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The Emergent Environmental Humanities: Engineering the Social Imaginary*

CHAD WEIDNER, ROSI BRAIDOTTI AND GODA KLUMBYTE

The Environmental Humanities (EH) matter, and scientific consensus now stresses the need for a fundamental shift within the humanities towards more interdisciplinary investigation of environmental issues. In recent years, a need has emerged for the interdisciplinary field of the EH to address the complexity of societal relationships with the natural and built environments (see Braidotti et al. 506). This complex context requires a fluid understanding of the interaction between nature and culture, thus challenging the artificial disciplinary separations between the human, social, and natural sciences—all of which has profound consequences for the future of literary studies as well. The field of the EH questions the basic concepts of reference in the shared understanding of human conditions, their place in the planetary history, and the disturbing potentials for anthropogenic depletion of the entire ecosystem. However, humanistic study of environmental matters is nothing new. Tens of thousands of years before the development of the scientific method, humans attempted to understand their connections to the natural world through culture. Humanistic fields have recently coalesced around the issue of the environment, and the EH have developed incredibly sophisticated, deep, and diverse approaches and theoretical methodologies to examine the human dimensions of the relationship to the environment. While the natural sciences have worked on environmental issues for some time, in the wider context literary, philosophical, and historical study of the environment is underrepresented. Thus what is needed now, more than

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at http://www.connotations.de/debate/the-emergent-environmental-humanities.

ever, is a wide humanistic intervention into environmental questions. What is needed now more than ever is a philosophy of literary and ecological identity.

An essential consideration is to what extent the humanities can contribute to current environmental debates, and to what degree scholarly activities can reconcile the many cultural and ethical questions that climate change demands. Can humans, in the face of unprecedented economic, technological, and social change, utilize their capacity for knowledge building to construct sustainable futures? The EH "assume that modes of social belonging and participation are mediated by cultural representations and interpretations of them" (Braidotti et al. 507). Moreover, the EH raise the need for new transdisciplinary tools and robust interdisciplinary values to deal with the complexity of the many issues involved in climate and environmental change. Socially, it asks what concrete actions can be taken to raise public awareness of the many threats, challenges, and opportunities involved in adapting to global environmental change, and how institutions can best fulfill the task of introducing systemic changes in the way citizens interact with social ecological systems and resources. Finally, the EH opens much needed dialogue between the humanities, the social, and the natural sciences, which must collaborate if a genuine transformation to a sustainable society is to be realized in the conceivable future. The need for a wide humanistic intervention into environmental questions seems clear enough. The question is just what exactly the EH has to offer. What is perhaps striking, and surprising, is both the diversity and breadth of existing fields of academic inquiry that fall under the EH umbrella today. This paper thus discusses the intersection points of the Environmental Humanities to the wider scientific debate. It suggests that the EH are suited to help construct knowledge for sustainable futures.

The Anthropocene as Catalyst

The acknowledgement of the arrival of the Anthropocene provides ample opportunities for the humanities to work across disciplinary barriers for the common good. In 2002, Nobel Prize-winner Paul Crutzen argued for the widespread use of the term "Anthropocene" (23), which is essentially a neologism suggesting human beings have created a new geological age which began during the Industrial Revolution. In locating the trigger for this new age, the human age, Crutzen believes that the "Anthropocene could be said to have started in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when analyses of air trapped in polar ice showed the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane. This date also happens to coincide with James Watt's design of the steam engine in 1784" (23). Basically, the beginning of the Anthropocene was the time when humans began adding significant amounts of carbon into the earth's atmosphere. The most important aspect of this development may be the acknowledgement and understanding that human actions have fundamentally changed the geology of the earth. Certainly, evidence of human activities will be found in both the fossil and geological records for ages to come. While the arrival of the Industrial Revolution brought radically improved standards of living for people in the West, the negative consequences of this new age took some time to become understood. Extensive habitat destruction and the introduction of non-native invasive plant species cause widespread extinctions of flora and fauna, and these effects are clearly visible today. Not only are the seas becoming warmer, but chemical dumping is literally changing the biochemical composition of the oceans. One clear result is ocean acidification, which is the ongoing decrease of the pH of the seas. This is caused by the absorption of increased atmospheric carbon dioxide. The long-term effects of such a development are difficult to fathom. Moreover, growing urbanization throughout the world increases rates of both sedimentation and erosion. Thus, human activities in recent centuries dominate the world "on a scale comparable

with some of the major events of the ancient past. Some of these changes are now seen as permanent, even on a geological time-scale" (Zalasiewicz et al. 2228).[1] One of the major problems that remains unanswered today is to what extent the human sciences can respond to the Anthropocene in any meaningful and long-lasting way. However, recent developments suggest that the humanities are already developing potent and codified forms of environmental praxis.

The Greening of Literary Studies: Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism represents one of the major shifts within the humanities towards study of the environment. Ecocriticism is a blanket term that covers a broad range of theoretical and methodological approaches to examining and understanding the complex and often contradictory relationships between human culture and the environment, with a special emphasis on the examination of culture.[2] Essentially, Ecocriticism is a humanities area of research that examines texts such as literature or film in the context of contemporary environmental concerns. Scholars working in this area are especially interested in exploring the places where there is contact and tension between human culture and the environment, where they meet, or possibly overlap. Lawrence Buell calls ecocriticism the "study of the relation between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" (430). Buell is perhaps too careful here, and privileges the study of literary texts over other forms of culture. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells provide a broader definition of ecocriticism, calling it the study of "texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crises" (5). While Kerridge and Sammells's explanation broadens the scope of the term ecocriticism, it lacks Buell's call for intellectual forms of direct action. One wonders whether Buell's attention to scholarly engagement can be matched with Kerridge and Sammells's interest in expanding the range of the term beyond literary studies. For the pur-

poses of this paper, ecocriticism can be considered the study of the relationship between culture and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis (see Weidner). And within ecocriticism, the idea of place remains conceivably the single most important trope.

While place is often seen as a secondary attention in the study of culture, ecocriticism puts it back at the center of the conversation. The goal is to shed light on the culturally complex connections between the environment and culture. Methodologically, ecocritics ask specific kinds of questions to uncover new knowledge about the many connections between human culture and the natural world. Ecocriticism thus has much in common with practitioners of the "often radical and always interdisciplinary fields of enquiry that called themselves 'studies'. Gender, feminist, queer, race, postcolonial and subaltern studies, alongside cultural studies, [and] film" (Braidotti, "The Contested Posthumanities" 15). In this sense, ecocriticism can be seen as a natural growth of comparative literature. Researchers in various fields employ interdisciplinary techniques to understand issues of cultural power; it certainly plays a role in green studies today, and one focus of ecocriticism, certainly in North America, is on environmental activism. The ultimate aim of ecocriticism therefore is to examine both the many moral implications of human interaction with nature in the hopes of preserving the valuable and unquantifiable qualities of the natural world that are necessary to the existence of human culture and society. One valid critique of American ecocriticism is that it can at times hold up a nostalgic or even superficial and sentimental view of nature. European ecocritics have done considerable theoretical work, and are not only interested in summoning the spirit of the uncontaminated retroactive pastoral, certainly not in the form of some sort of transcendental escapism (see Kaibara and Tucker). In considering ecocriticism as a global movement, a number of concepts help guide much of present-day thinking.

One essential concept is nature, and human language allows us to consider the idea of nature. Lawrence Buell holds up Henry David

Thoreau's writing as a relevant precursor to contemporary Ecocriticism. This is apparent in Thoreau's personal fascination for the field of natural history: "Properly speaking there can be no history but natural history, for there is no past in the soul, but in nature" (86). While Thoreau was considering the history of the earth's geologic and biological diversity and ever-changing ecosystems, the suggestion that the past only exists in nature and not the human mind presupposes a binary between the human and the nonhuman worlds. And given our current understanding, this separation might actually exist linguistically (see Weidner). However, if we can agree that language is "essentially representational," as Dana Phillips claims ("Ecocriticism" 588), then it follows that we can pose the more crucial question of whether humans can ever begin to really fully discuss the existence or absence of nature.

A cynic might argue that human language can represent neither the flow of time nor the incredible variety and diversity of life on this planet. Another concern is whether humans can even begin to effectively bridge the gap between the language of nature and human spoken communication. However, if one sees language as a tool of understanding, then it may provide humans with the best vehicle to begin to comprehend our existence on this planet. And in this respect literature, as a vital cultural and linguistic construction, assists in realizing this goal (cf. Weidner). In crucial ways, Thoreau's journals document this intriguing navigation between language and nature. First, his journals celebrate nature, and at the same time demonstrate sincere human intellectual interest in the environment. Second, there is recognition of a need to balance the trappings of modernity with the autonomy provided by living close to the natural world. It can be said that Thoreau was a proto-ecocritic in anticipating the need for discourse on the relationship between humans and the environment. It is important to note that ecocriticism goes beyond the analysis of literature only, and is helpful in generating questions that are relevant to the EH more broadly, including questions with wide-ranging implications. For example: Is nature stable and predictable, messy and

chaotic, or both? The natural world may seem to be organized through a number of predictable systems, many of which are self-correcting. Such a view suggests that, if human society would simply allow the earth to achieve natural balance, then a suitable environment for plants, reptiles, and mammals can be guaranteed for a considerable period of time.

Chaotic natural phenomena force us to question basic assumptions about the universe, and ecocriticism approaches questions from a number of perspectives. If organic mutations occur randomly, then nature is not an orderly and efficient system whatsoever. Mutations are simply one of the many chaotic natural occurrences that force humans to reexamine the idea of a predictable universe. For example, if one examines the fossil record, it is clear that evolution provides many more paths to extinction than to life. While there may indeed be patterns and systems by which the cosmos normally functions (physics and astronomy are examples of human scientific disciplines committed to charting out natural phenomena, and organizing them into predictable schemata), the existence of biological mutations and other chaotic natural occurrences shows the need to adjust our views on the seeming stability and rhythm of nature (cf. Weidner). Dana Phillips (*Truth of Ecology* 71) and Ursula Heise (*Sense of Place* 64) both seem to abandon the idea of a harmonious state of nature, and instead see a strange, ever-changing and unpredictable biological journey. In *The Ecological Thought*, Timothy Morton argues that humans exist on one large, untidy, connected ecological mesh, an organic web of sorts, and that the realization of our interconnectedness with other life forms is what he terms *The Ecological Thought* (cf. 1). In the most basic sense, ecology can be defined as the study of organisms and their interaction with the environment. T. V. Reed summarizes various focal points within ecocriticism at present, and breaks them down into different groups including conservationist, ecological, biocentric/deep ecological, ecofeminist, and environmental justice (148-49). Reed's chart thus presents a useful point of entry for ecocritical concentrations at present, and shows intersection between ecocriticism and other human-

istic disciplines. It reveals examples of scholarly ecological praxis, though other developments suggest that green solidarity can take many forms.

Animal Studies

While ecocriticism has opened new vistas in literary studies, another thought-provoking concentration within recent EH research is taking place in the field of animal studies. This area of scholarship brings together researchers working in art history, film and media studies, history, literary studies, and philosophy. Researchers are now engaging the animal extensively. Cary Wolfe stresses the recent growth of animal studies, and emphasizes the ways in which animals are abundantly represented in nonwestern cultures, adding that such societies can be a rich source for contact between humans and animals in art (564).[3] Researchers working in animal studies examine age-old questions to understand better the multifaceted relationship between humans and nonhuman others. The point is to take animals seriously as an object of examination and not only as a natural resource. Donna Haraway (*Staying with the Trouble*) suggests that a fundamental philosophical shift is needed, one that builds kinship across species lines, in the hope of developing a future affinity between terrestrial creatures that exceeds our present grasp. She says that the term "Anthropocene" is insufficient for promoting an optimistic future ecological worldview, and suggests "Chthulucene" ought to enter the discourse. She believes the term Chthulucene is less anthropocentric than Anthropocene, that it acknowledges the human impact on the world, while also recognizing all of the creatures big and small: the octopus, amoeba, and grubs, all nonhuman others that contribute to the rich biodiversity of our shared world. The idea of the Chthulucene may seem a bit utopian at times. However, if we are talking about really changing human behavior and envisioning sustainable futures, perhaps Haraway's Chthulucene allows for more potential cultural re-

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covery than the rather gloomy Anthropocene. The Chthulucene thus presents a wider view of the human relationship to nonhuman others than the Anthropocene allows: the latter entails a rather limited temporal view of this interrelation, but this messy, sometimes antagonistic, and yet symbiotic relationship goes back as far as human history itself.

Indeed, the interspecies imaginary has long existed and reveals the ways the symbolic of the animal has long occupied the human mind. In earlier civilizations, manuscripts and works of art suggested the possibility that different kinds of animals can merge biologically. For example, in ancient Egyptian mythology one sort of sphinx was both part lion and part human. Homer's *Iliad* describes a monstrous immortal creature that had the chest of a lion and body of a goat. Pan is half human and half goat, and exists comfortably in both the animal and human kingdoms. Moreover, consideration of chimera creatures is one way to complicate long-standing distinctions and problematize human-animal deliberations, while at the same time generating fascinating new questions. The age-old distinctions between humans and animals are not at all as certain as once imagined, and we can learn much about ourselves by studying the ways animals communicate, remember, and even mourn. In "The Android and the Animal," Ursula Heise explains a concept she calls "biological otherness," which is a condition of biological difference that does not conform to the usual evolutionary roads (505). Such a situation forces us to question, radically, not only our assumptions about what makes humans different from animals but also about potential opportunities for understanding, and even prospects for transspecies hybridity. Ultimately, the focus of animal studies today is not to better understand the human by comparing ourselves to the nonhuman other. Truly, the goal of contemporary animal studies research in the humanities is to try to better understand the human, as well as become more aware of the essential otherness of the nonhuman. Thus, Haraway's call to think in terms of multispecies kinship, as opposed to the animal-human dyad, is a useful way to ponder the complexity of our relationship to ani-

mals. The idea of chimeras and other forms of transspecies hybridity is not new, but strange animal hybrids still largely lie beyond existing models of humanistic inquiry, generally and certainly beyond the concept of the Anthropocene. While animal studies have done much to propel the EH forward, the recombination of the human relationship to their bodies forces us to consider other fascinating, often mind-boggling new possibilities, moral dilemmas, and new questions.

Far-reaching scientific advances force humans to reconsider the animal as matter and the implications in techno-scientific developments. For example, what is the effect of the animal *in* the human on a material level? What is the consequence of the human being as animal/biological matter? In other words, what might the scientific closing of the gap between species mean for humans and how they view their own bodies and the physical forms of nonhuman others? The most modern of tools have not only changed the relationship of humans to the environment but also the relationship between humans and their own bodies. In times of such radical technological change, we are compelled to reassess our relationship not only with machines but also with nature. Sweeping technological developments and innovative scientific tools have already changed the way the human body functions. Pacemakers and artificial hips are ubiquitous. Pig heart valves are routinely stitched into leaky human hearts. While possessing the heart valve from a pig might not at first seem to create a radically new form of human, what might additional, even more far-reaching developments mean for our understanding of what it means to be a human being? Braidotti reminds us that the medicalized commodification of animal bodies goes far beyond heart valve replacements: "Animals like pigs and mice are genetically modified to produce organs for humans in xenotransplantation experiments. Cloning animals is now an established scientific practice" ("Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others" 86).[4] Such developments force us to once again pose fundamental questions about not only the rights of altered humans but also those of nonhuman others, who share much of the same biology and, by extension, at least some of the same rights as

ourselves. Philip Dick wrote about such concerns in the 1968 science fiction classic *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* While Dick's novel was a creative inquiry into what it means to be human after anthropogenic ecological apocalypse, Donna Haraway brought a more theoretical view of animal and machine through the figure of the cyborg, which are hybrid creatures that are "simultaneously animal and machine" ("A Manifesto for Cyborgs" 66). Her work on cyborgs not only forces us to confront the lingering dualisms that have contributed to our current ecological crisis, at the same time she encourages us to accept the potentials of technology to further the human endeavor (100). And while animal studies remains a remarkably rich area of EH scholarship, other disciplines too are contributing to the EH movement.

Environmental Citizenship, Ecological Citizenship, and Political Ecology

Historically, Environmental Citizenship has been frequently associated with the liberal tradition. In this sense, nature is understood as an assembly of resources to be commodified, and ecological crises are identified as the simple endangerment of natural resources and thus exploitation of those resources. In this context, movement towards greater efficiency in economic activities would seem to slow the depletion of resources, thus benefiting the greater good. Derek Bell sees the most pressing ecological challenge as an opportunity "to address important weaknesses in contemporary liberal theory" (45). One way to meet the ecological (and social) challenge within the liberal model is through the introduction of what can be called environmental rights (see Bell 49). The recognition of environmental justice issues during the Clinton/Gore administration in the US in the 1990s provides a useful illustration. However, as Jelin rightfully asks, "[W]hat demands of positive rights can be deduced from the recognition of the greenhouse effect?" (52). While environmental citizenship involves aware-

ness of responsibilities to the wider society, the expansion of capitalism, continued acts of biopiracy, and discussions of growth limits remain central. The ethical questions posed here leave people largely devoid of opportunities for social learning, which is a fundamental condition for real transformation towards sustainable culture.

Ecological Citizenship is a more sweeping form of civic engagement and seeks fundamental societal change by suggesting a break with the system of contemporary Western capitalism; it may even open up spaces for the development of genuine solidarity with other animal species, what Donna Haraway says allows for "multispecies environmental justice" (*Staying with the Trouble* 8). The focus of ecological citizenship lies on the merits and responsibilities of citizenship as well as the hope that deliberative democracy will lead to profound change. Haraway sees this profound change as shared responsibility to reduce birth rates over the next few centuries. This manifests in developing new forms of kinship such as communal child-rearing. Ecological citizenship comes closer to an approach based on individual identity as a social being, or, as Melo-Escrihuela has it, a "personal duty or lifestyle-change approach" (68). Such a form of citizenship is didactic, and Dobson asserts that educational institutions are essential in this context. An intriguing problem here is the role of a supposed neutral state in such a process. In other words, how can the state remain neutral if economic and educational systems need to be profoundly reformed? Can the state remain thoroughly neutral in the face of widespread and integrated corporate lobbying in the political process, as well as the economic and social tensions brought about by unprecedented ecological change? Another intriguing challenge is what should be done if, for example, one particular nation-state is actively working against such a global view, perhaps in an effort to protect its own interests. And while these theoretical problems are real, if we are speaking about social transformation, the needed changes are necessarily deep, both vertically in the context of institutions as well as horizontally in the context of citizens and nonhuman others.

By the end of the last millennium, citizenship and environmental discourses had already formed a new field of political ecology. The task now is for academics to further "explore the idea and to place it in relevant theoretical frameworks and contexts," writes Bell (192). While the concept of environmental citizenship was introduced as early as 1990 by the Canadian environmental ministry, more recent distinctions are useful in the context of the contemporary understanding of climate change and related civic responsibilities. Andrew Dobson compares contemporary Western citizenship discourses and asserts that while liberalism highlights rights-approaches (qtd. in Gabrielson 430), civic republicanism stresses duties and virtues. He criticizes the dualistic thinking between these concepts as excluding other possible forms of green engagement and solidarity. He introduces what he calls post-cosmopolitanism, which is an alternative form of social action to shared obligations beyond the nation-state. Post-cosmopolitanism is thus aware of the historic inequitable consequences of globalization, and the resulting forms of environmental and economic injustice that follow.

The unequal relationship between developed and developing nations exacerbates, and is exacerbated by, ecological problems. At the core of Dobson's analysis lie the injustices of asymmetric globalization, which he explores as mostly an extension of the Global North's dominant influence and not as the balanced interaction between North and South. He describes climate change as the most fitting example of this lopsided relationship. While the North is largely responsible for environmental problems ranging from increased carbon emissions, nuclear proliferation, to biopiracy, the South will face the most severe consequences of this economic, political, and ecological imbalance. Technologically advanced Northern states will continue to develop tools to deal with the direct effects of climate change. One example is the ongoing expansion of the Delta Works in the Netherlands. While the Dutch are relatively well equipped to deal with rising sea levels, Indonesia is far less prepared. This example highlights the continued asymmetric relationship between developed

and developing nations. The "Alliance of Small Island States" is a collection of states which are threatened by flooding and the social and economic consequences such disasters generate. Dobson argues that the typical cosmopolitan call for a stronger dialogical involvement in the global community will not necessarily benefit the islands. He therefore prefers shared distributive costs that build "on the interconnectedness view of globalization" (21) to combat such problems. While a compassionate redistribution of resources, expertise, and shared suffering might help, it cannot do justice to the historical relations that gave rise to the situation in the first place. Dobson argues that the "principal difference between cosmopolitan and post-cosmopolitan citizenship, […] is that between the 'thin' community of common humanity and the 'thick' community of 'historical obligation'" (81). Dobson's aim is therefore to create a robust concept of citizenship that imposes obligations based on deep historical injustices. Thus, if each citizen on Earth would restrict themselves to their fair share of resources, the world would benefit not only socially but also ecologically. Moreover, other concepts of environmental solidarity add to the discussion.

Environmental History, Environmental Philosophy, New Materialism, and Postcolonial/Indigenous Digital Media

Research carried out in the area of environmental history is crucial to the continued development of the green humanities. Environmental historians examine the ways that humans have interacted with the environment over time. The field developed as a response to increasing environmental awareness in the final decades of the twentieth century. Donald Worster says that environmental history has "a great potential for changing the way we conceive of the past" (viii). The field attempts to trace the ways in which we have arrived at our current ecological predicament by taking into account a larger view of nature-historical developments. It is not interested only in historical

developments but in the implications of those developments for the current state of affairs. For the sake of simplicity, the field can be broken down into three main areas of focus. The first involves understanding changes in nature over time, as well as the human impact on the world. Worster considers humans as a kind of parasite (cf. 293), but the real point is that the world functions as a kind of fertile "womb." Thus it can be said that the human misuses the fertility of the earth.[5] The second major area concerns socioeconomic developments such as the ways that humans process raw materials into other more advanced materials for the purpose of economic distribution and consumption. Consider the historical developments that led to conflicts over access to Amazonian rubber in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the severe ecological and social consequences that followed. Environmental historians are interested in tracing the larger narrative behind such processes to develop new ways of thinking about the complex relations between ecology and human society. The final area of focus of environmental history, according to Worster, is "purely mental or intellectual, in which perceptions, ethics, laws, myths, and other structures of meaning become part of an individual's or group's dialogue with nature" (293). The last of the three focal points intersects with similar research being carried out in environmental philosophy.

Environmental philosophy is directly linked to environmental history and has much to add to the wider conversation within the EH. Essentially, environmental philosophy is an area of inquiry dedicated to the study of the environment and the human place within it. Similar to the fields of environmental history and ecocriticism, it emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century as concerns over nuclear proliferation and dangers of chemical pollution grew. A crucial publication that helped set these developments into motion was Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*, a narrative that traces the spread of dangerous chemicals throughout the wider ecosystem. Paul Ehrlich's 1968 *Population Bomb* placed a human face on the unfolding environmental tragedy; it argues that overpopulation will engender uncountable

human deaths and immeasurable human suffering in the period to come. Both of these publications contribute to the philosophical discussions around ecology today. A further development in environmental philosophy occurred with Arne Naess's 1973 article, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-range Ecology Movement." Essentially, Naess asserts that policies to ensure promotion of recycling and reduction or resource depletion are insufficient to lead to a real shift in ecological consciousness and transformation of society, and that it is more effective to consider principles of diversity, decentralization, egalitarianism, and social equality. As such, Naess poses many of the same intractable questions with which those working in environmental philosophy are occupied today. While work in environmental history and environmental philosophy are important to the continued growth of the EH, work in materialist studies also makes a contribution.

Work in what can be called materialism in a general sense challenges traditional forms of binary thinking within the academy and is directly relevant to contemporary environmental discourse. New Materialism focuses on matter and why it matters; it attempts to provide a perspective on materiality and the ways this can contribute to knowledge creation. According to William Connolly, New Materialism challenges the "classical ontologies of mind/body and self/world dualism" (399). New Materialism thus criticizes anthropocentrism, which is a prerequisite to biocentric modes of thinking. It also refuses to accept the longstanding dualisms such as the human mind vs body, culture vs nature, and technology vs the natural world. Such a shift in thinking is vital in a time when ecological calamities push the boundaries of our current intellectual limits. Moreover, New Materialism questions many modernist assumptions. After all, any study of culture today is necessarily entangled with larger questions of nature. Any consideration of science highlights the ways in which even the most abstract machineries occur as transformations of material assemblages. Therefore, New Materialism addresses not only environmental matters: by extension it practices ecology in the tradi-

tion of Bateson, Guattari, and others. Connolly believes that New Materialism defies conventional modes of scientific thinking, including "exclusive humanism, secularism, [and] omnipotent notions of divinity and scientism" (402). The movement is not without criticisms. Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy wonder what is really new about the movement and complain that the term New Materialism "is potentially misleading in that it suggests that scholars who identify with this perspective have wholly rejected or proceeded beyond the basic tenants of [...] materialism rooted in Marxist thought" (4). Instead of simply adding to the conversation, Dolphijn and van der Tuin try to establish a system of thinking that "traverses and thereby rewrites thinking *as a whole*, leaving nothing untouched, redirecting every possible idea according to its new sense of orientation" (emphasis theirs, 13). The difficulty of such a vision will be to implement it into environmental practice. In other words, what might New Materialism add to the discussion on ecological change on a practical level? If we are interested in promoting new ways of thinking about economics, consumption, and matter as a resource, such questions are necessarily complex, deep, and open.

Work carried out in postcolonial and digital media and indigenous studies also assist in filling the gaps within EH. Lisa Nakamura (2002) and Ponzanesi and Leurs (2014) agree that the postcolonial digital humanities is now a fully established field of inquiry. Digital media provides the most complete contemporary platform to challenge geographical borders as well as reconsider transnational contexts. Nakamura, Ponzanesi and Leurs's work on transversal projects tracks the critical analysis of power formation of mainstream culture into the complex cultural analysis of the posthuman age. The efforts to set up a robust field of the digital humanities, as well as the decolonialization of media, have been historically dominated by economic and corporate interests. This is especially true considering the ways that the media are used as tools to propagate consumerism and political ideology.[6] Walter Mignolo and the decolonial movement propose a similar emphasis, but with different methods. Mignolo

defines coloniality as the matrix of European power and its accompanying logic (cf. xviii), and calls for a fundamental break from such a tradition. In this way, we might possibly talk of the de-westernization of humanity, which can promote new ways of thinking that are conducive to progress on the environmental question. De-colonialization challenges both the epistemic and material foundations of historical European power projection, in a form of direct action called "epistemic disobedience" (122-23), as a way of "de-linking" from this disastrous legacy of colonial oppression. Indigenous forms of knowledge and non-Western epistemologies can therefore provide inspirational material for this journey. Such a situation can result in brand new alliances between environmentalists, native peoples, climate refugees, new media activists, and forces of anti-globalization, which today represent forces that constitute a significant example of new political assemblages.

Indigenous studies also contribute to the contemporary debates surrounding environmental and social justice and thus further enrich the EH. One recent example of ecological engagement in the context of media activism includes the groups associated with the Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrations in the US state of North Dakota. For months these groups, led by members of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, resisted commercial construction of an oil pipeline from Canada through Native American lands, calling themselves water protectors. Various American Indian tribes from throughout the Americas joined the protests, as did college students, foreigners, journalists, and upwards of 2,000 members of the Veterans Stand For Standing Rock, a group of US military veterans that traveled to North Dakota in solidarity. The Standing Rock organizers capitalized on the possibilities of social media to draw global attention to both their environmental struggle as well as condemnation of the overzealous militarized police response to nonviolent protest. This example of transnational environmental activism mirrors Rob Nixon's emphasis of taking indigenous epistemologies seriously not just as a relic of the past but as a blueprint for the future (see *Slow Violence*). Kim TallBear discusses

similar issues in her *Native American DNA*, which brings together indigenous epistemologies, environmental and social justice issues, along with an excellent and timely discussion of scientific and technological developments. Essentially, she says that ideas about racial science, which date to the nineteenth century, are being renewed through the practices of DNA testing. She argues that, because science appears so convincing, we tend to accept it above Native American beliefs about what constitutes kin. She ultimately claims that this shift over what defines what a Native is has lasting consequences for native lands, rights, and autonomy. Another recent academic development includes the Hastac Scholars Forum, which focuses on the legacy of colonialism, the realities of postcolonialism, and the ways that digital media can function to decolonialize the future.[7] They start from the assumption that Eurocentric thinking and the destruction of indigenous ways of knowing can be improved by the adoption of digital technologies. The intersection of digital technologies with the EH is therefore essential, since alternative technologies may work against the forces of colonization and "post-colonial legacies that maintain social injustice" (Braidotti, *The Contested Posthumanities* 30). What this all amounts to is the recognition that the EH are building critical mass.

Emergence and Convergence

The EH has made significant theoretical interventions into the contemporary environmental debate and has clearly reached a state of maturity, though there is much work to be done. The EH produces yearly conferences around the globe, disseminates knowledge through numerous publication outlets, and offers degree programs to those aspiring to integrate environmental praxis through humanistic research. Conferences within the EH are widespread and occur frequently around the world. The maturation of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, which began in the United States, has quickly branched out into a global network of connected

organizations devoted to the humanistic study of environmental issues. There are regional chapters situated in Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland, Asia, and India. A comparable scholarly organization includes the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies. Numerous publication outlets are now available for EH scholars. Unsurprisingly, the EH movement has coalesced around a number of institutions concerned with the investigation of environmental and social issues, including the Research Centre for Environmental Humanities at Bath-Spa University in the United Kingdom. Bath-Spa offers numerous degree programs at the MA level: in Environmental Humanities, Literature, Landscape and Environment, as well as an MSc degree in Environmental Management. They also offer PhDs. Moreover, The Seed Box is an international environmental humanities collaboratory located at Linköping University in Sweden, and is richly supported by government agencies. The goal of this program is to research across the nature-culture divide to help solve today's pressing environmental problems. Other institutions are also engaged in environmental inquiry, such as the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, Germany, which focuses primarily on social science questions around environmental issues. The Utrecht Sustainability Institute, hosted at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, seeks "a good balance between economic growth, the environment and the welfare of people" (Utrecht Sustainability Institute par. 2). However, while there certainly seems to be a greater focus on sustainability within institutions, which is a welcome step, many of these developments are driven by a purely managerial and natural sciences perspective without incorporating EH to any comprehensive degree. Therefore, the current situation requires a shift of sorts towards the incorporation of the all-important human dimension of environmental thought. In other words, the uneven development of institutional practices today provides an excellent opportunity to integrate EH as we proceed deep into the twenty-first century.

While there are no easy solutions to the many ecological problems we face, what is clear is that the EH offers modes of thinking that

must contribute to the environmental conversation. Only by reconsidering our place in the world can we begin to consider alternative and sustainable ways of living. This is especially important as ecological traumas will continue to escalate. Populations continue to grow, resource depletion continues, rogue states are nuclear-capable, mass extinctions are escalating, multinational corporations invested in fossil fuels hinder political progress, and billions of residents in the developing world strive towards western levels of economic growth. In this sense, the EH can conceive of the human being ecologically, as a part of a series of structures that cross nature and culture, organic and inorganic, flesh and machine. The environmental turn in the arts and the development of arts as environmental research practice are forms of ecological praxis. Indeed, any real social transformation must include the humanities. Katharine Meenan and Jennifer Rice argue that "[t]here is no independent arena of 'social' and 'natural' things, only relational moments between objects and people, humans and nonhumans" (qtd. in Del Casino 66). Thus more than simple collaboration, a unification of different academic disciplines needs to take place, by mapping narratives to accompany models. When discussing the potentials for ecology and the academy, Martin Hynes is even more resolute: "Examining the social and individual implications of major challenges can no longer be a simple add-on to existing research. It must be integrated into mindsets and research from the start" (European Science Foundation). Therefore, what is truly needed is a fully integrated EH.

So what are the EH today, and can a single definition adequately encompass the myriad humanistic approaches under the EH umbrella? Scholars working in the EH often claim an interdisciplinary focus, and that the EH is a large tent under which a multitude of humanistic methods and subjects can be found. Thomas Dean supports the idea of a broadened approach and argues for an expansive environmental criticism to "reconnect the disciplines that have become sundered through over-specialization" (par. 2). Such a view is often repeated throughout current ecocritical literature. Jean Arnold further argues:

> Looking at texts for their ideas about the natural world results in a cross-fertilization of the humanities with other academic disciplines: when literature combines with biology, cultural theory, biochemistry, art, ecology, history, and other sciences, any combination of these fields forms a cauldron of brand-new perspectives. (1089)

Such openness to other disciplines is a needed change in the humanities. Given rich and diverse theoretical and methodological advances in EH scholarship, it is evident that we are approaching critical mass.[8] We can now consider the EH as a lightning rod between the arts and the sciences. Indeed, we can even conceive of the possible emergence of a philosophy of literary and ecological identity.

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NOTES

[1]See the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, convened by the United Nations, "Global Warming of 1.5 °C" (Allen, Babiker, Chen et al.).

[2]William Rueckert first used the term "ecocriticism" in "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (1978), which called for interdisciplinary approaches to study of ecology and literature. Cheryll Glotfelty revived the expression in 1989. She urged its adoption in the interdisciplinary study of literature and the environment (Branch 1). The expression "ecocriticism" has since been used in discussion of environmental assessments of literary texts, and more recently in various forms of cultural developments.

[3]See also Malamud; and Derrida and Mallet.

[4]See also Braidotti's *The Posthuman*, *Nomadic Theory*, and "Posthuman, All too Human."

[5]See also Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*.

[6]Consider, for example, the superficial advertising that emerged in the United States immediately after the 9/11 attacks that linked increased consumption to patriotic duty. Contemplate also the ways that the media is manipulated by ideology in the pursuit of the endless war on terror on both sides of the ideological spectrum.

[7]See also Parikka Jussi's *Digital Contagions*, which examines media ecology and archeology from a neomaterialist perspective.

[8]The authors invite critical discussion and close readings that respond to the theoretical considerations outlined in this paper.

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John Lyly and the Most Misread Speech in Shakespeare*

FREDERICK KIEFER

> I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What [a] piece of work is a man—how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals. And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? (*Hamlet* 2.2.261-74)[1]

In the opening paragraph of *The Elizabethan World Picture*, a 1943 book once celebrated though virtually unread today, E. M. W. Tillyard cites Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as a précis of Elizabethan attitudes: "This has been taken as one of the great English versions of Renaissance humanism" (3).[2] The terms "Renaissance" and "humanism" are long out of fashion, and no one has generalized about a "world picture" in many decades, though there continues to be a lingering tendency to see in Hamlet's words something more than a character's momentary musing. Philip Edwards acknowledges the inclination to extrapolate from the speech: it is "often quoted as an example of the world-weariness not only of Hamlet but of a whole age" (130).

These days most Shakespeareans see Hamlet's words less as a considered meditation on life than as a pose concocted to insulate the prince from those who would ferret out the secret of his transforma-

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tion. According to Brian Vickers, Hamlet's prose "is expressly associated with the Prince's decision to assume 'an antic disposition'" (248). When Hamlet speaks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, writes Milton Crane, he "satirizes the world, maintains a suspicious reserve, admits the fact of his melancholy but conceals its cause" (5). In other words, Hamlet's speech discloses less than it appears to, since it is meant to fend off his inquisitive fellow students who are spying for the king. For Philip Edwards, Hamlet's comments are "a glorious blind, a flight of rhetoric by which a divided and distressed soul conceals the true nature of his distress and substitutes a formal and conventional state of *Weltschmerz*" (47). Peter Mercer similarly finds Hamlet seeking to deflect the curiosity of Claudius's flunkies, who "appear not to take Hamlet's misery seriously": "he is playing to the observers" (185). Accordingly, Hamlet's words are not likely the paean to orderliness imagined by Tillyard. Although "often regarded as a straightforward piece of praise," the speech "was not written to glorify anything"; for this reason Vickers calls it "the most misread speech in Shakespeare" (253).

Why have Hamlet's words inspired such disparate assessments? I suggest that the distinctive form of the speech is largely responsible: Hamlet's language represents one of Shakespeare's rare forays into euphuism, a "deliberately outrageous" (Bevington xxxix) prose style popularized by John Lyly's early narratives and characterized by "a self-conscious and excessive use of proverb lore, classical allusion, natural philosophy, rhetorical figures, and phonetic devices, especially alliteration" (Di Biase 85). My purpose here is not to enumerate the rhetorical features of Lyly's prose that Shakespeare borrows. Instead, I want to examine the specifically theatrical effects generated by the euphuistic mode: not only Hamlet's evocation of a dazzling cosmos, which finds a visual complement in the Globe theater, but also the frustration of his listeners, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who must be puzzled by the direction of Hamlet's thought and who react, uncertainly, with smiles and laughter.

1

Hamlet's words evoke euphuism most obviously by their sound. He speaks as someone who has just stepped out of a narrative or drama by John Lyly.[3] The deliberate tempo of Hamlet's speech represents the opposite of spontaneity. As Jonas A. Barish observes, "the symmetry and exact balance in Shakespeare's prose [...] form one aspect of the ceremoniousness of Shakespearean theater. In the prose as in the verse, we feel that we are never far from incantation or ritual" (*Ben Jonson* 38). The cadence of Hamlet's language almost suggests that a metronome lurks nearby; his speech seems carefully considered and balanced. Whether encountered by a playgoer in the theater or by a reader of the printed page, this quality fixes our attention on what he says, makes it memorable, and lends it the air of significance that Tillyard and many others have felt.

In his edition of Lyly's work more than a century ago, R. Warwick Bond called euphuism "important, not because it eminently hit the taste of its day, but because it is, if not the earliest, yet the first thorough and consistent attempt in English Literature to practice prose as an art" (144). Shakespeare's emulation of the style, which Bond terms "a piece of literary architecture" (145), complements the substance of Hamlet's meditation by echoing the nature of the cosmos, imagined as the epitome of elegant design. In short, the style matches the "goodly frame" that Hamlet describes: hierarchical, organized, majestic.

The stylistic "architecture" of Hamlet's speech finds a parallel in the Globe's physical structure and decoration, which must have looked spectacular—inside and out—when the theater opened for business in 1599. In a city of mostly single-story buildings, the theater was three stories high, a hundred feet in diameter, and, in its reconstructed form of 1614, topped with a double-gable and tower, making it one of the most prominent edifices in London, witness Wenceslas Hollar's *Long View of London*. The Globe's interior must have been equally striking. Walking into the theater, playgoers "would have entered a world of imagination and possibility far removed from the lath and plaster familiar from everyday life" (Ronayne 121). Eric Mercer describes

Elizabethan interiors as "an uproar of color": "Throughout the greater part of the period the only reason for leaving anything unpainted seems to have been the physical impossibility of reaching it with a brush" (152). Even today, visiting the rebuilt Globe, one cannot help being impressed by the polychrome painting, meant to emulate the artistic taste and iconography of Shakespeare's era. This opulently appointed theater itself affirms splendor and harmony. We might even venture to say that the interior of the Globe, densely decorated with paint and plaster and carving, provides a visual counterpart to Lyly's style.

The taste of Shakespeare's England had long favored extraordinary adornment. According to Mary E. Hazard, "[o]ne constant in Elizabethan style is manifest in every medium, the use of rich embellishment—whether in the golden flourish of Hilliard's inscriptions, the sugared conceit of the banquet subtlety, the curious fantasy of gold-threaded embroidery upon a lady's sleeve, the interplay of precious stones on a jeweled ornament, or the carved interstices of an architectural relief" (79).[4] Hazard's characterization extends to the literary arts as well. David Evett notes that symmetry, parataxis, and the application of ornament had long been characteristics of Tudor literary style, and "[w]e feel Lyly exploiting them until they almost become the raison d'être of the work" (256). Lyly's distinctive prose, then, evokes the intricate designs on display in so many Elizabethan artifacts.

Hamlet's speech would have had a special resonance for the Globe, especially in his description of "this majestical roof fretted with golden fire." Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor comment on the word "fretted": "Hamlet might be indicating the overhanging roof of the Globe playhouse [...] as well as the sky above it" (287). And "it is traditionally supposed that the original actor of Hamlet here gestured toward the roof of the Globe's stage, which was painted with *golden fire*, the zodiac and the stars" (Braunmuller 52). Kent Cartwright suggests that "Hamlet's repeated, gestural 'this' tends to make the references to frame, canopy, firmament, and roof immediate and concrete, the pronoun inviting the actor to point toward his stage surroundings as he speaks" (101).

Let us assume that Cartwright's supposition is accurate. What are the theatrical implications? The words "promontory," "canopy," "o'erhanging," "firmament," "roof," and "air" direct the eye upward and outward. "During an afternoon performance in an unroofed theater, 'this brave o'erhanging firmament' is plainly visible to all, and Hamlet's 'look you' seems to invite the audience to verify the words of the play" (Charney 151). The language leads playgoers to imagine a three-dimensional vertical space that opens heavenward. It is easy to imagine a sense of exaltation informing Hamlet's words: "What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable." Marvin Rosenberg, who has exhaustively studied the play's stage history, comments: "This speech is one of the great challenges to the virtuoso art of the actor-reader"; "The words have to soar" (413).

And yet, paradoxically, feelings of vulnerability and dejection seem to fuel Hamlet's remarks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: "I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth"; and he claims to behold "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." To this emotionally burdened speaker, Denmark is corrupt and confining. At least on its surface, the speech expresses frustration and alienation—no matter what Hamlet's underlying attitude may be. He is, he says, unable to respond to that world as, presumably, he once did. There is, then, a sharp incongruity between what he says he feels when he surveys his existence and the "most excellent canopy" he enthusiastically describes to his fellow students. In other words, the image of the "brave o'erhanging firmament" he describes has nothing to do with the world he says he inhabits. How can this be? Looked at in psychological terms, the speech proceeds from an impulse toward wish fulfillment, which finds apt expression in euphuistic style. The geometry of Hamlet's verbal eloquence functions as a kind of scaffolding that supports the image of the world he projects to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, one that lends at least the illusion of stability and connection.

To suggest that the speech springs in part from the speaker's psychic disturbance and need for reassurance is not to question the ar-

guments of Vickers, Crane, Edwards, and Mercer: namely, that Hamlet's purpose is to fend off the scrutiny of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. We cannot doubt, at this point in the dramatic action, that he has, as he tells them, "forgone all custom of exercises" and that "it goes [...] heavily with my disposition." And as the speech nears its close, he seems unable to find his bearings. Deep feeling on his part and the determination to throw his adversaries off the scent are not incompatible. Why may he not achieve his goal by constructing a verbal stratagem out of the materials of his own life, especially his broken idealism?

2

Besides providing the scheme for elaborate description, the euphuistic mode that informs Hamlet's speech accomplishes something else as well—it allows for thoughtful perusal: "Lyly's Euphuism is not simply a decorative style, employing antitheses, balanced clauses, and matching parts of speech for euphonic pleasure alone. It is a style of inquiry and analysis" (Altman 197). Lyly uses the term "anatomy" in the subtitle of his 1578 narrative, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, and his "choice of the word 'anatomy' to describe his work seems to indicate that he wanted to conduct an analysis that would put everything in its place" (Hodges 21). Arthur Kinney observes that Lyly's *Euphues* "witnesses to the process of life as the progress of learning, playing on the scholastic use of anatomization or analysis as the chief means to wisdom" (135). In short, euphuism opens up a space for thoughtfulness.

If we take the prince at his word, he surveys the "goodly frame" and anatomizes its glorious parts, while simultaneously assessing humankind and naming the features that render us masterpieces: "how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals." This is the sort of classifying and enumerating of correspondences that euphuism is superbly suited to accomplish: "An anatomy is an analysis, a break-

ing down into component parts. It exposes the relationships that are inherent in a static situation" (Hunter 18). Perhaps significantly, "Lyly was the first writer to use the term in a literary sense" (Kesson 34).

Shakespeare's resort to prose as Hamlet ponders the cosmos owes a good deal to Lyly's precedent. In contrast to the verse employed for virtually all drama before the 1580s, Lyly pioneered the new medium when he turned from his narrative *Euphues* and its sequel, and began writing plays: "[T]he real movement towards prose in the drama begins with Lyly in 1584" (MacDonald 479), when *Campaspe* was performed for Queen Elizabeth on New Year's Day. Lyly thereby created a form of dramatic speech unprecedented in the theater. As Jonas Barish observes, "Lyly invented, virtually single-handed, a viable comic prose for the English stage" ("The Prose Style" 34). All of his plays, with one exception, eschew poetry for the most part, and his example encouraged Shakespeare and other playwrights of the 1590s to experiment with prose and to amplify its use in all manner of plays—comic, tragic, and historical—written chiefly in iambic pentameter.

Shakespeare has a specific reason for casting Hamlet's speech in prose: to create a pause in the action. Douglas Bruster explains that, while "verse conveys the forward movement of time in a play," prose "functions as a space and a discourse outside of time"; it is "as though an imaginary clock were stopping while the speaker analyzes some action, object, or idea outside the normal pace of the dramatic event" (105). Hamlet's leisurely speech of nineteen lines contrasts with the much briefer remarks of his interlocutors (mostly one or two lines in length) and has the theatrical effect of arresting the pace of the dialogue. The medium of euphuistic prose invites the exploration of an issue.

To some Shakespeareans, Hamlet's words sound so personal that they might almost constitute a soliloquy. And if the prince turns away from his fellow students while speaking, he may easily project a sense of self-absorption as though communing only with himself.[5] Hamlet's diction, Ralph Berry proposes, suggests his position on the stage: "Hamlet may well be close to the edge to bring out the force of 'prom-

ontory'" (7). If so, his situation onstage emphasizes his essential aloneness.

Hamlet's rumination about the world and humankind, however, which seems more appropriate to a soliloquy than to a conversational comment, does not actually take the form of a soliloquy: Ben Crystal notes that this is a "rare moment when [Hamlet] explores an idea with other people onstage instead of the audience" (54). What follows from this? First, the audience is not necessarily listening to the private thoughts and feelings of the speaker, as Brian Vickers and others have recognized. Therefore we cannot simply take the contents of that speech, especially its image of creation, at face value as E. M. W. Tillyard and his followers apparently assumed. The speech, moreover, is cast in prose rather than verse, and "prose is not a guarantee of authenticity in Shakespeare. Quite the opposite" (Wills 57). Second, Hamlet's words are part of an ongoing discussion, which has just consumed seventy lines of dialogue. A conversational dynamic is at work, one that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern almost certainly hope will help reveal Hamlet's secret. That is why they are talking with the prince in the first place. He forestalls their effort by the sheer amplitude of his euphuistic speech. In other words, he deflects his listeners' agenda, throwing them off balance. When the three-way conversation resumes after Hamlet's words, the subject has changed. The speakers are no longer talking of Denmark as prison, dreams of ambition, or claims of friendship. The next sixty lines are occupied with a practical matter: the imminent visit of the players to Elsinore.

3

Hamlet's scrutiny is truncated when he interrupts his train of thought—stops in his tracks, so to speak—and asks abruptly: "And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?" This about-face, which frustrates a satisfying discovery, belongs to the indeterminacy of euphuism. Leah Scragg's analysis of Lyly's prose style highlights its essential unwillingness to arrive at a summary judgment: "the perva-

sive ambivalence at the heart of the euphuistic mode endows Lyly's work with a far greater degree of ambiguity than its subject matter initially suggests" (4). The same may be said of the prince. Despite his air of authority, he suddenly and unexpectedly changes direction. In keeping with euphuistic practice, Hamlet's speech to the king's flunkies is strangely inconclusive and its effect unclear. He never reaches a destination that the listener has been led to expect.

Basic to the ambiguity of Lyly's style is an extraordinary reliance upon analogy. For Lyly, analogy is indispensable to analysis. As Paul Salzman writes, "euphuism argues through analogy rather than logic, through the proliferation of supporting examples" (40), the piling up of what Janel Mueller calls "serial superlatives" (406). "Lyly's Euphues lives in [...] a forest of analogies" (Maslen 237). In much the same spirit Hamlet's thoughts are here couched in his analogy involving the various forms of life he catalogues—human, angelic, divine, animal: "in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals." This analogy is the single most memorable and aesthetically attractive part of the speech, and it bespeaks overall coherence, at least on its surface.

Although it may seem to point toward a reliable conclusion, the strategy of analogy suffers a drawback: it does not offer a secure route to anything. In Lyly's world, the accumulation of ingenious design takes the place of logic: "Lyly's motive in *Euphues* seems to have been to dazzle by the intricate structure of his periods, rather than to convince by the weight of his arguments" (Jeffery 131). According to Raymond Stephanson, discussing the subtitle of *Euphues*, "[t]he wit can merely disguise its epistemological inadequacy by inventing truth, by using analogy and a belief in parallel order to create the illusion of truth and security in an uncertain world" (15). *Euphues*, which bombards the reader with analogies, "draws the reader not towards an irresistible conclusion, but into a series of branching avenues leading progressively further from an inevitable goal, frustrating the drive of the narrative towards finality and closure, and proliferating the propositions from which a judgement might be reached" (Scragg 5).

