future visions of white violence and black counter-violence that are opened up to him.

Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this pattern occurs in an incident in Canto III, in which it is the speaker's own hand rather than that of his father or Manu that becomes central. This time, however, the hand engages in a deed neither prayerful nor prophetic but innocently (and humorously) transgressive:

> I dream to be small again, even though
> My mother caught me with my fingers
> In a panoose jar, and whilst I licked them clean
> And reached for more, she came upon me,

> Put one load of licks with a tamarind
> Stick on my back, boxed my ears; the jar fell,
> Broke, panoose dripped thickly to the floor. (III.1-7)

Even though the memory recalled at this point is a painful one, its sweetness makes it just as difficult to resist as the contents of the "jar" themselves. Given its trivial nature, the self-indulgent crime the speaker commits here is hardly comparable to the macrocosmic evil unleashed by Macbeth, yet Dabydeen's image of manual transgression is not without a residual Shakespearean flavour, faintly recalling *Macbeth*'s description of how the play's increasingly embattled protagonist "feel[s] / His secret murders sticking on his hands" (5.2.16-17). The image further links "Turner" to *Macbeth* in terms of the irony intrinsic to the speaker's decision to clean his fingers by licking them. While this action rids those fingers of both the syrup for which they reach and (by implication) whatever guilt this induces, it does so in a way that merely compounds the crime, since it reproduces the oral gratification the speaker is seeking in the first place. The suggestion is that the speaker's own self-cleansing exercises bear the traces of the very misdemeanour they should eradicate, just as Shakespeare's "multitudinous seas" are turned red by the very hand Macbeth hopes they will purify. The sense of a sin whose extirpation is not straightforward is captured both by Dabydeen's use of assonance (the quadruple "ick"-sound stretched across five lines) and the ways in which the punishment the speaker's mother inflicts on him only works as a reminder of the clinging pleasures of his original offence ("load of licks" and even "Stick").

These processes of cleansing and staining are not restricted to the scenes of childhood the speaker delineates but feature significantly in the account he gives of his Atlantic experience, where they take on a more sinister dimension and are organized differently depending on race and performed by the sea itself. As becomes evident, the speaker's posthumous ordeals amid the "endless wash and lap / Of waves" (II.25-26) bring him into contact with other dead figures besides the stillborn child, including the women who are "spew[ed] off the edg-

es" (IV.26) of the "different sunken ships" (IV.33) he witnesses in the course of his surreal aquatic trials. Although these temporary "companions" (IV.28) are white, he boldly reimagines them as black and blesses them with seductive African names—"Adra, Zentu, Danjera" (V.2)—in order to make them seem more "familiar" (V.1), even as the sea conducts its own unpredictable programme of transformations: it lovingly "decorates" (V.10) the women's countenances with "festive masks" made of "salt crystals" (V.8) before it "strips them clean" (V.12) of "flesh" (V.9) completely. The sea carries out a similar divestiture of the white male figures of Canto XIV, as it not only "soothes and erases pain from the faces / Of drowned sailors" (XIV.18-19) with "an undertaker's / Touch" (XIV.17-18) but also liberates them entirely from their bodies and the rough histories inscribed upon them, "unpast[ing] flesh from bone / With all its scars, boils, stubble, marks / Of debauchery" (XIV.19-21).

When it comes to black bodies, however, the sea's cleansing work is both less extreme and less certain, as suggested by the self-contradictory utterances in Canto IX:

> the child
> Floats towards me, bloodied at first, but the sea
> Will cleanse it. It has bleached me too of colour,
> Painted me gaudy, dabs of ebony,
> An arabesque of blues and vermilions. (IX.13-17)

Here it is difficult to have confidence in the redemptive future the speaker envisages for the "bloodied" child—the utopian possibility of a clean break with the past, as it were—because of his own history, in which the sea "bleache[s]" his skin only so that it can make it into a kind of *tabula rasa* or blank canvas on which it "Paint[s]" its "gaudy" hues, restoring the tell-tale "dabs of ebony" which, he claims, it has removed.

Ultimately, the issue of whether the speaker's skin is bleached or colourfully painted is irrelevant, since the dilemma he confronts goes deeper than this. Dabydeen makes this point in his "Preface," where, in a prefiguring of the contradictions just noted, he observes how,

despite the sea's best efforts at whitening the black body, the speaker "still recognizes himself as 'nigger'" (x)—sees himself, that is, in terms of the degrading stereotypes to which blackness has been historically reduced. As the "Preface" also points out, the catalyst to this recognition is the child, who exposes the speaker's "desire to begin anew in the sea" (ix) as a forlorn hope and thwarts his "creative amnesia" with the indelible stains of "grievous memory" (x):

> 'Nigger!' it cried, seeing
> Through the sea's disguise as only children can,
> Recognising me below my skin long since
> Washed clean of the colour of sin, scab, smudge,
> Pestilence, death, rats that carry plague,
> Darkness such as blots the sky when locusts swarm. (XI.17-22)

As the speaker responds to this brutal address, echoed at four further junctures in the poem (twice in Canto XVIII and twice again in Canto XXV), he returns us to *Macbeth* and the problem of the aftermath to Duncan's killing.[7] In Shakespeare's tragedy, the royal blood that stains the hands of the murderous double-act at the play's centre can be physically removed but comes back to haunt them in the hallucinatory shape of "thick-coming fancies" (5.3.37) that cannot be staunched any more than a "rooted sorrow" can be "Pluck[ed] from the memory" (5.3.40) or the "written troubles of the brain" "Raze[d] out" (5.3.41). In "Turner," similarly, the speaker's body can be "Washed clean" of its blackness but he himself cannot escape the radically demeaning associations with which it is encrusted and that are here couched in an overtly Biblical and increasingly apocalyptic language, ranging from "sin, scab [and] smudge" to a "Darkness" that, in another staining metaphor, "blots the sky when locusts swarm" (XI.20-22).

Macbeth's decision to kill Duncan is partly motivated by a desire to take his place as King but also by a need to reaffirm his own masculinity. This is so particularly in relation to his wife, who fears that he is "too full o'th' milk of human kindness" (1.5.16) to realize his ambitions and taunts him with the opinion that his initial determination to

"proceed no further in this business" (1.7.31) is unmanly. While such goading prompts Macbeth to tell his "dearest partner of greatness" (1.5.10) that he "dare do all that may become a man" (1.7.46), her own involvement in their destructive enterprise is predicated, ironically, on the very sort of gender-betrayal of which she accuses him, as exemplified when she commands the "spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts" (1.5.39-40) to "unsex" (1.5.40) her and "Come to [her] woman's breasts / And take [her] milk for gall" (1.5.46-47).

