Watermark
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Editor's Note

As a student of the graduate program in English at California State University, Long Beach, I came to the realization that a scholarly journal was shamefully overdue in such a talented and richly diverse department. After a year of sweat and tears, no blood thankfully, I am very excited to present to you the first volume of *Watermark*.

Within this volume you will find a collection of essays, written by graduate students from CSULB and a variety of other universities, addressing burgeoning issues in the fields of literature, rhetoric and composition, and literary theory. Careful attention has been given to ensure that a broad spectrum of literary study is represented, from Chaucer to Caryl Phillips, the Qur'ān to Forster, and literary theory to political discourse. In an effort to keep abreast of the most recent developments in the field, this volume also includes reviews of Eric Paras' *Foucault 2.0* and Andrew Epstein's *Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar American Poetry*, two seminal books of criticism published in 2006.

E. Brookes Little
Editor

"Disinclined to Accept Human Nature":
Rereading Clive Durham in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*
by J.G. Adair

Adair is currently a PhD candidate in English at Northern Illinois University. His current research explores the creation of "sanctuaries" for gay men in fiction addressing the world wars. Adair earned his MA from Western Illinois University (2003) and his BA in American and British Literature from Blackburn College (1998).

E. M. Forster's *Maurice* challenges readers: it invites a plethora of interpretation and criticism, mostly negative, because of its posthumous publication, its construction of different types of homosexuality, and its idealistic conclusion. In fact, much of the critical discussion surrounding the novel dismisses it as second-rate when compared to the canon of Forster's work, ultimately disregarding it as minor fiction. Much of the early critical discussion of *Maurice* evokes a strong sense of latent, or in some cases blatant, homophobia towards the novel's homosexual themes. Criticism of a more positive nature emerged more recently, but not without critique—scholars who interpret the novel positively face accusations of promoting gay agendas rather than paying close attention to the text itself. Robert K. Martin acknowledges this reaction in *Queer Forster* (1997): "In the content of the overwhelmingly homophobic response to the publication of these

texts [Forster's posthumous gay texts], many gay critics felt compelled to write positive assessments of Forster's work and to argue for the validity of his homosexual themes" (18). Such a motivation, despite admirable intentions, seems dubious because it fails to afford *Maurice* respect based on its own merits.

This divide in the critical community creates an interesting phenomenon: little criticism exists which cannot be identified immediately on the grounds of extreme bias either wholeheartedly supporting or utterly deriding *Maurice*. A particularly fine example of such derision can be found in C. J. D. Harvey's "*Maurice*: E. M. Forster's Homosexual Novel":

> Therefore, when an author takes his courage in both hands and attempts through a work of the imagination to illuminate this aspect of human behaviour, to suggest even, that homosexual love is not necessarily degrading and may even be ennobling, he must be aware that he is treading on thin ice indeed, and that any laughter he evokes may all too easily degenerate into an obscene guffaw and open up hideous gulfs of social and artistic disaster. (32)

Harvey continues in a similar vein throughout his article simply because *Maurice* focuses on homosexuality. In light of this binary criticism surrounding *Maurice*, a completely satisfactory explication of key elements of the novel seems elusive.

Carelessly categorizing it solely as a "gay" novel, as many critics have, diminishes *Maurice*'s impact and discourages further critical attention. Curr emphasizes, "If practical-critical methodology fails because it views only the literary, then gay critics who accuse Forster of cowardice look too fixedly at the gender/love issue; they lose sight of Forster's commitment to aesthetics as a path to social revision" (63). Indeed, one cannot discount the impact of Forster's belief system,

life experience, and the probable influence of the Bloomsbury Group aesthetic on Forster's novels, even *Maurice*. Curr aptly asserts:

> While New Critics strive to demonstrate the aesthetic quality of a work as an end in itself, Forster's aesthetic is indissociable [sic] from his draft for a new society. To him, art and life are inseparable: the individual soul, enlightened by love and aesthetic sensitivity, creates an open-minded community. (55)

In other words, Forster's sensibilities (which resonate with those of the Bloomsbury Group) create a work which requires more than a single critical viewpoint for complete comprehension. The shortsightedness of an approach which employs only one critical lens (which most of the current criticism demonstrates) fails to recognize that Forster's sensibilities coalesce to function as an organic whole in *Maurice*, both representing life as he knew it and critiquing his contemporary society through an improbable ending—an oft misinterpreted ending, rashly dismissed as simplistic folly or wishful thinking.

Such criticism routinely dismisses Clive Durham as a one-dimensional representation of mal-intentioned homosexuality. However, I would suggest Forster creates Clive, basing him on homosexuals he knew, to critique the British government (and contemporary social mores) and its unwavering insistence on the enactment of heterosexuality, however false. Clive ultimately reinforces the absurdity of Britain's refusal to accept male homosexuality and decriminalize it and exposes the frustration and disappointment inherent in the lives of the majority of homosexual men. I reject the prevalent assertion that *Maurice*'s primary objective involves rejecting one type of homosexuality in favor of another. This notion is propounded by critics Robert K. Martin and Charles J. Summers, amongst others, who suggest *Maurice* actively rejects Clive Durham's

"type" of homosexuality, while endorsing Alec Scudder's in an attempt to create a space, however fictional, for homosexual males to pursue relationships and achieve personal fulfillment beyond the constraints of the laws and mores of early twentieth century England. Such an assumption not only negates Forster's personal experiences but also implies an absence of any contemporary model of homosexual "space" to base his novel upon. Forster's terminal note in *Maurice* acknowledges, "It [*Maurice*] was the direct result of a visit to Edward Carpenter at Millthorpe" (245). Edward Carpenter and his lover, George Merrill, certainly provided Forster one strong model of homosexuals openly living together and flagrantly defying social convention—Carpenter's refusal to conform to societal norms was legendary. While Carpenter's mode of living may not have coincided with Forster's personal vision of homosexual partnership and domesticity, it certainly provided him one concrete example of how homosexual life could potentially function, despite legal strictures.

In addition, Forster's regular involvement with the Bloomsbury Group during the time he composed *Maurice* (1913) provided him models of male homosexuals living together and interacting in satisfying, semi-public ways. Many critics assert an isolation and insularity about Forster's life which suggests little substantial awareness of how homosexuals at the time were managing to create homes and lives together, an assertion which appears inaccurate at best. The dynamic of the Bloomsbury Group encouraged frank sexual discussion which, in turn, engendered liberal opinions about sexuality and gender, including the acceptance of homosexuality or bisexuality in nearly all its members.

One particularly vibrant example of homosexual domesticity accessible to Forster via the Bloomsbury Group was the relationship between John Maynard Keynes and Duncan Grant. In his book

Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture and Domesticity, Christopher Reed offers a fascinating glimpse of this relationship:

> It was into this sexually radicalized Bloomsbury that Keynes and Grant were made welcome. Encouraged by Strachey, who was their elder, in a forthright acceptance of their homosexual desires, they fell easily—Grant especially—into this circle of friends…Also linking Grant and Keynes to Bloomsbury was a common delight in domesticity. When they moved together to Fitzroy Square, Grant took charge of outfitting their rooms, writing to Keynes at Cambridge to describe how he ordered wallpaper of "cuckoo green" for his studio in the front room and installed, with the bravado of a would-be Oscar Wilde, "the most exquisite pot of chrysanthemums…Grant's decorations for Keynes were conceived from the start as an expression of sexual identity. (53)

The impact of such a radically new vision of homosexual domesticity can only have been a tremendous revelation for Forster, both as a member of the Bloomsbury Group as well as a homosexual in search of a model to emulate in the pursuit of happiness. Thus *Maurice*'s Greenwood, as a space for homosexual self-exploration and freedom, becomes Forster's conscious construction as a part of his social critique, not a necessity born of the absence of models of places for Maurice and Alec to escape to. In this context, I would also suggest that Clive Durham is a representation of the kind of homosexual most familiar to Forster. Furthermore, Maurice's ultimate rejection of society and retreat into the Greenwood with Alec represents the impossibility of sustained homosexual relationships at the time for men like Clive and the highly politicized societal system he operates within.

Claude J. Summers, in *E. M. Forster* claims: "It [*Maurice*] is

preeminently a political novel, for Maurice's education through suffering culminates in a sweeping indictment of his society, an indictment that results directly from his awareness of the political implications of the homosexual experience in a hostile world" (180). If we accept political critique as Forster's primary objective in *Maurice*, then the multiple representations of homosexuality in the novel become pivotal. In 1983, Robert K. Martin published "Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*," which analyzes *Maurice* based on the theoretical constructs for the explanation of male homosexuality propounded by sexologists John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter. Acclaimed by the critical community, Martin's article is still held in high regard by many as the definitive critical lens for explicating *Maurice*. Martin creates a logical delineation between the first portion of the novel (Maurice and Clive's romantic involvement) and the second when Maurice chooses Alec. Martin argues that Forster models Clive Durham on the Symonds-type homosexual (platonic homosexuality with decreased emphasis on physical sexuality), whereas Alec and Maurice (at the end of the novel) represent the model of homosexuality espoused by Edward Carpenter and his followers (celebration of the physical and emotional). Martin and Piggford reiterate this thesis in their 1997 study, *Queer Forster*:

> ...[T]he novel's debate over sexual identity is a conflict between two discourses of the homosexual, both located in a particular time and place. These two discourses are identified with two important late nineteenth century sexual theorists, John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter. The first of these is associated with an elitist idealism and the second with radical socialism and feminism. Thus, for Martin the novel is not, as it was often taken to be, a plea for homosexuality, but rather a dramatized conflict between

competing models of same-sex desire. (19)

Martin's model places Clive Durham and Alec Scudder in absolute opposition, conceding no common ground or intersection between the ideologies of Symonds and Carpenter, as though these variations of homosexuality represent mutually exclusivity. Martin's argument becomes problematic because it requires readers to understand the novel as a binary where Clive represents a faulty or undesirable homosexuality and Alec personifies a more positive representation of homosexuality. In this sense, Alec promises a capacity for redemption and social growth as a working-class individual with less at stake than someone like Clive in British society.

Unfortunately, such a reading of Clive utterly discounts him as a valid representation of homosexuality and diminishes the impact of Forster's social critique. In fact, I would assert the possibility of a completely different message with Clive and the Cambridge portion of *Maurice*. Martin notes, "The first half of *Maurice* is concerned with tracing the false vision of an idealized homosexuality. We perceive its falseness, however, only after we have followed Maurice through his sense of confusion and his apparent salvation in the arms of Clive" ("Double" 38). Martin's claim assumes that because Clive and Maurice's relationship remains unconsummated sexually and ultimately dissolves that it represents a homosexuality founded upon deception, without true depth of feeling or sincerity on Clive's part. Within this argument, Maurice becomes Clive's victim who, despite professions and demonstrations of love and attraction for Maurice, ultimately moves beyond the "falseness" of homosexuality and embraces his own heterosexuality.

Interestingly, Martin links Maurice and Clive's relationship to an event in Forster's own college career. He notes:

At Cambridge Forster became involved in a romantic

friendship with a fellow undergraduate, Hugh Meredith, the model for Clive Durham in *Maurice*. Although the two men were very close, the physical element of the relationship was confined to passionate kisses. Forster believed during this period that his sexual identity, his status as what he termed a "minority" was an essential aspect of his personality even though he had not yet consummated his desire for other men. ("Queer" 12)

And yet, armed with this information, Martin ignores Forster's possible employment of personal experience as critique of his own society—a society that criminalized homosexuality and forced numerous men like Clive Durham to pretend heterosexuality, regardless of the nature of their personal and erotic desires. Forster's experience, which he fictionalizes in *Maurice*, can hardly have been unique—young homosexuals finding themselves physically and emotionally attracted to other young men without any clear idea of how to handle such attractions experienced terror over the possible consequences of acting upon such "unusual" urges. Beyond its taboo nature and the unceasing fear of legal/societal retribution surrounding it, homosexuality at this time remained cloaked in secrecy and undoubtedly left many individuals frightened and confused. Within that context, it becomes clear why many homosexual men chose to marry and create families, defying their own desires to retain a place in society. Such capitulation ensured position and privilege, especially for men of higher social rank.

Nevertheless, the decision to ape heterosexuality fails to stifle homosexual impulses. Through Clive, Forster critiques this hypocrisy— in his desire to retain social position and the power that position affords him, Clive forsakes his desire for Maurice (and his own sexual nature) and becomes a model upper-middle class gentleman, illustrating the

mandatory disavowal of personal integrity and fulfillment required to maintain the status quo in early twentieth century England. Matthew Curr aptly summarizes this sensibility: "In *Maurice* Clive is ready to trade his soul for the accoutrements of social blessing and propriety—that hallowed English word just after a secure income in the litany of English desiderata" (62). In other words, Forster's frustration lies, not as Martin suggests, with the Symonds-type homosexual but with the hypocrisy of a society which only affords the retention of privilege to those who embody prescribed roles, regardless of the inherent falseness therein.

Forster's portrayal of Maurice and Clive at Cambridge represents a convincing vision of two men in love. From the beginning, we see them behaving as a romantically involved couple. "Durham didn't dislike him, he was sure. That was all he wanted. One thing at a time. He didn't so much as have hopes, for hope distracts, and he had a great deal to see to" (40). Maurice actively worries about Clive's interest in his friendship, unsure of the nature of his feelings for his new acquaintance. "Very often Durham made no reply and Maurice would be terrified lest he was losing him" (45). Before long, a pattern of casual intimacy develops: "Give me a cigarette. Put it in my mouth. Thanks," Clive says, subtly transgressing the boundaries of friendship by allowing Maurice contact with a sexually-charged area of his person (43). From then on, Forster repeatedly depicts Clive and Maurice in positions of increased intimacy and a sense of the growing attraction between the two emerges. "When they sat it was nearly always in the same position—Maurice in a chair, and Durham at his feet, leaning against him. In the world of their friends this attracted no notice" (44). Just as Keynes and Grant's intimacy gained acceptance in the Bloomsbury Group, so Clive and Maurice gain some acceptance at Cambridge. Within certain limits, such behavior was deemed acceptable

in the closed world of Cambridge, so long as the young men involved understood the highly confined (by time and social convention) nature of their flirtation. Maurice and Clive establish a domestic, comfortable intimacy that allows access to one another's bodies and establishes a profound sense of connection. The two become inseparable: "Durham couldn't do without him, and would be found at all hours curled up in his room and spoiling to argue" (49). Their growing intimacy suggests sincere emotion and genuine interest on both parts.

Clive's jealousy about Maurice's potential interest in a woman further establishes their mutual interest:

"Is there some trouble?"

He caressed again and withdrew. It seemed as certain that he hadn't as that he had a friend.

"Anything to do with that girl?"

"No."

"You wrote you liked her."

"I didn't—don't." (57)

This scene's tension increases when, moments later, friends interrupt the pair's embrace:

Now Durham stretched up to him, stroked his hair. They clasped one another. They were lying breast against breast soon, head was on shoulder, but just as their cheeks met someone called "Hall" from the court, and he answered: he always had answered when people called. Both started violently, and Durham sprang to the mantelpiece where he leant his head on his arm. (57)

This short scene represents a major shift in Clive and Maurice's dynamic. Whereas before demonstrations of physical contact and proximity occurred in their friends' presence, both men now recognize the increasingly illicit nature of their relationship and the need for secrecy

and subterfuge. The simple action of simultaneously jumping from the bed and mutually disentangling signals both men's cognizance of societal rules and their wish to conform to avoid retribution. However, this does not indicate any desire to discontinue their relationship; they simply choose to hide it from society, as represented in this instance by their friends rushing into the room demanding tea. Clive and Maurice's behavior indicates the pervasiveness of societal rules forbidding such contact. Indeed, Clive and Maurice have not declared love for one another at this point, but they understand the unacceptability of their behavior in the context of early twentieth-century England. Clive disentangles first from their embrace, subtly indicating his greater willingness to conform to society's expectations and forsake his own desires.