Lulled by the rhythm of Hamlet's words, we may feel ourselves, as his onstage listeners do, led ineluctably toward a resolution likely to compel assent. But the prince, for all his eloquence and intellection, arrives at no conclusion rooted in his elaborate description: "what is this quintessence of dust?" Are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (and we) meant to be reassured or disturbed or something else?

4

Hamlet's listeners onstage react with apparent humor, betraying bemusement. In response to their facial expressions, Hamlet says: "Man delights not me—nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so" (2.2.274-76). Perhaps Rosencrantz and Guildenstern resort to nervous laughter because they simply mistake his point; he takes them to understand him as referring to women. (Earlier in their conversation, they had joked about the privates of Fortune; 2.2.229-30.) But if they suppose so, they are surely mistaken; the speech does not mention women till its close when Hamlet notices his listeners' reaction to his words and acknowledges their laughter. And there is nothing salacious in his remarks. It is also possible, of course, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern respond the way they do because they imagine some intimacy with their fellow student and feel that they are in on a joke. Do they sense skepticism and even self-mockery on Hamlet's part? The dialogue fails to provide a clear answer.

Sly humor, born of wit, is a chief source of euphuism's attraction. Stephanson observes, "Lyly's educated audience would have undoubtedly appreciated the humor inherent in the characters' foolish belief that analogy is the only form of argument" (19). Lyly's appeal depends, of course, on verbal cleverness: "He is a wit, a man of letters to his finger tips" (Lewis 313). The subtitle of Lyly's 1578 *Euphues* is, as we have seen, *The Anatomy of Wit*. Edward Blount, in publishing six of Lyly's plays, a nostalgic revival of the sensibility of the 1580s and early 90s, advertises them on the title page as *Sixe Court Comedies* [...] *by the onely Rare Poet of that Time, The Witie, Comicall, Facetiously-Quicke*

and unparalelld John Lyly (1632). To the extent that he captures something of Lyly's verbal flamboyance, Hamlet displays the wit that he has exhibited from his first moments onstage. However serious the matter of Hamlet's speech, by its style it skirts the borderline of the comic and thereby complicates the playgoer's response.

However much amusement Lyly afforded theatrical audiences and readers for twenty years and more, his "scrupulously patterned" (McDonald 110) prose was becoming old-fashioned by the time Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. Prodigious popularity gave way to a feeling of surfeit especially as such other writers as Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge began emulating his style. Derek Alwes notes that, although "Lyly's two Euphues works—*Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580)—were the most popular works of fiction in the sixteenth century," the fad "had largely run its course by the time Elizabeth died in 1603" (28). And other narratives were establishing new models: Lyly's style lost "its dominance to works inspired by Sir Philip Sidney's massive prose romance, *Arcadia*" (Hadfield 582).

The "continual 'wearing' of Euphuism ultimately caused Lyly's syntactical garment to become threadbare" (Guenther 32). By the turn of the century, Lyly's style had become ripe for parody. That is why in *1 Henry IV* (acted 1596-97) Shakespeare casts Falstaff's impersonation of Hal's father in euphuistic style: "There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch—as ancient writers do report—doth defile, so doth the company thou keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also" (2.4.339-44). The contrast between the seedy tavern and the equally seedy knight, on the one hand, and the faintly courtly syntax, on the other, between the grubby and the highfalutin, generates a ridiculous effect. Shakespeare thereby makes clever use of what Donald Beecher calls the "parodic self-consciousness inherent to the style" (15). Hamlet's speech also flirts with the risible in a way that may not be obvious to an audience today.

Although Lyly's work of the 1580s perpetuated euphuism in that decade and beyond, particularly in narratives, his style harbored a liability in the theater. Whatever appeal euphuism may hold for readers, "the ornately symmetrical prose style filled with fantastical similes and constructed in rhythmic swirls of alliteration and antithesis" (Daniel 11) can have an off-putting effect onstage. The style is so dense, the figures of speech so plentiful, that Hamlet's speech "might have been designed to show that prose can double poetry" (Kermode 111). A listener will likely find an actor's euphuistic speech both syntactically complex and emotionally blank. Significantly, Lyly's plays fail to powerfully engage audiences in the way that those of other dramatists, especially those working in the public theaters, routinely do; for this reason his drama is seldom performed today.

John Barton's book *Playing Shakespeare* offers a useful insight when it looks at a euphuistic speech in *Julius Caesar*, written in the same year that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. This is how Brutus justifies the murder of his friend: "As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition" (3.2.21-25). In a conversation with Barton about this funeral oration, entirely in prose, Ben Kingsley comments: "it is so studied and so mechanical with its levers and pullies that it's like an engine. It's not human. Its built-in antitheses and rhythms strike me as not spontaneous and therefore not moving" (Barton 79). Barton, co-founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company and director of more than fifty productions, responds: "The antitheses are so laboured that it all sounds prepared, as if Brutus has conned it in the study in front of his mirror" (79). Brian Vickers, who observes that Brutus speaks verse immediately before and after his oration, makes much the same point: "this is a prepared speech, penned and learned in a vacuum" (243). Garry Wills, who finds the prose speech "as contrived and artificial as Shakespeare could make it" (41), imagines that the actor playing Brutus "*reads* his cold and studied text" (59). All of these remarks have an application to Ham-

let's "What [a] piece of work is a man" discourse, a compilation of truisms cast in the most self-conscious of prose styles.

What may we conclude? David Daiches provides a useful summing up when he describes Brutus's encomium over the body of Caesar: it "is brisk, logical, and abstract, apparently sincere yet oddly artificial" (36). That last word has been applied to Lyly by C. S. Lewis—"He is consistently and exquisitely artificial" (317)—apparently meaning artful rather than affected. Daiches's term captures the exceedingly peculiar quality of Brutus's utterance, which is in keeping with his strangely impersonal sense of loyalty to Caesar. What Daiches says of Brutus we may say of Hamlet, who also manages to sound simultaneously both sincere and artful in the extreme. Because Hamlet's melancholy mood seems in keeping with our sense of his character, we are inclined to interpret his words as genuine; we may even feel moved by their account of psychic pain. But because the speech sounds so contrived, we keep him at arm's length. Like the smiling Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, we are not sure how seriously to take him. Is he simply toying with us, deploying eloquence as a buffer? Or is he revealing profound conviction? What makes the speech so intriguing is that, by its euphuistic mode, it straddles both possibilities.

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NOTES

[1]Quoted after the edition by Thompson and Taylor, which preserves the Q2 (1604-05) reading: "What peece of worke is a man." The 1623 Folio has "What a piece of worke is a man!" The speech is (except for spelling and punctuation) virtually identical in both of these texts. No one knows why the speech fails to appear in Q1, along with most of the three-way conversation between Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern that leads up to it. What we can say is that Q1 is only about half the length of Q2 and F1. Terri Bourus, in *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet*, argues that Q1 is Shakespeare's first version of *Hamlet*, dating from 1589, and that he revised the play twice, first in 1602 and then in 1604. She believes that F1 represents the first revision, and Q2 represents the second.

[2]Tillyard's generalization in 1943 reflected prevailing opinion. For instance, Wells in 1940 had written that Hamlet's speech was "the most perfect of all expressions of Renaissance philosophy" (177).

[3] From the beginning of his career, Shakespeare was attracted to Lyly's sense of artifice. See, for example, Peter Berek's article on Lyly, Nashe, and Shakespeare. As a young man, Lyly was "the most fashionable writer in England, then achieved the position of leading court dramatist in the 1580s" (Bate 167). Elizabeth Oakes argues that, in Polonius, Shakespeare "caricatured Lyly himself" (155). She also observes that "Polonius' precepts [in his speech to Laertes] are similar to Eubulus' advice in *Euphues*" (157). She cites a page in Bond's edition of Lyly's works (165) that shows a number of such instances. Shakespeare may well have "parodied a rival playwright" (154). But parallels in content are not the same as parallels in style. At no point does Shakespeare give Polonius euphuistic speech. Euphuism is a prose style; Polonius usually speaks in verse.

[4]In this sentence Hazard employs the word *subtlety* as it was sometimes used in the sixteenth century: to describe a feature of fine dining. The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers as one definition: "Cookery. An ornamental figure, scene, or other design, typically made of sugar, used as a table decoration or eaten between the courses of a meal" (4.b).

[5]Discussing Maurice Evans's 1953 TV production of *Hamlet*, Kliman remarks that Hamlet "does not speak his 'What a piece of work is a man' to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern but almost to himself as he turns away from them and looks out a window" (124).

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Connotations
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More Context and Less:
A Response to Lena Linne and Burkhard Niederhoff*

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1. Preamble

As a digital, open-access publication, *Connotations* is particularly well-suited to serve as the venue for a multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas, such as the discussion of Alice Oswald's poem *Memorial: An Excavation of the Iliad* has turned out to be. Upon its publication, first in the United Kingdom in 2011 and then in the United States in 2012, the poem was widely reviewed in Anglophone newspapers and poetry magazines. More recently, it has become the subject of scholarly articles, mainly in the area of Classics, but also in Theater Studies, Eco-Criticism, and English Literature. In order to facilitate this engagement across different types of publications and disciplines further, I include at the end of my response an extensive list of reviews, interviews, and scholarly treatments of *Memorial*. It is my hope that my response will, in its turn, inspire other responses and thus provide a stimulus to further discussion of this remarkable poem.

In addition to transcending the disciplinary boundaries of more traditional journals, *Connotations* also provides a significant advantage due to its particular publication format, which allows for a seed article to be followed up by a series of linked responses. Consequently, I ask

*Reference: Lena Linne and Burkhard Niederhoff, "'[M]emories and similes laid side by side'": The Paratactic Poetics of Alice Oswald's *Memorial*," *Connotations* 27 (2018): 19-47. For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/the-poetics-alice-oswalds-memorial/>.

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readers of this response who are not familiar with the poem to consult the description offered in the seed article, only one click away.

2. Overview

In their article, "'[M]emories and similes laid side by side': The Paratactic Poetics of Alice Oswald's *Memorial*," Lena Linne and Burkhard Niederhoff explore Alice Oswald's practice of lifting Homeric similes from their original context in the *Iliad* and integrating them, in adapted form, into the long middle portion (henceforth labeled Part B) of her poem *Memorial*. They state that, by replacing Homer's plot with an unconnected sequence of poetic obituaries for the casualties of the Trojan War whose deaths are recounted in the epic, the poet poses herself "the task of producing a new kind of coherence" between the transplanted similes and their new context. Thus, they conclude, Oswald's poem constitutes "an act of creation by decontextualization and recontextualization" (22).

In what follows, I seek to inflect this conclusion in two seemingly opposite ways. First, I argue for a broader definition of "recontextualization." For Linne and Niederhoff, the new context of a simile in *Memorial* consists solely of the preceding obituary, but a simile may connect in a meaningful way with other passages of the poem as well. Second, I draw attention to a group of similes where the authors' concept of "recontextualization" does not apply, because the simile follows a list of names rather than a verse obituary. This observation leads to an investigation of Oswald's extensive and innovative use of blank space as a constituent element in *Memorial*, where the blank spaces do not merely create a generic void but rather evoke a specific context of missing material. In an earlier article on the poem, I showed that the lamentation for the dead in *Memorial* is radically inclusive in that it records the loss of life of the men fighting on both sides without distinction, and even reaches beyond the human realm by including an obituary for a horse killed in combat (Hahnemann, "Book" 18-26). In the final section of the present article, I argue for a third type of

inclusiveness by suggesting that *Memorial* commemorates not only the 215 dead who are named explicitly on its pages, but extends also to the many casualties of the Trojan War not mentioned in the *Iliad*, and perhaps even to the casualties of all wars since, down to our own time.

3. Argument and Findings of the Seed Article

At the center of Linne and Niederhoff's article stands a series of test cases in which the authors interpret seven similes from *Memorial*, each in connection with the obituary that precedes it in the modern poem on the one hand, and with reference to its original context in the ancient epic on the other (25-38):[1]

	Simile in the *Iliad*	Context in the *Iliad*	Preceding Obituary in *Memorial*
a.	wind on the sea and on a cornfield (2.144-48)	Agamemnon's exhortation of the Greek army	Protesilaus (9)
b.	a dog chasing a deer (22.189-92)	Achilles chasing Hector around Troy	Diores and Pirous (12)
c.	a little girl crying and begging to be picked up (16.7-10)	Patroclus begging Achilles to help the Greeks	Scamandrius (14)
d.	a woman weighing wool (12.433-35)	a stalemate in the fighting around the Greek camp	Acamas (22)
e.	oaks withstanding the wind (12.132-34)	Leonteus and Polypoetes defending the Greek wall	Ilioneus (49-50)
f.	generations of leaves (6.146-48)	generations of men	Hector (68-69)
g.	a shooting star (4.75-77)	Athena descending to the battlefield	——

In their discussion of these similes, the authors discern several patterns in the way Oswald departs from her Homeric model. To begin with, they note that in the *Iliad* the similes serve to illustrate a variety of events while in *Memorial*, whose "narrative" consists purely of obituaries, all of them come after the description of a death (a: 28; e:

33). As a result, the contrast between the world of the similes and the world of the narrative, although it exists also in Homer, emerges more starkly in *Memorial*: whereas the similes for the most part describe ordinary events that happen again and again, the obituaries focus on the extraordinary moment when the life of a unique individual is irrevocably lost (d: 32; e: 34). At the same time, Oswald tends to shift the focus of the narrative from the victorious warrior to the man killed, which lends her poem the tone of a lament (b: 29 with n12; e: 33).

In a second set of observations, the authors note that the point of contact between tenor and vehicle, technically known as the *tertium comparationis*, is less clear in Oswald's poem than in Homer's, since she eschews the use of signposts and different simile markers, opting instead for a looser link by opening each simile with the word "like" (a: 26; b: 30; e: 33). At the same time, however, in many cases she also creates subtle connections between an obituary and a simile by re-shaping the Homeric material so as to give rise to a shared concept (a: 26; c: 30; e: 33-34), which can be reinforced by verbal echo (c: 30-31; d: 32; f: 35). Consequently, in some instances the meaningful similarities Oswald employs to tie together obituary and simile are shot through with equally meaningful contrasts, for example in the juxtaposition of a warrior's death on the battlefield with a peaceful domestic scene (c: 31; d: 32; e: 35).

Finally, Linne and Niederhoff propose a pattern of a different kind, arguing that certain similes can be interpreted as meta-poetic, self-reflexive statements about *Memorial* as a whole. They suggest this reading apropos of the similes framing Part B of the poem—the wind simile (quoted and discussed below on pp. 49-51), and the simile about the generations of leaves and men—and return to it in their discussion of the simile about the shooting star at the end of Part C, the very last simile in the poem (a: 26-27; f: 36-37; g: 37-38). In my opinion, this pattern, which lacks an analogue in the *Iliad*, is especially intriguing and warrants systematic study. Similes relevant to such a study could include the one about the olive wand which "became a

wind-dictionary [that] could speak in tongues" (27-28), an evocative neologism which Mira Rosenthal borrowed for her description of *Memorial* as a whole. Given the poem's frequently noted similarity in format and content to an inscribed tombstone or casualty list (e. g. Green; Cole; Rosenthal; Hahnemann, "Book" 5-14; Schein 156), another simile with a potentially self-reflexive dimension is the one about "a stone [that s]tands by a grave and says nothing" (43). The recurrence of failed speech acts in these self-reflexive similes also makes for a fascinating link to Stephe Harrop's view that *Memorial* casts death primarily as a loss of the human faculty to speak.

Due to the somewhat subjective nature of the connections proposed by Linne and Niederhoff, readers will disagree as to which ones they find convincing, and one may hope that other scholars will feel inspired to continue, complement, or contradict some of the lines of thought they have broached. Regardless of such disagreements about individual instances, however, the authors' exploration of the connections that tie a particular simile to the preceding obituary forms a valuable contribution to the growing body of evidence supporting the view that the placement of the similes in *Memorial* is meaningful and worthy of investigation. That this should be so is by no means a foregone conclusion. To the contrary, several of the poem's early reviewers complained that, removed from their original context, the similes no longer make sense; William Logan, for example, whose sentiment is shared also by Guriel and Green, describes Oswald's method as a "rough-and-ready recycling" which "too often […] destroys the force, and the cunning, of the *Iliad*," resulting in a "Frankenstein transplant."

More recently, however, reviewers as well as scholars have been adducing insights that contradict these indictments, and the findings of Linne and Niederhoff fit well into this framework. The shift of focus from victor to victim, for instance, was first observed by Elizabeth Minchin, who specifies that in reworking the Iliadic material for her obituaries, Oswald erases all references to the victor's gloating over his success and in fact often does not even provide his name (209, cf. also Pache 176). Linne and Niederhoff extend this insight by show-

ing that the same shift applies also to the similes (29 with n9). Their observation, in turn, constitutes an important link to Oswald's habit of underlining the opposition between the genders in the similes by consistently marking the victims of violence as female and the aggressors as male (Hahnemann, "Feminist", forthcoming).

4. Problems of Recontextualization I: The Boundaries of Context

Surprisingly for a study focusing on the role of the similes in Part B of *Memorial*, Linne and Niederhoff offer no discussion of the remarkable fact that most of the similes are repeated.[2] Critics have described the effect of the repetitions in a variety of interrelated ways, stating that they create the solemn, even otherworldly atmosphere associated with a state of trance or prophetic utterance (Kellaway; Womack, "*Memorial*"); that they allow the readers/listeners to absorb the image first cognitively and then emotionally, while also granting them a respite from the grief induced by the poem as well as its fast pace (Jaffa 19; Crown; Rosenthal); that they serve as an element of music and a source of pleasure (Hahnemann, "Book" 4-5; Minchin 212n31). Adopting a more philosophical point of view, Teju Cole explains them as a "clarifying echo [that] invites the reader to place, one more time, each death into its proper natural context of dispersal and oblivion" (15), and David Farrier sees them as a "spectral echo in Derrida's sense of a moment that is both 'repetition *and* first time'" (4).

Most relevant to the investigation undertaken by Linne and Niederhoff, however, is a statement by Oswald herself. While the authors limit their analysis to a selection of similes and the preceding obituaries, the poet cites as one of her intentions in repeating (almost all of) the similes a desire to encourage the reader to think of them as connecting forward as well as back: "the first one links to the life behind it, and the second one links to the one in front. They're like [a] kind of swing doors" (Jaffa 19). Corinne Pache (182-85) provides a compelling example of such a double-headed reading in her study of the obituaries for the brothers Polydorus and Lycaon, which in *Memorial* appear

less than forty verses apart and are each preceded by a sea simile and followed by a lion simile. Moreover, as she points out, the mention of Polydorus' bereft father in his obituary resonates with the image of a male lion leading his cubs in the accompanying simile, while the central role given to Lycaon's traumatized mother in his obituary is picked up by the plight of a female lion whose cubs have been stolen. As these insights show, a broader definition of the new context into which Oswald has transplanted a simile can lead to the discovery of larger structural patterns in the poetic design of *Memorial*.

The double-headed approach suggested by Oswald and exemplified by Pache also lends support and nuance to Linne and Niederhoff's provocative interpretation of the first simile in the poem (9-10):

> Like a wind-murmur
> Begins a rumour of waves
> One long note getting louder
> The water breathes a deep sigh
> Like a land-ripple
> When the west wind runs through a field
> Wishing and searching
> Nothing to be found
> The corn-stalks shake their green heads
> *(repeated)*

Since this simile follows after the obituary for Protesilaus, the authors suggest that there is "a kind of dialogue between the wind on the one hand and the sea and the cornfield on the other—as if the wind is saying, 'What about Protesilaus?', to which the waves respond with a deep sigh, and the cornstalks by shaking their heads, indicating that the wind is searching for a man who no longer can be found" (27). Indeed, it seems especially appropriate that the wind should search for Protesilaus among the sea waves, since this hero was killed "jumping to be first ashore" (9) when the Greek armada made its landfall at Troy. Complementarily, the second portion of the double simile with its mention of the corn-stalks can be related to the two subsequent obituaries for Echepolus and Elephenor if we recall a passing remark in the *Iliad* which suggests that the battlefield beneath the walls of

Troy had formerly been a cornfield (21.602-03). The knowledge that the plain where of late Echepolus "mov[ed] out and out among the spears" (10) had, in times of peace, bristled with ears of corn instead of the blades of spears also creates a tension between the simile and the obituary in *Memorial* akin to the bitter irony inherent in the Homeric simile—not used by Oswald—that compares the Greek and Trojan warriors cutting each other down on this very plain to two lines of reapers mowing down a cornfield (11.67-69).

Readers might hesitate to accept the reading proposed by Linne and Niederhoff because it attributes to this simile a very specific connection to the man mourned in the preceding obituary while most of the other similes in *Memorial* tend to be more generic. We should remember, however, that the obituary for Protesilaus itself constitutes an exception to a rule, seeing that he is the only casualty included in *Memorial* whose death does not occur during the period of the war recounted in the *Iliad.* Moreover, the image of the wind going in quest of a dead man in much the same manner as the thoughts of his surviving relatives might do fits well with Oswald's habit of describing nature in anthropomorphic terms. Even the idea of a kind of near-verbal dialogue envisioned by Linne and Niederhoff between the wind and the water that "breathes a deep sigh" and the corn-stalks that "shake their green heads" is not far-fetched, since it receives support from a passage near the end of Part B in which an element of the natural world clearly joins in the human lament for the dead. Here the river Scamander causes the Trojan women doing their laundry on its bank to think of their dead relatives who died in its waters (67):

> Women at the washing pools
> When they hear the river running
> Crying like a human through its chambers
> They remember THERSILOCHUS…
> They remember MYDON…

Homer refers to the washing pools as a landmark that Achilles and Hector pass in their mortal race around Troy: there "the wives of the Trojans and their lovely / daughters washed the clothes to shining, in

the old days / when there was peace, before the coming of the sons of the Achaians" (22.154-57). Oswald, by contrast, has shifted the mention so that it now forms part of the obituary for the multitude of Trojans Achilles killed on his rampage prior to going after Hector. More importantly, she has shifted the chronological perspective as well. In the *Iliad*, the mention of the washing pools occasions a glance backward in time; at the very moment when the drama of the battlefield is about to reach its climax, the epic drives home the horror of war by calling to mind a peace-time scene. Thus Homer emphasizes the contrast between a past lived in peace and a present marred by war. In *Memorial*, however, the reverse is the case: here the washing happens in the present while the carnage is a memory from the past. Evidently, for the Trojan women in *Memorial*, time has come to a stand-still with the result that the distinction between past and present has been erased for them, just as it has for Laothoe, who relives the death of her son every time she looks at the river where he "was washed away" (66). Nor does the grief for the lost human life persist only in the minds of the human survivors; rather, it has been inscribed on the landscape in the crying river and, as Linne and Niederhoff suggest, the wind's futile quest for the dead.

5. Problems of Recontextualization II: The Absence of Context

Oswald has composed verse obituaries for about half of the casualties, while the rest appear only as names in list format (21, 24, 28, 36, 38, 40, 41, 46, 52, 53, 56, 61, 62, 65). Consequently, Linne and Niederhoff's method of seeking for connections within a simile-obituary pair cannot always be applied, because some similes are preceded and/or followed by a bare list of names. It appears, then, that coherence is not Oswald's primary concern; indeed, quite the opposite. According to a statement she made in an interview, she sought to recreate in *Memorial* her own—highly idiosyncratic—experience of Homer's poetry as "things just being little separated blocks next to each other—but not hierarchical" (Jaffa 19). While readers may hesitate to accept Oswald's image as an apt description of the narrative fabric of the *Iliad*, it works very well for *Memorial*, where each chunk of text—be it an obituary, a

list of names, the first or the second iteration of a simile—is set off from its surroundings by a bit of "nontext" in the form of a blank space on the page. Later in the same interview, Oswald makes this very point when she says about the structure of *Memorial* that, instead of "a whole shape spread[ing] over the whole poem, [she] wanted it to have these chopped, side-by-side things" (Jaffa 19). Thus, as Linne and Niederhoff indicate in the title of their article, it is a defining characteristic of *Memorial* that its constituent elements are placed "side by side", but it is equally important that they have been separated and chopped
apart.[3]

Like that dog in the barn
Lying in a darkless half-sleep guarding his sheep
All night there's a lump of growl stuck in his throat
So the fox tip-toeing through the woods
Worries him awake

Like that dog in the barn
Lying in a darkless half-sleep guarding his sheep
All night there's a lump of growl stuck in his throat
So the fox tip-toeing through the woods
Worries him awake

And DEMUCHUS
LAOGONUS
DARDANUS

And TROS begging for his life
But his life was over

Like when two animals have found a little luckiness
Of clear-running water in the mountains
One dies and the other drinks it

Like when two animals have found a little luckiness
Of clear-running water in the mountains
One dies and the other drinks it

And MULIUS and RHIGMOS

[68]

Like on a long beach the rustle of the sea
Opening its multiple folds unfurling waves

Like on a long beach the rustle of the sea
Opening its multiple folds unfurling waves

Laothoë one of Priam's wives
Never saw her son again he was washed away
Now she can't look at the sea she can't think about
The bits unburied being eaten by fishes
He was the tall one the conscientious one
Who stayed out late pruning his father's fig trees
Who was kidnapped who was ransomed
Who walked home barefoot from Arisbe
And rested for twelve days and was killed
LYCAON killed Lycaon unkilled Lycaon
Bending down branches to make wheels
Lycaon kidnapped Lycaon pruning by moonlight
Lycaon naked in a river pleading for his life
Being answered by Achilles No

Like when a lion comes back to a forest's secret rooms
Too late
The hunter has taken her children
She follows the tracks of that man
Into every valley
With her heart's darkness
Growing darker

[69]

Image 1: Blank spaces turn each list, obituary, and simile in Memorial into a discrete chunk of text.

Oswald presents the chunks of texts in *Memorial* in such a way as to give all equal importance, but she helps the readers/listeners to rec-

ognize a pattern in their relationship to each other by means of two different connectors: "and" and "like."[4] The fact that she uses "like" to introduce almost all of her similes has raised the eyebrows of Logan and other grammar mavens among her critics, because in many instances the correct connective would be "as." But switching back and forth between "like" and "as" would have compromised the effect of the repetition, and moreover, as Oxford Professor of Poetry Simon Armitage demonstrates in a lecture on the similes of Elizabeth Bishop, a more flexible use of "like" has precedent not only in colloquial speech but also in modern poetry. Still, Linne and Niederhoff's conclusion holds true: Oswald's use of the word in *Memorial* is radical in its looseness. Picking up on Oswald's own metaphor from her introduction, in which she calls *Memorial* a "bipolar" poem (in the sense the term is understood in physics rather than in psychology), we may think of the word "like" as establishing a kind of force field between the world of the battlefield on the one hand, and the world of nature and peacetime activity on the other.

In contrast to the syntactic and semantic looseness with which Oswald uses the word "like" at the beginning of the similes, she gives the connector "and" at the start of obituaries and lists of names a very specific function. Since "and" does not usually begin a sentence, its occurrence as the first word of a chunk of poetry no fewer than twenty-six times throughout *Memorial* is remarkable.[5] This special type of "and" occurs both at the start of obituaries (63) and of lists (61):

> And IPHITUS who was born in the snow
> Between two tumbling trout-stocked rivers
> Died on the flat dust
> Not far from DEMOLEON and HIPPODAMAS
>
> And HIPPOTHOUS
> SCHEDIUS
> PHORCYS
> LEOCRITUS

While translators of Homer will sometimes start a sentence with "and" in imitation of the ancient epic's narrative style, which links

almost every sentence to the preceding one by means of a connecting particle, Oswald employs the word as a link not to what comes immediately before it, but as a bridge to the previous death across the intervening blank spaces and simile. This interpretation is confirmed by her even more unconventional use of "and" as the last word of a list (21), whereby she clearly signals to the readers/listeners that more entries are yet to follow. In this manner, then, she ties together the deaths on the battlefield into a continuous, albeit interrupted sequence.

As Elizabeth Minchin reminds us, lists are an important element in the *Iliad* as well as in *Memorial* (204-07). The most notable example is the so-called Catalog of Ships, a survey of the contingents of the Greek and Trojan forces along with their leaders early on in the epic, which, according to the late novelist Umberto Eco, constitutes the prototype for one of two fundamental artistic principles. As he outlines in the book accompanying his 2009 exhibit, *The Infinity of Lists*, at the Louvre, the description of Achilles' shield near the end of the *Iliad* exemplifies a "closed system" or "form", used to depict "a thing understood" by means of a "poetics of the everything included." By contrast, a list or catalog establishes an "open system" by means of a "poetics of the *etcetera*," in an attempt to grapple with the unknown by listing its (always infinite) attributes (7-18). The reason why Eco sees the Catalog of Ships as an instance of this latter group lies in the fact that only the number of the leaders listed is finite, whereas the number of the implied followers is unknown. Although it seems doubtful that an ancient reader would have shared Eco's perception of the Catalog of Ships in the *Iliad* as incomplete because it does not list the common soldiers, it raises an interesting question in regard to *Memorial.*

Since the sequence of deaths starts with Protesilaus, who is said to have been "the first to die" (9), and ends with Hector, whose death and funeral are widely known to conclude the *Iliad*, readers/listeners may well come away with the impression that *Memorial* reflects the evidence contained in its ancient model completely and correctly. It takes a meticulous, not to say pedantic juxtaposition of the two works

to reveal some subtle deviations (Hahnemann, "Book" 29). More importantly though, Oswald pursues a strategy of including persons in her poem who are not mentioned in the *Iliad* by making their absence conspicuous. For example, by saying about a dead man that "nothing is known of his mother" (10), she draws attention to the fact that in the epic the account of this hero's family, like that of most others, makes reference to his father but keeps silent about his mother. Thus, "under Oswald's gaze, apparent absence takes on the quality of presence" (Farrier 7). Arguing along similar lines, in the remainder of this article I suggest that the blank spaces in *Memorial* serve not only to create "little separated blocks," but also to leave room in the interstices for casualties who cannot be mentioned by name.

Image 2: Like *Memorial*, contemporary monuments often make use of conspicuous absences; here the subterranean set of empty shelves commemorating the Nazi book burning on Bebelplatz in Berlin. © Carolin Hahnemann

6. The Nameless Dead

In all there are three groups of nameless dead whom Oswald conjures by means of clues in the surrounding text to become part of the poem in this negative way. The first group consists of the very men whom Eco had in mind when he pronounced the Iliadic Catalog of Ships incomplete: the warriors of lower social status as opposed to the heroic leaders. Oswald makes oblique reference to them when she mentions that Protesilaus commanded a contingent of "forty black ships" (9). At first, one might pass over this detail as a gratuitous embellishment intended to lend the modern poem a bit of Homeric flavor, but the fact that it occurs a second time only one page later in the obituary for Elephenor (10) argues against such an easy dismissal. If we follow Thucydides' famous estimate regarding the average number of warriors per Greek ship in the Trojan War, each of these leaders had no fewer than 3400 men under his command. Evidently, then, the conventional label that dubs Protesilaus and Elephenor "minor warriors," for example in the title of Gisela Strasburger's important study, is misleading; although they occupy only a handful of verses in the *Iliad*, they are nevertheless members of the privileged class with high social status. Even if we assume that these leaders, fighting in the front row as the heroic code demanded, died in disproportionately greater numbers than their followers, the double mention of the forty ships at the start of *Memorial* leads the readers/listeners to suspect that, besides the named leaders, many of their nameless followers must have died as well. This inference is confirmed later in the poem in the obituary for the Thracian King Rhesus, where we learn that "[t]welve anonymous Thracians were killed in their sleep / Before their ghosts had time to keep hold of their names" (31). The pointed reference to the dead men's namelessness draws attention to, and thereby transcends, a limitation to the feasibility of *Memorial* as a commemorative endeavor: the roll call of the dead presented in the modern poem cannot be complete because in many, even most, cases the dead man's name is not recorded in its ancient source.

Close attention to the way Oswald has shaped the first two obituaries also reveals a second group of dead that are conspicuously absent from the poem. The number of casualties listed in the *Iliad* is restricted both in terms of the narrative lens, which always focuses on just one or two areas of the battlefield while making it clear that much killing is going on simultaneously elsewhere, and of narrated time, since the epic covers only a brief period near the end of the Trojan War. Oswald goes beyond the chronological boundaries of the plot of the *Iliad* when she includes, exceptionally, an obituary for Protesilaus, whose death took place when the Greek fleet first landed at Troy at the onset of the war. Already in the next pair of obituaries, however, she specifies that Elephenor was killed "in the ninth year of the war" (10) and, resorting again to her strategy of emphasizing a detail through quick verbatim repetition, she reiterates the phrase in the obituary of Simoisius (11). Obviously, in the intervening years of continuous warfare many Greeks and Trojans must have died, and although we can learn nothing about them from the *Iliad*, their absence is made palpable and thus becomes a kind of presence in *Memorial*.

Finally, the series of casualties in *Memorial* transcends the confines of the *Iliad* also in the other direction, namely by reaching into the future. Admittedly, the *Iliad*, too, foreshadows future events, most importantly Achilles' imminent death, which comes into view with ever greater precision as the epic progresses. In *Memorial*, thanks to Oswald's omission of the Homeric plot, the narrative never turns away from the battlefield, so that the inexorably mounting death count eventually threatens to overwhelm not only the audience but the narrator as well. Toward the end of Part B, in the midst of a sequence of obituaries that get increasingly shorter until they are whittled down to a list of names, the narrator exclaims meta-poetically: "And LYKOPHRON / And KLEITOS it goes on and on" (53). Once again, Oswald repeats the key phrase soon after, in this case on the very same page, now embedded into the subsequent simile: "every living twig / Is wiped out white with snow it goes on and on." It seems that, just as it is impossible to make out the features of a land-

scape covered by snow, so also the narrator can no longer keep up with the killings. In light of this exclamation, it is not surprising that after sixty pages chronicling 215 deaths in Part B, in Part C the fabric of the poem thins into a sequence of uninterrupted similes, printed one to a page, and then ceases altogether.

Just prior to this final vanishing act, however, the poem contains a pregnant pause in the form of a large blank space: after the obituary for Hector, the rest of the page is left empty both in the English and in the American edition. Linne and Niederhoff mask this fact when they state that the simile of the generation of leaves "accompanies" Hector's obituary (35). But the empty space deserves to be taken seriously, and all the more so since it has a counterpart at the end of the litany of names in Part A, after the final entry "HECTOR": "[T]he blank page after those two final bold syllables is heartbreaking," comments Womack ("*Memorial*"), "The rest is silence." Indeed, Hamlet's last words capture well the impression of the blank space on the audience at a recitation of *Memorial*, who will experience it as a pause. For the readers, however, who encounter the blank space visually, it may bring to mind the uninscribed surfaces on a new kind of war memorial that has emerged lately in the United States in response to the War on Terror.

Monuments like the Middle East Conflicts Wall in Marseilles, IL (permanent version dedicated in 2004), the Hillcrest War on Terror Memorial in Hermitage, PA (dedicated in 2005), and the Middle East Northwood Gratitude and Honor Memorial in Irvine, CA (permanent version dedicated in 2010) share several features in common: they all originated through private initiatives, they list the US soldiers who have died in the conflict in the Middle East, and, most importantly, they leave room for ongoing updates with new names to be added. This last feature in particular sets them apart from the countless monuments containing casualty lists that dot cities and cemeteries all over the Western world; as a rule, those war memorials were erected not during the conflict in question but after it had been concluded. In fact, in the United States the law specifically mandates a ten-year wait

period after the end of a military conflict before it can be commemorated in a monument on the National Mall. It is all the more remarkable, then, that in August of 2017, Congress decided to waive this requirement in the case of a proposed national memorial for the Global War on Terror, thereby allowing planning and preparations to commence immediately. The implication of this decision is clear. What might once have been regarded as a series of several separate wars is now being viewed as a single drawn-out conflict flaring up again and again in different locations. Thus the smooth surfaces waiting to receive the names of future casualties on this new kind of memorial bear grim testimony to the conviction that, as far as the War on Terror is concerned, there is no end in sight.

Image 3: Inscribed stele of the Northwood Gratitude and Honor Memorial in Irvine, CA, with space left blank for the names of future casualties to be added.

Can we draw a similar conclusion about the Trojan War from Oswald's choice to leave a bigger-than-usual blank space at the end of Part B of *Memorial*? We know from the mythological record that many more Greeks and Trojans were killed after Hector, and it is only rea-

sonable to think of the later victims as a third group of nameless casualties in analogy to the two groups proposed above. But maybe that is not enough. More radically, the phrase that the killing "just goes on and on" can be taken as an invitation to think of the blank space at the end of Part B as a place-holder for the names of every man killed in war since that first mythical conflict, the Trojan War, until today.

The idea that Oswald might have intended the blank space at the end of Part B as a way to connect the Trojan War to later military conflicts down to our own time fits well with other aspects of her poetic practice. For example, she injects splinters of the modern world into the obituaries and similes by using anachronisms such as a "lift door" (13), "tin-open[ing] (17), astronauts (32), parachutes (42), and a motorbike (69). Moreover, as we saw in the discussion of the women by the washing-pools above, Oswald's presentation of time is kaleidoscopic. Pache sensitively explores the poet's technique of connecting the dead from the past to the audience in the present, including her use of narrative tenses and instances in which the narrator addresses the audience (175-78). For example, Protesilaus' death happened in a distant past "thousands of years" ago (9), while "the stump of Hypsenor's hand [that l]ies somewhere on the battlefield" (16) seems frozen in time. Above we encountered the latter as the perspective of the traumatized relatives, townspeople, and the local landscape, but it even extends to the reader, who becomes a vicarious witness to the violence when being told that "you can see" the hole in Echepolus' helmet where the fatal weapon entered his skull (10). Cumulatively, these techniques add to the poem's overwhelming emotional effect; by bringing the deaths from the mythical past into the present in this way, Oswald renders it impossible for the readers/listeners to keep their distance.

As is clear from the above analysis, Oswald's process of creation in *Memorial* at times constitutes "an act of creation by decontextualization and recontextualization," as Linne and Niederhoff suggest (22), but at other times it remains an act of creation by decontextualization

without recontextualization. Unquestionably, the most important instance of the latter strategy lies in the poet's omission of the epic plot. Confronted with a series of unconnected biographical vignettes instead of a continuous narrative, the readers/listeners are no longer able to tell what the war is about or even, in most cases, which side a dead man was fighting on. This omission sets *Memorial* apart as an act of commemoration, calling into question its very status as a war memorial, because it erases the boundary on which any war is based, the boundary between friend and foe. Recently for the first time, a public monument was erected that entails a similar act of posthumous reconciliation. *L'Anneau de la Mémoire*, which was unveiled in 2014 near one of the WW1 cemeteries in the Somme department of France, provides an alphabetical tally of the names of the 579,606 soldiers from both sides of the conflict that lost their lives in this region without any reference to their nationality. They are carved on an enormous ellipse, placed precariously on sloped ground as if to show that the peaceful unity between the countries formerly at war, which it took so long to achieve, could break apart again in a moment.

Image 4: *L'Anneau de la Mémoire:* The monumental ellipse on sloping ground. © Carolin Hahnemann

Image 5: *L'Anneau de la Mémoire:* Names of casualties without any indication of nationality © Carolin Hahnemann

At the end of his famous poem "The Young Dead Soldiers" Archibald MacLeish has the dead tell this to posterity: "We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning. / We were young, they say. We have died. Remember us" (9-10). Amid the current memorial boom in

western countries, including the United States, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, Oswald's *Memorial* and *L'Anneau de la Mémoire* stand out as examples of a radically new way of remembering the casualties of war. Whether they can also help us to find new ways of giving meaning to their deaths remains to be seen.

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NOTES

[1]My page numbers for *Memorial* differ from those provided by Linne and Niederhoff because theirs refer to the original English edition (2011) and mine to the American one (2012). However, the text and use of blank space is the same in both.

[2]Out of a total of sixty-five similes in Part B, only five are not repeated: the simile about the traveler and the simile about the farm boy that comes after it, which however are so similar to one another as to appear like close siblings albeit not identical twins (38); the simile about a deer being devoured by predators, which is only partially repeated (44); the simile about a donkey glutting himself in a cornfield (51-52), which instead of a second iteration is followed by a blank space; and the very short simile about a whirlwind unleashed in the sky (54).

[3]Oswald's phrase for Homer's narrative style bears a striking resemblance to the one Proust used to describe Flaubert's—"les choses […] sont venues se ranger les unes à côté des autres"—which Annegret Maack quotes in her contribution to the debate of A. S. Byatt's *Angels and Insects* in this journal (286). More broadly, Maack's observations regarding the differences between analogy and metaphor also resemble the ones drawn by Linne and Niederhoff between Homer's and Oswald's use of simile. However, it is important to note that in *Memorial* the chunks of poetry are *not* contiguous, either literally or figuratively.

[4]Comparison with W. H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles" may be helpful here. Like *Memorial*, this poem constitutes an antiphonal response to the *Iliad* in which each of two strands of materials is marked by a repeated phrase. The images of a civilization at peace amid an unspoiled natural landscape that Thetis expects Hephaestus to put on the shield (and which he does put on it according to the *Iliad*) begin with "She looked over his shoulder / For […]," while the bleak scenes of a world bereft of all beauty and sense by the degradations of modern warfare which he actually has put there start with "But there on the shining metal" or "But there on the shining shield." Thus, the relationship between the two strands of material, so elusive in Oswald, could not be clearer in Auden.

[5]11x2, 16, 21, 27x2, 28, 38x3, 40, 41, 48x2, 52, 53x3, 56, 61, 63x2, 65x3, 68. In addition, there are three instances of obituaries recounting more than one death in which initial "and" opens the account of the second one, but without an intervening blank space (12, 20, 24).

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Revisiting the Aesopic Race in the Late Twentieth Century: New Facets of Speed in Vikram Seth's "The Hare and The Tortoise"*

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In 1991, Vikram Seth published *Beastly Tales: From Here and There*, composed of ten fables. Seth says in his "Introduction" that "[o]f the ten tales told here, the first two come from India, the next two from China, the next two from Greece, and the next two from the Ukraine. The final two came directly to me from the Land of Gup" (i). In his comic re-telling of the Aesopic tale "The Hare and The Tortoise," Seth expands Aesop's short fable into 258 lines of verse narrative. He does so by re-contextualizing it in a modern setting, which he humorously calls "the land of Runnyrhyme":

> Once or twice upon a time
> In the land of Runnyrhyme
> Lived a hare both hot and heady
> And a tortoise slow and steady. (1-4)

The reader easily recognizes the familiar figures of the "heady hare" and "steady tortoise." The very first line of Seth's poem parodies the clichéd beginning sentence of traditional tales, and underpins, at the same time, its link to the classical text. However, through the word "twice," it points to its status as a rewriting. The humorous tone of the poem and its parodic intent become obvious in these first four lines with the modification of the phrase "once of upon a time," the playful sound of Runnyrhyme and the rhythm of the rhyming couplets, which sounds, to our modern ears, a bit mechanical.[1] Seth gives us a hint about his original touches with the specification of the setting.

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at https://www.connotations.de/debate/re-telling-aesopic-fables-in-the-21st-century/.

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Thus, the first stanza instantiates the overall structure of the poem: it both aligns itself to a tradition by rewriting an Aesopic fable and signals its difference from the source text from the very beginning, through the words "twice" and "Runnyrhyme," drawing attention in one humorous blow to the race in Aesop's fable and to Seth's choice of verse form. Seth depicts Runnyrhyme as a modern setting with contemporary modes of transportation, communication and information systems, which reshape social relations and construct new criteria for victory.

Although they abound in modern references and offer a critical commentary on present-day issues, Seth's fables in verse, unlike his fiction, have received relatively little attention. Existing scholarship on his fables falls roughly into two opposite camps as to whether Seth's original contributions to the tales provide the reader with any new and significant insights: M. K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan, for instance, argue that Seth "fails to invest these traditional tales with a new, contemporary significance" (73). In the other camp, there are two scholars who delve into the socio-political aspects of Seth's fables. Samarth Singhal examines the juxtaposition of text and image in *Beastly Tales* with regard to how it depicts and elaborates on the plight of postcolonial nation states, and thus invests them with a contemporary significance (61-62). Seth's engagement with gender politics in the fables has also come under scrutiny: analyzing Seth's fables from a queer perspective, Bianca Jackson asserts that Seth's animal tales show how the norms of heteropatriarchal society suppress homosexuality and pave the way for queerphobic communities (172). Departing from these approaches, this article argues that Seth's adaptation of the Aesopic tale "The Hare and The Tortoise" offers a send-up of the environment created by modern technologies and lays bare their working mechanisms in doggerel verse.[2] My contention will be that, in "The Hare and The Tortoise," Vikram Seth gives the Aesopic race a comical bent and plays on the notions of speed and victory to problematize the effect of fast technologies on the modern individual.

The Fable and Its Protagonists: Ancient and Modern

A fable is a cautionary narrative in which talking animals exhibit human vices and follies, and the fabulist makes the reader laugh at them. As a genre, it is characterized by allegory, hence the function of the surface action is to highlight a didactic secondary meaning. In his definition of the Aesopic fable, the rhetorician and Alexandrian sophist Auilus Theon emphasizes this feature of the genre: the fable is "a fictitious story picturing a truth" (qtd. in Perry xx). Many recent critics have made use of this brief definition. For instance, Ben Edwin Perry focuses on how Theon's formula suggests indirect and inexplicit ways of saying something, thus pointing to the allegorical structure of the genre (xxi). In the same vein, H. J. Blackham asserts that the word "picturing" in Theon's definition "implies a metaphorical representation of 'truth,'" denoting all the things happening in the external world (xi). As seen in its various definitions, the fable relies on indirect representation in an allegorical fashion.[3] Personification, as the principal technique of allegory (Baldick 7), is the figure of speech that enables the fabulist to portray situations and events from human life in a non-human context. These stories are often called "beast fables," in which animal characters stand for human types, foregrounding a single aspect or dominant motive.[4]

Likewise, in Aesop's "The Hare and The Tortoise," which is often translated into English in straightforward prose,[5] the reader does not encounter well-developed characters. The fable draws the reader's attention to the hare's crass and condescending attitude towards the hardworking tortoise:

> A hare was one day making fun of a tortoise for being so slow upon his feet. "Wait a bit," said the tortoise. "I'll run a race with you, and I'll wager that I win." "Oh, well," replied the hare, who was much amused at the idea, "let's try and see." (Aesop 229)

The hare not only mocks the tortoise for his natural slowness but also congratulates himself upon his own fast pace. At this point, the fable relies on the physical features associated with these two animals, hence they are basically depicted as the physically faster and the

slower. Taking this as a starting point, Aesop's fable initially presents a corporeal conceptualization of speed.

Triggered by the hare's disrespectful and abusive behavior, the tortoise challenges the hare and self-confidently suggests that they should run a race. The hare accepts the deal and cannot understand why the tortoise, in such a self-assured way, dares to claim that he will be the winner. The self-confidence of Aesop's hare, in turn, epitomizes the value placed on speed: faster than the tortoise, the hare views his pace as an empowering asset that will make him the winner.[6] When the race starts, the hare immediately outruns the tortoise. He is so comfortable in his own skin that "he thought he might as well have a rest. So down he lay and fell fast asleep" (Aesop 229). In the meantime, the tortoise goes on doggedly and slowly, and, thanks to its persistence and self-discipline, wins the race. When the hare wakes up, it is too late for him to catch up with the tortoise. By making the tortoise win, Aesop breaks the illusion that "speed is power," and the reader encounters the critique of this ideology in Aesop's fable: to be proud of your speed may make you the loser at the end. In Aesop's narrative, "[s]low and steady wins the race" (229).

Although the slower is the winner in Aesop's race, the competition between these two animals shows that speed was a matter of prestige in classical times as it is today. However, Aesop's understanding of speed in this fable is solely corporeal in the sense that the idea of running a race denotes a physical, athletic, and competitive activity in which the fastest one gains the victory. The winner's achievement is a notable one, especially if one acknowledges the Panhellenic significance attributed to athletics in classical antiquity, particularly with reference to the Olympic Games. These athletic contests constructed the cult of the competitive athletic body as "an icon of power and social rank" (Garrison 7-8).[7] Aesop's fable challenges this mentality by emphasizing hard work and discipline.