Such gender-instability, in which the wavering Macbeth is "quite unmanned" (3.4.74) and his more resolute spouse defeminized, is consonant with the ontological and linguistic ambiguities of *Macbeth* as a whole, where "nothing is / But what is not" (1.3.142-43), the dead seem (in the shape of Banquo) to "rise again" (3.4.81) to unnerve the living and the play's corps of witches, particularly the self-proclaimed three "Weïrd Sisters" (1.3.32), "palter with us in a double sense" (5.7.50). This feature of *Macbeth* is paralleled in "Turner," where, to come back to the "Preface," the "sea […] transform[s]" the poem's speaker and "complicate[s] his sense of gender" to such an extent that he wishes to "mother" (x) the "piece of ragged flesh" (XI.12) that drifts towards him.[8] Yet the speaker is not the only male mother in Dabydeen's poem, the other being the slave-ship captain, Turner, and it is by reading the vicissitudes of this strange (and ultimately monstrous) figure in the light of *Macbeth* that it is possible to discern further signs of Dabydeen's intertextual debt to Shakespeare.

In Shakespeare's play, Lady Macbeth is prepared not just to be unsexed in pursuit of her goals, but, as the disturbing image of breast-milk turned to gall implies, even to violate maternal duties. Nowhere does this become clearer than in the still more unsettling vision she invokes early on in the play in order to convince her husband of the depth of her resolve:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums

> And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
> As you have done to this. (1.7.54-59)

This shocking *volte-face* has its correlate in the equally volatile maternal disposition of Turner. As the speaker recollects, in one of his earliest flashbacks, this androgynous personage seems at first improbably benign and bountiful, as evidenced in the moment of the departure from Africa etched in Canto IV:

> His blue eyes smile at children
> As he gives us sweets and a ladle from a barrel
> Of shada juice. Five of us hold his hand,
> Each takes a finger, like jenti cubs
> Clinging to their mother's teats, as he leads us
> To the ship. (IV.34-39)

Here Turner provides the "children" he is in fact enslaving with oral gratification in the form of "sweets" and "shada juice," offering them the "fingers" of a "hand" they grasp as eagerly as "jenti cubs / Clinging to their mother's teats." Yet once his ship is underway, Turner's features alter dramatically: his "smile" (VIII.4) shrinks "like a worm's / Sudden contraction" (VIII.4-5) in Canto VIII and "strange words [are] spat" (VIII.5) from the "gentle face" (VIII.6) that had once "so often kissed [...] / His favoured boys" (VII.6-7). By Canto XIV, Turner's transformation from tenderness to cruelty is complete, as he severs the bond with the speaker with a similarly high-handed violence to that with which Lady Macbeth sunders her ties to her trusting "babe." At this point, Turner's fingers are mysteriously devoid of maternal comfort, irrevocably tensed instead into a "hand gripping [the speaker's] neck, / Pushing [him] towards the [ship's] edge" (XIV.2-3) and finally letting him "fall towards the sea" (XIV.5). If Turner's maternal mutability is comparable to that of Lady Macbeth, it is also suggestive of his resemblance to *Macbeth*'s witches: as Macbeth understands at the end of the play, these "juggling fiends" (5.7.49) are not to be relied upon (they "keep the word of promise to our ear / And break it to our hope" [5.7.51-52]), just as Turner

"curl[s]" the speaker "warmly to his bed" (VIII.9) only to submit him, finally, to "the waters" (XIV.6) and the "flush / Of betrayal" (XIV.7-8).

Macbeth's realization of the witches' unreliability emerges specifically in relation to the various predictions about his future that they make, and it is these that provide one final link between Shakespeare's play and Dabydeen's poem. For all its preoccupation with the past, "Turner" is, like *Macbeth*, itself a text with an eye trained on the future, articulating such concerns, as already suggested above, chiefly through the figure of Manu, who routinely holds "daedal / Seed[s] […] up to the sky / For portents of flood [or] famine" (XVIII.22-24) and is able to foresee both Turner's advent and the "lamentation in the land" (XVII.19) that it will bring. But as well as broadly echoing *Macbeth* in this way, "Turner" engages with the prophecies in Shakespeare's play in a more detailed manner by weaving them into its own narrative. This can be seen on at least two occasions, the first of which is in the poem's dramatic opening Canto, where the speaker reprises the marred origins of the child he comes to adopt:

> Stillborn from all the signs. First a woman sobs
> Above the creak of timbers and the cleaving
> Of the sea, sobs from the depths of true
> Hurt and grief, as you will never hear
> But from woman giving birth, belly
> Blown and flapping loose and torn like sails,
> Rough sailors' hands jerking and tugging
> At ropes of veins, to no avail. Blood vessels
> Burst asunder, all below-deck are drowned.
> Afterwards, stillness, but for the murmuring
> Of women. The ship, anchored in compassion
> And for profit's sake (what well-bred captain
> Can resist the call of his helpless
> Concubine, or the prospect of a natural
> Increase in cargo?), sets sail again,
> The part-born, sometimes with its mother,
> Tossed overboard. (I.1-17)

Here the child's abortive condition is underscored both by the truncated first sentence (made all the more jarring by the poem's far more usual pattern of fluid enjambment) and the way in which the Canto as a whole closes back on itself, recalling its first word in its last, "Stillborn" in "dead" (I.25). Such permanent immobility contrasts sharply with the slaver's more temporary "stillness," enacted in the parenthesis that encloses the "well-bred captain" and his Siren-like if "helpless / Concubine" and briefly suspends the poem's narrative movement—before, that is, like the "anchored" "ship" itself, the verse "sets sail again."

Considered simply in terms of content, "Turner"'s own imaginative parturition is indeed a moment of "cleaving," as mother and child are separated from one another by the twinned agonies of labour and death. Approached from a Shakespearean perspective, however, the opening entails cleaving in the directly opposite sense of the word, as the poem once again latches itself onto *Macbeth* and, in particular, the prophecy spoken by the "*Apparition*" of a "*bloody child*" (4.1.90; stage direction) that "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" (4.1.94-95). While such a statement causes Macbeth to assume that he is physically invulnerable and "bear[s] a charmèd life" (5.7.42) during his final confrontation with Macduff, the security it gives him turns out to be false when Macduff discloses that he is the mature embodiment of such a seemingly impossible progeny. As he tells Macbeth, he himself "was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" (5.7.45-46), a condition that connects him, intertextually at least, to Dabydeen's "part-born," torn in turn from its mother's "belly," albeit "to no avail," by "Rough sailors' hands."

