WATERMARK

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Spring 2012

Department of English
California State University, Long Beach

Watermark accepts submissions annually between October and February. We are dedicated to publishing original critical and theoretical essays concerned with literature of all genres and periods, as well as works representing current issues in the fields of rhetoric and composition. Reviews of current works of literary criticism or theory are also welcome.

All submissions must be accompanied by a cover letter that includes the author's name, phone number, email address, and the title of the essay or book review. All essay submissions should be approximately 12-15 pages and must be typed in MLA format with a standard 12 pt. font. Book reviews ought to be 750-1000 words in length. As this journal is intended to provide a forum for emerging voices, only student work will be considered for publication. Submissions will not be returned. Please direct all questions to **editor@watermarkjournal.com** and address all submissions to:

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Editor's Note:

Another year means another edition of *Watermark*. We celebrated last year with the largest edition of *Watermark* ever produced, showcasing the largest talent we ever had. It seemed appropriate for the fifth year. We were then faced with the question of what do we do for year six? How do we change things up?

Our answer was to go smaller. We had a smaller staff and really focused on the select few essays we wanted to publish. Just like every year, we received submissions from students all across the United States and even as far away as Australia. There is a passion for critical inquiry, and the number of submissions always exemplifies this.

With this edition of *Watermark*, we wanted to really showcase the broad range of English studies. We have essays representing Medieval and Renaissance studies, Rhetoric and Composition, American Literature, British Literature, and Gender and Ethnic Literature. In a bold move, we decided to publish two essays next to each other both dealing with *Frankenstein*. While it may seem odd to publish two essays on the same text, I believe it showcases what good literary analysis does: it illustrates how a text can be approached and interpreted from two very different areas of study. These approaches help illuminate and deepen the appreciation a reader or audience has for a text.

As always, this edition would not have been possible if we did not have an amazing staff of readers and editors working for *Watermark*. We'd also like to especially thank Dr. George Hart, Dr. Eileen Klink, Lisa Behrendt, Janice Young, Dean Tsuyuki for his tireless work on the layout and design of *Watermark* and the website, and all of the English staff and faculty who continue to push and encourage students to explore inquiry and make discoveries.

Michael Koger
Editor

BETWEEN STRANGERS: SOPHISTRY AND THE COSMOPOLITAN IDEAL

BY MARK OLAGUE

"What makes a man a 'sophist' is not his faculty but his moral purpose.
— Aristotle

Nationalism, patriotism, and nativist sentiments are expressions of collective self-identification coterminous with the rise of modernity. In all likelihood these expressions can be extended further back in human history ever since human societies organized and united themselves against outside threats. Those surveying the chaos and destruction of the twentieth century would not have been surprised to see these collective self-expressions grow deeper roots in the twenty-first. As the world has become smaller and more connected—"global" and "networked," to invoke just two contemporary slogans—it has also remained more divided and contentious over difference. To look at our contemporary moment, the post-9/11 "Global War on Terror" era and the ever-deepening financial crisis, the core commitments toward pluralism and openness in the United States and in Europe have been challenged. One need only to look at the hostile reaction toward the building of an Islamic cultural center near Ground Zero and two recent senate bills on illegal immigration in Arizona and Alabama to be convinced of its urgency. For all the contributions and arguments advanced by postmodernist thinkers from the last century, their reputed cultural relativism and anti-foundationalism have been the most scrutinized and under attack. Yet how we negotiate with difference in our own societies and abroad, and the ethical obligations we owe to one another, to those deemed "not like

us," stubbornly persists. Nevertheless, we remain conflicted over how to meet these obligations. How then to address the proverbial "problem of strangers" in an open but self-protective society? How to accommodate the values and beliefs of those who seem to oppose us, those beyond our borders with different political and religious ideologies? These are questions that I believe the rhetoric practiced by the ancient sophists and their postmodern descendants can help us try to answer.

Sophistry and 'rooted uprootedness'

I would like to ground my discussion first by referencing the relatively recuperation of the ancient Greek sophists and their contributions to modern rhetorical scholarship by researchers Susan K. Jarratt and Steven Mailloux. From here, my paper will move chronologically and tropically, examining what I deem the sophists' "rooted uprootedness" as key to their anti-foundationalism, their skepticism toward all absolute truth-claims. Against Plato and Aristotle's charge that the sophists promoted a form of "bad rhetoric" that pandered to the prejudices and ignorance of its audience, I intend to make the opposite case: their rejection of moral certainties for moral contingencies provides methodological basis for discussing what is "good" and "true" that can extend the conversation and agreements beyond the *polis* to the *cosmos*, to forge what philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah calls, in a similar effort, a global "ethic of strangers." Moreover, when Socrates attempts to discredit Gorgias by inquiring, "Who are you?" in the self-same dialogue, I believe Gorgias' non-response rhetorically infuses the dialogue with an element of existential open-endedness denoting not only the alterity of the sophists as wandering "strangers" in the ancient Greek polis, but the shifting ontological ground of their discursive methodology.

It is my view that the concrete and abstract "nomadism" of the sophists, both literally and figuratively, is an example of what Appiah has deemed a "rooted cosmopolitanism"—a global worldview between nationally-situated citizens throughout the world who share, or potentially share, basic values of human liberty and dignity (Nussbaum 276). The baseline for attaining this cosmopolitan ideal that Appiah argues for is most effectively achieved, as I see it, rhetorically, in particular, through the rhetoric advanced by the ancient sophists as emended by such modern philosophers as Friedrich Nietzsche, Kenneth Burke, Richard Rorty, and Stanley Fish. More specifically, a rooted cosmopolitan thus views the world as a continually expanding "imaginative discourse community" between strangers who freely partake in "free and open encounters" achieved through non-essentialist forms of discourse (Rorty 68). As a form of argumentation and persuasion that constantly interrogates entrenched values and beliefs, sophistic rhetoric is thus inherently political, facilitating agreements between opposing parties, if only contingently, insofar as the various contexts in which these agreements were made remain stable and unchanging (Mailloux 16). Viewing sophistic rhetoric as a deliberative political process in this fashion disallows personal beliefs and popular opinion to settle into dogma or harden into ideology. By this rubric, sophistic rhetoric is a means for uprooting politically motivated definitions of the "other," providing a framework for beginning a global conversation over facts and their meaning, values and their importance, in which a cosmopolitan ideal, ethical agreements between strangers, can be obtained.

Nomadic Rhetoric

Reacting strongly against E.D. Hirsch's call for a "cultural literacy" in the U.S., a shared cultural discourse over canonical knowledge and its importance to a "literate democracy," educator Chris Anson famously

posits a "shipwrecked" island scenario, where strangers from different parts of the world continually wash up on shore bringing along their local cuisine as well as their own culturally specific canonical knowledge. Rather than privileging one brand of cultural literacy over another, the inhabitants of the island agree instead to make a hodgepodge of various cultural *literacies*, whereby new views and perspectives are continually absorbed and assimilated. Without chaos and strife, the dominance of one cultural literacy over another, a cultural canon does manage to form on the island. As Anson explains:

> But as the culture becomes more diversified, the need to build new forms of knowledge from communication increases. Luckily, the island embraces this diversification, slowing for a moment their "communicative efficiency" in order to accommodate new inhabitants, their new perspectives, and their additions to the island's texts. The committee encourages these momentary difficulties, these epistemological accommodations, arguing that the island's intellectual and cultural integrity cannot be threatened as long as the inhabitants widen their perspectives and build new knowledge for producing and comprehending new kinds of discourse. Instead of holding defiantly to their cultural literacy, they face introduction of new works with open minds and intellectual curiosity, realizing that the island consists of different discourse communities who define literacy in different ways. (119)

It seems appropriate to compare Anson's potentially utopian island community to the situation of today's global citizens, connected and exposed to each other through technology, migration, war, and natural disaster. But we can also imagine an analogy with their antecedents in the ancient world, the itinerant scholars-for-hire, the sophists, as earlier models of a "shipwrecked" intelligentsia lugging around their expansive canonical knowledge as they arrive in every Hellenic city and port. As the editors of *The Rhetorical Tradition* inform us, the sophists' "ability to see many sides of an issue encouraged cultural tolerance, which would be a stabilizing factor in a diverse society, as Athens increasingly was, because of the influx of foreigners seeking to enjoy Athenian cultural and political advantages and to avoid the ravages of war elsewhere" (Bizzell and Herzberg 25). Cultural tolerance was not a difficult notion for the sophists to absorb since, as embodied nomadic figures in the ancient world, their political status was regarded as tenuous and contingent, their livelihood and acceptance dependent on an enlightened patronage and the education of a local, largely elite populace, open to the knowledge and perspectives the sophists had gained from their encounters with distant and diverse cultures. But perhaps even more important for us is how the ancient sophists were dispersing what can be considered "nomadic" forms of reasoning born from their "rooted uprootedness," figures who embodied the concrete and abstract notion that even though born with legs, it is roots, even when loosely set, which nourish and connect us.[1] Against absolute claims of truth expressed and enforced by state power, the sophists offered instead muliperspectival lines of reasoning and argumentation built upon the syncretic epistemologies collected from their wanderings, which, like Anson's island refugees, were continually being replenished by new contributions (Jarratt 11).

If we look closely at a text like Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen* and the anonymously authored *Dissoi Logoi*, we can see, through its many epideictic reversals and its interrogation of enthymemes, the nomadic double movement of sophistic rhetoric—"rooted" in society on one hand, but "uprooting" received knowledge and commonplace assumptions on the other. Unlike a secure citizen strolling in the polis, a nomad is usually set adrift, continually crossing borders,in possession of limited political status or rights, dependent on the knowledges and skills he or she carry

with them. In a similar fashion, a sophist always appears to be entering and leaving the city's gates physically and ideologically, accepting, to some degree, the community's norms and values, while also critiquing or adding to them, depending upon the contexts to which his speech is made. Thus, when Gorgias reappraises a controversial historical and literary figure like Helen, he reverses the popular, unchallenged view that holds her vanity and disloyalty culpable for causing war and division. Instead, skillfully, through speech, Gorgias transforms her faults into virtues, makes her an earnest victim of passion and the "powerful lord" of speech (Bizzell and Herzberg 45). Helen thus emerges from Gorgias' rhetorical performance as a fully embodied and empathetic figure who must be praised for "bringing together many bodies of men thinking great thoughts with great goals" even if such a meeting eventually resulted in war and tragedy (Bizzell and Herzberg 45). Gorgias, in one of the more spectacular displays of a sophistic performance, manages to effectively corporealize Helen from the abstractions of myth and legend. By making her flesh and blood, Gorgias is able to make her vulnerable to the same human foibles, the "drug" of persuasive speech and sexual seduction, as any of his listeners.

Gorgias' ability to make what was foreign and censurable in Helen familiar and pardonable to his listeners during his performance illustrates the ambiguities of, to reference Burke, ethical "substance," the underlying whims and passions that motivate human behavior, eventually facilitating a shift away from *division* to *identification* with Helen, an identification won "symbolically" through language. Gorgias therefore persuades his audience to reassess the historical and abstract Helen through a concept Burke calls "consubstantiation"—that is, by aligning her capitulation to desire with their own human propensities and weaknesses. Such a rhetorical move not only has the potential to transform individual opinions and beliefs, but to some degree, the community's, insofar as uncritical popular

opinion and sedimented assumptions have been temporarily uprooted or even discredited (Bizzell and Herzberg 1326). Sophistic rhetoric achieves such transformation not by mere opposition, i.e. dialectic and antithesis, but by shifting perspectives ever so slightly, so that the object under investigation—in this case Helen and her alleged treason—can be viewed anew and sympathetically by a receptive audience. Epideictic performances like Gorgias' were thus fundamentally historicist, every bit as much about critiquing contemporary values as they were about adjudicating the past. The success of this performance depended heavily upon the sophists' keen awareness of *kairos,* the tailor-making of their speeches and arguments to "the local *nomoi*, community-specific customs and laws," a concept postmodernists centuries later would conspicuously incorporate in their various formulations and critiques (Jarratt 11).

While Gorgias is able to achieve this with a famous mythical or historical personage, the anonymously written *Dissoi Logoi* does this with *topoi* or the rhetorical commonplace. The anonymously authored text, the *Dissoi Logoi,* is structured through the concentrated use of "anti-logic," which multiplies premises but perpetually withholds conclusions, predicated on the view that every proposition engenders another. According to Jarratt, it is a method credited to the oldest of the sophists, Protagoras, that directly opposes Aristotle's "law of non-contradiction" asserting that two propositions cannot be true and untrue at the same time. Critics of the *Dissoi Logoi* believe the text uses contradiction or anti-logic heuristically, as a way of "discovering a truth rather than the expression, from a distance, from a separate, single Truth within phenomena" (Jarratt 49). Hence, the author of the *Dissoi Logoi* privileges embodied experiential "truths" over received wisdom or dialectical proof. In this sense, the natural exterior world is neutral, but it is only our (often fallible) interior perceptions that ascribe value and meaning to it. As Eric Havelock has recognized, the method of reasoning on display

in the *Dissoi Logoi* is an example of the "complex processes and subtle judgment which go to the making of the collective mind and the group decision" (qtd. in Jarratt 52). Thus, it is not through dialectic or by logical proofs that people are ultimately swayed, but instead from factors as diverse as intuition, personal affinity, and cultural contexts. Some educators have even recently looked back at the *Dissoi Logoi* as a potential pedagogical model for civilizing polarized political debate in the U.S. and in academia, since the text, they argue, promotes "multiple perspectives rather than mere awareness of limited, limited exposure to, and eventual isolation from oppositional" views (Gencarella 359). In any case, the *Dissoi Logoi*, rather than merely reiterate commonplaces through topoi and affirm the uncritical attitudes of a particular discourse community, critically examines them, inducing in its listeners an imaginative (even if temporary) connection to "others" who ostensibly oppose them.

Nietzsche and the 'Double-Sidedness' of Language

Uprooting the flimsy linguistic basis by which common sense is inscribed by power to impose its own values on society is an idea Nietzsche affirmed and shared with the ancient sophists. Moreover, this idea of the "double sidedness" of truth and the primacy of experience is central to understanding and removing the barriers that keep human beings from connecting and empathizing with one another—hence, building a cosmopolitan ethos. As Appiah writes: "Cosmopolitans suppose that all cultures have enough overlap in their vocabulary of values to begin a conversation. But they don't suppose, like some universalists, that we could all come to agreement if only we had the same vocabulary" (167). Moreover, because human beings are separated by culture and geography they often have competing or opposed conceptions of "truth" even when the crushing irony of all human existence is that things like birth and death are things we do share collectively. This is the irony of the human condition and is central to Nietzsche's metaphysics: how all truth claims, because they are dependent externally on language and at some remove from the body upon where we really process phenomena, rests upon "mobile armies of metaphors and metonymies" that can never be more than substitutions for human intuition and corporeal experience (30).

Modern man's greatest feat, according to Nietzsche, was thus "forgetting" that these "intuitive metaphors" were simply substitutions, and from this self-deception, has created for himself "a pyramidal order of castes and degrees, creating a new world of laws, privileges, which now stands over against the other intuitive world of first impressions as the more fixed, more universal, more familiar, more human, hence something regulatory and imperative" (32). Whereas Locke and Hume mark the imperfections of language and seek to plug a hole in them (or the faulty human sensory organ that processes them) so that reason can ring triumphant, Nietzsche, as the sophists, believes our slavish faith in reason has left us passive and resentful toward life and easily subdued by power. Hence, our ability to "describe" the world is much better than our efforts to "explain" it, making it easier for human societies to ascribe hierarchies and divisions rather than justify them. This will forever remain insurmountable, according to Nietzsche, so long as a systemized use of language bent on transparency is the primary instrument we use to perceive the world. Refusing this claim constitutes one of the "lies" or myths modern human societies choose to live by. But it is also, interestingly, what Appiah thinks might keep us together.

Cosmopolitanism and the New Golden Rule

For those who advocate for a cosmopolitan ideal, like philosophers Appiah and Martha Nussbaum, what ultimately keeps us from identifying

with distant "others" is our privileging of one or two "concentric circles" of obligations and commitments that we have made locally, to our families and neighbors, for the "widest circle" of all: humanity (Fischer 53). Therefore, it is not necessarily a battle for supremacy over basic values, e.g. western democracy versus Islamic fundamentalism, as much as those who have exploited nationalist and nativist sentiment would like us to believe it is. If we cannot necessarily transcend the so-called local agreements that keep us apart globally, we can at least reach some agreement over the values we do share. But such empathy and understanding for one another must be won rhetorically.

Let us return to Anson's island scenario and imagine things a bit differently. Something has happened on the island recently or in the not too distant past (it doesn't matter exactly when) and the inhabitants are asked how to judge this event, to decide whether whatever occurred was "cruel" or "just," and what to do about it. Along with canonical knowledge in their metaphorical suitcases, the inhabitants have all brought a set of moral and ethical criteria in which to judge a situation or event. While in Anson's original scenario, the process of negotiating and building a canon of knowledge went rather smoothly, here, the situation is tenser. What kind of new "golden rule," baseline language for evaluating and making ethical decisions, could these newly arriving inhabitants share without some insisting their judgments are more valid than others'?

In all likelihood, the island inhabitants would be unable to reach an agreement over how to ethically judge an affair—especially if new inhabitants with new perspectives and prejudices continue to arrive. But what they will do, and this is what Appiah's theory of rooted cosmopolitanism rests upon, is "[getting] used to each other." As he explains:

> I am urging that we should learn about people in other places, take an interest in their civilizations, their arguments, their errors, their achievements, not because they will bring us to agreement, but because it will help us *get used to one another*. If that is the aim, then the fact that we have all these opportunities for disagreement about values need not put us off. Understanding one another may be hard: it can certainly be interesting. But it doesn't require that we come to agreement. (Appiah 78, emphasis added)

If it is impossible or virtually impossible to ever agree on universal values how does sophistic rhetoric help us "get used to" each other? The answer, it appears, is through the imagination. But it is a concept of the imagination that is built upon three neo-pragmatic rhetorical concepts: Burkean "identification" and "transformation," Rorty's liberal ironist hope for a "contingent (global) community," and the ever-expanding notion of Fish's "interpretive community" of rhetorically self-aware readers.

One of the critiques of the sophists is that their endless undercutting of logical propositions and claims of truth do not provide much help when urgent decisions have to be made. This is the same charge made against the postmodernists, that their rejection of universal values and absolute truth provide no ground to make urgent ethical decisions. If something is always right and wrong at the same time, how then do we know when and how to judge a given situation? It would be reactionary to implicate sophistry and its postmodern variety with nihilism and vulgar cultural relativism, those who would answer every political crisis with "why worry?" or "that's just how they do things down there." By extension, returning to the notion that either reason alone or religious authority can provide a basis for universal values is also not possible or desirable either. This is where people like Burke, Rorty, and Fish seem to coalesce around a modern "sophist" figure like Nietzsche and his call for a "dramatization" of truth—an expressive representation of human fears and desires that lead to self-knowledge and community engagement. Hence,

"getting use to one another" requires that we be continually exposed to one another, and since we live in a global networked world, this can be achieved "imaginatively" by technology, through art, literature, and film. Participating in such imaginative encounters, even as partisans, replete with our own perspectives but armed with what Burke calls "humble irony," provides us a rhetorical framework for how the work of getting to know "strangers" can be done. And just as the infinite multiplicities are produced conversationally in the *Dissoi Logoi*, the conclusions and decisions we make from these engaged encounters are likewise flexible, multiple, and variable.

Burkean Identification and Rorty's Contingent Community

In Burke's *Rhetoric of Motives*, one of the ways we locate our place in the world is through identifying what our place in it is and identifying with (and against others); once these identifications have been achieved, we transform these identification or are transformed by them (Bizzell and Herzberg 1326). As Burke famously noted, "war is the disease of cooperation," and is achieved when groups of people coalesce and identify with one another over their perceived divisions with others. What charismatic political leaders have been able to do throughout human history is manipulate these identifications through rhetoric; although, as we have come to see, such identifications, based as they are on exclusionary logic and ideological mandates, do not always need such overt manipulation so long as hegemony is doing its work (Bizzell and Herzberg 1326). What Burke provides, as does neopragmatists like Rorty and Fish, and postmodernists like Foucault and Derrida perhaps do not, is a way through these collective identifications toward a "a will-to-self-definition" beyond those that power ascribes. This counter "will-to-power" is achieved principally through aesthetic representation, which not only reveals ideological imperatives but responds to them. As literary critic Frank Letricchia notices in Burke's notion of the "encompassment" of discourse—and here we might register Erasmus' concept of *copia* or the abundance of expression—speakers and writers must exhaust all available intellectual resources to "master a [rhetorical] situation" when writing or speaking. As a result, aesthetic representation is an important component to rhetoric that can pierce through official ideology and critique authority (152).

What ultimately makes the theories of Foucault and Derrida critically barren, according to Lentricchia, is the lack of agency they provide for the socially situated subject identified by and identifying with dominant hegemony. When Burke discusses the "artistry" of Adolf Hitler, Lentricchia notes that he is merely pointing out the way Hitler was able to manipulate signs and the aesthetic perceptions of his listeners just as poets or writers routinely do. As a consequence, tyranny and power is as much of an aesthetic victory, a war over representation, as a political one (Letricchia 155). Moreover, as many postmodernists like Burke have claimed, the way to fight one aesthetic is with a competing aesthetic, i.e. other representations. Imagine Hitler's rabid political speeches undercut by Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and how various audiences throughout the world not only respond to the satire and parody but also are united by them. In this way, so-called strangers are able to align their personal symbolic systems—the "substance" for their belief and values—with others and identify against power and authority. This potential agreement between global citizens illustrates how Burke's theory of "consubstantiation," symbolic identification, can be put to political use (Bizzell and Herzberg 1326). It also accounts for why, perhaps, closed societies in order to achieve control over their respective societies tighten the spigot shut against outside representations, controlling their citizens' imaginative encounters with other cultures, lest such identifications

reveal the degree to which our human connections with others beyond our borders are exposed.

Consubstantiation posited by Burke is thus a rhetorical procedure prior to establishing what Rorty calls a "contingent community," a community of individuals united by "metaphor" and "self-creation" connected imaginatively through language and representation. Like Nietzsche, Rorty is also skeptical toward absolute claims to truth and *a priori* moral obligations from on high, the notion that we as sovereign individuals are beholden to our countries and communities first than to ourselves. In fact, what Rorty locates and praises in Nietzsche (among other, modernist literary figures) is his role as an "ironist," his lyrical skepticism, rather than his legacy as a metaphysician. Whereas the metaphysician advances through logical argumentation and scientific inference, the ironist proceeds through "redescription," believing that the "unit of persuasion to be a vocabulary rather than a proposition" (Rorty 78). Successful rhetors do not persuade by advancing stronger arguments but by providing their listeners and readers with larger conceptual vocabularies and filling their imaginative repertoires so that difference is multiplied rather than synthesized, expected rather than opposed.

How might this be useful in achieving a cosmopolitan ethic? Again, as Rorty explains: "Ironists specialize in redescribing ranges of objects or events in partially neologistic jargon, in hopes of inciting people to adopt and extend that logic" (78). Imagine, if you will, popular comedians like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert and their "mock" news reports that not only satirizes politics and issues of the day but redescribes these issues and events ironically. Such redescription and rhetorical performances extends a degree of critical meta-awareness to their audience through a shared skepticism toward the essentialist and reductionist analyses of current events offered by mainstream news organizations. Skepticism toward the news media, rhetoricized through irony and satire, is just one example of how a contingent "self-created" community of globally situated strangers can form spontaneously and imaginatively, consubstantiated through counter-identifications against official gatekeeping institutions. The Rortyian ironist, and the identifications she provokes in her audience, also aligns with Burke's definition of "humble" or "true irony" as one of the "four master tropes" that motivate discourse. According to Burke, "True irony, humble irony, is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, one is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer, but contains within, being consubstantial with him" (514). In a sophistic sense, the advantages of a global network media is both the disease and the cure for a cosmopolitan worldview, since, as it tends to initially create divisions in the world, it also allows us to counter-identify with these divisions through irony and satire, permitting listeners or viewers to come together as an impromptu critical discourse community of insiders who "get" the joke, while those outside—power and authority—remain clueless.

Some have criticized Rorty's notion that the only basis for truth and forming a contingent community is through "free and open encounters" between citizens unyoked by tradition, custom, and essentialist definitions (68). Skeptics might point to 9/11 and its aftermath as proof of all that can go wrong by promoting such "free and open encounters." But as Appiah notes, it is not necessarily a clash over values where conflict necessarily arises but the interpretation, by different communities, of those self-same values. Conflict arises, according to Appiah, when different groups of people essentially agree upon the same values but interpret or appraise these values differently. Appiah notes how when disagreements over the issue of abortion occur, both sides do not appreciably disagree about either the sanctity of life or the right women have over their own bodies as much as they would like to think they do, but instead disagree on where life begins and whose body is more important—in other words,

where emphasis or interpretation will be placed along the plane of these values (81). It is this struggle over interpretation that grounds the urgency for establishing a cosmopolitan ethic.

Stanley Fish and Global Discourse Communities

On the necessities of arguing both sides of any position, Aristotle writes, "We must be able to employ persuasion, just as strict reasoning can be employed, on opposite sides of a question, not in order that we may in practice employ it in both ways (for we must not make people believe what is wrong), but in order that we may see clearly what the facts are" (Bizzell and Herzberg 1614). It is from this evident qualification of Aristotle's critique of the sophists, how facts alone cannot establish truth, where a postmodernist like Fish sees the enduring legacy of the sophists in the rhetorical tradition. As Fish has noted, and as Appiah would likely find ample use for, the sophists believed the content of values can only be "filled differently and there exist no master context … from the vantage point of which the differences could be assessed and judged" (Bizzell and Herzberg 1614). Thus, the process of interpretation and evaluation of facts and values is continual and contingent, depending on the contexts, both local and universal, in which they are continually being made.

Nussbaum and Appiah, as philosophers rather than strictly rhetoricians (or literary theorists), believe a cosmopolitan ideal is achieved through education and practice, a constant exposure to one another's "humanity wherever it occurs" to which we owe our "first allegiance and respect" (Nussbaum 153). Fish, however, would most likely add that it is only by rhetoric, of the sophistic variety, that provides the substance for achieving this ideal. And like Anson's island scenario, it is not necessarily the size of the community that endangers harmony and agreement on the island but our habits of mind, our ability and desire to enter one another's symbols of identification disinterestedly. If we consider Fish's well-noted concept of "interpretative" or "discourse communities," we might see how our effort to forge a cosmopolitan ideal depends on establishing a set of shared "reading" conventions, ways of interpreting values informed by a global liberal consensus directed toward openness and negotiation. Rather than achieving fixed and stable meanings, this cosmopolitan "text" is instead merely a set of flexible rhetorical and open-ended reading practices, facilitated by imaginative encounters with another "reader" who reciprocates with the same interpretative strategies over values and their meaning. Ultimately, what two global "strangers" potentially share is a set of reading practices that seeks connection and openness rather than isolation and closure.

It is not, as some cosmopolitan theorists like Appiah and Nussbaum claim, a mere question of uniting our competing subjectivities under a general rubric of "rationality" or compassion, as such values, too, would be sites of continual rhetorical struggle. Our real obligation is, as Fish notes, to "proffer utterances that satisfy (or at least claim to satisfy) universal conditions of validity" (Bizzell and Herzberg 1625). What ultimately comprises this "universal condition of validity" is our desire to be both locally rooted in our specific communities while unrestrained in our ability from above to imaginatively connect with one another. "A company of transparent subjectivities," writes Fish, who are "[joined] together in the fashioning of transparent truth and of a world in which the will to power [of authority] has been eliminated" (Bizzell and Herzberg 1626). It is only through the acknowledgement of the constantly shifting conceptual ground upon which we make moral agreements that we can hasten a global interconnectedness with one another. This is no more evident than in the rhetorical analysis waiting to be done that will connect such recent political reform movements as the mass protest that reverberated throughout the Middle East known as "Arab Spring" in the summer 2011 and the Occupy Wall Street protests against economic inequality in the U.S. later that fall. It is this global push for a "transparent truth" against the absolute variety that links both phenomena and is just one example of the potential content by which we might connect ethically to one another as strangers "estranged" from all that separates us.