Unlike Aesop, Seth spends time on developing his two protagonists. Yet, he does not alter their dominant traits and motive, that is winning the footrace. In Aesop's fable, the hare's decision to sleep in the

middle of the race, for instance, not only shows his self-confidence but also implies his laziness. Seth builds on this portrayal of the Aesopic hare by expanding it:

> When at noon the hare awoke
> She would tell herself a joke
> Squeal with laughter, roll about,
> Eat her eggs and sauerkraut,
> Then pick up the phone and babble,
> —'Gibble-gabble, gibble-gabble'—
> To her friends the mouse and the mole
> And the empty-headed vole:
> 'Hey, girls, did you know the rat
> Was rejected by the bat?' (5-14)

Instead of the early morning, Seth's modern hare wakes up lazily at noon, and she starts her day by cheering herself up with a joke. Her quotidian activities show that fast technologies are very much part of the hare's lifestyle. After having breakfast, she calls her friends to pass on the latest gossip. The friends are the mouse, the mole, and the vole, all classified as rodents, known for their strong teeth and jaws. Relying on this natural feature of these animals, Seth humorously attributes a mouth-related human activity to them. The hare has a wide and active social circle, which is composed of idle friends (as the word "gibble-gabble" indicates). Not only the trivial content of their talk, but also the medium, the telephone in this case, lays bare the character of the hare: she is always interacting with others to keep herself updated about any new matters, just as communication technologies encourage the modern individual to do.[8]

In the next stanza, Seth builds on Aesop's representation of the tortoise, who, unlike the hare, does not have a social network. Instead, he is a rather isolated figure, who tries to protect the older model of the small family. The reader notes Seth's humorous take on Aesop's self-disciplined tortoise: after waking up, the modern tortoise "[d]aily counted all his toes / Twice or three times to ensure / There were neither less nor more" (26-28). In a rather miserly fashion, he also checks the savings in his bank account and even counts his grandsons,

Ed, Ned and Fred, to whom he speaks the same words of wisdom over and over again:

> 'Eddy, Neddy, Freddy—boys—
> You must never break your toys.
> You must often floss your gums.
> You must always do your sums.
> Buy your own house; don't pay your rent.
> Save your funds at six per cent.
> Major in accountancy,
> And grow up to be like me.
> Listen, Eddy, Neddy, and Freddy—
> You be slow—but you be steady.' (35-44)

All these recommendations, including the moral of "slow and steady" that echoes Aesop, indicate that the tortoise promotes working diligently and saving money, whereas other animals are the willing participants of the consumer culture that characterizes late twentieth-century's accelerated lifestyle. For instance, the beasts of Runnyrhyme, who all "[g]athered to behold the race" at the appointed time (95), "[g]obbled popcorn, guzzled beer" (97). Both of the verbs Seth employs denote fast consumption, a habit modern consumer capitalism encourages continuously. The tortoise, on the other hand, warns his grandsons against this threat. They should not break their current toys so as not to spend money on new ones and are supposed to save their money. But his traditional values do not ensure him against errors, as he advises them to buy their own house rather than pay rent. This recommendation sounds humorous especially when one thinks of a tortoise's capability to carry his home on his back. By utilizing this unique feature of an animal and ironically presenting the tortoise in need of a home, Seth leads the reader to reflect upon how modern consumer capitalism creates unnecessary demands.

Juxtaposing two contrasting types, Seth develops Aesop's protagonists by underlining the difference between the pace and variety of their social interactions. While the hare uses modern communication technologies, we do not witness the tortoise using a phone. The reader sees that the hare can reach a wide community, whereas the tortoise

communicates solely with his grandsons. Seth's fable appears to reflect Marshall McLuhan's argument in *The Medium is the Massage* that speed technology fosters unification and involvement, encouraging people to construct new forms of interacting social networks, paralleling these new media (McLuhan 8). This leads to the destruction of "the older, traditional ideas of private, isolated thoughts and actions" (McLuhan 12). Seth's two characters stand in opposition to each other in this respect. Moreover, the tortoise's strategy for managing his financial sources by relying upon archaic methods of calculation (like telling his toes) is linked to the traditional banking functions in the nineteenth century. He does not refer to any modern financial services, which in 1991, when Seth published his fables, were already in use. In this respect, it is evident that the tortoise cannot keep pace with developments the twentieth-century understanding of speed has triggered in the field of economy. Thereby, Seth presents the tortoise as a character trying "to do today's job with yesterday's tools—with yesterday's concepts" (9), in McLuhan's words. Seth extends Aesop's portrayal of the tortoise as an absurdly self-disciplined character through exaggeration, so much so that he turns into an obsessive figure. Whereas Aesop depicts the tortoise almost as a role model who has overcome difficulties through hard work, Seth's modern tortoise is not a sympathetic figure.

The Footrace in Runnyrhyme: From the Corporeal to the Technological Understanding of Speed

In his re-handling of the rising action, which triggers the competition between the two protagonists, Seth depicts a dialogue between the hare and her friend, the mouse. Meeting by the Fauna Fountain, they talk about the "pathetic" and "appalling" (58) pace of the tortoise's walk and even make fun of him by saying "[h]e won't even get here in an hour / If he uses *turtle power*'" (59-60; emphasis mine). This reference to the 1990 film *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, directed by Steve Barron, is another modern element Seth introduces into the story. Revolving around the adventures of a team of turtles and their

rat master Splinter, the movie shows these animals as mutants who have been turned into their present state (heroic intelligent creatures with agency) due to toxic waste. The allusion to this movie points to the enduring human interest in talking beasts, dating back to classical fables. It also informs the reader that Seth's hare and her friends are familiar with popular media culture. This is of great significance in terms of how the hare will later strategically manipulate the mass media for her own interests.

Like Aesop's hare, speed is something to boast about for the modern hare, who scoffs at the tortoise and yells: "'Teddy Tortoise, go and grab / Tram or train or taxi-cab!'" (61-62). While the challenge and ridicule in Aesop's race is linked to bodily speed, Seth's hare suggests that the tortoise had better use one of the mechanical means of transportation, functional in covering distances in short periods of time. McLuhan interprets the modern individual's relation to such technologies by stating that "all media are extensions of some human faculty—psychic or physical" (26), and the wheel, in that respect, stands "as an extension of foot" (30-32). A comparison between Aesop and Seth makes clear the shift from agile feet (the speed of the body) to wheeled vehicles (technological speed). It is evident that, in this modern rewriting, the theme of speed not only refers to the natural pace of animals, as it does in Aesop's version, but also to technologically produced and enhanced speed. In this respect, Seth's rewriting of the Aesopic fable does not merely transfer the story to the modern age. As the narrative progresses, the significance of these modern technologies over the course of events becomes clearer, which points to how Seth, entering into a dialogue with Aesop, problematizes the modern conception of speed.

Seth follows the basic movements in Aesop's plot, and, as is the case with Aesop's fable, the tortoise responds to the hare's condescending attitude by challenging her. Acknowledging "hares exceed / Tortoises by far in speed" (77-78), Seth's tortoise still claims that he will beat out the hare "slowly" and "surely" (81). He dares the hare to run a race, saying "'[c]hoose your place, and I'll be ready. / Choose your time,

and make it soon'" (88-89). The reader again observes the repetitive tendency of the tortoise, which Seth has already presented in an extravagant manner to comic effect in the third stanza. In these two successive lines, Seth builds on this humorous presentation through two figures of speech, namely an anaphora and parallelism. They highlight the character's monotonous tone by mirroring his obsessive actions at the formal level of the poem through repetition.

In the next stanza, the reader sees both protagonists on the race-course, preparing for the race in very different ways. The tortoise, believing that the race depends upon physical speed, is limbering up by flexing his toes (100). Like an athlete, he is engaged with the condition of his body. The hare, on the other hand, appears in her "silk nightie" (102). (The reader is not told what the tortoise wears.) In ancient Olympic footraces, if it was not an armed race, athletes were nude. The clothes of the modern hare suggest that she is actually putting on a show for the media. Seth's portrayal of the hare as a female character is another original touch. The gendering of this protagonist bears special significance as Seth expects the reader to recognize her as a representation of a popular media figure and laugh at the way she imitates twentieth century women celebrities coming to the forefront by manipulating their female sexuality. Introduced as "hot" at the very beginning of the poem (3), the hare does not represent the classical notion of the athletic body, arousing respect as it *does* something, but a modern one, admired due to its self-fashioning in accordance with late twentieth-century taste. This is the reason why the reporters seek to record the attractive hare's words, not the tortoise's, to broadcast them on *Rhyme & Runny News*. Although the occasion, the reason why all these beasts are gathered there, is the race, the press is not interested in it as an event with two contenders but only in the hare, who has already won the race from the reporters' point of view:

> 'What's at stake besides the honour?'
> 'Is the tortoise, Ma'am, a goner?'
> 'Why did you agree to run?'
> 'Is the race already won?' (107-10)

In these lines, the rhyming couplet serves the humorous tone of the poem as the shift from the word "honour" to "goner" stands as an example of bathos, which signals a move from the classical notion of glory, associated with competitors in the ancient games, to a modern informal usage referring to those doomed to lose.[9] Challenging the classical concept of honor observed in Aesop's text, reporters pose a question about material gain. Moreover, all the questions suggest that the hare is more than a favorite competitor, she is almost already the winner before the race even starts, and the tortoise, the so-called "goner," has no chance but to lose. What the hare says before the race supports this idea: "Who will win? Why - can't you tell? / Read the lipstick on his shell.'/ There she'd smeared a scarlet '2'" (121-23). Claiming that the tortoise can only come second, the hare employs her scarlet lipstick as a weapon to insult the slow and steady tortoise. This scene of using the lipstick as a pen achieves a comic effect by reminding the reader of the clichéd scenes in modern movies where an attractive woman uses a lipstick to write on a mirror. The jocular use of the lipstick suggests that the tortoise can only be a mirror reflecting the hare. That she risks the cup she won when she became Miss Honeybun (119-20) further supports her endeavor to be in the spotlight as an icon of beauty and sexuality. The press's perpetual interest in the hare and its complete neglect of the tortoise allow for such an interpretation. The hare's flaunting her sexuality and putting forward the cup she won in a beauty pageant reveal that she is aware of the working mechanisms of consumer capitalism, which has added economic connotations to what "running a race" means in the twentieth century. Triggered by and leading to the speeding up of the tempo of modern life, the strategies of capitalism, including fetishizing, creating demand, and exploiting desire, are conducted mainly through the media and the new technologies (see Harvey 343). Likewise, Seth's hare employs such strategies to exploit the press for her own interest, which shows that she is not interested in the footrace per se. Rather, the competition supplies her with a chance to present herself as a modern media figure.

The significance of the press and its use of fast technologies are foregrounded while Seth portrays the referee as a passive figure, a non-entity, which is a satirical gibe at modern contests held under a media blitz. He mentions a "secretary bird" (126) briefly at the beginning of the race, who just "[g]ently murmur[s]: '[i]t's begun. / Ma'am, perhaps you ought to run'" (127-28). In Aesop's fable, the first thing the hare and the tortoise do when they plan this race is to find a third animal, an objective eye to decide on the route of the race and to announce the winner at the end. Ironically, the fox, an archetype for his tricky and cunning nature, is chosen as the referee who is expected not to connive in any unfair dealings but to be unbiased. Thus, only three animals appear in Aesop's fable. Seth's story, on the other hand, is full of other animals, most of which are the passive audience watching a spectacle.[10] In classical Greece, visual information was privileged so much so that "their verb *oida*, 'I know' means literary 'I have seen'" (Garrison 10). Aesop's fox stands as the proof of this mentality, seeing who has crossed the line first is enough for him to know the winner. In Seth's version, instead of a referee who actually "sees" and announces who the winner is, the press holds the authority position to announce who the winner is even before the race takes place.

For the tortoise, running a race denotes its traditional meaning, which is evident in his emphasis on time and place in his challenge (88-89). He takes this event seriously as a sports competition and murmurs he has "got to win this race" (136). The narrative voice depicts his struggle by saying "the tortoise plodded on / Like a small automaton" (133-34). This simile refers to how the tortoise, unlike the hare, fails to pay attention to anything other than the race, such as the press, but stays focused on his target. It also reveals a similarity between the hare's and the speaker's use of language as they both refer to mechanical technologies to foreground the natural slowness of the tortoise. This parallelism signals the outdatedness of the tortoise's methods in the age of speed technologies.

The hare does not even run when the race begins with a gunshot and prefers to become part of the show. Ostentatiously, she has changed into satin shorts "[c]ut for fashion more than sports" (138). After two hours, the hare realizes that it is two o'clock, time for her beauty sleep and when another beast asks her about the race, she replies "'[t]he race will keep. / Really, it's already won.'/ And she stretched out in the sun" in a self-assured manner (142-44). The hare implies that she does not have to cover a certain area within a time limit, which is the age-old time and space criterion to win a footrace. Attentive to the dynamics of her own day, Seth's hare does not rely on her bodily speed, as Aesop's hare does, but on the mass media, which offers a virtual landscape, instead of the racetrack, and to which she strategically delegates her physical speed. The press, in Seth's narrative, shows how technologically produced and enhanced speed promises to go beyond the conventional limits of time and space. Moreover, it provides the modern individual with a new temporality: the hare does not wait for the end of the race to know that she will be the winner, no matter what she does.

The End of the Race: Who is the "Real" Winner?

Sleeping for two hours, the hare wakes up and asks where the tortoise is. Learning that he is "[o]ut of sight," she starts to run at "her rocket-fuelled pace" (151). Seth once again offers a comparison with technological speed. Yet, when she sees a field full of various mushrooms, the hare cannot resist the temptation and stops to eat them. The persona notes that devils-of-the-dell, a kind of mushroom the hare eats, must have "a cerebral effect" (160). Soon, the intoxicated hare starts to sing out of tune and shouts "[b]oring, boring, life is boring. / Birdies, help me go exploring. / Let's go off the beaten track" (169-71). The scene is of great importance in the way it comments on the hare's numbing of her senses. She finds this experience, which causes her to lose touch with reality, amusing. Although she must follow the path they agreed upon, the hare suggests that she will embark on a different route. Meanwhile, the tortoise continues to plod on, and he

sees the finish line and the golden cup. Hearing the gunshot, which announces that he has won, the tortoise "[c]lasp[s] the cup with quiet pride, / And [sits] down, self-satisfied" (199-200). Instead of uttering a simple, brief and telling statement like Aesop's tortoise, Seth's protagonist plans to speak at length in praise of his ethos. In the same way that he preaches to his three grandsons, the self-disciplined tortoise would like to advocate the notions of hard work, regularity, slowness, and steadiness against all the things the hare stands for: pride, laziness, ostentatiousness, and of course the speed she has boasted of.

> Now she'll learn that sure and slow
> Is the only way to go—
> That you can't rise to the top
> With a skip, a jump, and a hop—
> That you've got to hatch your eggs,
> That you've got to count your legs,
> That you've got to do your duty,
> Not to depend on verve and beauty. (207-14)

Giving voice to the internal monologue of the tortoise, the poem again employs an anaphora to parallel his repetitive habits and monotonous tone. However, the tortoise does not get to make the speech as it is again the hare that attracts the press corps at the end of the race, who say "'[o]h, Miss Hare, you're appealing / When you're sweating'" (223-24). They find something alluring in her even when she is the loser. A powerful media mogul, namely Will Wolf, fills a gorgeous cup "[w]ith huge rubies to the brim" (230), epitomizing extravagance and lavishness, and tells the hare that "'[i]n my eyes you win'" (234). Thus, Seth's poem shows that one cannot rely on the merits of the case, indeed cannot find justice done in the modern world, whereas the virtuous and hardworking competitor is rewarded in Aesop's fable. Will Wolf's words indicate that he can use the power of the mass media he holds in his hands to alter the audience's perception with regard to who the real winner is. This brings to mind the hare's relation to reality in the field of mushrooms and her decision to take

an uncommon path. Like the hare, the audience is out of touch with reality in the sense that what has happened in the footrace does not matter. Although she does not outrun the tortoise, the hare becomes a celebrity overnight: she was "[s]uddenly […] everywhere" (236); her remarks appear on the front pages of all the papers (238), and the BBC, which Seth humorously renames "Beastly Broadcast Company" (240), broadcasts her story in the news with the title of "All the World Lost for a Snooze" (242), referring to her failure in the competition. Although it is evident that she has lost the race, the hare, not the tortoise, becomes the one who "saw her name in lights, / Sold a book and movie rights" (243-44). As Virilio argues, new technologies characterized by movement at high speed will eventually cause "the withdrawal, the retreat, of the real" (122). Similarly, the press causes "the withdrawal of the real" by declaring the hare the winner, without allowing the audience to see, think or judge on their own. Modern communication technologies separate the audience from the real, and, due to this disconnection, the hare becomes an instant celebrity out of nowhere.[11]

Thanks to her success in appealing to the mass media, the hare earns a huge amount of money. As a true adherent of consumerism, the hare thinks that saving it would be a "sin" (250), thus, she buys a manor house in which she lives with her friends, the mole and the mouse (251-52). The persona ridicules this group of the nouveaux riches by noting that when they play Scrabble, the hare spells "'Compete' with K" (256). Yet, she is cunning enough to make use of new technologies, and becomes famous, wealthy and perhaps "the real" winner as the media mogul says. The tortoise, on the other hand, represents those who cannot comprehend the effect of instantaneous technologies. According to McLuhan, such people regard "all phenomena from a fixed point of view" (68). In that respect, the tortoise is so bound to his traditional views that he still believes that crossing the line first makes one "the winner," which bears no significance when the race is not subject to conventional time and space parameters due to the impact of speed technologies. Invaded by the press and all sort

of mass media devices, the modern racecourse in the land of Runnyrhyme is not designed for athletics. Whereas the hare recognizes and acts according to the tenor of the modern racetrack, the tortoise cannot comprehend it. The poem ends with the following couplet: "Thus the hare was pampered rotten / And the tortoise was forgotten" (257-58).

Conclusion

In his revisiting of the Aesopic fable, Vikram Seth, with a satirical sense of humor, sheds light on the working mechanisms of fast technologies and how they give shape to human relations in the modern world. By introducing present day cultural elements into this well-known fable, Seth underscores a fact not recognized by many: there is no poetic justice in the late twentieth-century world, and all is subject to the adverse effects of speed technologies. What renders Seth's rewriting successful is that he makes this grim proposition and his social criticism through comic laughter. Exerting its influence over social relations, time and space parameters, and the perception of reality, modern speed defies old structures and frames. Seth's "The Hare and The Tortoise" supports this argument by showing that his characters are caught up within the networks of speedy transformation, communication and information systems. As Seemita Mohanty observes, Seth's fable does not deliver a succinct message as fables conventionally do (91). In this respect, the moral of this fable differs from that of Aesop's: The late twentieth-century society is now suffering for its technological sins, and there is no solution the poem offers to the reader. The slow and steady is doomed to lose and disappear in such a speeded-up world. Though he is critical of the hare, Seth, unlike Aesop, does not idealize "slow and steady" as he presents the tortoise as a pompous and unsympathetic figure, who is behind the times and eventually forgotten.

The fable genre has been, from its inception, a form of social criticism. It is directly or indirectly satirical and at the same time didactic. Despite the didactic function of the genre, Vikram Seth does not instruct the reader about how s/he should behave in the era of transforming speed. By using the age-old tools of fabulists, he exposes in riotously comic rhyme the plight of the modern individual. Neither the media-savvy hare in step with the modern ethos nor the old-fashioned tortoise presents a viable model for the present age. Seth benefits from the seemingly simple yet suggestive nature of the fable since the story leads the reader to question his/her position vis-à-vis modern "races": Is s/he running like the slow and steady tortoise by disregarding the technological environment of the late twentieth century, or is s/he exploiting to advantage the working mechanisms of this accelerated world, where speed widens its sphere of influence day by day? And the most significant question posed by Seth's modern fable is who the "real" winner is, or maybe, whether there is a "real" winner at all.

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NOTES

[1]Vikram Seth writes in rhymed couplets as the father of English literature, Chaucer, does when he includes a humorously told beast fable in his *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Nun's Priest's Tale." Chaucer retells the medieval fable of Chanticleer and the Fox, which is frequently compared to Aesop's "The Fox and The Crow."

[2]Alternative readings of Vikram Seth's fables are possible from the post-colonial angle or in light of adaptation theory. When he rewrites Aesop's "The Hare and The Tortoise," Seth focuses exclusively on speed to delve into the new meanings and functions it has acquired in the modern age. Hence, how Seth plays with this concept is the main focus in this essay.

[3]Since the present essay focuses on how Seth's rewriting humorously depicts the new facets of speed in the age of consumer capitalism, a longer history of the fable and various rewritings of Aesop's fables through the ages are not included. For an in-depth study of the genre, see Blackham's *The Fable as Literature*. There are also various sources dwelling upon the use of the fable within certain historical periods and handling of certain themes such as Patterson's *Fables of*

Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History and Lewis's *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740*. On the earliest examples of the tradition of rewriting Aesopic fables, see Perry's *Babrius and Phaedrus*.

[4]For a detailed account of the term, see Ziolkowski's first chapter, "Inspiration and Analogues" (15-35), in his *Talking Animals*.

[5]In English literature, the fable has been one of the most popular narratives, so much so that one of the first books issued by William Caxton, who introduced the printing press into England 1476, was "his translation of the French translation of Steinhöwel's fables" in 1480 (Lenaghan 4). Thus, the Aesopic fable became one of the first texts published in England and Aesop's famous short fable, "The Hare and The Tortoise," was also included in this collection. In later years, it kept being translated and included in various editions.

[6]Dwelling on the conceptualization of speed and fast technologies in the modern age, the French critic Paul Virilio asserts in an interview with John Armitage that "speed is power" and has been so throughout the ages (Armitage 35). The hare's attitude before the race stems from a similar mindset.

[7]The competitive spirit not only belongs to the domain of athletic games but also characterizes many different aspects of classical culture. Even the most famous tragedies are products of this prevailing mood, as they were performed in the competitions held during religious festivals.

[8]The hare's relation to modern communication technologies is reminiscent of Nokia's slogan; that is, "connecting people," which was coined by Ove Strandberg and has been in use since 1992.

[9]Classical literature teems with examples dwelling on the theme of glory attached to competitors. For instance, in his "Pythian VI," Pindar celebrates the winner of the chariot race by saying "a treasure-house of songs" waits for the "Pythian conqueror" (4-5), and by comparing it to monuments and temples, the poem indicates that this treasure house, unlike others, will not be destroyed and will endure when monuments and temples fall prey to time (10-15). Through this meta-poetic metaphor, Pindar shows how the achievements of athletes and competitors were evaluated in the classical period.

[10]Due to space limitations and because it is not included as an objective of this study, the attitude of the audience in Seth's fable is not examined in detail. On the topic of the passivity of the audience in the face of the spectacles of the media and technology, one might see Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle.*

[11]As the hare's so-called title "winner" has no foot in reality, how she becomes famous epitomizes Baudrillard's fourth base of the image, which he explains by noting that "it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (368). The media mogul's celebration of the hare as the real winner, the press's interest in all things she does and announcing her as the winner even before the race starts exemplify the Baudrillardian "hysteria of production and reproduction of the real" (374).

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Rewriting Close Reading: A Response to Judith Anderson and Theresa M. DiPasquale*

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Donne is an apt, indeed ideal, author for debates about close reading: as Judith Anderson's essay notes, he has been the poster boy for the varied critical approaches included in that category. And 2018, the year the initial essays in this series appeared in *Connotations,* was an apt juncture for reconsidering close reading: both that practice and alternatives determinedly and often explicitly opposed to it, notably distant and surface reading, have interested many critics during the second decade of the twenty-first century. (Indeed, that widespread engagement led me to organize the panel at the 2018 Modern Language Association conference that subsequently generated these essays by Judith Anderson and Theresa DiPasquale.)[1] Finally, *Connotations* is an apt venue for such questions: its longstanding commitment to dialogue among critics can advance our understanding of the debates explicated by Anderson and DiPasquale.

Their essays respond powerfully to the opportunities created by that happy confluence of time, subject matter, and venue. In pursuing ways in which Donne's texts are situated, in the largest sense of that adjective, these contributions form a diptych. Anderson argues that, although the analysis of language is at the core of English studies, it does not—and cannot—preclude engagement with issues about culture. Drawing on personal experience with the Donne monument, DiPasquale relates its words to spatialities and visualities, among

*References: Judith Anderson, "Literature, Culture, and Other Redundancies: Close Reading Donne," *Connotations* 27 (2018): 155-66; Theresa M. DiPasquale, "Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph: Close, Comparative, Contextu[r]al, Concrete," *Connotations* 27 (2018): 167-89.
https://www.connotations.de/debate/donnes-anniversaries-matter-and-spirit/

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many other perspectives. Both authors wrestle with such questions through carefully marshalled evidence, indeed in so doing providing models for evidentiary procedures that our students are, or in any event should be, learning. In particular, Anderson examines the significantly different contents of two collections of essays from the 1970s, thus demonstrating the range of approaches to Donne and of established and nascent critical methodologies during that period. In bringing to bear on her principal text not only intense scrutiny of words like "aspicit," but many other sources of evidence, DiPasquale persuasively connects close reading with textual studies, space studies, and affective criticism, among yet more perspectives. (Like those essays, my own work here focuses primarily on the United States, though with some attention to England as well—and with the hope of encouraging subsequent contributions from other national and international perspectives.)

As oral presentations re-presented in written form but without a total transformation into a more lengthy scholarly article, those two powerful contributions are themselves a mixed genre that invites suggestions for future expansion and development. Although she notes in passing that one editor she discusses is British and the other American, Anderson's suggestive contribution here could and should do more with the impact of differences between their cultures. Such figures as I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis, both of course associated with types of close reading and many other issues raised in the collections Anderson contrasts, affected and indeed effected profound differences between critical practices in their respective worlds. Even in its current form, Theresa DiPasquale's work fruitfully extends Scott L. Newstok's groundbreaking analyses of the epitaph. But in writing about a genre often, though again certainly controversially, identified with a universalized "lyric I," Theresa DiPasquale might have discussed the particular implications of identifying her own religious affiliation and the intriguing broader questions about introducing personal experience into close reading. The often rigid assumption that all well trained readers will interpret texts alike harmed certain

early versions of close reading; yet many teachers in the United States have witnessed the problems resulting from students' celebration of "relatability"—that is, emphasizing putative connections between a text and their own lives. DiPasquale's work also could invite us to compare and contrast epitaphs in the more customary senses with epitaph-like texts in situations where the body cannot be found, notably the tributes outside their fire stations for the victims of 9/11. And both DiPasquale's and Anderson's essays might well encourage subsequent discussions of what constitutes the "literary"—and why that matters.

Above all, however, these two essays crystallize both the risks and the challenges, many related to the authors' emphasis on situatedness, close reading introduces into our criticism and classrooms. Such issues are especially pressing for scholars of Donne's work. First, Anderson and DiPasquale repeatedly draw our attention to the problems of defining the practice or practices in question—challenges that involve tracing the diachronic and synchronic differences to which I will return. In *Situated Utterances: Texts, Bodies, and Cultural Representations*, Harry Berger, Jr. influentially identifies attributes of close reading (30-33), though this inventory is questioned by Anderson and Berger himself. To what extent is it useful, at least heuristically? However one responds to that query, a few attributes skirted or ignored in his listing are surely crucial to understanding the status of close reading both yesterday and today—though if and only if we approach these items with the caveats that immediately succeed this paragraph. In particular, we should remember that many practitioners of close reading in the middle of the twentieth century considered "message" the m-word. It was seen to imply a simplistic, Hallmark-card truth inconsistent with the complexities and ambiguities manifest in, for example, the treatment of Petrarchism in "The Canonization"; and it risked underplaying the tonal nuancing that could shape a would-be message (how should we read the allusions to Christ as a phoenix in that poem?). The alternative, alertness to the complexities that might not be completely resolved, was often exemplified in

critical discussions of Donne's work. But DiPasquale's essay identifies certain spiritual beliefs in the texts she examines that are indeed messages—and messages with complexity denied by New Critical dismissals of the concept.

Diction crystallizes other attributes of close reading not explicitly emphasized on Berger's list but compatible with it. Many close readers would have praised good interpretations as "sensitive" rather than two terms prominent in criticism today, "powerful" or "robust." The comparisons among those adjectives should interest Donne scholars particularly, given that his work lends itself to all of them—and should interest all scholars because they invite differing aims in one's own readings and differing ways of evaluating those of other people. But whatever label was attached to the results, close reading in the middle of the twentieth century often assumed not only a unified text but largely unified reactions to it from appropriately trained and, yes, sensitive readers. (I. A. Richards's reports on misguided readings contrasted the elect from the unwashed.)

Lists like Berger's, supplemented with observations like mine about "message" and "sensitive," can be useful, but both Anderson and Berger rightly point out the many dangers of generalizing about close reading, dangers that repay, indeed demand, debates like those to which *Connotations* is committed. The generation of critics educated in the heyday of mid-century close reading, now nearing or at the ends of their careers, might occasionally find that Oedipal resentments or, alternatively, filial piety risk compromising their current evaluations of close reading; in telling contrast, most academics today were trained when in many quarters close reading was the past from which one turned away, the remnant one loved to hate.

How, then, can one arrive at a more balanced interpretation of the close reading that flourished in the 1950s and 1960s and was widely accepted in some circles for a few decades after that? How can one determine what more recent adoptions or adaptations or rejections of it can best advance Donne studies today? In approaching such questions, I maintain, as Anderson's fine essay does as well, that not

celebrating ripeness but rather anticipating variousness is all, or almost all. In terms of diachrony, in *Professing Literature: An Institutional History,* Gerald Graff persuasively demonstrates how New Critical close reading practices changed temporally (see esp. 145-61). The label "Old New Criticism," one should add, risks ignoring or underplaying changes within that category. And however it is labelled and described, New Criticism, especially the monolithic version of it too often cited, should not be conflated with other forms of close reading. Although the unified text and resolved paradox were hardly on the shopping lists of the practitioners of deconstruction, many have observed that members of that guild were not only close readers but also among the very best. Generalizations about critical movements need to be situated in shorter historical segments than we sometimes admit: the striking shifts in feminism (for example, the celebration of Shakespeare's so-called strong women by some pioneering feminists in the 1970s differed significantly from reinterpretations of such characters and the move from character to culture later in the movement) should alert us to similar changes in close reading. Moreover, though amassing detailed evidence is outside the scope of this brief response, as I argue elsewhere synchronic variations are arguably as significant as diachronic shifts (Foreword to *New Formalisms and Literary Theory,* esp. ix-xii; "Data vs. Literature: The Digital Humanities and Literary Studies" 1558*)*.

If telling the history of close reading is complicated in all these ways, introducing versions of it into our classrooms is no less so. The common observation that close reading has remained alive and well pedagogically even in the many circles where it has been dismissed, indeed demonized, in critical debate is only partially true. In the United States today, some teachers see attenuated and limited versions of this method as a minor segment of the skills they teach, and others omit it completely. I was astonished when, hoping to introduce a lively debate, I found that students responded to my question about the advantages and disadvantages of biographical criticism with what can only be described as incredulity. Not only

were they unfamiliar with "the biographical fallacy" rejected by many earlier close readers; in both high school and university they had primarily studied twentieth- and twenty-first century texts, often focusing on issues about ethnicities and the author's own experiences that did indeed encourage if not apparently mandate biographical discussions. Such training may well explain why so many students—and faculty members—still uncritically repeat the dubious and longstanding proposition that Donne's poems of mutual, assured love were necessarily written to his wife.

Whatever our students' prior exposure to or resistance to various forms of close reading may be, whatever other methods and approaches may interest us as teachers and scholars, this training has always been a gift to them for a reason Anderson's essay powerfully glosses:

> To my mind, the special, transferrable skill that English departments offer to society at large resides in a comprehension of English that heightens awareness and enables its effective use. Of course, this awareness includes culture and otherness, past and present, as it does in other humanities departments. But in an English department, it also includes—or should include—a focal interest in the use of the English language. The place of poetry—whether in verse or prose—in heightening verbal awareness and expressive capacity rests in the fact that every word matters in a finely honed poem, as do a variety of connections among these words. (163)

If the study of language is the central skill—indeed the central gift—we can give them, close reading is one of the best (though of course not the only) way of developing acuity about language, and Donne's own poetry is one of the best routes towards "heightening verbal awareness and expressive capacity."

Teaching close reading as a route to intensifying awareness about language is especially important in the United States today for additional reasons. Partly in response to students' and parents' demand for university training that can be, or can be touted as being, a ready avenue to a job, potential English majors often turn to other fields, notably majors like Communications when offered. But in fact teaching—and celebrating—the skills close reading builds, besides its other virtues, can provide a valuable example of how the range of

analytical and critical techniques taught in an English major can prepare undergraduates for a range of jobs. Similarly, the structure of many English majors is often being reconceived in terms of tracks (creative writing, expository writing, publishing and so on) that appeal to many students but in so doing subordinate one of the principal reasons the English major had originally attracted them, the opportunity to read exciting and challenging writings. Training in close reading can restore to students enthusiasm about those writings, and awareness of the many reasons engaging with them is valuable. In short, one need not choose between the intellectual and aesthetic pleasures of reading on the one hand and pre-vocational preparation on the other: it is clear that many employers in a range of fields value the attention to language that close reading can engender. Indeed, the English major opens a range of doors rather than slamming others shut: it can provide the pleasures of reading, say, Donne, and the advantages of acquiring skills in reading and one's own writing that will be professionally useful.

Finally, as the essays in this section of *Connotations* say explicitly at a few junctures and implicitly at many others, the acuity about language that close reading can engender is essential to our lives as citizens. I for one feel strongly we should not introduce discussions of contemporary political issues into classrooms on other subjects. (Exceptions may arise in courses where those issues conform to the subject matter of the course, such as one on the literature of immigration, and even there, care and respect for a range of opinions, not least those whose proponents may not feel comfortable expressing them, are mandated.) But whatever our own political credos may be, whatever attitudes our students may have inherited or acquired, training in close reading is training in approaching all texts, from extended political speeches to tweets, discriminatingly.

Any reference to tweets invites consideration of the impact of digitalization on both our pedagogy and our scholarship. We live in cultures—and teach in universities—where digests replace digestion and rapid encapsulation triumphs over more measured examination.[2]

Throughout his teaching and writing, but notably in his *Fields of Light,* Reuben Arthur Brower emphasized reading slowly, not just closely, a principle much to the point here. I am not the first to observe the potential conflict between involvement if not obsession with digital devices and acuity about rhetorical and other literary devices. Reading a text on a phone, especially from a site lacking annotations, encourages rapidly scrolling through it once. Too likely to assume that rapid conclusions are the goal, many undergraduates do indeed hunt out a message in the negative senses that contributed to the disdain for that concept. And too prone to seeing academic work as a series of yes-no questions most readily answered by finding the right site on a phone or computer, many undergraduates sorely, urgently need the alertness to ambiguities that close reading can provide. But not only the threats but also the potentialities of digitalization provide yet another reason—and strategy—for incorporating close reading into our classes. Although the proponents of so-called distant reading celebrate the emphasis on the digital whose absence putatively enfeebled earlier methods in benighted ages, in fact close reading has already benefitted from—and in turn benefitted, digital searches. DiPasquale's essay both asserts and proves the ways contemporary technology can enrich the questions she explores.[3]

Anderson's article establishes a telling contrast between two collections; symmetrically, many issues discussed in the Anderson and DiPasquale essays and in my own contribution here are encapsulated in the overviews of close reading by two distinguished critics, Harry Berger, Jr. and Richard Strier. Both subscribe to the variousness I also advocate above, but they differ sharply from each other in their approach to that issue, their announced affiliations, and their conclusions. In the analysis of close reading discussed above, Berger identifies himself as "a Reconstructed Old New Critic" (20). On the other hand, in his recent "New Formalism, New Historicism, and Thy Darling in an Urn," Strier sharply and determinedly distinguishes the close reading he embraces, which focuses on rhetoric, from the practices he identifies with Cleanth Brooks, whose emphasis on

imagery Strier rejects. Thus Strier's diachronic changes create a line in the sand. In contrast, in his own emphasis on the range of the movement, Berger facilitates a broader and often paradoxical affiliation with close reading—and certainly not an unproblematical relationship to it. Witness how he creates a relatively peaceful flock by—dare one say—shepherding together the postulates he associates with New Criticism, his own work, and newer, ostensibly antagonistic, enterprises.

What factors and predilections can help to explain these divergent approaches? We should acknowledge a generational difference: although only about a decade probably separates these two critics, Berger, as he emphasizes, was trained and launched in the heyday of these methods, while Strier's graduate training and early career occurred in the late 1960s and the 1970s, a period of more open and intense competition among methods. Perhaps too temperamental divergences? Was the decision variously to focus on one leader of New Criticism and to acknowledge distinctions in the movement cause or effect of these readers' preferences for distance from it or affiliation, however qualified and limited, with it? In any event, my aim is not to celebrate one of these alternatives over the other but rather to juxtapose them as examples of the challenges of returning to close reading today.

But however one glosses this contrast between Berger and Strier, it shows those challenges and the alternatives proposed by these two critics and by Anderson and DiPasquale. How should one define and describe close reading and New Criticism? should the connections between them be accepted more than interrogated? and what are the rewards and the dangers—the stakes in several senses—of how one represents these movements to our students and engage with them in our own careers?

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NOTES

[1]Matthew Zarnowiecki, another participant in the session at the 2018 Modern Language Association in New York from which the Anderson and DiPasquale essays developed, demonstrated the many rewards of looking at the interplay of music and poetry, including the blurring of the contrast between close and distant reading, in his presentation there.

[2]Tellingly, even the *New York Times*, whose investigative reporting models the triumphs of slow, meticulous research and the thoughtful reading it invites, now also includes snippets and tidbits on its third page, perhaps because readers now seek or, indeed, expect them even if they also value that investigative reporting.

[3]For another important demonstration of the interaction between digitalization and close reading, see Witmore and Hope.

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"You Are Black Inside": Class, Race, and Sexuality in John Gray's *Park*[*]

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John Gray's *Park* (1932) makes few concessions to the reader. The novella, roughly one hundred pages in length, gives a picture of a future society that has changed radically since the twentieth century but is neither utopia nor dystopia, and the author's attitude towards it remains obscure. The plot has no clear narrative arc or climax. None of the dialogue is indicated by quotation marks, and some of it is in ecclesiastical Latin; some speakers' words begin with a paragraph indentation, some do not. Ampersands are often used in place of "and," but not uniformly or with any discernible pattern or reason for the variations.[1] The narrative is often drily witty, but its meaning remains uncertain, and the reader suspects sometimes that she is on the outside of a private joke. Like other modernist works, *Park* presents itself as something of a puzzle piece, and no critic has given a satisfactory account of the book as a whole; the few critics who have written about it at length have focused on autobiographical elements in the narrative. The novella is not, however, covert autobiography: it is rather, as Jerusha Hall McCormack notes, "a psychic map of [Gray's] consciousness" (McCormack, *John Gray* 244).[2] Particularly prominent in that consciousness is Gray's sense of alienation, which is expressed through the novella's treatment of class, race, and sexuality; and to understand that alienation, some knowledge of Gray's life is essential.

[*]For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at http://www.connotations.de/debate/class-race-sexuality-in-john-grays-park

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I

Gray was born into the working class in the East End of London in 1866. Despite his good work at school, his father apprenticed him as a metal-turner at the age of fourteen, but Gray found the work uncongenial, and through private study and civil service exams he gained a toehold in the middle class and began to move in literary circles. He was briefly in the orbit of Oscar Wilde and was said to have been the model for Dorian Gray. There is evidence of this beyond the surname (see McCormack, *John Gray* 82-87), but Gray, sensitive about his position as a librarian in the Foreign Office and already wary of Wilde's increasingly indiscreet behaviour, persuaded the older writer to refute the rumour in a published letter (see McCormack, *John Gray* 74).[3]

Wilde did, however, arrange for the publication of Gray's first book of poetry, *Silverpoints*, in 1893.[4] As a work of design, *Silverpoints* became one of the defining books of the 1890s, a total work of art in which paper, typography, and binding—the production as a whole supervised by Charles Ricketts—were meant to add to the effect of the poems themselves. The book was memorably, if unfairly, described by Wilde's friend Ada Leverson as "the tiniest rivulet of text meandering through the very largest meadow of margin," and she suggested to Wilde that "he should publish a book *all* margin; full of beautiful unwritten thoughts" (Bergonzi in Gray, *Park* i).[5]

Gray subsequently repudiated what he called "the odious *Silverpoints*" and later in life bought every copy he came across in order, he said, to "immobilize" them (McCormack, *The Man* 137, 300). The poems continued to be reprinted in anthologies, however, especially as the Nineties became an identifiable period, and Christopher Ricks included twelve of Gray's poems in his 1987 *New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*—more than the pre-1900 Yeats. The title of Gray's next book, *Spiritual Poems* (1896), indicates the direction his life was taking. He had converted to Catholicism in 1890 during a visit to Brittany; after the Wilde period he recovered his early zeal and decided to study for the priesthood at the Scots College in Rome.

Ordained in 1901, he was posted to Scotland and was locally celebrated as a caring and fearless priest in the Cowgate section of Edinburgh, an area where even the police traveled only in pairs (see McCormack, *John Gray* 195).

His closest friend during this period, and for the rest of his life, was a Frenchman named Marc-André Raffalovich. The third son of a Russian Jewish family that left Russia after the Czar's edict that all Jews must convert or leave the country, Raffalovich was rich, an Anglophile, and a fellow convert to Catholicism (see McCormack, *John Gray* 44-47). He and Gray, both members of the lay Third Order of St. Dominic, planned the building of a new church in Edinburgh, funded in part by Raffalovich, with the understanding that Gray would become its parish priest. St. Peter's was completed in 1907, and Gray was its pastor until his death in 1934. The relationship of Gray and Raffalovich was a subject of speculation even during their lifetimes, particularly as they saw each other daily and often had meals together. There is no doubt that both men were gay and very little doubt that their relationship was always chaste. Raffalovich, who wrote extensively on homosexuality, argued that "Uranians" should live chaste lives and devote themselves to higher pursuits such as the arts and philanthropy (see Sewell 230).

In the 1910s and 1920s, Gray read the new modernist writers—Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, the later Yeats, and Huxley, among others—and knew writers and artists, like David Jones and Eric Gill, who combined Catholic themes with modernist technique. Gray was not as experimental as Jones and Gill, but his writing both in poetry and prose acquired a new terseness and astringency. *Park* was first published serially in 1931-32 in the Dominican journal *Blackfriars*, then in a limited edition of 250 copies published by Sheed and Ward.[6] Subtitled "A Fantastic Story," the novella recounts the story of Mungo Park—not the eighteenth-century Scottish explorer but a Catholic priest of the twentieth century who finds himself in a future England ruled by an aristocratic caste of black Catholic priests. They recognize him as a priest, but he does not have his *celebret*—his permit to exercise his

priestly functions—and cannot give a satisfactory account of his age. Park claims to be 59, but as his hosts explain, he must be hundreds of years older if his story is true, and the computational systems of the Wapama are different in any case (see 68). He is therefore put into a special category of beings officially dead, renamed Drak, and spends much of his time learning about the society of Ia, the name of which may be a hint at the story's autobiographical elements. Park/Drak is eventually ennobled and given extensive property for no apparent reason, but his rights remain severely abridged; towards the end of the story he is able to read the official assessment of his condition and the problems he presents to Wapama society.

II

Park is an elusive and finally ungraspable book, but it is fascinating in the way it addresses, indirectly and playfully, Gray's sense of social, racial, and sexual dislocation. Gray avoided autobiography because he was an intensely private person and his life was of interest to the general public only for reasons he preferred to forget, but he used his fictional form to address issues of general importance, and in a distinctly modern idiom. The difficulty of creating a "psychic map" of his consciousness while avoiding anything obviously autobiographical was in fact a kind of liberation—an incitement to art.

Gray's social dislocation is perhaps the most straightforward personal element in the book. Park remains an outsider in Wapama society, just as Gray had passed through various segments of Victorian society—working class, middle class, artistic and religious circles—without, it seems, ever feeling at home in any of them. An early poem called "The Flying Fish," with its idea of flight *from* rather than flight *to*, suggests his alienation:

> He prays the Maker of water-things
> not for a sword, but cricket's wings,
> not to be one of the sons of air,
> to be rid of the water is all his prayer;

all his hope is a fear-whipped whim;
all directions are one to him.
There are seekers of wisdom no less absurd,
son Hang, than thy fish that would be a bird. (*Poems* 260)[7]

The idea of travelling to a different society as a way of commenting on one's own is obviously a very old one. The idea of travelling to a *future* society had been popularized in Gray's time by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), and H. G. Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910). Bellamy, Morris, and Wells all use the literary device of a sleeper awaking in or dreaming of a radically changed society; Gray employs the same device, though it is not clear until the very end of the novella that Park has been asleep. *Park* also owes something to Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) in its description of a society still riven by class.[8] Extensive remnants of the white population, now generally debased, live underground, like the Morlocks in *The Time Machine*, and there is no doubt that they represent, as in Wells, the English working class. Gray's interest, like Wells's, is not in the social and political fact of class but its ability to isolate vast numbers of people not only from power but also from any consideration as fellow citizens.

Part of Gray's strategy of misdirection in *Park* is to employ words and ideas with different and often contrary meanings at different levels of discourse. The first sentence of the novella is this: "Mungo Park walked on in the belief, absurd as he knew it to be, that he had died" (1). The sentence sets up an apparent contrast between "absurd" belief and fact, but the novella will undermine this as Park actually becomes, in legal terms, a dead man; more importantly, Gray suggests a variety of meanings for death itself. As a Christian, Park has died and been reborn in Christ in the sacrament of baptism; as a priest he has died to the world; as a persona of John Gray, he has "died" to various earlier incarnations of himself (labourer, civil servant, associate of Wilde). These are presumably positive deaths, but Park will find himself as much an outsider among the Wapama as Gray did in any of his avatars, and he considers himself a "tormented prisoner" (45)

even though he is always treated well. The name Park may also be a clue here: the explorer Mungo Park died at thirty-five, Gray's age at his ordination.[9]

Gray's decision to make the priestly elite black is another instance of his playing on various meanings of words and ideas at different levels of discourse.[10] The negative associations of black are of course culturally pervasive, and the society Gray lived in was even more racist than our own. It would be startling for the book's first readers, then, to hear a character say, "Drak, your skin is white, more's the pity, but you are black inside" (39) and mean it as a compliment.[11] There is more going on here than a desire to *épater le bourgeois* by turning conventional bigotry inside out,[12] or to suggest, in the wake of the vogue for African sculpture and African-American music and dance from the 1910s through the 1930s, that black societies had produced art worthy of European attention. Early in the novella, Park attends Mass at a church dedicated to "the martyrs of Uganda" (19), a group of young men, Catholic and Anglican converts, who were pages of Mwanga II, the Kabaka or king of Buganda, and were killed on his orders between 1885 and 1887. Although the reasons for the executions are complex, the martyrs were acclaimed for having resisted Mwanga's orders to submit to his homosexual desires and were beatified by the Catholic Church in 1920, a decade before Gray wrote *Park*; they were canonized in 1964. Most of the martyrs were between fifteen and thirty years old, Gray's contemporaries, and he may well have seen in them a steadfast faith that he envied; his own conversion to Catholicism in 1890 had been followed by his friendship with Wilde, a backsliding that Gray considered the equivalent of Peter's denial of Christ.[13]

To be "black inside," then, is perhaps to be faithful, patient, longsuffering, Christ-like. But this is merely a form of romantic racism: the murderous Mwanga was as black as the martyrs he killed, and Gray realized that it would be unrealistic to portray a society ruled by a black priestly elite as ideal; all earthly societies are corrupt, and there are signs that the Wapama elite are indifferent to the plight of the

formerly dominant white population. One of Park/Drak's guides, Ini'in, seems to reverse the easy racism of whites towards blacks and to replicate their lack of concern about how others live:

> For if, it is said, you place them [whites] anywhere in history as we teach it, you are faced by an intolerable paradox: mechanical construction & genius we cannot overpraise, with moral degeneration the most complete. The palace of Vulcan inhabited by rats; Vulcan & the rats contemporary, if not identical.
>
> Well?
>
> Why, to make a short ending of a long story, when their troubles came upon them, they took refuge underground and are there to this day.
>
> Contented?
>
> I think so, said Dlar and Ini'in at once. (38)

Clearly they do not know, and have taken no pains to find out. Dlar has earlier admitted that the subterraneans were forced underground but adds defensively "and yet not entirely" (36), and Svillig has suggested that they remain below "because they like it" (29). The master race seems as indifferent to the subject race as master races always are, and if Park is complimented as "black inside," this is no guarantee of moral goodness.