The appearance of *Macbeth*'s equivocal ghost-child is followed by that of another spirit, in the form of "*a child crowned, with a tree in his hand*" (4.1.100; stage direction), who states that Macbeth will "never vanquished be, until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinan [*sic*] Hill / Shall come against him" (4.1.107-09). Such a prophecy once again seems to bode well, since, as its hearer reasons, it is surely not possible either to "impress the forest" (4.1.110) or "bid the tree / Unfix his earthbound root" (4.1.110-11) and advance towards his stronghold.

Like the previous vision of the bloody child, however, the spectre of its tree-bearing counterpart also proves, in the end, to be untrustworthy: Birnam does indeed in a sense become mobile when its branches and foliage are deployed by the forces opposed to the "abhorrèd tyrant" (5.7.10) as a means of camouflaging their march in his direction. Yet the route of this "moving grove" (5.5.38) does not end when Malcolm arrives at Dunsinan and instructs his men to "throw down" their "leafy screens" (5.6.1), but extends into Dabydeen's poem and the pictures of Turner's England into which the speaker transports himself in fantasy. Here it is not only that, as noted earlier, the speaker imagines "walk[ing] along a path shaded / By beech" (XVI.18-19)—and in this way enjoys his own version of those Shakespearean "screens"—but that the surrounding bushes and trees are themselves imbued with motion:

> [Turner] held a lamp
> Up to his country, which I never saw,
> In spite of his promises, but in images
> Of hedgerows that stalked the edge of fields,
> Briars, vines, gouts of wild flowers; England's
> Robe unfurled, prodigal of ornament,
> Victorious in spectacle, like the oaks
> That stride across the land, gnarled in battle
> With storms, lightning, beasts that claw and burrow
> In their trunks. (XVI.8-17)

As well as celebrating the beauties of the English countryside, these lines offer an implicit homage to the nation's naval preeminence (which includes its role in the slave trade) and in doing so are pervaded by a subtle irony. The "oaks / That stride across the land" may seem, like the "stalk[ing]" "hedgerows," to be "Victorious in spectacle" and to have won the "battle" against the natural world, but ultimately will be cut down to provide the "timbers" for the ship in which their own "images" are in fact displayed. In this respect, they share the predicament of the seemingly untouchable Macbeth himself, defiantly "Hang[ing] out [his] banners" on his castle's "outward walls" (5.5.1) just moments before the announcement of Lady Mac-

beth's death reduces life to "a tale / Told by an idiot" (5.5.26-27), and he thereafter receives the messenger's seemingly equally crazed and certainly ominous "report" (5.5.31) that Birnam is on the "move" (5.5.35).

As this section of the essay indicates, *Macbeth* is just as important an element in "Turner" as the Ruskinian material examined previously (and indeed Turner's *The Slave Ship).* Yet, Dabydeen's poem is imaginatively reliant also on *Beloved* and it is to this novel—another great contemporary meditation on slavery and the Middle Passage—that the essay's third and final section is devoted.

African American Connections: "Turner" and *Beloved*

The relationship between "Turner" and *Beloved* is evident in numerous respects, the first of which concerns the manner in which each text sets out to retell the story of slavery from the slave's perspective. In the case of Morrison's novel, the story she rewrites appears in an 1856 newspaper article by the Reverend P. S. Bassett and revolves around the figure of Margaret Garner, a fugitive slave who, the preceding January, had cut the throat of her two-year-old daughter and attempted to murder her three other children in order to prevent them from suffering the horrors of slavery as she herself had known them.[9] In the case of Dabydeen's poem, however, the immediate source of inspiration is not an ephemeral if compelling piece of abolitionist journalism but the more culturally enduring and elevated painting of Turner's *The Slave Ship*, an image that is itself a kind of retelling, too.

In rearticulating the story of the slave-mother and the baby girl she kills (respectively renamed in her novel as Sethe and the eponymous Beloved), Morrison's overriding concern is to develop a sense of what she elsewhere calls the slave's "interior life" ("The Site of Memory" 70), something which, she argues, is largely occluded in both the white archive of which Bassett's article is a part and the tradition of the African American slave narrative on which *Beloved* also draws. As Steven Weisenburger puts it, "*Beloved* returns to us a slave mother

who was always not only the subject of others' obscurely coded stories about her, but far more significantly herself a thinking and feeling subject" (10). A similar point might be made about the project of "Turner," as Dabydeen in his turn delves into the psychic processes of his own "subject" and plots their rhythms. These are typically recursive, with the poem obsessively looking back to particular events (the child's fall into the sea and its offensive cry of "'Nigger'" or the speaker's plunge into his pond) and underscoring this tendency by means of a widespread pattern of verbal self-echoing. More often than not, this involves the initial lines of individual Cantos: the first line of Canto II ("It plopped into the water and soon swelled") is repeated almost verbatim in that of Canto IV ("It plopped into the water from a passing ship"), with the time between these two textual moments taken up by an extended digression back into the realms of the speaker's African past. These aspects of Dabydeen's poem constitute another of its links to *Beloved*: Morrison's text is similarly both fixated on a selection of emotionally charged events and marked by a narrative whose movement is constantly disrupted by the sudden return to (or of) past memories, a formal feature captured in the novel's insistent "and there it was again" (4).