Notes

[1] The poststructuralist theorist Gilles Deleuze has developed, perhaps, the most sophisticated concept of the "nomad" or "nomadology" to articulate alternate, improvisational forms of political arrangements than that of citizenship as defined by the state.

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VOICES VOICED BY OTHER VOICES: HOW HETEROGLOSSIA COMPLICATES NARRATIVE AND INFORMS MEANING IN JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER'S *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED*

BY SAMANTHA MEHLINGER,

Jonathan Safran Foer's novel, *Everything Is Illuminated*, is a Bakhtinian dream; the novel's structure allows its words to become a chorus of voices working together to form one story. The function of this chorus can best be understood by literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "heteroglossia" (Bakhtin 1079). In his innovative essay, "Discourse on the Novel," Bakhtin argues that artful novels should possess a multitude of voices which interact in dialogue to create meaning. The structure of *Everything Is Illuminated* lends itself to a Bakhtinian interpretation because its tri-narrative structure creates a unique situation in which multiple narrators work together to create the whole of the novel. Foer employs heteroglossia to bring us to the conclusion that the events of the novel form a collective experience unable to be communicated without a chorus of many voices.

The novel is composed of multiple narrative structures, what Bakhtin calls "compositional-stylistic unities," allowing for what at times seems an infinite number of character voices (Bakhtin 1078). Bakhtin writes that in a novel, "form and content in discourse are one," and "the style of a novel is to be found in the combination of its styles; the language of a novel is the system of its 'languages'" (1078). These languages are composed of the voices of the narrators and characters. Bakhtin also emphasizes that each stylistic unity found within a novel is equally important, and that it

is the combination of stylistic unities and the voices within those unities that create the "higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole" (1078). In *Everything Is Illuminated*, there are three stylistic unities, or narratives. Two are in the form of "direct authorial literary artistic narration," the traditional form of narrative in which a narrator relays a story (1078). Both of these are in first person: one is narrated by a young Ukrainian named Alex, and the other is narrated by the author-character who possesses the same name as the author, Jonathan Safran Foer. Alex's narrative recounts the story of his journey across the Ukrainian countryside with his Grandfather and their tourist customer, the Jewish-American Jonathan. Jonathan has enlisted Alex's help to find a woman named Augustine whom he believes saved his Grandfather from the Nazis. He thinks he can find her in a Jewish *shtetl* (village) by the name of Trachimbrod but does not know its location. Alex and his Grandfather, who are working for Alex's father's tourist company, agree to help Jonathan find Augustine and Trachimbrod. Early on, Jonathan explains to Alex that he intends to write a book about the experience. Jonathan is then not only a character in Alex's narrative, but is also understood to be the first person narrator of the chapters set in Trachimbrod in both the late 1700s and the 1940s that relate his family's history.

The third narrative structure falls under the category of "stylization of the various forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration," which in this case is epistolary form (Bakhtin 1078). In these letters, Alex writes to Jonathan about his process of writing the narrative of their journey. He also responds to letters we do not see in which Jonathan tells Alex of his own writing process. The novel ends in a letter written by Alex's Grandfather, a narrator who speaks only once. Although the novel initially seems to be an attempt to tell the story of Jonathan's family history, it is not Jonathan who narrates the story of his journey, but Alex. Jonathan's voice, apart from the occasional authorial interjection in his Trachimbrod narratives, is relayed by Alex. This seems purposefully problematic, considering that in one of Alex's narratives he recounts a conversation in which Jonathan explains his problem as a writer; "I'm looking for my voice," he says (Foer 70). In this way, Foer's multiple narrative structures and the voices within them function not only as the form and content of the novel but also reveal its meaning. Each voice's act of remembering works together to form one great interrelated memory, combining the memories of the Holocaust-ravaged Trachimbrod, Jonathan's family's past, Alex's family's past, and Jonathan's and Alex's own experiences. The "form and content" of Foer's novel point to the novel's meaning, which is that one person's history is not just his own, but is made up of the memories and histories of many voices. The meaning of *Everything Is Illuminated* can only be discovered in the combination of the voices within it.

As in the works of many Jewish-American writers, the Holocaust is at the center of conflict in Foer's text. His fictional counterpart, Jonathan, discovers that Trachimbrod, the *shtetl* of his ancestors, was completely obliterated by the Nazis. Only one home remains standing. Besides the boxes full of random memories and trinkets from the town that the house's occupant, Lista, has gathered as a sort of museum to Trachimbrod, Jonathan finds nothing of his ancestry there. To supplement the destroyed history of Trachimbrod, he creates a mythical history of Trachimbrod with elements of magical realism. This is where the fictive and real Jonathan combine. In an interview for Harper Collins, publisher of his novel, he explains,

> I intended to chronicle, in strictly nonfictional terms, a trip that I made to Ukraine as a 22-year-old. Armed with a photograph of the woman who, I was told, had saved my grandfather from the Nazis, I embarked on a journey to Trachimbrod, the *shtetl* of my family's origins. The comedy of errors lasted five days. I found nothing but nothing, and in that nothing - a landscape

of completely realized absence - nothing was to be found (www.harpercollins.com).

As a result of finding nothing, not even a woman like Lista as Jonathan does in his novel, Foer creates a fictive history of Trachimbrod woven with elements of magical realism and myth. Part of that narrative is a fictional representation of himself.

The technique of using elements of folklore, myth, and magical realism to create a Holocaust narrative is one that many critics, such as Lee Behlman, Mihai Mindra, and Francisco Collado-Rodriguez recognize as a trend in contemporary Jewish-American literature. In his essay, "The Escapist: Fantasy, Folklore, and the Pleasures of the Comic Book in Recent Jewish American Holocaust Fiction," Behlman explains that at the heart of this trend is a desire to express the "massive collective experience" of the Holocaust (Behlman 56). In order to express the magnitude of this collective experience among the Jewish community and the world, he argues that Foer creates "a set of voices that always distance and mediate experience" (60). Lisa Propst argues that "this acceptance of disparate voices belongs to a long Jewish history," one which can be found in sacred Jewish writings such as the Torah, whose ambiguities elicit "a host of heterogeneous views in the Talmud and the Midrash" (Propst 38). Upon analysis of how this 'set of voices' interacts, Behlman's and Propst's arguments can be taken a step further. The complex narrative structure in which the pages of *Everything Is Illuminated* are meant to be seen as an "ongoing work of fiction" minimizes the author-character's voice. The complex manner in which the two main narrators' voices affect one another, as well as the unique way dialogue is presented in the text, complicate voice to such an extent that no individual voice goes unaffected by another. Foer's use of heteroglossia implies that the events of the novel form a collective experience that must be communicated with many voices.

In order for this meaning to be conveyed, Foer complicates the concept of individual voice. Because each narrative affects the others, none of the voices in the novel can speak independently of other voices. For example, we know from Alex's letters that he sends drafts of his narrative to Jonathan and that Jonathan sends drafts of his narrative to him. Alex holds Jonathan's opinion in high esteem not only because he is a friend, but also because he is an American writer. From his earliest letter to Jonathan, Alex discusses changes Jonathan has suggested to the section of Alex's narrative that preceded the letter. He writes, "I am so happy because you were appeased by the first division that I posted to you. You must know that I have performed the corrections you demanded. I apologize for the last line, about how you are a very spoiled Jew. It has been changed, and is now written, 'I do not want to drive ten hours to an ugly city to attend to a spoiled Jew'" (Foer 24). When looking back at the chapter Alex is referring to, it is clear that we are seeing the first draft unaltered by Jonathan's suggestion. The sentence at the end of the passage reads, "I do not want to drive ten hours to an ugly city to attend to a very spoiled Jew" (7). The only difference between the version in this letter and the original version is the word "very." Alex's response exhibits his sense of humor. Despite having apologized for his original description of Jonathan as a "very spoiled Jew," he rejects Jonathan's suggestion. He omits only the word "very," perhaps to tease Jonathan. In spite of this rejection, Jonathan's suggestions often do end up making an impact on Alex's writing. In the same letter, Alex says that he "jettisoned out the word 'Negroes,' as you ordered me to, even though it is true that I am so fond of them" (24). Here Alex refers to the passage in which he introduces himself by listing things he enjoys, which includes the statement, "I dig Negroes, particularly Michael Jackson" (2). In each of Alex's letters to Jonathan, he mentions more of Jonathan's suggested alterations to his writing. By altering and cutting aspects of Alex's writing, Jonathan aug-

ments Alex's voice.

Jonathan's voice becomes more intrusive in the edited version of the journey narrative which we do not see but know exists from discussions of alterations in Alex's letters. In later letters Alex agrees to insert new text, written by Jonathan, into his own. For instance, Jonathan asks Alex to change the section of the story when the three travelers stop in a hotel to read more in his favor. In the original version, Jonathan comes across as a bumbling tourist. Alex recounts that Jonathan had to pay extra for his hotel room because he revealed that he was an American to the hotel owner: "'You must remain in the car,' I told the hero, because the proprietor of the hotel would know that the hero is American, and Father told me that they charge Americans in surplus … [W]hen we entered the hotel, I told the hero not to speak … [B]ut he kept inquiring why he should not speak, and as I was certain, he was heard by the owner of the hotel" (63). As a result of ignoring Alex's advice, Jonathan is forced to show his passport and is forced to pay more. Alex's response to Jonathan's review of this account suggests Jonathan wishes to be portrayed in a more flattering light. In Alex's following letter to Jonathan, he writes that he changed the section according to Jonathan's suggestions:

> I fashioned the very sparse changes that you posted to me. I altered the division about the hotel in Lutsk. Now you only pay once. "I will not be treated like a second-class citizen!" you apprise to the hotel owner, and while I am obligated (thank you, Jonathan) to inform you that you are not a second-, third-, or fourth-class citizen, it does sound very potent. The owner says, "You win. You win. I tried to pull a fast one" (what does it mean to pull a fast one?), "but you win. OK. You will pay only once." This is now an excellent scene (101).

Alex changes the exchange of dialogue within the scene to alter its outcome. Now, Jonathan comes across as a savvy traveler. It is apparent that Jonathan has written the actual text Alex conveys in the letter, because at one point Alex has to interject to ask Jonathan what the phrase "I pulled a fast one" means. We can also see that Alex is easily influenced by Jonathan, whose opinion he holds in very high regard. Despite the blatant revision of fact that Jonathan requests, Alex does not protest. In fact, he goes so far as to conclude, "This is now an excellent scene." By editing Alex's text, Jonathan's voice alters Alex's voice within the text by asserting his own.

Jonathan also has strong influence over Alex's everyday usage of the English language. When first introduced to Alex, any English speaking reader will be initially jarred by his strange vocabulary choices and grammar. Mihai Mindra addresses Alex's unique language in the context of the time and place he grew up: "The vocabulary used by Alex, in his story of the trip and his post-trip letters to Jonathan Safran, seems to indicate Foer's expertise in pre-1989 East Communist mechanical perception of Western culture dictated by ideological Iron Curtains" (Mindra 52). According to Mindra, Alex's bizarre interpretation of English is an accurate representation of how Western languages, like English, were taught in the Communist Block before the Berlin Wall's fall. Mindra explains that it was common for English to be taught "according to academically out of fashion dictionaries and East European textbooks using high standard, archaic, non-colloquial dead lingos" (52). As the novel progresses, Alex's English abilities improve, which can be documented in his letters to Jonathan as time passes.

In Alex's very first letter to Jonathan, he begins by apologizing for his usage of English, writing in the second sentence, "Like you know, I am not first rate with English" (Foer 23). As he continues, he reveals that Jonathan has made efforts to help him with his English: "I fatigued the thesaurus you presented me, as you counseled me to, when my words appeared too petite, or not befitting" (23). The correspondence

narrative begins by informing the reader that Jonathan is attempting to help Alex change the way he speaks and writes English. In doing so, he eventually succeeds in making Alex's English sound a little less like he was born behind the Iron Curtain. The change in Alex's English is most obvious in the epistolary narrative. For example, in the same letter in which Alex assures Jonathan that he has adopted Jonathan's suggested alterations to the hotel scene, he also makes special note of the word "obligated," underlining it and adding in parentheses, "thank you, Jonathan." Previously, when Alex has tried to use the word "obligated," he has written "oblongated." After he makes this correction, he ceases to misspell the word both in his letters and in his novel chapters. Similarly, in another letter, Alex writes, "I attempted to guess some of the things you would have me alter, and I altered them myself. For example, I did not use the word 'spleen' with such habituality, because I could perceive it made you nerves by the sentence in your letter when you said, 'Stop using the word 'spleen.' It's getting on my nerves'" (54). "Spleen" is perhaps Alex's most frequently (and incorrectly) used word, both in his journey narrative and in his letters. He uses the word as a synonym for "annoy." After this point, he ceases using the word in his letters—a noticeable difference, considering the frequency with which he uses it before.

There is only one example of Jonathan's direct impact on Alex's voice in the journey narrative. After many letters have been exchanged, Alex has adapted his voice to be a more accurate representation of American English. Because each of his journey chapters are drafts that have not yet been edited by Jonathan, any improvement in his English must be a result of counseling from Jonathan's letters. Apart from the omissions and alterations Alex made, there is one sole example of Alex self-editing, which occurs toward the end of the novel: "But I ~~understanded~~ understood that the silence was necessary for him to talk" (Foer 157). Alex's self-editing shows that his correspondence with Jonathan is altering how he writes and speaks English. In a previous chapter, "A Very Rigid Search," Alex writes a line of dialogue in which he says, "You understanded me, yes?" demonstrating that he did not know the correct past-tense form of "understand" before (113). This is also the only instance in the entire novel in which a word is crossed out, making it visibly jarring and noticeable to the reader. Foer likely crossed out the word for two reasons: first, to remind the reader that what we are seeing is a work in progress, and, second, to alert the reader to the fact that as a result of Jonathan's tutoring, Alex has begun to better understand the rules of the English language.

The most apparent complication of voice in *Everything Is Illuminated* is that the author is a character within the book in which he is writing one of the narratives. That the character, Jonathan, is writing only *one* of the narratives is inherently problematic, as it is his name on the book's cover. The sections the character does write are not directly about him but are fictional histories of his ancestors. In these sections, we only occasionally hear snippets of Jonathan's voice via authorial intrusion. These are mere flashes, however, and they reveal little more than explanations of familial relations. We first realize that Jonathan is in fact writing the fictional Trachimbrod narratives when, at the end of the second chapter entitled "The Lottery, 1791," the chapter ends with a moment of authorial intrusion. "We were to be in good hands," Jonathan interjects, in reference to Brod being placed in the care of Yankel D (Foer 22). At the end of the next section of the Trachimbrod narrative, Jonathan interjects again. "He [Yankel D] had been given a baby, and I a great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather," he writes, thereby explaining his relationship to Yankel D and to the baby, Brod (42). Jonathan only ever intrudes into the narrative to explain things, such as clarifying his relationships to people within the story or on rare occasion to make a short commentary like "We were to be in good hands." He does not provide any extensive com-

mentary. Besides these brief interjections, his voice otherwise remains in the form of a removed narrator. It is impossible to glean information about Jonathan's character from these short moments of intrusion.

Jonathan's voice is primarily located within Alex's narration of the journey to Trachimbrod. Thus, we are presented with Jonathan's problem: "I'm looking for my voice." In the novel, his voice is relayed through Alex. As readers, we only come to know Jonathan's voice as a secondary source, a voice voiced by another person. In this way, his voice is controlled by Alex. This concept is best exemplified in a passage of Alex's journey narrative in which he and Jonathan are sitting outside of Lista's house, waiting for Alex's Grandfather to finish conversing with her. Lista is the only living survivor of the massacre at Trachimbrod and is initially mistaken by the travelers for Augustine. While waiting outside, Alex and Jonathan have difficulty starting a conversation. Jonathan attempts to spark conversation by telling Alex about America, but this attempt fails when it turns out that Alex already knows about all the places Jonathan references. Instead, Alex suggests that Jonathan tell him about his grandmother from Kolki, a *shtetl* nearby Trachimbrod. When Jonathan begins telling Alex about her, Alex stops him and specifies that he wants to hear about Jonathan's relationship with his grandmother. When Jonathan has difficulty finding what to say, Alex tells us, "I did not utter a thing, so he would persevere. This was so difficult at times, because there existed so much silence. But I ~~understanded~~ understood that the silence was necessary for him to talk" (Foer 157). In this passage, Jonathan literally cannot find his voice until Alex is silent. Alex recognizes Jonathan's need to speak, and that he needs to stop speaking himself in order to let Jonathan say anything meaningful about his Grandmother.

After Jonathan begins to talk about his relationship with his Grandmother, Alex notes, "With my silence, I gave him a space to fill" (Foer 158). Even though Alex remains silent long enough for Jonathan to express some personal information about his life, it is important to remember that his voice is still being controlled by Alex, because Alex is the one writing the chapter. Bakhtin explains the complications of finding one's own voice, which Jonathan has previously expressed as his own issue. The theorist writes that language "becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting to it his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin 1101). Although in response to Jonathan's query, "I'm looking for my voice," Alex responds, "It is in your mouth," in the context of the narrative Jonathan's voice is really in Alex's mouth (Foer 70). Because Jonathan's voice is being appropriated by Alex, it is only "half" Jonathan's voice (Bakhtin 1101). Bakhtin explains, "it [individual voice] exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other's people's intentions" (1101). Despite Alex's power as narrator, Jonathan's voice does find its way in to Alex's narrative in this section too. Alex alters the word "understanded" to become the correct past tense, "understood" because of tutoring he has received from Jonathan. Francisco Collado-Rodriguez explains that by manipulating Alex's and Jonathan's voices this way, Foer combines "narratorial voices that double and refract each other" (Collado-Rodriguez 55). This unique place in Alex's journey narrative is an excellent example of how both narrators' voices are shaped and controlled (or doubled and refracted) by one another, because in this instance we can see it happening simultaneously.

Foer complicates the identity of various voices not only through Alex's and Jonathan's narrative influence on one another, but also through his structure of dialogue in Alex's journey narrative. In most conversations found within these chapters, dialogue is not neatly separated by paragraph and indentation, as has been standard practice in much American fiction since at least the Modernist movement. Since then, much experimentation has occurred in structuring dialogue in American fiction. Heming-

way, for instance, notoriously did not include dialogue-tags in much of his fiction. Foer takes this unattributed quoting to new heights. He employs vast paragraphs of dialogue in which quotes are often not separated by anything more than a period, and often do not have Alex's narrative interjections between them to give us clues as to who is saying what. Still, because of Alex's strange Ukrainian-American English his voice is unique enough that it can usually be distinguished from Jonathan's. Instances where Alex's voice is distinguishable or indistinguishable from Jonathan's can be found in any of Alex's journey narrative chapters, such as one of his earlier ones entitled "Going Forth to Lutsk." Throughout most of this chapter, if the reader pays close attention it is easy enough to distinguish who is saying what, such as in this passage:

> "Do you have motorcycles in America?" "Of course." "And fax machines?" "Everywhere." "You have a fax machine?" "No they're very passé." "What does it mean passé?" "They're out-of-date. Paper is so tedious." "Tedious?" "Tiresome." "I understand what you are telling me, and I harmonize. I would not ever use paper. It makes me a sleeping person." (Foer 71).

Alex is easily identified in the section as the speaker who asks, "Do you have motorcycles in America?" and whose quotations occur every other sentence afterwards. Obviously, we can discern that this is Alex because he has never been to America, and that the other speaker is Jonathan, because he is the American. In terms of voice, however, Alex's voice is quite distinctive because of his unique brand of American English. The phrase, "I harmonize," for instance, is not something that any American would typically say. If it were Jonathan, he would have responded, "I agree." Also signifying that the first speaker is Alex is his questioning of the word "tedious," as he so often does when he does not understand a word or phrase Jonathan utters.

"Going Forth to Lutsk" also contains examples of the confusion this un-tagged, mashed-together way of writing dialogue can cause Jonathan's and Alex's voices to become visually indistinguishable. It is relatively simple to distinguish between Jonathan's and Alex's voices in the previous section because the quoted text is only a small portion of a larger paragraph. In this particular paragraph, as in others, there are no dialogue tags except at the very beginning of the paragraph when Alex writes, "'A question,' I said" (Foer 71). Similarly, in a large paragraph earlier in the chapter, Alex includes only one dialogue tag at the beginning of the paragraph: "'I want to see Trachimbrod,' the hero said" (59). Visually, looking at this immense chunk of un-separated, untagged dialogue makes it difficult to distinguish between who is speaking unless the reader pays close attention. Speed-reading certainly would not work here. If one's attention is wandering, it would be easy to confuse which of the two characters is speaking, because Alex's voice parrots back much of what Jonathan says to him, as in this small segment: "'And the shtetls weren't only Jews, so there should be others to talk to.' 'The whats?' 'Shtetls. A shtetl is like a village.' 'Why don't you merely dub it a village?' 'It's a Jewish word.' 'A Jewish word?' 'Yiddish. Like schmuck.' 'What does it mean schmuck?'" (60). Nearly every time Jonathan mentions a word, Alex repeats it, as though he is experimenting to see how Jonathan's foreign words work but putting them in his own mouth. Alex repeats the words and phrases, "Jewish word," "village," and "schmuck." As our eye's skim over the words they run together, catching these repeated phrases. Without dialogue tags to guide us in this sea of text, these large chunks of dialogue must be read carefully in order to figure out who is speaking. Mingling Alex's and Jonathan's voices together like this is another way Foer attempts to intertwine the voices of these two character-narrators.

By creating a complex narrative structure in which Alex's and Jonathan's voices affect and change one another, and in which Alex's narrative power seems to outweigh the supposed "hero" and creator of the book,

Foer raises the question, "Whose story is this?" Jonathan sets out to find his history and in doing so finds a wasteland. Alex, however, ends up accidentally stumbling across a revelation about his own family history that, had he not joined Jonathan on his journey, likely would have remained secret. His Grandfather, he discovers, once lived in a neighboring shtetl named Kolki. The town faced a similar fate to Trachimbrod: the Nazis came, lined the villagers up, and demanded that everyone, including Jews, identify at least one Jew to be shot. Alex's Grandfather reveals that when his turn came, he pointed to his best friend, a Jew named Herschel, and as a result he was murdered. Considering that it is Alex who makes a discovery about his past, and it is Alex's voice that controls two out of the three of the novel's narratives, it might seem that the story is actually Alex's rather than Jonathan's. Alex, however, knows that it is important that both of their voices work to tell their stories. In Alex's second-to-last letter to Jonathan, he writes, "We are talking now, Jonathan, together; and not apart. We are with each other, working on the same story, and I am certain you can also feel it. Do you know that I am the Gypsy girl and you are Safran, and that I am Kolker and you are Brod, and that I am your grandmother and you are your Grandfather, and that I am Alex and you are you, and that I am you and you are me?" (Foer 214). Alex references every important relationship in Jonathan's fictitious Trachimbrod narrative, placing himself and Jonathan in those roles. In doing so, he is attempting to tell Jonathan that the voices in Jonathan's stories have become entwined with their own voices. His proclamation, "We are talking now, Jonathan, together; and not apart … working on the same story … I am Alex and you are you, and I am you and you are me," means that Jonathan's voice and his own are now inextricable. Without their voices working together in unison and without the other voices present in each of their narratives, the story could not be completely told.

A similar sentiment is echoed in the chapter in which Alex's Grandfather reveals his secret. Alex does not write his Grandfather' dialogue in quotation marks, and thus his own narrative voice mingles in the midst of the revelation, a six page block of text that is set apart by parentheses in a way that Propst says "makes it seem as though Alex is cradling the words in his hands" (Propst 44). She argues, "Through these visual cues, Alex implies that their shared story is also the story of Grandfather and Herschel and the ghosts that he, Grandfather, and Jonathan carry with them" (44). This concept appears at the end of his Grandfather's confession when Alex's voice seeps in and again puts him and Jonathan in the places of other characters:

> Jonathan where do we go now what do we do with what we know Grandfather said that I am I but this could not be true the truth is that I also pointedatHerschel and I also said heisaJew and I will tell you that you also pointedatHerchel and you also said heisaJew and more than that Grandfather also pointedatme and said heisaJew and you also pointedathim and said heisaJew and your grandmother and Little Igor and we all pointedateachother (Foer 252).

By placing himself, Jonathan, Little Igor, and Jonathan's grandmother into the positions of Grandfather and Herschel, Alex is acknowledging that what his Grandfather did is something that affects both of their families. Just as his Grandfather pointed at his friend in Kolki, someone else probably pointed at members of Jonathan's family in nearby Trachimbrod. Having both been born from generations affected by the Holocaust, Alex must ask what he or anyone else would have done in his Grandfather's place, and his conclusion is that they all would have done the same. In this way, his Grandfather's story is just as much his story and Jonathan's story.

The complex tri-narrative structure in *Everything Is Illuminated* allows Foer to complicate voice in a way that lends greater meaning to

the text. As Propst notes, by including "Alex's installments of his story punctuated by Alex's letters (and, in the end, Grandfather's letter as well), the fictional Jonathan presents Alex and his grandfather as coauthors of his memorial book. By doing so, he implicitly declares the two men to be his *landsmen*, or neighbors; he asserts that they share a collective history" (Propst 46). Propst is not the only critic to point out that the characters of *Everything Is Illuminated* share a "collective history." Others, such as Behlman and Collado-Rodriguez, also acknowledge the importance in the employment of multiple narrative voices to create a story that forms a collective experience. None of them, however, have attempted to examine how exactly the narrator-character voices of Jonathan and Alex work together and affect one another to arrive at this notion of a collected experience. Foer's narratives are knit together with the precision of a very fine needle, so that the complexity of the narrative structure of his novel and the voices within it are not readily apparent except with close examination. Mikhail Bakhtin's "Discourse in the Novel" provides a lens under which to examine the function of these voices. He theorizes that to discover the meaning of a novel, one must understand how the "languages," the multiple voices of heteroglossia, work together within that novel's narrative structures (Bakhtin 1078). In applying this strategy to a study of Foer's *Everything Is Illuminated,* we see that Foer's narrative structures allow for a unique complication of voices that ultimately lends to the novel's greater meaning. Although Jonathan is meant to be the fictive author of the novel, his voice is almost entirely regulated by Alex's narration. Alex's voice, on the other hand, is affected by Jonathan's opinions and tutoring. In dialogue, their voices mingle together in such a way that they at times seem almost indistinguishable. By affecting each other in this way, each of their voices becomes inextricable from the other. Their stories become each other's stories, forming a greater collective experience in which Alex and Jonathan's relationship at work in the novel can best be summed up as, "I am you and you are me."

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DESIRING UNITY IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD: GENDER AND REPRODUCTION IN THE WORKS OF MILTON AND CAVENDISH

BY REBECCA COLEMAN

In her essay "One is Not Born a Woman," gender theorist Monique Wittig asserts that the social institution of heterosexuality causes gender inequality, as it advocates difference amongst the sexes and is founded on the notion that "the capacity to give birth (biology) is what defines a woman" (10). Arguing that a woman only exists by means of a "specific social relation to a man" (20), a relationship which is defined by reproductive and domestic obligations, Wittig suggests that the only way for women to gain equality is through the destruction of heterosexuality as an institution, as done in lesbian communities (20). Wittig posits that if the concept of 'woman' is defined by its relationship with its binary concept of 'man', then lesbians are neither women nor men; rather, she argues that "lesbian is the only concept... beyond the category of sex" (20). Thus, Wittig proposes that refusing "to become (or to remain) heterosexual" (13) will result in the destruction of the system of gender hierarchies, as with the disappearance of the class of 'men', "'women' as a class will disappear as well, for there are no slaves without masters" (15).