But Gray had another and more personal reason for creating his black priestly elite. He was widely read in African ethnography, in part because his brother Alexander had joined the colonial service and gone to Africa—it is not clear to which country—where he had married an African woman and fathered two children. After Alexander's death in 1919, his sons had come to England and had lived briefly with Gray before being sent to Hawkesyard, a Dominican public school—two half-black, half-white boys named Gray (see McCormack, *The Man* 256). Gray thus had personal as well as intellectual knowledge of the difficulties faced by black and mixed-race people in England. If Park himself is, as Dlar says, white outside but black inside, he too is no doubt Gray—a joke which serves as another clue to the novella's autobiographical elements,[14] but also draws attention to the absurdities of racial classification. We know that race has no

real existence, that it is description elevated into pseudo-science, and the evidence was there a hundred years ago. Here too the name Mungo Park can be seen as a clue, for Park, although a colonialist, felt that there was no essential difference between black and white: "whatever difference there is between the negro [sic] and European, in the conformation of the nose, and the colour of the skin, there is none in the genuine sympathies and characteristic feelings of our common nature."[15]

Quite apart from the personal and family issues represented by the Uganda martyrs and the racial divide in *Park*, there is a level of identification with blacks that links Park/Drak and Gray. Early in the novella, long before Dlar says that he is "black inside," Park dreams that he is in Westminster Cathedral, "and it was also a railway station of intolerable vastness & silence."[16]

> He had lost his server [i.e. altar boy] and his railway porter. I shall recognize him, for he is black. An unending train went through, pouring out passengers without stopping; all were Negroes. Park halted and addressed himself prophetically:
>
> Go through the swinging glass doors; no one will notice you, as you are black. With a wrench and a struggle he came to himself.
>
> This is a strange thing, he thought; to dream a fact I did not know awake. I am black. (13-14)

This reflects Gray's sense of himself. Gray's sister Beatrice wrote that Gray was "deeply interested in the black man (he was a keen anthropologist) and used to say, although he was a white man he was black inside, and foretold in a general way that the black man would rule" (McCormack, *The Man* 283). Gray identified, in short, with an "outsider" group. In the novella, Park has found himself an outsider among the Wapama; in this passage he imagines fitting in, but he never really does. Racial difference appears to be a way of dramatizing Park/Drak's—and Gray's—continuing sense of alienation through a reversal of his nephews' situation. Gray was a gay man in a straight society, his unmarried state explained and normalized by his vows as a priest, his real nature repressed and inexpressible. (He may well not

have *wished* to express it, but that is beside the point of his alienation as such.) He was also an Englishman in Scotland and a man who had, to judge by much of his writing, apparently never felt at home anywhere. He had climbed out of the working class into the middle class and into literary circles, but had left these behind to enter the priesthood, which gave him a respected but inevitably somewhat lonely position in the Catholic community of Edinburgh. When the poet Edmund Blunden wrote to Gray suggesting a possible interpretation of *Park*, Gray replied: "Your astuteness has penetrated the whole matter: the man stumbling in his dream upon a chance of vengeance & the free expression of repressed ambitions, yet dogged all the time by the obstacles of his waking life" (Healy 119-20).

Park's situation among the Wapama seems to dramatize the isolation of Gray's own life. Park's legal "death" requires him to wear a beard, a sort of mark of Cain (23, 37, 73); this and his racial difference make him highly visible in the elite circles he travels in, and he is famous throughout Ia, but despite his high status, his estate (his "park"), and his wealth, Park is far from content. "A tomb is a very exclusive apartment" (100), says the narrator, apparently reflecting Park's own thoughts, and when Park is "enfranchised and ennobled" (49) he reflects on the irony of getting these privileges "when all I want [...] is a pair of tacketty boots, forty pounds a quarter, and a miserable life" (50). (The Scottish word "tacketty," meaning hobnailed, seems to nod in the direction of Gray's own situation as a resident of Scotland and an enthusiastic hiker in mountainous terrain.) Anyone who has felt at odds with his society and himself, especially if he finds a culture which seems more congenial, can identify with Park's longing to escape himself and join another group. Woody Allen has spoken of his admiration for the physical grace of black athletes like Wilt Chamberlain, something he clearly feels he has never had himself. Race may be a fiction, but the appeal of the other is very real.

I have discussed some of the elements of class and racial alienation in *Park*. The third displacement, that of sexuality, is addressed neces-

sarily with great circumspection but also with some wit. Some aspects of the princess's court, for example, are distinctly gay: "This palace had too a vocabulary of its own. Vara Darling & Toni Boy and other such expressions were in common and frequent use" (70-71). More tellingly, one of the first scenes of the novella has distinctly sexual undertones. Park has been shot in the legs by a gamekeeper named Cuan and is then helped to recover by the same man.

> Cuan showed his face. He saw that he was not called; but he came on, persuasively. He had changed his clothes and had nothing but a cotton tunic, breech-cloth and white sandals. As though he were a nurse he lifted Park as he was, & carried him to a bath. There he stripped him and togaed him up in a sheet of the red and blue stripe; but not before he had looked with compassion at the miserable state of his legs, so swollen and discoloured where the saltpetre, or whatever it was, had damaged them. He touched the skin delicately, and sighed. (9)

Cuan leaves and returns, then applies a healing and sweet-smelling balm before taking Park to the bathtub. Healy (121) refers ambiguously to the "simple sensuousness" of the scene; there are certainly homoerotic elements in it, but they are disarmingly set in a context which suggests both childlike innocence and baptismal renewal or rebirth.

> With grimaces and gestures [Cuan] expressed: You must try to walk down into the water; for you are so slippery that I should let you fall.[17]
>
> He went down first to arrange the sunk furniture; on this he made his bather comfortable with his face just above the surface of the water.
>
> Lying without sensation in the tepid bath he watched Cuan, who, besides, was taking trouble that all his movements should be closely inspected, separating and assembling all the things which had been on his body and would never be there again. He could see that it was a sort of mausoleum rite which was being performed; that somewhere in the then world there must be a museum vault waiting for its prey. (9-10)

As he is dressed in new, robe-like clothes, Park senses that "the ritual was a mixture of vesting a bishop and dressing a baby" (10), an appropriate description of a scene which combines the happy helpless-

ness of the pre-sexual baby and the post-sexual life of the priest. This bracketing of a sexual life, which in Gray's life may never have occurred at all, with asexual elements is as close as Gray comes to addressing the subject of his sexuality. He may not have been distressed by it, and may, as I have suggested, have accepted priestly celibacy easily or even with relief; it is pointless to speculate. I would suggest, however, that Park's continuing sense of class and racial otherness and alienation in Wapama society represents not only his sense of social displacement but his otherness and isolation as a gay man.

There are other possible autobiographical elements in *Park*; some have suggested that it is in part a satire on some of the Catholic clergy of Edinburgh and some of the people in Gray's own circle (see Sewell 166). There is a character named A Ra, for example, whose name might be an abbreviation of André Raffalovich, but there is nothing in the description of him or his conversation which suggests Raffalovich.[18] If we try to get beyond the coded autobiographical elements I have discussed, however, *Park* becomes almost hermetic in its obscurity, and few would have read it after Gray's death if it were not for Gray's continuing mild fame as a model for Dorian Gray. If there were nothing more in this novella than a coded psychic self-portrait, it would hardly be of interest except to scholars of the Wilde circle, but it does have a more general literary interest, I would argue, and I wish to propose a reading of its theme which goes beyond autobiographical elements and does justice both to the novella's religious elements and its modernity.

III

Park realizes early on that Wapama numeration is different from that of the twentieth century, and that the Wapama also measure time differently, so that his age, fifty-nine, is an impossibility in their terms (22, 26-27, 33).[19] His own sense of time begins to alter, particularly between sleep and waking, and he begins to sense the artificiality of time itself:

> I shall never be back in time, he groaned. I shall never be back in time. Every thought has two meanings. If not back in time, in what shall I be back? Shall I ever be back? "Ever" is a property of time, & I shall never be back in time. Every thought has multiple meanings. I shall never be back in time. So he shut his eyes, and when he opened them he was back.
>
> Yes, but am I back in time? (13-14)

This passage is reminiscent of Quentin Compson's monologue in *The Sound and the Fury*, and also of some aspects of the treatment of time in Conrad, Eliot, and Proust. Park's sense of time probably owes more to St. Augustine than to Conrad and Faulkner, but they are not finally very different. Quentin, unable to endure the losses that time brings, wants to escape our necessarily linear experience of time and enter an eternal realm; his desire, as he knows, can only be realized in death. Park, by contrast, feels that he inhabits neither time nor eternity; as in so many other aspects of his life, he occupies a liminal space, as McCormack notes (*John Gray* 246). He therefore decides to immerse himself, as Quentin cannot do, in the present moment. Park thinks, "Tomorrow! It has either gone or will never be; detestable point of imaginary time" (13), and Svillig later reminds him that "the duration of time is best regarded as one second" (31).[20]

If time is merely a construct, so is almost everything else in our minds, and Park's attempts to understand the new world he finds himself in illustrate our frustration in trying to get beyond the map to the territory itself. Park tries to orient himself physically and discover the old English landmarks beneath the new names, and his attempts to understand the rules and etiquette of Wapama society frequently come up against brick walls. His solution is to live without judging or even trying to make sense of things, and this is significantly expressed, again, as a surrender to the present moment and situation. "Park had again & again to renew his resolution to abandon himself to his present experiences without reflection" (36); "Park, like a drowning man, abandoned himself to the space and the crowd" (92). This surrender is no doubt wise, but it does not satisfy his craving for certainty, and this may explain why Park, although uniformly well-

treated and by any standard privileged, is rarely happy. He naturally wants to *feel*, at least, that he knows what is going on.

As in his treatment of time, Gray combines a modernist awareness of incomprehension with an orthodox religious sense.[21] Even the subtlest intellect will not take us far; it becomes necessary finally to *choose* what to believe and how to live. The obsessive ideas of Conrad's and Faulkner's characters, the Hemingway code, the leap of faith, the existential act—all of these go beyond reason. None of them promises happiness but at best a temporary structure, or, if we are lucky, a way of life more or less satisfying. There are suggestions in *Park*—they are no more than that—that Gray felt no more at home in religious life than he had anywhere else. The prior of the Charterhouse says to Park,

> Men come to the Charterhouse in a spirit you have never possessed. You will not find here an escape from worldly difficulties merely because you are unable to solve them in a way you would have preferred. A boy who has climbed to the top of the Ondo mast must not, because he cannot make up his mind to climb down, expect to find a trap-door in the sky. I do not like to risk offence by telling you what you know; but for men of every position & every origin there is only one way to peace: purification of the heart, and the proper direction of the energies. You understand me. (104)

This view is both orthodox and entirely modern, analogous to the last lines of *The Waste Land* with their counsel to set one's lands in order, to give, sympathize, and control oneself. Modernism is possibility and returns via modern skepticism to the old distinction between knowledge and faith: where nothing is certain, nothing can be ruled out, including God and meaning. Wallace Stevens, like Johnson, Dowson, Beardsley, and Wilde in the 1890s, died a Catholic.

The resolution of *Park* is extremely conventional: Park awakes where he fell on the first page, and it was all a dream, "somewhat more elaborate than is usual" (108). We are given a clue to the dream half-way through the novella when Park is presented with a medal inscribed "DORMIO, SED COR MEUM VIGILAT" (51).[22] The dream reveals the character's subconscious life; Gray could fully express

himself only through fiction and dream, through Park and the voices of his poems. As Wilde says in "The Critic as Artist": "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth" (282).

Bernard Bergonzi groups *Park* with other "modern fantasies that dramatize the loss of identity" (Gray, *Park* xii), and to the extent that identity depends upon context and acceptance, he is certainly right. *Park* is one of those modern works that call into question the very idea of personality: out of my usual setting, unrecognized among strangers, who am I? Do I exist at all? The modernity of *Park* is evident in other ways, too. It addresses classic modern themes of alienation, class, race, and sexuality that remain crucial; its treatment of time and the possibility of knowledge engages with both current and traditional ideas. The hermeticism and obscurity I have mentioned are similar to those we find in writers like Eliot and Pound, Joyce and Jones, and need not have interfered with the book's popularity. Its limited appeal may be the result of its wry, equivocal tone and its deliberate avoidance of dramatic confrontations and high emotion. As Bergonzi points out, there is no "existential anguish" in *Park* (Gray, *Park* xii); Park is unhappy, but we sense none of the metaphysical torment we find in Kafka's Josef K. or Faulkner's Quentin Compson. The *TLS* reviewer of the 1966 reissue of the novella found Gray's style "a blend of Firbankian preciosity with a sort of avuncular sacerdotal jollity" (Cevasco 131). This is overstated, but it points to something real in *Park*; Bergonzi also notes the "numerous conversations, laconic yet mannered, which in their glancing obliquity have a slight hint of the dialogue of Ivy Compton-Burnett" (Gray, *Park* xi). Firbank and Compton Burnett are minor masters, writers who did not command a large audience but created striking and idiosyncratic works in unmistakably original styles; these are perhaps Gray's real peers.[23]

In 1918, when Robert Bridges published the first collected edition of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poems, critics and readers discovered that the most original English-language poet of the nineteenth century was a Jesuit priest of entirely orthodox opinions who lived and died in

complete literary obscurity. John Gray is no Hopkins, but like Hopkins he both used and transcended autobiographical elements in his writing and addressed both contemporary and perennial questions. He wrote at least one prose work in which modernism and orthodoxy co-exist in a fruitful and suggestive way.

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NOTES

[1]The original edition was designed by Eric Gill, who favoured ampersands and may have made other decisions about the physical appearance of the text; see McCormack, *John Gray* 176.

[2]Sewell makes the same point in different words, describing *Park* as "a kind of record in code of [Gray's] personality, and [...] a statement of his mind on a number of things" (166).

[3]Everyone who writes on John Gray is indebted to the pioneering biographical and critical work of Jerusha Hall McCormack, who has written two biographies of Gray (the first scholarly, the second fully documented but aimed at a popular audience) and has edited an anthology of his prose which, along with Ian Fletcher's edition of Gray's poems, makes his most significant work available again. All biographical information in this essay is taken, unless otherwise noted, from McCormack, *John Gray*.

[4]Wilde agreed to pay the costs of publication; as Gray distanced himself from Wilde, another contract was drawn up and the costs were paid entirely by the publisher (see McCormack, *The Man* 116).

[5]Although Ada Leverson is often credited as the author of the witticism, she was simply repeating and elaborating a remark by Sir Benjamin Backbite in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, who says of his poems, "I think you will like them, when you see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin" (Act I, Scene 1, 190).

[6]The novella has been republished several times since Gray's death. A second limited edition of 350 numbered copies was published by St. Albert's Press in 1966 to mark Gray's centenary, and a paperback was published by Carcanet in 1984; it is also included in McCormack's *Selected Prose of John Gray* and has been translated into French. The 1932 edition is an expensive rarity; all parenthetical references in this essay are to the 1966 edition.

[7]The poem was first published in *The Dial*, 1896.

[8]Sewell (167), Healy (48-49), and McCormack (*The Man* 278) mention Morris and Wells as antecedents; Cevasco (127) and Healy (49) add E. M. Forster's short

story "The Machine Stops," which first appeared in book form in 1928, as a possible source.

[9]Wikipedia, "Mungo Park."

[10]McCormack notes Gray's use of both "black" and "death" specifically as metaphors for the priesthood (*John Gray* 246-47) and argues that his career involved donning successive masks and suppressing his natural impulses. I am concerned here rather with Gray's ambiguous usage of the words.

[11]Gray probably intended to remind readers of Blake's "The Little Black Boy": "My mother bore me in the southern wild, / And I am black, but O! my soul is white."

[12]Cf. Jean Cocteau's 1920 hymn to the sun, "Batterie": "Le nègre, dont brillent les dents, / est noir dehors, rose dedans. / Moi je suis noir dedans et rose / dehors, fais la métamorphose."

[13]Cf. McCormack, *The Man* 281. It is interesting, in this context, that the church Gray and Raffalovich built in Edinburgh was called St. Peter's. Gray's mandarin manner led to gossip that he considered himself the pope of St. Peter's, but the name seems rather to be an aspect of Gray's humility—a recognition of personal weakness during the Wilde period.

[14]McCormack (*The Man* 284) notes the autobiographical joke. Dominicans who read the novella in the journal *Blackfriars* might have gotten a second level of the joke, since the order's habit consists of a black *cappa* or cloak over a white cassock. There is a brief discussion in *Park* of beautiful "three-blood children" (98), perhaps a suggestion of a possible post-racial society in which everyone is of mixed heritage.

[15]Wikipedia, "Mungo Park." Healy (120-21) points out that the original Mungo Park was also impressed by the intelligence of Africans serving as professional advocates in tribal disputes.

[16]A satirical reference to the extraordinary appearance of the cathedral.

[17]Park has not yet learned Bapama, the language of the Wapama, and he and Cuan, who is a gamekeeper and not part of the elite, communicate either in simple Latin or in sign language.

[18]Cevasco (130) identifies A Ra with Raffalovich and points out that A Ra has dedicated an oratory to St. Sebastian, just as Raffalovich had funded a large part of the building of St. Peter's in Edinburgh; McCormack notes only the possibility of a link.

[19]Healy points out (122) that the historical Mungo Park noticed non-Western ways of numbering among the Bambara people of what is now Mali.

[20]This is probably an echo of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Ch. XV.20.

[21]Healy makes a similar point in discussing Gray's style: "Paradoxically, the modernism of Gray's prose is most apparent when he is relying on scholastic modes of thought. The intellectualism of the Post-Impressionist world was prefigured, in some respects, by the intellectualism of St. Thomas; something, of

course, which did not escape the notice of the master modernist, James Joyce" (127).

[22]"I sleep, but my heart is awake." The phrase is from the Vulgate version of the Song of Solomon 5:2.

[23]Sewell (176) similarly puts *Park* in a class of *sui generis* books such as Johnson's *Rasselas* and Beckford's *Vathek*.

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Connotations
Vol. 28 (2019)

1943*

WILLIAM HARMON

I read the book that says "1943" and am persuaded.

Then I read a decapitating review that says "not 1943" and am confused.

Then I read a denigrating reply to the review that says "1943" and am dismayed but reassured.

A detonating response to the reply to the review says "*not* 1943" and puts me back where I was in the second place.

Until a devastating rejoinder to the response to the reply to the review says "1943" and I am beginning to forget some
parts of the point.

Whereupon a depilating witty riposte to the rejoinder to the response to the reply to the review says "not 1943 *at all*."

How could I have ever thought such a thought?

You wouldn't catch me thinking that with a tin foot.

Year after next an article in *The Articulate Review* will lay the whole sorry affair out but radically misconstrue the original
point.

I remember 1943. The penny changed awhile, the very penny.

*For debates inspired by this poem, please check the *Connotations* website at http://www.connotations.de/debate/william-harmons-1943.

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Connotations
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God's Mending: Formal and Spiritual Correction in George Herbert's "Deniall" and Henry Vaughan's "Disorder *and* frailty"*

JONATHAN NAUMAN

George Herbert's devotional lyrics have been much recognized both for their articulation of an acute and searching Anglican Protestant spirituality and for their pursuit of an unprecedented range of original and demanding poetic forms. I would like to pursue further a topic that has much occupied Herbert's readers, exploring some of the evident connections between the design of Herbert's verses and their message. For Herbert, lyric form often functions as a vehicle figuring God's external spiritual help, the poem thus becoming a verbal emblem of authentic Christian devotion. One noted example of this sort of experiential presentation in *The Temple* occurs in Herbert's "Deniall" (79-80), a lyric which explores the connection between its form and message quite explicitly. I will provide a reading of "Deniall" here, relating its verbal methods to Herbert's practices as a musician. I will then examine for contrast Henry Vaughan's lyric "Disorder *and* frailty," (1: 108-10), in which a similar form also indicates God's external influence over the poet's verse, but in a manner epitomizing the remarkable differences between Herbert's verses and those of one of his most talented followers.

Herbert's choice to present poems of Christian devotion under a variety of unusual and demanding lyric forms did not meet with general contemporary approval. Even in the earlier seventeenth century the humanist elites were gravitating toward the neo-classical ideals and preferences that would achieve almost unrivalled ascend-

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at http://www.connotations.de/debate/god's-mending-herbert-vaughan.

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ancy in the Age of Dryden; indeed, Herbert's posthumous literary success clearly depended rather more on wide devotional appeal than on specifically literary recognition. When Sir William Davenant dedicated his *Gondibert* to Thomas Hobbes in 1650, Hobbes responded with praise for the use of pentameter lines with alternate rhyme in Davenant's poem, adding asides probably intended as disapproving glances at Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and also at the lyrics of George Herbert.

> In an Epigramme or a Sonnet, a man may vary his measures, and seeke glory from a needlesse difficulty, as he that contrived verses into the formes of an Organ, a Hatchet, an Egge, an Altar, and a payre of Winges; but in so great and noble a worke as is an Epique Poeme, for a man to obstruct his owne way with unprofitable difficulties, is great imprudence. So likewise to chuse a needlesse and difficult correspondence of Rime, is but a difficult toy, and forces a man some times for the stopping of a chinke to say some what he did never thinke [...] (47)[1]

Through his academic training and his practice as Orator at Cambridge, Herbert would have agreed with Hobbes's assumption that certain poetic forms were conventionally chosen as optimal vehicles for certain literary and cultural functions—sonnets for courtship, for instance, or non-stanzaic pentameter for public heroic narratives; and he would have recognized that poets gained glory through eloquent performance within a hierarchy of genres. But the lyrics of *The Temple* were not written with a view toward attaining the kind of literary stature that especially interested the unofficial poet laureate William Davenant, nor with hopes toward gaining the individual glory that the cosmopolitan deist Thomas Hobbes desired to facilitate. Indeed, the mode of Herbert's English devotional poems might be described better as enactment than performance, works effecting dismissals of worldly glory, literary and otherwise; dismissals often emerging from interactions between the poem's speaker and God, and relayed to the reader for participation. Herbert's point in "The Altar" (26) and in "Easter Wings" (43) was not to revel in preciosity, but to match lyric form to subject in the process of communicating messages that were,

in regard to the poet, self-effacing. As Herbert's readers have long noticed, formal arrangements and accomplishments throughout *The Temple* are almost invariably designed to engage the artistic perceptions of the reader in support of Herbert's major theme, his exploratory dialogue, simultaneously personal and paradigmatic, between humanity and the divine will. Breakages either literally described or formally demonstrated can be as helpful as continuities for Herbert's ends, with fracture and restructure offered as necessary components in his speaker's efforts to enter God's service. In "The Altar," Herbert characterizes the words of his poem iconically as fragments of his speaker's heart, split by God and reassembled; and at the end of his poem "Repentance," he looks forward after confessing his sin to a joyful experience of divine reassembly:

> But thou wilt sinne and grief destroy;
> That so the broken bones may joy,
> And tune together in a well-set song,
> Full of his praises,
> Who dead men raises.
> Fractures well cur'd make us more strong. (49, ll. 31-36)

Hobbes's dismissals notwithstanding, the fulfillment of demanding literary forms, and their requiring a writer to scrutinize, reexamine, and recombine words, functioned for Herbert not as "a difficult toy," but as an enabling discipline which Herbert believed analogous to spiritual disciplines by which God perfected the human soul.

Herbert's lyric "Deniall" offers a demonstration of God's powers of reassembly especially meant to highlight the analogy between poetic ordering through lyric form and moral ordering through divine grace. The speaker begins with a subjective assertion of God's absence which unfolds through recriminations, expostulations, and expressions of despair.

> When my devotions could not pierce
> Thy silent eares;
> Then was my heart broken, as was my verse:

My breast was full of fears
And disorder:

My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
Did flie asunder:
Each took his way; some would to pleasures go,
Some to the warres and thunder
Of alarms.

As good go any where, they say,
As to benumme
Both knees and heart, in crying night and day,
Come, come, my God, O come,
But no hearing.

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To crie to thee,
And then not heare it crying! all day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing. (79-80, ll. 1-20)

Herbert's depiction of a state of mind alienated from God begins by drawing a parallel between brokenness of heart and brokenness of verse; and the final word of the first stanza, "disorder," appropriately fails to rhyme with any preceding line, initiating a formal regime of incompletion that continues up until the last word of the poem. The speaker's "bent thoughts" (l. 6) express a fractured and frustrated sensibility, and this motif crescendoes from the retrospective tenor of the first two stanzas, the speaker recalling how his thoughts "did flie asunder" (l. 7), how "Each took his way" (l. 8), to the immediate protests of the third and fourth stanzas which emerge into the present tense: "As good go any where, they say" (l. 11), "O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue / To crie to thee, / And then not heare it crying!" (ll. 16-18). In the speaker's repeated accusations that with God there is "no hearing" (l. 20),[2] these oppositional stanzas in the poem's center offer a clamorous counterfeit of formal unity, rhyming redundantly with themselves for an effect of emphatic frustration rather than resolution. The turning point of the lyric comes in the fifth stanza, which regains the earlier stanzas's retrospective cast and prepares for

the formal success of the final line as the speaker analyzes and recharacterizes his separation from the divine presence.

> Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
> Untun'd, unstrung;
> My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
> Like a nipt blossome, hung
> Discontented. (ll. 21-25)

Herbert presents his speaker's soul as a disused musical instrument and as a frost-damaged flower, images of recurrent importance in *The Temple*. The "nipt blossome" recalls the plucked and passing bouquet that brings "Times gentle admonition" (l. 9) in "Life" (94), and also the "Killing and quickning" (l. 16) that restrains overgrowth and brings "recover'd greennesse" (l. 9) in "The Flower" (165-67). The soul "untun'd, unstrung" ("Deniall," l. 22) strikes a resonance even more basic to Herbert's artistry: the poet's love for music and dedication as a musician, recognized by his biographers ever since Izaak Walton[3] and evident in poems as different as "Church-musick" (65-66) and "The Quip" (110-11), seems in fact to have been of primary importance to the poet's choice of pursuing inventive and demanding lyric forms, and to have contributed significantly to his strong interest in creating and fulfilling (or not fulfilling) his audience's formal expectations in rhyme and meter.[4] As John Hollander once observed, musical images are "seldom unconnected with some other, more central and governing one" in *The Temple*, but their underlying importance remains evident; "it is as if the image of music were always running along beneath the surface of all of Herbert's poems, breaking out here and there like the eruption of some underground stream, but exercising always an informing, nourishing function" (294). Among such musical images, the experience of tuning one's instrument seems especially important to Herbert, a collegial activity in which he often engaged, thinking, one might suppose, of the formal and spiritual implications as his own instrument and another's honed in on an exact pitch; considering and contemplating the unity and

communion provided by the salubrious aesthetic objectivity of a synchronized tone.[5] Human consciousness could perhaps join with the divine in an analogous manner, resulting in countless possibilities for divinely orchestrated human expressions of grace, a "way to heavens doore" ("Church-musick," l. 12). In "The Temper [I]" (55), a poem which addresses like "Deniall" the problem of dry spells in the spiritual life, instrument-tuning is offered as an enlightened recharacterization of the discomfort of feeling spiritual "lows" and "highs."

> Yet take thy way; for sure thy way is best:
> Stretch or contract me, thy poore debter:
> This is but tuning of my breast,
> To make the musick better. (ll. 21-24)

Here in "The Temper [I]" the poetic form epitomizes what finally is identified as God's tuning action: the lines of each stanza focus in to make pithy statements, shortening from pentameter to tetrameter to trimeter. "Deniall" on the other hand features an unruly variation in meter to reflect the speaker's felt spiritual chaos, and in the end it is the image of God's tuning that the speaker summons for a resolution simultaneously asked for and granted.

> O cheer and tune my heartlesse breast,
> Deferre no time;
> That so thy favours granting my request,
> They and my minde may chime,
> And mend my ryme. (ll. 26-30)

On the verbal level the speaker's petition remains a prayer for spiritual improvement not yet attained[6]; but the enabling and constraining force of poetic form here figures the presence of God's grace within the speaker's petition. "[A]sk, and ye shall receive" (John 16:24): the speaker's emerging disposition towards grace is a sign of grace; and formal resolution here indicates God's action, independent of and transcending the speaker's consciousness, with the poem's multi-layered statement becoming implicitly a divine-human collabo-

ration.[7] The reader is made to witness a final success in spiritual tuning, represented in terms of poetic tuning, and the exercise halts as abruptly as the sounding of musical strings when tonal unity is achieved.

When Henry Vaughan turned to poetic emulation of George Herbert amidst his increasing religious seriousness in the late 1640s and early 1650s, he experienced, as Jonathan Post has noticed, a burgeoning expansion in his use of stanzas, often following specific formal cues from his new master in English verse (80). But these formal techniques, including the ones that were for Herbert especially analogous to divine ordering and emblematic of theological insights, were appropriated by Vaughan in the context of habits he had already developed through his poetic apprenticeship among friends and followers of Ben Jonson and Thomas Randolph. Vaughan's transition when he became one of Herbert's "pious *Converts*" (2: 558) was from classicist *imitatio* to sacred *imitatio*: Herbert's words, thoughts, and forms were taken up, reworked, and quoted in unprecedented density in *Silex Scintillans*. But *imitatio* was in fact an approach to sacred verse quite distinct from Herbert's. While influences from Herbert's contemporaries are by no means absent in *The Temple*, there is no regime of formal emulation, quotation, or allusion in Herbert's English sacred verse even remotely comparable to Herbert's formal and verbal presence in *Silex Scintillans*. Similarly, while Vaughan's new formal pursuits clearly emerged from his response to *The Temple*, his sacred verses tended to function quite differently from Herbert's complex poetic experiments. Less tentative and exploratory than Herbert's, their rhetorics gravitate toward a univocal classicist eloquence and emphasis. Vaughan's use of Herbert's words and forms certainly implies a desire to merge his sacred devotion with Herbert's, but Vaughan shows inclinations (shared with such contemporaries as Barnabas Oley) to describe Herbert not so much as an accomplished verbal artist as a sacred luminary or mage.[8]

Nowhere is this exalted image of the earlier poet more evident than in Vaughan's explicit response to Herbert's paradigmatic enactments

in "Obedience" (104-05), a serious lyric with a quietly humorous touch in which Herbert's speaker first offers his lines as a legal document transferring his heart to God, and then gives his audience opportunity to sign it along with him:

> He that will passe his land,
> As I have mine, may set his hand
> And heart unto this deed, when he hath read;
> And make the purchase spread
> To both our goods, if he to it will stand.
>
> How happie were my part,
> If some kinde man would thrust his heart
> Into these lines [...]. (ll. 36-43)

Vaughan's poem "The Match" (1: 97-99) responds:

> Deare friend! whose holy, ever-living lines
> Have done much good
> To many, and have checkt my blood,
> My fierce, wild blood that still heaves, and inclines,
> But is still tam'd
> By those bright fires which thee inflam'd;
> Here I joyn hands, and thrust my stubborn heart
> Into thy *Deed*,
> There from no *Duties* to be freed,
> And if hereafter *youth* or *folly* thwart
> And claim their share,
> Here I renounce the pois'nous ware. (ll. 1-12)

Comparison of Herbert's carefully offered "deed" with Vaughan's impassioned acceptance does much to show how Herbert's inventive prosody of form and scenario contrasts with Vaughan's emulative and testimonial voice. Perhaps even more important is the evident contrast in how each poet employs the pressures of poetic form. As in "Deniall," formal constraint provides a meaningful basis for Herbert's entire lyric construction, the tight stanza form being especially appropriate for the poem's legal theme of property sale.[9] With Vaughan, on the other hand, the lyric form is emphatically a bor-

rowed strategy: here Vaughan forgoes, for the moment,[10] the smooth transparency of tetrameter or pentameter couplets for which he had developed considerable facility in earlier classicist endeavors, embracing instead what Hobbes was concurrently dismissing as Herbert's "needlesse difficulty" (47), demonstrating his ability to match a demanding form to his message while communicating his own relationship to the earlier poet. The divine trimming that Herbert requested and metrically depicted in "The Temper [I]" becomes a vehicle for Vaughan to simultaneously demonstrate and signify the strenuous mastery of his own sensibilities by Herbert's spiritual and artistic talent: a tetrameter line in which Herbert has "checkt my blood" prompts a rebellious pentameter expansion in "My fierce, wild blood that still heaves, and inclines," only to be reined back with the terse dimeter "But is still tam'd." This dynamic is repeated and reinforced when the speaker thrusts "my stubborn heart / Into thy *Deed*." But although Vaughan eloquently sustains these varying metrics for five more iterations in the second part of "The Match," the strong connections between statement and line length do not continue. *Imitatio* is pursued and achieved, but Vaughan's more and less intense use of the demanding metrical variety does not match the permeating appropriateness of stanza form to legal diction in Herbert's "Obedience."

Vaughan's effort toward *imitatio* in "Disorder *and* frailty" (1: 108-10), a lyric meant to answer Herbert's formal strategy in "Deniall," is more successful and wide-ranging but also similarly diagnostic of the differences between the two poets. The emulation is ambitious, featuring a stanza form much more complex and lengthy than Herbert's; additionally, each of the poem's four stanzas is a descant on Herbert's thought and imagery in another selection from *The Temple*. Vaughan's first stanza sets out his theme of human insufficiency in terms taken from Herbert's "The Glance" (171-72), where Herbert's speaker recalls God's healing regard transforming him "ev'n in the midst of youth and night" when he was "weltring in sinne" (ll. 2, 4), a joyful change that has enabled Herbert's speaker to withstand many

storms of moral challenge since. In Vaughan's rendition, however, the subject is not, as in Herbert, God's "full-ey'd love" (l. 20), but man's inconstant love in response.

> When first thou didst even from the grave
> And womb of darknes becken out
> My brutish soul, and to thy slave
> Becam'st thy self, both guide, and Scout;
> Even from that hour
> Thou gotst my heart; And though here tost
> By winds, and bit with frost
> I pine, and shrink
> Breaking the link
> 'Twixt thee, and me; And oftimes creep
> Into th'old silence, and dead sleep,
> Quitting thy way
> All the long day,
> Yet, sure, my God! I love thee most.
> *Alas, thy love!* (ll. 1-15)

The final line of Vaughan's stanza, italicized to indicate that it is God's response, also fails to complete the rhyme scheme, leaving the stanza's fifth line, "Even from that hour," equally unrhymed. The stanza's dimeter lines ("I pine and shrink / Breaking the link," "Quitting thy way / All the long day") add a reminiscence of Herbert's emblematic strategy in "Easter-wings," where the shortening of lines is meant to indicate human diminishment through sin. Vaughan uses the corresponding lines in the following two stanzas similarly, but in his final stanza the shorter lines follow instead Herbert's "With thee" in "Easter-wings" (ll. 6, 16), signaling human recovery with God's help—a theme that leads back to Herbert's "Deniall," the poem that Vaughan's lyric is primarily emulating.[11]

A similar sequence of energetic enjambment, personal statement passionately commandeering the stanza's meter, elicits another brief and rhymeless divine critique in the second section of "Disorder *and* frailty." This time Vaughan amplifies the insights and imagery of Herbert's "The Flower" (165-67), a lyric whose speaker depicts himself

as a blooming plant whose growth is sometimes excessive and vulnerable through pride.

I threaten heaven, and from my Cell
Of Clay and frailty break, and bud
Touch'd by thy fire, and breath; Thy bloud
Too, is my Dew, and springing wel.
But while I grow
And stretch to thee, ayming at all
Thy stars, and spangled hall,
Each fly doth tast,
Poyson, and blast
My yielding leaves; sometimes a showr
Beats them quite off, and in an hour
Not one poor shoot
But the bare root
Hid under ground survives the fall.
Alas, frail weed! (ll. 16-30)

Vaughan's third illustration of human spiritual failure develops another of his favorite natural images[12] from Herbert's poems, the water vapor of the "young exhalation" that settles to a tearful cloud in Herbert's "The Answer" (169).

Thus like some sleeping Exhalation
(Which wak'd by heat, and beams, makes up
Unto that Comforter, the Sun,
And soars, and shines; But e'r we sup
And walk two steps
Cool'd by the damps of night, descends,
And, whence it sprung, there ends,)
Doth my weak fire
Pine, and retire,
And (after all my hight of flames,)
In sickly Expirations tames
Leaving me dead
On my first bed
Untill thy Sun again ascends.
Poor, falling Star! (ll. 31-45)

The last stanza of Vaughan's poem, like the last stanza of "Deniall," turns from description of the speaker's situation to a petition directed

to God. Here Vaughan descants on Herbert's lyric "Whitsunday" (59-60), which opens with this invocation to the Holy Spirit:

> Listen sweet Dove unto my song,
> And spread thy golden wings in me;
> Hatching my tender heart so long,
> Till it get wing, and flie away with thee. (ll. 1-4)

Vaughan's prayer in response to the censures of the divine voice asks for grace in terms which recall Herbert's longing, reprising his horticultural metaphor and touching finally on Herbert's musical theme as well.

> O, is! but give wings to my fire,
> And hatch my soul, untill it fly
> Up where thou art, amongst thy tire
> Of Stars, above Infirmity;
> Let not perverse,
> And foolish thoughts adde to my Bil
> Of forward sins, and Kil
> That seed, which thou
> In me didst sow,
> But dresse, and water with thy grace
> Together with the seed, the place;
> And for his sake
> Who died to stake
> His life for mine, tune to thy will
> My heart, my verse. (ll. 46-60)

Vaughan's rhyme-mending conclusion to this stanza emulates Herbert's artistry both technically and theologically. The word "verse" not only rhymes with its antecedent in the fifth line, the word "perverse," but also subjects that earlier word to a salutary trimming[13]; and although Vaughan's request that God "tune to thy will / My heart, my verse" is not quite as succinct and provocative as Herbert's request that God's favors "and my minde may chime / And mend my ryme," it does similarly imply grace already present in Vaughan's speaker's desire for grace. Furthermore, Vaughan's re-

situation of Herbert's rhyme-mending has implications distinctly appropriate to his own enabling artistic experience of Herbert's poetic forms, which he saw as opportunities for *imitatio* higher than the earlier sort he had pursued, more intense in its formal demands and more admirable in its spiritual results.

Finally, in terms of the particular poems we have examined here, it can be noted that Herbert's "Deniall" presents the rhyme-mending device as a superimposition of divine and human actions, complementary and simultaneous but still separate. The conclusion of "Disorder *and* frailty," on the other hand, makes the earlier stanzas' division between the divine voice and the speaker's disappear, presumably testifying to an aesthetic situation distinctive to the younger poet, one in which Vaughan might feel enabled to speak of having seen "Eternity the other night" (1: 131) or of departed friends "walking in an Air of glory" (2: 568). Vaughan, by approaching Herbert's more difficult formal accomplishments under the ethos of classicist *imitatio*, gained the sort of authoritative voice in the sacred sphere that classicism would cultivate in the secular. The divine mending that had yielded a poetry of collaboration in *The Temple* was able to yield in *Silex Scintillans* a poetry of inspiration.

The Vaughan Association

NOTES

[1]As F. E. Hutchinson points out after noticing this passage, Dryden's satire *MacFlecknoe* (1682) singled *The Temple* out for depreciatory reference even more clearly (Herbert xiv).

[2]As a conforming Calvinist Anglican, Herbert would have held any assertion of God not hearing a prayer to be objectively inaccurate, God being omnipotent and omniscient throughout His Creation, and therefore present in one mode or another in all human action: as Herbert mentions in the first stanza of "Providence" (116-21), it is God "through whom my fingers bend / To hold my quill" (ll. 3-4). God could "not hear" a prayer only in a dispositional sense, by refusing to approve or grant a petition; and this seems to be the sense Herbert experientially explores in "Deniall." The speaker thus does not question God's actual

presence or His ability to hear, but objects to a withdrawal of previously experienced inward signs, felt tokens of God's answering presence.

[3]See for example Charles: "Herbert loved music all his life, probably secular consort music as well as sacred music; and all his life he sang, played, and perhaps even composed music" (163-64).

[4]George Herbert seems to have had in common with his brother, the Lord Herbert of Cherbury, both strong musical interests and an inclination to pursue musically-influenced experiments with lyric form; see Rickey (109) and Nauman (96-99).

[5]One probably feels the effects of Herbert's musical practices not only in his experimentation with demanding schemes of rhyme and meter, generally fitted to each poem's mood, but also in the candid technical asides Herbert occasionally makes to highlight unusual formal gestures. As noted above, Herbert mentions the brokenness of his verse form in l. 3 of "Deniall," finally mending the intentional lapses with the word "ryme"; and an even more extensive formal comment occurs in the final stanza of "Home" (107-09), in which the speaker pointedly opts for a visual rhyme with the poem's title rather than the aural rhyme mandated by the stanza: "And ev'n my verse, when by the ryme and reason / The word is, *Stay*, sayes ever, *Come*" (ll. 75-76). As in "Deniall," the device is meant formally to cede a prayer's answer to the framing initiatives of grace: the implicit divine reply, "Come Home," circumscribes and transcends the poem's present moment and its pleas.

[6]Richard Strier resists the idea that the restored rhyme at the end of "Deniall" grants the speaker's request, pointing out that the last stanza remains grammatically a petition only, and submitting that "there is something odd about a prayer which implies that it has already received what it is requesting" (190). In the secondary world of Herbert's poetry, however, different levels of reality mix, and God's actions are often signaled through formal implication and gesture. The speaker's situation in "Deniall" seems to me similar to the scenario explicitly narrated in the last two lines of "A true Hymne" (168), where God authoritatively redescribes a longing to love as an actual instance of loving. God intervenes similarly but implicitly at the end of "Deniall" when, in accordance with Herbert's Protestant theology, the grace of God's enabling presence is shown to be already working within the speaker's request. In musical terms, one might compare Herbert's sustained juxtaposition of narrative and formal progression to a musical exercise in counterpoint, the production of two complementary motives that evoke a complete aesthetic scenario through their interaction.

[7]See Bauer and Zirker for an exploration of how God's and Herbert's authorial roles interpenetrate in "A true Hymne." The author is grateful to Professor Bauer for having provided him an English version of this recently published essay.

[8]See for example the description of Herbert's artistry in Vaughan's "The Match" below. In his devotional treatise "Man in Darkness" in *The Mount of Olives* (1652), Vaughan called Herbert "a most glorious true *Saint* and a *Seer*" (1: 332). For Oley's remarks on Herbert's gift of prophecy, see *Herbert's Remains* b3^{v}.

[9]"Obedience" provides an eminent example of Herbert's tendency to present "his stanzas as inviolable architectural units" (Summers 132), and also shows his mastery of rhythm and tone across a full spectrum of human discourse.

[10]Although Vaughan emulates the metrical and stanzaic complexity of *The Temple* in most of his sacred poetry, a significant number of his devotional lyrics do use the pentameter and tetrameter couplets characteristic of his non-devotional classicist work. For a couple of better-known examples, see "The Rainbow" (2: 597-98) and "The Retreate" (1: 81-82).

[11]"Deniall" not only supplies Vaughan's poem with its rhyme-mending technique, but probably also helped to suggest Vaughan's title: Herbert's speaker's "breast was full of fears / And disorder," and his "feeble spirit, unable to look right, / Like a nipt blossome, hung / Discontented." Here and elsewhere, Herbert probably also helped to confirm Vaughan's much-pursued metaphor of the human soul as a flower, an image as important to Vaughan's sensibility as music was to Herbert's.

[12]Also used in Vaughan's "The Showre" (1: 74-75).

[13]For Herbert's use of word-trimming as a technical device and spiritual motif, see his lyrics "Paradise" (132-33) and "Heaven" (188).

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Shifting Perspectives on Law in *De Doctrina Christiana*: A Response to Filippo Falcone*

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In the wake of *Milton and the Manuscript of* De Doctrina Christiana (2007), skepticism about the treatise's authorship has mostly gone underground, in the sense that few published articles take up the position. Book reviews by Ernest W. Sullivan (on *Milton and the Manuscript*) and John Mulryan (on the 2012 Oxford edition of *De Doctrina Christiana*) articulate doubts: Sullivan on the basis of water-marks in the manuscript and Mulryan primarily on the basis of Latinity. The dearth of published articles owes no doubt in part to the deaths of William B. Hunter, Jr., who reignited the authorship controversy in 1991, and of Paul R. Sellin, who published a series of articles questioning the treatise's Miltonic authorship around the turn of the new millennium. Since 2007, though, such questioning has primarily occurred in conference presentations that do not then find their way into print. In this spirit, Filippo Falcone is to be commended for committing his ideas to publication in a peer-reviewed venue—and one that is open-access and built around facilitating debate, to boot.[1] It is, in brief, the Miltonic thing to have done.

Before proceeding, I should lay my own cards on the table concerning the matter of authorship. In my view, the question is primarily historical: is the manuscript Miltonic in its material provenance? Such questions, at a distance of centuries, invariably leave some room for doubt. Falcone's argument is not to do with material evidence, however, but with perceived theological discontinuities between, on

*Reference: Filippo Falcone, "Irreconcilable (Dis)Continuity: *De Doctrina Christiana* and Milton," *Connotations* 27 (2018): 78-105. http://www.connotations.de/debate/de-doctrina-christiana-and-milton.

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the one hand, the undisputed Miltonic corpus running from the antiprelatical tracts (1641-42) through *Of True Religion* (1673), and *De Doctrina Christiana* on the other. This disconnect between Falcone's methodological approach to authorship and my own helps to explain some of the remaining tension around this issue. Falcone is participating in the oldest vein of authorship skepticism, holding as Bishop Burgess did in 1829 that, "if the religious principles of the Work be wholly at variance with the principles professed and maintained by Milton in his youth, his middle age, and his old age, [...] the probability will be, that the Work *De Doctrina Christiana* was not written by Milton" (7-8). Indeed, the question of theology provoked the question of provenance, given the manuscript's association with Milton: William B. Hunter posited some Continental source, while Paul R. Sellin probed the treatise's possible connections to the school of Saumur or even Milton's nemesis Alexander Morus.[2] These alternative hypotheses rest, however, solely on internal grounds. No challenge to the account of provenance in *Milton and the Manuscript* has appeared in print, and neither has any determinative material evidence subsequently surfaced.[3] Hence the authorship question, to the extent that it remains a question, turns on theology.

In responding to Falcone, then, I am ultimately responding to Burgess's methodological assumption that, theologically speaking, the question rests on the treatise's continuity with Milton's undisputed works. Burgess assumes, in other words, that the treatise is a relatively static repository of its author's theological views. The trouble as I see it is that *De Doctrina Christiana* refuses to play this role, irrespective of its propositional content. In the rush to find heresy (or orthodoxy) in the treatise, the text itself, as a literary artifact, has too often gone by the wayside. In this sense, Burgess has led all of us astray, even and perhaps especially if we disagreed with his conclusions. The assumption of a continuity passing through the treatise *en route* to some other destination can hardly survive a sustained encounter with the text itself—certainly not in manuscript, but neither in the Oxford edition, which Falcone tellingly does not cite—for the simple reason

that the manuscript's myriad revisions evince changes of mind.[4] The primary engine behind these changes of mind is, as the epistle declares, scripture.[5] Indeed, the epistle explicitly (and famously) disavows reliance on earlier works, preferring the evidence of scripture instead. As the revisions show, *De Doctrina Christiana* can itself fall into the category of one of these earlier works, to be superseded on the basis of a better scriptural witness. It disrupts its own continuity, let alone any other continuity that one might wish to draw through it: if the treatise evinces changes of mind, I see no reason to hold *Paradise Lost* firmly to its theological standard, as the epic might simply represent a further change of mind.[6] In the face of the material evidence linking the treatise to Milton, we can either accept this complexity or ignore it. The relative paucity of scholarship in the last decade suggests that Miltonists have generally opted for the latter; I am trying to make a case that the treatise has a life of its own independent of *Paradise Lost*.

I turn, therefore, to Falcone's claim about how the treatise handles the abrogation of the law, for the pages where this claim unfolds show just such a scripturally-driven change of mind at work. By demonstrating how this change of mind unfolds, I hope to model a way of reading the treatise by the lights of its own professed concerns rather than the extrinsic ones that have dominated scholarship thus far. As it happens, the relevant doctrinal shift makes an appearance on the manuscript's most famous page, 307a/308, the only page to exist both in Picard's version and Skinner's copy—the copy rendered necessary by the messy state of the original.[7] There, a heading appears: "For the Israelites alone [*Israelitis duntaxat*]." This heading, however, reads thus only as the result of revision to the original "For the Israelites especially [*Israelitis potissimum*]" (*OCW* 8: 678-79). Perhaps due to Falcone's reliance on the Yale edition of the treatise, this and a series of related revisions escape his notice.[8]

Even more likely to escape his notice, though, is their cause, rooted in the discovery of a scripture confuting the earlier version of the heading. The revision in question is by Amanuensis 'M,' who also

adds, via the left-hand margin, a scriptural passage to the succeeding block of citations. This text is Psalm 147:19-20: "[God *declares*] *his words to Jacob*, etc., *his statutes and judgements to Israel. He has not* [*done*] *so for any* [other] *nation*, etc."[9] (Reading Yale, this text simply appears in the body alongside everything else, unless one thinks to check the textual notes; *CPW* 6: 517.) The marginal addition continues with two prose sentences and a sequence of scriptural texts:

> This wall of partition, namely, that between gentiles and Israelites, was at length torn asunder and destroyed by Christ's death, Eph. 2: 14. Before its destruction gentiles were alienated from the whole covenant, [ch. 2.] v. 12: [*remember ... that you were ...*] *alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.* (*OCW* 8: 678-79)[10]

This insertion, along with the related change from *potissimum* to *duntaxat*, captures a shift in the treatise's theology of the law, from a stance in which the law imposed some obligation on Gentiles, even though it was given to Israel especially, to one in which the law never imposed any obligation on Gentiles whatsoever, because it was given to Israel alone.