In both texts, though, such memories tend not to be directly available to consciousness, but are repressed, requiring the intervention of others in order to bring them back to life. In *Beloved*, this process is primarily undertaken by the ambigraphic figure of Beloved herself, the "fully dressed woman" who mysteriously "walk[s] out of the water" on page 50 of Morrison's novel and, throughout the text, plays a double part as the reincarnation of Sethe's dead daughter, on the one hand, and of her African mother, a survivor of the Middle Passage, on the other. In "Turner," by contrast, it is the "creature that washe[s] towards" (VII.2) the speaker who rekindles memory, "waken[ing]" him to the "years" he had "forgotten" (VII.1) and "burning [his] eyes / Awake" (VII.14-15) with its "salt splash" (VII.14). Such reawakening partly stimulates in him a regressive "lust" (XI.3) for the sensory delights of home, ranging from "the smell / Of earth and root and freshly burst fruit" (XI.3-4) to the "taste of sugared milk" (XI.7),[10]

but also occasions recollections that are bound up with the Atlantic crossing and that are hence more typically "obscene" (XI.17). But, however violent the fluctuations of memory's mood in "Turner," the moments when its revival is self-consciously announced in the text are, appropriately enough, moments in which the intertextual memory of *Beloved* is also activated, as in Canto XI. As the speaker indicates at this point, the instant of memory's return coincides with that in which the child is first jettisoned from the slaver—"It broke the waters," he states, "and made the years / Stir, not in faint murmurs but a whirlpool / That sucks [him] under" (XI.1-3)—just as Dabydeen's language is here pregnant with the metaphorical patterns in *Beloved*, as used, specifically, during the scene in which Sethe first sets eyes on her "girl come home" (201). In this episode, as Sethe gets "close enough to see" Beloved's "face" and begins to recall the history she has forgotten, she is overwhelmed by the impulse to empty her "bladder," a process of seemingly "endless" discharge that the novel likens to the unstoppable rush of "water breaking from a breaking womb" (51).

"Turner" and *Beloved* not only both use birth as a metaphor for the renaissance of the past but also include scenes in which birth is featured as a literal event. These scenes exist in a complex interplay of difference from and similarity to one another. This is a point that can be developed by returning to the *in medias res* account of blighted labour with which "Turner" begins and comparing it to the equally critical but ultimately triumphant narrative of birth in *Beloved*. The latter unfolds as the nineteen-year-old Sethe, six months into term with her fourth child and second daughter, attempts to escape from slavery on the Sweet Home plantation by crossing the Ohio River to freedom in Cincinnati, using a stolen boat with "one oar, lots of holes and two bird nests" (83). In "Turner"'s first Canto, it is the mother who is abandoned by her child: she "sobs from the depths of true / Hurt and grief" (I.3-4), sunk beneath her tears in a way which oddly parallels the plight of the stillborn submerged in blood and later water. In the scene in Morrison, conversely, the identity of the bereaved is less fixed and has the potential to be assumed by either

mother or child as their fortunes shift. At one stage, it appears that it will be Sethe's fate to be the one bereft, as her daughter's delivery stalls and she seems to be "drowning in [her] mother's blood" as "river water, seeping through any hole it chose [...] spread[s] over Sethe's hips" (84), while, at an earlier juncture, it is the daughter herself who is threatened with bereavement. This prospect arises when the exhausted Sethe concludes that she cannot complete the flight from Sweet Home and is condemned "to die in wild onions on the bloody side" (31) of the Ohio, her body little more than a "crawling graveyard for a six-month baby's last hours" (34). In the event, neither of these scenarios comes to fruition, largely because of Amy Denver, whose last name Sethe transforms into her newborn's first in recognition of both the selfless ministrations of this impoverished "whitegirl" (76) and, more broadly, the interracial alliance they represent: "'That's pretty. Denver. Real pretty'" (85).

In facilitating the "magic" and "miracle" (29) of Denver's nativity, the dextrous Amy succeeds where Dabydeen's rough-handed midwives fail, but there are other differences between the two birth-scenes also. When Amy is "walking on a path not ten yards away" and hears Sethe's "groan" at the thought of "herself stretched out dead while [her] little antelope lived on—an hour? a day? a day and a night?—in her [...] body," she "stand[s] right still" (31), her sudden stasis not dissimilar to that of Dabydeen's slaver. Yet, while the slaver's course is interrupted primarily "for profit's sake," Amy halts on compassionate grounds, just as her "dreamwalker's voice" (79) encourages in the "antelope" a sustaining "quiet" (34) radically at odds with the "stillness" (I.10) befalling its intertextual companion. That said, there is perhaps at least some sense in which Amy too profits from the exemplary kindness of her actions: in rescuing Denver from engulfment and Sethe from death, she at the same time masters two of her own past traumas—the vision of the "drowned" "nigger" who "float[s] right by [her]" when she is "fishing off the Beaver once" (34) and her "mama"'s demise "right after" (33) she is born.

While it would be wrong to overstress this last point, it is an important one even so, not least because it suggests an element of con-

gruence rather than difference between the scenes in question, since, in "Turner" too, the boundaries between compassion and profit are not always clear or stable. In the captain's case, the type of profit at issue is economic, but, for the poem's speaker, profit takes an affective or a psychological form, as the discarded child not only becomes his "bounty" (I.17) and "miracle of fate" (I.19) but also bestows on him the "longed-for gift of motherhood" (I.20): by adopting or appropriating the child, the speaker is able symbolically to reenact the very relationship with his own mother that the slave trade has severed, thus initiating his own version of the quest for a lost maternal love—that "clamor for a kiss" (275)—that so consumes Morrison's novel. In this respect, the naming of the stillborn as "Turner" is entirely apposite, as it is indeed turned from being "mere food for sharks" (I.21) into the resourceful speaker's "fable" (I.22), while simultaneously turning him from male to female.

The speaker's identification with his own mother is partly a matter of timbre and storytelling, as, for instance, in the moments when he considers how best to address "this thing" that is at once "drawn" to him and "yet / Struggling to break free" (XIX.2-3). "Shall I call to it in the forgotten / Voice of my mother" (XIX.1-2) he muses, wondering later if he should also "suckle / It on tales of resurrected folk" (XX.5-6) to satisfy its hunger for the "mirage / Of breast" (XIX.3-4) it is "seeking" (XIX.3). More typically, though, identification is a matter of bodily action and, in particular, the embrace. As "Birds gather from nowhere to greet" (VIII.1) this "morsel of flesh" (VIII.3), "Screaming their glee [and] flapping cruel wings" (VIII.2), the speaker responds to this terrifying congregation with his own counter-movement: while in Canto XXV he might be unable to defend himself from the rapacious Yeatsian "Wings of Turner brooding over [his] body" (XXV.20), "white [and] enfolding" (XXV.19),[11] he can guard the child from the "vengeful" (IX.8) creatures that encircle it, not only by softening them with "Gentle names—Flambeau, Sulsi, Aramanda" (IX.9)—but also by "gather[ing] it in with dead arms" (XV.1). Here the ambiguity of this phrase intertangles the two pairs of limbs to which it simultaneously refers (the speaker's and the child's) in a way which also inter-