Though relatively modern, Wittig's theory is strikingly applicable to the works of various seventeenth-century poets who express anxieties over gender hierarchies, particularly in relation to reproduction. This is not to suggest that seventeenth-century poets promoted lesbianism as a means to deconstruct gender inequalities; however, there is ample evidence that many early modern poets were concerned with reproduction's relationship to gender, with physical production being

primarily a feminine act and intellectual production being a 'superior' masculine act.[1] Yet, not all poets were bound by these limitations. For instance, Margaret Cavendish resists defining reproduction as the "female creative act" (11) by imagining an intellectual space free from gender difference and the physical act of male-female reproduction in *The Blazing World* (hereafter *TBW*); similarly, in *Paradise Lost* (hereafter *PL*), Milton acknowledges reproduction as a divisive act that is only gendered by means of mediation and separation from God. In a world wrought with political and religious dissention and division, fragmented by the civil wars and political turmoil, it is understandable that contemporaries such as Cavendish and Milton would create universes that allowed for unity and a return to an undivided state. Since reproduction is the means by which humans fragment, it is unsurprising that both these authors connect birth with disorder, and thus attempt to control it.

Exploring the idyllic creations of seventeenth-century poets, feminist critic Marina Leslie considers the lack of reproductive sexuality which results from the absence of male-female physical interaction in Margaret Cavendish's *TBW*.[2] As a scholar of utopian literature, Leslie argues that Cavendish (re)creates an immaterial, imaginative space separate from physical reproduction, wherein "[f]eminine virtue becomes a medium for action, rather than the mediation necessary for transmitting political legacies" (134).[3] Furthermore, Leslie suggests that in Cavendish's utopia, female productivity is associated with virtue and intellectual production rather than physicality (141). Indeed, Margaret Cavendish (re)creates an egalitarian, idealized space that reduces or eliminates the possibility of physical reproduction, often by excluding the male presence, allowing mastery of and freedom in intellectual reproductions. In doing so, Cavendish forms a unified world wherein gender differences are biologically insignificant. In this female poetic space, women are mutually reliant on each other and have first-hand, unmediated access

to creative production. Thus, through the lack of physical reproduction, Cavendish creates a space that promotes unity by means of sameness and interdependence.

In contrast, the recent conversation surrounding Milton's presentation of gender and its connection to reproduction falls into three main categories: the first, which includes feminist critic Katherine Maus, focuses largely on the female body as an internal yet penetrable space, explaining why it is an apt metaphor for poetic constructions;[4] the second, including critics such as Elizabeth Sauer, Erin Murphy, William Riggs, and Michael Schoenfeldt, calls attention to Milton's depiction of reproduction in relation to the social and gender hierarchies that dictate female public and private life;[5] the third, including Louis Schwartz, suggests that Eve is a heroic and sympathetic character on account of her curse and connection to Christ's birth.[6] For the purposes of this paper, I am most engaged with the second and third areas of the conversation, particularly with Schoenfeldt's assertion that Adam and Eve are initially genderless in the garden, complicating the evident gender hierarchy at work in the text (319). While I agree that Eve challenges the "masculine hierarchy" (320) and that both characters are initially genderless, I do not believe that she is as successful at maintaining equality through "egalitarian subjugation" (322), as Schoenfeldt proposes. Schoenfeldt posits that Eve's mimicry of Adam is an indicator of her equality (321-22); yet, the very fact that Eve mimics rather than creates is indicative of her reliance on mediation, subjection, and separation from God. Furthermore, Eve seeks unification, a Godly trait, as demonstrated through her acts of mimicry and desire for similitude, but, once subjected to Adam, finds only difference and fragmentation.

Milton demonstrates that when creation, particularly reproduction, is separate from God's direct influence, it is dangerous, leading to fragmentation and division. My argument consists of four parts: first,

Satan's birth of Sin is the initial physically creative act separate from God, which results in gender difference, suggesting that reproduction unmediated by God is a divisive act; second, Adam and Eve are genderless, much like their angelic neighbors, until Eve submits to Adam, a submission which results in a shift from conformity to difference and Eve's separation from God (as Adam becomes her mediator); third, the fragmentation that occurs at and after the fall, including the physical and spiritual separation from God, are associated with reproduction, as seen in the curses, yet both Adam and Eve are subject to this separation and can only access God through levels of mediation in the post-fall world; and, finally, the hope of recovering conformity and genderless, God mediated birth is re-established through the promise of Christ through Mary, the 'second Eve,' which will lead humankind back to uniformity. Therefore, I posit that the binaries of male and female and the resulting acts of reproduction, separate from God, are causes of division in the poem that Milton attempts to eradicate through the promised immaculate conception of Christ, allowing a return to "conformity divine" (Milton XI. 606), which I suggest must be a genderless state of being; thereby, Milton is more in-line with the proto-feminist portrayals of gender relations and reproduction seen in the work of Cavendish than one may presume.

Early in *PL*, Milton reveals that "spirits when they please / can either sex assume or both" (I.423b-24), establishing the lack of sex distinction amongst the fallen angels. It is unsurprising, then, that Satan is depicted as the first mother, though always addressed by male pronouns and titles. Sin refers to Satan as "Father" (Milton II.728),[7] yet the description of her painful birth is undeniably reminiscent of the act of female childbirth. Sin relates that Satan was surprised by a "miserable pain" (Milton II.753), until she emerged from an "op'ning wide" (Milton II. 755), evoking the physical discomfort and dilation that a woman experiences in childbirth.

Thus, Satan is physically the mother of Sin. Unlike Adam's birth of Eve, wherein God puts Adam to sleep and peacefully extracts the-would-be Eve from his body, the delivery of Sin is painful, unmediated, and physically fragments Satan. Schwartz reads the births of Sin and Eve as exposing seventeenth-century anxieties about the two types of childbirth: natural birth and caesarian sections (206-207). Schwartz' reading, then, would suggest that God is the surgeon performing the caesarian, supporting my argument that God is a mediator in the birth of Eve. However, this historical perspective does not account for God's direct relationship in the forming of Eve, as "The rib He formed and fashioned with His hands, / Under His forming hands a creature grew, / Manlike but different sex" (Milton VIII. 469-71a). Adam's delivery of Eve is not simply mediated by God, but created by him. This godly creation results in a new sex, but not a different gender, as both Adam and Eve remain genderless at this point in the poem. In-line with Schoenfeldt's astute analysis that through the term manlike Milton "might express the novel phenomenon of sexual difference free of hierarchical disparity" (323), I suggest that the emphasis on sexual difference without a distinct power division is due to a lack of gender hierarchy at this point, as Eve's birth is created by God and thus unifying. In contrast, Sin is created autonomously by Satan, resulting in the division of himself and the unmediated creation of a gendered being, Sin.

Sin is the first creation separate from God's direct influence, and unlike the other spirits, she is depicted as a decisively female being, though monstrous on account of her continuous subjection to reproduction. Sin is defined by her reproductive abilities, though she has no control over them, and by her relationship to Satan, which is overtly sexualized; thus, in-line with Wittig's theory, her relationship to Satan immediately genders her as it thrusts her into a subservient, and one dimensional, position. Sin is also the first being in the poem to physically reproduce

by means of sexual intercourse. This intercourse is only possible on account of Sin's difference, a difference that is based on the ability to physically produce without God's interference. Additionally, by means of the reproductive capabilities of Sin, Satan is gendered as male; he is the first being to physically impregnate a woman via sexual intercourse, resulting in the birth of Death, who is a decisively male character (Milton II. 761-67). Thus, on account of Satan and Sin's roles as reproducers who can create separate from God's interference, they are mediated, fragmented and divided in the poem. I agree with Sauer's assertion that "the move toward destruction authored by Satan is mapped out on the 'double-form'd' female Sin, whose body and whose story become the sites of the confusion of tongues, identities, and gender roles" (184). Sin's reproductive body leads to fragmentation on a larger scale, influencing language and gender as the fragmented history of both are reflected in her multifarious body. Satan is fragmented into what Sauer dubs the "demonic trinity" (173); he is physically split into three separate, gendered beings. Furthermore, Sin is simultaneously fragmented and self-consumed by the "the yelling monsters" (Milton II. 795) who are "hourly conceived / And hourly born" (Milton II. 796-97). These hydra-like beings attack the very source of fragmentation, the womb, while also dividing Sin into a fragmented being.

Where Milton pictures reproduction as a fallen, gendered activity, Cavendish avoids the biological entrapment of female creativity by presenting disembodied spirits incapable of physical reproduction. In *TBW,* reproduction, which Leslie calls a "gruesome metamorphosis" (140), is an act of chemistry and magic, rather than the result of intercourse. The people in Cavendish's utopia come about by means of a mixture of "oyl" and "gum" that is cultured for nine months, leading to the emergence of beings that will "appear of the age of twenty" (Cavendish 184-85). In this way, reproduction is a genderless act, as neither sex is subjected

by the physical act of birth. Wittig argues that in order to escape gender inequalities, women must not only gain "control of the production of children" (11), but also "abstract themselves from the definition 'woman' which is imposed upon them" (11). Cavendish does precisely this, as she evades gender difference by creating a world of genderless spirits; in fact, she chooses for her scribe "one of [her] own sex" (Cavendish 209) and engages in intellectual creation free from the constructs of gendering physical reproduction. As Leslie so eloquently proposes, "in order to make her text an authoritative body of knowledge, Cavendish must transcend the limitations of the physical body and those contemporary views of female 'nature' which would associate her with inert materiality rather than the animating spirit of masculine intellect" (9).[8] By making birth an act separate from gender restrictions, Cavendish transcends the subjective role of female bodily reproduction and becomes a genderless spirit who creates intellectually, allowing for an egalitarian space that is united in sexual equality. Thus, for both Cavendish and Milton, the act of physical, bodily childbirth is a fragmenting and divisive act.

In Book III of *PL*, Milton connects the image of birth to fragmentation and the creation of division by correlating "ill-joined" (III.463) reproduction with the splintering of language and the fracturing of religion. Milton's narrator interrelates the fractioning of language and religion with the "monstrous, or unkindly mixed" (III. 456) race that results from the intercourse "Betwixt th' angelical and human kind" (III. 462). This passage is referring to the Nephilim, a biblical, pre-flood race of "giants" (Milton III. 464) born of human women impregnated by fallen angels. Directly following this reference is a passage about "Babel on the plain" (Milton III. 466) and divisive "New Babels" (Milton III. 468), alluding to the biblical site of language fragmentation, followed by the emergence of religious factions, who are described as "Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars, / White, black and grey with all their

trumpery" (Milton III. 474-75). Of course, Milton's narrator is evoking the sects of priests who are identifiable by the colors of their cloaks. In a matter of twenty lines, Milton's narrator condemns three layers of fragmentation: a new race of beings, the division of languages, and the factioning of the church—and all of this fragmentation stems from acts of physical reproduction which are separate from God**.**

In contrast to these moments of reproduction which are separate from God, the birth of Eve is initially presented as a unifying moment that stresses likeness. When viewed through Wittig's critical lens, Milton initially depicts Adam and Eve as genderless beings who are gendered on account of their social relationship to one another, rather than inherently gendered by God: Adam is both mother and husband to Eve and Eve initially desires to live in conformity with her mirror images, meaning both the immaculately productive earth and her personal reflection, rather than her opposite, Adam. Upon waking after her creation, according to her own recollection, Eve has no knowledge of gender difference and desires to remain with her own reflection rather than Adam (Milton IV. 460-80); she initially finds Adam "less fair, / Less winning soft, less amiably mild / than that smooth watery image" (Milton IV. 478-80) of herself in the mirrored pond. Furthermore, Eve is often likened to the earth, which is highly productive by means of God's interaction, which doubly indicates her desire for unity, as she is literally seeing herself reflected in the earth. Schwartz suggests that Adam's description of Eve's birth "is the summation of all that God, in his goodness, has planned for his universe" (194). I would further this claim to suggest that God's planned universe was initially egalitarian and unified on account of a lack of gender distinction. As Wittig suggests, without the binary of male gender, there is no female gender. Eve inherently seeks unification, but with the acceptance of Adam as her master, she acknowledges difference, resulting in divisions and leading to her separation from God, as she is reliant on Adam as a mediator.

Adam's first interaction with Eve, wherein she "yields" to his seizing (Milton V. 489) hand, initiates difference in Eden, leading to Eve's separation from God via Adam's mediation; thus, Adam becomes the first divider by means of his relational position to Eve. After Eve leaves her reflection, God tells her that she is Adam's "image" (Milton IV.472) and that he is "inseparably [hers]" (Milton IV. 473). This statement is relevant for two reasons: it demonstrates Eve's desire for unity and shows that she initially has a direct relationship with God. However, upon seeing Adam, she perceives physical difference and flees, at which Adam speaks to her; he reasons, "Part of my soul I seek thee and thee claim / my other half" (Milton IV. 487-88). Adam demonstrates that he sees Eve as something to be claimed, and by seizing her hand he signifies that he is superior to her. Riggs suggests that in "the poem's first human conversation a tension may be felt, a kindly pressure to misinterpret the reality of a marriage of peculiarly unequal equals" (368); indeed, Adam's claiming of Eve, who is defined as complete in herself, is unsettling and introduces a sense of gender hierarchy that is discordant within the ideal space of Eden. Following Adam's dominant act, Eve responds with her first recognition of gender difference, admitting that her "beauty is excelled by manly grace" (Milton IV. 490). In doing so, she exalts Adam above herself, unlike God who depicted them as equals, leading to gendering, as Eve begins to see herself only in contrast to Adam, her new master. Of this event, Schwartz suggests that Eve's "desire for sameness gives way—at first unstably—to a desire for sameness in difference, which then leads to motherhood, which is ambiguously marked by an experience of both desire and submission" (204), supporting my argument that with difference comes submission, reproduction, and, I would add, separation from God by reliance on mediation. By recognizing Adam as her new master, she loses her direct relationship with God and becomes reliant on Adam's mediation.

After Eve submits to Adam, her relationship to the earth becomes more inward and concealed, suggesting that she is associated with lower level, physical productivity while Adam is connected with God and higher order productivity. Thus, both assume the most prevalent seventeenth-century gender roles associated with men and women. Maus suggests that "Milton's trope originates in an ambivalent wish to conflate intellectual originality with childbearing, while simultaneously implying that to identify the two processes is to confuse [the] carnal and spiritual" (93); while I concede that Milton correlates the intellectual with the physical, I disagree with the claim that carnality and spirituality are confused. Rather, they are separated according to gender, with woman being carnal and man being intellectual. Adam is presented as a beneficiary of the earth's abundant warmth and embrace, while Eve is shown as enclosed within it and domestically subjected to Adam:

> Adam discerned as in the door he sat
> Of his cool bow'r while now the mounted sun
> Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm
> Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs.
> And Eve within, due at her hour, prepared
> For dinner Savory fruits of taste to please . . .
> (Milton V. 299-305).

In this passage, Adam is presented as a mediating being, positioned on the boundaries of internal and external spaces. This physical positioning lends Adam the ability to partake in earthly comforts while also being visible, and accessible, to God. In contrast, Eve is not only enveloped by the earth and positioned within its "womb," she is also serving Adam by performing domestic duties. Considering Wittig's theory that gender roles are established via a relationship between men and women that is defined by domestic and reproductive obligations, one can see how Eve is doubly gendered female in this scene through her connection with the womb and domesticity.

Furthermore, Eve's imitation of Adam demonstrates that she relies on him as a mediator between herself and God. After meeting Adam, Eve is denied direct access to God. Eve is conveniently absent during many of the moments when God or his angels relay information to Adam; for instance, in Book V Raphael warns to Adam alone about the imposing threat of Satan, and Eve is only given second hand information through Adam. Adam's mediation is so apparent that when Satan first sees the human pair, he remarks that "Though both / Not equal as their sex not equal seemed / . . . / He for God only, she for God in him" (Milton IV. 295-299). Eve's access to God is interrupted by Adam, highlighting that separation from God is signified by difference, as it moves away from the intended, uniform ideal. Eve's internalization of the separation from God is seen in Eve's responses to Adam, wherein she calls him her "guide / And head" (Milton IV. 442-43), indicating that she views Adam as a mediator between herself and God. This mediation leads to gender difference and results in a gendered hierarchy and separation from God. Thus, as Schoenfeldt asserts, Adam and Eve show a "baffling blend of mutuality and hierarchy" (320), but the mutuality is not equally distributed as Eve is always subject to, and image of, both God and Adam, where Adam is only subjected to and imitative of God. The extra layer of mediation makes Eve an apt target for Satan, who sees this difference and separation as a weakness to exploit; thus, Eve is more susceptible to deception on account of the headship arrangement. Eve's separation from God is further exemplified when she wakes from her tainted dream in Book V and admits that Adam is her "sole in whom [her] thoughts find all repose, / [her] glory, [her] perfection" (Milton V. 28-29), as she is so removed from God that Adam has become God-like to her, defined as perfect and glorious.

It is unsurprising, then, that Satan follows as Eve's second mediator,

as he interferes with her dream, causing confusion and further regression into a duplicitous interiority. The very fact that Eve is mediated through her innermost thoughts adds to the feeling that she is an interior being. Tellingly, Satan appeals to Eve's desire to ascend the earthly realm and reunite with God. As a subject of both Adam and God, Eve is more inclined to long for a higher status, wherein Adam is already God-like in Eve's eyes. When Satan plants the seed of dissent, he provokes Eve by telling her the fruit is able to "make gods of men" (Milton V. 70). He follows this assertion by questioning, inaccurately, that "and why not gods of men since good the more / communicated more abundant grows, / the Author not impaired but honored more?" (Milton V. 71-74). Of course, the creation of more beings with knowledge of good and evil leads to further fragmentation and separation from God, and detracts from God's ultimate sovereignty, as already seen with Eve's near worship of Adam. Thus, Satan suggests that the production of knowledge separate from God will result in a sense of equality, when in the context of the poem it only leads to more disunity. Interestingly, Eve uses similar language to describe Satan as she did with Adam, calling him her "guide" (Milton V. 91), demonstrating that Eve is subject to layers of separation and subjection on account of her gender, which is defined by subjection to Adam and reliance on mediation in general.

The fall itself is associated with a heightened sense of gender difference and reproduction, resulting in separation from God and division between man and woman. As Eve ponders how to tell Adam of her choice to eat the fruit, she contemplates keeping "the odds of knowledge in [her] pow'r / Without copartner so to add what wants / in female sex, the more to draw his love / And render [her] equal" (Milton IX. 820-24). Although this is Eve's first moment of seeking equality in difference, rather than relying on mimicry and mediation, she belies herself in her admittance that women are lacking. Afterward, she admits to desiring superiority, thus, in line with Wittig's theory, she is still differentiating and causing division by means of her relationship to Adam. As Wittig argues, "matriarchy is no less heterosexual than patriarchy: it is only the sex of the oppressor that changes" (10). Furthermore, directly after Eve partakes of the tree, she associates the tree's fruit with childbearing. For instance, she describes her act as easing the tree's "fertile burden" (Milton IX. 801), suggesting that the fall is relieving the over-productive earth of the burden of birthing. However, due to the tree's significance as a bearer of knowledge, she is unburdening the tree of knowledge by dispersing it, which leads to the fragmentation of ideas, religion and language. Ironically, however, Eve is not incorrect in her statement. As the reader is aware, Eve literally takes on the tree's charge, as she becomes burdened with physical reproduction via the curse. Furthermore, as Schwartz relates of Lieb and Shawcross, it is well established that "the expulsion from Eden is itself a great, concluding birth figure" (Schwartz 236), highlighting that the fall is gendered by means of its association with birth.

Eve's punishment is the curse of constant fragmentation and disconnection from God, as with reproduction comes the division of languages, peoples and religion. This is best represented in the doubt that pervades Book X. Pre-fall, events are related with relative certainty; post-fall, stories are hedged with qualifiers such as "some say" (Milton X. 668 and 670). Ultimately, discord follows Eve's curse as she is responsible for the fragmentation of knowledge, which is manifest in the reproduction of people; the more people there are, the more versions and interpretations of stories and events are perpetuated; and, as suggested in Biblical history, the more interpretations there are, the more division occurs, and thus, fragmentation and separation from God through levels of deepening mediation. This fragmentation is best exemplified in the ever-shifting, quickly told events related by Michael in Book XI. Adam's curse, in contrast, requires him to labor for production and subject

himself to the land, which is, as previously established, a feminine force. But this is complicated, as the feminized earth itself is cursed (Milton X. 202), and Adam is simply forced to engage with a cursed entity, rather than become a cursed entity himself. With Eve taking over the burden of productivity, Adam is forced to toil with unproductive soil. Thus, post-fall, reproduction is gendered as wholly feminine, while lack of productivity is masculinized.

Thus, in a way, Adam and Eve are equalized in the sense that they are both subject to their gendered opposite and equally physically separated from God. Whereas pre-fall Adam had access to God directly and Eve was mediated by Adam, post-fall both are equally expelled from God's presence and mediated only by Christ. In Book X, the son assumes the role of mediator, as the narrator relates, "from wrath more cool, / came the mild Judge and Intercessor both / to sentence Man" (Milton X. 95b-97a). Thus, when Adam blames Eve and God for the fall (Milton X. 135-145), it has already been established that Adam has been demoted as a viable judge of Eve, and thus his power is reduced. The Son rebukes Adam for "resign[ing] [his] manhood" (Milton X. 148), suggesting that through the diminishing of his authority, he has become ungendered. From this point on, Christ acts as the "Intercessor" between God, man and woman, allowing equal access to God amongst all humankind. Of course, Wittig would resist this reading, as Adam and Eve's genders are still defined by their social interaction, especially since Eve is the domestic reproducer and Adam is the public laborer. However, while fallen, both are at least equally fallen and have equally limited access to God, which is a necessary step to reestablishing the perfect, genderless ideal, as promised through Christ's birth.

However, this equality shifts slightly, and temporarily, as through the promise of Christ's birth, wherein God directly interacts with a woman alone, the hope of unity is restored, reestablishing the genderless, uniform ideal by means of an unmediated woman. As Michael relates, Christ is promised "by the woman's seed" (Milton XII. 601), through "Mary, second Eve" (Milton X. 183), allowing a chance for redemption through all-female reproduction. As previously established, reproduction that results from God's direct influence is positive and unifying. Additionally, Christ's birth allows for the possibility of a total restoration (XII. 623), implying a return to an egalitarian state of being; since Christ's ransom allows people to go to heaven, a sphere inhabited by genderless spirits, his restoration reinstates a perfect, genderless space as Eden was intended to be, but failed on account of man's mediatory role with woman.

As contemporaries, both Cavendish and Milton wrote at a time of great dissention, turmoil and fragmentation on account of the Civil Wars. If adhering to Murphy's reading that the family is a microcosmic site of larger social politics, than the fragmentation of the family via reproduction and gender hierarchies can be read as representative of larger social concerns about political divisions. Thus, both writers attempt to recreate a space wherein the possibility for unification becomes a reality; however, neither can believe this reality without destroying gender, for, as Wittig astutely notes, with gender comes difference and division. Both depict physical, gendered reproduction in a negative light, as physical reproduction is an act that divides men from women, andcreates further fragmentation through an increase in population. Therefore, in their respective ways, they create worlds that praise ungendered reproduction as means to establish unity and equality within society.

Notes

[1] In their poetry and prose, Donne, Jonson, Milton, Lanyer, and Cavendish all complicate notions of gender by means of reproductive language.

[2] In her book Renaissance Utopias and the Problem of History, Marina Leslie suggests that, in the female-ruled Blazing-world, Cavendish's treatment of reproduction as a magical occurrence separate from the female womb demonstrates that "she clearly has no interest in connecting the political body to maternity and female nurture" (141).

[3] Marina Leslie. "Gender, Genre and the Utopian Body in Margaret Cavendish's Blazing World"

[4] In her essay "A Womb of His Own: Male Renaissance Poets in the Female Body," Maus argues that mental reproduction is "analogous but superior" (91) to physical reproduction, and that male poets, including Milton and Donne, evoke the image of the womb because it is secure and private, yet externally accessible.

[5] In the essay "'Monstrous Altercations and Barking Questions': The Prodigious Births of Scylla, Mris Rump and Milton's Sin," Sauer argues that Sin's public role contributes to her monstrosity and that Sin's body signifies the confusion of "tongues, identities and gender roles" (184) that occurs post-Fall. Likewise, Murphy argues, in "Paradise Lost and the Politics of 'Begetting'," that Sin's reproduction is associated with the public sphere; however, she focuses on how Eve, who is associated with the private, domestic sphere, contrasts with Sin, as her birth allows a place for family and structure in the post-lapsarian world (44). In his essay, The Temptation of Milton's Eve: 'Words, impreng'd / With Reason," William Riggs argues that domestic distress is a fallen limitation as seen in the temptation of Eve. Lastly, in his essay "Gender and Conduct in Paradise Lost," Schoenfeldt argues that Eve's "capacity to generate social behavior... challenges the masculine hierarchy based on precedence and physiology that the work habitually reaffirms" (319).

[6] While Louis Schwartz book, Milton and Maternal Mortality, largely demonstrates Milton's sympathy towards Eve's curse on account of his biographical experience with death in childbirth, he also explores Satan and Adam's roles as birthers, which are particularly interesting to my discussion, and the female role as begetter of Christ.

[7] Interestingly, Sin refers to Satan as Father with a capital F, a title usually reserved for God himself. This highlights that Satan is sole creator of Sin, and that the creation is separate from God's mediation.

[8] Marina Leslie. "Gender, Genre and the Utopian Body in Margaret Cavendish's Blazing World."

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Beowulf's Wife and Mother: A Look At the Missing Pieces

by KALEIGH SEVI

Though the plot of *Beowulf* is not necessarily female-centric at first glance, women play a significant role in defining and dictating the social community in and around the mead-hall. The encounters we have with the female characters are brief, yet often among the most vivid in the text: a gold-adorned Wealhþeo passing the cup to the men in the mead-hall, Modþryth sentencing men to death for their gaze, and Grendel's mother descending to avenge her son's murder. While some, like Gillian Overing, would contend this vividness is due to the fact that the female characters function as "hysterics" (225) that inherently disrupt and destabilize the masculine economy of the narrative, a close examination of the female characters in *Beowulf* finds them integral to the structure of Anglo-Saxon familial and community structures. However, amid a narrative seemingly obsessed with detailing lines of kinship, there is little to be found in the text regarding Beowulf's own important female familial relations: his wife and his mother. The lack of these important women in the text serves as a glaring omission, one that draws more attention in its striking absence than passing mentions of either would merit. To discuss the full importance of these absences, I will look at the way these women would fit into Anglo Saxon community and then determine how the absence of a mother and a wife affect Beowulf as the leader of a failed community.

Carol Parrish Jamison has explored how women, ruling women especially, might have functioned in Germanic tribes.[1] The peace-pledge, as referenced in Jamison's title, refers to the women exchanged between unstable tribes to ensure peace between them. Jamison uses both Hygd

and Wealhþeo in *Beowulf* as examples of women who participate in the practice of "king-making" (22) to indicate that they have moved beyond the simple role of acting as peace-pledges between tribes, establishing them as community leaders and builders. Jamison contends that both women understand the necessary bonds between men and use their unique positions as mothers to "exert some influence" (23) in regard to king-making.