This change comes as a result of scripture, but it also happens in concert with what Jeffrey Alan Miller has identified as Milton's "belated reading" of Girolamo Zanchi's commentary on Ephesians—and Ephesians 2:12-15 in particular.[11] Two instances of this belated reading appear in the section of I.27 on the abrogation of the law that Falcone takes up in his article. This section, which appears under the heading **Throughout all nations** [**Per omnes gentes**], bears the marks of revision in several stages.[12] MS 315 has an extensive marginal citation, and the next leaf, comprising MSS 316-17, has a deleted passage spanning the page turn. The next leaves, though, have been added later: MSS 318-19 as one sheet, and MSS 320-35 as its own section, suggesting a process of expansion upon the earlier state of the treatise, as well as an opportunity to incorporate marginal or other revisions into the main text (cf. Miller 208). The first reference to Zanchius, on MSS 320-21, addresses the point that Falcone raises

about subdivisions of the law, as Milton disagrees openly with the Italian theologian:

> Now not only the ceremonial code but the whole positive law of Moses was [one] of commandments, and set in decrees. And not just in the ceremonial code—as **Zanchius** on this passage [i.e., Ephesians 2:14-15] claims—but in the whole Mosaic law, Jews were separated from Gentiles, who of course were "alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and outsiders as regards the promise of the covenants," v. 12; and the promise was made for the works of the whole law, not just for ceremonies; nor were [ceremonies] alone the cause of the enmity between God and ourselves, v. 16. (*OCW* 8: 700-03)[13]

This passage bears a clear relation to those on MSS 307-307a, just discussed: the same section of Ephesians 2 is at issue, as is the pivotal point of Gentile "alienation" from the covenant. This passage also introduces the idea, central to Falcone's argument, that the dividing wall of the law cannot be reduced to ceremonies alone.

Falcone brings up the tripartite division of the law in order to argue that the treatise stands for abrogating even the moral law. He makes the implications of this argument clear as he contrasts "freedom from the moral demands of the law" (a position he associates with *De Doctrina Christiana*) with freedom "from the *rule* of law," restated as a contrast between "a passage from law to antinomianism" and one (in *Paradise Lost*) "from the '*imposition* of strict laws to free / Acceptance of large grace'" ("Irreconcilable" 82, citing *PL* XII.293-305). Falcone's emphasis on "*rule* of law" owes, as a note alerts us, to his book, which has a section on "Freedom from the Slavery of Sin and thus from the Rule of the Law" (*Milton's Inward Liberty* 13-21). He draws this phrase from Carey's translation of the definition of Christian Liberty in I.27 (*CPW* 6: 537). Carey's "rule of the law" has, however, misled Falcone into seeing the treatise as more antinomian than it is. The Latin in that place reads "legis hominúmque praescripto velut manumissi liber-amur," which Oxford renders as "from the prescript of the law and of human beings—like manumitted slaves" (*OCW* 8: 716-17). Being freed from the command or direction (*OED*, "prescript" *n*. 1.) of the law is a very different thing than being freed from the rule of law, which

denotes the degree to which a system of laws has practical purchase within its putative domain. Absent rule of law, anarchy prevails. Being freed from the *command* or *prescript* of the law, however, only removes the coercive element. In a chapter on Christian Liberty, this is unsurprising, but Falcone nevertheless worries (as many in the seventeenth century, including Milton, did) that such freedom includes freedom from the moral law.

In claiming that the treatise advocates freedom from the moral law, Falcone misconstrues its response to Polanus' argument that the Gospel frees believers "from the curse and constraint of the law," which Falcone glosses as "the domain of the law." He infers from the treatise's question, "what do believers gain from the gospel?," that this gain does not include "exemption from the law's curse and provocation to sin, namely the very capacities the author has been arguing to be sources of slavery." Rather: "What they do gain from it is the extinction of the law as a whole" ("Irreconcilable" 79, quoting *CPW* 6: 535). Per Falcone, this lack of gain proves incompatible with Milton's undisputed works, which hold "that the constraining power of the law, curse, and provocation to sin all vanish when the believer is clothed in Christ's righteousness" ("Irreconcilable" 80). The finding is curious, given that the treatise, in express response to Polanus' view that Christians "are no longer bound to absolutely perfect fulfillment in this life of God's law," reads:

> Who does not see that the situation is far otherwise? For from Christians no less perfect a life is required—rather, indeed, a *more* perfect life—than from those who were under the law, as all Christ's precepts shout out. This only is different: that Moses used to impose the letter or external law even on the unwilling, [whereas] Christ writes God's internal law through his spirit on the hearts of the faithful, and leads those who are willing. (*OCW* 8: 714-15)[14]

This position can hardly be construed as an antinomian rejection of the moral law. It is, rather, an insistence that the moral law continues, in strengthened form, under a new non-coercive regime.[15]

The author of the treatise is no Ranter; nor is he what the heresiographers took the "divorcer" Milton to be. The liberty claimed in the treatise is not license after all. Falcone does acknowledge the treatise's position that the "substance" of the law—love of God and neighbor—"is not broken by this abolition," but he does not sufficiently attend to how carefully the treatise keeps love from turning into license ("Irreconcilable" 80, citing *CPW* 6: 531). He notes the treatise's identification of law with slavery ("Irreconcilable" 79), but he takes no notice of the "slavery" it puts in the law's place, even though the definition of Christian liberty includes the paradoxical (but scriptural) idea of slavery to God. As one small example, under the ensuing heading "**That we may be slaves to God,**" the treatise quotes 1 John 5:3-5: "for this is the love of God, that we should observe his commandments; and his commandments are not irksome" (*OCW* 8: 716-19).[16] Here, love proves compatible with a kind of commandment-keeping—indeed requires it. The difference is now that the commandments are kept freely out of love, not because of a coercive prescription.[17] In this way, the moral law survives the transition to the gospel in a way that ceremonial law does not, as the treatise makes clear when it discusses "the prohibition of blood [*sanguinis ... prohibitio*]" (*OCW* 8: 720-21).

On the question of the law, the treatise undertakes to reconcile what Falcone finds irreconcilable: the abrogation of the law and an insistence that obedience to commandments still matters. This reconciliation, moreover, occurs through the processes of revision and attendant changes of mind that Falcone's methodology ignores. The treatise's theology on this point has two interrelated components: Ephesians 2:12-15 and Zanchius's (belatedly read) commentary on those verses. The treatise avers as much, in a passage that Miller identifies as belonging to a later stage of its composition:

> When, having pooled the illumination of so many texts, I was thinking that I had affirmed this truth against the view of almost all the Theologians whom I had read—[people] who deny that the whole Mosaic law was abrogated—I happened to find that **Zanchius,** commenting copiously on Eph. Ch. 2, shared my view [...]. (*OCW* 8: 712-13; cf. Miller 203)[18]

As I have discussed above, Ephesians 2, with its talk of a "dividing wall," prompts a series of revisions eliminating the possibility that the Gentiles were answerable to the Law of Moses. The references to Zanchius, though, pose a different question, that of the treatise's relationship to the broader milieu of Protestant theology. The treatise's relationship to Zanchius's commentary is manifestly complex: in one place (quoted above), it disagrees with Zanchius's view that only the ceremonial aspect of the law is abrogated, while in the passage just quoted it finds Zanchius in agreement with its own view that the whole law is abrogated.

Zanchius's entrance into the treatise through a complex process of revision shows the inadequacy of Falcone's reading *De Doctrina Christiana* as a straightforward account of Milton's theological views. Here, again, the primacy of scripture avowed in the epistle asserts itself. Milton is quoting Zanchius in this second instance not to express agreement (or disagreement) with his theological conclusions, but simply to assert that working out the question of the law's abrogation is central to understanding the gospel: "'a very large part of Theology depends on the explanation of this question: and not even the scriptures can be understood, especially their teaching about justification and good works'—I would actually say, the whole gospel—'unless this point, about the abrogation of the law, be understood'" (*OCW* 8: 712-13).[19] The treatise shares with Zanchius a commitment to the importance of this question, an insistence that Ephesians 2 (and scripture generally) bears centrally on it, and even the use of a distinction between external and internal law in the resolution.[20] The doctrinal inch (to borrow Marilynne Robinson's phrase) that separates them on the point of whether the ceremonial or the whole law is done away in the gospel—a difference dispelled in any case by their overlapping usage of the distinction between external and internal law—is minute in comparison to their agreement concerning methodology and process writ large (see Robinson 31). Indeed, the manuscript revisions involving Ephesians 2, which may have been provoked by Zanchius himself, seem responsible for

cracking that doctrinal inch open in the first place. (Recall that 307a initially held that the law was only given especially [*potissimum*] to Israel, implying that the Gentiles always had access to its internal components.) The broader network of revisions, though, calling attention to the pivot point on MS 307a, privileges Ephesians over Zanchius, suggesting that Milton turned to Zanchius more to understand Paul's epistle than to take stock of Zanchius' position in particular. Zanchius, in other words, proves useful not because he share's the treatise's position, but because he shares its project, broadly construed.

The treatise, then, is not what Falcone (or Burgess before him) supposes it to be. It is not a record of Milton's theological views—or, if not Milton's, someone else's. It is, rather, what it claims to be: an attempt to articulate Christian doctrine on the basis of scripture. This task is much more difficult than readers of the treatise generally seem to have assumed. The point is not simply to say what one thinks and then to muster scriptures in support, but quite the reverse. Indeed, the manuscript revisions show that the treatise is highly responsive to scripture—very willing to revise a position in light of a passage suggesting the need. To be sure, the treatise does not always bend in the face of perceived scriptural opposition. The process at work is much more complex and dialectical than that, such that Falcone's model of continuities and discontinuities proves unsatisfactory as a way of gauging the treatise's Miltonic provenance. A more sophisticated way of reading must be brought to bear, one that attends to the changes of mind on evidence in the manuscript. Recent scholarship by a new generation of Miltonists has begun to work in this vein, but much yet remains to be done. Perhaps Falcone, as another young scholar publishing on the treatise, might join the labor.

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NOTES

[1]It should be noted here that Falcone (as he acknowledges, see "Irreconcilable" 101n1) builds his article on earlier work, from his book, *Milton's Inward Liberty* (which addresses authorship only obliquely), and from his article, "More Challenges," which bears directly on authorship. The latter's appearance prior to the publication of the Oxford edition may account for some of the methodological shortcomings to which I shall be drawing attention, although there is no reason why Falcone could not have updated his arguments in the intervening years.

[2]See Hunter chapter 5, as well as Sellin, "If Not Milton" and "Some Musings." Hugh F. Wilson has presented further alternatives in various conference papers, as yet unpublished. These suggestions of Continental provenance founder on the reference to the English ejection of the bishops (*OCW* 8: 1246-47; cf. 1253 note xviii); references to English debates about tithes, to include a hint of English behind the Latin (*OCW* 8: 834-37; cf. 852 notes ix-x); and a bit of scribal English directing the placement of an insertion on MS 617 (*OCW* 8: 1094 note 105). These details collectively incline toward a reading of the controverted "Amesius noster" (did he count as English or Dutch?) as the former (*OCW* 8: 1040-41; cf. 1057 note iv).

[3]Even Sullivan concedes that "the detailed and convincing story of the manuscript's travels from Milton's desk to the State Paper office inspires awe" (153-54). The watermark evidence on whose basis he finds the book's methodology wanting proves inconclusive. Even if the paper can be shown to date from 1625 (which Sullivan has not demonstrated in print), the material question is not when the paper was made but when it was used; the date provides only a *terminus a quo*.

[4]Falcone cites instead the Yale and Columbia editions (although the latter only obliquely). The Yale edition remains useful for Maurice Kelley's contextual notes, but by presenting only an English translation (in which John Carey often prefers elegance of style over exactness) and relegating textual notes to an easily ignorable appendix, it risks imbuing the treatise's theology with the "fixity of print" rather than acknowledging the processes of thought on evidence in the manuscript. On changes of mind in I.17-18, see Kerr and Hale. Hunter is simply mistaken when he avers that the manuscript revisions "never involve fundamental revisions of doctrine" (38), as will become clear shortly.

[5]This emphasis on scripture means that I do not quite espouse Michael Lieb's conclusion that the treatise exhibits an "essential instability" arising from the manuscript's "almost schizophrenic [...] appearance" (19). Although the revisions can be quite volatile, I contend that the treatise's commitment to scripture affords an underlying—if evolving—source of stability. Doctrinal conclusions can and do shift, but the treatise's commitment to scripture is unflagging.

[6]Although I cannot develop the argument here at any length, I believe that the treatise even changes its mind about the Son. The chronology goes something like this: Milton reads Wollebius on God's decree of the Son's generation from eternity, sees that Wollebius offers no scriptural support for this proposition,

turns to the Bible to see what it says, and finds Psalm 2:7 with its *hodie,* suggesting that the Son was begotten "today" instead of from eternity, at which point all hell breaks loose, so to speak. Obviously most of the evidence that could support such a claim lurks behind pages recopied by Skinner, but close reading attentive to the kinds of formal aberrations on evidence in Picard strata (i.e., the layers of revision carried out by the scribe Jeremie Picard; see Miller) that similarly incorporate earlier changes, plus the attendant oddity of how I.5-6 sort in the Ramist schema, offer a window into the process of composition. In my view, the difference between treatise and epic turns on a change of mind about scripture—a change of mind prompted by the treatise's unruliness that invites the possibility of dissociating from some of its positions. Different assumptions lead to different results, even as some continuity between the treatise's theology of scripture and the poem's remains.

[7]Determining the chronology of revisions is a complex and uncertain business. Rather than claiming this page as the beginning (I am inclined to think it is not), I am choosing it as a convenient thread to pull in what I am suggesting is an intricate web of revision.

[8]See n4 above.

[9]Latin: "verba sua Iacobo &c. statuta et iudicia sua Israeli non sic ulli genti &c." I follow the Oxford edition in representing the manuscript's small hand scriptural citations with italics.

[10]Latin: "hic paries intergerinus ille inter gentes nempe et Israelitas morte Christi tandem dirutus et solutus. Eph. 2. 14. ante hunc solutum gentes alienatae ab omni foedere fuere. v. 12. *alienatae à re publica Israelis.*"

[11]Beyond the point about Zanchius, Miller's article provides an invaluable account—one going beyond *Milton and the Manuscript*—of the manuscript's complex and multi-layered state. Miller's scholarship is essential reading for anyone working on the treatise. By "belated" Miller simply means that Milton seems, on the basis of the manuscript evidence, to have been sincere in his claim to have read Zanchius late in the process of composing the treatise.

[12]I follow the Oxford edition in representing the manuscript's large hand (often used in headings) with boldface.

[13]Latin: "lex autem non caeremonialis modò, sed tota Mosaica positiva, praeceptorum erat, et in decretis posita. nec caeremoniali tantum, ut hîc vult **Zanchius;** sed tota lege Mosaica dissidebant Iudaei à Gentibus; abalienatis ne[m]pe à civili statu Israelis, et extraneis quod ad pactorum promissionem, v. 12. promissio autem facta est totius legis operibus, non caeremoniis tantùm; nec illae solùm causae erant inimicitiae inter nos et Deum, v. 16."

[14]Latin: "Quod quis non videt longè aliter se habere? à Christianis enim non minus perfecta vita requiritur, immo perfectior potius quàm ab iis, qui sub lege erant; id quod omnia praecepta Christi sonant. Ho[c] tantùm interest, quòd Moses literam sive externam legem imponebat vel invitis; Christus internam Dei legem per spiritum suum fidelium cordib. inscribit, volentésque ducit."

[15]Drawing on Kelley's Yale note, Falcone quotes A. S. P. Woodhouse to imply that Milton's position tends toward antinomianism—omitting, however, Woodhouse's statement (also in the note) that "Milton escapes [Antinomianism] by replacing the outward with an inward Law conceived as ethical and rational in character, and identified with the law of nature (of which indeed the Moral Law was itself a formulation); so that the essence of the Law was not abolished but accepted and obeyed in a new spirit of free and voluntary activity" (*CPW* 6: 531n15). Falcone's argument hinges on the treatise's omission of the phrase "moral law"; be that as it may, the theology of renewal developed in I.17 works to preserve human moral responsibility.

[16]Latin: "**Ut Deo serviamus.** [...] 1 Ioan. 5. 3. 4. 5 *haec est enim charitas Dei, ut praecepta eius observemus; et praecepta eius gravia non sunt.*"

[17]For an extended treatment of "slaves to God" and the treatise's conception of Christian liberty, see Kerr, "*De Doctrina Christiana* and Milton's Theology of Liberation."

[18]Latin: "Hanc ego veritatem cùm tot locorum luce collata contra omnium ferè, quos legeram, Theologorum sententiam, qui totam Mosaicam legem abrogatam negan[t] asseruisse mihi videbar, **Zanchium** fortè in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè scribentem in eadem mecum sententia reperi [...]."

[19]Latin: "*in cujus quaestionis explicatione, non minimam partem Theologiae consistere: nec probè intelligi posse ne scripturas quidem, praesertim doctrinam de iustificatione et bonis operibus,* totum evangelium ego quidem dixerim, *nisi articulus iste de legis abrogatione intelligatur*." Compare Zanchi, vol. 2, tom. vi, 91. Oxford misprints *cujus* as *huius;* compare MS 330 (and Zanchi).

[20]See Zanchi, vol. 2, tom. vi, 90. Of the external he writes that "the law is abolished through Christ, though not equally; for a certain kind of ceremony was abolished, such as cannot be revoked, but is rather negated by faith in Christ" (my trans.). This category covers animal sacrifice and so on. By contrast, the internal "is by no means abrogated: neither piety toward God, penitence and faith, the kernel of ceremonies, nor charity, peace, concord, justice, a civic spirit are taken up" (my trans.). The distance between this position and that taken up in the treatise is slight. Both theologians thus use the internal as a way of guaranteeing the continuation of the moral law into the gospel, but Milton disagrees with Zanchius that the abolition of the external law therefore extends only to the ceremonial, intent as Milton is on opposing external imposition generally, as in *A Treatise of Civil Power,* whose title page declares "That it is not lawfull for any power on earth to compell in matters of Religion." Latin: "lex per Christum abolita est, quanquam non aequaliter: caeremoniae enim quaedam ita fuerunt abolitae, vt reuocari non possint, quin fides in Christum negetur [...]. Ad interna vero quod attinet, neutra abrogata est. cum neque pietas in Deum, poenitentia ac fides, nucleus caeremoniarum, neque mutua caritas, pax, concordia, iustitia, spiritus politicarum, sublatae sint."

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Wordsworth's "The Baker's Cart"*

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In its rendering of human suffering, William Wordsworth's "The Baker's Cart," a fragment composed between late 1796 and early 1797, foreshadows his concern with the struggles of the rural poor that would characterize his later works. This tale of an unnamed woman's want and grief connects with several issues raised in some of Wordsworth's subsequent poems, such as "The Thorn" (1798), "The Mad Mother" (1798), and "Ruth" (1800), which depict the disintegration of the human mind caused by unrelieved suffering. Written "[o]n the leaf preceding" (Butler 461) the first version of *The Ruined Cottage* (1798), "The Baker's Cart" contains motifs that would emerge in that poem, such as the protagonist's poverty, her "low and fearful voice" (l. 15), and her "[s]ick and extravagant" mind (l. 21). The nameless woman in "The Baker's Cart" could be Margaret or the Female Vagrant, or someone facing a similar plight. Wordsworth acknowledges that *Salisbury Plain* and *The Ruined Cottage* share a historical background: "the state in wh[ich] I represent Robert's mind to be I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in 93, opportunities of which I availed myself in the Story of the Female Vagrant" (*The Fenwick Notes* 82).

Although some literary critics, such as Heather Glen, Simon Jarvis and Nicholas Roe, refer to "The Baker's Cart" as a study for broader subjects, this paper is the first attempt to explain the significance of this fragment in Wordsworth's early career as a poet of social critique

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who drew on the mental condition of the suffering lower orders, appealing to his readers' sympathy and implicitly demanding reform. Noting that Wordsworth "might have used" the situation described in "The Baker's Cart" for "protest" (136) but did not do so, Roe maintains that in this poem Wordsworth has already moved towards abandoning the genre of protest poetry and becoming a "poet of human suffering" (137). I modify this view by arguing that, although social and political criticism in "The Baker's Cart" is levelled down in comparison with the overt protest agenda of *Salisbury Plain* written to "expose the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war as they affect individuals" ("W. W. to Francis Wrangham" 145), traces of protest poetry are still detectable in it, namely in the shape of the author's preoccupation with the economics of war, the despotism of the government and the influence of the turbulent political situation on the lower classes. Through the critique of the figure of the baker, the poem makes a social reformer's bid for a just distribution of wealth.

However, in its shift inward to a psychological analysis of the protagonist's mental disposition, which attests to Wordsworth's emerging absorption in his characters' inner lives, "The Baker's Cart" differs from protest poems. The latter derive topics of invective from images of human wretchedness but neither delve into the states of mind of the oppressed people that they portray nor aim at a compassionate understanding of their misery.

Contextualizing "The Baker's Cart" and examining its continuities with and deviations from some late eighteenth-century literary conventions, I will show that this poem combines Wordsworth's interest in social and political protest with his concern for human experience and the influence of suffering on the mind. The woman's ordeal, which conveys the predicament of the rural poor in eighteenth-century England, "is […] metamorphosed within the aesthetic which takes madness as the figure capable of representing this extreme suffering" (Martin 60). Her impaired mental and emotional state is a result of a corrupt governing system and a malevolent social order.

This paper also examines the influence of the concept of sympathy on the composition of "The Baker's Cart," and Wordsworth's use of it for developing his exploration of human nature. After the poet's disappointment with Godwinian rationalism, trusting the permanence and the communicability of human passions, he returns to the valorisation of emotions, grounds his philosophy in emotivist principles and incorporates sympathy into his aesthetic and ethical theories. In "The Baker's Cart," stirring his readers' emotions, he makes them sympathize with the suffering woman.

"The Baker's Cart," never titled or published by Wordsworth, is, to some extent, an editorial creation. It is not clear whether Wordsworth considered it a separate poem. The text edited by James Butler in *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar* "represent[s] the fragment in [its] most advanced state[…]" (Butler 461). Butler remarks that, since "it is uncertain how Wordsworth intended to use incomplete passages of revision […] they are excluded from the reading text" (461). Ernest de Selincourt, on the other hand, incorporates parts of this material into his edition of "The Baker's Cart"[1] ("Incipient Madness"), though his ordering of lines must be based on surmise. Moreover, Simon Jarvis draws attention to "the only part of the existing manuscript material which has not made it into any printed reading text of the poem as a whole" ("Wordsworth and Idolatry" 4). I relate to the lines printed by de Selincourt and Jarvis, examining their choices and interpretations.

Social Criticism

"The Baker's Cart" shares some features with contemporary magazine poems. Robert Mayo points out that "[b]ereaved mothers and deserted females were almost a rage in the poetry departments of the 1790's" (496) and classifies these suffering women into stereotypical categories. The nameless protagonist in "The Baker's Cart" belongs to the category of women who "have been rendered destitute by death, war, exile, and other kinds of misfortune" (496). Since in this poem the

husband is absent, she could also belong to the class of women who "have been abandoned by their lovers or husbands" (496)—the husbands of Margaret and the Female Vagrant join the army in a time of economic crisis to help provide for their families. However, Wordsworth deviates from most magazine poets in his "attention to particular localities in which events were supposed to occur" (497). "The Baker's Cart" demonstrates the same particularity that Mayo finds in *Lyrical Ballads*. This poem is grounded in "aberrant and traumatic empirical phenomena" (Faflak 80). The suffering of the protagonist is "the consequence of a specific set of historical circumstances" (Martin 87), her belonging to a specific social class at a specific time and place.

"The Baker's Cart" is also one of the first "drafts of Margaret's story" (Magnuson 105), which Wordsworth contextualizes in the Fenwick Note to *The Excursion*: "for several passages describing the employment & demeanour of Margaret during her affliction I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire & afterwards at Alfoxden in Somersetshire where I resided in 97. & 98" (*The Fenwick Notes* 78). He adds: "[a]ll that relates to Margaret & the ruined cottage &c was taken from observations made in the South West of England" (199). "The Baker's Cart" is Wordsworth's testimony of the plight of the lower orders in late eighteenth-century rural England.

That in "The Baker's Cart" the baker's wain is "loaded" (l. 3) does not necessarily indicate, as Roe claims, that "the land is evidently one of plenty" (136) and that it is exclusively this woman who is deprived of bread. Rather, the word "loaded" conveys the friction between the rich and the poor: the opening lines of "The Baker's Cart" foreground "the extent and greatness of that oppression, whose effects have rendered it possible for the few to afford so much, and have shown us that such a multitude of our brothers exist in even helpless indigence" ("A Letter to the Bishop" 93).

In "A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff" (1793) Wordsworth condemns the ills of social hierarchy, drawing attention to "the baleful influence of aristocracy and nobility upon human happiness and virtue" (96). The gap between the rich and the poor is also pointed out

in Coleridge's protest lecture "On the Present War" (1795): a "Feast for the rich, and their usual scantly Morsel to the poor" (66). In *Salisbury Plain*, the disillusioned poet reflects on the privations of the hungry savage who has known no "happier days" (l. 12) since the outbreak of the war with France. Whereas the "war-song's peal" (l. 15), which shakes the valley, lulls the indigent to sleep among boars, wolves, and bears in "the rushing rains" (l. 7), the upper classes "on the couch of Affluence rest / By laughing Fortune's sparkling cup elate" (ll. 24-25). The famished man in this poem is one of the many who of "his hard lot partake, / [and who] Repose in the same fear, to the same toil awake" (ll. 17-18). The anonymous protagonist in "The Baker's Cart" belongs to this class of people. Her namelessness suggests that her fate is serial, shared by many.

While in the magazine poems, as in the opening lines of *Salisbury Plain*, "suffering is rendered in terms of a kind of generalized human nature" (Mayo 497), "generalized poverty [and] hardship" (505), one of the novelties of *Lyrical Ballads* is Wordsworth's "imaginative use of concrete detail, which give[s] the poem[s] some of [their] feeling of intensity" (498). The generalized depiction of the conventional social barriers that divide the rich and the poor, which is the focus of *Salisbury Plain*'s opening stanzas, is replaced by a specific incident in "The Baker's Cart": a baker's refusal to give a mother and her five children bread. Bread represents basic human needs: this family is not only denied "[t]he common food of hope" (l. 20) but is literally deprived of elementary nutrition. That the horse is "accustomed" (l. 2) to stopping at the woman's door implies that her family, like that of Margaret in *The Ruined Cottage*, has been impoverished recently; a short while ago, she was able to afford bread.

Roe notes that "[u]p to line 10, the poem describes a routine inexplicably upset as the wain moves off" (136). In fact, however, an explanation is available. "The Baker's Cart" was written at a time of rising bread prices. The ten years following 1791 were characterized by an unusual scarcity. Following the upheaval caused by the French Revolution, a series of misfortunes, combined with the expenses of war and

poor legislative decisions, led to food shortages: the government's policy of taking over "the foreign corn trade with the avowed intention of starving France […] came nearer to starving England" (Barnes 76). Moreover, in 1793 "it was […] found that the machinery for determining the prices regulating importation and exportation [of grain] was not functioning properly" (71). The hot dry summer of 1794 was followed by "one of the three memorable cold [winters] of the eighteenth century, and a very meagre crop was the result" (72). Because there was no surplus of wheat from earlier years, prices began to rise dramatically, and "the suffering experienced by the lower classes was almost unprecedented" (72). Coleridge observes that the repercussions of economic and political instability always "fall […] heaviest on the unprotected innocent": "the cottage of the poor Man is stripped of every Comfort" ("On the Present War" 65), while dearth "enlarge[s] its terrible features into the threatening face of Famine" (74). In *The Ruined Cottage*, "the plague of war" (l. 136), aggravated by "[t]wo blighting seasons when the fields were left / With half a harvest" (ll. 134-35), has adverse effects on all social classes, but it is the poor who are wiped out: "many rich / Sunk down as in a dream among the poor, / And of the poor did many cease to be" (ll. 141-43).[2]

The rise in the price of grain resulted in riots throughout the country.[3] In an attempt to relieve the nation-wide misery, "a law was passed ordering the payment of bounties on wheat […] imported into Great Britain," while a bill "made it a criminal offence to hinder the transportation of grain" (Barnes 74). The government also tried to "fix […] the amount of bread each man, woman and child was to be allowed a week" (75), and the House of Commons "took up the plan to secure a voluntary pledge to decrease the consumption of wheaten bread […] by at least a third: either by cutting down the amount of wheaten bread used, or by eating bread containing substitutes" (74). Consequently, an act was passed permitting the bakers to make and sell certain kinds of mixed bread. However, such legislative measures were met by opposition not only from the common folk but also from "the baker and miller" (75). These are the backgrounds for Words-

worth's choice of bread, or lack of it, to communicate the impoverished woman's suffering in "The Baker's Cart."

As soon as the horse stops (as it is used to doing), "o'er his head / Smack [goes] the whip" (ll. 3-4). What leads to the cracking of the whip are "human actions—grotesquely, yet from [the woman's] perspective accurately enough, perceived as a single malevolent impersonal process" (Glen 232). The sense of cruelty is intensified by the brutality of the invisible wagoner, who urges the horse to proceed. This invisibility of human agency recurs in the poem in the sole statement the woman makes: "that waggon does not care for us" (l. 16). Roe reads the woman's words as "irrationally attributing her own desolation to the wain's desertion of routine" (137). However, the personified wagon can also be read as a metonymical representation of the unjust governing system; its hostility is that of society. The woman's privations are inscribed within a social order that does not prevent such incidents. Her words emerge as severe social criticism.

In his 1801 letter to Charles James Fox, Wordsworth is grieved by the "decay of domestic affections among the lower orders of society" (260). Sixteen years later, in his letter to Daniel Stuart, urging the restoration of affections among people even when it comes to such impersonal issues as business and trade, he laments the disappearance of that mutuality of respect and concern which is fundamental to social unity: "I see clearly that the principal ties which kept the different classes of society in a vital and harmonious dependence upon each other have, within these 30 years, either been greatly impaired or wholly dissolved" (783-84). In the manuscript of the 1835 "Postscript," the poet calls the attention of the elite to their contribution to the deteriorating condition of their abject countrymen: "it is an easy thing for men in the upper ranks of society, who have not duly considered the misery" of the lower ranks, to blame the law "when in fact that mischief has mainly arisen from their own fault" (263). Although in "The Baker's Cart" the baker does not belong to the upper classes, he too exempts himself from responsibility towards his suffering countrymen.

Wordsworth believed that both the state and the individual had a responsibility to relieve and sustain the poor. He agrees with William Godwin, whose *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) influenced his philosophical and political principles during 1794 and 1795, that "[e]very man is entitled […] not only to the means of being, but of well being" (Godwin 415-16). However, whereas Godwin sees in charity "a very indirect and ineffectual way" of arriving at a social system in which "all men […] receive the supply of their wants" (419),[4] Wordsworth considers charity a necessary palliative, if not a solution, for the plight of the poor. "The Baker's Cart," in which the nameless woman is "a victim of a society that has no charity to offer" (Magnuson 105) and of individuals who are indifferent to her suffering, reflects the poet's outrage at the lack of charity, both private and public.[5]

Advocating a system of benevolent paternalism, Wordsworth holds that it is "the duty of a Christian government, standing in loco parentis towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation" ("Postscript 1835" 242). Thus, denying the needy relief "infringe[s] upon one of the most precious rights of the English people," namely, the indispensable and even natural right of "self-preservation" (241). In the "Postscript" of 1835 Wordsworth reiterates the idea that "all persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law" (240). This would reduce or even preclude the occurrence of such situations as that of the Female Vagrant, who "homeless near a thousand homes […] stood, / And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food" (*Salisbury Plain* ll. 386-87), or that of starving children who stare at a loaded wagon craving bread. Like Ruth, who "begs at one steep place, / Where up and down with easy pace / The horseman-travellers ride" ("Ruth" ll. 208-10), the family in "The Baker's Cart" should have the opportunity of relying on public or private altruism.

The Psyche of the Deprived

Wordsworth claimed to see "into the depths of human souls—/ Souls that appear to have no depth at all / To vulgar eyes" ("*The Prelude* of 1805" Book XII, ll. 166-68); he came to believe that his works "may in some small degree enlarge […] our knowledge of human nature" ("W. W. to Charles James Fox" 262). Through his characters the poet probes "our elementary feelings" and explores how "the human mind act[s] and react[s]" ("Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)" 124, 120). "The Baker's Cart" describes the influence of a malevolent world on a character whose human consciousness he recognizes. Offering new insights into the nature of suffering, Wordsworth represents the response of the protagonist's mind to abjection.

In *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, pointing to the government's role in generating criminals, which was part of the oppositionist platform in the political debate of the 1790s,[6] Wordsworth focuses on a series of external circumstances that drive the Sailor to crime and the Female Vagrant to destitution. By contrast, in "The Baker's Cart" he mediates the socio-economic crisis of the unnamed protagonist through the rendering of her experience and the exploration of her mental condition. Unlike the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*, who philosophizes Margaret's suffering with the purpose of coming to terms with it or at least situating it in the human life cycle, the speaker in this poem examines the woman's traumatic experience from a psychological perspective.

"The Baker's Cart" was written in a turbulent post-revolutionary period of skepticism which unsettled traditional values; the high hopes raised by the French Revolution had been shattered, and the English people were subjected to various forms of political and social oppression. In *The Prelude* Wordsworth characterizes the 1790s as the times of "utter loss of hope itself / And things to hope for" (Book XI, ll. 6-7). "The Baker's Cart" reflects this climate of hopelessness: the impoverished woman's physical appearance and "low and fearful voice" (l. 15) convey the impression that she has long been "denied /

The common food of hope" (ll. 19-20). Her destitute children watch the cart with longing, but "ere the grove of birch / Conceal[s] the wain, into their wretched hut / They all return" (ll. 8-10). This description conveys a state of helplessness and a submissive acceptance of misery.

Whereas Margaret's suffering results in her neglect of her children and the death of the younger one, the mother in "The Baker's Cart" is concerned about her children's well-being, which is suggested in the use of the collective pronoun "us" (l. 16) instead of the singular "me" in her only statement. Watching her children yearn for bread and the knowledge that nobody cares about her family's strife intensify her hopelessness and misery. In contrast to her children, the woman's reaction to excessive suffering transcends passive acceptance and results in the disintegration of her mind. She creates an alternative reality: her "rebellious heart to its own will / Fashions the laws of nature" (ll. 24-25). The fact that, in his edition, de Selincourt presents "The Baker's Cart" as part of the larger fragment "Incipient Madness" suggests his perception of the former as a case study of derangement.

In 1798, while he was composing some of the poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth "sent off to Bristol for a copy of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia*, a lengthy medical treatise [with] case-histories of extreme mental states" (Glen 227). This attests to his interest in the workings of the deranged mind. In many of his poems, such as "The Thorn," "The Mad Mother," and "Ruth," the theme of madness is linked to abandonment, homelessness and vagrancy. This combination of concerns started as early as 1793 in *Salisbury Plain* even before the composition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Mental disorder can be a source of creativity: it has been explored by artists "to demonstrate its proliferating fantasy aspects and its flamboyant dislocation of normal thought processes as an artistically innovative stance" (Mitchell 5). Grouped together, Wordsworth's poems that deal with mental disturbance, of which "The Baker's Cart" is a precursor, could be viewed as a collection of case-studies of suffering individuals, anticipating the case-study

research methodology which would be later developed in the fields of science and psychology.

What in the eighteenth century, long before psychoanalysis, was labelled as madness might correspond in some cases to later diagnoses of hysteria, melancholia or traumatic neurosis. In the twentieth century, hysteria, a universal and cross-cultural phenomenon, was recognized as a psychological condition, and other terms for it came into use. Although the symptoms of this mental disorder depend on the cultural or social context in which they appear, there are many commonalities between them. Some of these symptoms are captured in the mental condition of the protagonist in "The Baker's Cart." Later studies of mental disorder can shed light on their representation in the poem.

The precipitating causes of traumatic neurosis are psychical traumas. Any experience which provokes "fear, helplessness, or horror" (Yehuda 108), "fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain" (Breuer and Freud 6) can cause trauma. The woman in "The Baker's Cart" has undergone a traumatic experience which triggers mental disorder. In de Selincourt's edition, her condition is associated with "rumination deep" (l. 54). Here the verb "ruminate" means "[t]o muse, meditate, ponder" but its literal meaning is "[t]o chew, turn over in the mouth again" (*OED*, "ruminate" *v.* 2.a, 4.b). Evoking the imagery of the consumption of food, Wordsworth shows that privation, grief and pain have the power to drain or consume the sufferer, both physically and mentally. This corresponds to Edmund Burke's observation that "it is the nature of grief to keep its object perpetually in its eye" (84). In "The Baker's Cart," the word "rumination" enhances the reader's sense of the protagonist's strife: suffering not only gnaws but doubly consumes her; she is herself like the cud of a ruminant.

Max Byrd defines madness as "withdrawal from reality" (117). In "The Baker's Cart," the protagonist's refashioning of the laws of nature can be perceived as such. Disconnection from reality caused by intense suffering resurfaces in many of Wordsworth's poems of the period. In *Salisbury Plain*, for instance, crumbling beneath the weight

of her misfortunes, the Female Vagrant feels as if she were "transported to another world" (l. 371) characterized by alienation from humankind. In *The Ruined Cottage*, unable to resume her life after the departure of her husband, Margaret "develop[s] severe disorientation" (Magnuson 100). On his later visits to the cottage the Pedlar notices that her behaviour is mechanical, and that she is non-communicative.

Unrelieved agony dehumanizes the sufferer. In de Selincourt's version of "The Baker's Cart," the voice of the woman, who has no emotional outbursts, is "[t]ied to dead things" ("Incipient Madness" l. 55). Her simple words convey her harsh circumstances as if they were ordinary features of everyday life. This lack of emotional display is a manifestation of mental disturbance (Mitchell 2). Repressed feelings, especially negative ones, such as fear and anxiety, resurface in the shape of hallucinations, deliria and trances—"pathological expressions" (5) of human emotions. The tattered and "[s]ick" ("The Baker's Cart" l. 21) mind of the woman is described as "extravagant" (l. 21); exceeding the bounds of reason; "creat[ing] fictions" (Magnuson 107); delusive or prone to illusions.

As if studying the progression of this woman's mental condition, Wordsworth observes that she is driven by "strong access / Of momentary pangs" (ll. 21-22) which culminate in "that state / In which all past experience melts away" (ll. 22-23). As her distress erases her past, she plunges into a state of timelessness which characterizes mental instability: "the confusion of past and present may be the prime means of indicating derangement" (Martin 22). Her near-speechlessness demonstrates "an inability to make sense of things," which "becomes inseparable from trauma itself" (Faflak 81). Indeed, aphasia and paraphasia are phenomena that accompany hysterical attacks (see Breuer and Freud 22).

Robin Downie remarks that, whereas in many works of creative writing mental derangement is used as a literary device which provides no understanding of the phenomenon, some creative artists have succeeded in capturing instances of mental disorder in a way

that complements scientific psychiatry (see 49). Although in the eighteenth century the field of psychology was unknown, in "The Baker's Cart" Wordsworth's brief analysis of the woman's mental disposition exemplifies his preoccupation with the human psyche and anticipates modern psychological theories. He provides the reader with what Joel Faflak deems an "incipient psychoanalysis" (81). In this respect, Wordsworth was ahead of his time.

Wordsworth's delving into this woman's psychological condition indicates that he is concerned with not only the physical aspects of suffering but also its emotional repercussions. His shift to her inner experience, rather than signalling a departure from social criticism, enhances it since her hopelessness and misery, which disturb her mind, are induced by a corrupt social order and human negligence. The content of the woman's words, her characterization of the attitude of society, contradicts the poet's claim that her statement is a product of a sick mind as well as his interpretation of her mental state as disconnected from reality. This contradiction might stem from Wordsworth's "divergent purposes" in 1797: "[h]e wants to write telling social criticism, which prompts his giving her those words, and he wants to demonstrate that the effects of injustice are sicknesses that she suffers" (Magnuson 107).

Sympathy

The 1790s "saw an alteration in the structure of feeling for the poor and disenfranchised among articulate liberals, radicals, and dissenters" (Roe 129). Accordingly, the popular poetry of the last years of the eighteenth century drew on the destitution, pain and distress of the lower orders with the purpose of "mak[ing] blunt appeals to sympathy" for them (Mayo 500-01). Such miserable characters as the woman in "The Baker's Cart" were typically viewed by the readers of the time as "objects of sympathy and […] of humanitarian feeling" (496). Through the depiction of her physical and mental distress, Words-

worth stirs the emotions of his readers and prompts them to identify with her.

Wordsworth, who in the aftermath of the French Revolution and under the influence of Godwinian rationalism was "enflamed / With thirst of a secure intelligence, / And sick of other passion" ("The Prelude of 1805" Book X, ll. 832-34), comes to anchor benevolence in emotions, which hitherto he deemed unstable and inadequate. His trust in the universality of human sentiments is articulated in the 1800 "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*" when he speaks of "durable" (124) truths in human nature and of "certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind" (130). The poet moves from rationalism to emotivism not only in his ethical but also in his aesthetic stance. His belief in the communicability of "the essential passions of the heart" (124) becomes the basis of his poetics.

Traces of this attitude are already detectable in the "The Baker's Cart." In de Selincourt's edition, the woman's voice betrays that she is "seeking sympathy" (l. 55). Edmund Burke observes that "sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected" (91). Adam Smith likewise comments that our feelings of sympathy for another person are produced by imaginatively placing ourselves in his (or her) situation. Thus we "become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations" (14). These accounts of our inserting ourselves into another person's situation are echoed by Wordsworth in the 1802 "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*" when he talks about "the wish of the poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs" (1443).[7]

Simon Jarvis notes that, before quoting the woman's words and after stating that she craves sympathy, Wordsworth intended to insert the phrase "in stocks and stones" ("Wordsworth and Idolatry" 3). In his reading, "the woman's pitiable search for sympathy in stocks and

stones risks idolatry" (4). However, her appeal for sympathy to stones and to the stocks that make up the wagon points to the stone-heartedness of the people who have denied her and her children bread. Rather than indicating "active impiety" (4), the metonymic displacement of the baker's emotionlessness onto his cart and her subsequent seeking sympathy in inanimate objects illustrates the consequences of extreme suffering encountered by harshness and neglect.

The woman in "The Baker's Cart" also seeks the sympathy of the speaker. At first, she approaches him—"to my side / [she] came" (ll. 12-13), and, after seeing "what way [his] eyes / Were turn'd" (ll. 14-15), she addresses him. The first words of the poem—"I have seen"—indicate that the speaker is involved in her story; the events are filtered through his perspective. Like the Pedlar, who has a first-hand knowledge of the details of Margaret's ordeal, the speaker is not a stranger or a passer-by but knows this woman personally. This is suggested by the fact that the first six lines of "The Baker's Cart" constitute one long sentence in which the speaker, in a sustained apostrophe, directly addresses the suffering woman using the second person "you." Moreover, he is familiar with her routine; he knows that the horse is "accustomed" (l. 2) to stopping at her door. As Adam Smith remarks, intimacy enhances sympathy; by contrast, if we are not familiar with the circumstances of the sufferer, "though we are uneasy both from the vague idea of his misfortune, and still more from torturing ourselves with conjectures about what it may be, yet our fellow-feeling is not very considerable" (16). Accordingly, when the speaker witnesses the inhumanity of the incident, he is stirred to a sympathetic identification with the suffering family. His hyperbolical observation "you were left, as if / You were not born to live, or there had been / No bread in all the land" (ll. 4-6) conveys his frustration on seeing an instance of systematic callousness which transforms into cruelty.

Sometimes the experience of the sufferer and that of the person who sympathizes with him/her are unsharable or incommensurable:

"when we put ourselves in [the sufferer's place], that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality" (Smith 16). The insane, like the dead, belong to the category of people for whom we have a feeling that they themselves are incapable of understanding. According to Smith, of all the calamities to which a person is likely to be subjected, the loss of reason is "by far the most dreadful" (17). Therefore, people who sympathize with the insane "behold that last stage of human wretchedness with deeper commiseration than any other" (17). And still, the deranged person who suffers might not be aware of the reality of his or her situation. Like stocks and stones, the woman in "The Baker's Cart" cannot reciprocate the speaker's feelings.

After the speaker repeats the woman's words to the reader, he "moves from alignment to meditation" (Glen 231). The "involuntary look" (l. 11) with which he examines the scene suggests that, unlike Wordsworth's 1814 Pedlar who has "observed the progress and decay / Of many minds, of minds and bodies too" (*The Excursion*, Book I, ll. 404-05), and who can "afford to suffer / With those whom he s[ees] suffer" (ll. 399-400), the speaker cannot do so. His unintentional turning away from the woman's misery is marked by the switch of the pronouns from "you" to "she": instead of addressing her personally, he reports her actions and mental condition in third person.

The closing stanza of *Salisbury Plain* urges those who believe in justice to rebel against their despotic rulers and free the people from oppression. By contrast, the speaker in "The Baker's Cart," though embittered and frustrated, avoids homiletic declamations and overt "moral commentary" (Jarvis, "William Wordsworth" 294). However, rather than indicating "blank confusion" (Roe 136-37) or "bafflement" (Glen 229), his silence can be perceived as conveying protest, scorn and pity. Some late eighteenth-century poets leaned towards representing the suffering of "miserable, grief-stricken" characters "with great 'simplicity' of manner and sentiment" (Mayo 496) and without "affectation" (494). Instead of effecting detachment or signifying

indifference, the somewhat dispassionate tone of the speaker in "The Baker's Cart" conforms to this literary taste.

Although in "The Baker's Cart" the poet refrains from directly addressing the readers, his detailed description of the scene of the woman's misery and her psychological condition invites them into her predicament, so that they can put themselves in her place, bring their feelings close to hers and share her sorrow. This method is continued in Wordsworth's subsequent poetry. For instance, in the early version of *The Borderers* his "care [is] almost exclusively given to the passions & the characters […] that the reader […] might be moved" (*The Fenwick Notes* 77); the poet asserts that the feelings which "The Idiot Boy" communicates are "such as all men may sympathize with" ("W. W. to John Wilson" 298); in the 1800 note to "The Thorn" he states that one of his objectives is "to take care that words, which in [certain characters'] minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to readers who are not accustomed to sympathizing with men" (Butler and Green 351). Coleridge concurs with this attitude: for him, one of the cardinal features of poetry is "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader" (*Biographia Literaria* 5). Gaining his readers' sympathy for his suffering characters, Wordsworth, who believed that his poetry could exercise a beneficial influence, enhances the moral dimension of his works. In his later years, he insisted that people praised him not simply for the "pleasure [his poems] bestowed, but of gratitude for moral and intellectual improvement received" ("W. W. to John Kenyon" 813).

According to utilitarian philosophers, such as David Hume and Edmund Burke, feelings of sympathy are translated into acts of kindness: "the pain we feel" when we observe someone's distress "prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer" (Burke 93). In Wordsworth's terms, "men know that emotions [of commiseration] are not given to be indulged for their own sakes" because "sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and

compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment" ("Postscript, 1835" 247). Mere compassion would not ameliorate the woman's condition. Prompting his readers to identify with the lower orders, Wordsworth implicitly urges them to seek change.

Thus, "The Baker's Cart," one of the fragments from which Margaret's story in *The Ruined Cottage* developed, represents Wordsworth's concerns in the oppressive 1790s. The nameless woman's predicament, like that of the Female Vagrant, "is directly linked to an individual history in which specific events in late-eighteenth century England figure" (Martin 59). Among other things, Wordsworth's interest in "the local" (Mayo 497) is what distinguishes his early poetry from contemporary magazine poems.

In "The Baker's Cart," the exploration of the protagonist's inner experience is "not a turn away from the social, but a way of getting to it" (Jarvis, "William Wordsworth" 294). Combining Wordsworth's interest in social and political protest with his interest in human experience, this poem illustrates his early attitudes to the subjects of social sympathy, poverty and public utility. Like the majority of the poems of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, "The Baker's Cart" exhibits "the sentimental humanitarianism" (Mayo 506) of late eighteenth-century popular verse, which portrays human misery with the purpose of eliciting the reader's sympathy. Although some critics, such as Nicholas Roe and Heather Glen, interpret the speaker's silence as confusion, his inability or refusal to comment on the woman's misery can be read as an expression of frustration with the contemporary state of social affairs.