Not long after this scene, Clive confesses his love for Maurice. Although his initial reaction—"Oh, rot!"—distresses Clive enormously, Maurice quickly rallies and confesses his love as well. Before he does so, though, Clive "wrote Maurice an icy note suggesting that it would be a public convenience if they behaved as if nothing happened. He added, 'I shall be obliged if you will not mention my criminal morbidity to anyone'"(59). Facing a crushing rejection from Maurice, Clive remains gravely concerned about his public position and perception. In fact, his letter mentions nothing of his own feelings or disappointment. Instead, he focuses upon the precarious position he places himself in by revealing his feelings. Although Maurice makes no threat to expose him, Clive's reaction offers a fascinating glimpse into a soul clearly determined to maintain appearances at any cost. Fortunately, Maurice realizes the similarity of their desire: "He loved men and always had loved them. He longed to embrace them and mingle his being with theirs" (61). After this powerful realization, Maurice decides to confess his feelings, ostensibly to forge a more fully-developed romantic

relationship with Clive.

However, Clive's anxiety takes control and he rebuffs Maurice: "I shouldn't have said that. So do leave me. I'm thankful it's into your hands I fell. Most men would have reported me to the Dean or the Police" (65). Clive's fixation on the authorities' power to punish his behavior, while not without grounds, signals an anxiety about the criminal nature of his desire strong enough to outweigh its pursuit. An overwhelming sense of guilt about his homosexuality remains a part of Clive's personality as well. Forster tells us, "His sixteenth year was ceaseless torture. He told no one, and finally broke down and had to be removed from school" (67). Clearly, Clive understands his own desire, but wishes to deny it for fear of its reception.

Clive and Maurice briefly attain a romantic relationship. After Maurice confesses his love and the two kiss, a short period follows where the reader nearly expects requited love for the two. This union results in heightened emotions and playfulness, albeit tinged with Clive's anxiety about possible exposure as a homosexual. Maurice skips lectures in order to escape into the country with Clive for a day of companionship, the desire of any young lovers. Clive says, "I can't stick Cambridge in this weather. Let's get right outside it ever so far and bathe" (73). While Clive may just want to escape for the day, his choice of words hints at much more—he wants to completely escape ("ever so far") from Cambridge to fulfill his desires and escape the judging stares of society. The two nearly escape, "[b]ut as they threaded Jesus Lane they were hailed by the Dean" (73). An ironic choice of street name, Forster reminds us of the presence of Christianity, which both men disregard and, according to Edwardian standards (and beyond), actively transgress to fulfill their desires. The appearance of the Dean, who represents society in his role as chief authority at the college, also reinforces the omnipresence of the condemning gaze of society. In the

face of such stifling control and claustrophobic "morality" it becomes necessary to defy society, as men like Carpenter, Keynes and Grant were doing in Forster's own life, in an attempt to create a space for homosexuality, even if only in a single room or house. For those men unwilling to undergo scrutiny and forfeit their societal privileges in order to live life as they chose, the only alternative becomes assuming the role of heterosexuality, regardless of the reality of their sexual desire.

Thus, Clive quickly assimilates the role of heterosexuality despite the overwhelming evidence suggesting his love and desire for Maurice. This transformation occurs after a trip to Greece, an ironic vacation destination for him to contemplate his place in society. Forster uses this ironic situation (Clive finds Greece unpleasant) to reveal Clive's inability to embrace his own homosexuality because of the requirement inherent in such an acceptance that he divorce himself from ambitions for public life or enjoyment of the privileges of his social class. In order to attain such heights, Clive must embody the roles of masculinity and heterosexuality demanded of a man of his station. Breaking the news to the traumatized Maurice, he says "'Against my will I have become normal. I cannot help it'" (113). Although these events should cause no surprise, they do. Nearly all the critical discussion surrounding this "transformation" accepts it at face value, believing that Clive either experiences a miraculous transition from homosexuality to heterosexuality or suggesting Clive's homosexuality was false from the outset—both absurd assertions at best. Clive's homosexuality is clear, evidenced by his impassioned emotional and physical, although not purely sexual, affair with Maurice.

The notion that Clive willfully dismisses his homosexuality and attains heterosexuality or awakens one morning to find homosexual urges vanished appears as nothing but preposterous. Forster does not

wish us to see Clive as newly heterosexual—he wishes to expose the hypocrisy of a homosexual forced into the role of heterosexuality to preserve and promote his social position. Summers suggests, "Clive's conversion to heterosexuality vividly illustrates the power of the physical, even in someone who has struggled so long to repress it, "not realizing that the body is deeper than the soul" (160). Harned insists, "Clive begins to be sexually attracted to women and to find Maurice's embraces repulsive" (56). Furthermore, critic Frederick McDowell asserts, "Clive's idealized conception of sex may partly motivate his later deconversion from homosexuality" (51). Despite the prevalence of such claims, *Maurice* offers no convincing evidence of Clive's "deconversion." In fact, much later in the novel Clive (a married man by this point) kisses Maurice's hand, suggesting his desire for him lives on and courses just under the surface. Rather than becoming heterosexual, Clive succumbs to his fears and anxieties about living life as a homosexual and chooses the safety of pretended heterosexuality instead.

Jon Harned's "Becoming Gay in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*" makes a fascinating point about Clive's conversion: "*Significantly, the mysterious alteration in his sexual life occurs just after he has passed his bar exams. The law—the law that forbids the mention of homosexuality and founds culture itself—must be obeyed*" (61). While Harned wholeheartedly accepts Clive's sexual about-face, he unwittingly suggests what I perceive as the genuine cause of Clive's desire to marry Anne Woods and embark on what most likely represents a *marriage blanc*, more or less, and conveniently fulfills Clive's requirements in the realms of public life and social ambition. Clive recognizes the consequences of transgressing the law and forsakes emotional and sexual fulfillment to comply with it.

Forster creates a fascinating portrait of the Durham-Woods

marriage—one which falls quite short of wedded ardor. Clive decides not to tell his wife about his love for Maurice, implying his love for Maurice endures. However, even if his love for Maurice ceases, Clive recognizes that even mentioning a past love for another man gives his wife reason to question his masculinity and possibly his fidelity. We learn, "In the first glow of his engagement, when she was the whole world to him, the Acropolis included, he though of confessing to her about Maurice...But loyalty to his friend withheld him, and he was glad afterwards" (159). Forster's use of the term 'confessing' suggests that Clive thinks of his attraction/love for Maurice as criminal and places his wife in the position (potentially) to punish his 'crime.' Thus, Maurice becomes a guilty secret that Clive guards carefully, unwilling to relinquish his love for him. Although sexual activity occurs between Clive and Anne, Forster intentionally depicts it unconvincingly— antiseptic and dispassionate at best:

> They united in a world that bore no reference to the daily, and this secrecy drew after it much else of their lives. So much could never be mentioned. He never saw her naked, nor she him. They ignored the reproductive and the digestive functions. (159)

Throughout his life after marriage to Anne, Clive still works to maintain contact and interaction with Maurice, taking special interest in Maurice's love life and expressing anxiety over his inability to disavow his homosexuality. While many critics categorize this concern as a form of revulsion toward homosexuality, I tend to view it as something more akin to anxiety or jealousy over Maurice's ability to remain honest about his desires and continue having homosexual relationships. It is this behavior and his ultimate inability to divorce himself utterly from Maurice which comes to represent the plight of the closeted homosexual in early twentieth-century England. In this light, Clive's

much touted "conversion" to heterosexuality raises serious doubts. In fact, I would suggest Clive comes to represent one of many men who deny their homosexuality and choose to conform to society's dictates to alleviate external discomfort and difficulty.

Ultimately, I believe Clive represents the behavior of a significant portion of male homosexuals (behavior which Forster experienced firsthand at Cambridge) in England during the time Forster composed the novel. While much criticism exists about Clive's "type" of homosexuality and the ways his sensibilities align with those of sexual theorist John Addington Symonds, this characterization ascribes to him a purely intellectual, elitist outlook which ultimately diminishes Forster's representation and suggests an incomplete reading of the character's nuances. While he undoubtedly fits some of Symonds' tenets of homosexuality (one could easily argue Maurice does as well), critics tend to view these character traits as something akin to affectation, having little to do with actual homosexuality. In fact, Clive's decision to marry and enact the stereotypical heterosexual life has far too often been read as genuine, as though his homosexual behavior early in the novel represents falseness or confusion. Clive's desire to emulate the model of masculinity and social propriety thwarts his homosexuality, it does not negate it. Through Forster's exploration of repressed homosexuality in Clive Durham he exposes an incredibly frustrating situation he experienced firsthand and moves toward constructing a more open, liberated homosexuality in the hope of sparking new thought and inspiring social change.

This desire for social change drives Forster to envision a pristine, untouched world for his protagonist to claim. Despite the availability of several models of homosexual domesticity/space (s) to Forster, employing any of those (Millthorpe/Bloomsbury Group models) potentially endangered his friends and made a less forceful statement

about the necessity of sweeping changes in law and societal perception. In the end, Forster could have presented Maurice sharing a house with Alec in some artistic, vaguely seedy address in London like many of his friends, or he could have created a cottage in the countryside where they could share their lives together. However, although such domesticity worked well for his friends, Forster certainly found no sustained sexual/romantic happiness or fulfillment in that world. In fact, to employ the exceptional circumstances of his social circles would indicate the possibility for homosexuals to live together and form loose communities in England. While accurate in a limited sense, such circumstances occurred outside the foundations of the law and opened his friends up to the possibility of a backlash against the minority who managed to transgress society's laws successfully (and one recognizes his fear of such retribution when considering *Maurice's* posthumous publication). In addition, such an ending would also suggest the existence of safe spaces, regardless of legality, where homosexuals could live together unashamedly. Such an ending would overlook the tenuousness of the space occupied by men like Carpenter, Merrill, Keynes and Grant—a space which could be quickly eradicated by the publication of a novel calling for the expansion of such spaces and laying out a plan of how or where to create these freedoms for such a vilified group.

As it stands, Forster's conclusion achieves his pointed critique of British society and its laws, particularly through the tragic character of Clive Durham. Clive appears most quintessentially British and embodies a homosexuality that seems most aligned with Forster and other members of his group because of his intellectual interests and focus on personal exploration and understanding (demonstrated in the Cambridge portion of the novel). Clive's ultimate betrayal of his own desire and assimilation into heterosexual society resonates as a central

theme for many men during this period. Clive comes to represent the frustration and self-denial inherent in successful participation in British society. Maurice and Alec, however, escape such oppression into the mythic "Greenwood" to create a space for themselves and others like them. Unquestionably unrealistic, the conclusion of the novel punctuates Forster's argument about men like Clive and the expectations/restrictions placed upon them should they choose to remain in the system they are born into. Summers reasons:

> Ironically, however, though Maurice wrestles free of Clive's influence, the country squire who smugly denied the reality of homosexual love will never escape the memory of his incomplete passion. Maurice will continue to haunt all his days and nights to come, mocking his timidity and rebuking his hypocrisy...Clive's fate is aptly summed in Wilde's description of men who desire to be something separate from themselves, such as a member of Parliament. (174)

Ultimately, Clive must suffer all that he denies himself and a marriage which includes none of the passion or intensity of his relationship with Maurice. He embodies the fact that "England has always been disinclined to accept human nature" (206). Rendered powerless in the realm of advancement for homosexuals, Maurice and Alec face the astonishing task of creating a new world in the Greenwood where they can form a society of their own which enforces no such unrealistic standards nor causes the mutually antagonistic frustration of either being a homosexual male who chooses to pretend heterosexuality or a man like Maurice, and possibly Forster, who falls into doomed love with such a man. Routinely criticized as an overly optimistic conclusion, it seems the most productive option for broad social critique for Forster. Indeed, for a man who saw no real freedom,

happiness, or acceptance for men like him, except in rarefied circles like the Bloomsbury Group (which still did not offer complete fulfillment to him) this seems the only possible conclusion to the novel. Forster recognized the privileged nature of the relationships of the homosexuals he was familiar with and wanted to create a space, however theoretical, which included all types of homosexuals—even bisexual, working-class men like Alec. The models of homosexuality available to Forster at the time contained no space to begin completely anew and redesign a society where homosexuals would find acceptance, not just toleration (and even then only in the ultra-specific milieus of art and academia), so he envisioned a new space where homosexuals do not deny themselves as Clive does, a place untouched and full of potential for a freedom and contentment he never knew in his lifetime.

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History Reinterpreted:
A Postcolonial Approach to History in Caryl Phillips'
Crossing the River
by Rebekah Bartley

Bartley earned a BA in English from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and an MA in English from George Mason University (GMU), Fairfax, Virginia. She was awarded a teaching assistantship from GMU and was recently a recipient of the 2006 GMU Sven Eric Molin Prize and Scholarship. Areas of research include African nationalism and postcolonialism.

Striving for a voice with which to speak one's self and thus validate one's identity and corroborate one's history is the struggle in which the dominated, the subaltern, are perpetually caught. Like J. M. Coetzee's Friday, their tongues have been severed; silenced by the colonizer, their story becomes a fabrication compiled by another. If the Crusoes of the world construct the Fridays, then those dominated and their histories are subverted, moved to the periphery, and rewritten in order to substantiate the superiority of Western history. As Leela Gandhi suggests, the white Western historian creates a Western version of history, a version that advances Western preeminence, and the West propagates that version to the world. In this way, history becomes a "discourse through which the West [asserts] its hegemony over the

rest of the world" (170). The lives and history of the colonized are often de-emphasized, truncated from a book to a chapter and then to a few sentences within a Western narrative, as Chinua Achebe's character Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* becomes merely a paragraph, a superfluous detail in the commissioner's text. The colonizer's clout to create history derives not only from his ability to re-present the colonial subject but also to omit that subject and his story altogether, as Walter Rodney heralds, "To be colonized is to be removed from history" (qtd. in Gugelberger). Burdened by the need to recover the lost histories of the colonial subject, postcolonialism offers a rebuttal to the Hegelian assertion that independent from the West's history, Africa, as are all the colonized, is without history.

Caryl Phillips' postcolonial novel *Crossing the River* subverts the traditional Western historical narrative in order to historicize the silenced and unrepresented subaltern. Additionally, *Crossing the River* challenges that form and structure through which the West writes its history. For if the silenced colonial subject is able to speak his/her story, disrupting the West's narrative, then the form which will transport the silenced's historicity must also upset that narrative's solidarity. This paper will deconstruct several of the ways in which *Crossing the River* employs postmodern techniques, as a medium for a revolutionary, postcolonial rewriting of history.

One of the major parallels critics find between the postmodern and postcolonial is that of form. When asked in an interview about the form in which he writes his novels, Phillips responded that the Caribbean writer should not feel bound to a literary tradition which does not account for the heterogeneity of the Caribbean experience, history, voices, and people. Phillips finds his appropriate medium in a postmodern narrative structure. The postmodern form disrupts a linear arrangement of events, privileges multiple narrators and a

cacophony of perspectives, and combines various genres. It is a fitting method for Phillips not only because the postmodern writes against the grain of Western forms and narrative traditions but also because, as John McGowan elucidates, the two 'posts' have a "concomitant interest in non-Western voices that offer different perspectives on the West's image of itself and its past." The postmodern novel achieves this primarily through its subversion of a single (Western) narrator and privileging of a multiplicity of (non-Western) voices and perspectives. The postmodern use of multiple narrators appeals to Phillips because it mirrors the "many-tongued chorus" one of Phillips' narrators, the African father, hears rising from the "diasporan souls" throughout 250 years of exile and displacement across three continents (1, 236). Additionally, the temporal disjointedness and narrative fragmentation of the novel mirrors the historical turbulence of the 250 years in which the African diasporic is caught.

As the structurally disjointed narrative of *Crossing the River* disrupts a Western reader's expectations, so does the characterization. Each of the characters does not fit the certain stereotypes found in traditional historical narratives, for the very reason that these are the characters who have been silenced – characters with whom a Western audience is unfamiliar. Benedicte Ledent illustrates the characterization of this novel succinctly and aptly, describing those characteristics which have written these individuals out of traditional histories:

> Nash, the educated slave turned coloniser and missionary; Edward, the liberal-minded and homosexual master; Martha, the black settler and frontierswoman; and even Joyce the colour blind outcast, are non-conformist pioneer figures most often excluded from conventional historiography and literature. (118)

Additionally, while the characters are historically displaced, they are

also all geographically displaced, their voices dispersed throughout three continents: Africa, America, and Europe – a mirroring of the triangular trade route through which the children were first uprooted from their native soil.