Dorothy Carr Porter further focalizes the discussion by describing the three kinds of symmetrically doubled women present in the *Beowulf* narrative: queens, peaceweavers, and monsters. Porter argues that understanding the women and their function in the text helps to understand the poem as a whole and that an "investigation . . . uncovers the possible matrilineal undercurrent in the culture of *Beowulf*" (n.pag.). Porter does not qualify Wealhþeo or Hygd as 'peaceweavers' in the same way that Jamison does, but rather sees them as relics from a prior matrilineal and matrilocal Germanic society from which they locate their authority in the hall. Stephen Glosecki offers a further examination of the relationship of matrilineal kinship to Anglo-Saxon culture by looking at the importance of the avunculate relationship (the mother's brother to her son).[2] The role of the peace-pledge would be further stabilized by sending one of her sons back to her own family to raise—the peace-pledges' brother (as uncle) then becomes the primary masculine influence in the son's upbringing, as opposed to the child's own father, cementing the importance of succession through the maternal line.

The role of kings and queens in Anglo-Saxon culture is outlined in *Maxims I* from *The Exeter Book*. In it, a brief passage reads:

> Cyning sceal mid ceape cwene gebicgan,
> bunum ond beagum; bu sceolon ærest
> Geofum god wesan. Guð sceal in eorle,
> wig geweaxan, ond wif geþeon
> leof mid hyre leodum, leohtmod wesan,
> rune healdan, rumheort beon
> mearum on maþmum, meodorædenne
> for gesiðmægen symle æghwær
> eodor æþelinga ærest gegretan,
> forman fulle to frean hond
> ricene geræcan, ond him ræd witan
> boldagengum bæm ætsomne. (81-92)
> [A king shall with trade, buy a queen / with cups and with rings; Both shall first / be good with grace. War and battle shall grow / in the earl and the wife to prosper / beloved amid her people, to be light of mood / to keep counsel, to be generous hearted, / with horse and treasure, at every mead-drinking / feast, before the band of retainers, / she first greets the protector of princes, / quickly reach the cup to the hand of the lord first / and to know how to advise him / as possessors of a hall, both together.] [3]

This description speaks to the balance and partnership necessary in order to be a good ruler. A king must not exclude his wife from decision-making; he should, in fact, involve and seek out her counsel. They rule as a unit: the king a leader in battle and the queen a leader and unifier of her people. In *Beowulf,* we see this kind of partnership exemplified in Hroþgar and Wealhþeo, though, aged, Hroþgar no longer engages in direct battle (instead calling Beowulf in his place). Rather, Wealhþeo performs the duties described in *Maxims I* when she weaves peace in the hall after the disruptive, community dissembling argument between Unferth and Beowulf:

> Eode Wealhþeo forð,
> cwen Hroþgares cynna gymyndig,
> grette goldhroden guman on healle,

on þa freolic wif ful gesealde
ærest East-Dena eþelwearde . . . (612-615)
[Wealhþeo went forth, /queen of Hroþgar, mindful of courtesy / gold-adorned, greeted the men in the hall / and the noble wife offered the cup / first to the guardian of the East-Danes . . .]

As Wealhþeo travels through the hall with the cup, she restores order by purposefully reinstating the hierarchy amongst the men: first Hroþgar, then the Danes, and finally Beowulf. Her role here may seem ornamental with the textual focus on "cynna" [courtesy] and "goldhroden" [gold-adorned], but she is performing a deeply necessary peace-keeping ritual in order to save her kingdom. Wealhþeo's actions indicate she knows that if Beowulf is too angered by Unferth's remarks and leaves, no one will be left to defend her people from Grendel; likewise, if Unferth leads a retaliation against Beowulf no one will be left defend her people from Grendel.

Along the same lines, Wealhþeo and Hygd locate authority in their positions as maternal figures in the act of "king-making" (Jamison, 22). After the battle between Beowulf and Grendel, Hroþgar intercedes at the mead-hall feast and offers his kingdom to Beowulf as a reward. Wealhþeo, however, senses that her own bloodline will be disturbed and graciously deflects this pronouncement by Hroþgar with a speech that attempts to ensure her sons' succession to the throne, rather than the usurpation by Beowulf. Hygd makes a similar, if not more forward, political gesture in her own role as mother and queen. When Hygelac dies, she is left with a son too young to rule in an increasingly threatened, hostile state. In an effort to maintain community and to maintain the viability of her husband's kingdom, Hygd offers the vacant throne to Beowulf (more experienced in leadership than her young son, Heardred) thereby extending Beowulf's maternal line:

Þær Hygd gebead hord ond rice,
beagas ond bregostol; bearne ne truwode
þætne wið ælfylcum eþelstolas
healdan cuðe, ða wæs Hygelac dead.
no ðy ær feasceafte findan meahton
æt ðam æðelinge ænige ðinga
þæt he Heardrede hlaford wære,
oððe þone cynedom ciosan wolde. (2369-2376)
[There Hygd offered him (Beowulf) treasure and kingdom / rings and throne; Trusted not the son / to hold the ancestral thrones from foreign people / that Hygelac was dead. / Not sooner that the destitute may prevail / upon that hero (Beowulf) / then he (said he) would not be in any way the lord of Heardred / or wished to accept the royal power.]

The fact that Hygd has power enough to determine the line of succession is an interesting subversion of typical patrilineal structure and hints at the remnants of the matrilineal culture remaining amongst the Geat tribe during this time period. More alarming, though, is that Beowulf refuses the throne offered to him by Hygd. I feel this decision is a reflection of Beowulf's continual rejection of his own matrilineal line. A look at Beowulf's family tree indicates that Hygd is his maternal aunt-in-law, married to King Hreðel's son, Hygelac. Hygelac is Beowulf's mother's brother (thus forming the crucial avunculate relationship between the two) and King Hreðel is his grandfather, thereby easily securing his place in the succession to the Geatish throne. Though in a more patrilineal society, Beowulf should feel more of a kinship with his father Ecgþoew's own line, the text indicates that Beowulf was brought up, and brought up well, by his mother's family, not by his paternal relatives:

Ic wæs syfanwintre þa me sin(c)a baldor,
freawine folca æt minum fæder genam;
heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning.

geaf me treasure ond symbel, sibbe gemunde;
næs ic him to life laðra owihte,
beorn in burgum þonne his bearna hwylc,
Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min. (2428-2434)
[I was seven winters old when my lord of treasures / friend and lord of the people, took me from my father / King Hrethel kept and held me. / Gave me treasure and feast, kinship remembered. / I was not to him in life hostile aught, / a man in the residence, than of whichever of his sons / Herebeald and Hæðcyn or my (lord) Hygelac.]

Beowulf equivocates his own upbringing as equal to that of his uncles, indicating that Beowulf was being groomed by Hreðel to assume the throne potentially, a possibility that certainly becomes more real after the death of Hreðel's son Herebeald. Jamison discusses the close relationship of matrilineal kinship that can easily be applied to Beowulf and what we do know of his mother: "the union might be more tightly sealed if the bride's son were sent back to her own people to be raised by maternal uncles and to live among maternal cousins" (14). The fact that Beowulf rejects the throne he was clearly being groomed for by Hreðel and served for under Hygelac shows that Beowulf has little regard for the well-being of the bloodline to which both he and his mother belong. Given that Beowulf was raised by Hreðel, the lack of discussion regarding her whereabouts is even more alarming.

The uncertainty regarding Beowulf's mother takes an even more bizarre turn when Hroþgar gives a speech about Beowulf's heroism following Grendel's mother's defeat. Where one might expect Hroþgar to praise Beowulf's father Ecgþeow for raising a brave warrior who excels at battle, Hroþgar instead turns his praise to Beowulf's mother:

Hwæt, þæt secgan mæg
efne swa hwylc mægþa
swan ðone magan cende
æfter gumcynnum, gyf heo gyt lyfat,
þæt hyre ealdmetod este wære
bearngebyrdo. (942b-946a)
[What that may say / even so whichever of women / thus bore this man, / among humankind, if she yet lives, / that the gold of old was gracious to her / of child-bearing.]

Praising Beowulf's mother for her excellence in child-bearing appears to go against the conventions that we might expect for a warrior being praised after battle. Hroþgar, here, contributes Beowulf's success to the good fortune of his mother, rather than his father Ecgþeow, to whom Beowulf is linked, by name, seventeen times in the text.[4] When Beowulf is fighting Grendel, however, he is consistently referred to, by the schop, as "mæg Higelaces" or "kin of Hygelac" (see lines 737 or 758 for examples) thus affirming his association with his mother's kin in one of his most important victories. Given the fact that Beowulf was raised by his mother's family, perhaps Hroþgar is giving a nod to that particular relationship—this becomes more likely when considering Hroþgar's own history with Ecgþeow—Hroþgar explains how he paid the were-gild for a murder Beowulf's father committed in lines 457-472, concluding "he me aþas swor" ["he to me swore oaths"] (472)—which cements Beowulf's debt to Hroþgar and reminds Beowulf of his kinship ties to his mother's line. Given the seeming importance of the speech, though, it is odd that Beowulf's mother is not given a name (people are given a name for much less reason in the narrative) and, moreover, it is unclear whether she is still alive or dead. That this information is all unknown, and especially unknown by Hroþgar who clearly has history with Beowulf's kin, is disquieting and shows Beowulf's blatant disregard to his mother's kin who raised him and groomed him for kingship from a young age. Beowulf then continually rejects his mother, and, when he

eventually does become king of the Geats, he seeks his own glory, rather than sustaining the community that his mother's family ruled.

The depiction of a good battle-leading king is found toward the end of the text, conveniently placed right before Beowulf makes the decision to battle the dragon. A diversion in the text that is seemingly only there for background feudal information, the story of Ongenþeow in the Battle of Ravenswood describes how a king should balance both his personal glory in battle with his devotion to his queen:

> Sona him se froda fæder Ohþeres,
> eald ond egesfull ondslyht ageaf,
> abreot brimwisan, bryd ahredde,
> gomela[n] iomoewlan golde berofene,
> Onelan modor and Ohþeres. (2928-2932)
> [Immediately him, the wife father of Ohþere, / old and terrible, gave in return onslaught / destroyed the sea-king, rescued the bride, / the aged wife of old, gold-deprived / mother of Onela and Ohþere . . .]

Ongenþeow both delivers fierce victory on the battlefield and also rescues his queen and the mother of his children. These lines, so closely tied together through textual delivery (Ongenþeow succeeding in battle next to the rescue of his queen), show the ideal vision of masculinity encompassing both success in battle and understanding of the value of saving his queen, the unifier of his people. When Ongenþeow does these things that are valued of kings and in ideal masculinity, he is rewarded soon after when his community is saved: "Frofor eft gelamp / sarigmodum" [Solace came to pass in turn / to the sad-hearted] (2941b-2942a). Mary Dockray-Miller[5] discusses the Ongenþeow episode in-depth, pointing to Ongeþeow as the ideal masculine role model in *Beowulf* suggesting that "[Ongenþeow] preserves his masculinity intact until the end of his life, showing that, in *Beowulf,* advancing age does not necessarily mean a movement away from masculinity" (20). Dockray-Miller does not, in fact, link Ongenþeow's dutiful care of his wife to his successful version of masculinity, but referring back to the rules of decorum for kings *Maxims 1*, Ongenþeow fulfills the ideal of kingship by keeping a successful queen.

Some critical discussion has occurred regarding the subject of Beowulf's own queen but little satisfactory findings have emerged. Fred Robinson has suggested that perhaps "Beowulf's marital status was of insufficient interest to warrant a mention in the poem" (118-119). This statement, of course, is incredibly problematic given the poem's fascination with the extended familial narrative and the fact the every king of Beowulf's stature has a named queen in the text. Helen Bennett similarly explores the topic by translating excerpts from Tilman Westphalen's book length study concerning the identity of the female mourner, a discussion that basically boils down to her being "Beowulf's wife [or] not Beowulf's wife" (37).[6] Bennett calls Westphalen's theory (that the mourner is Beowulf's wife: a remarried Hygd) "highly speculative" (38) and arrived at with "circular reasoning" (38), yet offers no hypothesis of her own on the subject, spending the rest of the article discussing the lament tradition in Anglo-Saxon works. Robert Morey similarly disagrees that woman in these lines is Beowulf's queen, stating firmly "Beowulf is the only king in the poem who never marries (I am highly skeptical that the woman introduced in line 3150 is his widow)" (493). The speculation of the Geatish woman who laments at Beowulf's funeral is based on restorations of the Beowulf manuscript and is not at all universally accepted.[7] That said, having been introduced to Hygd in such a powerful way previously, it seems unlikely this anonymous woman is either Hygd (theoretically now married to Beowulf) or another bride, as the passage lacks the necessary descriptors we have come to associated with the other queens depicted in *Beowulf*.[8]

If we are to view Beowulf as a king in the way that Hroþgar and

Ongenþeow are presented to us as peace-keepers who are focused on the preservation of their communities, Beowulf falls well short of the mark. Beowulf continually disregards the tenets of community, especially the acknowledgement of his matrilineal relationships and refusal to provide for his people a queen, instead focusing on his own glory-building and quests for treasure. Robert Morey points out that Beowulf seems "married to the eorlscipe he enacts among the Danes" (493). While Morey argues this due to the fact that Beowulf is feminized in the narrative, I would argue that it is because Beowulf is more devoted to causes outside his home-tribe (we see no act on Beowulf's behalf comparable to his battle with Grendel, which restores peace in the Danish community, even as his own people suffer with increasing feudal wars), rather than focusing on the necessary community building efforts within his own people due to a lack of regard for his mother's kin. Wiglaf, Beowulf's trusted companion, delivers a speech that allows us to see Beowulf's decision making process at the end of his life:

> 'Oft sceall eorl monig anes willan
> wræc adreogan, swa us geworden is.
> Ne meahton we gelæron leofne þeoden,
> rices hyrde ræd ænigne,
> þaet he ne grette goldweard þone,
> lete hyne licgean þær he longe wæs,
> wicum wunian oð woruldene;
> heold on heahgesceap. Hord ys gesceawod. (3075-3084)
> [Often many men shall endure misery / for the will of one, so became us. / We could not teach or advise our well-loved king, / by not any counsel the guardian of the realm / that he might not attack the guardian of the gold / might allow him to lie low where he long was / to reside in settlement as far as the end of the world, / Guarded in destiny. What is hidden, hoard, is viewed.]

Wiglaf in no uncertain terms claims that Beowulf's decision to go against the dragon was selfish. Beowulf refuses to take the counsel of his men and leaves them in "wræc" [misery], in pursuit of his own "willan" [will or desire]. His thanes prove unworthy substitutes for the counsel of a queen; with the lack of a queen to advise him properly, Beowulf focuses on seeking glory for himself rather than worrying about his people who are torn apart by his decisions and by his unwillingness to be advised. When faced with the dragon, Beowulf's thoughts are not with his community; rather, his focus is on fitting into the warrior mode he envisions for himself and gaining treasure: "eorscype efne. Ic mid elne dæle / gold gegangan" [I must perform this warriorly deed. I with strength shall gain gold] (2534-2535). In contrast, when Grendel attacks Heorot, Hroþgar does not himself descend into battle against Grendel. Putting himself directly into harm's way while his kingdom's future is not certain (in that both of his sons are too young to claim the throne and his community would therefore be put into disarray over a fight for the throne) is not how a king excels. Similarly, Ongenþeow only descends into battle as a last resort to save his people from certain extinction. Beowulf's own kingdom is in similar turmoil, given that the death of Beowulf will almost certainly mean invasion by the Swedish. With no heir left behind, thereby destroying his mother's bloodline that has ruled the Geats for several generations, the Geats have no stable, established leader to turn to for protection. Beowulf reflects on his lack of an heir after being mortally wounded:

> Nu ic suna minum syllan wolde
> guðgewædu, þær me gifeðe swa
> ænig yrfeweard æfter wurde
> lice gelenge. Ic ðas leode heold
> fiftig wintra; næs se folccyning,

ymbesittendra ænig ðara,
þe mec guðwinum. (2729-2735)
[Now I would give my son / the battle-garment were I given the guardian of an heir / from my body. I kept this nation / fifty winters. Never the king / of a neighboring people, not any dared / greet with armies, awe or threaten [the Geats]]

Even in this speech, in what should be a reflection on his lack of an heir or an attempt to provide guidance to his remaining thanes, Beowulf reiterates the power of his rule, that no other king would dare to attack the Geats while he lived. Beowulf, then, completely disregards the pattern of kingly behavior exhibited in the text in favor of his own glory-seeking, leaving his nation leaderless without his reputation to protect them.

While Beowulf focuses on masculine bonds and building his own reputation as a fierce warrior, he refuses to acknowledge the necessary matrilineal and feminine contributions to his own culture. Beowulf, the man, may be content to live without a mother or queen, but Beowulf, the king, requires a desire to continue and build glory in his mother's bloodline as well as a queen to weave peace for the betterment of his people. When Beowulf disregards these aspects of his culture, he fails spectacularly as a king and dies, leaving his tribe alone to be conquered by the Swedes.

Notes

[1] In "Traffic of Women in Germanic Languages: The Role of the Peace Pledge in Marital Exchanges." Jamison outlines the four ways that peace pledges can interact within their marriages: 1. being an object 2. being seen as a threat 3. becoming a kingmaker or 4. rebelling and seeking vengeance on her new kin (14).

[2] In "*Beowulf* and the Wills: Traces of Totemism?," Glosecki argues that the skeleton of a matrilineal kinship structure remains in Germanic cultures and that the *Beowulf* poet has subscribed primogeniture (which was gaining prominence during the time that *Beowulf* was composed) into the poem when, in fact, the kinship structure of the time the actual events of *Beowulf* were taking place bears more relationship to the Crow kinship system of tribal groups (where a matrilineal succession is valued).

[3] Translations are my own with a focus on literal meaning.

[4] References to Beowulf being Ecgþeow's son are found in lines 263, 373, 529, 631, 1383, 1465, 1473, 1550, 1651, 1808, 1817, 1999, 2179, 2367, 2398, 2425, 2587. Most notably, in line 2367, Beowulf is linked to Ecgþeow when Hygd offers him Hygelac's throne.

[5] In "Beowulf's Tears of Fatherhood," Dockray-Miller examines masculinity in *Beowulf*, specifically through the lens of Hroþgar's leadership. She suggests that Hroþgar "adopts" Beowulf as a way of regaining some of his lost masculine economy, but is ultimately rejected by Beowulf because he can no longer exert that kind of masculine influence. In her discussion, Ongenþeow is presented in contrast to Hroþgar's failed leadership.

[6] In "The Female Mourner at Beowulf's Funeral: Filling in the Blanks/Hearing the Spaces." Bennett, through this article, wants to examine what would happen if we let the absences in the *Beowulf* manuscript dictate our interpretations rather than prescribing meaning onto the text because we desire a text that is "complete, closed, [and] authorized" (36), an argument that allows for readings absences in the text as I have done here.

[7] Klaeber notes in his edition the problems with the deteriorated manuscript at this section. Chickering also notes in his translation that the manuscript is ripped at this line and the multitudes of options offered by translators are "conjecture" (240).

[8] Wealhþeo, Hygd, Hildeburh and Modþryth are all described in ornamental terms, usually adorned in gold. The Geatish woman is purely anonymous is description except for her hair, tightly bound on her head.

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OCCUPYING THE THIRD SPACE IN MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*: FINDING A FLUID IDENTITY IN OTHER-WORLDLINESS, UGLINESS, AND THE GRANDEUR OF MONSTROSITY

BY KACIE WILLS

"I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth," laments Victor Frankenstein when the reality of modern science has seemed to annihilate his dreams of pursuing "immortality" and "power" (52). Viewed through the lens of Feminist theory, Victor's words express the struggle to attain a fluid identity within a reality bound by binaries. Referring specifically to the idea of "becoming" presented in Helene Cixous'[1] essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," a fluid identity is not structured or restricted by binaries or social constructs. Rather, identity changes, encompasses, adapts, and reforms. Such "boundless grandeur" can not be achieved within an existing framework and must, therefore, be created in a separate space. In the text of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* this "third space" outside of the binary system is created by Elizabeth's other-worldliness, the creature's ugliness, and the two characters' mutual monstrosity. Both Elizabeth and the monster in this way resist signification in the Lacanian symbolic order. While Elizabeth's fluid identity ultimately becomes problematic when confronted with the reality of a life/death binary, the creature's identity, occupying the space of ugliness and death, is able to maintain a state of "boundless grandeur."

The concept of a "third space" is prevalent in post-colonial discourse. Arguing in terms of political hybridity, Homi K. Bhabha writes of "elements that are *neither the One* (unitary working class) *nor the Other* (the politics of gender) *but something else besides* which contests the terms

and territories of both" (13). Bhabha's concept in "The Commitment to Theory" addresses a hybridity created in a space outside of colonial binaries where the "moment" of political change occurs (13). Bhabha contends that, "in this 'Third Space', we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (22). The third space, when applied to identity, is, therefore, the space outside of binary constructions where a fluid identity is allowed to take shape. In this space, identity can be formed out of the concepts of both the self and the "other." Simultaneously, the privileged role and its oppositional counterpart upon which that very role is built become integrated. When Bhabha's concept is applied beyond the colonizer/colonized binary structure, not only gender roles, but also the very social constructs that make up identity are called into question.

Identity in such a hybrid or fluid form is argued by Judith Halberstam to exist in the "totalizing monster" (29). Halberstam contends, in "Making Monsters: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," that the monster is "chameleonic" and that interpretations that attempt to define the *Frankenstein* monster in a specific category ultimately deny the "hybrid" nature of its monstrosity (29). Identity as monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is the constructed product of multiple influences, an amalgamation of forms and traditional categories, specifically of gender. Monstrosity, therefore, becomes a space for an undefined identity to exist. As Halberstam argues: "The monster, in fact, is where we come to know ourselves as never-human, as always between humanness and monstrosity" (37). Monstrosity becomes the "third space" that enables the existence of the hybrid, fluid identity that questions the very concept of what it is to be "human." Within this process of destabilization, monstrosity in *Frankenstein* engages the defining roles of gender, treating the identities of Elizabeth and the creature as plastic and all-encompassing. As Halberstam states, "The monster is always all of these figures. By his very composition, he can never be one thing" (36).

Bette London claims that the monster is associated with the female,

"the traditional locus for 'the monstrous' and 'the body'" (256). Sandra Gubar connects the monster and monstrousness with Eve and all women, stating that women have been seen as "monstrous, vile, degraded creatures, second-comers, emblems of filthy materiality," a fact "as true as that women have traditionally been defined as superior spiritual beings, angels, better halves" (65). These critics fall short in their exploration of Elizabeth's monstrosity by overlooking its connection to the creature, lumping her instead with the monstrousness of all women. Halberstam argues that "the grotesqueries of human form are linked, in this novel, to the extreme fear of feminine sexual response" (29). From this idea, Halberstam connects Elizabeth with the female monster (46), but never fully explicates the connection between Elizabeth's fluid identity and monstrousness.

Not only does Elizabeth as a female invoke the echoes of "monstrous" perceptions, but, if monstrosity is defined in terms of Halberstam's "chameleonic" argument, then Elizabeth's identity in the text is also clearly monstrous. Her monstrosity is produced by the third space of other-worldliness, which she both inhabits and creates for Victor. The role she occupies in Victor's life, as well as the life of his family, deconstructs traditional ideas of identity and creates a space where her identity achieves a state of openness and adaptability. Victor states, "No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me" (44). Elizabeth is referred to as his "more than sister" (43). The relationship between Victor and Elizabeth, her multi-faceted role, however, can be argued as incestuous, rather than an embodiment of fluid identity. Gubar argues Elizabeth and Victor's incestuous connection as reflecting that of Milton's Adam and Eve (55). Gubar views incest in Shelley's work as a reflection of "solipsistic self-awareness," extending the incestuous bonds to Frankenstein and his creature (56). Stepping beyond incest as an embodiment of the narcissistic reflection of the self,

Alan Richardson grapples with Darwinian concepts of incest and the explication of Romantic sibling relationships in "Rethinking Romantic Incest: Human Universals, Literary Representation, and the Biology of Mind." Rejecting the Freudian idea of repressed sexual desire, he focuses instead on its absence (558). Looking at the relationship between Victor and Elizabeth in the light of popular evolutionary thinking and cultural developments of the time, he argues that their relationship is idealized (and would have been encouraged to be so) to the point in which Elizabeth becomes Victor's ideal intellectual, ethical, and affectionate partner (564). Such idealization is evidenced in Caroline Frankenstein's departing words to the pair: "my firmest hopes of happiness were placed on the prospect of your union" (*Frankenstein* 49). Richardson argues, however, that a relationship such as Victor's and Elizabeth's could not exist on a sexual level. He contends that the wedding night could never happen because the sibling relationship would be averse to that dimension (564-565). Rather, he claims that Romantic writers like Mary Shelley idealized the incest desire but ended it tragically before any consummation could take place (570). While Richardson's claims for the representation of idealized incestuous desire within *Frankenstein* are well-founded, his argument fails to account for the simultaneous mother role that Elizabeth adopts. In the same breath in which she calls for Victor and Elizabeth's union, Caroline tells Elizabeth: "you must supply my place to my younger children" (49). Elizabeth is thus called upon to simultaneously marry Victor and be the mother of his siblings, complicating the relationship with Victor beyond either Gubar's or Richardson's conceptions of incestuous desire.

Viewing Elizabeth as a reflection of romantic incest or of Victor's own self-awareness neglects to explore the implications of her unfixed identity, her relation to the creature, and her subsequent monstrosity. Elizabeth's identity is established as existing outside of a set role. To Victor she is sister, lover, and friend. She is his mother figure after Caroline's death, as well as his future wife. In relation to Caroline, Elizabeth functions as a daughter, though Caroline never bore her. And, though seen as a daughter, Elizabeth becomes Caroline's replacement, taking on her role as mother to the family. In all of these circumstances, Elizabeth's identity as a female, the role assigned to her by anatomy and society, is both unstable and adaptable. Her role is all-encompassing within their family unit. She resists signification as specifically mother, daughter, sister, or wife and, rather, becomes all. This resistance is achieved through the space created by Elizabeth's other-worldliness, an abstraction attached to her identity that allows for exploration and can be seen as supplement to the ugliness of the creature in the context of identity's plasticity within their mutual monstrosity.

While Elizabeth provides a space for Victor's identity to find multiple outlets of relational expression, the creature represents a space where Victor is able to transgress gender normative roles and take on the aspects of maternal identity in the birthing of a human being. Cynthia Pon argues that "Mary Shelley describes the doomed trajectory of masculine creation that displaces the female" (37). Comparing Walton's voyage of discovery to Frankenstein's quest to create a new species, Pon contends that Frankenstein ultimately fails in his ambitions. Despite his efforts, Victor is only able to create a horrifying vision of himself (36). Pon concludes that masculine reproduction that bypasses the female ultimately creates monstrosity (37-38). Though Pon claims that the creation of the monster does not culminate in a work of originality (37), she is looking only at the results of the "doomed trajectory." In focusing on the creation act itself, Victor's identity can be seen to achieve plasticity and greater dimension. In fact, Victor moves beyond the maternal and aspires further after the god-like. Not only does Victor begin "the creation of a human being," but he also "breaks through" the bounds of "life and death" (*Frankenstein* 58). He is not only looking to bypass a woman, but

also to bypass God. Through the creation of the monster, Victor opens up a space outside of normal creator/created and mother/child binaries. Victor's identity becomes fluid in the third space of masculine/mortal creation in the novel and the monstrosity that is its result.