"The Baker's Cart" also attests to Wordsworth's interest in mental processes and "the pathology of the psyche" (Faflak 81). Although the poem shares some features with contemporary protest poetry, its turn inward to discover the disintegration of the human mind caused by misery and hopelessness signals a departure from this genre. Wordsworth's exploration of the influence of suffering on the human mind would become one of the Pedlar's major concerns in *The Ruined Cottage*. However, whereas the Pedlar, through Margaret's ordeal, comes

to terms with human misery, in "The Baker's Cart" the poet has not yet resolved his attitude to suffering. In 1799, Wordsworth adds a consolation to Margaret's tale in *The Ruined Cottage*, but "The Baker's Cart" has no resolution, partly because it is incomplete. This fragment lends support to the poet's stance in *The Borderers*: "suffering is permanent, obscure and dark, / And shares the nature of infinity" (III.v. 64-65).

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NOTES

[1]In de Selincourt's edition, the fragment has no separate title and is presented as the last part of "Incipient Madness," another fragment which Wordsworth wrote in 1797 while he was working on the first drafts of *The Ruined Cottage*.

[2]The line numbers in this paper refer to the 1799 version of *The Ruined Cottage* as it appears in *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar*, edited by James Butler.

[3]At the end of October 1795, the people of London and Westminster, who held the war responsible for the distress, attacked the King's carriage, chanting "no Pitt, no war, bread, bread."

[4]According to Godwin, the practice of charity presupposes the existence of social division, which is against the principle of justice: justice and virtue "do not authorize us to accumulate luxuries upon ourselves, while we see others in want of the indispensable means of improvement and happiness" (419).

[5]In 1800, following another wave of famine, a committee appointed by the House of Commons warned "certain individuals" against "deliver[ing] flour and bread to the poor at reduced rates" (Barnes 77).

[6]In "On the Present War," emphasizing the nation's entrapment in the vicious circle of war, destruction, economic decline, hunger, violence, crime and persecution, Coleridge writes: "if in the bitter cravings of hunger the dark tide of passions should swell, and the poor wretch rush from despair into guilt, then the government indeed assumes the right of punishment though it had neglected the duty of instruction, and hangs the victim for crimes, to which its own wide-wasting follies and its own most sinful omissions had supplied the cause and the temptation" (70).

[7]Some of Wordsworth's earlier works are "imbued with Enlightenment values" (Day 77).

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Self-Imposed Fetters in Four Golden Age Villanelles*

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The villanelle enjoyed what the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* calls a golden age during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, when leading poets from Dylan Thomas to Elizabeth Bishop "ensured the villanelle's survival and status in English poetry" (Kane and French 1522) Thomas's "Do not go gentle into that good night," published in the literary magazine *Botteghe Oscure* in 1951 and a year later in his *Country Sleep and Other Poems*, will serve here as a reference point for a comparative study of three golden age villanelles by American poets: Theodore Roethke's "The Waking," from *The Waking: Poems 1933-1953* (1953); James Merrill's "The World and the Child," from *Water Street* (1962); and Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art," from *Geography III* (1976).[1] My commentary on them stems from a paper I gave at the 2017 *Connotations* symposium on "Self-imposed Fetters" in literary texts and highlights how the four villanelles use the constraints of their form to address fears. Antithesis, paradox, prosody, syntax, and a pivotal turn in the terminal quatrain are all brought into play under the aegis of the villanelle's demanding form. Together they put the lie to what Milton once called "the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming," which "forces poets much to their own vexation, hindrance and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse than else they would have expressed them." [2] W. H. Auden argues just the opposite: "Blessed be all metrical rules that forbid automatic responses, / force us to have second thoughts, free from the fetters of Self" (856). Perhaps not coincidentally, Auden was the first

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at http://www.connotations.de/debate/four-golden-age-villanelles

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major English-language poet to write an iambic pentameter villanelle, "If I could tell you so" (314), written in October 1940.

* * *

"Do not go gentle into that good night" remains the gold standard for staunch adherence to the chain rhyming dictates of a villanelle, six stanzas rhyming A^1bA^2, abA^1, abA^2, abA^1, abA^2, abA^1A^2.[3] John Goodby surmises that Thomas chose the fetters of a villanelle "[t]o constrain the emotion of impending bereavement and pity for his father's suffering" (Thomas, *Collected Poems* 417), but that his villanelle was also "rooted in his own fear of death" (Goodby, *The Poetry of Dylan Thomas* 395). Brett C. Millier makes a related observation about Bishop's "One Art": "each version of the poem [in the drafts] distanced the pain a little more, depersonalized it, moved it away from the tawdry self-pity and confession that Bishop disliked in many of her contemporaries" (241). Jonathan Ellis maintains that Bishop mastered "disaster" in her villanelle "not by ignoring feeling, but by placing formal controls on it," (23) and Lorrie Goldensohn argues along the same lines that in Bishop's published work "the more volcanic emotions required containment within the vessel of form; overtly autobiographical feeling is poured into sestinas or villanelles, cooled into rhyme" (59).

"Containment," with its associations of constraint, restraint, and control, has become a catchword for a period in American culture coterminous with the villanelle's golden age, thanks in the first instance to Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture*: *American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (1995), which evokes George F. Kennan's Cold War advocacy of a "containment" foreign policy toward the Soviet Union.[4] Golden age villanelles have their own "containment" policy and also ally themselves with the New Criticism's approach to a poem as a well-wrought urn, thereby shunning the prominence that confessionalism gave to the poet's ill-wrought psyche. This restraint does not rule out guarded access to childhood trauma, a

frequent concern of confessional poetry, which Merrill's villanelle centers on, Bishop's indirectly alludes to, and Roethke's transcends, while Thomas's keeps at bay a troubled emotional relationship with his father dating from childhood. His "Do not go gentle into that good night" generates much of its incantatory power by holding fast to its self-imposed fetters. All the rhymes are perfect rhymes; the refrain lines are repeated in their entirety word for word; and apart from some allowable substitutions in initial position and a pyrrhic foot, the iambic pentameter grid is religiously adhered to:

Do not go gentle into that good night,	A^1
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;	*b*
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	A^2
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,	*a*
Because their words had forked no lightning they	*b*
Do not go gentle into that good night.	A^1
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright	*a*
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,	*b*
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	A^2
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,	*a*
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,	*b*
Do not go gentle into that good night.	A^1
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight	*a*
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,	*b*
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	A^2
And you, my father, there on the sad height,	*a*
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.	*b*
Do not go gentle into that good night.	A^1
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	A^2

Thomas heightens the rhetorical impact of his villanelle by grafting onto its form the rhetorical structure of a priamel, which Race and Doak outline as consisting "of two basic parts: the foil and the climax. The function of the foil is to introduce and highlight the climatic term by enumerating or summarizing a number of other instances that then yield (with varying degrees of contrast or analogy) to the particular

point of interest or importance" (1107).[5] In Thomas's villanelle the tercets deliver instances of kinds of men who "do not go gentle into that good night" – wise men, good men, wild men, and grave men – which leads in the quatrain to the poem's real subject and occasion, "And you, my father" and *his* dying.[6] A villanelle's division into five tercets and a quatrain makes it an ideal vehicle for a priamel, as Bishop's "One Art" also demonstrates.

But to begin at the beginning, the A^1 and A^2 refrains of Thomas's opening tercet construct an antithesis, "night" coming on and "light" going out, with "day" lodged between them, which recapitulates in reverse order Genesis 1:3 (KJV): "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." The *a* rhymes work variations on the refrains in the succeeding tercets, while the *b* rhymes forge a rhyming chain of their own devising. Triadic abA^2 teamwork eventuates in the final tercet's felicitous lyric trio, "sight, gay, light." Thomas thus joins countless poets who have worked variations on the divine maker's primal creative act by reconfiguring the Genesis triad of "light," "day," and "night."[7]

Thomas's variations on the A^1 and A^2 refrains generate perfect rhymes for ritualized use in a choric accompaniment for a dying man: "night," "light," "right," "bright," "flight," "sight," which culminate in the quatrain's "on a sad height."[8] This rhyming sequence evokes the opening lines of Henry Vaughan's "The World": "I saw Eternity the other night / Like a great *Ring* of pure and endless light, / All calm, as it was bright" (1: 131), but Thomas relates no such vision. His father's "going" into "a good night" would be made good, it would seem, by the father's rage in going there. Vaughan's poem "They are all gone into the world of light," rhyming in line 3 with "Their very memory is fair and bright" (2: 567), is too much bright light for Thomas. His oxymoron "blinding sight" instead evokes near-death visionary experience and the mythic figure of the blind seer. On a humbler biographical level, Thomas's father "went blind and was very ill before he died. He was in his eighties and he grew soft and gentle at the last."[9] The villanelle would have him reassert his by no means

gentle natural self, now that dying looms. Hence also the poet's prayer "Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears," which sonically brings to mind Donne's praise of fetters in metrical verse: "Griefe brought to numbers cannot be so fierce / For, he tames it, that fetters it in verse" (12). For Thomas it was not solely grief over impending bereavement that required "fetters," it was also the emotional impact dating from childhood of his vexed relationship with his father. Andrew Lycett records that D. J. Thomas "had difficulty showing his affection for his own offspring, later reportedly declining even to acknowledge them if he met them on the street" (19). After his father's death, Thomas's pain, more than he had expected, "came from how little he had been able to communicate with a man who had exercised such great influence over his life" (398).

But what will happen to the "day" lodged between opposing "night" and "light" in the inaugural tercet of Thomas's villanelle? Will it perhaps turn "gray" in the *b* rhyming chain it inaugurates, as in stanza 14 of Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis": "night," "day, "light," "gray"? In Thomas's quatrain the "day" ends with a good night prayer, "I pray." Chain rhyming can make its own choric sense, amplified by intertextual echoing of innumerable other poems, but it is only half the story of what sonically happens to the villanelle's "day." As an *ars moriendi* Thomas's villanelle distinguishes between a wrong way and a right way to "go," summed up in the antithesis "gentle" | "rage." The assonantal surge "age," "rave," "day" of the opening tercet's line two leads to "Rage, rage" at the outset of line three. It resumes in tercet 2 with "they," then assonance peaks successively in "rage": *they, wave, frail, bay, Rage, rage; late, way, Grave, blaze, gay, Rage, rage; pray, Rage, rage.* The "day" becomes a *dies irae.*

* * *

Writing under the pseudonym Winterset Rothberg, Theodore Roethke reviewed *Country Sleep and Other Poems* in the December 1952 issue of *Poetry* under the heading "One Ring-Tailed Roarer to Another" (184-

85). He and Thomas had struck up a friendship and admired each other's work, which is also reflected in his contribution to "Dylan Thomas: Memories and Recollections" in the January 1954 number of *Encounter*, where he writes: "I had come to think of him as a younger brother: unsentimentally, perhaps, and not protective as so many felt inclined to be—for he could fend for himself against male and female; but rather someone to be proud of, to rejoice in, to be irritated with, or even jealous of" (11).[10] Thomas mentions Roethke by mangled name in his jocular "Verse letter to Loren McIver and Lloyd Frankenberg": "must I strain this mousetrap until damndom boom, until theodore reothke's seize" (190). Roethke may or may not have been jealous of Thomas for getting there first with his villanelle, but he seems pretty clearly to have used it as a foil for "The Waking," which loosens the fetters to which Thomas's held fast. It nonetheless outdoes "Do not go gentle into that good night" in bravura use of paradox. Rage it leaves to Thomas. Roethke had already denounced his own in the title poem that opened his first collection, *Open House* (1941): "Rage warps my clearest cry / To witless agony" (*The Collected Poems* 3).

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.	A^1
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.	*b*
I learn by going where I have to go.	A^2
We think by feeling. What is there to know?	*a*
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.	*b*
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.	A^1
Of those so close beside me, which are you?	a
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,	b
And learn by going where I have to go.	A^2
Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?	*a*
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;	b
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.	A^1
Great Nature has another thing to do	*a*
To you and me; so take the lively air,	*b*
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.	A^2
This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.	*a*

What falls away is always. And is near.	*b*
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.	A^1
I learn by going where I have to go.	A^2

Thomas's opening tercet prescribes an art of dying, Roethke's affirms an art of living. Each declaration hinges, however, on a negation, Thomas's "do not," Roethke's "cannot." Thomas exhorts his father to brave fear of dying; Roethke assimilates fear of his own fate and thus, by extension, of where he will ultimately go, but his focus is on living with fear as an indwelling condition of the self, one which afflicted Roethke from childhood on. Breaking fear's mind-forged manacles is a recurrent theme of his, notably in "The Lost Son," where "Fear was my father, Father Fear" (53) locked in a chiasmus. According to his biographer and friend Alan Seager, "Ted very early acquired the burden of fears that haunted him the rest of his life" (162) beginning with his fraught relationship with his father, whom he loved and feared, and whose death was "the most important thing that ever happened to him" (104). Roethke suffered from manic-depression, and in connection with a hospitalization in 1959 Seager notes that "fear had always possessed him that he might be thrown into some institution and forgotten" (259). "Frightened" is the single word on an entire page in one of Roethke's notebooks.[11]

Antithesis engenders paradox and ambiguity in "The Waking," beginning with "I wake to sleep." Shall one take "to sleep" as an infinitive expressing purpose, "in order to sleep," perchance to dream as in Hamlet's fearful soliloquy on suicide (III.i.68)? Or better as a prepositional phrase, as in the Beatles song "Let it be": "I wake up to the sound of music," in accord with the rest of the poem, whose music becomes a "lively air." But how shall we take "I cannot fear" in line two, as an indicative statement of fact, or else as I do, a performative resolution bolstered by internal rhyme ("wake," "take," "I," "my"), polyptoton ("wake," "waking, "go," "going"), alliteration ("sleep," "slow," "feel," "fate," "fear"), and assonance ("sleep," "feel," "fear").

"Fear" begins its sonic metamorphoses in the reiterated internal rhyming of tercet 2, "I *hear* my being dance from *ear* to *ear*," which

plays on the idiom to grin or smile from ear to ear. In tercet 3 "there" off-rhymingly undermines "fear" in the prayer "God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there," perhaps not to disturb the dead but also with due natural reverence for "the lowly worm" that in tercet 4 "climbs up a winding stair," off-rhymingly sloughing off "fear." Its dark ascent anticipates Roethke's climbing in "In a Dark Time": "A fallen man, I climb out of my fear" (231).[12] Rosemary Sullivan does not specifically cite "The Waking," but suggests that Paul Tillich's concept of existential anxiety "lies behind the brooding fear" of several of Roethke's poems. She also explores Tillich's impact on Roethke's nature mysticism, to which one might add Roethke's "God bless the Ground!" as an evocation of Tillich's notion of divinity as the "Ground of Being" (Sullivan 127).[13] At the same time Roethke set off his blessing from Thomas's plea to his father, "Curse, bless, bless me now with your fierce tears," and he sheds no fear's tears.

Roethke's "I take my waking slow" issued in walking softly, but is sped by enjambment when he addresses a potential walking companion: "Great Nature has another thing to do / To you and me; so take the lively air, / And, lovely, learn by going where to go." The poem itself becomes a lively air in tune with the musical origins of the villanelle, while "lively" morphs into a "lovely" beloved directly addressed.[14] She may also learn by going where to go, but she need not go alone. Roethke employs the "come with me" / "go with me" motif of love poetry from Elizabethan pastoral to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* when the Don sings to Zerlina "Andiam, andiam, mio bene, / a ristorar le pene / d'un innocente amor!" (Act I, scene 3): "Let us go, let us go, my beloved, / to soothe the pangs / of an innocent love." (Mozart)[15].

"The Waking" also allies itself with the prototypical aubade in which lovers who have slept one good night together awake at dawn to birds singing a lively air as the sun rises, or as Roethke puts it in tercet 4, when "Light takes the Tree." "Takes" has erotic overtones and capitalized "Tree" suggests personification, specifically Daphne, who on the point of being "taken" by pursuing Apollo, god of light

and the sun, was turned into a tree (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1. 490-567). Aubade lovers like Romeo and Juliet lament the dawning of the light and the male's "going" that it entails, but Roethke's "lovely" need not worry about his leaving her when the sun rises, any more than Donne's must in "The Sun Rising" or "The Good Morrow." Roethke as poet-lover bids his lovely go with him. In the end he and she, subject to Great Nature's final dictate, will sleep an eternal night, but "learning to go where I have to go" also means learning how to live unfettered by fear.

Roethke's villanelle is not overtly autobiographical, but as a proto-epithalamion it chimes with Roethke's having fallen in love with Beatrice O'Connell in December, 1952 and their marrying on January 3, 1953. He was forty-four, she twenty-six and a former student whom he encountered serendipitously in New York on the way to giving a poetry reading, where she unbeknownst to him was also headed. "Of those so close beside me, which are you?" connects in tercet 3 with an incident recorded by Alan Seager: "That night [December 4, 1952] on the way to the reading, Beatrice O'Connell saw Ted crossing the street beside her. She said, 'Remember me?' Ted said, 'Hi, Puss,' and started going through his pockets to find a piece of paper so that he could write down her address. At last he asked, 'Where can I get in touch with you?' To see if he remembered her name, she said, 'I'm in the book.' She did not wait around after the reading as did friends and former students and this puzzled Ted" (205). Never mind, where there's a will there's a way, and within a couple of days Roethke was taking Beatrice out.

If "The Waking" were not a villanelle with a quatrain in store, the happy ending of the tercets would suffice: *Amor vincit omnia*. Perhaps the lovely whom the poet bids go with him becomes his muse. "The Waking" concludes *The Waking and Other Poems 1933-1953* (1953) but also heralds the sixteen love poems Roethke wrote for his next collection, *Words for the Wind* (1958), chiefly exuberant love lyrics inspired by his Beatrice, who made Roethke into a love poet.

The quatrain begins with a paradox, "This shaking keeps me steady," a paradoxical stabilizing effect that Donne also affirms in his Holy Sonnet 19: "Those are my best days, when I shake with feare" (351). Trembling and shaking recur in Roethke's poetry but so does steadiness, as in section 3 of "Meditation at Oyster River": "I shift on my rock, and I think: / Of the first trembling of a Michigan brook in April," which culminates in "And the whole river begins to move forward, its bridges shaking" (185). Shaking yes, but remaining steadfast. The full twenty-one-line passage symbolically enacts a psychic rebirth of the self, of spirit working, as water flows, going where it has to go.

The quatrain's opening sentence, "This shaking keeps me steady," places the poet's utterance in a here and now, which I construe as the fictive present time of his writing of the poem, hand perhaps shaking as he writes. Fear has not disappeared, but is becoming mastered in and through an act of writing, writing "this" villanelle. "I should know" completes the iambic pentameter line, its full-stop caesura throwing extra emphasis on "I," in the sense of "If anybody, *I* should know" as opposed to "I ought to know but don't." One might take this as poetic bragging: only a poet harried by fear can know the satisfaction of assimilating fear in and through the act of writing.

Roethke's splitting of a potential sentence by another full-stop period in the following line throws extra emphasis on the first "is" and posits a mutability/perpetuity paradox formulated in a chiasmus: "What falls *away is*. And *is near*." Fear has "fallen away" by off-rhyming in the tercets, but off-rhyming is also near rhyming, and hence fear remains near. Writing may be a way of managing fear, but not annihilating it. How near the poet's ultimate destination, "going where I have to go," may be doesn't trouble him, as opposed to Andrew Marvell in "To his Coy Mistress," who uses the same "hear / near" rhyme for his *carpe diem* argument: "But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near" (82). Roethke is content to reiterate his opening refrain lines as an *ars vivendi* in the terminal couplet. Later in "The Far Field" he will himself approach death with

an echo of "The Waking": "I am renewed by death, thought of my death, / The dry scent of a dying garden in September, / The wind fanning the ash of a low fire. / What I love is near at hand, / Always, in earth and air" (195).[16]

* * *

James Merrill wrote only obliquely of his private life and childhood in his first two collections, *First Poems* (1951) and *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* (1959), but they feature prominently in *Water Street* (1962), where, as J. D. McClatchy notes, "more than half the poems [...] are concerned with childhood, with family or domestic scenes" (250). In a volume whose tutelary genius is Proust, directly addressed in "For Proust," "The World and the Child" recreates what David Lehman calls "that most primal of Proustian scenes, 'the child awake and wearied of,' stoical in the dark bedroom while parents and others in the room below talk about him" (38). Stephen Yenser finds the villanelle indeed "too close to its inspiration" in its recreation of "the child's bedtime drama at having to separate from a parent" (81). His in effect making the child the agent of the separation rather than the father reflects his development in the villanelle from traumatized victim to self-assertive critic.

Parents in Merrill's villanelle are assimilated into impersonal "people" whose correlations with Merrill's actual parents are not spelled out. His father, Charles E. Merrill, was the co-founder of Wall Street's most prestigious brokerage, Merrill Lynch; he left his second wife, Merrill's mother, in order to marry a third. The divorce was finalized in 1939, when James turned thirteen. His biographer Langdon Hammer records that as a teenager he "was still freshly wounded from his parents' divorce, after which he'd sided with his injured mother. [. . .] His home was 'broken': it was lost. Poetry and love both seemed like ways to create a more beautiful and durable one" (ix-x). Homes and rooms became salient motifs in his work signaled by the title *Water*

Street, alluding to a new home at Water Street 107 in Stonington, Connecticut that Merrill shared with his partner David Jackson. In Merrill's next collection, *Nights and Days* (1966), he works seven variations on sonnet form in a sequence that looks back from an adult's distanced and often ironical perspective on "The Broken Home." His volume *The Inner Room* (1988) evokes the inner resonance that rooms poetically acquire. The opening of his 1982 essay "Acoustical Chambers" had intimated much the same: "Interior spaces, the shape and correlation of rooms in a house, always appealed to me," and then Merrill cites "a childhood bedroom" (*Collected Prose* 3). Twenty years earlier he summoned up another in "The World and the Child":

Letting his wisdom be the whole of love,	A^1
The father tiptoes out, backwards. A gleam	*b*
Falls on the child awake and wearied of,	A^2
Then, as the door clicks shut, is snuffed. The glove-	*a*
Gray afterglow appalls him. It would seem	*b*
That letting wisdom be the whole of love	A^1
Were pastime even for the bitter grove	*a*
Outside, whose owl's white hoot of disesteem	*b*
Falls on the child awake and wearied of.	A^2
He lies awake in pain, he does not move,	*a*
He will not scream. Any who heard him scream	*b*
Would let their wisdom be the whole of love.	A^1
People have filled the room he lies above.	*a*
Their talk, mild variation, chilling theme,	*b*
Falls on the child. Awake and wearied of	A^2
Mere pain, mere wisdom also, he would have	*a*
All the world waking from its winter dream,	*b*
Letting its wisdom be. The whole of love	A^1
Falls on the child awake and wearied of.	A^2

The opening tercet upsets expectations of how a villanelle "ought" to begin based on Thomas's and Roethke's precedents, where stark

opposites (night/light, slow/go) form refrains. The perfect antithesis of "love" would be "hate," but Merrill chooses a mere function word whose frequent "weak" schwa pronunciation [*uv*] might serve as a rhyme, but love is not love when it thus dwindles into the flaccid iamb that ends line one, "of love." Letting anything be the "whole of love" is suspect enough, but even more so when subordinated to a self-proclaimed "wisdom." When "of" recurs later as the climactic word of the tercet, it acquires by position its "strong" [*awv*] vocalic pronunciation in concord with the *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary*: "The strong form is usually found only in final position (*e.g.* 'She's the one I'm fond of,' though it can occur initially in some forms such as 'Of the ten who set out, only three returned'" (347).[17] Metrically "of" is also in a now quite strongly stressed position. Indeed the entire participial phrase "wearied of" is emphatic, decisive, and where the whole tercet has been heading to as its thematic and rhetorical climax.

Making "love" and "of" his refrain rhymes left Merrill with few legitimate options for *a* rhymes to follow. He eschews potentially indelicate "shove," ignores "dove," perhaps ponders over "Pavlov," then first goes for "glove-," a hyphenated perfect rhyme with "love" that preserves the decasyllabic syllable count, as Marianne Moore might have in her syllabic verse. He follows up "glove-" with "grove" and "move" sight rhymes on "love," before winding up the tercets with the perfect rhyme "above." In the quatrain we will encounter "have," a mere consonantal echo of "love," and precisely what the child does not have, until the quatrain bestows it on him.

The tercets of the three other villanelles are self-contained syntactic units sealed off by a full-stop period, and the first tercet of "The World and the Child" seems to promise the same. All that it would need as we read the tercet is a period after "of," but instead a comma extends what might have been a complete sentence. So much depends upon a comma. The reader must visually press on across intervening white space before encountering a "Then," followed by another comma, followed by an adverbial subordinate clause, "as the door clicks

shut." But not the pentameter line, which still requires an iamb that perforce must begin a new sentence. That is where "The glove-" comes in. All this playing off of meter, stanza, and syntax creates a gracefully measured momentum, while "Then, as" imitates a storyteller's creation of narrative suspense in a children's bedtime story.

Initial trochaic substitution is par for the course in iambic pentameter verse, as in "Letting" and "Falls on." Not so trochaic substitution in the fourth foot of line two of tercet 2, made all the more contrary to metrical expectations by caesuras before and after it: "The father tiptoes out, backwards. A gleam." Merrill was a metrical virtuoso, and the father exits "backwards" in sync with a "backwards" iamb: "The *fa*ther *tip*toes *out*, *back*wards," backlit by a gleam emanating from a partially opened door until it "clicks shut," as a jail door might.[18] The gleam is like a candle "snuffed," but an "afterglow," a dying of the light, briefly remains as an eidetic image that "appalls" the child, leaving him dismayed and afraid less of the dark than of abandonment.[19]

The second tercet gives way via cross-stanza enjambment to the third, where no gentle goodnight is to be heard either from the "bitter grove / Outside," only an "owl's white hoot of disesteem," which is at least how the child interprets what he hears coming from a "bitter grove," sonically not far distant from a bitter grief. The owl in question may well be an *Athena noctua*, Athena's night owl and symbol of wisdom, whose proper abode is her pleasant and sacred grove. Here it becomes bitter as the owl seems in the child's ears to hoot the same "wisdom" that the father made the whole of love.

The fourth tercet, the only one self-contained, slows the pace, Merrill beginning it with curt asyndeton: "He lies awake in pain, he does not move, / He will not scream." The child's adamantly withheld "scream" is repeated at the end of line two, "Any who heard him scream," doubling its volume in the *b* chain rhyme: *gleam, seem, disesteem, scream, scream.* This mute screaming marks the beginning of a rebellion, a stoic self-assertion in the face of what the child and the

poet know: "Any that heard him scream / Would let their wisdom be the whole of love." The child has acquired his own bitter wisdom.

The final tercet's opening sentence localizes the uncaring "Any": "People have filled the room he lies above." Their muffled talk sounds to the child like a "mild variation" on the "chilling theme" of the white owl's dissing "disesteem," expressed now as mere disinterest in him, which may again be taken as an aural figment of a traumatized child's imagination. One might also begin at this point, if one has not before, to read "The World and the Child" in surrealist and musical terms of a chilling theme and variations along lines that J. D. McClatchy suggests: "it is one of the few villanelles to include a convincing dramatic narrative—and the gradual amplification of its thematic terms (wisdom, love, pain) give it a haunting nearly surreal quality, like certain songs by Mahler" (280).

What comes as a surprise in this fifth tercet is how the A^2 refrain line breaks off half way through, "Falls on the child." Merrill's interpolation of a mid-line period obliges the second half of the refrain to begin a new sentence requiring more cross-stanza enjambment:

> Falls on the child. *Awake and wearied of*
>
> Mere pain, mere wisdom also, he would have
> All the world waking from its winter dream,
> *Letting its wisdom be*.

Curiously enough the new sentence that began with the second half of the A^2 refrain ends with the beginning of the A^1 refrain (both italicized here for clarity's sake).[20] This fissuring and redistribution of the refrain halves makes the child no longer a grammatical object "wearied of," instead a grammatical subject who is wearied of both spondaic "*Mere pain*" and thrice heavily stressed "*mere wis*dom *al*so." The quatrain echoes the fourth tercet's "He lies awake in pain," now intensified as "Mere pain." For the child the pain experienced is "mere" in the older sense of "pure, unadulterated," from Latin *merus* = "pure." The child is no less wearied, however, of the father's "mere wisdom," which invites us to take "mere" as "paltry," "meager." Letting his

"mere" wisdom be the "whole" of love doesn't say much for the father's love. The Beatles song "Let it be" again comes to mind and its Mother Mary in an "hour of darkness. [...] Speaking words of wisdom, let it be / Let it be, let it be, let it be." There was no mother to speak words of wisdom to the villanelle's child in his hour of darkness. Perhaps she is among "People" in the room below along with the father, who has left one room for another.

The tercets' debunking of the father's "wisdom" broadens in the quatrain thanks to a pronoun change in the A^1 refrain from "his" to the world and "its" wisdom, which summons up biblical associations such as "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Corinthians 3:19, KJV). Then there is that devious exemplar of the wisdom of this world, "Mr. Worldly Wiseman," whom Christian encounters in Bunyan 's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (17-19). Beginning with its title, "The World and the Child" has set the child at odds with the world, and he now sovereignly dismisses "the chilling theme" of tercet 5 as merely a "winter dream" from which he would have "All the world waking [...] / Letting its wisdom be."

The villanelle still awaits completion in the quatrain's terminal couplet, where we expect a simple repetition of the A^1 and A^2 refrain lines:

> Letting his wisdom be the whole of love,
> Falls on the child awake and wearied of.

Something has gone horribly wrong, or wonderfully right. The refrain lines could never have made semantic or syntactic sense in a terminal couplet if Merrill had not fractured and transposed the resultant half lines to begin new sentences. The only possible sentence which might end the villanelle is left to perform its task:

> The whole of love
> Falls on the child awake and wearied of.

The love withheld by the father and the world falls, as if from heaven, upon the child, but it is Merrill's technical wizardry that has arranged this miracle to occur before our eyes. From the outset he has been

using full stop caesuras and enjambment to distract us from what he has been doing by shuffling the fetters of this villanelle.

* * *

When asked in a 1978 interview whether she had ever written poems that were "gifts" which "seemed to write themselves," Elizabeth Bishop replied: "Oh yes. Once in a while it happens. I wanted to write a villanelle all my life but never could. I'd start them but for some reason never could finish them. And one day I couldn't believe it—it was like writing a letter" ("The Art of Poetry No. 27").[21] Horace wrote his *ars poetica* as a verse epistle, but did not claim the art of poetry was easy to master. Work on your drafts for nine years he advises. It could take Bishop more years to finish a poem, twenty-five for "The Moose" being her personal best, but "One Art" took only a couple of months for the sixteen drafts that Alice Quinn provides facsimiles of (225-40). From the second draft onward she chose the fetters of a villanelle to engage with her fear of losing a beloved, which gives a twist to Jean Passerat's "J'ay perdu ma Tourterelle" ("I have lost my turtledove"), a villanelle more about seeking a beloved already lost. Written in 1574 and published in 1606, Passerat's was the first villanelle composed in its modern nineteen-line rhyming form, albeit in heptasyllabics. William Empson's 1930s decasyllabic forays included "Missing Dates," which delineates an art of losing dishearteningly difficult to master: "It is the poems you have lost, the ills / From missing dates, at which the heart expires. / Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills" (79). Thomas wrote a parody of an Empson villanelle in 1942,[22] a year after Auden wrote "If I could tell you so."

Eleanor Cook proposes that Bishop's villanelle "grows out of an echo from Emily Dickinson about forgetting: "Knows how to forget! / But could It teach it? / Easiest of Arts, they say, / When one learn how."[23] Dickinson's "they say" and qualification "When one learn"

suggest that her one art is not so easy after all. The same turns out to be true of Bishop's art of losing:

The art of losing isn't hard to master;	A^1
so many things seem filled with the intent	*b*
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.	A^2
Lose something every day. Accept the fluster	*a*
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.	*b*
The art of losing isn't hard to master.	A^1
Then practice losing farther, losing faster:	*a*
faces, and names, and where it was you meant	*b*
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.	A^2
I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or	*a*
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.	*b*
The art of losing isn't hard to master.	A^1
I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,	*a*
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.	*b*
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.	A^2
——Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture	*a*
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident	*b*
the art of losing's not too hard to master	A^1
though it may look like (*Write* it!) like disaster.	A^2

Bishop's opening tercet positions "master" and "disaster" as A^1 and A^2 refrain rhymes with "intent" lodged betwixt them, intimating at least an intent to master disaster that at the end of the *b* rhyming chain will become "evident." Bishop does not use the word "master" elsewhere, but Bonnie Costello remarks that she "concerned herself, throughout her career, with questions of mastery—artistic, personal, and cultural. Her poems portray both the desire for mastery and the dangers and illusions to which such desire is prone" (*Elizabeth Bishop* 10). The "master" / "disaster" rhyme is not, however, Bishop's private property. Auden used it plus a mid-line "art" in "Letter to Lord Byron": "So long as he can style himself the master: / Unluckily for art, it's a

disaster" (101)[24] and in "Musée des Beaux Arts" he played off "Masters" and "disaster" in the first and second verse paragraphs (179). Critics generally highlight Gerard Manley Hopkins's use of "faster" and "master" in the twenty-eighth stanza of his disaster poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (117).[25]

The opening tercet hinges, like Thomas's "do not" and Roethke's "I cannot," on a negation, in fact two, "isn't" and "no," which burgeon in the following tercets and the quatrain into *isn't, none, isn't, None, isn't, wasn't, shan't, not*. Repetition and variation are also at work in Bishop's uses of polyptoton and other grammatical shifts of the same word: "losing" is repeatedly a gerund except for one key transformation into a participle in the quatrain; "lost" is both an adjective and an indicative verb; and "lose" is an imperative verb. To these add *loved, lovely, love* in tercets four/five and *love* in the quatrain. Positioned at the head of the quatrain's line two, "I love" climaxes a sequence of line-openings that tells all: "I lost," "I lost," "I miss," "I love."

A catalogue in tercet 2 of things lost as if by their own intent starts with something relatively trivial, lost door keys, which precipitates an amusing feminine off rhyme, "fluster" / "master." As for the "hour badly spent," an hour isn't a life and "lost" door keys are found often enough. Tercet 3 sets off disyllabic trochaic words against the normative iambic grid as syncopated practical advice, "Then *prac*tice *los*ing *farther, los*ing *fast*er," like a steam engine chugging, picking up speed as in the children's didactic exemplum "The Little Engine that Could." The loss of "places, and names, and where it was you meant / to travel" is aggravating when memory falters, but truly "None of these will bring disaster." "Losing farther" in tercet 3, where "losing further" might be expected, is close enough to "losing father" without actually uttering it. Tercet 4 alters the brisk pace and playful tone thus far in a curt opening sentence that employs an "I" for the first time: "I lost my mother's watch." A greater loss for Bishop came at age five when her mother was committed permanently to a mental asylum, never having recovered from the loss of her husband, who died when

Bishop was eight months old. Citing circumstantial indications from other poems, Heather Treseler identifies "a pun on both a lost time-piece and the traumatic loss of maternal 'watch' or care" (90-91). As for Bishop's exclamation "And look! my last, or / next-to-last, of three loved houses went," Thomas Travisano observes, "given her life-long search for home, Bishop's loss of her White Street house in Key West, her dispossession of that beloved residence in Samambaia, and her renunciation of the meticulously renovated Casa Mariana are losses that she could at best only struggle to dismiss" (370). Her "last, or / next-to-last house" was a condominium at Lewis Wharf in Boston, where she died of a cerebral aneurysm on October 6, 1979.

In the chancy *b* rhyming chain "intent" was quickly "spent" in the second tercet, doggedly returned in the third as "meant," but "went" in the fourth, then expands into trisyllabic "continent" in the final tercet's ominous abA^2 triadic chorus: *continent*, *vaster*, *disaster*. The overall progression of losing in "One Art" has been toward expansion, lost door keys become two houses lost, an hour badly spent turns into a lost watch, and realms become a continent, in biographical contexts South America. Bishop lived in Brazil for some fifteen years with Lota de Macedo Soares, whom Bishop later lost forever when she committed suicide. The "two cities" might point to Rio de Janeiro and Ouro Preto, where Bishop and she had resided; the "two rivers" suggest the Amazon and the Tapajós, the "two great rivers" in her travel poem "Santarém"; while "some realms" brings to mind Keats's "Much have I traveled in the realms of gold," which inaugurates "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" and its accompanying "Cortez" allusion.[26]

The A^1 refrain withstood verbally unchanged the tercets' mounting examples of losing but teeters in the quatrain, "The art of losing's not too hard to master." The final link in the *b* rhyming chain makes "evident" that the rhetorical "intent" of the villanelle has been from the outset the formation of a priamel. Like Thomas's "And you, my father," Bishop's employs a direct address to a *you*, "—Even losing you," which divulges the real subject and occasion of the villanelle, a harrowing fear of losing "you," identifiable biographically with Alice

Methfessel, Bishop's late love, whose surname derives from the German noun "Fessel" = "fetter."[27] Emotionally Bishop had become happily "fettered" to the much younger Methfessel. Using "parenthesis," a typographical formation of fetters, Bonnie Goldensohn gets to for Bishop the heart of matter: "After invoking loss incrementally through keys, then houses, then continents, and then simply, as 'you,' we arrive at the ultimate disaster with its portrait of the beloved protectively wrapped in parenthesis: 'losing you (the joking voice, a gesture / I love)'" (33).

Such fetters are in a sense preserved when "losing" in the participial phrase "—Even losing you" changes from a previously generalizing gerund into a participle grammatically attached to a subject "I" and its attendant direct object, "you," as if by a magnet: "—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture / I love) I." This fortuitous "you, I" dyad, enclosing the parenthesis and hence the beloved, insinuates a yearned for "we."[28]

Grammar also comes to the fore in that contracted, future perfect indicative rare bird "I shan't have lied," whose threatening futurity resides in the participial phrase taken as an agitated conditional ("if I were to lose you"). All depends on what the "you" will or will not do. Thus understood, the priamel's climax, with its strategically placed pathos, is a rhetorical performance whose end is persuasion of the "you" not to leave the speaker. The villanelle becomes an art of not losing.

What tests it at the end is the form of the villanelle itself, which gives disaster the last word. A cavalcade of six "I" utterances begun in tercet 3 reaches an assonantal climax, "like (*Write* it!) like," the personal pronoun "I" now sonically merging with the imperative verb "*Write*" urged on by assonantal "like," like." The second "like" resumes an effort, after the poet's mental aside to herself, to write the villanelle where it has to go metrically to complete its appointed task, formally and rhetorically.

Parenthesis, italics, and an exclamation mark underscore "(*Write* it!)" as an emphatic trochaic phrase lodged within the iambic metrical

grid, which I render in boldface for metrical accents: "though **it** may **look** like (***Write*** it!)." The mental aside over, the feminine iambic line is now ready to continue on: "though **it** may **look** like (***Write*** it!) dis**as**ter." But it doesn't. The poet's fictive act of writing the line to its appointed end prompts her to write "like" all over again, picking up and repeating where she left off, this time putting "like" in a metrically stressed position: "though **it** may **look** like (***Write*** it!) **like** dis**as**ter." The metrical line does not turn into a disaster, instead the second "like," now stressed, facilitates Bishop's metrically mastering what merely looks *like* looming disaster.[29]

* * *

A villanelle is inevitably a kind of game requiring a poet's witty mastery of its strict rules, but few villanelles are more than that. How many would one wish to come back to again and again over the years, becoming ever more fully responsive to them? For poet-critic Don Paterson there aren't any: the "villanelle is best passed over in silence. […] Indeed its best-known example is one of the silliest poems I know, Dylan Thomas's 'Do not go gentle into that good night'" (694). Poet-critic Robert Hass is more upbeat and grants that the villanelle form "has produced at least these four quite powerful poems" (194) the Thomas, Roethke, and Bishop villanelles that I discuss plus "The House on the Hill" by the American poet Edwin Arlington Robinson, written in iambic trimeter and published in 1903 (cf. Hass 194).[30] I would not disparage, however, the reading pleasures offered by the roughly 300 other villanelles in the well-conceived Finch and Mali anthology. Silver age villanelles, which take the lion's share of villanelles on offer, can be classified for the most part as entertaining comic light verse, topped by Anita Gallers' hilarious parody "One Fart" (Finch 190), which I do come back to when feeling flatulent:

The fart, amusing, isn't hard to master.
Let loose despite your efforts and intent
to stop or hide it, it is no disaster.

Just let one rip like a repeating blaster—
no need to make it into an event.
The fart, amusing, isn't hard to master.

No matter if the smell could take the plaster
off the ceiling, make the milk ferment,
bring tears and coughs. It's hardly a disaster.

In fact, give it a push. It'll go faster,
louder, funnier – more expedient. The fart,
amusing, isn't hard to master.

Make it resound, its echo ever vaster;
let freedom ring across the continent!
Repression, not release, is the disaster.

So feel no shame. Make no embarrassed gesture.
Be proud, and laugh. It's evident
The fart, amusing, isn't hard to master
though it may sound and smell like a disaster.

So much for self-imposed fetters.

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NOTES

[1]My golden age villanelle quotations are from Thomas, *Collected Poems* 193; Roethke, *Collected Poems* 104; Merrill, *Collected Poems* 147; Bishop, *Poems*, *Prose*, *and Letters* 198. Other verse quotations are from the same editions.

[2]From Milton's note on "The Verse," procured by the printer for the fourth issue of the first edition of *Paradise Lost* to answer readers "troubled why the poem rhymes not" (51). Milton was not averse to rhyme elsewhere in his work, but in his epic "[t]he measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin" (54).

[3]See the entry on "Chain Rhyme" by Brogan and Chang in *The Princeton Encyclopedia* which includes *terza rima,* the villanelle, and other schemes of interlocking stanzas or lines (220).

[4]See more specifically Axelrod, "Elizabeth Bishop and Containment Policy."

[5]See also Race, *Classical Genres* 35-55 and on Thomas's priamel specifically 93-94.

[6]Goodby notes that "[t]he four central tercets follow part five of Yeats's 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', which ironically mocks, in turn, the 'great', the 'wise', the 'good' and finally 'mockers' themselves" (*Discovering Dylan Thomas* 226).

[7]The Genesis triad of "light," "day, and "night" is reconfigured, for example, by Swinburne's "Sestina" from stanza to stanza, always with "delight," even as God found his creation "good." Byron uses "night," "bright," "light" accompanied by assonance in the opening *ababab* stanza of "She Walks in Beauty": "night" / "skies" / "bright" / "eyes"/ "light" / "denies." The opening and closing quatrains of Blake's "The Tyger" employ "bright" / "night" as dichotomous *aa* rhymes reinforced by assonantal "eyes." A decade before Thomas's villanelle Roethke rhymed "night," "sight," "bright," "light," "night" in his "Night Journey" (*The Collected Poems* 32), and later in "The Dying Man" he links "staring at perpetual night" with "until my dark is bright," and then "a dying light" with "the long night" (*The Collected Poems* 149, 150). Two silver age villanelles fiddle with Thomas's "night, light" refrains by adding a syllable. Jacqueline Osherow's "Villanelle for the Middle of the Night" uses "night" / "house" / "streetlight." What will rhymingly happen to or in the house, stationed between the night and a streetlight as if in an Edward Hopper painting? Suzanne Gardinier's villanelle "Tonight" (1987) plays off "light" and "tonight," making us wonder what will happen tonight.

[8]Goodby relates "on the sad height" to "the predicament of Lear and Gloucester in *King Lear* and of Christ on Calvary (reversing the trope of the early poems, by which God the Father is seen as having betrayed the Son into crucifixion)" (*Discovering Dylan Thomas* 227).

[9]Revealed by Thomas during a reading in America; qtd. in *The Collected Poems* 417.

[10]Alan Seager writes of the two poets' friendship and admiration of each other's work in *The Glass House* 192-93, 199-200, 203-05, 213-14.

[11]Recorded undated by Seager 162. From a 1944 notebook Seager quotes "For ten years I played roaring boy when I was really frightened boy" (165), and from 1945, "Afraid? Why, hell, I've been afraid all my life—dogs, thunder, my cousin ..." (165).

[12]Compare Robert Lowell's later "Jonathan Edwards in Western Massachusetts": "The meeting house remembered! / You stood on stilts in the air, / but you fell from your parish. / 'All rising is by a winding stair,'" (355). Lowell quotes from Sir Francis Bacon's essay "Of Great Place" (see Bacon 36) and in a preceding stanza records when Bacon "fell" (Lowell 353). Lowell draws on his central trope of falling, rising, standing, reversing it here. In "Jordan (I)" George Herbert asks critically with regard to poetry: "Is all good structure in a winding stair?" (200).

Roethke brings down to earth Yeats's high-flown "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" in *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*: "*My Soul.* I summon to the ancient winding stair; / Set all your mind upon the steep ascent" (Yeats 284). Ronald E. McFarland identifies the Bacon source, refers to "George Herbert's poetry" and "one of Yeats's several winding stairways" (91).

[13]For Tillich's influence on Roethke and his mysticism see 105, 117, 126, 140, 183. Seager attests to Roethke's being "specially interested in reading the works of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr" (202). In his classic *The Courage to Be,* Tillich adverts to fear (see 34-38, 72-73).

[14]Kane and French emphasize the villanelle's evolution as song (see 1521). See also Annie Finch's "Dancing with the Villanelle" preface to *Villanelles*, eds. Finch and Mali (18) for the villanelle's simultaneous origins in dance.

[15]Compare Elizabethan pastoral versions in Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," Sir Walter Ralegh, "The Nymph's reply to the Shepherd," and John Donne, "The Bait." T. S. Eliot's Prufrock is no Don Juan or scheming Elizabethan shepherd, but he "sings" his own love-song invitation, "Let us go then, you and I," composed in heptasyllabic song meter (5).

[16]Compare another juxtaposition of this passage from "The Far Field" and "The Waking" in Bowers 166.

[17]My simplified phonetic transcriptions are intentionally very different from the arcane IPA symbols.

[18]Or as a dredge might: "Click. Click. Goes the dredge, / and brings up a dripping jawful of marl" (59) in Elizabeth Bishop's earlier "The Bight," with a play on "bite." Bishop rhymed "jawful" and "awful." Merrill was a friend of Bishop's and I expect awaited her chuckling at his sonic allusion. Angela Leighton keeps an ear out for "click" (albeit not in Bishop or Merrill) in *Hearing Things* 46.

[19]The gleam reappears as a simile in "The Broken Home," which begins "Crossing the street, / I saw the parents and the child / At their window, gleaming like fruit / With evening's mild gold leaf" (Merrill, *Collected Poems* 197). Lines 5-8 evoke "the room he lies above" in the villanelle: "In a room on the floor below, / Sunless. cooler—a brimming / Saucer of wax, marbly and dim— / I have lit what's left of my life." In lines 11-12 "The flame quickens. The word stirs" and becomes "a tongue of fire."

[20]It's perhaps worth noting on the wing that the new sentence harks back to Roethke's "The Waking," in which wisdom is acquired by "going where I have to go.

[21]Alice Quinn's collection of Bishop's drafts, *Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke-Box*, includes a facsimile of one aborted villanelle, titled determinedly "Villanelle," consisting of eleven unrhymed lines followed by "etc., etc." (34).

[22]"Request to Leda (Homage to William Empson)," *Collected Poems* 129.

[23]Franklin ed. no. 391, qtd. Cook 240. Angela Leighton suggests it is "just possible that Bishop was recalling a passage from Robert Hitchens' racing send-up of Victorian aestheticism published in 1894: *The Green Carnation.* Mr. Amarinth,

recognizably Oscar Wilde, declares at one point: 'My temper and my heart are the only two things that I never lose! Everything else vanishes. I think the art of losing things is a very subtle art. So few people can lose anything really beautifully'" (*On Form* 248).

[24]Costello, "Auden's Influence" 38, notes Bishop's echo.

[25]Ravintihiran devotes a paragraph to interrelations of the Hopkins stanza and Bishop's writing of "One Art" (206).

[26]The Keats association is mine, the others Axelrod's in "Bishop, History, and Politics" 40. Axelrod examines how "One Art" "conflates Bishop's personal sense of 'losing' with a global history of master and disaster and with the fear of defeat that haunts every colonial and military project" (39-40).

[27]Marshall recounts biographical details (270-78). Methfessel considered marrying but gave up the idea. After Bishop's death in 1979 she became her literary executrix.

[28]I mean to invoke here interpretive perspectives of Bonnie Costello's *The Plural of Us*, which comments only incidentally on Bishop and cites only "The Moose" (7).

[29]McCabe emphasizes the gradual acquisition of mastery through the act of writing the drafts: "Bishop wrote at least seventeen drafts of 'One Art' before she considered it written. Not surprisingly the act of writing is a focal concern of the poem [...] It is only in the process of 'writing it' that Bishop can face the catastrophic losing of a love, though the drafts do not foresee surviving such an event" (33).