Crossing the River is also postmodern because it rejects the singularity and objectivity of history. This novel shares in the postcolonial and postmodern questioning of a traditional perspective of history and counters that perspective by viewing history from the position of those who have been written out of it and offers an alternative to the homogeneity of history in the traditional historical narrative. The postmodern novel often accomplishes this through the subversion of the objective grand narrative, replacing the central authoritative narrative with multiple subjective meta-narratives. By removing the grand narrative, the postmodern novel reveals that privileged narratives (and privileged histories) are only narratives (and histories) that have been privileged by someone at some time and hold no true authoritative, indisputable preeminence which make these narratives the right ones and their histories the legitimate accounts. In *Crossing the River* the proper historical account is fragmented and marginalized in order to interpolate within an historical narrative the history of the unaccounted for others, such as Nash, an American slave; Martha, a black frontierswoman; Travis, a black American GI; and Joyce, a white woman of the Yorkshire lower class who is ostracized because of her relationship with Travis. In doing so, *Crossing the River* validates and legitimizes a history and a perspective that is non-white, non-traditional, non-European, and non-existent.

However, despite the many parallels between postmodernism and postcolonialism, there is a primary delineation, inherent in postcolonialsm but absent in postemodernism: resistance and revolution. While postmodern texts are typically, as Linda Hutcheon

states, "politically ambivalent," privileging no one point-of-view in order to deconstruct all existing orthodoxies, postcolonial texts, because of the consequences of colonialism, are deeply rooted in the political and are often sites for resistance and revolution (130). *Crossing the River* resists the marginalization and silencing of the African diasporic's history within a Western narrative and offers a revolutionary alternative to the diasporic's muting and decentering by the European.

Crossing the River is written in four chapters, each one independent of the other, and as Ledent indicates, "each voice speak[ing] its own particular language" (109). Uniting these four disparate narratives is the frame – the African father's narrative. The frame captures the disjointedness and displacement of the narrative's form and characters. It establishes the exilic condition of each individual displaced by the African diaspora, as well as those who have been exiled by society and, thus, can be folded into the diaspora. Rising out of the father's narrative in the opening frame is the voice of James Hamilton, the slave ship captain who bought his children. Listen as the father's narrative progression is suspended by the intrusion of Hamilton's voice, which Phillips sets off in italics: "I turned and journeyed back along the same weary paths. *I believe my trade for this voyage has reached its conclusion.* And soon after, the chorus of a common memory began to haunt me" (1). The closing frame is both a retrospective glance at the day he sold his children and a future longing for the hope of recovering his children's voices among the survivors. In this frame, the father is interrupted by fragments of the narratives of Nash, Martha, Joyce, and Hamilton. The interpolation of other voices within the frame unites their individual stories, experiences, and geographical locations into one common experience – one common chorus. In the face of separation, Phillips claims there is solidarity.

The first chapter titled "The Pagan Coast" is Nash's narrative (Or

is it his master's, Edward's?) and is the only narrative out of the four that in tone and technique most closely resembles an English literary tradition. There is an established, known narrator: a third-person, extradiagetic, intrusive narrator whose perspective, the reader can deduce, is white. The narrator refers to Nash's request for necessities as "childish" and states that Nash was "chosen for colonization" of Liberia (7, 9). 'Chosen' connotes an earned reward and a freedom to accept or decline that reward. Both are not the case with Nash who, as a slave, is bound to his master's will. Nash has no more freedom in choosing to be (re)colonized by the ACS as he does in choosing to leave Edward's service. Thus, the more appropriate word choice should be 'forced' – the word a non-white narrator who would likely sympathize with Nash's situation and who would not have glossed over the meaning of this obligatory deportation would have chosen.

The sequence of this narrative is relatively linear, beginning with the arrival of Madison's letter confirming Nash's disappearance in Liberia and following Edward's journey to Africa to find Nash and learn the truth, and despite a few analepses, which provide pertinent information to the forward progress of the narrative, the narrative focuses on the present. The exception to this linear progression is Nash's letters. Nash's only words are spoken and his perspective discovered through the five letters he writes to Edward from Liberia, which are dispersed throughout the narrative. These individual letters, while arranged in chronological order, disrupt the flow and time of Edward's narrative and offer the reader the other side of the grand narrative which centers on Edward.

While Nash's narrative is a blend of genres: historical, epistolary, and travel, all used heavily in the English literary tradition, Martha's narrative is written in the slave narrative genre of the 1800's in America. "West," the title of the second chapter and Martha's narrative, oscillates

between a third-person narrator and a first-person narrator. As the narrators alternate back and forth so does the progression of the story, which continually slips into the past without warning and then returns to the present in the same manner. While this alternative chronology found in "West" is characteristic of the postmodern form, it is also inherent to Caribbean writers whose intentions, as Simon Gikandi elucidates, are to "confront[] Eurocentric notions of time as a way of questioning or subverting the European episteme" (140).

Martha's narrative historicizes the black female in America in the 1800's. While Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois are writing from a similar perspective: that of the emancipated slave, their voices are male. The female gendered voice has been silent or at the most marginalized within white and black (male) narratives. Phillips includes Martha in the many-tongued chorus because she represents not only the marginalized American black, who has been at best an object in European and American history, but also because she is female and, therefore, a marginalized individual within a patriarchal society.

The third chapter and narrative, "Crossing the River," disrupts the flow of the children's tales and is, literally, at the center of the novel and is narrated by Captain Hamilton, the slave ship captain. This narrative is the novel's only truly linear, chronological narrative. The only interruption in Captain Hamilton's journal entries are the letters he writes to his wife, which still fall in the temporal order of the narrative. Set in 1752 onboard a slave ship, Captain Hamilton's tale is told through the seaman's journal genre, essentially a compilation of successive days' events recorded by Hamilton. The journal entries, true to the 'real' entries this narrative seeks to mimic, are very mechanical and include mundane specifics such as the time of day, changes in temperature and wind direction, sightings of land, and, naturally, the commodities for which he trades. Juxtaposed to this dispassionate

Hamilton in these impersonal entries is the loving, tender, ardent Hamilton in the letters he writes to his wife.

The letters can be viewed as Phillips's device for creating Hamilton's humanity and inviting the reader to empathize with the dutiful husband who is also burdened by an inner turmoil stemming from the contradiction of his Christian faith and his chosen vocation. However, it appears clear that while Phillips uses the letters as a sentimental device, he is not condoning Hamilton's actions. Hamilton is still a sinful white man to Phillips because Hamilton does not show that he is pursuing any recourse from his current trade. Although, through the letters Phillips may be suggesting that within Hamilton there is an opportunity for change, for at least he does not foster the same "passionate hatred...toward the poor creatures in his care," as it has been intimated to him that his father did (118-19). Thus, Hamilton is brought into the narrative because he shows this potentiality for change. This premise is corroborated with Phillips' acknowledgement at the beginning of the novel to John Newton's *Journal of a Slave Trader*, from which Phillips states he gathered "invaluable research material" for Hamilton's logbook. John Newton was a ruthless slave trader who after his conversion to Christianity became a collaborator with William Wilberforce for the abolition of slavery in England. So, whereas Hamilton is not one of this novel's heroes, and is in fact the reason for the children's displacement, he too is an exilic individual because he does not adopt, as many others in his profession, the hatred and racism for those he enslaves.[1]

The final chapter and narrative titled "Somewhere in England" is a diary broken into 65 non-sequential entries, often dated with a month and year and sometimes only a year. The journal entries cover a span of 27 years from 1936-1963 and are narrated in the first-person by Joyce, a white Englishwoman and member of the working class

exiled from her society because of her lack of prejudice which leads her into a relationship with Travis, a black American GI during the Second World War. Because she too is marginalized and, like the other children, fatherless, the African father has adopted her as one of his own, included her in his many-tongued chorus, and selected her voice to tell his son's Travis's story. Furthermore, Phillips's inclusion of Joyce in his history of the African diaspora suggests that Phillips equates the marginalization of blacks with the marginalization of women by society. For like Martha who has been written out of the history of the American slave, Joyce, an unprejudiced member of the Yorkshire lower class, has been excluded from the predominately male-centered, prejudiced historical narrative.

This final narrative is the most fragmented and nonlinear narrative in the novel because Joyce's journal entries, ironically unlike those in a traditional journal, are not arranged chronologically. Like Martha's narrative, the progression of her story "proceeds both forward and backward" creating, as Ledent states, a "past and present [that] continually interact" (114). Only after the last entry in both Martha's and Joyce's narratives can the reader begin to assimilate the pieces and discover the true (her)story of Joyce and Martha. In this way, *Crossing the River* exemplifies a Barthesian 'writerly' text through which the reader must participate in the writing (constructing) of the text.

The severe contrast between the linear, traditional narrative of Captain Hamilton and the nonlinear, fragmented, chaotic narratives of Joyce and Martha is only more apparent because Phillips positions Hamilton's narrative between these other two, a strategic juxtaposition that cannot be overlooked. By framing Captain Hamilton's narrative with Joyce's and Martha's, Phillips is stating that the version of history that has been published, read, and propagated to the world and the acceptable form for that history is not unequivocal and irrefutable

but can be decentered and subverted by those whose history it has silenced.

While Phillips hears the "sundry restless voices" of the diaspora – the voices of the marginalized and the silenced that have for 250 years fallen on deaf ears – and rewrites the traditional historical narrative in order to authenticate the history of the diasporic in *Crossing the River*, he does not offer a happy ending to the diasporic situation and the hope of returning to one's past and one's original roots, as the words of the African father narrator in the novel state: "There are no paths in water. No signposts. There is no return" (237). However, despite the impotence to return to the past, and in spite of the historical and geographical fragmentation and displacement, Phillips contends that unity exists. He finds that solidarity in the chorus of the polyphonic voices he hears in New Orleans, in Charleston, in Stockholm, in the Caribbean, in Trinidad, and in Rio, through which he recovers a common memory and a collective history. The hope, therefore, that Phillips asserts is not found in the return but in the new beginning. Each individual, as do Nash, Martha, Joyce, and Travis, has within the ability to grow new roots – and this is the hope, the consolation the novel offers.

Notes

[1] I use 'reason' here lightly. For the true reason for the children's displacement is the institution of slavery. The failure of the crops, the decision made by the father out of desperation, and finally the presence of Hamilton on the West African coast all contributed to the reason for the children's displacement.

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A Narrative Encircled by a "vast chain of apparent miracles": *Arthur Gordon Pym*'s Expedition into the (Super)Natural Limits of Imagination
by Heather Bowlby

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The only novel of a predominately short fiction and poetry writer, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* has greatly perplexed readers ever since its publication on July 30, 1838. Poe scholar Richard Kopley relates in his introduction to the 1999 Penguin edition of the novel that although *Pym* sold reasonably after its initial public release, it was never the spectacular source of income its financially-challenged author hoped that it would be, most likely due to a lack of contemporary consensus over how to interpret what was generally perceived as a mystifying text.[1] Virtually ignored by criticism until W.H. Auden's seminal reevaluation of its significance in 1950, *Pym* has now become one of the most studied and critically contested of Poe's works—a "Bermuda triangle" of possible interpretations according to Frederick S. Frank's memorable evaluation (117).

Clearly the most disputed interpretive issue currently surrounding the novel concerns the question of whether the novel is textually unified and thus whether meaning is implied in its structure. On one side of this critical divide are readings that assert that *Pym* is a visionary novel that promotes a transcendent unity of signified meaning, tracing back to Charles O'Donnell's influential 1962 article; on the other are evaluations of its fragmented, self-referential function as promoting the *absence* of unified meaning. As J. Gerald Kennedy notes, many such deconstructionist readings were more recently offered in the 1980s and early 1990s to counteract the formerly prevalent visionary critical trend by arguing that textual meaning is deferred beyond the narrative itself (22-25).

Many of these textual deconstructions have focused on *Pym*'s conspicuous emphasis on the role of writing, asserting that the coded quality and continual misinterpretation of this writing—which represents an attempt to communicate meaning—actually indicates the oversignification and thus *meaninglessness* of the text itself. Initiating this poststructuralist trend, John Carlos Rowe argues that the novel "enacts the deconstruction of representation as the illusion of the truth and prefigures the contemporary conception of writing as the endless production of differences" (95). In the poststructuralist perspectives offered by critics such as Cynthia Miecznikowski and Marita Nadal, *Pym*'s indeterminacy indicates a plethora of meaning overflowing textual boundaries, a vast potentiality which in turn suggests the self-cancellation of the very meanings signified.

Interpreting the novel according to a dualistic critical structure based on meaning/meaninglessness, however—even according to Miecznikowski's perception of a paradoxical meaning residing in the very *absence* of signification—fails to account for the complexity of a text that conspicuously eludes attempts at clear definition according

to such binary constructs. In this paper, I reexamine the relationship between the self and the often surreal setting of the novel and imply a dialectical, mutually constituting association between the individual subject and the encircling natural environment that I see as bridged by imagination. Pym's natural surroundings—the essential *not-self*—respond to and sympathetically reflect his inner, psychic condition, I argue, because of his construction of identity through the performative act of narrating his tale. Textual boundaries *are* eroded in *Pym*, but rather than indicating a collapse of meaning into a self-referential void, this dissolution instead reveals the intricate network of interrelationships represented in the novel.

Nature, both the origin of all reference (and thus of the narrative itself) and the most complete depiction of the other, concurrently represents the fathomless internal frontier of the imaginative mind and the external wilderness of the natural world beyond. Pym's preoccupation with decoding the unknown consequently suggests a deeper desire to map out the self as embodied within setting. As the ability to create symbolic, psychic realms from sensory perceptions of the natural world, imagination is related to the function of linguistic structures and is the only method of communication available between the individual and the environment when speech or writing is incomprehensible. Meaning is indeed related to the role of language within the novel, but due to the essential association between the subjective self and the natural world—evident in the patently fantastical elements of the natural world Pym explores and interacts with—Pym himself becomes the referential ground for interpretation through his disclosure of self in this narrative. Accordingly, the vast significations within the text thereby indicate a broader interconnected web of (super)natural relationships and spatial negotiations between the self and elements of the outer world in the novel—in short, a "vast chain of apparent

miracles"—and Pym constructs his identity as an individual member of a mutually constitutive ecological system (169).

At the end of the novel's title page, after a sensational, comprehensive description of contents typical of the exploration literature of Poe's day, the subtitle concludes by promising the revelation of "THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES STILL FARTHER SOUTH" Pym's adventure makes possible. Kopley notes that the publication of the novel during the period when Jeremiah N. Reynolds was attempting to gather support for an exploratory expedition to the south pole positions it in dialogue with the contemporary ideas of the far south as "an emblem of all mysteries that perplexed and challenged" (xvii). Presenting the novel in this fashion, Poe sets it up as offering the disclosure of the unknown signified by nature. The subtitle clearly invokes the sublime aspects of the unknown southern region, an area of nature then unexplored by man and thus entirely indeterminate, and suggests the interconnection of nature with the mind through the reader's attraction to and interaction with the natural sublime. According to Edmund Burke's much-referenced perception, the sublime, as located in nature and inspired by mystery, actively infiltrates the mind, which becomes entirely consumed with the feeling of fear (332, 329). The void represented by the still-unknown Antarctic region presented a very real sublime for mid-nineteenth century readers that Poe purposefully capitalizes on in this adventure tale.

The need to understand the mystery of nature is interwoven throughout the novel, manifested most clearly in Pym's driving desire to overcome all obstacles and press on to the pole. When Captain Guy considers abandoning his objective to explore the unknown southern waters due to the practical concerns of scurvy and lack of sufficient fuel, Pym pleads with him to continue for the reason that "[s]o tempting an opportunity of solving the great problem in regard to an Antarctic

continent had never yet been afforded to man" (163). This desire for a more inclusive understanding of the mystery represented by the pole completely consumes Pym's mind to the exclusion of the mundane requirements of physical survival, and even after the massacre on Tsalal, he remains firm in his conviction that the search for knowledge should be privileged above all else. While expressing the obligatory regret over the bloodbath on Tsalal made possible by Captain Guy's heeding his exploratory desire, Pym simultaneously validates his quest for knowledge by stating, "I must still be allowed to feel some degree of gratification at having been instrumental . . . in opening to the eye of science one of the most intensely exciting secrets which has ever engrossed its attention" (161).