Both Elizabeth and the monster inhabit spaces that are set apart. In "Facing the Ugly: The Case of *Frankenstein*," Denise Gigante argues for the contrast between Elizabeth and the monster, affirming Elizabeth's connection with the ethereal (572). She argues that the ugliness of the creature places him beneath man, while the angelic beauty of Elizabeth places her in a space beyond (572). The description of Elizabeth's features bears striking resemblance to the later description of the monster and, according to Gigante, sets up a contrast between the two characters. Elizabeth's "brow was clear and gentle" (*Frankenstein* 43), while the monster's "yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath" (60). His "lustrous black hair" (60) is contrasted with her hair of "the brightest living gold" (43). While Elizabeth's lips express "sensibility and sweetness" (43), the creature's are expressionless, "straight" and "black" (60). The most striking comparison, however, lies in the eyes of the two characters. Elizabeth's are described as "blue" and "cloudless" (43), while the monster's are "dull yellow," "watery," and "seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set" (60). In setting up the physical descriptions of Elizabeth and the creature in contrast to one another, a connection is formed between the two characters that can be seen to develop beyond physical appearance. Gigante claims that the physical descriptions of Elizabeth are the embodiment of her character's identity; Victor is not just talking about her "smooth brow" and "blue and cloudless eyes," but rather, these physical descriptions are creating her identity, much in the same way that the creature's ugliness is creating his (572). Viewing physical descriptions in light of this argument adds a new dimension to their relevance in arguing for not only the interchangeability

of Elizabeth and the monster, but also the unique, fluid identities of each.

Elizabeth is referred to as "of a distinct species" (*Frankenstein* 43). She is said to be a "blessing," a "being heaven-sent," and "fairer than a pictured cherub" (43). She is described as "the living spirit of love" and a "saintly soul" (45). Most strikingly, she is referred to as an "apparition" (43), a description that defies definition with the human. An apparition is both unstable and intangible, two qualities that are incompatible with the material nature of a human. This description of Elizabeth, therefore, deconstructs the very nature of her bodily humanity. The physical humanity of the monster is similarly destabilized by his lack of proportion. Halberstam argues: "In this novel, the monster is not human because he lacks the proper body—he is too big, too ugly, disproportionate" (35). Both Elizabeth and the male monster are physically incompatible with "humanness." Elizabeth's ethereal identity is too far beyond the physical, while the creature's physical form and ugliness are an excess of physicality.

Halberstam dissects Elizabeth's difference in physical appearance as blurring the distinction between human and monster (39). She also contends that Elizabeth fails to distinguish between man and monster in the novel, a tendency that forms her as "the new Gothic heroine" (38). Ultimately, Halberstam argues that Elizabeth becomes a "substitute for the female monster" and must be sacrificed to the creature as retribution for Victor's destruction of the female mate (48). Beyond a Gothic heroine, Elizabeth is a monster within the novel. Halberstam's reading of Elizabeth's failure to make the distinction between man and monster only serves to open this possibility. Her difference, her other-worldliness builds upon this argument, but there is more than monstrous similarity. Not only does Elizabeth stand in for the female monster in avenging Victor's destructive act, she resembles the original monster more closely than Halberstam asserts. Halberstam argues that the "male monster represents a sublimity which is missing from the female monster" (50). She sees

this "sublimity" in the male monster as encouraging his connection with Victor, while the female monster's raw representation of "female sexuality" and the female body threatens Victor and drives him to destroy her. In this sense, Elizabeth is more clearly connected to the male monster. Her other-worldliness reflects the sublimity of the creature and forms a space of connection with Victor's identity. In fact, Elizabeth's incompatibility with the raw reality of death, of the gruesomely constructed body further disassociates her from the female monster who offers only that to the text.

Thus establishing the connection between Elizabeth and the male monster, the third space occupied by each character can be further explicated in their identities' relations to the symbolic and imaginary orders. Exploring this aspect of Elizabeth and the monster's identities sheds light on their ultimate compatibility with reality and their ability to maintain a state of fluidity in the novel. Gigante argues that the ugliness of the creature is distinct from the Freudian concept of the uncanny. She states that "while something may be uncanny for one person and yet not so for another, the ugly is universally offensive" (567). Moreover, she claims that, in this way, the creature is "that aesthetic impossibility: the positive manifestation of ugliness" (567). In becoming such a manifestation, the creature is set apart by his ugliness in the same way that Elizabeth is set apart by her ethereality. While Halberstam argues that the creature's ugliness traps him forever in the Lacanian imaginary[2] order (44), Gigante contends that the true horror of ugliness is its threat to "consume and disorder the subject" (569). Both critics, therefore, argue for the monster's embodiment of the imaginary that forever resists the symbolic. The creature's resistance of the symbolic is paramount to the continuation of the fluid identity that the third space of his ugliness creates. Elizabeth can also be seen as resisting the symbolic order, which Gigante claims that Victor defines in his opening statement of his family history as a means of identifying himself (580). Elizabeth's lack of clear origins, the mystery that shrouds her parents' identities, and her own unclear identification within the family structure points to her failure to be incorporated into the symbolic order. Elizabeth's marriage to Victor, however, imposes a structure upon her identity. Incorporating her into the symbolic order by labeling her as Victor's wife, Elizabeth's ethereal nature is drawn into the social structure of a life/death binary with which her identity is ultimately incompatible.

The connection between the identity of Elizabeth and that of the male monster can be seen most clearly in Victor's dream as Elizabeth actually morphs into the monster. Victor's vision of Elizabeth walking "in the bloom of health" transforms first into the corpse of his dead mother and then, upon his waking, into "the miserable monster" (61). The transformation that takes place in this sequence signifies the connection of Elizabeth and the monster, the fluidity of their identities, and their interchangeability.

The intervening image of the dead mother, however, is important to note in the sequence. Julia Kristeva writes: "the abject, on the contrary … is what is radically excluded, drawing me towards the point where meaning collapses" (126). Kristeva's concept of the abject is useful in understanding the identity of the monster, as well as the identity of Elizabeth in the text. The abject, according to Kristeva, repulses because it reminds us of the other. It is unrecognizable and opposed to the object, or the self (126). Abjection entails what is horrifying and repulsive: blood, vomit, corpses, puss, etc.—all of which the *Frankenstein* monster is clearly a prime example. The abject, primarily the corpse, collapses meaning in its jarring reminder of death, specifically our own death, and its breakdown of the self/other, subject/object distinction that is necessary for entrance into the Lacanian symbolic[3] order in which identity is secured in a socially-constructed form (*Introductory Guide to Critical Theory* n. pag.). The interjection of Caroline's corpse into Victor's

dream sequence, therefore, has several curious ramifications when viewed in light of Kristeva's abject. First, Elizabeth's disappearance from the scene at the appearance of the corpse argues for her incompatibility with the reality that death represents. Second, the appearance of the monster that follows the image of the corpse strengthens the connection of the monster with death and reality. Since abjection is associated with the failure to distinguish between subject and object that is prerequisite to the symbolic order, the appearance of the corpse signifies both Elizabeth's and the monster's potential failures to enter into the symbolic. Though placed in a gender role as wife to Victor, Elizabeth's marriage is never consummated. Her death serves to confirm what the interjection of the corpse has already done in Victor's dream: Elizabeth's identity is problematized and broken down by the reality of death. The appearance of the monster following the corpse, however, not only cements the monster's place outside of the symbolic order, but also gives precedence to his identity. The sequential nature of the dream makes Elizabeth and the monster appear interchangeable to Victor, but the ultimate presence of the monster at the dream's ending reveals the creature's superiority over fixed identity. Death, as represented by the corpse, morphs into the monster, and the monster is the only vision which Victor sees while awake, confirming his unyielding and undifferentiated existence.

Devon Hodges argues that "the monster does not desire to be a rebel; he wants to be assimilated into society" (160). He also contends that the creature's "monstrousness is projected on him" (161). Tackling Hodges' first claim, it seems that, while the monster does make an effort at assimilation, it is entirely on his own terms. Declaring himself to be Victor's "fallen angel," rather than his "Adam," the creature assigns himself an identity (93). This identity is not built upon societal structures, but rather the literary work of Milton. The significance of the creature's formation of identity from a literary text lies in the multiplicity of meanings that can be derived from the source. Interpretations of Milton's Satan and Adam are undefined and continually undergoing reassessment. Seen in this light, the monster's identity, therefore, maintains adaptability in its Miltonian foundation.

In telling Victor about his experiences with fire the monster states: "How strange, I thought, that the same cause could produce such opposite effects!" (97). The creature's demand that Victor make him a female mate may appear at first a call for integration into the structures of the symbolic order. However, upon closer examination this request breaks down into a confirmation of the creature's resistance to assimilation that is inherent to his monstrosity. While the call for a female mate seems to fall into the role of a traditional male figure, the monster's demands do not signal assimilation into society. The monster's mate would be equally monstrous. Rather than escaping his monstrosity, the creature's attempt to normalize himself would only result in affirming the very thing which he rejects. A mate fashioned unnaturally in the same manner as the creature would affirm his otherness and inability to integrate into the order of society. Just as fire produced two different effects depending upon the creature's proximity, so the creation of a mate for the monster, though an objectively "normalizing" process of assimilation, would not produce the same effect in the monster's identity as it would in a male member of society.

Marshall Brown argues that the creature as a monster is defined by his "lack of a place in the cosmic order," therefore, "A book about a monster lacks a stable ground for experience" (196). The successful creation of the female monster and the possibility of a future in South America would represent too stable of a development in the creature's identity. He would have a "place in the cosmic order" if his plans succeeded, and the monstrousness that defines his all-encompassing identity would be nullified. Even if his plans did come to fruition, the very fact of the

monster's unnatural development can not be erased. As Brown puts it: the monster "hardly stirs before it walks, feeds, and clothes itself, and within days it has begun to think … long before it learns about speech" (198). The reality of the monstrous nature of the creature's development will always be present, no matter the efforts the creature makes to erase that reality. Brown states: "Nor can monstrosity be localized; it pops up in the most out-of-the-way places" (198). Regardless of the monster's perceived efforts to assimilate into society's identity structures, such a desire will ultimately be resisted, if by nothing else than the monstrosity inherent in the identity of his existence.

Having established that Elizabeth and the creature become interchangeable in the text, both occupying and establishing a third space where their monstrous, fluid identities can exist, the issue of Elizabeth's identity comes to the forefront. Her all-encompassing identity, incompatible with the reality of death, becomes problematic at the murder of William and ultimately breaks down entirely upon her own death. Gubar argues that Elizabeth's complicit guilt in the murder of William is a reflection of the Miltonian concept of Original Sin (55). Beyond this "shared guilt" that Gubar contends is also behind Justine's confession and Victor's remorse, Elizabeth's accusation of herself can be seen as a reflection of the problematic nature of her fluid identity. Elizabeth accuses herself of both the motherhood and the murder of William. She cries out, "I have murdered my darling child!" (72). William, however, is not her child at all. More than anything, William should be a younger brother figure to Elizabeth, who has been adopted into the Frankenstein family. However, at his death, Elizabeth refers to him as if he were her own child. The relationship between Elizabeth and William, as expressed in this statement, is an assumption of maternal authority on the part of Elizabeth and a confirmation of the fluidity of her identity within the Frankenstein family.

Elizabeth's simultaneous accusation of herself as William's murderer, however, speaks to the problematic elements of the space that she occupies within the text. Her all-encompassing identity can only exist in the third space of the ethereal with which she is connected. When confronted with the reality of death, the physical marks of the wounds on William's neck (72), her identity breaks down. The nature of her identity's plasticity becomes detrimental, as she can no longer differentiate between herself and the murderer.

Unlike the death of William, there is no description of the murderous fingerprints upon Elizabeth's neck when the creature strangles her. Instead, her features are at first "half covered by her hair" (167) and later covered by a "handkerchief thrown across her face and neck" (168). Her features are hidden and, in hiding, resist identification with death and bodily corruption. The lack of description speaks to the ethereal nature of Elizabeth that is set apart and can not be associated with the grim disfigurement, the absolute identification of death. The reality of death, however, is everywhere present. Referring back to Victor's dream, death again functions as an intrusion of reality upon the other-worldly third space in which Elizabeth's identity exists. Her own death cements the incompatibility of her fluid identity with a reality outside of the ethereal space that she occupies, her inability to be incorporated into the symbolic order.

The monster, however, is literally created from death and birthed outside of the socially-sanctioned order. An embodiment, not of the ethereal, but of the ugly, a walking corpse himself, the monster simultaneously embodies and resists the power of the abject. Rather than incompatibility with the symbolic order, the monster's identity can be seen as existing beyond it in such a way that the binary of life and death holds no power over him. His fluid identity is allowed to exist through the end of the novel. The monster does not die, but is "borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance" (189). This ending neither

places the monster within any sort of structured identity nor destroys him. Rather, the "darkness and distance" merely obscure and dissolve his form. Ultimately the monster retains his fluid identity to the end, unable to be integrated into or dismantled by any symbolic order or fixed representation. His final blurring into the background marks the success of the third space created by his ugliness in fostering a hybridity that is able to resist both the abject and the binary of life and death.

The construction of third spaces in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* complicates and enhances traditional readings of identity and monstrosity in the text. Through viewing Elizabeth's other-worldliness and the monster's ugliness as spaces in which identity becomes fluid, both characters can be seen to share in Halberstam's hybrid concept of monstrosity. While the introduction of the abject in Victor Frankenstein's dream initiates the incompatibility of Elizabeth's identity with the symbolic order, the scene simultaneously asserts the monster's resistance to and authority over signification. Problematized and broken down, the ethereal third space of Elizabeth's identity can not exist when confronted with the reality of a life/death binary. The monster, on the other hand, simultaneously composed of and resisting the abject, maintains an unfixed identity that persists to the end, his "boundless grandeur" merely becoming shrouded in darkness.

Notes

[1] Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs* 1.4 (1976): 875-893. Web. *JSTOR.* 12 Dec. 2011.

[2] The *Frankenstein* monster is frequently viewed as a character unassimilated into the symbolic order. See Collings, David. "The Monster and the Maternal Thins: Mary Shelley's Critique of Ideology." *Frankenstein.* Ed. Johanna M. Smith. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2000. 280-294. Print.

[3] The Lacanian Order is composed of three parts: the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. While the real can never be attained, it is what we always strive for and can never attain once we have been initiated into language. The Imaginary order is both narcissistic and idealized; within the imaginary, the "I" is composed of the perceived self as reflected in another. Finally, the symbolic order initiates the self into the established social order that is built upon commonly accepted signs and language. See Felluga, Dino. "Lacan, the Structure of the Psyche." *Introductory Guide to Literary Theory:* < http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacanstructure.html>

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I SEE THE BODY ELECTRIC: A CORPUS APPROACH TO DESCRIBING PROBLEMS OF THE MONSTROUS BODY IN MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*

BY JEREMIAH ALLEN

Derrida's conflation of difference/deference makes the important observation about the gap between the sign and nature. The indeterminacy of the relationship is as problematic as the indeterminacy of whether one, when speaking French, is saying *différance* or *différence*. As I type this, my word processor makes a command decision: both words were auto-corrected to the English word "difference." Likewise, the distinction between the psychological and the physical, or what I call the "internal" and the "external," is lost in the "gap" between sign and signified when modern audiences read a text such as *Frankenstein*. Part of the problem is that the physical nature of the monster is nebulous in the original novel: he is never adequately (to our modern obsessions with the visual, anyway) described. In our modern idiom, we demand physicality, and we invent it when it is not there, usurping the referent just as *MS Word* attempted to usurp my command of language. Due to the gap between the internal and the external of the novel, the hole that supplants the wholeness that we expect has forced us to reinterpret Shelley's work to reflect our obsession with the visual, cum the physical.

The lack of a clear description of Shelley's monster becomes a major problem for us, and our filmic adaptations of the novel are a reaction to this lack. The body therefore is the most significant contributing factor in a discussion of cultural usage of this missing referent of the novel, and filmmakers appropriate the creature's body as a place of cultural discourse because of both its emptiness and its resultant horror.

Part of the enduring fascination with *Frankenstein* is that it contains many mythic elements: universal signs that exist within the murky realm(s) of the collective unconscious. In contemporary culture, movies serve as our mythology. The mythic elements that we see in the psychological details of the novel are portrayed for us on screen in Technicolor detail—full of lust, violence, and gore. Of course, the visual medium of film has promoted the already primal dominance of the visual sense, and critics and pop psychologists are already tired of deprecating the medium for its pandering, if they are not quite ready to give up on accusing movie studios of inflating the obsession. Regardless, several filmic adaptations of the novel give us glimpses of the mythic elements, and the places where they differ from the novel certainly defer to the sign, which I deem to be the co-opting of the gap between the novel's psychology and the films' physicality. There is a gap in meaning present here, that cannot be denied, but it is obfuscated by this new dominant referent.

The core mythic element in *Frankenstein* is the body. It is appropriate to start with this concept given the body of works we have today that relate to "Frankenstein"—and here, I am referring to "Frankenstein" as a mythology, not as a character in the novel or movies, nor any one particular work, but the juggernaut concept, packed with the mythic and expressed through mythos. Anytime I refer to "Frankenstein" with quotations, I refer to this *conceptualizing*. I have chosen to go with the progressive *–ing* gerund ending here for "conceptualize," rather than the more common *–ation*, to emphasize the active, evolving nature of myth. Just as the twentieth century mythos is an amalgamation of cultural scraps, the body of the creature is cobbled together from various parts; apropos of such, the problem of the absence of physicality will be illustrated here through linguistic research. The use of a corpus of historic English will remove us from the confounding elements of plot, theme, structure, and production, and help deliver us to the universal.

The Language

Four binary pairs that are paradigmatic of Mary Shelley's 1818 (and 1836 revised) novel *Frankenstein* were queried in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). This corpus searches for individual words or phrases within its database of millions culled from texts across all print media over the last two centuries. I specifically looked at the two decades in which the two editions of Shelley's novel were published, in the 1930s when James Whale's filmic adaptation was produced, and the 1990s, in which Kenneth Branagh made his critically acclaimed adaptation just as a number of other films with "Frankenstein" elements seemingly culled from the same charnel house entered the culture. The binaries used in the study are human/inhuman, creature/creator, man/monster, and natural/unnatural.

What immediately stands out is that adjectives which appear as collocates (words that appear within four words of the targeted search word) have categorically decreased when they describe internal/abstract characteristics (such as "charming, "gentle") and increased when they describe physical attributes (such as "small," exotic," "bipedal") when comparing the decades of the book's original publication and revision to the twentieth century. For instance, three common collocate adjectives of the word "monster" during the early nineteenth century are "hideous," grim," and "horrid." In the twentieth century, these words have decreased significantly: the ratios of usage comparing the decades 1810 and 1830 to 1940 and 1990 stand at 40:1, 28:1, and 20:1 respectively, while "tiny," "big," and "hairy" have increased, with ratios comparing the latter to former decades of 17:1, 13:1, and 12:1[1]. Additionally, adjective collocates of the word "man" that decreased the most since the Romantic era include "benevolent," "honorable," and "well-informed." In the twentieth century, these descriptors saw a decrease in usage, having declined by ratios of 127:1, 66:1, and 54:1, respectively, while

"blond," "wiry," and "heavy-set" leaped up to comparable late-to-early ratios of 90:1, 88:1, and 80:1, respectively. These initial results suggest that the twentieth century is much more fixated on physicality than the nineteenth. It is a hypothesis that proves out.

While the collocates of "human" have undergone a lot of change since the nineteenth century, the collocates of inhuman have been more static. The top three collocates from the nineteenth century only declined in ratios as high as 13:1, which is a low number. The collocates that became more popular in the twentieth century had ratios over the nineteenth century only as high as 5:1. Most of these collocates are abstract adjectives such as "barbarous," "unwise," "brutal," "monstrous," and "strange." Unlike with "monster," "man," and "human," these do not divide into internal and external. Perhaps this is because "inhuman" is usually an adjective, and is itself rather abstract.

As the abstract concept of inhumanity is certainly a concern for Shelley (she often raises the question of who is more human in the story—Frankenstein or his monster), an even more prominent abstract concept is that of a creator. According to COHA results, the concept of the word "creator" seems to encounter a paradigmatic shift over the course of history that should surprise few modern critics, but does have considerable bearing on modern interpretation of myth. Two prominent collocates of "creator" are "infinite" and "human." "Infinite" has seen the steepest decline since the nineteenth century, with a ratio of 27:1, while "human" has seen a slight increase of 8:1. The contexts (the actual quoted material) listings on the COHA show that "human" here is not usually an adjective of "creator," but rather of "being." However, those human beings are being considered against a creator, or as a "creation." While we in the twentieth century may no longer be so heavily interested in the "infinite" nature of our creator, it seems we are not ready to give up on the idea of God quite yet. Certainly for "Frankenstein," the confusion

between creator and created is a problem presented by the text. The God question rears its monstrous head in depictions of Victor's inadequacies as both a creator and a benevolent force in his creature's life.

"Frankenstein" often grapples with theological concepts. The role of scientist as creator was a controversial topic of Shelley's time—many romantics had problems with science's purported objectivity, as well as with its disdain for aesthetics and intuition (Ziolkowski 35). *Frankenstein* is as at least as much a critique of science as it is of religion. It is possible that Shelley, in complete accord with her times, was deliberately criticizing science for attempting to penetrate the domain of the spiritual. In this instance, the corpus data, at the very least, indicates that these then-common uses of religiously derived words mean that they were at least subconscious influences to nineteenth century writers such as Shelley.

The last word queried in the corpus was "unnatural." Like many of the other words used in this analysis, the results indicated that in the twentieth century, the most common collocates were adjectives that described physicality. Examples of collocates which declined in usage after the nineteenth century are "improbable," "monstrous," "unreasonable," and "cruel," with ratios of 20:1, 20:1, 20:1, and 14:1, respectively. Collocates that increased in the twentieth century include "stiff," "dirty," "heavy," and "alone," with ratios of 8:1, 6:1, 6:1, and 6:1. Like "inhuman," "unnatural" is abstract, and similar to "inhuman," it is always an adjective. However, unlike "inhuman," "unnatural" does not have many twentieth century collocates that are also abstract ideas. However, the nineteenth century collocates are abstract.

Difficulties arise in making assumptions about a word that is purely an adjective based on its adjectival collocates, because those words are not describing the adjective in question, of course, but a nearby noun. For example, we cannot assume that people thought more abstractly in the nineteenth century about an adjective as if it were a noun as when we

conclude that words like "man" used to be discussed in terms of external rather than internal qualities. Therefore, the most one can conclude is that, in general in the nineteenth century, "inhuman" was used alongside other abstract adjectives, but whatever nouns the word is being used to describe now are thought of in more concrete and physical terms.

This raises the question of which nouns were collocates of "inhuman" in the twentieth century. The top four noun collocates on COHA are "treatment," "body," "things," and "sound." Most of these words are concrete, and all can be described as physical. They have all declined in use since the nineteenth century. One may surmise, then, based on these results and those above, that there has been a general change in human thought in the twentieth century, one that favors the concrete and physical over the abstract and internal. *Frankenstein* itself, as a novel, while containing many descriptions of the physical body, is not as visual and graphic as its later adaptations will be. Without a doubt, the cinema has played directly into the human fascination with the visual, and it must have some effect on our thoughts. If we do conceive of things in more concrete and physical terms, then it should affect our language as much as any other aspect of our culture.

The twentieth century is notably more concerned with the physical function of the body than even aesthetics, let alone supposedly "less shallow" aspects of human personality. Bouriana Zakharieva involves her criticism with most of the canonical depictions of Frankenstein in film. She notes that "what in the novel is allotted a mere paragraph with no details of the actual process, only a description of the result, i.e., the appearance of the creature, becomes in the films an elaborate, highly visualized scene of creation" (417). Both Whale and Branagh place the creation of the monster at their film's visual center. In the films, the focus shifts away from the psychological aspects of creation upon which Shelley spends the first act of the novel elaborating. We will table these concerns

for the time being in order to innumerate those psychological aspects present in the original work, while keeping in mind the corpus data above as a basis for discussion.

The Novel

A key scene from the novel illustrates the linguistic and metaphysical problems of textual binaries. In a conversation between Walton and Victor Frankenstein, which occurs early in the novel, Frankenstein states that:

> [W]e are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. (38)

Of the many linguistically opposed complications that stand out in this passage, the close binarism of "human creature" is the most striking. This is a troubling connection because a great deal of the novel hinges on the idea that the difference between humanity and inhumanity are a matter of perspective. When the creature finally reveals himself to De Lacey, he is not perceived as a monster (in fact, he is not perceived at all by the blind man). However, as perceived by the rest of the De Lacey family, he is a monster; he is abhorred because of his hideous form (121). This issue only reflects the ultimate proclamation by his own maker, Dr. Frankenstein, who flees from the sight of his hideous creation. Therefore, the monster possesses both humanity and inhumanity. Both of these concepts are manifested physically to the De Laceys, but they cannot see his humanity, the chief internal characteristic of compassion, which the monster shows he is capable of expressing (by gathering firewood for the De Laceys, or when he later saves the young girl from drowning), because

of the overwhelming external ugliness. However, we do not "see" what they see. There is a cognitive gap between what the characters perceive and what Shelley describes to the reader.

A further complication with the above passage lies in what is indicated by "unfashioned," and "weak, and faulty." While the creature is "fashioned" into what he is (both internally and externally) by Dr. Frankenstein, he is not fashioned in much detail by Shelley's words. It is left to our imaginations to supply the detail of what nightmarish form the creature should take. What does this mean in relation to the Corpus data, which suggests that there was less of an obsession with physical form, pre-twentieth century (and the advent of cinema)? Perhaps Shelley's words could not do justice to the spectral form the creature took in her imagination. The Corpus data validates this point in that nineteenth century adjectives in general described internal characteristics. Despite the Corpus, I am still greatly concerned by the lack of any physical body in the novel. The "weak and faulty" nature that Frankenstein refers to is not a reflection of his creation; he is alluding to himself. He realizes that the physical body of his creation is vastly superior, but he was not able to endow the creation with physical beauty. His grasp of science failed to create a humanity that could be seen as such through humanity's own eyes.

The gap between the constructed body that Shelley doesn't show us and the complicated internal framework of the creature then is the point of the passage: the horror of the creature is meant to reflect the horror buried within our own unconscious—the weaknesses within ourselves, which we repress. Derrida sees a similarity in language, arguing that:

> [N]ature is affected—from without—by an overturning which modifies it in its interior, denatures it and obliges it to be separated from itself. Nature denaturing itself, being separated from itself, naturally gathering its outside into its inside, is catastrophe, a natural event that overthrows nature, or monstrosity, a natural deviation within nature. (33)

The monster in Shelley's novel hides within not only the internal, "psychological" being of the reader, but in the words themselves, because of their lack of a referent. This is a gap within a gap, the monster within the monster. Perhaps this explains the uncanny psychological grasp that the novel seems to have on us, and the reason why we so strongly need to express it in cinema: because the monster (with lack of a body) reaches out from within the void of the text and demands us to supply it with a body of meaning. Hollywood is happy to oblige. We become the close friends that Victor Frankenstein needs to fashion the "weak and faulty" nature of the text, which has become a gross and monstrous void of humanity.

When dealing with the monstrous, perception permeates myth. Jay Clayton deconstructs the role of the monster in *Frankenstein*, likening him to Medusa, claiming that the gaze of the monster is more troubling than seeing him, for "[a]lthough the monster in Shelley's novel is hideous to look at, Frankenstein himself feels more keenly the horror of the creature looking at him. In this respect, Shelley reverses the terms of monstrosity." I like Clayton's allusion, but I do not see the same incongruity that he sees. Shelley has not reversed the direction of the gaze. The monster is hideous in that we cannot see him, but also in that he follows and watches his creator, unseen. The Medusa myth plays on that same fear. To look upon Medusa means certain death, yet she is free to look on her victims with impunity. The monster, remember, cannot be seen; he is hidden within the gaps of text and language, and therefore the horror is compounded by the fact that he can see us. Clayton invokes another work of Derrida's, where he synthesizes his argument as a reaction to "fac[ing] … the impossibility of describing the unnamable in positive terms." As Clayton notes:

> [Derrida] chooses a significant figure to fill the void, that of a

> monster. … [H]e includes himself among those who "turn their eyes away when faced by the yet unnamable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the non-species, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity."[2]

Derrida strikes on something that is equally terrifying about language as it is about the novel. Language tends to mask these gaps of the unknown with deferral of meaning, where Shelley's novel makes no such pretenses. She allows this terror to form in the psyche of her reader, precisely by allowing the gap to form. There is something about the unknown, or the misunderstood (which we can claim is an aspect of Frankenstein's creature), that is terrifying.