tangles Dabydeen's poem with *Macbeth* once more and its own comparison of battling armies to "two spent swimmers that do cling together / And choke their art" (1.2.8-9). But the loving gesture by which the speaker cradles the stillborn also recollects the salvific maternal embraces that bless his early years, played out in a seemingly prelapsarian Africa prior to Turner's destructive arrival. On one occasion during this phase of the speaker's life, his mother "buries [him] in the blackness / Of her flesh" (VIII.12-13) when "fevers starch [his] blood" (VIII.10) and, at another time, she "catch[es]" (XII.54) and "pin[s] [him] tightly, always, / To her bosom" (XII.56-57) when he "crie[s] out in panic / Of falling" (XII.55-56) from her lap while "tugg[ing]" too firmly at her "silver nose-ring" (XII.53). And she is also there in the wake of the diving accident discussed above, "pluck[ing] […] up" her son from the side of the pond where he lies injured and carrying him to safety with "huge hands" (XII.27).

Yet, even as the speaker fondly clasps the child to himself in a way that reenacts how he was once embraced maternally, there are points in the poem in which his relationship to his mother appears to be ominously fractured, even before it is ruptured once and for all by the coming of Turner and the initiation into the Middle Passage which this sets in train. One way in which this is illustrated is in the resurfacing memories of "harvest-time" (XV.I) in Africa:

> We trooped into the field at first light,
> The lame, the hungry and frail, young men
> Snorting like oxen, women trailing stiff
> Cold children through mist that seeps from strange
> Wounds in the land. We float like ghosts to fields
> Of corn. All day I am a small boy
> Nibbling at whatever grain falls from
> My mother's breast as she bends and weaves
> Before the crop, hugging a huge bundle
> Of cobs to her body, which flames
> In the sun, which blinds me as I look up
> From her skirt, which makes me reach like a drowning
> Man gropes at the white crest of waves, thinking it
> Rope. I can no longer see her face
> In the blackness. The sun has reaped my eyes. (XV.2-16)

As these lines indicate, the process of gathering the "corn" brings mother and child into comforting proximity, yet, at the same time, is shadowed by a sense of growing distance. No longer a suckling imbibing milk but a "small boy," the speaker must be content with "Nibbling at whatever grain falls from / [His] mother's breast," even finding his place there taken by "a huge bundle / Of cobs," which themselves quietly oust the "jenti cubs / Clinging to their mother's teats" (IV.37-38) in Canto IV. Such exile is crucially augmented by the way in which this bundle "flames / In the sun," its brightness blinding the speaker as he looks "up" to his labouring mother and discovers her faceless. As his "eyes" are thus "reaped," the speaker suffers a quasi-Oedipal trauma that both parallels the "strange / Wounds" marking the misty "land" and links him to those "lame" figures "trooping into the fields."

In likening these infirm workers and their companions to floating ghosts and then comparing his own predicament to the floundering delusions of a "drowning / Man" who "gropes at the white crest of waves, thinking it / Rope," the speaker anticipates the moment when Turner suddenly metamorphoses from good mother to bad and flings his charge into the sea.[12] At the same time, however, the speaker's experience looks back, once again, to *Beloved* and the title character's interior monologue towards the end of the novel's second Part. As befits a revenant compounded out of Sethe's murdered daughter and the mother whom Sethe recalls as little more than "one among many backs turned away from her [and] stooping in a watery field" (30), Beloved articulates her thoughts at this juncture in a double tongue, in which memories of death and of the Middle Passage flow freely into one another:

> Sethe went into the sea. She went there. They did not push her. She went there. She was getting ready to smile at me and when she saw the dead people pushed into the sea she went also and left me there with no face or hers. Sethe is the face I found and lost in the water under the bridge. When I went in, I saw her face coming to me and it was my face too. I wanted to join. I

> tried to join, but she went up into the pieces of light at the top of the water. (214)

In some ways, this series of breathless reflections is quite different from the harvest-scene just considered: it dramatizes a drowning that is literal rather than metaphorical and voluntarily sought by a suicidal mother rather than involuntarily suffered by a dependent child. But where Morrison's text and Dabydeen's connect (or "join") is in how they imagine the mother's absence as primarily that of her "face."

Alongside the mutual preoccupation with the mother-child bond—how it is severed by the institution of slavery and how it can be restored—there are two further elements of common ground between Dabydeen's poem and *Beloved*, the first of which emerges from the parallels between Turner and the figure of Morrison's schoolteacher. Throughout *Beloved*, the latter not only manages (and torments) the slaves on the Sweet Home plantation after the death of the relatively humane Mr Garner but also places them under constant surveillance, "Talking soft and watching hard" (197) as he "wrap[s]" his "measuring string" (191) around their heads and bodies and instructs his two "nephews" (36) in the art of correctly tabulating Sethe's "human" and "animal" "characteristics" (193). While Dabydeen's Turner does not engage in quite the same coldly pseudoscientific studies, he nonetheless shares the faith in the Western rationalism that underpins them and seeks to inculcate a similar belief in his own slaves: as the speaker puts it in Canto II, "since Turner's days" (II.18) he has "learnt to count, / Weigh, measure, abstract, rationalise" (II.18-19). But Turner also uses his reasoning powers as an equally chilling means of calculating both the quantity and value of the black bodies that (as in the massacre aboard the *Zong*) he plans to jettison. In Canto XII, he is to be found "sketch[ing] endless numbers" (XII.32) and "multiplying percentages" (XII.46) in his ledger:

> He checks that we are parcelled
> In equal lots, men divided from women,
> Chained in fours and children subtracted
> From mothers. When all things tally
> He snaps the book shut. (XII.39-43)

Although economic rather than anthropometric or anthropological in spirit, this sinister volume consolidates the intertextual link with *Beloved* by recalling the "notebook" (37) in which Morrison's *sotto voce* sadist records his observations of the Sweet Home slaves, even extending these to include the scene in which Sethe is euphemistically "nurse[d]" (6) by his "boys" (36) during her pregnancy, "one sucking on [her] breast" and "the other holding [her] down" (70).