Pym's focus on the necessity of exploration past the limits of knowledge of the natural world implies a similar desire to investigate the interior frontier of the mind and know the self that perhaps most lucidly reflects Poe's own fascination with psychic structures. Understanding the mystery of nature provides a setting for the corresponding perception of the role of the self *within* nature and of the inexplicable workings of the mind. Thus, Pym's early "incipient passion for the sea," fed by his "glowing imagination," persists and intensifies in strength even after multiple disasters and near-death experiences resulting from this voyage (18). Relentlessly drawn to the "unapproachable and unknown" aspects of his natural world, Pym's persevering drive to reach the southernmost tip of the globe is representative of this desire to know that which is essentially beyond the reach of knowledge, to map out the void existing at the center of his own psyche (18). This first-person narrative is as much an account of the subject's universal quest to know the self as it is to solve the Polar mystery, a quest complicated by these intersecting layers of signification. In this sense, Pym's exultation in the opportunity to reveal the unknown also relates to Poe's own agenda

with the novel as a whole. For Pym, these "intensely exciting secrets" concern the naturalistic reality of the Southern Pole, while for Poe, as editor and creator of this narrative, they refer to the mental landscape of the individual (161). By seeking to know the natural reality, Pym likewise embarks on a crucial quest to realize the self, and the natural world intersects that of his psyche.

Symbols of human presence and of their symbiotic relationship with the natural world are scattered on the island of Tsalal and throughout the rest of the novel as a whole, and in this sense, Neil Evernden's idea of interrelatedness of all ecological organisms is particularly relevant. In his article "Beyond Ecology: Self, Place, and the Pathetic Fallacy" Evernden maintains that the science of ecology is "subversive" because it promotes the deeply intrinsic interconnection of all aspects of the environment (93). Organisms that superficially appear to be discrete are actually mutually dependent and thus inseparable, Evernden explains, and the boundary separating the self and the not-self is ambiguous and perceiving the world in such binary terms is erroneous (94-95).[2] Humans experience an internal drive to be a symbiotic part of setting just as much as other non-human creatures and seek to extend themselves into their environment, thus imbuing it with human properties (100). Evernden thus claims that self-knowledge is unattainable without simultaneous understanding of individual setting (101) and concludes by stating that "[t]here is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place" (103).[3]

This intrinsic juncture of nature with the world of the mind reflects the Romantic conception of the essential interconnectedness of all systems articulated by M. H. Abrams in his influential book *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. Abrams focuses on the ways writers and thinkers of the Romantic period

incorporated elements of previously accepted religious thought into their secular philosophies, effecting a naturalization of the supernatural in which the inherited dualistic mode of perception carried over into Romantic ideas of subject/object relationships (12-13). According to Abrams, the Romantic period signaled a new way of conceptualizing human relationships with each other and with the outer world (14). Romanticism sought to remove God from the religious triad of God/man/nature by creating a dualistic subject/object dialectical system, but instead of eliminating the supernatural, this resulted in interweaving it throughout the new philosophical structure (91). The mind occupied God's vacated space and was given the accompanying reverence, and heaven for Romantics like Wordsworth was envisioned in the interactive fusion of the mind with nature (93-95).

Pym's preface to his narrative demonstrates this complexly integrated stratum of interconnections the text represents, not only between the natural and the supernatural as Abrams' theory suggests, but also between the real and the unreal. After returning from his harrowing journey, Pym is encouraged by several Virginian gentlemen—one of them being Poe himself—to publicize his narrative but expresses concern about it being perceived "as merely an impudent and ingenious fiction" (3). Finally, Pym allows Poe to publish it "*under the garb of fiction*" with Poe listed as author, but due to the success of the tale, shortly afterwards Pym reveals his own authorship and the veracity of his narrative (4-5). Pym is thus both character and author, the fictional narrative is presented as truth masquerading under the cover of fiction, and Poe is both the real creator and a creation in the recursive referential cycle enacted by the text.[4]

Referring to other evidence of the blending of fact with fiction in *Pym*—particularly the many plagiarized passages added to provide a sense of verisimilitude[5]—Linda Gitelman argues that *Pym* parodies

exploration literature and exploits it, imitating source material to comment on its assumptions and conventions (350). As the problematic aspects of the novel reinforce its function as a satiric response to the exploration genre of literature instead of causing it to disintegrate, Gitelman states that "Pym's psychic disharmony mirrors the disunity of the text he narrates" as well as that of Poe's source material and of the exploration narrative genre as a whole (353-54). Conceptualized in this manner, I add, the self-referential properties of the novel does not in imply a cancellation of meaning as Miecznikowski, Nadal, and Rowe claim, but rather suggests the unity of all aspects of the work—the characters, the author, and the narrative, the real and the unreal—in a comprehensive system of interconnected unity. The novel actively interacts with the reader and with the genre it satirizes, and as Gitelman maintains, the boundaries between categories are not meant to be kept distinct.

While Rowe's view is similar to Gitelman's in the sense that he also recognizes the breakdown of definite categories in the novel, he focuses more on the linguistic implications and argues that this indeterminacy causes the annulment of all meaning. Explaining that writing paradoxically both performs the fusion of the self with the other and makes this union impossible, Rowe asserts: "the differential process of writing is enacted as the subject and the object of the work" (97). The novel experiments with the function of writing (98), and the significance of every natural occurrence is deciphered in terms of its place within its overall "semiotic system" (103). Rowe's mention of this encompassing "semiotic system" relates, in this limited sense, to my view of language as a form of communication representing a paradoxical relationship that is *validated* by the recursiveness of the novel (103).

The narrative embodies a network of semiotic significance that

correlates to Pym's construction of self-identity as necessarily situated within the ever-changing natural environment. On arriving at Tsalal, Pym is impressed by the exotic uniqueness of the Tsalalian landscape, which itself defies description. The extraordinary plant life and geology on the island is "utterly incredible" and unlike any other forms known in other regions of the world, but the "singular character of the water" elicits the most interest (168). This water is indeterminate in nature, being both limpid and non-limpid and presenting variations in shades of purple color, and Pym painstakingly relates the details of his experimental investigation of this substance that he finds difficult to accept as entirely natural (168). Identified by Pym as creating "the first definite link in that vast chain of apparent miracles with which I was destined to be in length encircled," the Tsalalian water—or rather, Pym's fascination with it—is significant as representative of the complex negotiations Pym must enact within a fantastical world in which he has no fixed point of reference (169).

Pym is compelled to mediate his position within this strange world and establish how he will relate to it. After the murder of the crew of the *Jane Guy* by the Tsalalian natives, Pym and Dirk Peters stumble upon the chasms coded in the shapes of hieroglyphic writing, depicting alphabetical letters and a human figure pointing towards the south, as it is later presented in the final note to the novel (202).[6] Likewise, in their travel across the island they discover the "wreck of some gigantic structures of art" that is similarly ambiguous (207). The unreadable symbols of the chasms and the mysterious ruins of art represent the underlying interpretive problem for Pym: how to construe his surroundings, whether being "altogether the work of nature" (199) or of some other force, and consequently, how to establish his own relationship with and role within this "vast chain of apparent miracles" (169).

Within his setting, Pym as an "individual-in-context," in Evernden's phrase, must construct his identity through the relationships forged with the outer world, and a dialectical tension between the self and the other (as essentially embodied in nature) is implied within these negotiations (103). While Pym is initially attracted to the idea of troubled adventures at sea, his entire being protests against the threat of actual loss of self represented in the "living inhumation"—or loss of individual self through death—intimated by his entombment within the Tsalalian mountain (184). Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's significant Master-Slave dialectical theory describes the complex urge to define individual self. The self, in Hegel's view, exists only in relation to others as a definition of unique identity may only be articulated through the contrasts provided by the other. Paradoxically, self-consciousness depends both on a resistance to the other in order to formulate a clearer definition of essential self and on a return to the self mirrored in the other: the separate identities of the self and the other coexist in a relationship that is mutually dependent and effectively independent (630).

Abrams notes that Hegel's dialectic demonstrates the function of imagination to unite the mind with nature by recognizing the continual circular motion of the self and the other splitting and synthesizing as parts of the same whole (174-75). Isolation or self-individuation is the Romantic idea of evil or death while fusion with the overall environment is life, and thus even the act of thinking—differentiating oneself from the other—both symbolizes the birth of self and is unhealthy to the soul (181). Abrams emphasizes, "[r]omantic philosophy is thus primarily a metaphysics of integration, of which the key principle is that of the 'reconciliation,' or synthesis, of whatever is divided, opposed, and conflicting" (182). In Pym's quest to discover the mystery of nature and thus discern his own role within it, he

embarks on this dialectical journey when interacting with his setting as the other. Gradually, the more involved (or "integrated" in Abram's term) he becomes within this comprehensive system, the more he loses his sense of purely discrete individuality, or "being-for-self" as Hegel calls it: the boundary separating his interior reality from his exterior reality slowly dissolves as his being becomes unified within the overall ecological system (632). Just as nature is the ground of all reference, Pym thus becomes self-referential as well the more he is assimilated within the interlocking circle of signification in his world.[7] As meaning is diffused *throughout* this system rather than being concentrated in one entity, readings of textual indeterminacy refer more to the analysis of isolated parts of the novel rather than the intricately interdependent, symbiotic relationships represented by this structure in its entirety.

The interaction between the mind and nature is carried out through the mediation of imagination, which Abrams portrays as adopting the role of the "Redeemer" in Romantic literature (118-19). For poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, this interface involved a "revolutionary mode of imaginary perception" that works from inside the individual and is capable of the structural renovation of the existing environment (338). Likewise, William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley depicted the enaction of this Romantic perspective in their works by asserting, in Abrams' view, that "man's outlook does not merely reflect but *alters* his world [my emphasis]" (344). Pym's imagination assumes this generative ability most vividly during his descent down the Tsalalian cliff. Apparently experiencing a type of vertigo, Pym is overcome by the effect of his "imagination growing terribly excited" (205), and states: "The more earnestly I struggled *not to think*, the more intensely vivid became my conceptions, and the more horribly distinct" (206). His rational faculties lost, Pym's imagination assumes complete control over his

experience of his environment and actually *creates* his situation and alters his relationship to his environmental context.[8] Finally, Pym thereby discovers "these fancies creating their own realities," and under their influence, he lets go of the cliff and falls, fortunately to be caught by Peters (206).

A separate, imaginary space is thus created through spatial negotiations between the self and setting. Winifred Fluck elaborates on this generative potential of the imagination in her essay "Imaginary Space; Or, Space as Aesthetic Object." and explains that cultural meaning only results from space when the perceiver conceptualizes interrelationships between physical reality and subjective impression. She states: "in order to gain cultural meaning, physical space has to become mental space or, more precisely, imaginary space" (25). Fluck argues that the "aesthetic experience is constituted by a transfer between the recipient and the aesthetic object," a transaction that can accordingly function as "the basis for the articulation of otherwise inexpressible dimensions of the self" (32).

The observer or reader of space must actively reconstruct it through subjective, imaginative interpretation in order to understand it and generate meaning—what Fluck terms as a "second narrative" written over the first one (34). In this sense, imaginary space is significant for the indeterminacy through which it provides a blank page available to be reinscribed with the individual interpretations of readers and can thus represent the invisible (36). As an agent in Fluck's "transaction" model, the imagination functions as an active force in my perspective. Existing in a continual state of movement, the imagination shapes both the interior and exterior realities by drawing them into an interactive relationship with each other and thus mediating self-identity in reference to the overall ecological network of interrelationships.[9]

Pym's final ambiguous journey into the much-analyzed polar

cataract offers the supreme example of the mind's creative interaction with nature. Surrounded by the color white, present in the "milky consistency and hue" (215) of the Polar water, the "fine white powder" that falls on the water surrounding Pym's canoe, and the white animal Pym sees floating by, the three travelers are enveloped within the natural synthesis it represents as both the presence of all color and the utter absence of color (216). Nature in the form of the "gigantic and pallidly white birds" flying into the polar cataract echoes the human language of the Tsalalian natives in the birds' continual scream of "*Tekeli-li*" (217).[10] The closer they journey to the polar cataract, the more Pym describes "a *numbness* of body and mind—a dreaminess of sensation" (215) and "a listlessness" that unaccountably pervades his entire being (216). The unity represented by the whiteness, the echoing of human language by the birds, and the erosion of distinctions between the self and the setting all indicate Pym's expedition into the limits of knowledge and imagination. The individual gradually merges into the natural environment, and the culmination of knowledge and imagination lies at zero degrees interpellation—the (super)natural polar cataract itself.

John T. Irwin claims in "The Quincuncial Network in Poe's *Pym*" that Pym fails to recognize the ambiguous white figure at the end as "his own shadow, a kind of literal nonrecognition of reflection" (186). Asserting that interpretations of this figure are the reader's similar projections of meaning onto an indeterminate text, Irwin explains that the mind continuously interacts with the physical world through such performative interpretations of meaning (187).[11] The polar cataract, I accordingly propose, similarly represents the synthesis of the mind with the world, Pym's final performance of meaning. Building off of Irwin's idea, the "shrouded human figure" who is a representation of Pym's shadow also represents the human mind as embodied within nature and

thus the link between the mind and the environment (217). Beginning his journey on a search to know himself, Pym concludes his narrative with a rush into the frontier of the mind presented by the sublime human figure. The cataract itself is characterized as permitting views of a "chaos of flitting and indistinct images," much like the endlessly signifying state of the individual psyche (217). As the appearance of the shrouded human figure suggests, the interior reality of the self is the true unknown.

At the polar cataract, the barrier separating the internal from external worlds disintegrates when the self is finally *diffused* into setting[12] by the interactive function of the imagination by which the entire structure of spatial interrelationships forms a mutually-constitutive, ecologically-balanced network. Pym's narration ends when he sails off the edge of the known world into the supernatural unknown, but another, anonymous narrator provides a final commentary on the text in the concluding note. The inclusion of this narrator, who relate Pym's mysterious "late sudden and distressing death," adds yet another layer of complexity to the recursive positioning of the narrative itself (219). Poe is said by the new narrator to have refused to provide the rest of the missing chapters of Pym's narrative ironically due to his "disbelief in the entire truth of the latter portions of the narration" (219). At the end of the narrative, this new fictional narrator, portraying himself as beyond the scope of the story, undermines the sense of veracity the tale had attempted to construct by casting doubt on its truth—or *relevance*—through the depiction of the fictional Poe's own disbelief in Pym's story. [13]

This inclusion of the additional metafictional commentators, however, provides yet another stratum of believability to the narrative itself through their critical explication of the significance of the hieroglyphics found in the Tsalalian chasms, which represent "darkness,"

"whiteness," and "the region of the south" (220). By emphasizing the coded qualities of these signs, the commentators themselves direct attention to the mysterious network of self-referential correlations between seemingly incomprehensible nature and human language and meaning. This paradoxical web of interdependent liaisons—between the self and the environment, meaning and apparent meaninglessness, the real and the unreal, natural and supernatural, life and death— establishes the narrative as a whole within a stratified self-referential system. Like the replication of Too-Wit's image represented by his mirrored reflections in the ship's cabin, the novel seems to endlessly produce such reflections through this recursive, self-referential quality, multiplying the significance of the original image to infinity and seemingly rendering interpretations of meaning within its structure invalid.[14] Rather than representing a static cycle annulling textual meaning, however, the recursive qualities of the novel highlight the dissemination of meaning from residing in discrete entities to be distributed throughout the entire system of signification: in this way, the novel spatially *relocates* meaning instead of destroying it, and the self becomes representative of the significance of the entire network of which it is one part. By entering into a mutually constitutive, symbiotic relationship within the natural and supernatural systems structuring the exterior and interior settings, the individual acquires the qualities of these contexts and through this interactive fusion likewise becomes the ground of all self-reference.