The Films

Clayton reviews the etymology of "monster": its Latin origin is *monstrare*—to show. The monster that hides within the gap (within the gap) demands that he be shown. It is no surprise, then, that this is precisely the work that the filmic adaptations of "Frankenstein" take up. The "introduction" to James Whale's 1931 film indicates that it intends to show the monster in all its gruesomeness. This appears as a warning that some of what the audience is about to see is very "shocking." More importantly, Zakharieva tells us that:

> The innovation of the composite body, of creation through cutting and montage, brings the ideology of *Frankenstein* closer to the aesthetics of cinema. As the principle of montage in cinema works against the classical aesthetics of representation and undermines the idea of authenticity, so does the composite Monster problematize the idea that natural man is an integral being. This Monster also questions the limits and nature of organic as an axiomatic given, the binary opposition of the given verses the produced, nature versus culture. (419)

It is not so much the "shocking" elements of the monster's body that the language of "Frankenstein" films consists of, but the political aspects. While Derrida and the poststructuralists call into question the concept of "nature," the concept of culture tends more and more to stand not for an opposite or a binary, but an irrevocable lens with which we view "nature"—whatever "nature" may be. How we see the monster in filmic representations is a direct corollary to this notion: we see the monster move, kill, sometimes talk, and certainly act, but he does so out of our paradigm, not his. We must remember as we venture forth that the monster has no context of his own; he never has. Each time we see the monster, he is an idiomatic expression—an invention, if you will—of the circumstances that stitched him together just as the celluloid that contains him was stitched together.

The most salient point critics have made about the differences between book and movie is that we must do something with the monster's body physically. What that seems to have meant was to make a new binarism out of physique and language, so that the monster may no longer speak. The role of two kinds of language, spoken language and that of the body, are suddenly juxtaposed over the old binary of internal/external. When Jodie Picart conducts her seminal analysis of Frankenstein in movies, she notes:

> [The] tense dialectic binding word and image, which is at the heart of the novel, becomes radically reworked, particularly as we now see the monster before we see him speak—the chaos of his physicality takes center stage, and he can no longer, as in the novel, deprive us of the sight of his mangled and mismatched body. (17)

Picart's language suggests that when "Frankenstein" hit the cinema, the

monster could no longer lurk in the psyche or within linguistic gaps. She goes on to compare the original Universal features with the later TriStar *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, where she echoes Derrida's language in describing the monstrous, calling the creature "child-like," but adds that this humanizes the creature (26). Picart notes, however, that this humanization is quickly eschewed by filmmakers when they transform the monster into a horror icon:

> [T]he Universal series ends up transforming the creature into a mindless automaton—a standard horror prop that is momentarily resurrected, only to enact a ritualistic chase and destruction by an angry mob. By the end of the Universal series, the Frankenstein monster simply becomes one of a coterie of horrors, inclusive of Count Dracula and the Wolfman; worse, it becomes a sick and inferior monster not only physically but mentally. (26-27)

This depiction of the monster is an obvious contrast to Shelley's depiction in the novel. The easy answer is that the movie is much more interested in presenting a physical terror than a psychological one.

Picart's is a fascinating juxtaposition. The very thing that allows us to sympathize with the monster is the very thing that causes us to recoil in horror. These binaries are so tightly related, they seem conjoined. While the clumsy awkwardness of Whale's monster—its childlike behavior—can be endearing, it can also be frighteningly unpredictable, resembling an out-of-control toddler. However, in this case, the infant cannot be overpowered or put under our control: very like a wild beast. Therefore, our fear of the monster is a fear that not only stems from the unknowable but also encompasses a fear of what we cannot control—and in language, this is a truism: we cannot be precise with our meaning, and the more words we use to articulate a particularity, the more we lose control of the growing number of referents.

The fear of an out of control monster run-amok is just one of the fears lurking within the empty referent. However, the abundance of horror apparent in the myth is rife with opportunities for co-opting. As Paul O'Flinn argues, the twentieth century adaptations of "Frankenstein" were the product of a complex collision of political values: those of its capitalist backers, the intellectual concerns of the artists involved, and, of course, the broad audience whose "populist" interests the film could not avoid addressing (34). The novel's own empty referent is co-opted to become a political narrative; the absent body of the monster is substituted with the body politic of twentieth century America. O'Flinn notes that "there are no immutable fears in human nature to which horror stories always speak in the same terms … rather those images need to be repeatedly broken up and reconstituted if they are to continue to touch people" (34). Broken up are many of the images of the novel, a good deal of which are the depiction of the monster. The silent lumbering beast replaces the articulate creature of the novel, who, in the Whale film, instead of being given a voice is accidentally given the "abnormal" brain of a criminal. Zakharieva argues that the "anthropological features—large, flat-domed skull, sinking black water eyes, long clumsy hands, and large stumbling legs—define it in terms of 'savageness' or debility conceived by those racial theories" (420). This post-colonial articulation, an instance of the film's co-opting of the previously undisplayed body of the monster, is quite a common use of the monster-gap problem, which becomes a representation of the political.

The historical-political implications for O'Flinn are that the horror of the inhuman(e) monster's murderous tendency reflects the insecurities of a Depression-era United States on the verge of entering an enormous war in Europe, what he calls an "intervention in its world rather than just a picture of it or a retreat from it, a practice whose extent is marked out by a reconstruction of the text" (38). This engagement is little more than a usurpation of the monster's body, a forceful repurposing that glosses over

the psychic mess with which Shelley presents us, reducing the body to a commodity. This others the monster into the role of "shadow," or what Picart deems the "'not I' … instantiated in the realms of the feminine, the body, people of color, and anything else that deviates from rational ego-consciousness" (19). Accordingly, the uncertainty of Depression-era United States saw plenty to scapegoat, and this is one more hijacking of the empty referent, a place for the monster to reveal himself in vivid ugliness.

Even more of a contrast is Branagh's version of the monster, who comments on and questions his body. He wonders aloud to his creator, of whose body is he comprised and were they good or bad people and do their moral character have any bearing on his. Zakharieva calls this the "hypercorporality":

> [T]he Creature discusses his own body, and this body—fragmented, ambiguous, abject—which he can comprehend nor apprehend … is a body that "remembers" (and it is a "re-membered" body); it knows and acts out of knowledge; in other words, it is already discursive. … [In Branagh's version], the body stands out because it is problematic. Being disorderly and creating disorder, the body becomes visible, not "transparent." The dysfunctional body, hence, is made to function aesthetically. (425-26)

In this latest film, the role of the body comes full circle: instead of being hidden away in the discursive gaps of the narrative, or being simply abjectified as in the Whale film, the body becomes a discourse in its own right.

The idea that the monster should represent something less abstract than linguistic and narrative uncertainties has long been popular with critics. What the monster in the novel represents has long been fodder for discussion. Typical answers are the other, the feminine, science, etc. The movies sometimes buy into these intellectualizations, but since the movie versions heavily fetishize the physicality of the monster, it is possible that they more basically work to relieve the terror of the unknown that Derrida posits. One could argue that the fear of the unknown is what underlies these physical—often increasingly violent—portrayals, and that they fail to assuage our deep-seated fears. However, one fascinating aspect of horror films as a genre is that what shocked audiences in past generations no longer produces the same effect with later audiences.

What these films are more likely doing is trying to depict rather than relieve these fears, but the visual language they use becomes trite simply because the ever-progressing technical aspect of filmmaking keeps pushing audiences' expectations of how violence is portrayed. It is the same with the other great taboo that we fetishize on the screen: the sex act. I do not need to innumerate how portrayals of physical sex have become more explicit and increasingly less suggestive throughout the history of cinema, especially over the last forty years. Picart notes that Branagh's film portrays an "unabashed display of sexuality, and startling[ly] showcase[s] … dismembered body parts, yet does so with a certain deftness that prevents these technical resonances from being mere clichés" (26). "Frankenstein" merely evolves with the times. If he rears his ugly head, it is not because we seek to de-repress, but because he demands to be seen, to crawl up from the depth of the psyche—but he must do so on each generation's terms.

When we title a movie as "Frankenstein," we have to contend with the baggage of not only what Mary Shelley wrote, but also what she refused to write. Instead of the failing of science, or of a single man, or of the family as the center of the narrative, we have a body to represent whatever it is politically and culturally convenient to impose upon it. That monster, particularly the fact that his body is an empty referent, plays on repressed fears, and we cannot transcend or assuage those fears,

but must continually hide them behind representations. Finally, the creature becomes the quintessential scapegoat for whatever fears we wish to heap upon him. At the end of each Frankenstein movie, one thing is certain: the monster must be destroyed. We must send the creature back to the void from whence he crawled (or out of which we dragged him), but the body is continually resurrected as we find new uses for him, new fears to cast upon him, and new ways of explaining his monstrosity.

Notes

[1] From here on, I will continue to refer to ratios which compare usage of collocates in the 1810/1840 decades to those of 1940/1990 without explicitly mentioning these dates. The numbers have also been rounded to the nearest whole.

[2] I disagree slightly with Clayton's overall argument here: that the post-modern study of the past necessarily produces incongruities of visions (i.e., the lenses of theoretics) that appear to us as monstrous. I think we recoil in horror more over our contemporary misunderstandings—the actual build-up of narrative that the sediment of history has deposited on today's culture—then on academic perspective (which tries to cut through the former), which, at least to me personally, is often refreshing.

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"EVERLASTING NIGHT" AND "IMMORTAL HEAT": JOHN DONNE'S AND GEORGE HERBERT'S VISIONS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

BY EMILY KEERY

Critics are divided over the specific religious position of Donne's and Herbert's poetry. Both poets were ministers in the Church of England; however, there was an internal divide within the church between those who favored a liturgical, ritualistic High Church model and those who supported the Puritan Calvinist emphasis on Scripture and simplicity.[1] In the case of Donne, this debate is complicated by his personal history growing up Catholic and converting to Protestantism. For Herbert, critics engage in a similar debate, some calling on his use of shape poetry and images, like altars and windows, to place him under Catholic influence, whereas others appeal to his simple style and heavy reliance on Scripture to argue his poetry reflects Calvinism.[2]

In the midst of this debate, there are some critics who see a third way between the two competing religious factions. For one, Anne-Marie Miller Blaise argues that Herbert defines his "theology of beauty" from his study at Cambridge of pre-Reformation sources (2). These pre-Reformation sources, the Church Fathers and Augustine, allow Herbert to escape the debate of his day, since the Church Father's believed in religious emblems and icons, while Augustine also encouraged poetic language if based on simplicity and the Bible (2, 8). Taking a slightly different approach, Frances Cruickshank argues Donne and Herbert "both make the argument, explicitly and demonstrably, that poetry is a special and privileged mode of religious discourse, a productive way of affronting material existence and turning it to spiritual and literary account" (10).

Cruickshank sees both poets fleeing to this specialized discourse, poetry, to escape the religious debates of their day. For Cruickshank, the region of poetry allows the authors access to a spiritual realm with a degree of socio-cultural transcendence (13). In this view, within the text a neutral ground can be found between Anglo-Catholic and Calvinist ideas.

While critics who strongly side with a particular religious influence on Donne and Herbert present interesting ways of seeing the texts, deconstructing the strict binaries between Anglo-Catholic and Calvinist influence on the poets proves most fruitful. When not bound to a particular faction, Donne and Herbert can be freed to represent their own particular blend of Protestantism, often combining ideas from the different traditions. Specifically, both Donne's and Herbert's images of Christ act as verbal icons for Ignatian meditation, which seeks to lead the reader to spiritual sanctification (the process of the Christian growing closer to or being purified by God). For Donne, this meditation is for the purpose of personal transcendence from a state of spiritual anxiety; for Herbert, the images work to facilitate corporate meditation (the act of meditating in a group as one would in a church congregation), much like a liturgy. This reveals an underlying difference in their visions of Christian faith. Donne sees Christianity worked out primarily with the individual seeking God a God who pursues, whereas Herbert sees the Christian in a community made up of individuals turning to God.

Building on Heather Asals's work on "Anglo-Catholic" influence on Herbert, Blaise argues that Herbert's poetry functions as "verbal icons" (12). Blaise explains, "words, in Herbert's poetry, really become a new verbal equivalent of icons as defined by Byzantine patristics" (12). These icons are situated in a Protestant theology where the image is contemplated in order to lead the Christian to the divine, not act as a substitute or mediator for God. In this way, the icon is "an extension of the Incarnation" since the study of the image will lead to the study

of the incarnate Jesus, the ultimate material symbol representing God (12). Herbert's concrete depictions of specific images, such as Christ's passion, present the reader with a mental image to contemplate and acts as a religious icon leading to contemplation of the divine. These images are verbal in that they are made with words and meant to be sensually experienced through the eyes and ears. They are icons in that they are concrete images for the purpose of facilitating Christian worship.[3]

The idea of verbal icons can be extended to Donne's poetry as well because, in *Holy Sonnets*, he too presents concrete images, which work to lead the reader to a state of spiritual transcendence. Cruickshank argues that both Donne and Herbert were "incarnationalists" since "their poetics took account of the pressure of sensible things on abstract thought, and used that pressure to shape an imaginative response . . . They rather treat the synergy of outward and inward as a productive one, bearing the imprimatur of the Incarnation itself" (1). This idea works along with that of verbal icons: a physical icon is a sensual experience of the material with the purpose of guiding the mind to the spiritual, non-material. Verbal icons use sensory language in order to present the image which works in the imagination guiding the mind to higher, spiritual thoughts. Both Donne's and Herbert's iconic images are primarily of Christ, thus doubly working with ideas of incarnation—depicting the Incarnate Christ and calling on a perfect combination of spiritual and physical in the image itself. It is this melding of focus on the outward image and inner spiritual state which allows Donne and Herbert to blend Anglo-Catholic and Calvinist influences.

"Holy Sonnet XIII" portrays Donne's use of verbal icons. The speaker says, "Mark in my heart, O soul, where thou dost dwell, / The picture of Christ crucified" (2-3). In these lines, the verbal icon is presented in "Christ crucified," and the reader is to "mark" this image. One meaning for "mark" is "to make the sign of the cross" upon oneself (*OED*). When

the reader is to focus on the image of Christ on the cross, the goal is for this image to become imprinted upon his/her soul. The physical image interacts with the spiritual state of the observer. This image is described in detail using Petrarchan techniques of isolating specific body parts: "tears in his eyes" and "Blood fills his frowns, which from his pierced head fell" (5,6). In this way, the speaker paints the picture the soul is to visualize.

Not only does the speaker call upon the image of Christ, but he/she also calls upon the reader to place his/herself in relation to this image. The soul must face the image of the cross "and tell / Whether that countenance can thee affright" (3-4). There is an expected emotional response to the image for which each individual soul must give account. The fear here seems to refer back to the first line, "What if this present were the world's last night?" (1). The picture of Christ on the cross is in the context of eternal judgment at the end of the world. Thus. the soul views this image filled with questions about its relationship to Christ. Has the speaker properly "marked" the message of the cross or will he/she be eternally damned? This fear is obviously one commonly related to Calvinists searching for assurance of their inclusion in the elect. The speaker calls upon this common fear in Donne's day in order to question not only individual status before God but also if Christ himself is compassionate. The central question of the poem is "can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell, / Which prayed forgiveness for his foes' fierce spite?" (7-8). In the end, the speaker seems to come to peace with this question using a line of reasoning that beauty is a sign of compassion so "This beauteous form assures a piteous mind" (14). In this reasoning, the image of Christ and its beauty is critical to answering the question of eternal damnation. Again, Anglo-Catholic emphasis on image works in tandem with Calvinist questions of the soul's election. Together these ideas comprise the theological emphasis of this poem: the verbal icon of the cross must be meditated on in order to answer metaphysical questions

of Christian salvation and eternal judgment.

However, these Anglo-Catholic and Calvinist ideas do not easily fit together for Donne. More than anxiety over individual salvation in the face of eternal judgment, the speakers in Donne's poems often wrestle with contemplating imagery at all. Likely, informed by his Catholic background, Donne is intently aware that contemplating images can easily lead to idolatry and an overemphasis on the material. For this reason, critics debate how to best read Donne's speakers' reactions to iconic images, like the crucifixion, in his poetry. In the seminal work *The Poetry of Meditation*, Louis Martz connects Donne's and Herbert's poetry with Ignatian meditation, where the Christian was to imagine Christ and consider their own soul in relation to this image (Oliver 112, Schoenfeldt 562). Martz argued that Donne's speakers imagined the cross in order to emotionally relate to the suffering in the act of meditation (562).

In response, P M Oliver, a strong contender for Donne's poetry being Calvinist, argues Donne boldly rejected Catholicism and his Jesuit past (115). Where it seems like Donne uses Iganatian meditation, Oliver argues Donne enacts "parody-meditation" where the speaker uses ideas from Ignatian meditation to ultimately subvert Catholic ideas as "Igantian motifs in the poem are made to clash with Protestant, Calvinist ones" (116). While Oliver sees both Anglo-Catholic and Calvinistic views at work in Donne's poetry, he ultimately sees Calvinism winning out.. Likewise, Schoenfeldt agrees that within Donne's poetry elements of Calvinism can be clearly seen, particularly in his speaker's hesitation to look directly on the image of Christ's crucifixion. The fact the speaker never faces the cross in "Goodfriday, 1613, Riding Westward" not only proves the speaker's mistrust of the image but also violates liturgical decorum as "one was never supposed to turn one's back on a superior" (Schoenfeldt 569). Still, Schoenfeldt reminds that the speaker internally recreates in detail the Passion and, as a result, "participates, albeit provisionally,

in the Catholic meditative processes [argued by Martz]" (570). Here, Schoenfeldt helpfully allows the act of meditation, as explained by Martz, to connect to even the more abstract images of Donne's and Herbert's poetry. Since the iconic images have been transferred into the imagination and psychological landscape of the speaker, they can often be displaced from concrete into a metaphor for the concrete image. The idea behind the concrete image, in Schoenfeldt's example the pain of the cross, is expressed and meditated upon. Still the act of mediation allows for the same result for a metaphor for the cross as a concrete depiction of the cross.

Similarly, Martz's ideas of reading Donne's poetry as Ignatian meditation can define how the reader interacts with the verbal icons found in the poetry. Meditating on the image of Christ as depicted by Donne and Herbert, the reader joins in with the poet in the stage of "compositio" working out the image in his/her imagination (Martz 112). In this way, the reader moves from considering the word-images to spiritual realities. Thus, Blaise's ideas on verbal icons are best used in tandem with Martz's and others' reading of images by means of this Ignatian method. This act of meditation also balances the Anglo-Catholic emphasis on the image of Christ with the Calvinist insistence on "sola Christi" and spiritual realities over physical ones. Ultimately, the influence of Calvinism on Herbert and Donne causes them often to distance concrete iconic images by means of metaphor in an effort to avoid idolatrous readings. Ironically, using more abstract metaphors actually makes the reader concentrate more intently on the metaphor and draw concrete connections to the image it evokes. In the end, the result is the same as a more concrete image: meditation on the metaphor leads to Ignatian meditation.

This has many implications for defining Donne's vision of Christianity. For Donne, meditation on a verbal icon is for the purpose of personal transcendence from a state of spiritual anxiety. The focus is on the individual Christian working to define his/her spiritual status. For example, in "Holy Sonnet XIII," the speaker looks to their own personal reasoning to answer if Christ is compassionate. No external sources of knowledge or assurance are sought and only the personal "my heart" is examined (2). Christ's character is defined in the internal, individual act of mediation. The poem acts becomes an inner dialogue between the speaker and his soul, where the image of Christ leads to personal reflection. Like a mirror, the cross causes the speaker to examine his/her own soul. Even though the end of the world is the context of this poem, there is no evoking of mass judgment or collective humanity experiencing tribulations. The center of the judgment is the individual soul before the judging Christ. The only other people featured in the poem are "my profane mistresses," a clearly negative portrayal (10). Thus, when outside community is introduced into the poem, the connotation is it leads the soul away from God. In this way, Donne illustrates a model of Christianity where the individual looks to the cross for internal, personal reasons. The Christian must be cautious of external community and understand that, at the end of the world, the primary judgment will be an individual one.

Donne's views of the Christian self before God can be further seen in "A Hymn to Christ, at the Author's Last Going into Germany." The speaker starts the poem with the image of a ship calling it an "emblem of thy ark" (2). He paints the picture of a boat on the ocean as a metaphor for Christ's blood saying, "that flood / Shall be to me an emblem of thy blood" (3-4). Conflating the biblical story of Noah and Christ's death, the speaker compares the God of the Flood and Christ. God's judgment caused the Flood much like it was poured out on Christ on the cross caused a sea of His blood. Now in looking out at the ocean, the speaker is led to contemplate Christ's blood. The speaker asserts "though thou with clouds of anger do disguise / Thy face, yet through that mask I know those eyes" (5-6). In this case, the face of Christ is sought for consideration. The

verbal icon is the "emblem" of the ship on the sea, as a metaphor for Christ, with the spiritual message again to contemplate the face of Christ.

As in "Holy Sonnet XIII," Christ's image is sought in order to determine His character. In contemplating Christ's face the speaker concludes, "though [Christ's eyes] turn away sometimes, / They never will despise" (6-7). The central question is if Christ will reject the speaker in the end. The answer to this question comes about from personal knowledge not an outside source: "I know those eyes" (6). The speaker appeals to an individual relationship to Christ in order to define whether He is loving. Schoenfeldt's thoughts on "Goodfriday, 1613, Riding Westward" assist in this case. Although the image of crucifixion greatly disturbs the speaker causing him to turn away, Schoenfeldt notes that unlike Foucault's idea of surveillance being a negative punishing act, "Donne was fascinated by a contrary notion: the immense comfort that can emerge from a sense of complete visibility before God, and the corollary fear that God will not deign to bestow such a gaze" (568). The "eyes," in "A Hymn to Christ," are sought after for comfort and, thus, their turning away is a negative act. This notion reveals an important aspect of Donne's vision of Christ—that of a lover. Far from the punishing gaze of a Calvinist God, Christ's gaze is sought after like a lover's. There is an underlying fear of fickleness and inconstancy, but at the same time a fiercely personal desire for Christ.

This desire goes both ways: Christ has a jealous love of the speaker and demands complete devotion: "O, if thou car'st not whom I love, / Alas, thou lov'st not me" (23-4). This vision of Christ's love is like a jealous lover, who while allowing other relationships "would have that love [Himself]" (21). Here the speaker says Christ allows for outside relationships as long as His is the most important to the Christian. The individual must again be cautious of an external community. The speaker calls on Christ to "Seal then this bill of divorce to all," transferring the affection which used to be focused "On fame, wit, hopes (false mistresses)" (25, 28). What is most important is a complete dedication to God where the speaker can "see God only" (30). Strikingly, the speaker asserts, "Churches are best for prayer that have least light" (29). This presents a vision of Christianity that is extremely individual. In the image of the darkened Church there is no place for Christian community. The solitary soul must commune with God alone in "An everlasting night" to enact a proper human-divine relationship (32). The implication of this view is a vision of the Christian soul forsaking community in order to have God turn to him/her.

Herbert employs verbal icons in a similar manner; nevertheless, Herbert's vision of Christianity differs greatly. In "The Sacrifice," Christ is given a voice to describe the Passion narrative. Like Donne, Herbert concretely depicts the image of Christ allowing it to function as a verbal icon for the purpose of meditation. Much like a Byzantine icon containing different pictures of a biblical narrative, this poem chronicles the Passion narrative with specific images. Readers can stop to ponder famous images such as "a scarlet robe they me array" (157), "on my head a crown of thorns" (161), "sharp nails pierce this" (218), and "they will pierce my side" (246). The speaking Christ allows for this "icon" to literally take on a verbal quality. Much like a sermon, Herbert paints a picture of the Passion narrative for the reader to consider while also interpreting it for him/her: "Never was grief like mine?" (252). Contemplating the words and images leads the reader to his/her own thoughts of its significance. Phrased as a question, this interpretation of the crucifixion demands an answer. As in Ignatian meditation, the reader must place him/herself in the context of the narrative. Is the reader a part of the "all ye, who pass by," included in the "you [who] slept" or embodied in another character (1, 150)? The repetition of "Was ever grief like mine?" also mirrors the act of spiritual meditation where a phrase of Scripture is repeated over and over (4). The words and images act to bring the reader into a state where

personal questions of spirituality are addressed.

Furthermore, Herbert's images and commentary play with both Anglo-Catholic and Calvinist ideas. One instance of this is when Christ's blood is compared to the beads of the Rosary, "Drops blood (the only beads) my words to measure" (22). The image is clearly a Catholic one of the Rosary, but the emphasis on "only" makes the line read Calvinist, affirming Christ as the only way to sanctification. Yet, in "Love II," Herbert seems to contradict Calvinist doctrine with the speaker saying, "All knees shall bow to thee, all wits shall rise, / And praise him who did make and mend our eyes" (13-4). Far from a select elect, the speaker presents a vision of God mending all eyes, not destroying masses of people in judgment. Seemingly to take on a more Arminian, Anglo-Catholic view of salvation, the emphasis is on God working for salvation of many souls. There is no latent fear of the Christian being left out of election. As with Donne, Herbert blends the discourses of the two factions defining his own place within the Church of England.

Herbert has a vision of Christian faith where the Christian works in community to turn towards God. In "Love II," the speaker acknowledges a community of believers using the plural possessive making the poem sound like a liturgical reading. The primary image is of God as fire or "Immortal Heat (1)." Although more abstract than those of "The Sacrifice," this image can act as a verbal icon for corporate meditation because of the sensory nature of heat/fire/light. This is a potential moment where, in light of Calvinism, Herbert distances himself from the concrete in favor of concentrating on an interior, emotional mediation, which will produce the same result as meditating on a more concrete image. As in a liturgical service, the people reciting this hymn join corporately together in a state of meditation to consider God as fire. Far from a fire of judgment, this Heat is to attract the believer: "O let thy greater flame / Attract the lesser to it" (1-2). These believers are not completely devoid

of light, but only "lesser" lights needing God's fire to "consume [their] lusts" (5). While God is shown as necessary for sanctification here, there is no underlying fear of judgment. It is almost assumed that when faced with God's fire sins will be erased. The language of sanctification is not one of judgment but recovery: "Thou shalt recover all thy goods in kind" (11). The speaker's metaphor is the believer "disseized by usurping lust" (12). Instead of a condemning judge, God here repossesses what was originally His in order to repair the believer. The poem presents an image of a gracious, forgiving God.

In "Love II," the crux of the issue is the believer seeking God: "Then shall our hearts pant thee" (6). Instead of craving the eyes of God to be on the believer, the thrust is for the believer's eyes to be on God (9). Collectively the believers join in singing hymns in order to praise God and turn their eyes toward Him (8). This collective form of meditation will lead to sanctification and, ultimately, all turning to God. Unlike Donne's speaker who individually finds God in the darkened church, Herbert's speaker finds God in a communal illuminated one. It is the role of the gathered believers to seek out and praise the God "who did make and mend our eyes" (14). Here the believers turn their eyes to God, contrary to Donne's speaker, who calls for God's eyes to be turned to him. In this way, Herbert's view of Christianity is one that envisions the believer acting out faith in a community, jointly focusing on God.