The prospect of having "her daughter's characteristics" listed "on the animal side of the paper" (294) is one of the main motives precipitating both Sethe's escape from schoolteacher's regime and her apotropaic slitting of Beloved's throat just one month later when he comes to claim her back. But an equally powerful influence upon Sethe's actions is the thought of the daughter's inevitable rape under that same dispensation, her "private parts invaded," as Sethe surmises, by a "gang of whites" (251). This aspect of *Beloved*—white male sexual violence towards the black subject—constitutes the second of the additional elements in the intertextual dialogue between Morrison's novel and Dabydeen's poem and can be brought into initial focus by considering the speaker's accounts of his two sisters, as they appear in Cantos XXII and XXIII, when the poem draws to a close.

As even the most cursory reading of *Beloved* suggests, the sexual fate Sethe fears for her "beautiful, magical best thing" (251) is, by contrast, part of the daily round for numerous other black females in the novel, one case in point being Ella, a woman whose "puberty" is "spent in a house where she [is] shared by father and son." Ella designates the latter with the oddly nondescript soubriquet, "'the lowest yet'" (256), but it is arguable that Dabydeen's Turner himself qualifies for such a dubious accolade, particularly with regard to his treatment of the speaker's younger sister, who, by a curious coincidence, is Ella's virtual namesake:

> Afterwards [Turner] will go to Ellar, the second-born,
> Whom he will ravish with whips, stuff rags
> In her mouth to stifle the rage, rub salt
> Into the stripes of her wounds in slow ecstatic
> Ritual trance, each grain caressed and secreted

> Into her ripped skin like a trader placing each
> Counted coin back into his purse. Her flesh is open
> Like the folds of a purse, she receives
> His munificence of salt. By the time he has done
> With her he has taken the rage from her mouth.
> It opens and closes. No word comes. It opens
> And closes. It keeps his treasures.
> It will never tell their secret burial places. (XXIII.6-18)

In these graphic (if not pornographic) lines, Ellar is subjected to a form of bodily suffering that is powerfully eroticized and can be read as a figurative rape or even the grotesque preparation of the victim for literal violation. Turner "ravish[es]" her with "whips" and then massages "salt" into her "wounds" in a process that merely produces further pain for her but pleasure for him and whose ritualized and entrancing nature is reciprocated in the rhythms of the text. These are strikingly repetitive, as the reader not only twice suffers receipt of the same harrowing information about Ellar's abuse but is also mesmerized by the kaleidoscopic recycling and echoing of individual words, images and phrases. As Frantz Fanon comments in *Black Skin, White Masks*, "We know how much of sexuality there is in all cruelties, tortures, beatings" (159), and this episode fully confirms his view, even exploiting the traditional associations between money and semen stirred up in the image of salt as a "coin" placed inside Ellar's purse-like "flesh."

Yet it is not only the traumatized Ellar, but also her elder sister, Rima, who is exposed to the "munificence" of Turner's sexual cruelty, albeit in a way that is neither at first glance obvious nor indeed to be expected from her story as the speaker tells it. As that story starts, Rima—referred to, in another curious intertextual coincidence, as the speaker's "beloved" (XXII.28)[13]—is an "extravagant" (XXII.1) and "wayward" (XXII.19) figure, with little respect, even "as a child" (XXII.2), for the structures of patriarchy, denying her father's rule, trampling on her brother's mock-"battleground" (XXII.13) and "Talk[ing] above the voices of the elders" (XXII.20). As the story ends, however, she seems to have been punished by the patriarchal order

she defies, dying in "childbirth" (XXII.23), with the "village idiot whom she / Married out of jest and spite" (XXII.25-26) looking on. Although respected in death and accordingly "bur[ied] [...] / In a space kept only for those who have / Uttered peculiarly" (XXII.28-30), the possibility remains that Rima's enemies will pursue her into the afterlife, filling it with terrors that require a collective female prophylaxis to keep them at bay. As the speaker anticipates:

> And the women will come
> Bearing stones, each one placed on her grave
> A wish for her protection against kidnapping,
> Rape, pregnancy, beatings, men, all men:
> Turner. (XXII.34-38)

While *Beloved*'s murderous "motherlove" (132) would appear to be an effective means of exempting the black female from the predations of the white man, the strange and disturbing implication of this peculiar utterance is that such drastic steps are not guaranteed to succeed in every case and that death itself may be no refuge.

Together with its emphasis on the sexual violence white males inflict upon black females, *Beloved* also acknowledges the homosexual violence these "men without skin" (210) visit upon the black male. This is encapsulated most clearly in the account of Paul D's induction into the oral traditions governing the coffle he is forced to join in Georgia:

> Chain-up completed, they knelt down. The dew, more likely than not, was mist by then. Heavy sometimes and if the dogs were quiet and just breathing you could hear doves. Kneeling in the mist they waited for the whim of a guard, or two, or three. Or maybe all of them wanted it. Wanted it from one prisoner in particular or none—or all.
>
> 'Breakfast? Want some breakfast, nigger?'
>
> 'Yes, sir.'
>
> 'Hungry, nigger?'
>
> 'Yes, sir.'
>
> 'Here you go.'
>
> Occasionally a kneeling man chose gunshot in his head as the price, maybe, of taking a bit of foreskin with him to Jesus. Paul D did not know that

> then. He was looking at his palsied hands, smelling the guard, listening to his soft grunts so like the doves', as he stood before the man kneeling in mist on his right. Convinced he was next, Paul D retched—vomiting up nothing at all. (107-08)

In this snapshot of "breakfast" in America, the slaves' chained and "Kneeling" posture ironically recalls the image created by Josiah Wedgwood in 1787 that became one of the most familiar components of abolitionist iconography in both Britain and America. At the same time, the posture links them to a rather more obscure black figure, in the form of the statuette Denver encounters as she leaves the residence of the novel's own erstwhile abolitionists, the Bodwins, the "white brother and sister who […] hated slavery worse than they hated slaves" (137). Though not an image of a slave at least, this figurine is nonetheless strongly expressive of ongoing racial inferiority amid the Reconstruction era of the early 1870s in which the novel's present action takes place. The artefact represents a black subject posed "on his knees" atop a "pedestal" bearing the legend "'At Yo Service'" and moulded in caricature: he has "eyes" "Bulging like moons [...] above [a] gaping red mouth" filled with "coins," with these features set within a "head thrown back farther than a head could go" (255). Equally, though, as much as it links them to this florid sign of a racism still unchallenged even among progressive whites, the slaves' position on the chain-gang quietly looks beyond the sublunary horizons of the white world that oppresses them. As they kneel, the slaves suggest a prayerfulness which in turn suggests "obedience" neither to the "hammer at dawn" (107) nor the grunting guards but to a higher master, in the shape of "Jesus," whose redemptive presence is registered, albeit faintly, by the cooing of the distant "doves."