Just as Pym's imagination enables his expedition into both the polar cataract and the self to be the dual grounds of all reference in his narrative, so we as readers are invited to journey into and interact with Poe's text in order to determine its meaning. By the imaginative act of reading, we enter into the elaborately affiliated system embodied by the text and recreate it through our imaginative processes.[15] Expanding

on the implications of the vibrant interaction between text and reader, Wolfgang Iser suggests that the literary work exists in a "virtual" space between the text and the reader and is realized by dynamic dialogue *between* these two entities (1674). Areas of indeterminacy in the text, according to Iser's theory of reader-response, embody "gaps" (1675) that prompt the bridging of the worlds of the text and the reader and thus the creation of a new meaning through this "communication" (1676). Iser's conception of association between the text and the reader is one founded on dynamic interrelationships. As readers, we thus recreate textual meaning in much the same way as Pym does in his narrative: through the imaginative reconstruction of spatial realities and vital participation in the overall system of signification represented by the novel itself.

Arthur Gordon Pym's expedition to the limits of imagination in this narrative truly is "an interpreter's dream-text," according to Douglas Robinson's apt articulation, but not simply due to its indeterminacy and wealth of possibilities for credible readings. Rather, the meaning of the work is located within the complex network of interrelationships it advances and represents (47). By reading the work and interpreting it, we, too, are encircled by the "vast chain of apparent miracles" composing the text and expand this system's emanating spheres of influence by active participation—thus imaginatively re-creating its structure (169). As readers of *Pym*'s mysterious and sensational narrative, we do not merely embark on a "voyage to the end of the page" in Jean Ricardou's famous phrase,[16] but rather continue this journey beyond the boundaries of the page itself: like Pym's own imaginative shaping of his interior and exterior realities, our interpretive creative processes begin where the blank page of his narrative leaves off.

[1] In response to *Pym*'s ambiguous contemporary reception, Poe himself denoted his novel "a very silly book" in an 1840 letter (qtd. in Kopley xxviii).

[2] According to Evernden, John Dewey's aesthetic theories promote the most accurate perspective of the interactive relationship between the human individual and the environment. In Dewey's view, "[i]nstead of detachment from the environment, we have a subtle diffusion into it. . . . strict categories are an abstraction, not reality" (97). Like Evernden, Dewey conceptualizes this association as symbiotic: rather than maintaining a mutually beneficial but differentiated liaison, the boundaries that maintain separate identity erode as self and setting fuse together and become an indivisible ecological system.

[3] The way the individuals perceive their relationship with the natural world profoundly affects their conceptions of identity, and Evernden quotes Northrop Frye as stating that the ultimate objective of art is to "recapture, in full consciousness, that original lost sense of identity with our surroundings, where there is nothing outside the mind of man, or something identical with the mind of man" (99).

[4] Given the complexity of this text's intermingling of fact with fiction, it is easy to see how many contemporary readers could have become lost within its self-referential chasm. Kopley reports one contemporary reader as angrily expressing his view by writing at the end of the work that "the whole of the preceding narrative is a base fabrication, & that such a man such as Pym never existed [;] if anyone should read this book [,] I think them void of common sense if they believe it" (xviii). Even the vehemence of reactions against the work displays its success, though, as such strong responses to the novel represent readers' serious consideration of its qualities.

[5] A significant division of *Pym* criticism focuses on investigating the many sources Poe drew on when composing the novel; the works of South Seas navigators Jeremiah N. Reynolds and Benjamin Morrell are generally acknowledged as the primary sources (Kopley xvii).

[6] Rowe interprets the hieroglyphics on Tsalal as indicative of the dual function of writing (106). Language itself, like the narrative, strains to transcend the boundaries of the written text which exists in a constant state of Derridean play (107), and he explains that this system of signification implies both annihilation and creation of meaning and identity (110). For the purposes of my argument, I am focusing on the way Pym construes his relationship within his setting through the interpretation of these symbols

of a human presence within nature rather than analyzing their significance as written artifacts.

[7] Although the narrative demonstrates the dissolution of categorical boundaries separating the individual from the environment, I do not mean to suggest that Pym's relationship with his setting thus becomes a transcendent, spiritualized one in which the self is lost to the unity of the whole. Rather, this system represents mutually constituting entities that still retain their individual essences while additionally benefiting from the shared qualities of their cooperative, inextricable association.

[8] Kennedy notes *Pym* has often been compared to Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* as sea-faring narratives similar in many key respects (1851). Like Pym, *Moby-Dick's* narrator Ishmael also recognizes the transitory boundary separating the self from the environment and mediates on the potentially all-consuming generative power of the imagination.

[9] The novel itself functions on two different levels: Pym is a reader of his environment, and we are readers of his "marvellous" (Poe 3) narrative. The performative action of imagination both creates Pym's perception of his setting (and thus his reality) and constructs our experience of the work as a whole.

[10] The echoing of the Tsalalian language by these birds similarly relates to the cryptic hieroglyphics engraved on the Tsalalian cliff: both display the essential interrelationship of humans within the ecological environment.

[11] Irwin's development of the connection between nature and the intellect—as evidenced in the "spirit of reflection" (Poe 142) demonstrated by the birds—is particularly relevant to my discussion of the *unity* between visible nature and the invisible mind the ecological interrelationships in the novel represent.

[12] Dewey's terminology in describing the nature of the human/environment relationship as a "diffusion" is pertinent here (qtd. in Evernden 97).

[13] Through the self-reflexive qualities of intricate metafictional positioning, which itself further confuses the boundary between fact and fiction, Poe can be perceived as performing a parody upon his own position as both fictional character and author.

[14] Representing the viewpoint of many poststructuralist critics of the novel, Nadal asserts that *Pym's* ambiguous ending demonstrates the "postmodern trapping of the subject in an incessant pattern of repetitions and duplications, in which the ultimate dénouement is forever deferred and postponed" (387).

[15] Rowe elaborates on the interactive relationship between the text and reader,

claiming that the reader is compelled to assume an active role by filling in empty spaces in the text with his or her imagination (94) between the split narrative of Pym and Poe as textual character and imaginative composer of the book itself (97). Rather than indicating a collapse of meaning as Rowe suggests, however, I see these interpretive spaces as generating a web of interdependent associations—between Pym and his environment, Poe as author and his (quasi)fictional constructs, the reader and the text—and I argue throughout this paper that this intricately correlated system itself forms the basis of meaning in the novel.

[16] "Le Caractère singulier de cette eau." *Critique* 243-44 (1967): 72. (qtd. in Kennedy 17).

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The Role of South African Protest Fiction: A New Historicist/Post-Colonial Critical Approach to Njabulo S. Ndebele's *Death of a Son*

by Justine Cadet

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The content of Njabulo S. Ndebele's *Death of a Son* encompasses the changing dynamics of one married couple in a township outside of Johannesburg. Yet, their relationship and the internal voice of the female protagonist reflect the grander historical and social context from which and into which the story was published. At the time of *Death of a Son*'s publication in 1987, the socio-political system of Apartheid had been established in South Africa for approximately forty years, affecting the conscious and unconscious minds of those who orchestrated its tyranny, and more dramatically, those who were subjected to its oppression. The female narrator represents both a marginalized race, living as a Black African under the racist Apartheid regime, and a marginalized woman, under-valued in a male-dominated environment. Despite these adversities, she and her husband manage

to attain a higher socio-economic status than most of their fellow Black Africans, causing the couple to incorrectly believe they are removed from the prospect of government persecution.

Power structures, such as Apartheid, are intimately linked to their effect on the individual, who may not even comprehend how invasive hierarchies become in one's daily life and personal relationships. This short story's portrayal of South African government officials displays the mindset of that time period and location without the need for historical documents, which are most often written by, and therefore, tend to be slanted towards those in power. Accurate and thorough versions of history must include the voice of the oppressed. Ndebele's account of one family remains as important in understanding the mindset of that time period, especially because his source and content concern the victims of oppression. As a result, this realistic story of one couple exposes the state of culture and the effects of living under the tyrannical South African government in the 1980s with as much accuracy and depth as non-fiction. Through a depiction of a black South African couple, Ndebele incorporates grander, inclusive themes concerning the plight of humans, who are forced to endure an unjust society.

In order to understand Ndebele's content, the reader should become familiar with relevant biographical details of the author's life that determined the focus of his creation. Since Ndebele lived and wrote in an oppressive racist milieu, his literature reflects a response to that realm. Stephen Greenblatt, a founding New Historicist, often writes about culture's impact on the creation of a work: "The work of art is the product of negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society" (*Poetics* 12). The author is a product of their environment, and his/her works naturally mirror and respond to that world. When asked in an interview if he wrote out of

protest or for an exploration of art, Ndebele responded,

> When you start writing, it can be in response to certain
> personal or public circumstances…there was no way I
> could not notice the oppression of black people by the
> apartheid government, the economic disparities between
> blacks and whites, and between suburb and township…
> this world of shocking contrasts…So, my early efforts at
> writing involved the discovery of art forms within an ever
> expanding consciousness and understanding of the wider
> world. (Manigat)

Ndebele was acutely aware of the binaries that existed racially, economically and regionally in South African society throughout his formative years.

These regional binaries are exemplified through Ndebele's *Death of a Son*, which is set in an unspecified township outside of Johannesburg, similar to the location of Ndebele's upbringing in the Western Native Township. To investigate the discrepancies of these two locations during Apartheid, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presented a series of lectures examining the bi-polarity between Johannesburg and the Western Native Township. One lecture surmised that "racial segregation underlies all urban history in South Africa; as late as 1976, a government minister proclaimed that 'blacks are present in white areas (cities) to sell their labor and for *nothing* else,' [resulting from]… an explicit social and spatial ideology, *apartheid*" (MIT). Ndebele's story displays the vast gap between these two locations through the daily work schedules of the female narrator and her husband, Buntu. The narrator's successful, hectic career as a journalist and Buntu's as a personnel officer at an American factory brings them to Johannesburg for employment. They are forced to work long days in Johannesburg, only to travel a great distance back to their home in the township,

which also insulates them from the daily burdens of the townships. This isolation serves to augment the couple's delusion of protection, and perpetuates Buntu's unrealistic dreams of a hopeful future "as if we were going to surround our lives with the glossiness of magazines" (209). Regretfully, it takes their son's death to wrench them from their internal, fictional haven into the destructive, external reality of the townships.

In Ndebele's story, the narrator's occupation, a rare and coveted position for a black female in the 1980s, would have caused her and her husband to possess an elevated status in the community. Unfortunately, the random violence of the government destroys the couple's façade of this elite status, in addition to nearly destroying the intimacy of the relationship. This couple, like most other Black South Africans, was forced to accept the inferior living quarters of the townships. These townships were purposefully created to segregate and oppress the black population in South Africa, subject to constant police surveillance and terrorism. Prime Minister Jan Smuts began the construction of The South Western Township, commonly known as Soweto, under the Native Urban Act of 1923, and "the township itself was designed and created precisely to keep the black urban population out of the 'white' city, except when they were needed there, temporarily, to work" (Pohlandt). Residents of Soweto lived in constant fear because "confrontations, searches, and nighttime raids for "illegals" by both municipal police and members of the South African Police were a constant of life in Soweto" (Pohlandt). Black Africans could never separate the activities of the police from the incursion of the national government. Foucault's description of the Panopticon prison structure within his book *Discipline and Punish* is relatable to Apartheid's societal structure, and directly applicable to township life: "The organization of the police apparatus…sanctioned a generalization of the disciplines

that became co-extensive with the state itself" (215). The residents of Soweto feared the police because they were seen as an extension and physical representation of the Afrikaner government's stronghold. Regardless of their socio-economic status, Black South Africans would always be considered inferior to the dominant white minority under the Apartheid system.

Even though the death of the protagonists and Buntu's child was an accident, the police force's action still produced the desired effect of fear in all township residents. The impact of this child's murder ripples throughout the entire community, evidenced by the large gathering outside the couple's home after the shooting. The close-knit township neighborhoods displayed their concern for this grieving family. When Ndebele's female narrator returns home late she "find[s] a crowd of people in the yard. They were those who could not get inside" (206). In solidarity, the community supports and comforts each other. They are aware of their own vulnerability to such atrocities, which is the intended purpose of an oppressive power structure. Foucault discusses the purpose of penalties within such power structures: "The penalty must have its most intense effects on those who have not committed the crime" (95). Although Foucault references a traditional penalty, which affects the perpetrator of a crime, in Ndebele's example, the penalty affects the innocent. The randomness of the child's death coupled with their inability to rectify the injustice, renders the couple powerless and leaves the extended community at a loss and afraid for themselves.

To further understand Ndebele's motivations and intended audience, the reader must also examine what details from South African life he chooses to exclude. Ndebele's choice to exclude the more demanding details of township life could indicate that his implied readers were South Africans, who could understand and envision this setting without the need for explanation. In the townships, "few urban

amenities were ever provided…Black housing was rudimentary…Only a small proportion had electricity or adequate plumbing…the average number of people living in each 'matchbox' house in 1970 was thirteen" (Meredith 415-16). Ndebele's authorial choices serve to include, rather than polarize the Western reader by exclusion of these harsh realities. Ndebele chooses to focus on a humanistic perspective in his protest fiction. In fact, this short story was first published through Ravan Press, a small rebellious independent publishing company associated with the University of Witwatersrand, and managed by white liberals. Ndebele has written about his gratitude for these risks during Apartheid and the influence of European writers on African authors. For these statements, Ndebele has received criticism from his black contemporaries, such as Theophilus Mukhuba's interpretation

> It is true that black South African writers depended largely
> on white liberals to have their works published. After all
> many of these liberals owned the means of publication.
> But it is false to claim that protest fiction was intended for
> consumption only by white liberals. (Mukhuba)

Regardless of Mukhuba's criticism, Ndebele has claimed that the only goal for his literature is to "write about the condition of man" (Mukhuba). However, Mukhuba's qualifies that statement with an explication of Ndebele's literary content:

> Ndebele also writes about the condition of man, more
> particularly, of the black man in South Africa…the black
> man's condition in South Africa — his humiliation, his
> fears, racial pride, his weaknesses and his strengths, and
> above all, the necessity to overcome. All this is portrayed
> as a direct consequence of the brutality of the apartheid
> system. (Mukhuba)

Ndebele intends to write in generalities about the state of humanity

for an all-inclusive audience, but he chooses to portray these motifs through stories of individual struggles against the Afrikaner regime.

As Mukhuba suggests, when an artist creates in an oppressive environment, his/her work naturally represents suppressed emotions and resentment. Even Ndebele states:

> . . . artists experience art forms and content simultaneously. The end product, at various stages of an artistic career is the measure of the artist's maturity both as a person and as an artist, in the face of strong surrounding social influences. The artist will swing this way and that depending on a number of influences at the time an artifact is being made. (Manigat)

He concedes that pervasive social pressures impact the writer and therefore, his/her works. Even though these influences can change according to the time of creation, examination of the work cannot be separated from those influences. Kenyan theorist and author Ngugi wa Thiong'o considers literature a perfect reflection of society because

> literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Hence a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. (58)

While Thiong'o presents a more extreme stance to Ndebele's more generalized perceptions of the creative process, South Africa's social impact was so destructive that its influences are prevalent in Ndebele's works, which are concerned with Apartheid's effect on individuals. Ndebele's authorial decision not to focus on the gritty details of township life elucidates a theme of humanity's struggle against injustice, which is highlighted through the realistic incidents and the raw emotional content in *Death of Son*.

Even though the township community in Ndebele's *Death of a Son* regards Buntu and his wife as elites, the Afrikaner regime exploited all non-Europeans, regardless of their occupations or income. Buntu's attempts to obtain their son's body without a bribe delayed the intense grief that parents naturally feel when enduring the loss of a child. As Greenblatt states, "the supreme power of the state" denies them this right because "the human subject itself...seem[s] remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society" (*Renaissance* 256). These township residents had become so accustomed to the injustices that they no longer desired freedom, but simply understood how to acquiesce and bend to the stronger will, long enough to survive. Hope and justice could not be attained because "for a 'colonized man, in a context of oppression,' life does not embody 'moral values' or cohesive, 'fruitful living. To live means to keep on existing'" (Obee 43). For Black South Africans living under Apartheid, the sole concept of survival propels these individuals into states of obedience and forces them to accept vast injustices. Unfortunately, Buntu refuses to accept this fate throughout much of the story, which causes strife for himself and his marriage.