This view of Christianity being acted out in community in the corporate act of meditation is alluded to in some of Herbert's other poems as well. In "The Flower," the speaker switches between singular and plural pronouns. Within this switch, the individual Christian speaker is repeatedly connected with other Christians. To the image of a flower going into the ground in winter and reemerging in spring, the speaker compares his "shriveled heart" undergoing the process of redemption (8). In the stage of the flower being "Dead to the world, keep[ing] house

unknown," the speaker reminds the readers "We say amiss / This or that is, / Thy word is all, if we could spell" (14, 19-21). This evokes an image of Christians corporately studying the Bible and engaging in debate over theology. Yet, the speaker asserts that in concentrating on Scripture, the Christians should "spell" (21). Here, spell likely means to "To engage in study or contemplation of something" *(OED*). Thus, the speaker paints a picture of corporate meditation assisting the readers in the stage of purgation or "killing and quick'ning" (16). The end goal being corporate sight, since God's wonders are: "To make us see, we are but flowers that glide. / Which when we once can find and prove, / Thou hast a garden for us where to bide" (44-6). The metaphor of the dying and resurrecting flower is to be considered by the Christians so that they all gain access to a corporate place of unity abiding in Christ as flowers in a garden.

Furthermore, while "Aaron" and "Love III" chronicle the individual believer's interacting with God, the eventual goal of this individual's meditation or "tuning" into God is corporate worship. In "Aaron," after the speaker gets his "doctrine tuned by Christ," he announces "Come people; Aaron's dressed" (23, 25). Using the figure of Aaron allows Herbert to connect the speaker to a priest figure. Presumably, the speaker is a minister whose goal in individual sanctification and internal preparation is to engage with others leading corporate worship. Appropriately, the poem ends with this very occurrence as the speaker calls out for others to join him. In "Love III," the speaker dialogues back and forth with God, or Love, about the act of glazing or meditation on Christ. At first the speaker is hesitant since in his sinful "unkind, ungrateful" state he cannot view Love (9-10). Yet, Love assures him by means of a rhetorical question that Love, or more specifically Christ, "bore the blame" (15). Then, Love directs the speaker to "'sit down . . . and taste my meat'" (17). With this ending image of the speaker sitting before Christ partaking in the Eucharist, Herbert again alludes to a corporate act of worship. Theologically speaking, the Eucharist is to be an act of Christian communion both with Christ and other Christians; thus, this act is intimately linked with the Anglo-Catholic liturgy and in Calvinist Protestant circles made up one of the only ritualistic parts of their church service. Ultimately, taking the Eucharist is a communal meditation on Christ's crucifixion. Thus, even when Herbert describes individual, private meditation, he often links it to communal worship.

Thus, reading Donne and Herbert unbound from a specific faction of the Church of England allows for an uncovering of their individual visions of faith. Examining their use of verbal icons and combining this idea with the act of Ignatian meditation opens the way for a provocative reading of Donne's and Herbert's poetry. How Donne and Herbert navigate the theological complexities of using iconic imagery showcases differing views of the purpose of meditation—specifically, if it should be primarily an individual or corporate event. More importantly, this emphasis reveals Donne's spiritual anxiety and vision of a faith defined by the individual seeking the gaze of God, and Herbert's use of corporate meditation and vision of faith where, in community, the Christian must gaze at God. These differing models of faith call for more examination in other poems by Donne and Herbert as well as consideration of how these visions would influence their views of personal identity. Certainly these ideas would also be informed by Donne's vision of the individual in "Everlasting night" and Herbert's vision of communities drawn to "Immortal Heat."

Notes

[1] Michael Schoenfeldt references Louis Martz, Anthony Raspa, and A. D. Cousins as the main critics reading Donne in light of Catholicism; P. M. Oliver adds Helen Gardner to this list (Schoenfeldt 582, Oliver 110). Oliver also credits Barbara K. Lewalski and John Stachniewski as key scholars in placing Donne's poetry in the Protestant, specifically Calvinist sphere (121, 137).

[2] Anne-Marie Miller Blaise cites major critics under the banner of "Anglo-Catholic" influence as Louis Martz, Heather Asals, and Amy M. Charles, and those who think Herbert "Calvinist" as Joseph H. Summers, Barbara K. Lewalski, and Richard Strier (Blaise 18).

[3] It is interesting that in Herbert's lifetime the word "icon" could mean a metaphor, specifically "a simile" (*OED*). Much like a simile, when Herbert's poetry acts as an icon it motions to the reader to compare two things, often the literal and the spiritual.

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WATERWAYS AND LIFEWAYS: THE ETHICS OF WATER, LAND, AND RESTORATION IN LESLIE MARMON SILKO'S *SACRED WATER*

BY ADRIANNA ELY

Sacred Water is a short chapbook of stories and photographs that Leslie Marmon Silko self-published in 1993, shortly after the publication of *Almanac of the Dead*. In 1993, Silko explained to scholar Laura Coltelli how a work like *Sacred Water* emerged from the traumatic visions of *Almanac of the Dead*: "*Sacred Water* was meant as a soothing, healing antidote to the relentless horror let loose in this world. It was meant as a gift to readers who wrestled with *Almanac of the Dead*. Some of the readers were wrenched by *Almanac* and I wanted to give them something generous, yet truthful" (Coltelli 26). Indeed, there is something generous and comforting about the form and content of *Sacred Water*—hand-drawn and pasted glyphs; black-and-white photos of desert skies, waters, and rocks; Silko's concise, deeply personal prose style; and even her ballpoint signature on the frontispiece. This book is, in a sense, the bioregional counterpart to *Almanac* and the localized forerunner to the transnational visions of *Gardens in the Dunes*. Where *Almanac of the Dead* traverses the Americas and *Gardens in the Dunes* traverses the globe, *Sacred Water* clearly demonstrates a highly localized ethic of environmental restoration through Silko's personal recollections of and conjectures about the role of water in the lifeways of the Pueblo peoples.

Sacred Water is fundamentally a set of stories about how cultures and places interact. Silko's stories touch on the various elements of the

desert—water, stone, and sun—and illustrate how the Laguna Pueblo way of understanding reciprocal relationships between humans, land, animals, and water shaped her worldview. She writes: "When I was a child, the people used to watch the sky for changes in the weather. I learned to watch for the fat dark rain clouds, and I remember the excitement and the anticipation as the cool wind arrived smelling of rain" (*SW* 5). In this passage, Silko connects her own experience of rain with the collective experience of rain, gesturing towards the communal nature of water ethics in the desert. She does not partake in nature writing conventions describing subjective experience as the isolated self within nature, but rather describes the collective experience that necessarily governs indigenous understandings of natural processes. When she was a girl in Laguna Pueblo, for example, there was a strong imperative to collectively protect and respect supplies of fresh water: "We children were seldom scolded or punished for our behavior. But we were never permitted to frolic with or waste fresh water" (6).

The traditional ethics of water usage in the Laguna community pose a strong counterpoint to ethics of waste in the booming Sunbelt of the American Southwest, which Silko also describes in *Sacred Water*. She writes, "In Tucson and Phoenix, more young children die from drowning than from traffic accidents. Backyard swimming pools are numerous; the clear, still water, the colorful tiles, pool steps and pool ladders are all designed to be attractive and inviting. A safety gate was left unlatched; the parents always insist they only looked away for a moment" (54). Silko sets up an obvious comparison between the water ethic she grew up with in Laguna and the flagrant waste of water within contemporary Southwestern cities. Where the adults in her community admonished children not to waste water, an ethic of waste persists in the exploding urban areas of Tucson and Phoenix where, even in a place with limited fresh water, many families must have their *own* artificial swimming pool.

The waste created by the self-interested development of the Sunbelt is markedly less sustainable than collective water conscientiousness. Traditional Laguna people could survive on annual rainfall, but deep wells in Tucson continue to suck up water from the aquifer "which has receded so far that the two hundred year old cottonwood trees along the Tanque Verde wash are dying" (*SW* 52). The ostensible reason for depleting the aquifer is to fill more swimming pools. Furthermore, as Silko's story about child drownings suggests, the waste of water in the desert can bear ironic social repercussions.

Within the Keresan Pueblos of Laguna and Acoma there is an extensive body of cultural knowledge that reinforces a practice of respecting water and limiting waste. There are, for example, stories that describe times of extreme scarcity, as Silko remembers: "All around Laguna and Acoma, there are sandstone formations which make natural basins and pools that hold rain water. These rain water pools are cherished even now, because long ago in times of drought, the survival of the people depended on the rain water stored in the sandstone pools" (18). Ethical use of water is possible only when people are collectively aware of the possibility of not having water. If there is communal sense of false abundance, as is the case with the swimming pools of Tucson and Phoenix, then waste becomes the order of the day. Through their stories, traditional Laguna people understand water as the source of life, something sacred and not to be wasted. The fundamental, shared awareness of the water's fluidity and impermanence in the dry desert inculcates stories like that of the sandstone pools, and through such narratives Laguna people traditionally maintain a collective memory of water scarcity that promotes continued prudence.

Sacred Water also touches upon the elemental understanding of water within the cosmology of Pueblo peoples. Silko writes, "The old-time Pueblo people believe that natural springs and fresh-water lakes possess

great power. Beneath their surfaces lie entrances to the four worlds below" (20). She goes on to describe how there was once a lake near the village, *Ka'waik*, in which the giant water snake-spirit *Ma'sh'ra'true'ee* lived, from which the snake "carried the prayers of the people to the Mother Creator below" (24). Once the lake dried up, the connection to the four worlds below was severed and the snake disappeared (27). Water, then, was understood as the physical conduit to the other worlds. Clouds were also part of this cosmology, as the Pueblo people understood clouds as the souls of departed loved ones. Silko writes, "On All Souls Day, November 2, the people take oven bread and red chile stew to the graves to feed the spirits of the dead. All these feedings of the spirits were conducted with such tenderness and love, that as a child, I learned there is nothing to fear from the dead. They love us and bless us when they return as rain clouds" (17). The water in the body thus becomes the water in the earth once a person passes on and, hence, the water in the sky. Human spirits rejoin the water cycle in death.

As Silko also writes in *Yellow Woman*, a collection of her nonfiction essays, natural springs also have spiritual significance within the Pueblo worldview as the source of their life and culture: "[T]he small spring near Paguate village is literally the source and continuance of life for the people in this area. The spring also functions on a spiritual level, recalling the original Emergence Place and linking the people and the springwater to all other people …" (*YW* 36). As Silko writes, theses desert springs "literally" enable the "continuance of life." "Water conservation" seems a woefully inadequate phrase for describing the traditional Pueblo understanding of water as sacred. The multidimensional spiritual and practical understandings of water within the Pueblo world defy categorization into such an easy-to-understand (and Eurocentric) ethic of conservation.

Agriculture was a significant means of subsistence for Pueblo people,

and further exemplifies an ethics of sacred water. Silko describes the practices of Pueblo agriculture in *Sacred Water* through the story of her grandmother's neighbor, Felipe Riley. She tells the story of how Felipe's careful diversion of surface rainwater kept her grandmother's cellar from flooding for many years and was so integrated into the landscape of Laguna as to be virtually invisible. Silko writes:

> Felipe Riley used to dry farm with the run-off water from the hillside. He diverted the water with an intricate network of small stone check dams which he carefully engineered so that the rain water fed small ditches leading to his pumpkin and squash plants, his peach and apricot trees, and his big corn field. … Felipe's arrangement of stone check dams was so subtle, and conformed to the natural contours so well that we never realized how Felipe had saved our old houses from the floodwater until after Felipe had passed on. Without Felipe's care, the rocks which formed the check dams gradually scattered. (44-6)

Felipe used the ambient rainfall of the region to farm an abundance of fruits and vegetables, controlling the floodwaters in the least-invasive and most useful way possible. Silko contrasts Felipe's depth of understanding and careful execution of water diversion to that of the U.S. government, whose "engineers spent months, and many thousands of dollars to install giant storm drains that dump the run-off into the river" (46). Felipe's arrangement of dams was so subtle that it melded with the desert environment as it diverted life-giving water to his garden—a stark contrast to the "giant" drains that "dump" water into the river. Furthermore, Felipe's method could not be reproduced by someone who does not know the land as well as he, which indicates the critical importance of passing on cultural knowledge of traditional farming and water management techniques.

The use of seasonal precipitation to water crops is called dry farming,

as Silko notes in her story about Felipe Riley. She makes it clear that Felipe's method of farming was a delicate art; as James Vlasich observes in the introduction to his book *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*, "Dry farming is more precarious than other forms of irrigation and requires the talent of an expert agriculturist" (3). Traditional agriculture methods in Pueblo communities allowed the people to live there prosperously since long before the Bureau of Reclamation or the Army Corps of Engineers started damming rivers and digging wells. Fields were irrigated through the low-impact method of "*ak chin*," which involved surface-channeling seasonal runoff (HKM 4). For most of their history, Laguna and Acoma agriculture have "depended on the combination of snowmelt moisture, direct precipitation, intermittent runoff from mesa tops, and floodplain irrigation along the riverine bottomlands" (Rivera 2). The cosmology of the Pueblo people that holds water to be sacred was clearly evident in traditional agricultural practices that worked in concert with the land so closely and so conscientiously that they were able to thrive. Not only did Laguna people try to not waste water, but they were able to use what they had to create abundance.

The Pueblo people had many, many generations to learn how to cultivate a variety of crops in the desert without negatively impacting the land. Felipe Riley's story in *Sacred Water* indicates the abundance of crops that traditional agriculture enabled without technologies any fancier than a carefully placed stone check dam. An early traveler to the Southwestern territory in 1866, James F. Meline, had to admit that, despite the "primitive" appearance of Pueblo technologies, "they always stored a year's supply of food and raised every kind of vegetable or fruit known in the region" (Vlasich 95). The vegetables and fruits the Pueblo people grew were numerous; wheat, corn, chili, melons, watermelons, beans, peaches, and tobacco were among their many crops (Vlasich 95, Ortiz 281). Of course, once the United States government became

involved, the Pueblo people, who had had plenty to subsist on since time immemorial, were pressured to "modernize" and "improve production" by a government-employed farmer at the Pueblo agency (Vlasich 101). The U.S. government went so far as to attempt to re-educate Pueblo children in "correct" methods of farming, but as Vlasich notes, the real trouble for traditional farming came when "relocation programs took many of the best and brightest away from the reservation farms" in the post-WWII era (287). Pre-requisite to the forced "modernization" of Pueblo agriculture was the privileging of Western techniques, developed in the East and transplanted in the West, and the subsequent de-privileging of local knowledge, developed in the desert through centuries of experience. Through the story of Felipe and the erosion of his dams, Silko seems to be gesturing towards the gradual decline of traditional Pueblo farming and the irreplaceability of such lost knowledge.

Other Pueblo writers have written about the changing landscape of Pueblo agriculture. In the 1979 anthology *The Remembered Earth*, Acoma poet Simon Ortiz, alludes to other circumstances that in the 70s were making traditional agriculture less possible. One of the changes in the land was the decreased seasonal flow of the San Jose River and the pollution of the water through mining uranium. Ortiz writes in a short piece entitled "Up the Line":

> All that land is good land and it used mainly to be farmed. The Rio de San Jose, which is really just a small creek now, runs through there and is used for irrigation. There isn't that much farming done anymore, less in Laguna than in Acoma, just small garden crops, some corn, alfalfa, beans, chili, and a few orchards. The water isn't much good anymore because of the uranium mining and milling. (283)

The decline of farming in Laguna and Acoma has been significant—the 1827 Census of employed Pueblo people listed that, of the 446 total

employed people in Acoma and Laguna, 376 were farmers (Vlasich 80). In the post WWII-era, this number has eroded to single digits. As the passage above suggests, the decline in farming that Ortiz describes is related to the growth of mining and other industries in the Southwest. For the Pueblos the erosion of farming practices has been an unavoidable consequence of modernization processes that, though not all bad, has had significant consequences for traditional life. For example, agriculture is intimately tied to water management—there is no separating the two. Thus, as Silko's story about Felipe Riley suggests, the delicate methods through which Pueblo people were able to irrigate their crops may be a disappearing art as traditional water management slowly gives way to the more heavy-handed scientific approach that does not value subtlety or minimal impact. The loss of traditional practices to mining indicates not just a changing economy, but also the fact that fewer Pueblo people are around to teach the delicate skill of *ak chin* irrigation that Felipe Riley exemplifies.

However, *Sacred Water* is also about recovery and renewal, not simply decline. The story of renewal is told through the restoration of the rainwater pool at Silko's home in the Tucson Mountains. Silko describes her pool as a source of abundant aesthetic pleasures: "For a long time I had a great many Sonoran red-spotted toads behind my house. I also had a few cattails and a yellow water lily. … [H]undreds of toads used to sing all night in a magnificent chorus with complex harmonies" (63). This passage hearkens back to an earlier moment in the text when Silko describes how, as a child, "We were given stern warnings about killing toads or frogs. Harm to frogs could bring disastrous cloudbursts and floods because the frogs and toads are the beloved children of the rain clouds" (6). If one considers amphibians to be the beloved children of rain clouds, then Silko's rainwater pond in the desert seems to be a blessed place for the children of the rain to gather and celebrate fresh water in a "magnificent chorus." Historically, as the story of the sandstone pools suggests, such a pool also might have sustained the Native peoples through dry months. After the pond becomes overwhelmed by red algae, Silko is forced to drain it.

Silko aligns the restoration of the rainwater pond with the potential restoration of waters polluted by nuclear radiation in and around Laguna and Acoma. To this end, she tells the story of neighborhood dogs chasing a mule deer into her pond, which led to a nuclear fallout of sorts for the species that inhabited it: "The water lily was trampled to pieces, and the cattail was torn apart …. [S]oon after the deer's ambush, a strange red algae with the texture of mucous began to float on the pool's surface. This red algae smothered the yellow water lily, and even the cattail died" (68). After this incident, the pool seems to be destroyed. Nothing that she tries is able to remediate the red algae in the least. She tries dumping crushed rock into the pond, skimming algae off the surface, and planting a number of restorative water plants, but the algae only seemed to grow stronger (70). Finally, she plants in the pool a host of water hyacinths, "hardy and pestiferous" plants that are considered an invasive species in most of the world, and, at last, the algae recedes and the water becomes clear once more. Silko asserts, "I write in appreciation of the lowly water hyacinth, purifyer of defiled water" (72). The success of the water hyacinth seems to counteract discourses that would identify the hyacinth as invasive, and in using the water hyacinth, Silko plays the role of the gardener/trickster that uses unorthodox means to rehabilitate damaged spaces.

Sacred Water seems to suggest that the remedies needed to heal desecrated places already exist within traditional knowledge and need only to be recovered and put to use. Following the story of her triumph over the red algae, Silko broadens the scope of the story beyond her backyard in Tucson and returns to Laguna:

> Only the night-blooming datura, jimson weed, sacred plant of the Pueblo priests, mighty hallucinogen and deadly poison, only the datura has the plutonium contamination. … [T]he datura metabolizes "heavy water," contaminated with plutonium, because, for the datura, all water is sacred. Across the West, uranium mine wastes and contamination from underground nuclear tests ruin the dwindling supplies of fresh water. … [W]hatever may become of us human beings, the Earth will bloom with hyacinth purple and the white blossoms of the datura" (76).

Silko's prayer for the world to be overrun with purifying plants suggests that the Earth will be able to heal all that has been done to it, while further troubling the negative connotations associated with invasive species. What has been damaged by the onslaught of ecologically harmful technologies and wasteful land ethics will be remedied in time, and natural processes will hasten the breakdown of substances as noxious as plutonium. The datura plant, for example, will take even the most seemingly irredeemably damaged water, polluted with plutonium, and absorb the radiation into itself to restore it for the people and animals need for survival.

The issue of radiation contamination is a major problem in Laguna and Acoma to this day because of the enormous Jackpile-Paguate uranium mine that operated there for decades. Silko has dealt with the Jackpile-Paguate mine in much of her work, including *Ceremony*, *Almanac of the Dead*, and *Sacred Water*. As Laguna Pueblo governor John Antonio Sr. related in his 2010 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources, "Two surface water tributaries near the mine, the Rio Moquino, and the Rio San Jose have since tested positive for radiation contamination. Groundwater is also at risk for radiation contamination. Because water is scarce in our arid part of New Mexico, the contamination of our water resources is devastating to our people and the entire region" (1). The contamination of local water is clearly devastating to the Pueblos, whose sovereignty and cultural practices are clearly threatened by water contamination. As Ortiz has observed, "The uranium industry has affected the water table and quality irreparably on Indian Peoples' land. Not too long ago, the People used the creek for drinking water but now even fish refuse to survive in it" (284). Silko suggests through *Sacred Water* that, ultimately, by participating in the harmful industries that are polluting the land the people "desecrate only themselves; the Mother Earth is inviolable" (*SW* 76). Her stories about plants healing the Earth's damaged soils and waterways suggest that the Earth will always be able to recover and will survive. Silko would, perhaps, disagree with Ortiz's particular word choice in the quote above, and gently note that the harm done to the land is not "irreparable" and that it may be healed.

Land restoration is critically important to cultural preservation in the Pueblos. Within the brief space of *Sacred Water*, Silko draws a broad web of connections between the spirits of ancestors, the subsistence of the people, and the reliance of humans and animals on water that binds together all desert beings. As anthropologist and archaeologist Kurt Anschuetz concisely states, "Ethnographic observations show that, despite wide cross-cultural diversity in form, Pueblo people understand the substance of corn, the souls of humans, and the life force of the supernatural beings who inhabit the underworld and their cosmos as being composed of the same essence: *water*" (Anschuetz 58). Because of this far-reaching spiritual understanding of water, the radiation contamination of water clearly poses a threat to Pueblo culture that is spiritual as well as physical. Furthermore, Silko avoids the pitfalls of the "ecological Indian" stereotype because her work is anchored in the specifics of practice and cosmology rather than generalities. Restoring

traditional ways of sustainably living on the land might therefore function, as Silko's stories of redeeming damaged places within *Sacred Water* suggest, as a kind of "ritual of cultural renewal" (Norden 103). *Sacred Water* thus suggests that human cultures can reverse the negative environmental impacts that they have created, and that land restoration is irrevocably tied to the complete wellbeing of the indigenous peoples.

Sacred Water clearly advocates for a hopeful perspective, the hope for an ecological future that only obliquely comes across through the dark violence depicted in *Almanac*. The hopeful thread throughout *Almanac*, with its wide scheme of horror, is the continuing possibility of returning to live by the rhythms of the land and awaiting the fulfillment of ancient prophecies; *Sacred Water* is Silko's personal representation of the rhythms of the land through images and prose, a vision that she recreates on a global scale in her later novel, *Gardens in the Dunes*. *Sacred Water* suggests that hope for positive change most certainly exists in the recovery of indigenous knowledge and understanding the land as sacred, particularly because the close relationship Pueblo people have with the land is their greatest asset in guaranteeing resiliency and survival. As Silko has stated, "Regionalism is the hope. Regionalism—what human beings did with plants and animals and rivers and one another before you had the nation-states tramping in it—that's where the hope is" (Arnold 24). In *Sacred Water,* hope is manifested by the water hyacinth actively clearing away the red algae, the night-blooming datura filtering out radiation, and the resiliency of desert creatures. Hope for the future is not within the text represented as a passive dream, but rather as the active processes of environmental restoration and cultural renewal. The resiliency of the land and indigenous people is a consistent thread within Silko's work, and serves a critical counterpoint to the disturbing cultural realities that she frequently represents. As Sterling pensively observes at the end of *Almanac*, one day, "The Great Plains would again host great herds of buffalo and those human beings who knew how to survive on the annual rainfall" (759). In other words, the Earth will endure but the survival of humans depends on redeveloping ethical ways of living on the land alongside other species. Hope, therefore, emerges from the possibility of actively relearning to closely and communally regard the limits of the land, and to recover a non-anthropocentric ethics of reciprocity within the places we inhabit.

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"'OINK, OINK, OINK!'": SWINISH SYMBOLISM IN THOMAS PYNCHON'S *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*

BY DANILO CAPUTO

When one is exposed to Thomas Pynchon's vast and complex 1973 novel *Gravity's Rainbow*, he or she is soon made aware of its labyrinthine and encyclopedic nature—hundreds of characters (including Pavlovian psychiatrists, Argentine anarchists, missile-worshipping Hereros, masochistic ghosts, and too many more) slip in and out of the text, crisscrossing at any given time, while historiographic digressions of subjects both grand and inane (from corporate instigation of WWII to light bulb manufacturing) pull the reader deeper and deeper into the paranoiac black hole of Pynchon's text. Though most would-be readers of *Gravity's Rainbow* abstain from the book for this very reason (and most who do attempt it put it down in early surrender), the few who do fully subject themselves to Pynchon's experiment (and *you will* come out altered) are guided by a master writer through a darkly comical and complex world only he could have created. It is popularly presumed that the most complex object in *Gravity's Rainbow* is also its focal point: the V-2 rocket—a driving force that thrusts the characters into movement as Tyrone Slothop and others search for the elusive rocket "00000." However, an animal study of the novel reveals a force that subverts the monolithic symbolism of the rocket, counterbalancing 00000 in the Zone: the pig. At the simplest polarization, the rocket obliterates life

whereas the pig sustains it, a binary that creates assumptions that the key symbolic structure of *Gravity's Rainbow* is formed around a centralized rocket with a panoptic gaze of everything contained within the work. But Pynchon's pigs are even more significant, a fact that ultimately undermines the rocket and pig binary—they are complex, polysemous creatures imbued with transgressive sexuality and romantic pastoralism; they are syncretized with Norse myths and Christian symbols of salvation and sacrifice. Finally, these pigs function on a metafictional level, not only sustaining the narrative of *Gravity's Rainbow*, but swinishly reconstructing the identity of the reader.

Critical study of the animals that inhabit Pynchon's texts is not a new approach; Katalin Orban in her essay, "Werebeavers of the World, Unite? Animals on the Verge of Readability in Thomas Pynchon's Novels," argues that animals are accessible symbols in his works because they are less complicated than his often cryptic human characters—or, for that matter, any aspect of the text entirely. Orban observes the daunting task of approaching a text such as *Gravity's Rainbow*:

> For one of the intriguing things about Pynchon's longer works … is how difficult they are to address critically: given their vast encyclopedic vistas, it seems that focusing on any aspect, let alone detail of the text amounts to simplification and unfair misrepresentation. (96-97)

Providing a less complex lens through which to examine the text, animals "make an important contribution to the breakdown of rigid hierarchies of meaning in . . . Pynchon narratives," (Orban 96). However, Pynchon's pigs do not simply *break down* a hierarchy—they also reconstruct it in a new binary form, thus allowing the reader to glean an understanding of *Gravity's Rainbow* through, for example, a science versus nature dichotomy. Orban recognizes that "Pynchon's animals never stay quite comfortably within the notion of the simple, natural, innocent counterpart to the violent complexity of civilization and culture, yet never quite disengage completely from that romantic notion" (96). Orban, however, does nothing more to demonstrate the complex symbolism of the pig in the text, as if the statement was made merely as a safeguard from future refute. To state that the pig is more complex than a romantic representation and to fail to investigate it further over-simplifies the complexities of Pynchon's beloved creature. Moreover, critically—and specifically—frolicking with the pigs of *Gravity's Rainbow* is substantiated by Pynchon's personal affinity to them; Steven Weisenburger's methodically researched *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion* contains a biographical note*:* as Pynchon drafted the novel "his bookcase . . . had rows of piggy banks on each shelf and there was a collection of books and magazines about pigs" (55). Weisenburger's insight confirms the relevancy of studying Pynchon's beloved pigs.

Patrick J. Hurley discusses the pig in more depth in his essay, "Pynchon, Grimm and Swinish Duality: A Note on the Pig Image in *Gravity's Rainbow*." Hurley states that the pig represents a "dualistic image of sacrifice and redemption" (208), and identifies Pynchon's use of Jacob Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology,* a primary source that permeates the themes and motifs of the novel. Hurley connects a note from Grimm's book on animal sacrifice: the pig is "selected immediately after birth, and marked, and then reared with the rest until the time of sacrificing" (208). Hurley then connects this process of selection at birth to Slothrop, whose parents volunteer him to undergo psychological experimentation as an infant. Slothrop is secretly monitored by *Them* growing up, goes to Harvard, and joins the service until his sacrifice is ordered—first as a castration, and eventually as Tyrone's scattering across the Zone.