Such homosexual abuse as is dramatized in *Beloved*'s coffle-scene is an important feature of "Turner" also. For much of the poem, it is something only hinted at, as, for example, in those "fat hands" (XVI.20) of Canto XVI, "Feeling" the speaker's "weight" and "prying in [his] mouth" (XVI.21); the *double entendre* with which the physical

spaces of Turner's slaver become fused with the more intimate recesses of his boys' anatomy as he kisses them in "quiet corners" (VIII.7) and "Unseen passages" (VIII.8); or, again, in the image of Turner's "creased mouth / Unfolding in a smile" (VII.43-44) as he "enter[s] / His cabin, mind heavy with care" (XII.44-45) and "beholds / A boy dishevelled on his bed" (XII.46-47). In the course of the poem's penultimate Canto, however, Turner's violations of his boys become more overt, even as at this point they are metaphorical in nature rather than literal and carried out in the name of other impositions:

> Turner crammed our boys' mouths too with riches,
> His tongue spurting strange potions upon ours
> Which left us dazed, which made us forget
> The very sound of our speech. Each night
> Aboard ship he gave selflessly the nipple
> Of his tongue until we learnt to say profitably
> In his own language, *we desire you, we love*
> *You, we forgive you*. He whispered eloquently
> Into our ears even as we wriggled beneath him,
> Breathless with pain, wanting to remove his hook
> Implanted in our flesh. The more we struggled
> Ungratefully, the more steadfast his resolve
> To teach us words. He fished us patiently,
> Obsessively, until our stubbornness gave way
> To an exhaustion more complete than Manu's
> Sleep after the sword bore into him
> And we repeated in a trance the words
> That shuddered from him: *blessed, angelic,*
> *Sublime*; words that seemed to flow endlessly
> From him, filling our mouths and bellies
> Endlessly. (XXIV.1-21; italics in original)

As so often in the text, Turner is Protean here, his identity shifting dramatically from one guise to the next. Throughout the Canto, he is most obviously aligned, once again, with Morrison's schoolteacher, giving his reluctant pupils lessons in English that leave them "dazed" and forgetful of their own "speech." Yet, the master who conducts his charges across the Lethe that leads from their language to his is also an overbearing mother-figure, his "tongue" a "nipple" "spurting

strange potions" in a way that extends the repertoire of mammary images both in Dabydeen's poem itself and *Macbeth* and *Beloved*. This role is no sooner assumed, however, than it is usurped by Turner the paedophile, implanting his "hook" in the "flesh" that "wriggle[s]" beneath him and is "Breathless with pain." These two identities—of Turner as tyrannical mother and as suffocating abuser—coalesce in the ironically terminal description of Turner's "shudder[ing] […] words […] flow[ing] endlessly" into his young slaves' defenceless "mouths and bellies"—like breastmilk or semen or a mix of both.[14]

As noted earlier, the speaker behaves towards the stillborn child who navigates the fluctuating course of his 783-line monologue as his mother formerly behaved towards him: the care he gives it recapitulates the care he once received, thus allowing him to restore his past and vicariously reclaim a love otherwise lost. Equally and more troublingly, however, the speaker's treatment of the child also possesses a family resemblance to that which he experiences from Turner, as becomes clear at the start of the poem's final Canto:

> 'Nigger,' [the child] cries, loosening from the hook
> Of my desire, drifting away from
> My body of lies. I wanted to teach it
> A redemptive song, fashion new descriptions
> Of things, new colours fountaining out of form.
> I wanted to begin anew in the sea
> But the child would not bear the future
> Nor its inventions, and my face was rooted
> In the ground of memory. (XXV.1-9)

Like Turner's, the speaker's "desire" (significantly figured here as a "hook") is to "teach" the child, though he is evidently not as adept in this enterprise as his model. In the one case, the pupils capitulate to their instructor in a state of "exhaustion" so "complete" (XXIV.15) that all they can do is chant back the hypnotic "words" (XXIV.17) they hear—"*blessed, angelic, / Sublime*" (XXIV.18-19)—but, in the other, the student will not be brainwashed, rejecting what he is taught as a "body of lies" and ultimately emerging, indeed, as the true pedagogue. In that bleakly authoritative "'Nigger,'" what the child

demonstrates to the speaker is that the wish "to begin anew in the sea"—breaking away from their common history—is impossible. This is a point Dabydeen underlines by once more resorting to the device of internal echo and recycling here the selfsame phrase as first appears in the "Preface," as if the poem is unable to break free from its own origin.

It is the realization of history's inescapability that prompts the speaker himself to follow the child's scornful lead and turn against the authority of his own narrative, rejecting his autobiography as no more reliable or authentic than the hope for a future sealed off from the "Preface"'s "memory of ancient cruelty" (x). His final utterance is, accordingly, a resounding palinode:

> No savannah, moon, gods, magicians
> To heal or curse, harvests, ceremonies,
> No men to plough, corn to fatten their herds,
> No stars, no land, no words, no community,
> No mother. (XXV.38-42)

Among this catalogue of negations, the most significant for this essay is the speaker's claim that he has "no community." In one respect, this is all too poignantly true, especially given the fact that he has just been abandoned by his unwilling confidant, who "dips / Below the surface" (XXV.16-17) of the sea they share and "frantically […] tries to die" (XXV.17). From an intertextual perspective, however, the claim is anything but persuasive, since "Turner" is rich with community, engaging in a play of call and response with a wide array of other voices.

Conclusion: Beginning Anew

To recall "Turner"'s "Preface" one last time, this essay enables work on Dabydeen's poem to "begin anew," taking the critical debate beyond the frame of reference that the "Preface" sets up (and that "Turner"'s critics have largely replicated), raising questions about the

interpretative authority writers can (or cannot) exert over their own creations: it directs attention to parts of Ruskin's "Of Water, as Painted by Turner" that are rarely if ever considered in readings of Dabydeen's poem and, more significantly, to *Macbeth* and *Beloved*, texts whose importance to an understanding of "Turner" has been similarly "submerged" in the critical seas that have washed over the text in the years since its publication.