Ndebele's story primarily focuses on the character of Buntu, who is presented through the perspective of the man's wife, the nameless female narrator. Buntu desperately attempts to prove to his wife and himself that he can overcome the tyrannical forces that assault his manhood, but these efforts only serve to make him more pitiful when he fails. To further illuminate Buntu's character, his wife relays a flashback scene when Buntu was first courting her. He wished to comfort his girlfriend with words of reassurance when she witnessed an act of injustice. Yet, as the young couple continues on their journey, it was not "long before his words were tested" (205). The young couple immediately confronts a Boer bully and his family, who force them out

of their path by physically pushing the female protagonist off the street. This event becomes a defining moment in the couple's relationship, because she learns Buntu's desire for strength cannot overcome their adversary and his words cannot protect them: "The world around us was too hostile for vows of love…On that day, Buntu and I began our silence…we stopped short of words that would demand proof of action.Buntu knew. He knew the vulnerability of words" (205). At a young age, Buntu and his wife learn their desires can always be conquered by the pervasive power structure. Foucault analyzed these types of oppressive power structures, suggesting they are "linked more directly to the reorganization of the power to punish…*Ideologues*, this discourse provided in effect…a sort of general recipe for the exercise of power over men: the 'mind' as a surface of inscription of power" (102). The dominant white regime indoctrinated the black population of South Africa with concepts of subservience and inferiority through an absolute authorization to abuse, imprison, and kill its victims without consequence.

In many ways, Apartheid cripples the traditional African concepts of manhood. Buntu learns this emasculating lesson at a young age, when the narrator simultaneously realizes that she holds a certain amount of power over her future husband. After the incident in the street, the protagonist "gave in to him for the first time. Or should I say I offered myself to him? Perhaps from some vague sense of wanting to heal something in him?" (206). She gave herself sexually to Buntu for the first time to soothe his vulnerability and battered ego, but also to reconfirm his manhood in both of their eyes. This capability to empower Buntu through an act of intimacy provides the protagonist with a certain control, "all I vaguely felt and knew was that I had the keys to the vault" (206). She consciously, but silently harbors a certain power over her husband because she is fully aware of

his weakness in their environment, but she also preserves the means to assuage his pride. Ironically, when the narrator hears of her son's death and the kidnapping of his body, she seeks another female, her mother, as a source of comfort: "The desire to embrace my mother no longer had anything to do with comforting her...I needed to embrace her for all the anguish that tied everyone in the house into a knot" (207). The narrator longs to be wrapped in the comforting arms of a woman, a relationship unlike her marriage, which is plagued with the emptiness of words. This insight into her internal progression allows the reader a unique perspective, unable to be obtained through historical references, and also tremendously informative about an oppressed female mindset.

Throughout the story, the relationship between Buntu and his wife continues to waver as they yearn for the return of their son's body in separate manners. When Buntu continues his quest to obtain the dead child without the humiliation of paying for it, the narrator knows he will eventually have to succumb to the will of the more powerful Apartheid force. She internally questions the purpose of his futile efforts to obtain legal representation, while dictating meaningless assurances to his wife and himself. The narrator's disappointed response indicates that his intentions were having a contradictory effect on his wife: "I felt the warmth of intimacy between us cooling. When he finished, it was cold...Why had Buntu spoken?" (209). The narrator defies many female stereotypes, especially in her desire for vengeance coupled with the need to protect and comfort her ostensibly stronger husband, "I saw and felt deeply what was inside of me: a desire to be avenged... And as my hurt vanished, it was replaced, instead, by a tormenting desire to sacrifice myself for Buntu...Perhaps from some vague sense of wanting to heal something in him" (206). The narrator's choice to remain silent in spite of her thoughts displays her strength and love for

her husband. She allows him to fail regardless of her personal desire for the immediate return of her son. She wordlessly struggles with her marriage, her place in her community, but mostly with the domineering presence of a colonial power on her soil and its impact on her family. This female narrator embodies Apartheid's impact on humanity that Ndebele hoped to portray in his writing.

Eventually the couple will succumb to the power structure that dominates their lives, and pay the bribe to the authorities. Buntu confronts daily disappointments when he is continually refused the body of his son without payment; "he always left to bear that failure alone" (211). Buntu verbally condemns the government, futilely hoping that its unjust actions would be publicly exposed as a source of humiliation for the murder of his child. Buntu believes this vindication would exonerate his own shame and weakness. Buntu's daily efforts and ceaseless chatter seeks this type of pacification, while he should seek comfort from a closer source, but instead he "got up every morning and left not to look for results, but to search for something he could only have found with me" (211). The protagonist identifies all of his ineffective actions as Buntu's desire to prove himself, and ultimately to be perceived as unafraid. Her response to these rants is silence, while internally questioning "Could he prove himself without me?" (211). Or, can he achieve this personal affirmation with the confirmation of another, particularly his wife? She knows his inability to acknowledge his fear cripples him, "I wanted him to be free to fear. Wasn't there greater strength that way?" (211). The protagonist recognizes her place in this oppressive system, as defined by Foucault, "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power…he inscribes himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (202-03). The narrator's acceptance of her fate in this

society, as well as the acceptance of her fears, empowers her. She makes no attempt to attack the system of power, like her husband, but seeks out methods of power that exist to her from within that system.

This understanding of her place within the system causes the protagonist to possess power over Buntu, despite her personal anguish over their son's death. "I sensed, for the first time in my life, a terrible power in me that could make him do anything. And he would never ever be able to deal with that power as long as he did not silence my eyes and call for my voice…In a way, I have always been free to fear. The prerogative of being a girl" (211). The narrator realizes her position as a woman frees her from some of the societal expectations, to which Buntu feels subjected. Under the Apartheid system, Buntu's traditional African concepts of manhood have been consistently challenged because he is unable to physically enact his desires. By contrast, the narrator accepts her position in this oppressive environment, discovering viable means of resistance and enacting her power within that structure. When Buntu's determination finally breaks, his wife uses this dominance to comfort her weaker husband. After they properly grieve together, the couple gains a greater understanding of their position in society, "Ready as always, each and every month, for new beginnings" (213). She and Buntu with newly reinforced strength and a willingness to fear, ask the question, "Shall we not prevail?" (213). When Ndebele wrote this story, Apartheid still reigned, his final question challenges his South African audience by portraying a couple, whose marriage survives the horror of losing a child through discovering the importance of dependence upon one another. Ndebele's final question also seems to address the grander human struggle of prevalence despite an unjust power structure.

In conclusion, writers and artists creating within an oppressive societal structure cannot distance their work from that environment, simply because the work of art, like the creator, is a product of that

milieu. So, in order to comprehend the work of art, the reader must be equally aware of the time and location, in particular with protest fiction. The most obvious physical representation of the South African Apartheid system in Ndebele's story is the careless and unnecessary murder of the couple's son and the township setting. Most elements of society are intricately connected with one another, especially the individuals who find solidarity in lamenting their similar predicaments. One couple's relationship takes a dominant role in identifying and embodying the various power struggles and subjugations that occur within this type of oppression. Yet, the female protagonist embodies Foucault's theory that power exists on varying levels and from all directions, but one must embrace this capacity for power, along with their fears, in order to utilize it. This story's accuracy of emotions along with its presentation of the personal and political power dynamics acts as a formidable historical source.

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Johnson's Moral Biography and the Material *Life of Pope*
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Samuel Johnson's career as a writer shows that he is not afraid of new territory, as his writing ranges from groundbreaking developments in journalism, lexicography, literary criticism, and biography. I will focus on Johnson the writer, specifically his work as literary critic and biographer in his critical approach to the life of Alexander Pope in *Lives of the Poets*. Pope's writing, as seen through Johnson's critical approach, is shaped by a sense of economic security and material comfort. Thus, Johnson's inclusion of Pope's personal habits is useful in situating Pope behind the critical economic lens that must be considered when reading the *Life of Pope* as an example of moral biography, led primarily, by Johnson's value for knowledge, virtue, and truth. Furthermore, I will discuss how Johnson's *Rambler* No. 60 is a guiding force for Johnson's biography of Pope, as a project of moral significance to Johnson's readership.

Carl Rollyson, in "Samuel Johnson, Dean of Contemporary Biographies," discusses the intimacy Johnson called for in biography, with attention given to the "minute details." He claims that such details are often left out in current biography as irrelevant to the understanding of the merits of the subject of the biography. Rollyson argues that this is largely due to the protest from critics who claim that the literary work of the subject is of much greater importance than the person behind the work. Rollyson further claims that Johnson's purpose for biography is not merely to reflect on the genius or the achievement of the subject, but to look into the character. While it is true that the work of Pope is the reason we care about the man Pope, it could be further argued that we cannot know Pope's work to the fullest possible extent without understanding the factors that shaped his writing. And what shapes a person's writing more than the life of the writer? Thus Johnson aims to reconstruct the life of the poet by demonstrating the factors that constitute his character: his record of relationships, habits, social standing, economic independence, and political-historical situation. As a result, Johnson's account of Pope's life is not merely superfluous in content, but it changes the way Pope's writing can be read, since the liberty afforded by his privileged economic status is as much a shaping force of Pope's writing as was his inquisitive and diligent disposition.

Johnson's description of Pope's literary output can be seen as unconsciously directed by Johnson and Pope's differing economic situations. Johnson's own poor economic circumstances might account for some of what seems an excessive amount of energy given to his characterization of Pope's materialism. Johnson combines the life and the work as inextricably linked, never losing sight of the importance of human involvement in the writing process. John D. Boyd, in "Some Limits in Johnson's Literary Criticism," reflects that Johnson's approach to literature is refreshingly mindful of "the needful human center and

purpose of art and of the critic as humanly involved and committed" (212). Thus, Johnson's critical account of Pope can no more be separated from Johnson the individual, than Pope the individual can be separated from Pope the writer. There can be no doubt that Pope the writer would have produced a vastly different oeuvre had he been a penniless writer, pressed to deadlines, and dependent on the supply-and-demand of the publishers. Likewise, Johnson's body of writing would likely look different had he possessed the material ease that Pope enjoyed. It might even be said by Boswell that Johnson would not have written at all since "no man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money."[1]

Johnson's characterization of Pope continually draws the reader's attention to the economically privileged situation of Pope's circumstances. In order to catch a glimpse of the economic situation of Pope, it is useful to look at his life and habits. His eccentricities are directly related to his privilege to afford the luxury to "expect that every thing should give way to [Pope's] ease or humour," a quality that Johnson graciously attributes to Pope's ill health (725). The attention Pope's servants paid to his demands for physical comfort was not given merely out of human kindness, but out of his economic privilege as master of the house. Such privilege is more likely the reason Pope never had the need to stoop to the level of "servility" in order to gain the notice of "men of high rank," a privilege "very few poets have ever aspired" (728). Had his situation been different, Pope would likely have "set his genius to sale" and written for the food that was the "avenue of his heart" (726). There are many things a person will do for hunger, and undue flattery in exchange for meat (whether highly seasoned or not[2]), will bend even the strongest will.

Johnson pays attention to the idiosyncrasies of Pope's domestic affairs, juxtaposing them against Pope's uncommon diligence and

intelligence for crafting language. Even Pope's personal habits suggest his obsession with maintaining a private but efficient economy where Pope is on the clock at every minute. He made "poetry the business of his life" (735), and like a good businessman Pope "consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism" (735). The shrewdness of his management spilled over into his social life as he often interrupted his conversations because he had a pressing need to write something down. Johnson records Swift's complaint that Pope "was never at leisure for conversation because he had always some poetical scheme in his head" (730). Pope, like a man in charge of his own business, a business that begins and ends with Pope, is never at rest, never off-duty, but always vigilant to enlarge his enterprise, knowing that the weight of it rests on his shoulders, and his alone.

In *Rambler* No. 137, Johnson, who was concerned with the betterment of mankind through proper thought given to the *choice of life*,[3] advises the scholar not to place book learning before the importance of "learn[ing] those arts by which friendship may be gained" (225). Johnson's description of Pope's interpersonal skills is at odds with Johnson's call for the balance between scholarship and social manners. Pope is described as having a "great delight in artifice," a "general habit of secrecy and cunning," and was never seen "excited to laughter" (726-27). These seemingly anti-social qualities are at odds with Johnson's moral position toward learning and living. Further criticisms of Pope are expressed by Johnson who draws attention to Pope's spoken conversation with the comment, "It is remarkable that, so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said" (727). Despite the seemingly deprecatory remarks about Pope's social habits, and seemingly straightforward judgments of those qualities, Johnson matches these gross qualities with praise of his writing and his diligence. Pope's diligent commitment to

his writing is a prime reason for both his social rudeness as well as his scholastic excellence.

Martin Maner, in *The Philosophical Biographer*, discusses the appeal that the new genre of biography had for Johnson in terms of an "epistemological and rhetorical challenge in the exercise of judgment" (122). Maner argues that Johnson uses dialectical opposition as a rhetorical device to make critical judgments. Maner further argues, "Johnson virtually invented a rhetoric of biography, and one of its distinctive features was an art of contrast deriving from a specific way of encouraging the reader to think about judgment" (122). Maner contends that Johnson allows the reader to be the judge of Pope, given the evidence Johnson provides, and given the rhetorical balance between Pope's inferior and superior qualities. While it is recognized that many of Johnson's contemporaries were outraged with what can be seen as a demoralization of the heroes of English literature and culture,[4] the ultimate judgment of a life, I would argue, is not ultimately at the reader's discretion. The greater authority is given to the writer who is both reporter and judge. While the reader retains the power to interpret, that interpretation is only heard when the reader assumes the position of writer, reporting an interpretation, and thus creating a secondary text. That interpretation is still dependent on the authority of the primary text, and Johnson's judgment still stands, regardless of whether or not the reader agrees with Johnson's evaluation of Pope.

Looking at Johnson's portrayal of Pope's peculiar *choice of life* appears an unlikely example of a morally instructive biography. In "The Moral Art of Johnson's *Lives*," William McCarthy discusses Johnson's achievement in the *Lives of the Poets* as "a literary biography of England," notable for "imaginative scope, moral incisiveness, and high spirits" (503). The economic interest of Johnson's publishers for commissioning the project was, McCarthy posits, to boost book sales

using Johnson's name. Unlike Pope's position as a writer, who never published his work hastily, Johnson could not afford to write outside of economic interest. While Johnson wrote quickly to make money, Pope was known to let his drafts sit "under his inspection" (735) for two years before turning them over for publication. Pope's greatest luxury as a writer is perhaps his freedom to remain quiet, for "when he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent" (735).

McCarthy further explains that Johnson tampered with the poets in order to showcase the poets as moral examples of living, concluding that because of this, it is more important to judge Johnson's *Lives* in terms of its genre rather than its sources. McCarthy points out that Johnson's specific approach to biography did not last long, specifically the practice of writing several little brief lives for moral uplift. However, if Johnson's lives are deduced merely to "moral examples of living" they are not moral examples in a strictly Christian sense, but are rather more instructive in terms of English manners. For example, Johnson gives an example of Pope's obsession with money both in his life and in his writing. Johnson writes of Pope, "it would be hard to find a man so well entitled to notice by his wit that ever delighted so much in talking of his money" (728). It is not the Christian disapproval of *the love of money* that Johnson criticizes here, but rather, Pope's refusal to keep quiet about money in public conversation, a taboo subject in many social circles even today.

This seemingly trivial information about Pope's manners is not confined to his social habits alone, but is inextricably linked to Pope's writing, as Johnson explains:

> In [Pope's] letters and in his poems, . . . some hints of his
> opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his
> ridicule is poverty. . . . He seems to be of an opinion, not
> very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to

want every thing. (728)

This certainly is not information that makes Pope appear at all favorable to the reader. If anything, such critique of Pope puts something of a damper on the reader's attitude toward the poet. While at the same time, the reader is placed in a position to place judgment on Johnson, the biographer, who does not necessarily come off as the better man for letting the reader in on the seeming truth of Pope's great character flaw.