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C. S. Lewis and Satan: *A Preface to* Paradise Lost and Its Respondents, 1942-1952[1*]

DAVID V. URBAN

Published nearly eight decades ago, C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost (1942) remains arguably the most influential work of Milton criticism ever written. Composed during the height of the mid-twentieth century "Milton Controversy,"[2] during which the very value and quality of Milton's epic was challenged and debated by various "anti-Miltonist" scholars, *A Preface* was influential on many levels, including Lewis's assertion that *Paradise Lost*'s artistic success could best be appreciated by placing it within its proper genre as a "Secondary epic" (Lewis 39; see 39-60)[3] and also his argument that "Milton's version of the Fall story" should not be considered theologically unorthodox but rather conforming "substantially" to the Augustinian tradition and the orthodox "Church as a whole" (65; see 65-71, in which Lewis argues that Milton's account largely coincides with that of Augustine's *City of God*). But unquestionably Lewis's chapter on Milton's Satan (Lewis 92-100) provoked the most substantive and enduring responses in the decade following *A Preface*'s publication. In that brief chapter, Lewis challenged the popular notion that Milton's Satan was the hero of *Paradise Lost*, arguing rather that Satan was not only morally evil but also supremely egotistical, even showing himself in some ways to be foolish and tedious. The critical response to Lewis's assertions came rapidly and continued steadily, shaping and continuing to shape interpretations of *Paradise Lost* to this day, as

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evidenced by various late twentieth century and twenty-first century books and articles that engage both Lewis and his best-known early respondent, A. J. A. Waldock.[4] My essay will present and analyze Lewis's discussion of Satan and the response it elicited through 1952, focusing specifically on the books and articles during that time period that most directly and thoroughly engage Lewis's chapter.[5] Amid this presentation, I will address what I consider the strengths and shortcomings of Lewis's and his respondents' discussions, even as I highlight common elements in his respondents' critiques.

Lewis's Challenge to the Romantics' Heroic Satan

To understand the significance of Lewis's analysis of Satan, we must recognize that in *A Preface*, Lewis writes against a long tradition, begun with the Romantics William Blake, and more importantly Percy Bysshe Shelley, that contends that Milton unconsciously favored Satan—Blake famously wrote that Milton "was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (Blake 35)—and that Satan was the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. This Romantic notion of Satan's heroism goes beyond John Dryden's notion that Satan is the epic's hero because he defeats Adam,[6] or even the idea that Satan is heroic in the sense that he drives the action of the poem and is the most dynamic character in the epic, but actually argues that Satan is morally superior to Milton's God the Father, whose immoral actions toward Satan provoke and even justify his rebellion.

In articulating this position regarding Satan, Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry* writes:

> Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy. (290)

In Shelley's view, Satan's heroism is grounded in the grandeur of his noble, indefatigable rebellion against an immoral and sadistic Tyrant

who, despite his cruel torture and inevitable victory against Satan, cannot quell the preserving spirit of his victimized foe. Although Shelley elsewhere admits his own misgivings regarding Satan's moral character, he nonetheless asserts that Satan's moral failings are "excuse[d]" because the "wrongs" done to him by Milton's God "exceed all measure" (Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, 121).

In *A Preface*, Lewis portrays himself as working to reverse longstanding wrong thinking brought about by Romanticism's celebration of Satan. In his Dedication, Lewis directly addresses his friend Charles Williams, calling Williams's 1940 Introduction to The World's Classics' *The English Poems of John Milton* "the recovery of a true critical tradition after more than a hundred years of laborious misunderstanding" (Lewis v). Lewis was deeply impressed by Williams's contention that Milton depicts Satan as "malicious and idiotic" (Williams xiii), a character whose pompous "self-love" reveals the "ironical" nature of his words (xii). According to Williams, Satan's bombastic speeches are inaccurate in the way that "Hell is always inaccurate," and they rightly elicit the "irrepressible laughter of heaven" at Satan's "solemn antics." Indeed, Milton's Father's mirth in the face of Satan's absurdity depicts how "Love laughs at anti-love" (xii-xiii).

In his chapter on Satan, Lewis frames his discussion in a manner that recognizes the artistic greatness of Milton's depiction even as he challenges the idea that Milton admired Satan or that Satan should be approved of by Milton's audience. Lewis asserts, on the one hand, that "Milton's Satan is a magnificent character" in the sense that "Milton's presentation of him is a magnificent poetical achievement which engages the attention and excites the admiration of the reader" (Lewis 92). On the other hand, Lewis challenges the idea that Milton's Satan "ought to be an object of admiration and sympathy, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the poet or his readers or both" (92). Lewis's aim here is not "directly to convert those who admire Satan, but only to make a little clearer what it is they are admiring. That Milton could not have shared their admiration will then, I hope, need no argument" (92). In these sentences, Lewis clearly distinguishes be-

tween admiring the sublime artistic achievement that is Milton's Satan, and admiring Satan himself. In doing so, Lewis affirms against the "anti-Miltonists" *Paradise Lost*'s poetic greatness even as he challenges the morality of romanticizing Satan.

Lewis then builds on Williams's brief assessment of Satan's mock-worthy foolishness. Lewis writes that, although Milton's epic form has "subordinated the absurdity of Satan to the misery which he suffers and inflicts," Milton intentionally displays Satan's "absurdity," arguing that the very "nature of reality" demands that Satan's practice of "rant[ing] and postur[ing] through the whole universe" inevitably "awak[ens] the comic spirit" (93). Moreover, Milton himself was supremely aware of Satan's absurdities, for Milton "believed everything detestable to be, in the long run, also ridiculous" (93). Indeed, "mere Christianity commits every Christian to believing that 'the Devil is (in the long run) an ass'" (93).[7]

According to Lewis, Satan's absurdities are grounded in his "sense of injur'd merit" (1.98).[8] Satan claims to have suffered after he "thought himself impair'd" (5.665) by God the Father's exalting his Son as the "Head" (5.606) of the angels and commanding the angels, on pain of damnation, to worship the Son and "confess him Lord" (5.608). Lewis unflinchingly emphasizes the absurdity of Satan's ridiculous discontent:

> He thought himself impaired because Messiah had been pronounced Head of the Angels. These are the "wrongs" which Shelley described as "beyond measure." A being superior to himself in kind, by whom he himself had been created […] had been preferred to him in honour by an authority whose right to do so was not disputable […]. No one had in fact done anything to Satan […] he only thought himself impaired. In the midst of a world of light and love, of song and feast and dance, he could find nothing to think of more interesting than his own prestige. (94)

Noting that Satan's subsequent speech to his legions which inspires their rebellion contains laughable contradiction, Lewis argues that throughout *Paradise Lost* Satan "is engaged in sawing off the branch he is sitting on," for "a creature revolting against a creator is revolting

against the source of his own powers—including even his power to revolt" (94). Lewis contends that Satan's "diseased, perverted, twisted" rebellion "means misery for the feelings and corruption for the will" and "means Nonsense for the intellect" (94).

Satan's "doom of Nonsense" (95), Lewis writes, is exemplified in his debate with Abdiel, the loyal angel who confronts Satan after he successfully exhorts his legions to rebel. Most notably, Abdiel rebukes Satan for his illogicality in refusing to submit to the Son, "by whom / As by his Word the mighty Father made / All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n" (5.835-37). Satan first responds incredulously—"who saw/ When this creation was?" (856-57)—before hubristically denying that God created the angels: "We know no time when we were not as now; / Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd / By our own quick'ning power" (859-61). Commenting on this debate, Lewis emphasizes Satan's illogicality and foolishness. Having logically rebutted Satan's absurd ontological pronouncement, Lewis ridicules Satan's "happy" (95) and "triumphant […] theory that he sprouted from the soil like a vegetable" (96). Lewis continues: "Thus, in twenty lines, the being too proud to admit derivation from God, has come to rejoice in believing that he 'just grew' like Topsy or a turnip" (96). Here Lewis reduces the alleged magnificence of Satan's rebellion to the pathetic ignorance of the impish slave girl of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who, denying having mother or father, and resisting the notion God created her, tells Miss Ophelia, "spect I grow'd" (Stowe 282). Few readers know that Lewis's rather infamous comparison between Satan and Topsy was taken directly from Williams, whom Lewis does not here reference.[9]

Lewis also calls nonsensical Satan's speech to his minions from his throne in Hell (2.11-43), in which Satan displays his "proud imaginations" (2.10) by lauding the fallen angels' new state, whose universal misery prevents "envy" toward superiors (2.27) and thus offers Satan and his followers political stability and great advantages in their quest to retake Heaven. Lewis notes Satan's self-contradictory logic: "A stability based on perfect misery, and therefore diminishing with each

alleviation of that misery, is held out as something likely to assist in removing the misery altogether" (96). The absurdities Satan espouses during these two scenes demonstrates in him "the horrible co-existence of a subtle and incessant intellectual activity with an incapacity to understand anything" (96). And Satan's declining intellectual capacity is the self-inflicted logical consequence of his continuing evil choices to evade the reality grounded upon the ultimate truth he denies. In Lewis's words, God's judgment on Satan is "*thy* will be done." Satan "says 'Evil be thou my good' [4.110] (which includes 'Nonsense be thou my sense') and his prayer is granted" (96).

Satan's foolish choices also bring about what Lewis famously calls Satan's "progressive degradation" throughout the poem (97). In sum, having first hatched a "misconceived" battle against God for the sake of "liberty" (see 5.793), Satan quickly "sinks to fighting for 'Honour, Dominion, glorie, and renoune' (VI, 422)" (Lewis 97). Defeated by the Son, Satan again "sinks" to "the design of ruining two creatures who had never done him any harm, no longer in the serious hope of victory, but only to annoy the Enemy, whom he cannot directly attack" (97). Spying on Adam and Eve in Eden, he sinks further, acting as "not even a political spy, but a mere peeping Tom leering and writhing in prurience as he overlooks the privacy of two lovers"; described no longer "as the fallen Archangel or Hell's dread Emperor, but simply as 'the Devil' (IV, 502)—the salacious grotesque, half bogey and half buffoon, of popular tradition" (97). Lewis summarizes Satan's "progressive degradation": "From hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows, and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake—such is the progress of Satan" (97).

Related to Lewis's insistence on Satan's foolishness and degradation is his argument against the idea that Satan is the most interesting character in *Paradise Lost*. Rather, Lewis contends, "in real life," Adam would be "better company" (99). Lewis contrasts Adam's wide intellectual curiosity and celebratory disposition with "Satan's monomaniac concern with himself and his supposed rights and wrongs" (100).

Satan, Lewis writes, compulsively "states his position" (99) in response to each of his circumstances throughout the poem. Indeed, "Satan has been in the Heaven of Heavens and in the abyss of Hell, and surveyed all that lies between them, and in that whole immensity has found only one thing that interests Satan"—himself (100). Lewis concludes that Satan "is interesting to read about; but Milton makes plain the blank uninterestingness of *being* Satan" (100). Not faulting but rather again affirming Milton's artistic dexterity, Lewis avers that Milton has intentionally created Satan the megalomaniac to be, ultimately, the kind of person who, though initially impressing us with his bigger-than-life personality, turns out to be an egotistical colossal bore from whom we politely flee lest we subject ourselves to his tiresome self-focused conversation.

Having detailed Satan's degradation, Lewis rejects the critical supposition that Milton, after displaying Satan's glorious self-aggrandizing rhetoric in Books 1 and 2, tardily "attempted to rectify the error" by displaying a less attractive Satan later on. Lewis counters that Milton's goal in those books was "to be fair to evil, to give it a run for its money—to show it *first* at the height, with all its rants and melodrama and 'Godlike imitated state' [2.511] about it, and *then* to trace what actually becomes of such self-intoxication when it encounters reality" (97). Indeed, when Milton "put the most specious aspects of Satan at the very beginning of his poem[,] he was relying on two predispositions in the minds of his readers, which in that age, would have guarded them from our later misunderstanding. Men still believed that there really was such a person as Satan, and that he was a liar" (98). Milton "did not foresee that his work would one day meet the disarming simplicity of critics who take for gospel things said by the father of falsehood in public speeches to his troops" (98). Indeed, the pro-Satan critics are as absurd as Satan himself.

But whatever Satan's obvious moral failings and absurdities, he is, Lewis maintains, "of course" Milton's "best drawn" character (98). And here Lewis also implicitly explains why Milton's God the Father is, as he writes later in the book, a comparatively "unsatisfactory"

depiction (126). This is because, for Milton, as with almost all writers, it is easier to effectively depict an evil character than a "good" one. Lewis explains:

> To make a character worse than oneself it is only necessary to release imaginatively from control some of the bad passions which, in real life, are always straining at the leash; the Satan, the Iago, the Becky Sharp, within each of us, is always there and only too ready, the moment the leash is slipped, to come out and have in our books that holiday we try to deny them in our lives. But if you try to draw a character better than yourself, all you can do is to take the best moments you have had and to imagine them prolonged and more consistently embodied in action. But the real high virtues which we do not possess at all, we cannot depict except in a purely external fashion. (98)

Thus Lewis explains Satan's aesthetic excellence through a call for us to recognize our common sinfulness and the art it paradoxically inspires. This notion also sets up Lewis's response to the argument that Milton's magnificent depiction of Satan belies Milton's unconscious moral alliance with his diabolical creation.

Regarding this alleged Miltonic "'sympathy' with Satan," Lewis writes that Milton's "expression in Satan of his own pride, malice, folly, misery, and lust, is true in a sense, but not in a sense peculiar to Milton" (99). Again, the answer lies in humanity's common moral depravity:

> The Satan in Milton enables him to draw the character well just as the Satan in us enables us to receive it. Not as Milton, but as man, he has trodden the burning marl, pursued vain war with heaven, and turned aside with leer malign. A fallen man *is* very much like a fallen angel. That, indeed, is one of the things which prevents the Satanic predicament from becoming comic. It is too near us; and doubtless Milton expected all readers to perceive that in the long run either the Satanic predicament or else the delighted obedience of Messiah, of Abdiel, of Adam, and of Eve, must be their own. (99)

Here Lewis's insights anticipate Stanley Fish's classic reader-response criticism, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in* Paradise Lost (1967). Readers, Milton (and Lewis) hopes, will recognize in Satan their own sinfulness and wisely choose to turn away from such folly.

Lewis concludes his discussion of Satan by exhorting readers to soberly consider how they regard him. "To admire Satan," Lewis writes, "is to give one's vote not only for a world of misery, but also for a world of lies and propaganda, of wishful thinking, of incessant biography. Yet the choice is possible. Hardly a day passes without some slight movement towards it in each one of us. That is what makes *Paradise Lost* so serious a poem. The thing is possible, and the exposure of it is resented. Where *Paradise Lost* is not loved, it is deeply hated" (100). Lewis explains why such readerly resentment takes place: "We have all skirted the Satanic island closely enough to have motives for wishing to evade the full impact of the poem"; moreover, "Satan *wants* to go on being Satan. That is the real meaning of his choice 'Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n' [1.263]" (100). Readers are faced with a similar choice; Lewis warns them against following Satan, but he acknowledges that some will consider Satan's just-quoted phrase "a fine thing to say" (100). Lewis's analysis here resembles his earlier notion that pro-Satan critics display a foolishness that resembles Satan's own. But here Lewis's accusation is broader: those who favor Satan reveal their own Satanic proclivities, proclivities that go beyond common human fallenness. For such readers have seen Satan exposed in all his evil, lies, and foolishness, and yet have chosen to align themselves with him.

Lewis's Oversimplification of and Insufficient Acknowledgement of Previous Critics

In the pages that follow, a common theme of many critics' responses to Lewis's analysis of Satan is that it is too simple. Before discussing these critics, however, we should recognize that one demonstrably simplistic aspect of Lewis's discussion is his sweeping representation of the critics who preceded him. When Lewis implies that Williams's negative assessment of Satan is "the recovery of a true critical tradition after more than a hundred years of laborious misunderstanding" (v), he ignores the many negative assessments of Satan published after

Shelley's aforementioned pronouncements. Indeed, numerous nineteenth and earlier twentieth century critics disputed the pro-Satan position, including British authors Walter Savage Landor, John Wilson, J. W. Morris, Stopford Brooke, Shadworth H. Hodson, Anna Buckland, and John Dennis (see Huckabay 203-05) as well as A. W. Verity.[10] Somewhat anticipating Lewis's approach to Satan, Morris's 1862 discussion of Satan warns against the Romantic practice of reading certain seemingly sympathetic passages in isolation without acknowledging the larger scope of Milton's epic and its critique of Satan's character (see Morris 16, 19, 23). Perhaps most notably, Brooke's 1879 volume, *Milton*, dedicates some twelve pages (138-49) to discussing Satan's "process of degrading" (138), anticipating Lewis's noted discussion of Satan's internal degradation. And Verity's 1894 essay "On the Character of Milton's Satan" again anticipates Lewis in denying Satan's heroism, not only for his "egotism" and "pride" (142), but also for Satan's "self-degradation" that changes "ever for the worse" his "shape and mind and emotion" (143). But Lewis mentions none of these critics. On the American side, critics such as Paul Elmer More (250-51), James Holly Hanford (*Milton* 150, 156-57; "Dramatic" 188), and Edwin Greenlaw (353) addressed matters of Satan's malice, perverted will and intellect, and external and spiritual decline in ways that also anticipate Lewis's discussion. Indeed, E. M. W. Tillyard in his 1930 book *Milton* likely has these writers in mind when stating that much critical opinion, particularly in America, "had already reacted against the Satanists" (1). But Lewis is silent on these American critics, even Hanford, whose status as a premier Miltonist was well established before Lewis composed *A Preface*. As Joseph Wittreich observes, Lewis's inexplicable failure to credit earlier challenges to the Satanist position makes dubious Lewis's contention that he, along with Williams, is "commencing a new" "critical tradition" instead of continuing an established one (Wittreich, "Speaking" 268).

A particularly significant challenge to the Satanist argument that Lewis minimizes was put forth by Sir Herbert Grierson, who dealt a devastating blow against Satan's Romantic heroism in a 1926 review

of Denis Saurat's *Milton: Man and Thinker* (1925). Grierson offered, based on an orthodox Christian understanding of the use of "begotten" in Psalm 2:7 and Hebrews 1:5, groundbreaking analysis regarding God the Father's use of the word "begot." Grierson demonstrated that, when the Father announces, "This day I have begot whom I declare / My only Son" (5.603-04)—a statement that directly precedes his command that the angels worship and serve the Son, which, as noted above, elicits Satan's "th[inking] himself impaired" and subsequent rebellion—"begot" actually means "exalted," not, as Shelley and many subsequent Miltonists, including Saurat (the Milton scholar whom Lewis engages the most) argued, "created." Grierson repeated this analysis in his highly influential 1937 book, *Milton and Wordsworth*. And although Grierson maintained his own sympathy for Satan, his analysis of "begot" essentially destroyed the most persuasive ontological justification for Satan's rebellion. In his history of *Paradise Lost* criticism, John Leonard emphasizes Grierson's significance: "Critics since Shelley had assumed that Satan rebelled because God 'begot' (created) an upstart younger sibling. Grierson's recovery of the true meaning of 'begot' effectively deprived Satan of one of his strongest claims upon the reader's sympathy. The twentieth-century reappraisal of Satan might not have happened but for Grierson's discovery" (*Faithful* 393).

But Lewis's handling of Grierson's work is almost dismissive. Without mentioning Grierson's biblically based analysis of "begot," Lewis, while critiquing Saurat's assertion that "begot" means "created" (Saurat 99) writes, "it is obvious that 'This day I have begot' must mean 'This day I have exalted,' for otherwise it is inconsistent with the rest of the poem" (85). Lewis adds a footnote: "The real question between Professor Saurat and Sir Herbert Grierson on this point is whether a sense which contradicts the rest of the poet's story is more, or less, probable than one that agrees with it" (85). But Lewis gives no context to his mentioning Grierson, citing neither of his above publications. And instead of mentioning the import of Grierson's analysis of "begot," Lewis treats the challenge of exegeting 5.603-04 as an

obvious matter, ignoring that the belief that the Father creates the Son just before he commands the angels to worship him (see 5.603-08) is what grounds Shelley's defense of Satan, even as it does the defenses of Satan offered by Saurat, Walter Bagehot in 1859 (209), and, perhaps most significantly, Walter Raleigh (82), whose seminal 1900 book, *Milton*, significantly developed and offered critical "respectability" to the Romantic view of Satan as hero (Barker 421).

Lewis fails to engage Raleigh's developed analysis of Satan, and he certainly oversimplifies Shelley's discussion of Milton's Satan. Remarkably, Lewis quotes only three words of Shelley's brief but supremely influential comments on Satan. As I discussed above, Lewis, writing of Satan's resentment against the Father's begetting of the Son, states that Satan "thought himself impaired because Messiah had been pronounced Head of the Angels. These are the 'wrongs' which Shelley described as 'beyond measure'" (94). But if we reexamine Shelley's larger statement, we may see that Lewis misrepresents and unfairly dismisses Shelley's concerns. In his Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley writes:

> The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. (120-21)

First, we may see that the "wrongs" Shelley believes that Milton's Father inflicts upon Satan include not, as Lewis implies, merely that the Son has been "pronounced Head of the Angels" but also, according to Shelley's understanding, that Satan is being commanded to worship and serve a being who had just been created earlier that day. Moreover, the particular "wrong" that may be said to be beyond "all measure" is that Satan has been not merely punished, but is eternally

damned and tortured for what Shelley considers to be justified rebellion against the "tyrant" God and his "Malignity" (Shelley, *On the Devil* 388). In his *Defence*, Shelley writes of the "tyrant" God's "horrible revenge" against Satan through his "design of exasperating [Satan] to deserve new torments" (290). Whatever one thinks of Satan's rebellion and subsequent punishment, it seems irresponsible for Lewis not to mention Satan's damnation as one of the "wrongs" Shelley decries. Shelley's concerns go well beyond the idea that Satan must play second fiddle to the boss's son. Lewis also ignores Shelley's concerns about Satan. As Richard Strier notes, although he admired Satan "as a literary creation," Shelley "did not admire Satan [...] as a moral being" (272). As his words above show, Shelley attributes to Satan negative traits that compromise his moral status as well as any kind of appropriate sympathy—or "interest"—from the audience. Furthermore, Satan has deleterious intellectual and moral effects on his audience, who, engaging in "a pernicious casuistry," excuse Satan's many faults because the "wrongs" done to Shelley by Milton's immoral God greatly exceed Satan's own moral failings. Strier writes that Shelley "thought Satan was awful. But he thought [Milton's] God was worse" (272). Significantly, in 1948 Allan H. Gilbert asserted that Lewis's and Shelley's views on Satan have important similarities (see Gilbert 224). But none of this is evident simply by reading *A Preface*. Indeed, Lewis's failure to more closely engage Shelley's comments on Satan breeds an inaccuracy of analysis that obfuscates such similarities even as such obfuscation, however perhaps unintentional, allows Lewis to exaggerate the degree to which his analysis of Satan is original.

The Critical Response to Lewis Begins: Waldock's Forgotten Article

The critical response to *A Preface*'s discussion of Satan came promptly and consistently for the next decade. The first retort came in 1943 in a brief and generally forgotten article by A. J. A. Waldock tellingly entitled "Mr. C. S. Lewis and *Paradise Lost*: The Problem of Approach." This essay, appearing in the newer and then comparatively

obscure Australian journal *Southerly*, is mostly unknown even to Milton scholars. But Waldock's article set up various issues at stake for respondents to Lewis's *Preface*, issues that have been repeated in various forms in the subsequent three-quarters of a century. Having called *A Preface* "a very brilliant essay" (7), Waldock specifically challenges Lewis's suggestion that his Christianity benefits his understanding *Paradise Lost* (Lewis 64). For Waldock, Lewis's interpretive situation is more mixed. Lewis's Christianity

> is an advantage in some ways—not in all ways; for Mr. Lewis, I think, is almost too sympathetic with *Paradise Lost* to see it as it really is. He understands very well what Milton intended; he does not seem to me to understand nearly so well what Milton achieved. His contention, indeed, is that once Milton's purposes have been thoroughly grasped, nearly every important ground of objection against the poem disappears. Find out what Milton was driving at, he says, and it all comes right. (7)

Waldock is skeptical about such a contention, and he wonders "if the case is quite so simple" (8), the first of many times critics will subtly or forcefully level the charge that Lewis's assertions are somehow overly simplistic or dogmatic; significantly, as in Waldock's case, those challenges are usually accompanied by a certain skepticism concerning Lewis's Christianity and the likelihood that Lewis's faith in some way limits his greater appreciation for or understanding of the complexities of Milton's epic.

Concerning Lewis's analysis of Satan, Waldock observes Lewis's contention that Satan is Milton's "most impressive" character, stating that Lewis "quickly forestalls any question why this should be so" (9). Waldock does not pursue this matter, but we should keep in mind his briefly stated objection. Indeed, in the decades to follow, the charge that Lewis's *Preface* has somehow forestalled or prevented the asking of certain questions has been repeated on various occasions.[11]

More to Waldock's concern is the confidence with which Lewis asserts that, as with Milton's Satan, the "bad" character in any given work will always be the most effectively written because, to quote Waldock's paraphrase of Lewis, "To draw a 'bad' character, a writer

has only to relax and be himself; to draw a 'good' one he has to rise above himself." But Lewis offers "no evidence" to "support" this "ingenious theory"; indeed, "it is not difficult to think of numerous examples that appear to refute it" (10). Waldock considers, among others, the characters of Shakespeare. Cordelia, he contends, is "at least as credible" as Edmund (10). And although Lewis suggests that Iago is Shakespeare's most intriguing character, Waldock offers a credible refutation: "Shakespeare's great successes, of course, were in the middle regions" (10). Hamlet, for example, is not "good" or "bad"—he "is a natural man, with a natural man's unevenness and imperfections; but he is a very wonderful natural man; he is in many respects the most wonderful specimen of a natural man that the human imagination has yet produced. And he is there, he exists. By comparison with him Iago is but a structure of lath and plaster" (10). Waldock here implicitly suggests that perhaps Milton succeeds so well with Satan because he too, like Hamlet, is, ironically enough, "in the middle regions"—a character who, wonderfully, exhibits "unevenness and imperfections" even amid his damned state. If so, the matter of Satan is, to borrow Waldock's earlier statement, not "quite so simple" as what Lewis has put forward. Moreover, Waldock's critique of Lewis's overly simplistic critical explanation of Satan's artistic effectiveness will be extended onto different subjects by various future critics, each warning that Lewis's assertions, however seemingly compelling at first, are inevitably open to challenges that Lewis does not properly anticipate and address, challenges that Lewis's readers will likely not consider in light of his clever, forceful, and authoritative rhetoric.

Elmer Edgar Stoll's Defense of Satan

The next response to *A Preface* was offered in 1944 by the venerable American critic Elmer Edgar Stoll in "Give the Devil His Due: A Reply to Mr. Lewis," published in the prestigious *Review of English Studies*. Having praised the "many excellent things" Lewis has said about

Milton, "particularly his style," Stoll asserts that he is "extraordinarily mistaken" about *Paradise Lost*'s characters, particularly Satan (108). Specifically, Stoll complains that Lewis portrays Satan not as a "magnificent figure" but largely as "silly and contemptible" (108), resulting in unfair generalizations concerning Satan's character. Responding to Lewis's contention regarding Satan's ludicrous pride, Stoll writes, "not all pride, of course, is petty," and he quotes from Satan's first speech in Hell, which articulates a "motive" that "is certainly above the inglorious level of Mr. Lewis's preferences" and exhibits "defiance triumphing over defeat" (109). Stoll quotes perhaps Satan's most powerful lines in the epic:

> […] so much the stronger prov'd
> He with his Thunder: and till then who knew
> The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those,
> Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage
> Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
> Though chang'd in outward luster; that fixt mind
> And high disdain, from sense of injur'd merit,
> That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,
> And to the fierce contention brought along
> Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
> That durst dislike his reign, and mee (sic!) preferring,
> His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
> In dubious Battle on the Plains of Heav'n,
> And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else not to be overcome?
> That Glory never shall his wrath or might
> Extort from me. (1.92-111)[12]

Stoll follows Satan's lines by affirming R. A. Scott-James's 1928 assessment of them: "The sentiment is excellent. The moral is a noble one. It recalls all the admirable ethical qualities which Milton gives his heroic Satan" (Scott-James 278; quoted in Stoll 110). For Stoll, Scott-James's observations are self-evident. This earlier critic's sensitive recognition of Satan's sublime nobility trumps Lewis's "inglorious"

and narrow-minded "preferences." Stoll's implicit admonition is that a reader like Scott-James who emphasizes Satan's aesthetic greatness can recognize his ethical greatness as well. One like Lewis who is constrained by his theological "preferences" cannot.

Stoll then quotes the following lines spoken by Satan:

> Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable (1.157)
>
> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
> What matter where, if I be still the same,
> And what I should be, all but less than hee
> Whom Thunder hath made greater?
> Here at least
> We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
> Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
> Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
> Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n. (1.254-63)

Stoll exclaims, "What a difference between the two conceptions, the critic's and the poet's!" chiding Lewis for his failure to make "allowance for the improbabilities—the contradictions—involved in the story of a rebellion in Heaven, against a faultless, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Deity" (110). Again, for Stoll, the greatness of Satan's character is self-evident here, albeit lost on Lewis. Stoll acknowledges that if Lewis's ideal scenario of God's faultlessness were "realized," then Satan "of course" really would exemplify "utter wickedness and folly" and that Satan would be "the worst of fools" (110). But, Stoll argues, "the poet" prevents such a scenario, and Milton's God's behavior is such that "the sympathetic and judicious reader" maintains his interest in Satan, not being distracted by the theological contradictions implicit in Milton's narrative (110-11); Lewis "misrepresents Milton's meaning" when he argues that Satan is "wicked, petty, and despicable from the beginning" of *Paradise Lost* (111).

Ultimately, Stoll contends, Lewis's failure is that he treats Satan's "superhuman character […] in the light of common sense," displaying an "imagination" that "stubbornly refuses to respond" to the "passionate paradoxes" of Satan's sublimity (113). And Lewis displays a similar failure of imagination when he explains Satan's poetic magnificence, for he offers a "moral and theological" explanation instead of a "psychological and artistic" one (122). Like Waldock but more subtly, Stoll suggests that Lewis's Christianity prevents him from embracing the full beauty and complexity of Milton's poetry and Satan's character. If Lewis contends that readers who admire Satan choose him because they embrace the evil within themselves, then Stoll argues that "judicious" readers can appreciate artistic grandeur without such appreciation being derailed by religious dogma and its attendant obligations to pronounce as inferior creations that challenge their presuppositions. By contrast, the "critic" Lewis's theological judgments carry him away from an understanding of the "poet" Milton, whose magnificent depiction of Satan transcends religious categorizations.

Curiously, Stoll does not mention perhaps the most damning evidence in favor of his suggestion that Lewis is deaf to Satan's sublimity: the fact that nowhere in his chapter does Lewis quote more than a few words of the speeches Stoll quotes or any of Satan's other famously powerful speeches in Books 1 and 2. This is a truly remarkable omission, for these powerful orations are what most critics have emphasized when arguing for Satan's grandeur. Although perhaps Lewis assumed his audience would be intimately familiar with these speeches, we may recognize that Lewis's failure to quote these speeches unfairly obfuscates Satan's nobility, thus presenting readers Lewis's strong position while shielding them and even himself from the inconvenient attractions of Satan's glorious rhetoric.

Against Lewis, Stoll puts forward as superior Raleigh's analysis of Satan, whom Raleigh compares to Prometheus even more favorably than does Shelley. Raleigh writes:

> His very situation as the fearless antagonist of Omnipotence makes him either a fool or a hero, and Milton is far indeed from permitting us to think him a fool. The nobility and greatness of his bearing are brought home to us in some half-dozen of the finest poetic passages in the world. (Raleigh 133; qtd. in Stoll 115)

The "great critic" (Stoll 115) Raleigh understands, as Lewis does not, that Milton the poet would not "throw […] away" the artistic sublimity of Satan on a character who "is unworthy" of such a depiction (116). For Stoll, Lewis the commonsense Christian moralist cannot recognize the poet Milton's larger embrace of his, in Lewis's words, "magnificent poetical achievement" (Lewis 92). Indeed, Stoll's analysis reveals Lewis's inability to reconcile his affirmation of Satan as a "magnificent poetical achievement" and his religiously motivated impulse to degrade Satan, the character who is that magnificent achievement. That same impulse, Stoll suggests, motivates Lewis's insistence that Milton stands within the great orthodox Augustinian tradition and that he has labored to reveal his greatest character as petty and foolish.

More Sympathy for Satan and Suspicion of Lewis: G. Rostrevor Hamilton

Raleigh's above quotation forms the title and central subject matter for G. Rostrevor Hamilton's brief book *Hero or Fool? A Study of Milton's Satan* (1944), which seeks to answer Lewis's charge that Satan "is absurd and nonsensical" (7).[13] To answer the question "Hero or Fool?" Hamilton asserts, we must "turn again to the text of the poem" (8). Before he begins his textual analysis, however, Hamilton points out that readers, like "Milton himself," come to *Paradise Lost* with tremendous "prejudice" against Satan, although Hamilton grants that we ought not "throw […] overboard our moral sense" as we approach Milton's poem. Nonetheless, "Satan *in imagination* differs from Satan *in idea*," for although we or Milton may abstractly conceive him as unmitigated evil, our imaginations "seek in him some credible mix-

ture of good with evil," something that rightly comports with his role as a rebel "fighting a lost and hopeless cause," one in whom we find both "folly and heroism" (8).

Examining specific passages from *Paradise Lost*, Hamilton pointedly distinguishes between Milton the imaginative poet and Milton the moralist. Quoting, like Stoll, from Satan's magnificent opening speech, Hamilton writes that Satan's words exhibit "more than malice" and "bombast," but also "greatness, indeed sublimity, in courage, endurance and determination" (9). Directly after Satan's speech, however, Milton's narrator decries "Satan's pride and malice" (10), implicitly warning readers against siding with the fallen angel. But this tension between Satan the poetic creation and the moralizing narrator, repeated throughout the epic, reveals more than hides Satan's virtues. Indeed, when Milton "allows free scope to his imagination, he presents us with an evil figure of real magnificence, in whom the great vices, although dominant, are shot through with great and substantial virtues." But Milton "the stern moralist" "clings tenaciously to his preconceived moral ideas" (10). Ultimately, "if Milton's purpose is at odds with his imagination, it is certainly from the latter that we should form our judgment of Satan. For Milton the poet is inexpressibly greater and more comprehensive than Milton the moralist, and it is only the imagination that makes Satan triumphantly alive" (11). We would be gravely mistaken "if we allowed Milton the moralist to browbeat us into denying credit to Satan for the qualities, exalted as well as mean, heroic as well as vicious, by which Milton the poet makes him live" (11).

Hamilton's monograph and Stoll's article, published in the same year, unsurprisingly do not reference each other, but there are clear parallels between their analyses. Indeed, Lewis the critic, portrayed by Stoll as in direct tension with Milton the poet, appears quite analogous to Hamilton's description of Milton the stern moralist. And while Hamilton never explicitly links Lewis with Milton's moralizing narrator, the parallels are implicit as Hamilton challenges Lewis's pronouncement of Satan's "absurdity." Lewis fails to recognize Sa-

tan's "spiritual greatness" and "can see in Satan at his height only rant and melodrama" (13). Hamilton takes Lewis to task for ignoring Milton's portrayal of Satan's "'undaunted' courage," and he finds Lewis's demeaning portrayal of Satan ironic in light of his assertion that Satan is Milton's best-drawn character (13; he quotes Lewis). Here, like Stoll, Hamilton finds Lewis's critical judgments to be in tension with themselves, with Lewis's ethical concerns undermining his ability to appreciate Milton's art. Moreover, Hamilton's implicit parallels between the epic's moralizing narrator and Lewis the moralizing critic anticipate Waldock's highly influential Paradise Lost *and Its Critics* (1947), which we shall presently address.

Throughout his ensuing pages, Hamilton implies that Lewis "oversimplif[ies]" (22) various matters about which he judges Satan and his alleged absurdities and foolishness. Because "good and evil […] are not severed in Satan," he does not, contra Lewis, "become laughable when he 'meets something real'" (16). Satan's speech to his followers at the beginning of Book 2 is not, as Lewis's charges, "ludicrous"; rather, "Mr. Lewis does not fairly represent the text" (19). More accurately in light of the context of his audience, Satan proves himself "the astute propagandist, rather than the fool" (21). Also unfair is Lewis's discussion of Satan's chafing at the Father begetting the Son and Satan's subsequent confrontation with Abdiel. Given Milton's unsatisfying portrayal of God, there is "surely some excuse" to doubt claims that he created the angels; moreover, Lewis unfairly subjects Satan to "merry-making" by comparing him to either "Topsy or the turnip" (23). If, more appropriately, we compare Satan's boasts of self-existence to "the autochthonous demi-gods of Greece" or "the Phoenix," Satan may be condemned for "self-pride," but "not for intellectual nonsense" (24). Lewis's Christian disapproval of Satan's vainglory ought not simultaneously demean Satan's intellect.

Finally, in "affect[ing] to trace the progressive degradation of Satan," Lewis himself "descends to the most intemperate and unfair arts of prosecution" (28). Particularly scandalous is Lewis's charge that Satan's downward trajectory moves from a peeping Tom, to a toad,

and to a snake. If, specifically, Satan descends lower than a peeping Tom—Lewis's unfair charge against Satan when he views the embracing Adam and Eve with "jealous leer malign" (4.503), a phrase that more properly describes Satan's damnation to loneliness and longing than some kind of laughable prurience—why then, while inhabiting the serpent, does Satan, beholding the lone Eve in her naked innocence, stand for a time "abstracted from his own evil" (28), "Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd, / Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge" (9.465-66)? Hamilton argues that, rather than being the subject of Lewis's mockery, "Satan's plight" should be "matter for tears"; moreover, "if there should be any laughter, it could not be either heavenly or human: it could only be the laughter of some superior in evil, less infirm than Satan, who should stand to him as Lady Macbeth to her husband" (30). This indictment of Lewis is particularly effective because, instead of charging him with critical blindness because of his Christianity, it actually accuses Lewis, in his championing the thesis of Satan's foolishness, of a kind of diabolical heartlessness, a heartlessness implicitly shared by any reader who has laughed at Lewis's calling Satan "a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows" (Lewis 97). Remarkably, Hamilton here does not merely, like Stoll, challenge Lewis's critical sensitivities; he also challenges his moral and spiritual decency, a heavy blow to Lewis the Christian critic who, if he can fathom charges of stuffiness, is ironically undercut by charges that his sensibilities are, ultimately, unchristian.

Sydney Musgrove's Guarded Defense of Lewis

A more sympathetic response to Lewis appeared the following year in Sydney Musgrove's "Is the Devil an Ass?" Engaging with Waldock, Stoll, and Hamilton, Musgrove generally sides with Lewis but suggests he goes too far in arguing that Satan's absurdity defines him even in Books 1 and 2. Musgrove writes, "One can admit everything [Lewis] says in Satan's disfavour" yet recognize that "still the sense of glory remains"; indeed, although "our better logic and our better

conscience cry 'Wrong' and 'Evil,' the imagination still blazes with Satan's fiery grandeur" (304). Nonetheless, Milton likely intended "the more astute of his readers to see, as Mr. Lewis sees, the indefensibility of [Satan's] intellectual position"; however—and herein lies Musgrove's key difference from Lewis—Milton "did not intend that, *at this stage*, [Satan's] intellectual absurdity should remove the more prevailing impression of grandeur" (305). Rather, Milton intended that readers would see "the contrast between this first Satan"—whose grandeur shines amid the fires of Hell—and "the later Satan," whose "degradation begins" when he encounters his daughter Sin and their incestuous offspring, Death, at Hell-gate late in Book 2 (305) and as his folly and malice is increasingly exposed in Eden. Musgrove chides Raleigh, Stoll, and Hamilton for obfuscating the "bottomless cruelty" of Satan's machinations against Adam and Eve in Book 4 (308), and he judges as "impeccable" Lewis's analysis of Satan's rebellious speeches in Book 5, echoing Lewis's diction in calling Satan's words toward Abdiel "plain nonsense" (310).

But in his penultimate paragraph, Musgrove, for all his sympathy with Lewis, repeats the charge that he oversimplifies Satan. Musgrove argues, "Satan is neither the nincompoop seen by Mr. Lewis, nor the Prometheus of Shelley and Macaulay." Although Musgrove urges "full assent" to Lewis's depiction of "Satan's intellectual hollowness," he adds, "surely Mr. Lewis of all people should know that the intellectual impression is only part of the total impression left by any poetic experience" (314). Similarly, although Musgrove clearly affirms Lewis's notion of Satan's degradation, he argues that we do not "behold a straight and unswerving line of degradation," adding, tellingly, "truth is *not so simple* as that" (315, italics mine). Rather, Satan follows a general downward course in the epic, although Satan sometimes evidences "momentary recovery" in which he is moved, "momentarily, towards light and the memory of what he was" (315). And Lewis's failure to recognize these moments of recovery, like his aforementioned failure to quote and discuss the grandeur of Satan's early speeches, speaks to a significant deficiency in Lewis's coverage of

Satan: his avoidance of directly engaging Satan at his best moments, an engagement that would call for a more balanced assessment than Lewis offers.

Waldock's Developed Challenge: Paradise Lost *and Its Critics*

By 1947, Waldock's brief article had grown into one of the most enduringly influential books in the history of Milton studies, Paradise Lost *and Its Critics*. Although, as its title suggests, this volume interacts with various commentators, Lewis is by far Waldock's most significant interlocutor. Waldock responds to Lewis on various subjects, but most famously in his chapter "Satan and the Technique of Degradation." Early on, Waldock defends Satan from Lewis's charge that Satan is "nonsensical" in Books 2 and 5. He chides Lewis for his demeaning and one-dimensional commentary on Satan's speech to his followers in 2.11-43; while acknowledging that Satan indulges in some "spurious impromptu reasoning," Waldock classifies the speech with those given by "able commanders" at "critical junctures since the dawn of history" (70). Indeed, "to appraise such a speech by logic alone is to bring under the same ban of Nonsense, by implication, half the great oratory of the world" (70). Waldock's challenge to Lewis regarding Satan's reply to Abdiel is even more forceful and developed. For Satan to question Abdiel's assertion that the Son created the angels is not "silly" but entirely appropriate. This idea is, as Satan says, a "strange point and new" (5.855), and it "must necessarily be based on hearsay" (71). Moreover, it is not "laughable" that Satan should chafe at both the Father's decree that the Angels worship the Son and the subsequent ethos of Heaven (73). Lewis calls Heaven "a world of light and love" (Lewis 94), but, answers Waldock, "There is no sign of love" in the Father's "dictatorial" decree, which is "full of threats" (73). Regarding Lewis's one-sided refusal to acknowledge Satan's admirable qualities, Waldock charges Lewis not with being overly logical, as Stoll charged, but rather with being "a sentimental-

ist" who "wishes to see Satan's character as made up of aesthetically harmonious qualities—of qualities that match" and who hesitates "to admit that we can condemn Satan for some things and at the same time find him extremely admirable for others" (76). Waldock insists, against Lewis, that Milton himself had much "sympath[y]" for Satan's admirable "qualities" without taking his side ethically (77).

Waldock then famously refutes Lewis's chronicling of Satan's "progressive degradation" throughout the epic (Lewis 97). For Waldock, Milton the moralist, not Satan himself, is responsible for Satan's downward trajectory. Satan "does not degenerate: *he is degraded*" by Milton's theological scruples (83). This process takes place in two stages: First, throughout Books 1 and 2, Milton follows Satan's glorious speeches—which put Satan in a more positive light than Milton the Christian could have wanted—with moralizing comments that "pull us gently by the sleeve" and tell readers "'Do not be carried away by this fellow: he *sounds* splendid, but take my word for it …'" (78). For example, after Satan's inspiring opening speech promising indefatigable rebellion, Milton the moralizing narrator comments, "So Spake th' Apostate Angel, though in pain, / Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despair" (1.125-26). Significantly, Waldock rejects the veracity of Milton's editorializations on Satan's character, warning against the "very naïve critical procedure" of accepting "Milton's comment" (78). In sum, "[e]ach great speech lifts Satan a little beyond what Milton really intended, so he suppresses him again (or tries to) in a comment" (78-79). Clearly Waldock includes Lewis the simplistic Christian "sentimentalist" (76) among the naïve readers who accept the narrator's words and thus suppress Satan's grandeur.

And an even more duplicitous means of degrading Satan occurs after Book 2, a degradation that explains why "[e]verybody feels that the Satan of the first two Books stands alone" and that "after them comes a break, and he is never as impressive again" (81). The reason, Waldock argues, goes beyond the notion that, in subsequent books, Satan "re-enters altered" (81). Rather, the Satan of Books 1 and 2 "*disappears*" (82), never to be seen again. The subsequent Satan "is not

a changed Satan, he is a *new* Satan" (82). In naming these two distinct Satans, Waldock justifies giving primacy to the Satan of Books 1 and 2 even as he claims he does justice to *Paradise Lost* as a whole. Waldock also implicitly undermines Lewis's larger argument against Satan, for both Lewis's view of the Satan of Book 1 as nonsensical and his overall view of a degenerating Satan align Lewis not with the imaginative greatness of Milton's poetry but rather with the puritanical side of Milton that, through narrative sermonizing and the bait-and-switch composition of the second Satan, degrades his most splendid creation. It is this Milton that Lewis the Christian can comprehend and explicate, not Milton the great epic poet. At the end of this chapter, Waldock refers to Lewis's chapter on "Satan's Followers" as "not so much of criticism, as of a sermon," calling a sermon something "entitled to use its text less as a subject for rigorous interpretation than as a convenient springboard for disquisition on moral truths" (96). Clearly Waldock thinks this well describes Lewis's discussion of Satan himself.

Allan H. Gilbert: Challenging Lewis's Detractors, Suggesting Lewis's Similarities to Shelley and Coleridge

The next detailed response to *A Preface*, Allan H. Gilbert's 1948 "Critics of Mr. C. S. Lewis on Milton's Satan," does not address Waldock but pointedly engages Hamilton and Stoll. In his opening paragraph, Gilbert, in contrast to Waldock and Stoll, suggests that Lewis's oft-discussed Christianity, his "seventeenth-century orthodoxy," actually offers Lewis greater interpretive insight concerning Satan: "Mr. Lewis, in estimating the Devil, has something of the advantages of a contemporary of Milton," for "the noble Satan is not to be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (216). For Gilbert, Lewis's critical shortcomings come not from his religious perspective but rather from a tendency to pen phrases "extreme in their rhetoric" (216)—he offers Lewis's memorable description of Satan as a "peeping Tom" (Lewis

97) and his comparing the allegedly "'self-begot, self-raised' Satan with Topsy or a turnip" (Gilbert 217). Gilbert is not particularly bothered by Lewis's phraseology, but he offers here a mild version of the common argument that Lewis, one way or another, tends to oversimplify his points.

Gilbert then addresses Hamilton's charge that Milton the "moralist" (and, by implication, Lewis the critic) is at odds with Milton the imaginative poet (220). Gilbert balks at this dichotomy, for it "amounts to doing over Milton to suit oneself, forgetting Manzoni's advice to ask: 'What is the poet's intention?'" (220). Here, Gilbert not only raises the crucial matter of authorial intentionality—something that Milton's "moralizing" narrator would seem to reveal—but also turns the tables upon Hamilton and other critics who suggest that Lewis's Christianity causes him to view *Paradise Lost* according to his own philosophical preferences. Are not critics who cast off Milton the moralist doing the same thing, based on *their* own philosophical preferences?

Similarly, Gilbert finds unacceptable Stoll's rejection of Lewis's distinction between great poetry—the "magnificent poetic achievement" of Satan's character—and the objectionable character Lewis describes Satan as being. Against Stoll's claim that "the poet rightly and pretty effectively endeavours to keep the sympathetic and judicious reader from realizing" the alleged horror of rebelling against a faultless and omnipotent God (Stoll 110-11), Gilbert argues that Lewis, sharing Milton's seventeenth-century perspective, would argue the opposite: that a contemporary of Milton would realize the evil in Satan's rebellion (221). Again, Gilbert asks, which critic, Lewis or Stoll, is reading *Paradise Lost* according to the proper perspective, and is either of them free from philosophical bias in his judgments?

Gilbert also objects to Stoll's using Shelley against Lewis. Quoting the aforementioned passage from the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, Gilbert observes Shelley's moral concerns about Satan and also differentiates between Shelley's qualified and Raleigh's more enthusiastic praise of Satan. Shelley, like Lewis, distinguishes the greatness of Milton's art from the immorality of his character. Ultimately, Gilbert

asserts, Shelley on Satan is closer to Lewis than Stoll. Similarly, Stoll is wrong to simultaneously praise Coleridge's 1819 assessment of Satan while disparaging Lewis's. Unlike Stoll, Gilbert quotes at length Coleridge's remarks about Satan, which include both Coleridge's declaration that Satan's "daring," "grandeur of sufferance," and "ruined splendour" […] "constitute the very height of poetic sublimity"; and Coleridge's horror at Satan's "intense selfishness," "alcohol of egotism" and "lust of self," comparing him in the process to "the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon" (Coleridge 427; qtd. in Gilbert 223). Gilbert asks wryly, "Did Coleridge admire the character of Napoleon?" (223). Gilbert here demonstrates that Coleridge's assessment of Satan's character is very close to that of Lewis, who, Gilbert reminds readers, "believes Satan a magnificent poetical achievement" (216).