As it conducts that latter double exchange, "Turner" further encourages us to ponder the intertextual links between Shakespeare's Renaissance tragedy and Morrison's late twentieth-century novel, both of which pivot, after all, around different types of murder and the guilt that springs from them and feature supernatural agencies (to suggest only two of the most obvious commonalities). The conversation that might be going on between those two ostensibly disparate texts is a topic for another occasion, but its existence perhaps accounts for the texts' copresence as central elements in Dabydeen's remarkable poetic project.

Cardiff University

Figures

Figure 1: J. M. W. Turner, *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhon Coming On* (1840)

NOTES

[1]For a far more detailed account of the *Zong* massacre than can be provided here, together with the incident's legal, social and historical significance, see Walvin and the suite of articles by Armstrong, Jones, Lewis, Lobban, Oldham, Rupprecht and Webster in *Journal of Legal History*.

[2]Although Dabydeen does not support this provocative claim, it is worth noting that in 1805 Turner participated in a failed tontine scheme to purchase the Dry Sugar Work pen near Spanish Town, Jamaica. This speculative involvement in slavery of course long predates the composition of *The Slave Ship* (and could even be paradoxically used to argue as much against imputations of the artist's "sadism" as for them), but would surely resonate with Dabydeen, who was born and brought up for much of his childhood on a sugar-plantation in Guyana. For a thorough and balanced account of Turner's part in the tontine venture and his relationship to slavery and the slave trade more generally, together with the bearing that both have on his work, see Smiles.

[3]Throughout this essay, "intertextual" is understood to encompass both the relationship between one written text and another and that between written text and visual image. In adopting such a capacious usage, the essay follows Dabydeen's own practice in his 2001 interview with Lars Eckstein, in which the term subsumes the perhaps more formally nuanced "intermedial": "If I quarrel with Turner […] it is basically really trying to be what now the critics call intertextual, which is trying to see whether from [his] art something can emanate that you can take and convert into your own creativity" (*Pak's Britannica* 170).

[4]See, for example, the essays by Frost, Gravendyk, Härting, Slapkauskaite, Wallart, and Ward. For a departure from this normative critical approach, see Boeninger, who sets Dabydeen's poem in an interesting relationship to Derek Walcott's *Omeros*. For another such departure, see Jenkins, who not only locates "Turner" in the tradition of the "maritime epic" that includes *Omeros* but also defines Dabydeen's poem as "a sustained rewriting" (78) of Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922).

[5]In Madina Tlostanova's essay on "Turner," for instance, *Macbeth*'s intertextual presence in Dabydeen's poem is restricted to a single phrase, in which she detects "vaguely Shakespearean echoes" (90). The phrase in question is "the idiot witter / Of wind through a dead wood" (XXV.13-14), which Tlostanova presumably construes as an echo of Macbeth's despairing rejection of existence as "a tale / Told by an idiot" (5.5.26-27). For its part, *Beloved* is more frequently cited in critical readings of "Turner" (Craps 136n; Härting 80n; Jenkins 79; Mackenthun 178), even though such citations remain radically undeveloped. Dabydeen himself mentions Morrison's novel approvingly in the course of reflecting on his own poem during a 1994 interview with Kwame Dawes, but, similarly, does not elaborate the links between the two texts (Grant 201-02).

[6]As is widely recognized, Dabydeen participates also in the reworking of *The Tempest*, both in "Turner" and, more explicitly, in earlier poems (in *Slave Song* [1984] and *Coolie Odyssey* [1988]) that move away from the Middle Passage and

into the terrain of the plantation. As he notes, however, his formative encounter with Shakespeare's late romance was of an unusual kind, occurring not in a direct reading of the play but in the mediated shape of an exposure to William Hogarth's *Scene from Shakespeare's* The Tempest (c. 1735). For Dabydeen's commentary on his imaginative relationship with this picture, see his "Hogarth and the Canecutters" (2000) in *Pak's Britannica* 80-85.

[7]At the same time, as several critics have noted, these moments of violent interpellation return us to Chapter Five of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), in which Fanon famously dramatizes the devastating "occasion" when he is obliged to "meet the white man's eyes" (110) during his time as a medical student in Lyon. As it turns out, the "eyes" in question are not a "man's" but belong to a child who is out walking with its mother on a "white winter day" (113) and, like "Turner"'s "creature" (VII.2), repeatedly engages in acts of exclamatory violence, escalating from "'Look, a Negro!'" (111) to "'Look at the nigger!'" (113). On this point, see Craps 65, and Falk 191. See also Döring, who was the first to recognize and explore Fanon's relevance for "Turner" (Döring 158-59).

[8]The gender-transformations that befall "Turner"'s speaker occur not just in the poem itself, but in the "Preface" that announces them. The "Preface" refers to the speaker as "he" (x), even as, in *The Slave Ship*, the figure is female (Costello 209; May 112; McCoubrey 344-45). Dabydeen is well aware of this, as evidenced in an interview with Karen Raney in 2010: "in my 'Turner' poem, I make the character male, but don't forget: in the Turner painting it's a female who's drowning; it's a female figure who's being devoured by these sexual, phallic, monstrous […] fish" (*Pak's Britannica* 194).

[9]Bassett's account of these harrowing events is included in Harris, Levitt, Furman and Smith 10.

[10]This particular remembered delight is no doubt one that would also appeal to Morrison's Beloved, whose appetite for such foodstuffs is seemingly boundless: "From that moment and through everything that followed, sugar could always be counted on to please her. It was as though sweet things were what she was born for. Honey as well as the wax it came in, sugar sandwiches, the sludgy molasses gone hard and brutal in the can, lemonade, taffy and any type of dessert Sethe brought home from the restaurant" (55).

[11]On the resonance of this image with Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" (1923), see Jenkins 79.

[12]The "drowning / Man" to whom the speaker compares himself here is a subtle reminder of "Turner"'s historical foundation in the events aboard the *Zong*. As Sharp notes, 133 slaves were originally to have been jettisoned from the slaver, "but one Man was saved by catching hold of a Rope which hung overboard" (Lyall 301n).

[13]This incidental link to *Beloved* is also noted by Jenkins 86n.

[14]Like the image of Turner's "white enfolding / Wings" discussed above, these lines bear traces of Yeats's "Leda and the Swan," in which "the staggering girl" (2)

is subjected to the "shudder in the loins" (9) of the sonnet's feathery and tyrannical god.

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