Having discussed a little of Johnson's work as a biographer in the *Life of Pope*, it is vital also to consider what Johnson had to say about the rising genre of biography, and what that genre should entail. While Johnson's famous *Rambler* No. 60 is the first text that comes to mind when considering his position on biography, it is important to look at the reception of Johnson's distinctive voice as *The Rambler* before looking at his specific instructions for the development of the genre of biography. Mary Van Tassel takes a look at Johnson's reader of *The Rambler* in terms of psychological and philosophical make-up in "Johnson's Elephant: The Reader of *The Rambler*." She defines Johnson in terms of how he appeared to his readers: he is moral, experienced, introspective, a man, a Christian, and in short, "the counterpart and mirror of the Rambler himself" (462). Van Tassel sets up the writer/reader relationship as a rhetorical battlefield for the writer's security as a writer in the annals of history. She addresses the reader in terms of reflecting Johnson's own anxieties as a writer, as well as demanding a dialogue of fair play between both the reader and the writer. In this way, Van Tassel argues, that the reader is given a "superior moral vantage point," standing both with the Rambler and apart from him. Although Johnson's voice in the *Lives* is not that of *The Rambler*, the writer/reader relationship still remains a battlefield.

Johnson's readership was likely made up of Protestants, Anglican

in denomination, and very aware of Pope's alignment with the Catholic Church. Paul J. Korshin discusses Johnson's readership in "Johnson, the Essay, and *The Rambler*" highlighting the effect of Johnson's sermon-like style in his essays. Korshin argues that since Johnson's essays are not based in the literature of the Bible, but in classical literature, they point more to the moral responsibility of society, rather than to Christian duty. In a time when religion determined whether or not an individual was entitled to a public education, the members of the Church of England might have received Pope as other-minded rather than like-minded. Johnson's portrayal of Pope, although not congratulatory like *The Life of Savage*, does shine a positive light on Pope in terms of his diligence and developed talent, regardless of any denominational or doctrinal differences. Pope is judged by Johnson as a moral being and poet, rather than as a good Anglican Christian and theologian.

Johnson addresses the art necessary in constructing a useful biography in *Rambler* No. 60. The complex task of sewing together the life of an individual into a single bound text is not reducible to any one formula. Johnson, having already written such biographical accounts as "The Life of Dr. Herman Boerhaave," (1739) as well as "The Life of Richard Savage" (1744), takes on the task of setting down some guidelines to consider when attempting a biography. Through the very process of defining what is and is not good biography, Johnson has, in a way, set the framework not only for his own future practice of biography, but for the status of biography as a growing genre of literature, a genre that will be carried on by writers other than Johnson. Johnson's advice to the writing of biography in *Rambler* No. 60 does not always appear to form his writing of biography. However, it should be noted that the historical significance of Johnson as a trailblazer to a new literary path should not be counted against him if his theory does not exactly match his practice.

Johnson's method of instructing biography is not one of a lawgiver, but rather, Johnson acts as a guide who will woo with suggestions rather than weigh down with demands. Johnson certainly does not indulge the pride of the reader in *Rambler* No. 60, but he does come close to flattering the reader when he suggests, "I have often thought that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful" (205). Johnson's affirmation here is not pointed only at the reader as an individual, but rather at the common man who, by nature, is endowed with a certain amount of intelligence and reason regardless of station in life. In spite of this, it is not the individual life that is primary, but the way in which the narrative portrays that life that makes the biography useful. While it might appear, at first glance, that Johnson is condoning all human subjects as possible material for biography, he is not so naïve as to think that all subjects should be thought of as potential material for biographical narrative. The *Life of Pope*, or any other of the *Lives* Johnson narrated, were useful both for book sales (as noted earlier), as well as for the promotion of literary criticism. And, more significantly, Johnson would hope, the *Lives* served to "diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition" (204).

By the time Johnson was commissioned to write the *Lives of the Poets*, he had already established himself as an authority of literary criticism through *The Rambler* publications and through his edition of Shakespeare. *The Rambler*, in addressing the reader, encourages the reader to feel that by the very act of participating in the task of reading *The Rambler*, the reader is automatically counted among the intelligent and reasonable. Johnson addresses issues related not only to morality and general education, but to scholarship and the art of composition itself. The reader is graciously invited to enter into a discourse that is likely greater than the reader's accomplishments, and yet the reader is brought into this discourse without feeling alienated in the process

by pedantic condescension. In addressing the proper way to write a biography in *Rambler* No. 60, Johnson is allowing the public in on the development of a genre that is both for the reader and might potentially be produced by the reader. When considering a subject, Johnson does not hold back from the reader, rather he, like a good teacher, invites the reader to look on with him, and join him in the quest for "knowledge," "virtue," and "truth" (207).

In many ways, Johnson, in addressing the common man, is still addressing an audience who comprised the upper-crust of his day. His readership was likely limited to those, first of all, who could read, and, secondly, who could afford leisure time to read. Under Johnson's guidance, the most affluent aristocrat and the most servile indigent are both prospective subjects for useful narrative. Johnson does not advocate that they are both equal in prospective usefulness, but rather, they both possess a life filled with experiences that, if treated judiciously by a skillful biographer, contain a degree of usefulness from which to learn. The seriousness of Johnson's writing would likely enlarge the disparity between those who make up Johnson's readership, and the common man he seems to include in his essays.

Carl Rollyson, a biographer himself, takes a look at the current acceptance of biography and its apparent place in society:

> Biography is viewed, at best, as a second-rate form of writing. In the academy it is rarely viewed as scholarship; to the literary community it ranks well below the novel. . . . Only general readers agree with Johnson, for year after year they continue to support the boom in biography. (443)

Rollyson is not surprised by this general discrepancy between scholarship and the general readers. One of Johnson's main reasons for valuing the cultivation of the biography is precisely because it does reach the interest of the general reader. Johnson, like a good instructor,

knows his audience, and plays off of the natural interests of the general reader. Johnson, an author primarily concerned with the moral education of society, found the perfect platform for his voice. He never condemns his readers for being uninterested in heady scholarship. His astute understanding and acceptance of his readers gives his voice greater resonance, and an undeniable relevance to his readership. He is able to accomplish this mix of a moral voice matched with the voice of a common man without compromising his values or his honesty of expression. Since Johnson was compelled to promote a healthy society, the purpose of cultivating a genre that was attractive to the minds of readers is a natural and brilliant choice, a choice that in no way hurts the book publishers if the public chooses to "support the boom in biography."

In "Excellence in Biography: *Rambler* No. 60 and Johnson's Early Biographies," John J. Burke addresses the importance of the biographer establishing a sense of equality between the subject of the biography and the reader:

> The fame of the subject of a biography—what makes him
> a figure of interest in the first place—necessarily increases
> the distance between him and his fellow human beings.
> The biographer must diminish that distance by stressing his
> kinship with them. (27-28)

Burke asserts that choosing the subject of a biography is more complicated than it might seem. The idea of fame is directly opposed to the idea of the common man. If the general public admires Alexander Pope for his poetry, a biography on Pope would be snatched up by the curious reader. However, if the biographer is not careful to bridge the distance between Pope and the reader, then the reader will soon lose interest because the biographer's rendering of Pope is not believable. What is believable and what is flattering should not be confused here.

Johnson's Pope is often quite unappealing. The biographer must, as Burke asserts, find a way to stress the reader's kinship with Pope. Johnson, foreseeing this necessity in *Rambler* No. 60, encourages the biographer to tap into the reader's imagination and momentarily place the reader "in the condition of him whose fortune we contemplate" (204). While Pope often comes off as selfish, disrespectful, or rude, at least Pope is brought to the level where the reader lives, grounded on earth, and readily relatable as an imperfect human being. If the narrative of biography is placed too high as to appear fantastically heroic, or too low as to appear abominably vulgar, then the biographer has not done the reader a service. Since Pope is somewhat of an heroic subject, Johnson has justly taken care to acknowledge "a man's real character" (205). Whether the subject of the biography is marked by fame or infamy, the success of the biography is largely dependent on the level of discernment exercised by the biographer.

At the end of *Rambler* No. 60, Johnson addresses the historical veracity necessary in biography. He describes the timeliness in which the best biographies are written. He warns the biographer that at the close of a great life, there is a short window of time during which both the public "interest" is eminent, and the freshness of "memory" is accessible. It is interesting that Johnson includes the public interest alongside the importance of a truthful memory. Johnson's awareness of the public, and his concern for veracity, is marked throughout his concern for the "worthy cultivation" of biography. This marriage between readership and authenticity of form, firmly grounds Johnson's study of biography as "a species of writing [most] worthy of cultivation" (204). It is perfectly fitting that he closes his essay with his concern that the biography be composed in the most efficient way as to produce the most truthful and insightful account.

Paul J Korshin, in "The Essay and *The Rambler*," discusses

Johnson's role in the development of the genre of biography. He mentions the limitations that a biographer faces, and the breadth of subject matter to which Johnson opens the genre. More specifically, Korshin highlights the attention Johnson gives to the timeliness of the biographer:

> One of Johnson's greatest improvements to the genre, in distinction to writers [of hagiography] and classical figures like Plutarch, is immediacy; the biographer has to form his or her work while the clay of human life is still malleable. (56)

The subjects in Plutarch's biographies are such that he could not possibly have known the incidents of his biographies firsthand in the immediacy Johnson recommends. The loss of inside sources to the "most prominent and observable particularities" (207) is not accessible to a biographer like Plutarch who chooses subjects outside of his immediate personal scope of knowledge. The inability to access first-hand, or even second-hand insight to the unique particularities of a life like Pope's is almost impossible, even though Johnson is far less removed from Pope than Plutarch was to Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar.

What is "lost in imparting" such particularities of character, Johnson asserts, "will lose all resemblance of the original" (207). The result is either that of the useless "uniform panegyric" or that of the not so delightful "general and rapid narratives of history" (204). While the first kind is created to protect the subject from the public, the second kind functions as a dry historical record. Thus, both evade knowledge of the individual life in question. Their function as a biography, in Johnson's terms, is useless, as both do not serve to improve the moral betterment of the reader. This lack of function, as well as the general boredom the reader of such texts is likely to suffer, must be avoided in

the writing of biography. The only way to escape such pitfalls is for the author to remain steadfast in gleaning relevant material, discerning in censure, and ever vigilant in focusing on the overall vision of the genre, which as Johnson sees it is the propagation of virtue in the readership. Johnson does attain that "immediacy" necessary in biography in the *Life of Pope*, where we see a figure emerge that is not at all portrayed in shallow panegyric and is far from resembling a list of historical facts.

Toward the end of *Rambler* No. 60, Johnson warns the biographer about the elusiveness of knowledge:

> We know how few can portray a living acquaintance except by his most prominent and observable particularities, and the grosser features of his mind; and it may be easily imagined how much of this little knowledge may be lost in imparting it, and how soon a succession of copies will lose all resemblance of the original. (207)

The inaccessibility of information, and the use of information that is merely a copy of a copy of a copy, is likely to cause anxiety in the mind of any writer of biography. The impression of accuracy is often misleading as the biographer searches for truthful sources of information. Johnson does not claim that the truth is unattainable, but he does raise complications in attaining it. What can be observed about an individual is limited to what is most prominent in the individual: his habits, his dress, and his expression. The unobservable particularities that make up the complex individual are hidden from sight and are not likely accessible even to those who lived with the subject. What might be considered a window to the unobservable particularities of Pope are his personal letters. However, Johnson is careful to warn the reader that even Pope's letters "seem to be premeditated and artificial" (730), and grossly entangled with his vanity. This inability to access the inner man, however, does not dissuade Johnson from attempting to further

the project of biography.

Johnson warns the biographer against relying too much on the nature of memory alone, as it fades with time. The "volatile" and "evanescent" nature of memory leads the biographer away from the truth. Johnson takes his sources for biography as seriously as a courtroom judge takes the evidence. He is concerned that if the evidence is not presented and handled properly by the biographer, then, what is presented to the public will not be truthful. The consequence of false evidence is the perpetuation of ignorance, slander, and deceit, which is the antithesis of Johnson's admonition for the increase of knowledge, virtue, and truth.

The temptation to censure faults at the expense of truthful analysis is the temptation of any biographer who knew the subject personally. Johnson addresses this possible shortcoming of the biographer in a strikingly poignant statement, "If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth" (207). His aphoristic writing style displays his ability to drive his point home, by placing responsibility on the reader. Johnson cleverly announces that if his readers have any reverence for the deceased, there is an even greater respect that must be paid to those values, of which the Enlightenment was a steadfast proponent. His proclamation that the author, by refraining from concealing the truth, is in fact acting out of a set of values which are of a most noble cause, is compelling to the reader. The result of ignoring the Rambler's admonitions is to forsake the noble enterprise of extending knowledge, virtue, and truth. The "uniform panegyric" that will surely follow is a pitiful tradeoff. In a way, Johnson is touting a "uniform panegyric" of his own, that of the laudatory praise of Enlightenment values. The honest and discerning agent of reason is presented in the portrait of the knowledgeable, the virtuous, and the truthful author. To fall short of this task is to give way

to vulgarity and indecency, or to weakly succumb to the dual vices of censorship and invention at the costly expense of instructive truth.

While the significance of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* reaches beyond that of a simple moral tale or character sketch, it is Johnson's concern for the moral character of his readers that functions as a guide to Johnson's final product. Regardless of financial burdens and demands on time and production, Johnson holds fast to this invisible guide, holding himself to the highest standard as he saw it. Johnson's admiration of Pope, from one writer to another, is interesting in light of their personal differences. Pope, who measured his success in writing by a private sense of perfection attained only after the luxury of deliberation, contrasts sharply with Johnson's dependence on producing writing hastily for economic returns. However, despite the economic pressures Johnson faces, he remains steadfast in his dedication to the moral purpose of writing, a purpose that afforded his writing a power beyond that of the economic pressures that often pushed him to write. The wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and instruction that he left for prosperity is, in itself, the story of a genuine man, whose own biography has been written, and will continue to be written, as his mark on the history of human letters is censured by few and praised by many.

Notes

[1] Attributed to Samuel Johnson in *Life of Johnson*. (Boswell) 1 Vol. vi.

[2] In *Life of Pope*, Johnson writes that Pope "was too indulgent to his appetite: he loved meat highly seasoned and strong of taste" (726).

[3] "Choice of life" is an allusion to Johnson's *The History of Rasselas Prince of Abissinia*. Rasselas leaves his home in the *Happy Valley* in search of finding happiness by discovering the best way to live, making his "choice of life."

[4] As seen in James Gillray's 1783 satirical prints depicting Johnson as Dr. Pomposo in *Apollo and the Muses, Inflicting Penance on Dr Pomposo, Round Parnassus*.

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"But his blood would not be quiet":
Racial Indeterminacy and the Struggle Within in
William Faulkner's *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses*
by Richard Fitzgeorge

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In speaking of the racially ambiguous character Joe Christmas from his novel *Light in August* William Faulkner has famously argued that the real tragedy of the male protagonist lies in the fact that "he didn't know what he was . . . which to [Faulkner] is the most tragic condition a man could find himself in—not to know what he is and to know that he will never know" (Faulkner, *Faulkner in the University* 72). In this single statement Faulkner effectively distills an entire novel's worth of emotional trauma and social violence into the tragedy of one man's inability to account for his racial origins. This conflation of a complex network of textual forces into a singular and seemingly personal focus, whether inadvertently or not, serves to highlight the cultural conflict seething beneath the surface of nearly all Faulkner's work.