Gilbert's points regarding Lewis's analysis of Satan and its resemblances with those of Shelley and Coleridge are both valuable and unexpected to those who have read *A Preface* and the ensuing controversy the present essay discusses. But, per my earlier discussion of Lewis's failure to present Shelley's moral reservations about Satan, I believe that the deep presumed dichotomy between Lewis's position and that of the Romantics is largely the doing of Lewis, who, early in his opening paragraph on Satan, specifically contrasts his position from Shelley's and then, two paragraphs later, gravely oversimplifies Shelley's concerns about God's treatment of Satan. Lewis's neglect of Coleridge's discussion of Satan—a discussion which resembles Lewis's considerably more than does Shelley's—is perhaps even more lamentable, because in Coleridge Lewis might have found a critical ally who could have abetted his own analysis of Satan. It is hard to believe that the immensely well-read Lewis would have been ignorant of Coleridge's comments.[14] Did Lewis withhold Coleridge's insights because they might complicate Lewis's assertion that the "true critical tradition" (Lewis v) concerning Satan had been neglected since "the times of Blake and Shelley" (92)?

Gilbert also challenges the idea that Lewis's Christianity obscures his ability to understand *Paradise Lost*'s complexity. While discussing Shelley, Gilbert postulates that Lewis's Christianity inspires him, in contrast to Shelley, to believe—like Lewis thought Milton believed—that Satan "suffered no wrongs and displayed the most serious faults" (223). Gilbert then raises a question that recalls Lewis's memorable remark that "Many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God" (Lewis 126). Gilbert asks: "Is [Lewis's] religion—and Milton's—what Stoll objects to?" (223). Gilbert then suggests that it is Stoll, not Lewis, whose literary interpretation is clouded by a blinding allegiance to another power. Lewis believes, sensibly enough, that "Satan is morally bad though magnificently presented"; whereas "Stoll, unlike Shelley, holds, not that the character of Satan engenders casuistry, but rather that we forget [his] faults in single admiration" (223). Indeed, the venerable Professor Stoll has far greater allegiance to Satan than the "Satanist" Shelley. Perhaps Lewis's Christianity can be forgiven.

Gilbert concludes by turning on its head the common critical refrain against Lewis's alleged oversimplification of Satan. For one thing, Lewis has, in his discussion of Satan's degradation, engaged the larger text and helped further the recent "rediscovery of the latter books of *Paradise Lost*" (224), books often neglected in earlier criticism that focused on Books 1 and 2. And the "controversy" that *A Preface* has elicited alerts us to the fact that "[t]here is something in the nature of the poem to provoke" that controversy (224). Indeed, Lewis is largely responsible—both through his own work and those who have responded to him—for helping readers understand the complexity of Milton's epic. Gilbert mentions the "two Satans" critics have recently been discussing, and in doing so he implicitly reminds us that this crucial topic has resulted from Lewis's engaging Milton and subsequent critics' engaging Milton and Lewis. Ultimately, Lewis has "emphasized" "[t]he variety of *Paradise Lost*," and readers needn't "abandon" what Romantic readers saw as we "add still other ways" to view Milton's great epic (225). "We," Gilbert concludes, "can thank Mr.

Lewis for his vigorous attempt to reveal to us one aspect of Milton's infinite variety" (225). To his credit, Gilbert recognizes that, ironically enough, Lewis's so-called critical simplicity has both articulated and elicited valuable avenues in understanding Satan's multifaceted depiction.

Stoll's Second Attack on Lewis's Religious Moralizing

Stoll does not respond to Gilbert in his 1949 "A Postscript to 'Give the Devil His Due,'" but he clearly believes that other critics have not given *Stoll* his due. Indeed, Stoll chides Waldock for not acknowledging how his 1944 article anticipated important points in Waldock's book,[15] and he announces that in his present article he will not acknowledge Waldock (167n1). But Stoll—as if Gilbert's (again) unacknowledged article has liberated him to declare more forcefully what he suggests in his 1944 article—essentially echoes and even intensifies Waldock's criticism of how Lewis's religious moralizing prevents him from properly engaging Milton's poem and its artistic greatness:

> At bottom the trouble with Mr. Lewis and his followers, I think, is simply that, ignoring, in the process, the impossible but indispensable postulates of the story, they listen to the censor, not the poet; or make the censor swallow up the poet, and themselves forget that these devils are great angels straight down from out of Heaven, who—Beëlzebub, Moloch, Mammon, and Belial, as well as Satan—talk like it, and though still a little in keeping with their names and later reputations, not much as the reader of the Hebrew Scriptures would expect them to talk. (176)

Here again we see the implicit association between Lewis and Milton's "censoring" narrator, and here Lewis's Christianity—in the form of "the reader of the Hebrew Scriptures"—is posited as a potential interpretive disadvantage because of the potentially unshakable presuppositions they instill in one's understanding of Milton's fallen

angels. For Stoll, the matter of Lewis's religious oversimplification of things remains an unshakable tenet.

R. J. Zwi Werblowsky: Lewis's Critical Blindness

The final sustained engagement with Lewis's depiction of Satan that we shall examine is R. J. Zwi Werblowsky's *Lucifer and Prometheus: A Study of Milton's Satan* (1952), whose opening chapter challenges Lewis's suggestion that Satan, in his "wickedness and meanness, his cruelty, falseness and intellectual hollowness" falls into "complete idiocy" (4). Werblowsky writes that the "method" and "failure" of "the anti-Satanist case" "are exhibited almost to perfection" in *A Preface* and that a proper "examination" of Lewis's book is necessary to "clear the ground for a more comprehensive vision of Satan and of the role he plays in *Paradise Lost*" (5). In this statement, Werblowsky, despite his resentment against Lewis, whose "debunking campaign […] against Satan is the most thorough and cogently argued that has been made so far" (5), acknowledges not only the quality and influence of *A Preface*, but also suggests that such an "examination" can be a fruitful point of departure for a very different analysis of Satan's character.

As he begins to critique Lewis, Werblowsky suggests that his discussion of Satan is devoid of the aesthetic sensitivity Lewis has exhibited elsewhere: "Satan has been made the object of all Mr. Lewis' hair-splitting logic, persuasive charm and subtle irony, but unfortunately of none of his poetic feeling and artistic receptivity, of which he has given so much proof on other occasions" (5). Werblowsky continues, arguing that Lewis's biting wit, exhibited in his memorable put-downs of Satan, obscure a proper pursuit of truth: "Cleverness is a virtue of very doubtful value. Far from solving any real problems, whether in theology, philosophy, and art (including poetry), it more often tends to obscure the truth, leading at its best to intellectual unauthenticity, at its worst to downright dishonesty. Cleverness is Mr.

Lewis' greatest pitfall, and vitiates much of his most brilliant work. Neither the problem of evil, nor that of pain, can be adequately treated with logic-chopping" (5-6). Like Hamilton before him, Werblowsky will decry the moral improprieties of Lewis's mockery of Satan. Here, however, he emphasizes the deleterious argumentative effects of Lewis's wit, which shortchanges logical argument and critical investigation in favor of the humorous effect of sarcasm.

Werblowsky contends that "the most convincing and decisive argument" against Lewis's "logic-chopping" impulse "remains the poem itself," but it must be "read with the ears and the heart […] not with the brain alone" (6); a reader must be able to properly *feel*, as it were, the poem and its art, and not merely accept the orthodoxies directly laid out by the poem's narrator. But in any case, Lewis's rationalistic attempt to relegate Satan into the realm of unmitigated evil flies in the face of Milton's primary point of grounding for the principle of free inquiry championed in his *Areopagitica*: the idea that "as the world goes, good and evil coexist everywhere"; for, as Milton writes, "'Good and evil we know in this field of the world, grow up together almost inseparably'" (6). Werblowsky continues: "and to this rule his Satan is no exception. He has a host of fine qualities with which Milton and his readers must and do sympathize" (6). Werblowsky's use of Milton's famous quotation from *Areopagitica* is intriguing, albeit perhaps a false analogy. One might object that Satan is an eternally damned supernatural being and is *not* "in the field of the world"—the good but now-fallen creation of a loving God who still rules by his Providence—the way potentially redeemable humans are. But Satan's various locations in *Paradise Lost* complicate this objection, and even as Satan displays evil before he is cast from Heaven, so too does Milton suggest that hints of good remain in Satan as he appears in Hell, including the seemingly compassionate tears he weeps for his fallen angelic followers (see 1.605-11, 619-21), as well as his seeming potential for redemption when on Earth he remorsefully contemplates his rebellion (4.42-80), and his aforementioned time of standing "[s]tupidly good" (9.465) before Eve's beauty and innocence. As dis-

cussed before, Lewis simply does not address such passages, and Werblowsky is correct to note that in places Lewis employs dismissive humor as a rhetorically effective way to avoid difficult lines that might complicate his thesis.

Werblowsky's critique of Lewis continues amid his discussion of Satan's "degradation." Werblowsky agrees with Waldock that Milton degrades Satan both through his belittling narrative commentary and by creating a different Satan after Book 2. Nonetheless, "Milton could not help investing this 'Traitor Angel' and 'false fugitive' [2.689, 2.700] with so much courage, loyalty, and steadfastness. Not to admit these qualities is blinding oneself to one of the major features of the poem and betraying 'eyes that see not and ears that hear not'" (7). Here Werblowsky quotes Mark 8:18, Jesus's rebuke to his disciples when they misunderstand Jesus's use of metaphor—"beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod"—by taking his words literally, saying, "It is because we have no bread" (8:15-16). And Werblowsky applies Jesus's words to rebuke the Christian critic Lewis, who has misunderstood Milton's poetic creation of Satan in favor of a literalizing acceptance of Milton's degrading of that creation, a creation whose metaphorical magnificence transcends any attempts to dismiss him through clever phrases that conform to narrow doctrine.

Werblowsky also counters Lewis's "outraged" objection that Satan, living amid Heaven's "'light and love,'" would rebel against God's decree that the angels worship the Son (7; he quotes Lewis 94). Werblowsky rather calls the Father's speech "domineering, provocative, and dictatorial" (8). And responding to Lewis's paraphrasing Satan's pronouncement "Evil be thou my good" (4.110) as "Nonsense be thou my sense" (Lewis 96), Werblowsky asks if Lewis would expound Isaiah 5:20—"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil"[16]—as if "sinning against logic" were the Israelites' true transgression (8). Indeed, Werblowsky calls Lewis's charge that Satan is absurd "an inversion of the mock-heroic method," in which Lewis reads Satan's "passionate paradoxes" as "'personified self-contradiction[s]'" (8; he quotes Stoll, "Give" 113). Werblowsky also ponders the truly "power-

ful" moment of "Satan's agony at the sight of Adam and Eve 'Imparadis't in one anothers arms,'" which "brings home to him in a tormenting flash of insight what it means to be in hell, 'where neither joy nor love' (iv. 505-10)" (8). He then speculates, "Mr. Lewis, I suppose, would reply here too: 'What do you mean by saying that we have lost love? There is an excellent brothel round the corner.' This is worse than disgusting, it is unfair" (8; he quotes Lewis 103). Here again Werblowsky exercises his own moralizing impulse, and his reproach of Lewis's stinging zingers—albeit quoted in this last instance out of context—curiously places Lewis, regularly reproached as a stuffy moralist, on the moral defensive. Once more, Werblowsky uses the Bible to rebuke the Christian Lewis for subchristian behavior, and the implication is similarly evident: Lewis in his insistence on doctrinal rightness cannot fathom the greater spirit of Milton's great poem, or perhaps even of the Bible.

Again explicitly following Waldock, Werblowsky then equates Lewis with Milton the problematic narrator, who, long before Lewis, was "the first to start hitting Satan below the belt" (8) through "Milton's habit of first ennobling his Satan and then calling him names" and adding "nasty remark[s]" to any of Satan's "spirited and impressive appearances" (9). Significantly, Werblowsky here actually subtly differs from Waldock in an important way. Waldock's concern with Milton as narrator is Milton's moralizing Christian reflex, a reflex Lewis imitates. Werblowsky, by contrast, emphasizes Milton's and Lewis's biting nastiness and ironically unbiblical pronouncements. By way of example, Werblowsky quotes Milton's disapproving commentary following Belial's speech in hell: "Thus *Belial* with words cloath'd in reasons garb / Counsel'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloath, / Not peace..." (2.226-28). He then states, "It may have escaped Milton […] that to prefer to be miserable rather than not to be is sound Biblical doctrine: *Ecclesiastes* ix.4: 'for a living dog is better than a dead lion,'" asserting caustically that Milton's moralizing words here are "really worthy of Mr. Lewis" (9). Werblowsky's use of the Bible to expose where Lewis's and Milton's judgments of Satan and his fellows are

found wanting is an ingenious and fairly effective rhetorical device; but in so doing, Werblowsky indulges in the kind of dubious "cleverness" about which he earlier reproached Lewis. Werblowsky here also sets himself up as one who better understands the spirit of the Scriptures than do Milton and Lewis. It seems likely that readers not already inclined toward Werblowsky's argument would question his presumption on this matter.

Continuing his discussion of Satan and Lewis, Werblowsky dismisses Lewis as a critical extremist. He writes: "Even the anti-Satanists have to admit that Mr. Lewis's analysis is a critical aberration," and he contrasts Lewis with the "far more moderate and cautious" Musgrove, who "admits" that Satan "is neither an idiot nor a nincompoop" (11). He also casts Lewis as one who is tone deaf to the undeniable truth "that a great split runs through the poem, that the *Paradise Lost* Milton meant is not quite the one that he wrote, and that this is due 'to the radical ambiguity of what the poem asserts on the one hand, and what it compels us to feel on the other'" (13; he quotes Waldock 143). Although Lewis is "aware of" the significant "emotional disharmony in the poem," he is nonetheless "determined to make light of and to explain away" that disharmony (13). In his critical extremism, Lewis tries to smooth over the "radical ambiguity" that every good reader, including those who sympathize with him, needs must embrace (13).

At this point Werblowsky suggests that Lewis's critical commitment to analyzing Milton's authorial intention—a commitment Lewis believes strengthened by his own connection to Milton as a fellow Christian (see Lewis 64)—is something that undermines Lewis's ability to read *Paradise Lost—the poem itself*—properly. Paradoxically, Lewis's beliefs are perhaps too similar to Milton's to properly recognize and accept the power of Satan's character. Milton may, Werblowsky acknowledges, "have intended all his readers to be as astute as Mr. Lewis" (13); but this intention only speaks to Milton's—and presumably Lewis's—disconnect with his own audience and, by extension, their reception of Satan. Indeed, wise readers recognize "that Milton's

intention" often does not match his poetic "performance": "but here again the fact is that Milton has grossly overrated his reading public" (13). Critics who attempt to denigrate Milton's Satan inevitably resort to "preaching," a tactic that leads to "bad literary criticism" (13). Werblowsky then quotes Lewis's "excellent criterion" for "critics" (14): that "[t]he first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know *what* it is—what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used" (Lewis 1). Werblowsky ingeniously comments, "it is clear that Mr. Lewis' own conditions are not fulfilled by Satan, though of course that may be part of his wickedness. He simply does not do what he was intended to do, and is he not then, according to that very criterion, a bad piece of workmanship?" (14). Ultimately, Lewis is befuddled by Milton's Satan because he defies Lewis's commonsense critical rubric. Regrettably, Lewis insists on fitting Satan into that rubric, thus diminishing Satan's splendor.

In the end, Werblowsky believes Lewis's capacity as a reader and critic of *Paradise Lost* is thwarted both by his connection to Milton's Christianity and by his critical orthodoxies. Lewis, like Milton's moralizing narrator, feels obligated to morally degrade Satan, and in the process, despite his acknowledgement that Satan is Milton's "best drawn" character, Lewis cannot properly appreciate or celebrate Satan's grandeur. At most, Lewis can acknowledge that Milton's Satan must "be conceived as a poetic, not as a cosmic force" (Werblowsky 17). Critics like Lewis cannot appreciate Hamilton's understanding that Milton "the poet had his reasons of which the Puritan knew nothing, that the Satan created by Milton's imagination was nobler and more admirable than the devil conceived by his intellect" (Hamilton 11, quoted in Werblowsky 17). And if Lewis's knowledge of Christian doctrine and all such "backgrounds" to Milton's writings aid in one's intellectual understanding of *Paradise Lost*, one must recognize in the end "that all this necessary research ought to be regarded, in the last resort, as the *ancilla*"—not the essence—"of literary criticism" (Werblowsky 17). Ultimately, the critic's task is to emphasize "that

'rapturous expression' and the kind of heart and blood which Milton's epic gave to the traditions" (18; he quotes Martin 175). Lewis's brand of criticism, emphasizing Satan's theological and moral improprieties, needs must fall short of such artistic celebration. And if Werblowsky's notion of the essence of criticism is (to use the phrase yet once more) too simple, we may note here a legitimate pattern of concern by Lewis's respondents: that amid his primary ideological commitments, he fails to celebrate Satan's wondrous grandeur.

Final Reflections on *A Preface*, and the Question of Hitler

The various above responses to Lewis's chapter on Satan critique Lewis both for what he wrote and what he failed to address. Remarkably, Lewis's chapter on Satan is a mere 4,200 words, a fact that helps explain Lewis's inattention to certain important topics. But if *A Preface* gives short shrift to matters of Satan's grandeur, it is because Lewis made a conscious decision not to directly engage Satan's most attractive lines. And although Lewis's allegedly narrow-minded Christianity has generally been blamed for this glaring omission, another possible explanation is that *A Preface*, an expansion of his 1941 Ballard Matthews Lectures, was written and published not merely at the height of the Milton Controversy, but also and more importantly at the height of World War II, during and in the wake of Germany's Blitz of England. Lewis and his England were living amid the very real and direct threat of a flesh-and-blood Satan figure, himself celebrated for his grandeur, his oratory, his splendid inspiration of his loyal followers. Significantly, in his 1944 Messenger Lectures celebrated Milton scholar Douglas Bush explicitly linked Satan's egotistic rhetoric and seeming "courage" to "the spirit of Hitler" (Bush 70).[17] And Hitler was not the only great leader of 1940s Europe who wreaked havoc on the region. Perhaps Lewis, openly critical of centralized power and the theocratic nature of the political strongmen and movements of his day,[18] could not bring himself to give voice to literature's best-drawn

diabolical leader. Perhaps such concerns also explain his strange omission of Coleridge, whose comparison between Satan and his contemporary Napoleon, if quoted, essentially would have necessitated the obvious parallel Lewis could have offered. And Lewis, a professed hater of "politics,"[19] would likely have not wanted to explicitly politicize his discussion of *Paradise Lost*, although, tellingly, *A Preface* warns against admiring any "real human being in so far as he resembles Milton's Satan" (92). But Lewis's omissions ought not obscure his innovative, memorably worded, and enduringly valuable commentary on Satan. In his analysis, Lewis succeeds in trenchantly exposing not only Satan's evil but also his attendant illogicality. And if critics such as Hamilton and Werblowsky have charged Lewis with a kind of immorality for his insensitive mockery of Satan, other readers have no doubt thanked him for revealing in Satan—and indeed in themselves—the absurdity of evil.

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NOTES

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[2]For discussions of the Milton Controversy, see Bergonzi and especially Leonard, *Faithful Labourers* 169-265. Prominent anti-Miltonist essays before *A Preface* include those by Leavis and Eliot. The immediate popularity of *A Preface* is evident in that by 1949 it was already in its sixth impression (Lewis iv).

[3]This and all parenthetical references to Lewis refer to *A Preface*.

[4]In his 1998 Preface to the second edition of his seminal *Surprised by Sin*, Stanley Fish writes that his book endeavors to empower Milton studies to escape "the impasse created by" rival "interpretive traditions," the more orthodox Christian

one "stretching from Addison to C. S. Lewis and Douglas Bush" (ix), and the Satanic one begun by Blake and Shelley "and continued in our century by A. J. A. Waldock and William Empson among others" (x). More recent books that substantially engage both Lewis and Waldock include Leonard, *Naming in Paradise*; Rumrich; Forsyth; Bryson; Herman; Wittreich; Shears; Fresch; Leonard, *Faithful Laborours*; Falcone; Davies; and Urban, *Milton*. See also the very recent chapter by Bryson and Movsesian; and Urban, "Falls."

[5]A second essay will discuss subsequent responses to *A Preface* to the present.

[6]Dryden, in *Dedication of the Aeneis*, laments, "if the Devil had not been [Milton's] heroe instead of *Adam* [...]" (276).

[7]Lewis's final phrase here is taken from Ben Jonson's comedy *The Devil is an Ass* (1631).

[8]Various lines from *Paradise Lost* are quoted within the critical works I discuss. Other references are quoted from Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*.

[9]Williams, with less clever stylistics, writes that Satan "will have it that he was like Topsy and grew by himself" (xiv).

[10]For matters discussed in this paragraph see also Urban, "Speaking" 96-97 and 102-03 at endnotes 4, 5, and 6. John Leonard's chapter on the history of criticism of Milton's Satan (Leonard, *Faithful Labourers* 393-476) is invaluable. My present essay differs from Leonard's broad discussion of the sweep of Milton criticism on Satan in my specific developed focus on Lewis and particular critics' responses to him.

[11]See Urban, "Speaking" 97-101 for an analysis of early twenty-first century charges that Lewis has forestalled discussion of important critical issues.

[12]For this and the other passages that Stoll quotes, I have quoted from Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*.

[13]Hamilton also mentions Williams here, but throughout his study he primarily engages with Lewis.

[14]Indeed, *A Preface* actually quotes Coleridge's 1818 comments on Hamlet and Ophelia (Lewis 119).

[15]Stoll does not express indignation that Waldock equally ignores how Hamilton and Musgrove also anticipate points of Waldock's book.

[16]Werblowsky quotes the entire verse: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

[17]Surely the pro-Satan critics Hamilton and Waldock, also writing in the mid-1940s, prompted, however perhaps unintentionally, some readers to connect Satan and Hitler when Hamilton called Satan an "astute propagandist" (21) and Waldock stated that Satan's speech to his followers in 2.11-43 recalls the rhetoric of history's most "able commanders" (Paradise Lost *and Its Critics* 70).

[18]Urban, "Contextualizing" 84-88. See specifically Lewis's 1943 essay "Equality" 17; his 1946 essay "A Reply to Professor Haldrane," 75-76; and his 1958 essay "Is Progress Possible?" 315.

[19]Dyer and Watson 6-7; Urban, "Contextualizing" 75-76.

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Wordsworth & the Sonnet as Epic Prelude: A Response to Stephen Fallon and Henry Weinfield*

BRIAN BATES

Stephen Fallon's "The Equanimity of Influence: Milton and Wordsworth" and Henry Weinfield's "'When Contemplation like the Night-Calm Felt': Religious Considerations in Poetic Texts by Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth" appear together in two bibliographic ways: in volume twenty-six of *Connotations* and in the journal's debates section under the title "Between Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth" (https://www.connotations.de/debate/between-shakespeare-milton-and-wordsworth/). While Fallon reexamines "how Wordsworth makes his poetry out of Milton's poetry, and particularly his *Prelude* out of *Paradise Lost*" (126), Weinfield plots a Shakespeare-to-Milton sonnet lineage manifested in Book V of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. Each article concerns authorial influence—for Fallon based on "equanimity" and for Weinfield involving a potential "threat" (116)—and focuses on beginnings and endings, making and remaking, echoes and allusions, transience and permanence. Fallon argues that Wordsworth discovered in Milton's epic narrator a lyric model for presenting the growth of the poet's mind toward equanimity "in the face of sorrows and adversity" (127). Weinfield contends that Milton's Sonnet

*References: Fallon, Stephen. "The Equanimity of Influence: Milton and Wordsworth." *Connotations* 26 (2016/2017): 126-40. https://www.connotations.de/article/stephen-m-fallon-equanimity-influence-milton-wordsworth/

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XIX mediation of Shakespeare's sonnet XV moved Wordsworth toward "a third-order meditation […] reflecting on the nature of contemplation itself" amidst the certainty of material transience (121). My response builds on their respective arguments about the beginning of Book I (Fallon) and Book V (Weinfield) of *The Prelude* (c. 1804-1805) and involves a form not discussed in their articles: Wordsworth's blank verse sonnets. I aim to spotlight how central blank verse sonnet making was for Wordsworth's thinking and development as an epic poet.

I propose that Wordsworth's blank verse sonnets in the thirteen-book *Prelude* enable him to find the equanimity of mind and the surviving form that Fallon and Weinfield describe. To lay the groundwork for my argument, I first examine how, in his *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807), Wordsworth aligns and transposes his epic poetry and sonnets in the deleted "Advertisement," dual Latin epigraphs, and sonnet "Nuns fret not." I have chosen the 1807 volumes' "Advertisement," epigraphs and "Nuns fret not" sonnet to illustrate how Wordsworth's collective lyric progress—particularly his Milton- (and Shakespeare-) inflected sonnet formations—dynamically shaped his poetics as an epic poet from 1802-1805. Then, I turn to three of *The Prelude's* blank verse sonnets: Book I's opening lines, Book V's "strains of thankfulness" (174), and Book XIII's closing benediction. I argue that these *Prelude* sonnets not only extend the solace and liberty that he found in composing pastime sonnets for his 1807 *Poems*, but also authorize his epic voice, ground his epic labor, and monumentalize his epic progress through a cycling lyric form that sings of greater things by little.[1]

Wordsworth's first near-public announcement of how integrally bound his shorter poems are with his epic endeavors appears in the prose "Advertisement" that he canceled during the proof stages for his 1807 *Poems*. This half-page introductory note, which was set to follow the title page, juxtaposes his epic progress with the lyric poems "of which these Volumes consist" (527).[2] He declares that these

> short Poems […] were chiefly composed to refresh my mind during the progress of a work of length and labour, in which I have for some time been engaged; and to furnish me with employment when I had not resolution to apply myself to that work, or hope that I should proceed with it successfully. (527)

To demonstrate the signal importance of these "short" lyrics for his growth as a serious poet, Wordsworth describes them in apposition with "a work of length and labour." The 1807 *Poems* have taken time away from direct epic composition (neither *The Recluse* nor *The Prelude* is named), but they also have relieved fatigue, restored "hope," and conditionally habilitated "the progress" of his "larger work" (527). More than a mere recreation (an entertaining and pleasurable pastime), these lyrics have afforded him time and space to "refresh" (restore and renew) his blank verse epic compositions. Although Wordsworth nearly apologizes for publishing these lyrics ahead of his unfinished "larger work," he also proffers their collective power: "They were composed with much pleasure to my own mind, and I build upon that remembrance a hope that they may afford profitable pleasure to many readers" (527). Grounded on his memory of their compositional affect, Wordsworth posits the 1807 *Poems* as one amalgamating, pleasure-giving form with benefits exceeding the sum of its lyric parts. And, as Wordsworth's opening and concluding epigraphs for the volumes might suggest, the sonnet's "scanty plot of ground" significantly marks and fosters a continuum of recursive pathways for poetic development ("Nuns fret not" 11).

None of the hundred-odd poems in the 1807 volumes were written in blank verse measure, and approximately half of them are sonnets—the one genre for which reviewers widely praised Wordsworth and for which he partially accounted in an initial and a concluding Latin epigraph.[3] As Nicola Trott has shown in "Wordsworth's Career Prospects," Wordsworth was at pains during the proof copy stage for the 1807 volumes to fashion his career progression according to a Milton-inflected "'*rota Virgiliana* or Wheel of Virgil'" (283). Wordsworth's opening epigraph—ostensibly from Virgil's *Culex*[4] and likely filtered

through Spenser's *Virgil's Gnat*—recalls the developmental turn of that wheel from a lower, pastoral mode to a middling, georgic mode (both associated with lyric poetry) and then to a weighty, epic mode: "*Posterius graviore sono tibi Musa loquetur / Nostra: dabunt cum securos mihi tempora fructus*."[5] With neither a prose introduction nor an initial section title, the 1807 volumes lean heavily on this epigraph to guide readers, and, reciprocally, the half-title page epigraph (also inserted during the proof stage) before the final poem in volume II—"Ode"—returns to Virgilian guidance: "Paulò majora canamus." Taken from the opening invocation in Book IV of Virgil's *Eclogues*, this epigraph has been translated variously as "Let us sing a loftier strain," "Let's sing a nobler song," "Let us sing of somewhat more exalted things," and "Let us sing of matters greater by little."[6] The "Ode's" epigraphic rise toward the epic and separation from the volumes' previous poems (implied in the first two translations) have been recognized often. The second two translations, however, qualify that generic teleology and remind us that a wheel and the cycling seasons have no end point. In the third and fourth translations, the words "more exalted" and "greater" highlight the elevated genre status of his "Ode" while "somewhat" and "by little" describe an incremental movement that implies less a growing out of youthful short lyrics into mature epic compositions and more a growing into the variegated lyric makeup characteristic of epic formations.[7]

Singled out in the 1807 *Poems*' "Contents" page as the "Prefatory Sonnet" to two sonnet series—*Miscellaneous Sonnets* and *Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty*—"Nuns fret not" (c. 1802) announces the fitness of Wordsworth's ensuing sonnets to balance the shifting weight of epic progress. The octave-to-sestet turn in this Italian sonnet suggests how Wordsworth's sonnet series anticipate one translation of the ode's epigraph, "Let us sing of matters greater by little." Falling midway through line nine, that volta presents an inductive leap, which follows the octave's examples of nuns, hermits, students, maids, a weaver, and bees working "contented" in self-enclosed spaces: "and hence to me, / In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound / Within the son-

net's scanty plot of ground" (9-11). As the sestet emphasizes, the sonnet has the capacity to hold in productive tension greater and little subjects within its "scanty plot of ground." Wordsworth's conclusion that the sonnet "was pastime" foregrounds its recreational (hobby-like) function, but "pastime" also is a closed compound form of "past time" (a passing or elapsing of time) that elides while also implying Wordsworth's acknowledgment that he came late to sonnet writing and would have benefited greatly from earlier sonnet recreation. These "pas[t]time" meanings correspond with the kind of purposeful recreation described in the deleted "Advertisement," and the sonnet's "ground" aligns with the deleted section title "Orchard Pathway" (and companion motto poem) and the opening Latin epigraph.[8] Within the sonnet's "scanty plot," the poet has "found" an incremental structure to mete out "the weight of too much liberty" (13).[9] Matching form and content, line thirteen's "liberty" introduces the only extra syllable in an otherwise pentameter poem. Instead of extending this extra-syllable through enjambment, however, Wordsworth delimits it with a comma that marks the sonnet's capacity to foster and pause over the liberty he has gained in expressing "sundry" (miscellaneous) emotional states. As the "Prefatory Sonnet" to *Miscellaneous Sonnets* and *Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty*, "Nuns fret not" forecasts how the sonnet form can provide "short solace" for the poet (and, he hopes, for readers) that alleviates the "weight of too much liberty," which Wordsworth associates with composing more free-flowing, blank verse epics (whether *The Recluse* or *The Prelude*).[10]

The thirteen-book *Prelude* begins with the "solace" (relief and comfort) of an unrhymed sonnet that transforms the initial "weight of too much [blank verse] liberty" into a joyful lyric that "sing[s] of greater things by little."[11] In Book I, Wordsworth openly (and repeatedly) questions how and why to begin a blank verse epic. Although his resounding "Was it for this?" begins the two-book *Prelude* (1799) and has been singled out often as *The Prelude*'s initial locution, that question does not begin its 1804, 1805, or 1850 versions.[12] Instead, Wordsworth inaugurates the thirteen-book *Prelude* with fourteen emancipa-

tory lines containing a prominent volta: "Now I am free, enfranchised and at large / May fix my habitation where I will" (9-10). He couches his new-found freedom in a sonnet "habitation" that gives form to his ensuing questions about where (and how) to turn next:

> What dwelling shall receive me, in what vale
> Shall be my harbour, underneath what grove
> Shall I take up my home, and what sweet stream
> Shall with its murmurs lull me to my rest? (11-14)

His enjambed exuberance in search of a "home" comes to "rest" at the sonnet's conventional close, and that full-stop sets up and authorizes his revelatory interpretation of *Paradise Lost*'s ending as a new beginning[13]: "The earth is all before me—with a heart / Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty," (15-16). Marked by a comma (as in "Nuns fret not") and inspired by the movement of "this gentle breeze / That blows" (1-2), his open-hearted pause over "liberty" builds on the freeing spontaneity celebrated in the octave's two full-stop quatrains (1-8). This joyful and structurally contained spontaneity enables him to liberate and make room for his emergent epic voice through a lyric form that reframes past physical and mental "[em]prison[ment]" (8). In this fourteen-line blank verse sonnet, Wordsworth associates his newly "enfranchised" voice with a sonnet pattern which, like this "gentle breeze," invigorates, concentrates, and inaugurates his epic beginning (9, 1).

The majority of Wordsworth's rhymed and unrhymed sonnets have a Petrarchan structure, but he also altered conventional sonnet forms to fit his subject matter. Though written well after the 1805 *Prelude*, Wordsworth's often quoted 1833 letter to Reverend Alexander Dyce details his longstanding fascination with sonnet variations. In this letter, his enthusiasm for Dyce's forthcoming edited collection of sonnets (dedicated to and featuring fifteen sonnets by Wordsworth) leads him to ask if Dyce will include "a short preface upon the construction of the sonnet" (31) and then to rough out his own quasi-sonnet preface. His subsequent account of the sonnet's make-up

ranges from Aristotelian plotting ("a beginning, a middle, and an end") to formal logic ("the three propositions of a syllogism"), visual borders ("the frame of metre"), musical aesthetics ("to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound"; 32), and architectural design ("making a whole out of three parts"; 32). Following this multivalent description, Wordsworth praises Milton because "in the better half of his sonnets the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the meter […] giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist" (32). Wordsworth further compares the "intense unity" of his preferred sonnet form to "the image of an orbicular body,—a sphere or a dew drop" (32).[14] He presents this "image" in macro- and micro-cosmic sizes that align the largeness of an astronomic "body" with the smallness of a budding "dew drop" through the universal form of a geometric "sphere" (32).[15] Wordsworth's metaphysical imaging suggests that the sonnet's bounded form has the capacity to hold the largest of universal truths as well as the smallest descriptive details. In *The Prelude*, his blank verse sonnet in Book XIII follows Milton's orbicular sonnet model with its late turn toward expansive, prophetic truth. By contrast, the early turn and binary division of Book V's blank verse sonnet reverses the sonnet's conventional movement from an earthly octave to a transcendent sestet and draws his prophetic narrative back to a lyric resounding with loco-descriptive details.

Heading a new verse paragraph, this Book V sonnet (lines 166-79) functions as a check on the poet's progress and a holding space of recovery that recollects epic poetry's mixed genre make-up. The sonnet curtails his apocalyptic ruminations about the mortality of the physical book—"Poor earthly casket of immortal verse"—and turns his despondency into "strains of thankfulness" (164, 174).[16] Instead of using a conventional volta to signal that grateful turn, as in Book I's opening sonnet, Wordsworth divides this sonnet in half with a rhetorical question: "How could I ever play an ingrate's part?" (172). The shortened octave arrests his apocalyptic thinking and recalls his past

and present gratitude for the natural world. The lengthened sestet extends his mental recovery as he imagines "intermingl[ing] strains of thankfulness" with "thoughtless melodies" (175) and then humbly welcomes the natural world's rhythms of song along with the power of lower poetic modes "to tell again/ In slender accents of sweet verse some tale/ That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now" (177-79). This echoing genre recycling ("to repeat/ Some simply fashioned tale") of a tale within a sonnet, within his epic, composes his mind and enables him to find his epic footing anew through "slender accents" that "resound" (176-77, 173).[17] Wordsworth celebrates the tempering power of lower poetic modes in a sonnet that balances and realigns (a three-line and a four-line full stop followed by a foreshortened three-line and an extended four-line full stop) his shifting affective responses with the enduring rhythms of the natural world. As a familiar pastime genre, the sonnet enables him to delimit his prophetic reach, locate inspiration anew, and find a narrative pathway forward that depends on the staying power of just such "portable," adaptable, and recurring lyric patterns.[18]

The blank verse sonnet before the close of Book XIII (lines 428-41) foregrounds the monumental significance of his cycling sonnet labor. This sonnet begins *The Prelude*'s final verse paragraph, and it follows his characterization of the entire *Prelude* as an "offering of [his] love" for Coleridge (427). In this position, it stands as a synecdoche for *The Prelude*. Through its enjambed turn—"we shall still/ Find solace in the knowledge which we have"—the sonnet offers the "solace" of its complete structure, which forecasts epic completion in *The Prelude* and *The Recluse* (435-36). Its octave provides room for Wordsworth to project an end-stopped time when "all will be complete" and an epic "monument of glory will be raised" (429-30) while also voicing his anxieties about a possible future in which "this age fall back to old idolatry," "men return to servitude as fast / As the tide ebbs," and "nations sink together" (432-36). At the sonnet turn, Wordsworth rises from the weight of these projected cultural counterturns to find faith in poetic labor as "work" that can bring about reconciliation (439). In

the last four lines of this sestet benediction, Wordsworth and Coleridge become:

> United helpers forward of a day
> Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work—
> Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe—
> Of their redemption, surely yet to come. (438-41)

Wordsworth prophesies collective "redemption" (liberation) in a miniature form that aligns his grandiose thoughts with patterns of return in the natural world. With the "grace" of "Providence," Wordsworth and Coleridge appear "forward of a day" that will come as "surely" as the turning of the earth. At once representing and predicting that forthcoming micro- and macro-cosmic turn ("we shall still / Find solace"), this sonnet captures the creating mind's capacity to gather together, recycle and transcend temporal limitations.[19] As an "image of an orbicular body,—a sphere or a dew drop," this blank verse sonnet serves as a structural monument celebrating Wordsworth's capacity to sing of greater things by little.

To my mind, the close of Book XIII's sonnet also harkens back to the line following Book I's opening sonnet and the line preceding Book V's sonnet. Just as Book I's emancipatory sonnet authorizes his ensuing revelation—"The earth is all before me" (15)—this closing sonnet authorizes his succeeding claim that he and Coleridge are "Prophets of Nature" (442). Likewise, Book XIII's sonnet characterization of them as "joint labourers" recalls Book V's characterization of "Shakespeare or Milton, labourers divine" (439, 165). This dual recall, moreover, draws me back to Fallon's and Weinfield's articles, which concern Miltonic legacies and lyric remainders in *The Prelude*. I have attempted to extend Fallon's and Weinfield's respective claims to the sonnet itself, which I see as the most significant lyric mediator and enduring symbolic form in *The Prelude*. Not coincidentally, after *The Prelude*'s final sonnet mediation, Wordsworth declares his capacity to "speak / A lasting inspiration, sanctified / By reason and by truth" that "Instruct[s] […] how the mind of man becomes / A thousand times more beautiful than the earth / On which he dwells, above this

frame of things" (442-44, 446-48). Much like the closing movement of a sonnet, in these lines the mind of man paradoxically rises "'mid all revolutions" above its earthly "frame" to "remain unchanged": "In beauty exalted, as it is itself / Of substance and of fabric more divine" (451-52). Wordsworth's expansion of the thirteen-book *Prelude* into the fourteen-book *Prelude* (1850), perhaps, best exemplifies his enduring faith in the power of the sonnet's adaptable, fourteen-line form to authorize, ground, and monumentalize the revolutions of the epic poet's mind at work. If we train our attention on how Wordsworth employs blank verse sonnets in *The Prelude*, we learn about how joy (both great and little) can be found and created, cycled and recycled through the formal constraints of sonnet recreation. For Wordsworth, the sonnet can serve as an epic prelude, interlude and postlude that recalls our connective growth, speaks to our enduring relationship with the natural world, and prophesies our collective liberation of mind and union of spirit.

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NOTES

[1]I build on Jennifer Ann Wagner's claim in *Revisionary Poetics and the Nineteenth-Century English Sonnet* that for Milton and Wordsworth "sonnet and epic would ultimately come to be tropologically connected […] Wordsworth seems to have apprehended the way Milton used the sonnet as a synecdoche of his epics" (37-38). See also Jay Curlin's "Chaos in the Convent's Narrow Room: Milton and the Sonnet," which focuses on the epic stretch and near-blank verse prosody of Milton's sonnets and mentions Milton's embedded blank verse sonnets in *Paradise Lost*. Wordsworth's admiration for Milton's rhymed sonnets has been well established since at least R. D. Haven's *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (1922), and Lee M. Johnson has made much of Wordsworth's 1836 remark to his friend Henry Crabb Robinson about finding in *Paradise Lost* "a perfect sonnet without rhyme" (86). In his "Appendix" to *Wordsworth and the Sonnet*, Johnson identifies "several dozen blank verse sonnets embedded in *The Excursion*, *The Prelude*, and in other blank verse poems" (174), including "over thirty fourteen-line passages" in *The Prelude*. Although Johnson hesitates to call all of these sonnets—"the purpose or function of blank verse sonnets in *The Prelude* […] would still require

further clarification" (180)—he identifies two "authentic" blank verse sonnets in *The Prelude*: Book I (lines 428-41 in 1805; lines 401-14 in 1850 version) and Book XIII/XIV (lines 428-41 in 1805; lines 432-35 in 1850) (180). In *Wordsworth's Metaphysical Verse*, Johnson details the structural and thematic significance of over a dozen blank verse sonnets in *The Recluse*.

[2]For quotations from Wordsworth's 1807 *Poems* and related paratexts, I cite Jared Curtis's Cornell Wordsworth (Poems, in Two Volumes, *and Other Poems, 1800-1807*).

[3]On the early positive reception of Wordsworth's sonnets and his epic contextualizing of them, see Simon Bainbridge's "'Men are we': Wordsworth's 'Manly' Poetic Nation." For more on the resoundingly negative reception of Wordsworth's 1807 *Poems*, see my *Wordsworth's Poetic Collections*.

[4]Though several arguments were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries debunking Virgil's authorship of the *Culex (The Gnat)* in the *Appendix Vergiliana*, Wordsworth and many of his contemporaries held that Virgil was the author.

[5]Alun Jones has translated the epigraph as "Hereafter shall our Muse speak to thee in deeper tones, when the seasons yield me their fruits in peace" and points out that it corresponds with and stands in for the opening section title "Orchard Pathways," which Wordsworth deleted during the proof stage along with the "Advertisement" (XV).

[6]The first two translations are the most common. For the third translation, see Joseph Sitterson's *Romantic Poems, Poets, and Narrators*, in which Sitterson argues for the ode's epic characteristics and "generic comprehensiveness" which "for Wordsworth characteristically entails going beyond the lyric mode to the narrative" and which "includes lyric in a larger, narrative 'plot'" (93, 95, 98). For more on the composition and arrangement of the 1807 *Poems*, see Curtis's Cornell Wordsworth "Introduction: The Making of *Poems, in Two Volumes, 1800-1807*" (3-39).

[7]For an overview of the epic's lyric characteristics, see Barbara Lewalski's "The Genres of *Paradise Lost*." On embedded sonnets, see Lee M. Johnson's "Milton's Blank Verse Sonnets."

[8]That deleted motto poem is:

> Orchard Pathway, to and fro,
> Ever with thee, did I go,
> Weaving Verses, a huge store!
> These, and many hundreds more,
> And, in memory of the same,
> This little lot shall bear Thy Name! (283)

[9]For a recent discussion of related sonnet concerns from Romanticism through Modernism, see Matthias Bauer's "Self-Imposed Fetters": https://www.connotations.de/article/matthias-bauer-self-imposed-fetters-the-productivity-of-formal-and-thematic-restrictions/. My interpretation of "Nuns fret not," however, fundamentally differs from Bauer's (3-4).

[10]As John Kerrigan argues in "Wordsworth and the Sonnet," "Wordsworth built his sonnets precisely for dwelling's sake. The sonnet was a space in which being, for him, declared itself by being radically at home […] Yet these many mansions are formally one home, revisited till the revisiting became dwelling" (58). See also Charles Mahoney's brief reflections on "Nuns fret not" in "Poetic Pains in Formal Pleasures Bound" about the sonnet's "kind of freedom which [Wordsworth's] blank verse could not provide" (28), as well as Clifford Siskin's observations in "Renewing Wordsworth" about Wordsworth's fascination with "the disruption deep within the body of the sonnet suturing the parts into the whole" and with embedding sonnet structures into other poems (121).

[11]To my knowledge, no Wordsworth scholar has recognized these fourteen lines as a blank verse sonnet. Daniel Robinson, however, comes close in "*The River Duddon* and Wordsworth, Sonneteer" when he notes a connection between "Nuns fret not," sonnet making, and the opening lines of *The Prelude*: "[T]he formal demands of the sonnet provide 'short solace' for a poet who feels 'the weight of too much liberty'—the same weight that drives Wordsworth's poetic impulse in the first book of *The Prelude*" (293). As Don Bialostosky points out in "The Invention/Disposition of *The Prelude*, Book I," Wordsworth's use of the term "preamble" (Book VII, line 4) to characterize the opening lines of Book I recalls a tradition of Greek lyric poetry (140).

[12]The composition date of the thirteen-book *Prelude*'s opening fourteen lines remains somewhat mysterious. Though most scholars follow John Alban Finch's contention in "Wordsworth's Two-Handed Engine" that Wordsworth composed his "glad preamble" (lines 1-54) in November 1799, Wordsworth only situated them as the opening fourteen lines of Book I in early 1804 (5). For this history, see also "Composition and Texts: *The Prelude* of 1805 and 1850" in Wordsworth, *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850* (515-26).

[13]My argument echoes and further particularizes Fallon's statement that "Wordsworth splices the beginning of his epic (and both the beginning and 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" (129).

[14]For the most recent work concerning Wordsworth and the word orbicular, see Thomas Owens's "Orbicular Poetics" in *Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Language of the Heavens*, particularly his accounting of Milton's use of the word orbicular in *Paradise Lost* (75-76). Though Owens does not mention the following, in "The Structure of Wit" P. G. Stanwood and Lee Johnson have shown that one of Milton's most significant uses of the word orbicular occurs in the midst of a triple blank verse sonnet embedded in Uriel's speech about the creation of the earth, near the close of *Paradise Lost*'s Book III (36-38).

[15]In his 1825 *Concise Dictionary of Terms Used in The Arts & Sciences*, Walter Hamilton defines orbicular as: "In *Geometry*, &c., spherical, circular," and an orb as: "In Astronomy, a spherical body or space, contained under two superfices; the one concave and the other convex. 2. There are orbs concentric (having the same center) and orbs eccentric" (262). Reciprocally, Hamilton defines a sphere as: "In

Geometry, &c., a globe, an orbicular body, of which the centre is at the same distance from every point of the circumference" (378).

[16]My argument here reframes Weinfield's insightful claim that, in Book V, Wordsworth conceptualizes an individual's soul after death as being "joined to immortal being—no longer as an individual, however, but as part of the oneness of being" (122). As a formal extension, I contend that Wordsworth's Book V blank verse sonnet celebrates a recycling amalgamation of lower and higher poetic modes and kinds.

[17]I argue that Wordsworth's blank verse sonnet-making in Book V suggests a formal line of reasoning which would help delineate Fallon's general claim that Wordsworth plots a developmental trajectory over the course of *The Prelude*, leading him to an equanimity of mind—"a balance of joy and sorrow"—and to laud "the education of the soul or mind as it achieves calm of mind and discovers paradise in the quotidian" (126, 131). On the aesthetic, political, and gendered print market significance of the literary tale as a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century poetry and prose genre of repetition and remaking, see Stuart Curran's chapter 6, "The Romance," in *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*; Mary Favret's "Telling Tales about Genre: Poetry in the Romantic Novel"; Ashley Cross's "From 'Lyrical Ballads' to 'Lyrical Tales'"; and Miranda Burgess's "The National Tale and Allied Genres, 1770s-1840s."

[18]In the ensuing lines, Wordsworth finds a compositional pathway forward, in part, by recalling the monumental influence of western poetry genres cycling from "Homer" and "Jewish song" to (203-204):

> Our shores in England, from those loftiest notes
> Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
> For cottagers and spinners at the wheel
> And weary travellers when they rest themselves
> By the highways and hedges: ballad-tunes,
> Food for the hungry ears of little ones,
> And of old men who have survived their joy— (207-13)

My use of the word "portable" builds on Daniel Robinson's characterization in "*The River Duddon* and Wordsworth, Sonneteer" of Wordsworth's sonnets as "portable, perfectly suited for itinerary poems" (296). I am indebted further to Robinson's several other publications about Romantic period sonnets dating back to his article "'Still glides the stream': Form and Function in Wordsworth's *River Duddon* Sonnets."

[19]The sonnet, thereby, exemplifies what Weinfield characterizes as Wordsworth's concern with salvaging the transient body amidst his certainty about the individual soul's return "to the source of life," and the sonnet fosters what Fallon describes as Wordsworth's finely balanced (Miltonic) equanimity of mind (122).

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