Hurley also suggests that Slothrop identifies with the swine while in bed with Katje. Their sexual encounter takes on a piggish nature: "'Oh,' Katje groans, somewhere under a pile of their batistes and brocade,

'Slothrop, you *pig*.' 'Oink, oink, oink,' sez Slothrop cheerfully" (Pynchon 208). The connotation associated with being piggish in coitus that Katje places on Slothrop is simultaneously abject and arousing. Katje's words infer that Slothrop is doing something dirty or uncivilized (and thus inhuman), therefore acting more like an animal than a decent human being. The tone and circumstances of her comment—being spoken while under the covers presumably during a sexual act, in between groans, and not attempting to stop Slothrop's actions—implies that his piggishness may also connote an insatiable sexual appetite that is welcome in bed.

Allon A. White's essay on transgression, "Pigs and Pierrots: The Politics of Transgression in Modern Fiction," helps to illuminate this duality. Studying the pig as a symbol of transgression in *Gravity's Rainbow*, he writes that "the ambivalence of the pig is that it stands for both bodily enjoyment (the belly, genitals, excrement), and for odious bestiality" (56), an applicable description for what takes place in the previous passage. Katje knows Slothrop's sexuality is perhaps abject, or at least frowned upon by conventional standards, but it is enjoyable and sexually satisfying nonetheless. Tyrone's swinish act also exhibits transgressive behavior and is therefore a subversive act against *Them* (the elusive conspirers that the paranoiac narrator mentions through the novel) and the rocket. The enjoyment of sex is akin to fertility (associated with nature) and contradicts the sterility and/or death symbol of the rocket; sexuality and reproduction are reserved for the living, while the rocket, comprised of inanimate materials, is used to kill. White also writes that the "pig is carnivalesque victim and king, [a] gigantic eater, [and] procreator symbolizing fertility" (56), while its victimhood is its sacrifice and consumption. Slothrop establishes his pig-like appetite for sex throughout the text, indicated early on by his map of London marked for every place he has slept with a woman (much to the awe of his peers). This map representing his sexuality ultimately alerts *Them* to his connection with the V-2 bombings in the city and what eventually leads to his sacrificial "scattering," sealing his fate as both a victim and king because of his sexuality.

The pig as Christian symbol of victim and sacrifice recurs throughout *Gravity's Rainbow*, ultimately bearing the most striking connection to Norse mythological symbols. Seaman Bodine, an intertextual character from Pynchon's first novel *V* (1961) was known as "Pig" Bodine. Bodine is nearly cooked and sacrificed like a pig in the alliterative feast scene. Hurley states that this episode "unites the pig as an image of sacrifice and escape with the pig image drawn from Grimm and with that forming part of the more complex transgressive thread of the novel" (210). Hurley, therefore, associates the pig with the self-contradicting symbol of sacrifice to and in subversion of the system. Interestingly, Norse mythology contains more illuminating insight on Pynchon's use of the sacrificial pig that Hurley seems to omit within his focus on Christian symbols of salvation. The recurring motif of sacrifice and salvation among piggish characters is related to the mythological swine, Saehrimnir. In his book on Norse mythology, Peter Andreas Munch describes Valhalla, a warrior's heaven where the men, welcomed by the gods Odin and Freyja (like Pynchon's Frieda), get to play-battle all day and feast and drink all night. Running out of food is not an issue in Valhalla:

> The Heroes are a great company, constantly increasing; but their number is never so great that they do not have enough to eat from the flesh of the boar Saehrimnir. The cook, named Andhrimnir, each day boils the boar in a kettle called Eldhrimnir; but at evening the beast is just as much alive and unhurt as before. (48)

Just as Saehrimnir never stops providing sustenance to the heroes of Valhalla, Pynchon's swine are similarly sacrificed and revived numerous times.

Continuing the motif of pig as sacrificial substitute and furthering the association of Tyrone with Norse god Thor, the Plechazunga pig suit both disguises and protects Tyrone. As he wanders through the Zone in search of 00000, he stumbles into a town celebrating an arcane pagan tradition that leads him to his second symbolic identification with the pig; the townspeople surround him and tell him of the Pig-Hero, Plechazunga, sent down by the Norse god Thor to protect them from Viking invaders (577). They ask Tyrone to wear the Pig-Hero costume because he appears to be the only person fat enough to fit. He concedes: "The pig costume is a little startling—pink, blue, yellow, brought sour colors, a German Expressionist pig, plush outside, padded with straw inside. It seems to fit perfectly. Hmm" (578). It is no wonder that Tyrone is a perfect fit; after all, the pig is his totem animal. He partakes in the festivities until the Russians come in and brutally break it up—but he remains unharmed: "the first billy-clubs catch him in the straw padding over his stomach, and don't feel like much. Civilians are going down left and right, but Plechazunga's holding his own" (580). The pig symbol here both protects and disguises as Tyrone learns that the Russians are actually looking for him. Under—*within*—the protective symbol of the swine, Tyrone Slothrop flees from the town and continues to navigate the hostile Zone in search of the rocket.

The costume protects him again as a sacrificial substitute when, during a raid at a brothel, Duane Marvey steps into it thinking that "no MP would bother an innocent funseeking pig" (617), but is sorely mistaken as he is apprehended by the MP, who assume he is Slothrop and castrate him. Slothrop, disguising himself in the Plechazunga costume to circumvent hostility in the Zone, appears to resonate with another Norse myth, one in which Thor is said to have disguised himself as Freyja (also spelled Freya), a goddess who rides a boar with golden bristles, thus enabling him to navigate a hostile zone in search his lost hammer (Munch 77). It is no coincidence, then, that Pynchon's fictional Plechazunga myth is associated with Thor. Tyrone's safety, like Thor's, depends on a pig-related disguise. Moreover, Thor's association with Freyja the goddess is comically paralleled in *Gravity's Rainbow* by Tyrone's meeting with Frieda the pig, an encounter that establishes Slothrop's connection to romantic pastoral imagery.

Tyrone's association with Frieda as his totem animal establishes the idea that the pig symbol is more than transgressive or sacrificial. Weisenburger suggests in *Companion* that Frieda is "named for Freya, the etymology of whose name gives us *fried* (peace). Frieda is an apt name for Pokler's pig because the Teutonic goddess Freya often appears riding a sow or boar, sometimes one with golden bristles" (195). Weisenburger's etymology of "Frieda" connects her with Freyja, goddess of love and peace (Rydberg 1020), adding dimension to the novel's swinish symbolism. Too, Tyrone's time with Freida is arguably the most peaceful and romantic of his Zonal experiences; his connection to "peace" and the romantic pastoral symbolized by Freida contrasts his earlier transgressive sexual encounter with Katje. He wakes one morning in the countryside to Freida licking his face, and rather than being repulsed by the pig that "grunts and smiles amiably, blinking long eyelashes" (583), he responds with deference: "'Wait. How about this?' He puts on the pig mask. She stares for a minute, then moves up to Slothrop and kisses him, snout-to-snout" (583). A passage of pastoral serenity follows as Tyrone and Frieda travel the countryside together in peace. She leads him to food, protects him from an attacking dog, and guides him to his next lead on his quest. Tyrone realizes the animal's totemic relationship to him in an epiphany one night as they sleep together:

> Slothrop keeps waking to find the pig snuggled in a bed of pine needles, watching over him. It's not for danger, or out of restlessness. Maybe she's decided Slothrop needs looking after.

> In the tinfoil light she's very sleek and convex, her bristles look smooth as down. Lustful thoughts come filtering into Slothrop's mind, little peculiarity here you know, hehheh, nothing he can't handle … [T]hey fall asleep under the decorated trees, the pig a wandering eastern magus, Slothrop in his costume a gaudy present waiting for morning and a child to claim him. (585)

Tyrone recognizes he is under the protection of his totem animal, and even has passing lustful thoughts about her. His feelings for her grow into absurd thoughts of marrying her, which is more emotional investment than he gives any other woman in *Gravity's Rainbow*—she is not just another woman for Slothrop to tag on his map.

Although Hurley does credit more symbolism to the pig in *Gravity's Rainbow* by recognizing it as "Slothrop's personal totem" (208), as opposed to Orban's simplified allegorical status, it is still only a one-dimensional reading of its significance to the novel as a whole. To restrict the swine to parallels with Slothrop implies that the symbol only serves to benefit a character analysis of the text's protagonist. This is not so. In fact, the pig motif maintains its symbolic significance without its connection to Slothrop. For example, Andre Le Vot studies the relationship between the pig and the rocket in his essay, "The Rocket and the Pig: Thomas Pynchon and Science Fiction." Le Vot argues that *Gravity's Rainbow* is "informed by the awareness of a fundamental dichotomy between living nature and the technological urge to use it, degrade it, [and] kill it" (115), and attributes this conceptual enmity to more tangible symbols: "emphasis is on the destructive aspect of science through the Rocket, whereas the life force . . . is symbolized by the Pig" (115). What Le Vot has done here is elevate the allegorical status of the pig to something more substantial than merely being Slothrop's totem animal; he places the pig level with the rocket, reinforcing the notion of the pig and rocket dichotomy. In this sense, those who succumb to the rocket's Thanatos are

metaphorical pigs: nature's sacrifices that feed its destroyer. Along with le Vot's observation of the pig and rocket dichotomy, he briefly mentions the recurring pig motif via Slothrop's encounters with swine, including the pig-hero costume he adorns, his time spent with Frieda, and his ancestor William Slothrop's affinity to pigs in colonial America.

Settling in Berkshire around 1635, William Slothrop ran a pig operation that required him to travel the road to Boston with his pigs, and on the road he grew to love them: "They were good company. Despite the folklore and the injunctions in his own Bible, William came to love their nobility and personal freedom" (564)—therefore, he was dismayed by the slaughter that concluded the journey and the lonely trek home. William Slothrop was "content to live a life of simple pastoral pleasures in the company of his pigs" (Le Vot 114), just as Tyrone enjoyed comfort with Frieda. Nature, however, is ultimately exploited and the pigs are slaughtered—literally and figuratively. Furthermore, like Tyrone fitting perfectly into the pig-suit, William's pigs trust him "as another variety of pig" (Pynchon 565), demonstrating his own pig-congruency. Through William, the pig gains yet another symbolic meaning, one that elevates it to syncretism—containing multiple, if not contradictory philosophical and religious ideologies.

As incongruous as Norse mythology and Christianity appear to be, Pynchon syncretizes them in the pig. William Slothrop interprets the unfortunate fate of his swine as a parable for the treatment of the Preterite: "the many God passes over when he chooses a few for salvation" (565), and argues for the holiness of *both* the Elect *and* the Preterite. He (blasphemously) breaks down the puritanical hierarchy of Elect at the top and Preterite at the bottom, reconstructing it as a binary wherein both entities are equal. Through the pig, William inferred that "Everything in the Creation has its equal and opposite counterpart" (565), and centuries later the pig is the equal and opposite counterpart to the rocket. William

Slothrop's wisdom is a key: he recognizes that although the pigs are fated to die, their symbolic value retains vitality. The dichotomy of the Elect rocket and Preterite pig promises devastating results if one should falter: to follow the rocket signifies human progress and advances in technology, but ultimately leads to destruction; to follow the improprieties of the pig is the freedom to give into sensual desires, but also regression into chaos.

Amongst the numerous symbols the pig represents in *Gravity's Rainbow*, the pig as syncretized symbol is perhaps the most significant. When the pig becomes a heterogeneous culmination of salving symbols, the pig and rocket dichotomy becomes possible. The dichotomy must be upheld without one overtaking the other; regression and progression counterbalance each other from eminent entropy—chaos on the one hand, destruction on the other. It appears that as the novel concludes, the symbolic balancing act of the rocket and the pigs is lost as the scales have fatally tipped in the rocket's favor, with devastating results for the narrative and reader. As 00000 descends upon a movie theater, Pynchon metafictionally places the reader within the text, saying "There is time, if you need the comfort, to touch the person next to you, or to reach between your own cold legs" (775) with only a hymn written by William Slothrop for comfort on the final page. The text linguistically self-destructs with the reader figuratively placed within the confines of the theater, the end of the reading experience coinciding with the destruction of the cosmos contained in *Gravity's Rainbow*. Seen in this light, it becomes apparent that as we read *Gravity's Rainbow*, we are to Pynchon what William Slothrop's pigs were to him: hapless and unsuspecting creatures being (mis)guided to our deaths. Thus, the final scene of *Gravity's Rainbow* simultaneously illuminates both a new interpretation of the novel's ending and one final swinish symbol: *reader as pig*. The death of the reader (metafictionally blasted by the rocket) is the death of the pig symbol (finally overcome by the rocket). Pigs do not only function internally within the text to sustain the narrative through counterbalancing the rocket, but we as pig-readers also sustain the narrative through our active reading of it. With the dichotomy of the opposing of forces diminished, the narrative cannot continue; the rocket fulfills its death wish in a culminating, implosive end. The destruction of the swine symbol, then, is significant in its demonstrating that *Gravity's Rainbow* becomes unsustainable without its pigs, the ultimate demonstration of the swinish syncretism.

Our figurative fate as Preterite reader-pigs predestined to face 00000 is, then, a paranoiac premonition to the 1973 reader—aware of the all-too-real implications of the Cold War—that he or she is doomed to suffer the literal destruction of the world at the hands of *Them* and their nuclear missiles, and that modern civilization has selected the rocket as its path of entropy. Nearly forty years later, *Gravity's Rainbow* still resonates as we are left to surmise whether we are slouching further along that path, or whether we've regressed enough to counterbalance the death wish of progress. Either way, Pynchon's saturnine offerings are not for our choosing; we pigs can only follow the path *They* have designed for us.

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THE PASSIONATE BREAST: POSITING THE MEDIEVAL BREAST AS A SITE OF CHASTITY AND HUMANITY

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Introduction

Foucalt's Biopolitics finds many examples in postmodern times in the gender discourse of various Third World countries. Using the physical bodies of women in nationalist politics is an oft-found theme in postcolonial studies. Be it the issue of sati in India or that of clitoridectomy in Kenya, women's bodies have been fiercely used as puppets in the quest of nationalism.

The colonial and postcolonial episodes concerning the bodies of women have interesting (and sometimes inverted) connections to those found in the medieval ages, especially in the latter's culture of law and violence. These relations serve to highlight the gendered nature of punishment. For example, marital violence had varying degrees of punishments. The domestic abuse of their wives by men was a fairly normal order of the day; the reverse, however, was severely condemned. A medieval wife accused of killing her husband was usually burned alive (McGlynn 57). The concept of burning women alive finds itself in renaissance in nineteenth-century India, where sati, the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, was practiced as an outdated ritual in the modernized colonial times of the nation. However that's where the similarity ends, for the Indian woman suffered this gruesome death by virtue of simply being the wife of a deceased Brahmin man.

The above works as a fine example to highlight the body politics that construct gender in all eras. Consider the colonial establishment of the world as a breast-shaped entity in early explorations. The earth apparently "had the shape of a pear, which is all very round, except at the stem, where it is very prominent, or that is as if one had a very round ball, and one part of it was placed something like a woman's nipple" (Sale 176). Or note the bodily punishments inflicted on women in the medieval ages, in particular, the ripping of breasts. The choice of the breast as a point of focus, both in medieval and colonial ideology, now is forced to represent something apart from being a factor of anatomical distinction. After all in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* why was the scarlet letter branded on the bosom (of the gown) of Hester Prynne and not directly seared on her forehead or any other conspicuous part of her body? Why was one of the indicators of a (female) virgin the direction her nipples pointed in?

Medieval violence and legal (although an arguable term) punishment tended to be concentrated on specific parts of the body. I focus in particular on the torturous procedure of ripping of the breasts from the body of a condemned medieval woman. The punishment was inflicted for various reasons having to do with the doubt cast on the physical and moral purity of women. The procedure in itself was a most gruesome and cruel one, and the equipment to carry it out was termed, quite matter-of-factly, the "breast ripper." A formidable looking instrument, the ripper was equipped with metal claws piercing into the flesh of breast and tearing it from the body.

But the question is, why the breast? Why was that particular physical feature of the body chosen as the site of this cruelty? Is it simply because it is the most and immediate distinct marker of biological identity between the sexes? This is not to indicate that the point of cruelty could be diverted to any other part of the body but to underline the multitude of meanings that the removal of this particular anatomical region delineates. The conscious selection of the breast as the receptor of penalty has to possess some meaning that transcends physical pain.

In "The Filipina's Breast: Savagery, Docility, and the Erotics of the American Empire" Nerissa Balce notes that records of colonial documents indicate that (savage) breasts were viewed as signs of conquest (Balce 89). She further observes that in the American imperial imaginary concerning Filipinas, "savage bodies were also docile bodies needing discipline and tutelage" (92). It is my contention that this can be projected back to the medieval ages, where the colonial savage breasts become the microcosm of medieval women who engage in activities outside a masculine-prescribed law, and the forceful extraction of the breast becomes the sign of conquest, even if no evident rebellion is found.

Keeping in mind that body politics have played a vital role in postcolonial discourse, I propose that this removal of breasts as a form of punishment perhaps serves as an early instigator of gendered connotations. I argue that breasts obtain meaning as a site of chastity, a chastity that was relegated almost only to the feminine realm, and, by extension, as a site of humanity. The physical act of ripping of the breasts translated to the (masculine) wiping out of passion, maternity (and therefore, mankind). Thus, in effect, the infliction of such a punishment is an attempt at the revocation of female agency.

Chastity: A Case Study of Compare and Contrast

"Then raged the cruel one, and bade men torture her / On the breast in the rack, and bade it afterward be cut off" (Skeat 202).

The breast as a site of chastity is perhaps best highlighted in the study of the life of St. Agatha. When Quintianus, as a suitor, wished

to corrupt the virgin saint, he did so by forcing upon her the company of a prostitute, Aphrodosia. However this evil scheme of his fails and Agatha remains the chaste virgin she is. In order to get back at her determined will, he sentences her to torture and orders her breasts to be cut off. However, Agatha perceives this physical agony itself as a spiritual triumph, thus retaining her (physical and spiritual) chastity.

"But I have my breast sound in my soul / with which I shall at any rate feed my understanding" (Skeat 202).

Horner presents an analysis of the above event that focuses on this spiritual triumph in her essay on the violence on the bodies of Ælfric's saints.

Agatha's identity thus lies in both the essential materiality of her female body and the spiritual truth veiled by that body. Quintianus believes that the outer breast matters; Agatha asserts that it does not, drawing attention away from the literal body to the spiritual breast … Agatha reconfirms the idea that the breast to which both she and Aphrodosia refer is spiritual, not corporeal. (Horner 32-33)

While I admit to the superiority of the metaphorical, such an oversimplification of the physical entity of the body risks missing the physical connotations of the breast, especially under the lens of a masculine gaze. Why did Quintianus command that her breasts specifically be cut off in retaliation of her rebellion? In such an execution, Quintianus believes he asserts his masculine superiority borne out of anatomical difference, for the man cannot be penalized in a similar way. In addition, the removal of the breast signifies his triumph over Agatha's inability now to serve as a maternal figure, a nourisher of humanity.

The infliction of punishment on the breasts takes an interesting turn when it is viewed in juxtaposition to the ancient South Indian epic poem, *Silapathigaram* (having alternate spellings), penned by Ilango Adigal. The exact date of the origin of this written work is contested, but most scholars place its authorship around the early first century, which makes it a precursor to the literary themes of the medieval era. Even though the poem is set in an epoch much earlier, the plot of the narrative poem contains a relevant imagery that inverts the relationship between punishment and chastity.

Silapathigaram follows the journey of Kovalan, who is happily married to a woman, Kannagi, the epitome of wifely loyalty. Their joy, however, is short-lived when Kovalan indulges in an extra-marital affair with a dancer, Madhavi, and soon blows away his wealth on her. Once impoverished, he falls into a petty quarrel with Madhavi and repentantly returns to Kannagi, who welcomes him with open arms. They travel in search of a better life and reach the city of Madurai, located in southern India, where Kovalan tries to pawn the anklets belonging to his wife. However, he is falsely accused of stealing them from the queen and is hanged. In rage, Kannagi confronts the king and his queen at the court and proves that the anklets indeed belong to her. The king dies of guilt and shame, and to avenge her husband's unjustified death, Kannagi rips off her left breast and throws it on the ground. The city of Madurai burns down under the power of her curse (Zvelebil 132).

This fable, in comparison with that of St. Agatha, generates interesting and opposite results. Firstly, the female protagonist here becomes the *giver* of punishment, unlike Agatha, who is the receiver. Secondly, the meanings of the breast in the two instances differ; for Agatha, the breast signals its "nourishing capabilities" (Horner 32), while for Kannagi, the breast is the "seat of an occult, magic power, and the symbolisms suggest a truly internal source of fire" (Zvelebil 134). The former takes on a religious tone (as Horner relates the breast as a site of nursing to Christ), while the latter obtains a supernatural one.

Yet, in both narratives, the commonality is that the breast is a seat of passion. Consider the line in the Old English poem, *Judith*, "*hāte on hreðre mīnum*," where the eponymous heroine pleas for the Lord to avenge the hot passion in her breast. Here the word *hreðre* takes on the multiple meanings of heart, mind, and breast (Baker 268). In this note, it is through the transformation of the breast into a spiritual entity that Agatha reaffirms her passion and faith for her Lord (Christ). Kannagi's breast is a site of passion and rage that translates to the destructive fire. The forceful removal of the breast in the former and the voluntary ripping in the latter have distinct ends and meanings; yet both instances underline the role of the breast as an agent of purity for the woman. Agatha retains her chastity despite the extraction, and Kannagi, already the personification of chastity, destroys the city as a result of the act. As Horner insists, "although she may be breastless, Agatha can never be fully masculinized" (Horner 32). The removal of the breast draws attentions to the femininity of the body, and therefore, I argue, by extension, femininity of chastity.

Nursing, Humanity, and Monsters

Agatha said to him, "O thou most wicked! / Art thou not ashamed to cut off that which thou thyself hast sucked? (Skeat 202)

"While we are not to assume that Quintianus has literally sucked from Agatha's breast" (Horner 32), what Agatha implies here is that Quintianus has suckled from the breast of a woman – his mother. The breast as a site of nursing achieves importance through this imagery. More importantly, the meaning of nursing extends to humanity.

The colonial belief that the world was in the shape of a breast perhaps underscores the connection between the ideologies of nursing and humanity. Catherine Keller perceives this vision of the world as "forbidden fruit … the mother breast ready to suckle death-ridden, oppressed and depressed Europe into its rebirth (Keller 63). But this interpretation can be taken a step further. The Colonial exploration was carried out not just to discover wealth and uncharted lands but also to establish the existence of a non-Euro-centric humanity. It was this world, this breast, which nurtured and nourished this alternate community, the one that colonial recorders were in search of. Keller raises a pertinent point at this juncture. She notes the "symbolic matriphobia" that Columbus flees from upon his realization of the metaphor of the breast in one of his colonial expeditions (63). And this is reflected, centuries later, in the colonial intervention in the breast-feeding practices of the Belgian Congo.

Nancy Hunt's essay on colonial interference in the indigenous familial practices of African life engages in language that highlights the ambivalence brought about by this matriphobia that Keller observes above. Hunt explores the puzzlement of colonizers at the decline in population of the Belgian Congo following colonization which was attributed to the practice of the indigenous culture of the people to space out the births of children through sexual abstinence and prolonged breast-feeding. The colonial beliefs that infant mortality was partly caused by breast-feeding and their efforts to alter this practice and encourage alternate forms of nourishment employ the ideology of matriphobia in mixed ways: it promotes maternity to improve population count (that is, motherhood), but at the same time, it discourages maternal nourishment (that is, nursing through breast milk).

"The colonial remedy was to make other food available to children, by distributing milk and milk products so *mothers' milk would be dispensable*" (Hunt 409; emphasis mine). The colonial insistence on the dispensability of breast milk is of major significance to my argument. It acquires an almost eugenic tone; it highlights the breast as a site of

humanity by promoting a race that is weaned from this mother's food. While such a move serves to discourage infant mortality, the other aim of the move should be looked at, that is, the production of a certain type of humankind; one that is bereft of the milk of the mother. Here, the breast is removed literally from the mouth of the child and metaphorically from a picture containing the humanity of the future.

Such an erasure of the breast can be interestingly traced back to the depictions of monsters in Old English literature, especially in *The Wonders of the East*, a work that conflates text and pictures. Dana Oswald notes that the erasure of genitals in the illustrations of monsters in *The Wonders of the East* spells out the human fear of the potential of that monstrous body to reproduce (Oswald 28). In this persistence, the monster becomes the "permanent Other." "Genitals and female breasts are the most taboo and the most private elements of human bodies in Anglo-Saxon culture" (29), and Oswald correctly observes that such depictions enable the understanding of Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards gender and sexuality. (However, if there is a trepidation that the monsters will reproduce like humans at all, why bestow them with any characteristic of a human?)

Oswald draws attention to two particular and similar images in the set of illustrations (54-57). Both are by different artists and both have the same image; that of a masculine figure feeding animals. The figures, at first glance, look masculine by virtue of their physical depiction – a broad, stocky torso – and the genital areas are covered. But the most important difference is that one figure contains breast and nipples while the other doesn't. Oswald suggests that there is a purpose behind the depiction of the latter and notes the various hints that give away the sexes of the monstrous figures in both illustrations.

However, Oswald differs from my position on one point. She claims that the feeding of the animals, in essence, implies that the nurturing quality of the feminine is not erased (57). But it is yet unclear why such a difference in the illustrations then occurs (even if they are by different artists). The pictures contain an embedded message. The erasure of genitals and especially *female* breasts corroborate my earlier claim that breasts act as a site of humanity. Here, I understand humanity to broadly be any life. The erasure of breasts converts to the erasure of life, thus stunting the possibility of further sustenance especially through nourishment (though this disputes Oswald's argument). Further, there is a masculine assertion in the other illustrations themselves; "these women take on masculine habits and carry them to excess, in that they work with animals fiercer and hunt animals more exotic than those pursued by most medieval men" (Oswald 56-57). The assertion is further found in the beards of the women combined with their masculine attire and the very evident lack of a womanly physique or features. Assuming the artist therefore to be male (as given in Oswald's book as conveniently generic "he"), it is hard to believe that the male gaze can perceive a woman (even as a monster) to acquire masculine characteristics and still expect her to be a symbol of nourishment; for that simply counters Oswald's earlier argument that the erasure of body parts was done to quell the fear of the possibility of these monsters' reproduction.

Conclusion

The idea of the breast as a seat of passion, chastity, and humanity is more than a romantic notion. As a conclusive argument, I consider the most interesting angle the breast takes in Philip Roth's book, *The Breast*. When the protagonist, David Kepesh, wakes up one day to find that he has metamorphosed into a six-foot breast, he now has to define his identity as a function of his physical condition. Debra Shostak, in an insightful essay on the book, explores the notions of (the erasure of) masculinity and how this (or any) body part "turn[s] the human into the

questionably nonhuman" (Shostak 34).

By fixating just on the breast that he's become, Kepesh is now no longer human. Yet, unlike the monsters depicted in the Old English *The Wonders of the East*, he acquires the one characteristic that it omits – he becomes a starkly feminine symbol of nourishment and humanity. The significance of this metamorphosis is perhaps understood best if we consider how this text would be translated back to Old English. How easy would the conversion of the conveniently "ungendered" words that Kepesh uses be? Considering that possessive nouns in Old English are gender-specific, and the male protagonist turns into a female anatomical part, what gender would every instance of his new "my" now take following this transformation?

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