The tragedy of Joe Christmas is, in reality, neither singular nor personal. Rather, the racial indeterminacy Faulkner credits with making Joe Christmas such a tragic character lies at the center of a collective manifestation of deep cultural anxiety. To exist outside of the proscribed social boundaries dictating racial identity is to challenge the powerful cultural forces that ensure the persistence of these boundaries. Because Joe Christmas is unable to determine his racial antecedents, those surrounding him are forced to face the dissolution of a carefully constructed and seemingly unassailable cultural binary. *Light in August* ultimately demonstrates the uniquely violent cultural response reserved for the challenge of racial boundaries in the murder and subsequent castration of Joe Christmas. Oddly, however, the social violence invoked in inscribing the cultural necessity of a clearly delineated difference between black and white upon the dead and mutilated body of Joe Christmas is not a ubiquitous response to racial transgression in Faulkner's work. Sam Fathers of Faulkner's later novel *Go Down, Moses* possesses neither an easily definable racial heritage nor any sense of respect for the societal mandates dictating interracial exchanges. Yet while Joe Christmas is murdered for what his racial indeterminacy signifies to those around him, Sam Fathers is somewhat perversely celebrated as regal. This difference in cultural reactions to transgressive racial identities serves to form the boundaries of the societal hysteria surrounding the prospect of complete racial amalgamation pervading both *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses*. The societal wrath so violently enacted upon Joe Christmas is only awakened when it appears that the culturally constructed signifiers protecting the purity of the black\white binary have lost their exclusivity. Thus because Sam Fathers is neither capable of nor interested in passing as white, he never challenges the visible viability of racial distinctions. For that reason he is never afforded the societal violence Joe Christmas experiences.

Sam Fathers's freedom from social violence in the face of his own racial indeterminacy seems to imply an ability to navigate the perilous course between utter submission to the demands of white culture and the repercussions insubordination entails. It could be argued that Sam Father's success in avoiding the societal wrath that accompanies any challenge to the permanence of racial distinctions serves as the beginnings of a hybrid space in which the racial assumptions of the white patriarchy can begin to be reworked.[1] Social violence, however, is not the only method through which the white power structure ensures its permanent superiority within the black\white binary. While it may appear that Sam Fathers, in his disavowal of both the subservience demanded of him as a person who is not white and any desire to pass as a person who is, occupies a liminal space of racial freedom unknown to Joe Christmas, the ultimate imposition of an interiority overwrought with racial conflict by the novel's white power structure shatters the transgressive nature of his hybridity and reinscribes the essentialist blood doctrine that allows for the cultural persistence of the black\white binary.

In order to understand the societal anxiety that manifests itself throughout *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses*, and ultimately accounts for their respective treatments of Joe Christmas and Sam Fathers, it is essential to examine the cultural trajectory of racism leading up to the moments of their creation. In writing of *Light in August*, Eric J. Sundquist asserts that the novel

> only releases the full power it holds, and only—like Christmas at his death—rises forever into our imaginations, when we recall that [it] appeared approximately at the crest of a forty-year wave of Jim Crow laws that grew in part out of a threatened economy, in part out of increasingly vocal demands for black equality during and after World

War I, and in greater part out of reawakened racist fears that had, at least in contrast, simmered restlessly for a generation between Reconstruction and the twentieth century. To be more exact, they grew out of the Supreme Court's decision in favor of the doctrine of 'separate but equal' in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)—a decision that rested the burden of its argument on a case involving a 'Negro' who was 'seven-eighths white' and could pass for white. (68-69)

Sundquist's extremely concise and informative summation of the period does much to elucidate the cultural ramifications surrounding racially transgressive characters like Joe Christmas and Sam Fathers. As Sundquist points out, the entire apparatus of institutionalized and legally sponsored racism, manifested most famously in the segregationist doctrine of Jim Crow laws, relied upon a Supreme Court decision concerned with a person who at least in terms of racial identity uncannily resembles Joe Christmas. For those interested in perpetuating the perceived inferiority of the black end of the black\white binary through the implementation of Jim Crow laws, the stakes in ensuring that someone like Joe Christmas could never pass were indeed very high.

C. Vann Woodward expertly examines both the motivations of those most keenly interested in the persistence of Jim Crow laws and the series of events responsible for creating the sense of national fervor surrounding them.[2] Woodward roots the cause of the most prolific period of Jim Crow legislation, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and not abating until nearly a decade after the publication of *Light in August* in 1932, in the national acceptance of what had been predominantly Southern views of extreme racial inequality. At the heart of this shift lies the birth of United States as an imperial power. Woodward points out that "in the year 1898, the United

States plunged into imperialistic adventures overseas" and "as America shouldered the White Man's Burden, she took up at the same time many of the Southern attitudes on the subject of race" (72). That a cultural acceptance of segregation is born out of the increased national importance of imperialism is no surprise. Much like the need of an exclusive white purity in the black\white binary of racial identification, the doctrines of imperialism demands that those being colonized are perpetually denied access to what makes the colonizer powerful. If it is nationally acceptable to suppress the rights of millions of people in other parts of the world in the name of economic growth, it then becomes increasingly difficult to criticize the actions of those who desire the same thing within the borders of that same nation.[3] The reliance on the power of segregation present in the Jim Crow laws thus becomes a means by which the visible racial distinctions that make the black\white distinctions possible can be linked not just to the perceived social well-being of the South, but to the continued economic success of the imperial nation as a whole.

The potential power of racially indeterminate people, characterized fictionally by Joe Christmas and Sam Fathers, to disrupt this seemingly stable relationship between continued racial distinction and societal calm was understandably great. The immediacy of this threat to racial distinction was made more severe by the simple presence of a large population that was deemed black because of the presence of "one drop" of Negro blood, but exhibited no physical signs of racial difference.[4] Joel Williamson points out that "centuries of miscegenation had produced thousands of mulattoes who had simply lost visibility, so much did color and features overlap between those who were mixed and those who were purely white" (98). For this reason white culture in the South and throughout the United States became increasingly preoccupied with successfully locating racial distinction. The possibility that with the

dissolution of visible racial difference would come the destruction of the doctrine of blood upon which rested the entire legislative apparatus of institutionalized segregation, instilled within white culture a sense of hysteria principally concerned with unequivocally establishing the dominance of essential racial identities. In speaking of this hysteria Williamson asserts that

> it is not too much to say that Southern whites in the early twentieth century became paranoid about invisible blackness. In their minds blood, not environment, carried civilization and one wrong drop meant contamination of the whole. The identification of newcomers in a community was always important to them, but as blackness disappeared beneath white skins and white features, it became vastly more so. (103)

It is against this backdrop of sweeping paranoia that *Light in August*, with its "tragic" depiction of racial amalgamation, appears upon a cultural landscape marked both by its growing intolerance of racial indeterminacy and a dogged reliance on segregationist laws to ensure the permanence of racial distinction.

With such a fundamentally threatening social struggle surrounding the formulation of *Light in August*, it is not difficult to locate the upwelling currents of cultural anxiety seeking to escape the textual confines of the novel. The racial indeterminacy of Joe Christmas addresses in nearly every way the summation of these fears of racial amalgamation. That the antecedents of his racial impurity are merely implied and never proven only serves to further root Joe Christmas's indeterminacy in the fear pervading the cultural networks from which the novel sprung forth. The inability to account for racial heritage was not a phenomenon isolated to the fictitious characterization of Joe Christmas. Joel Williamson notes that "the ultimate absurdity in

America's attempt to draw a race line with the one-drop rule was the fact that many mulattoes themselves simply did not know whether they were white or black. Their African origins were lost to certain memory, and they were left only with lingering doubts" (Williamson 98).[5] The systematic exclusion of all signs of positive racial identification in Joe Christmas situates the novel within a unique dialogue between the legitimacy of the blood doctrine governing the black\white binary and the threat racial indeterminacy poses to social reliance on essential racial distinctions. That Joe Christmas is the product of a tryst between a white woman and a circus worker of equally uncertain racial origins only serves to further destabilize the already tenuous cultural demand for clear racial distinction. Whether Joe Christmas's father is actually Mexican, black, or neither is never revealed, and is of little importance.

The implications of painting Joe Christmas with the brush of racial impurity reveal their seriousness when Brown reveals to the authorities that they had been duped into believing that Joe Christmas was white. After realizing that he sounds more and more suspicious, Brown grasps at his last chance for exoneration. Brown's taunting exclamation to the sheriff "'you're so smart' . . . 'The folks in this town is so smart. Fooled for three years. Calling [Joe Christmas] a foreigner for three years, when soon as I watched him three days I knew he wasn't no more a foreigner than I am. I knew before he even told me himself'" simultaneously establishes the text's fascination with the discursive formulations of race and insinuates the permanence such a discursive practice brings to the construction of racial identities (*Light in August* 98). The entire passage is characterized by Brown's increasing desperation during his interrogation, and Byron Bunch even points out that "it was like he had been saving what he told them . . . for just such a time as this" (97). The veracity of what Brown says, however, is never questioned. Just

like Joe Christmas's own suspicions about his origins come to consume him, the mere utterance of an accusation concerning racial impurity is enough to change the entire dynamic of the town's relationship to the crime it believes was committed. John T. Matthews locates Joe Christmas's purposeful ambiguity and discursive racial identity in a desire to demonstrate the folly of racial essentialism. In writing of Joe Christmas's mysterious heritage Matthews asserts that

> the anxiety that besets Joe reflects the foundational uncertainty of majority identity in a racial society. Over the course of the novel, Joe falls victim to the South's refusal to admit the open secret of racial hybridity. His career traces an exemplary arc, through which a white man, presumably even one like Faulkner . . ., must confront the fetish-fictions of southern life. In doing so, Faulkner suggests the failure of such fantasies to sustain indefinitely the ways of racial discrimination. (206)

Matthews identifies racial hybridity as both the impetus for the invocation of social violence enacted upon Joe Christmas and the driving force in challenging the validity of racial distinctions as the foundation for institutionalized racism. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper hybridity can serve as a space in which ideological "truths" are necessarily rendered opaque (Bhabha 37). Thus the very indeterminacy of Joe Christmas's racial heritage can serve as a physical challenge to the assumptions of racial purity governing national ideas of institutionalized racism. The notion of hybridity becomes the very affirmation of racial indeterminacy that patriarchal white culture must strive so vehemently to contain.

In order to further flesh out how notions of hybridity function in the text it is necessary to revisit the imperial national ideology Woodward credits with contributing to the rise of institutionalized

segregationist practices in the twentieth century. In invoking the role of hybridity in *Light in August* Matthews draws heavily upon the post-colonial theory of Homi K Bhabha. Matthews convincingly transposes Bhabha's theories regarding the psychological gymnastics colonizers must put themselves through in subjugating those they wish to colonize onto the imperially inflected cultural landscape of the South.[6] Matthews analyzes the ways in which stereotype functions simultaneously to both negate the viability of Joe Christmas's racial hybridity and challenge the assumptions inherent in the doctrine of racial difference. He invokes Bhabha's exploration of "the stereotype as a fetish that addresses the contradiction of racial stereotype," pointing out that "on the one hand, the stereotype insists that racial difference is absolute, natural, and visible; on the other, it carries the suspicion that all humans share common skin, race, and culture" (204)[7]. The duplicitous nature of stereotype, its ability to inscribe difference at the same time it proclaims similarity, functions in much the same way the social anxiety towards racial amalgamation expresses itself within the novel. The contradiction of a social belief in essential racial difference is fundamentally at odds with the growing fear that betrays a sublimated understanding of its own illogical nature, and yet, like stereotype, it endures through its swaggering proclamation of natural difference.

Matthews credits the presence of hybridity in *Light in August*, and *Go Down, Moses* for that matter, with successfully vitiating both the power of stereotype and the larger societal preoccupation with racial distinction. He claims that "in *Light in August* Faulkner exhibits the failure of skin to execute the fetish of stereotype. Joe's skin poses the problem of hybridity to the U.S. South's epidermal binarism" (207). Just how far the prevalence of hybridity in the text goes to truly attack the institutionalized binarism pervading the South, however, remains unclear. The most commonly referenced example of hybridity

undermining the rigid racial dogma of the white patriarchy in *Light in August* is Gavin Stevens's ridiculous invocation of the doctrine of blood in explaining the actions of Joe Christmas:

> But his blood would not be quiet, let him save it. It would not be either one or the other and let his body save himself. Because the black blood drove him first to the Negro cabin. And then the white blood drove him out of there, as it was the black blood which snatched up the pistol and the white blood which would not let him fire it. And it was the white blood which sent him to the minister . . . And then the black blood failed him again, as it must have in crises all his life. He did not kill the minister. (Faulkner 449)

There is little doubt that the simplicity of Steven's hypothesis is meant to sound ridiculous. Coming at the end of the novel, when so much has already been learned about the deep complexity of Joe Christmas's character, the straight-faced insinuation of warring bloods unequivocally discredits the one-drop rule upon which the validity of legalized segregation rested. Eric Sundquist notes that

> Stevens speaks . . . in service of an unbearable anxiety that, because it constantly threatens to dissolve into anarchy both a social and a psychic structure, can only be contained by the simplest of theories—one that is necessarily rendered farcical by renouncing the dangerous complexities generated in the surrounding actions of the novel. (70)

Yet is it possible to negate something by merely presenting it in a farcical manner, or does such a representation serve in part to inscribe its social viability at the same time as it mocks it presumptions?

Regardless of its ridiculousness, Gavin Stevens's speech unequivocally succeeds in removing the social violence so invested in ensuring the demise of Joe Christmas from the context of his

death. In this way the presence of Gavin Stevens in the novel and the unquestionable ridiculousness of his views allows for an increased focus on the promise of the hybrid alternative to the essentialism of the pervading blood doctrine. Yet such a shift in focus only serves to draw attention away from the shocking presence of social violence in the novel—a violence that ultimately succeeds in reasserting the viability of distinct racial difference. In response to the shocking nature of Christmas's murder Sundquist writes that "the threat of physical amalgamation, of the disintegration of racial distinctions, erupts into a violent assertion of distinctions—one that that radically denies the physical amalgamation that already exists and the psychological amalgamation that follows from it" (94). With this in mind it is possible to understand the ways in which even though the novel's inclusion of hybridity serves to counteract certain elements of the blood doctrine so essential to the perpetuation of racial difference, the larger explosion of uncontrolled violence that kills Joe Christmas envelops the transgressive qualities of hybridity in the name of a reinscription of racial difference.

The presence of hybridity in the work of Faulkner, however, is no way limited to the pages of *Light in August*. As has been mentioned earlier in this essay Sam Fathers of *Go Down, Moses* appears to succeed as a hybrid in all the ways Joe Christmas does not. Not only is he openly defiant of all the interracial conventions so ruthlessly guarded in *Light in August*, but he is also able to avoid the societal wrath that befalls Joe Christmas. "The Old People," a largely ignored chapter of *Go Down, Moses*, characterizes Sam Fathers with all the racial indeterminacy that makes Joe Christmas so dangerous. The product of the union between a Chickasaw chief and a slave woman who is described as already possessing a modicum of white lineage herself, Sam Fathers is the embodiment of hybridity. He is described as a man "whose only trace

of negro blood was a slight dullness of the hair and the fingernails," a carrier of regal blood, and one who was afforded respect because of it (Faulkner 161). What serves to most strikingly distance him from typical representations of non-white characters is the way he interacts with whites, characterized most succinctly by this passage:

> In the boys eyes at least it was Sam Fathers, the negro, who bore himself not only toward his cousin McCaslin and Major de Spain but toward all white men, with gravity and dignity and without servility or recourse to that impenetrable wall of ready and easy mirth which negroes sustain between themselves and white men, bearing himself toward his cousin McCaslin not only as one man to another but as an older man to a younger. (164)

In this passage it is as if the promise of a viable hybrid, a promise so violently repudiated by the death of Joe Christmas, has finally been realized. Sam Fathers is neither black, white, nor Chickasaw. He is, instead, all of these things, and furthermore he is able not only to exist in this manner, but he has carved a niche in the social landscape that is stable enough to afford him the respect of the same patriarchal white order that so viciously brought down Joe Christmas. While much criticism regarding *Go Down, Moses* locates the alternative to the black\white binary in Lucas Beauchamp,[8] Lucas's close inclusion in the McCaslin family precludes him from the ability to appear to exist outside of the power relations governing interracial communication the way Sam Fathers can. Because Sam Fathers seems to operate in a realm utterly removed from the blood politics that so thoroughly saturate the socially dictated racial identities of both Joe Christmas and Lucas Beauchamp, he is able to appear to emerge as an effective space of hybridity, and in doing so challenges the persistence of racial distinction in a way Joe Christmas could not.

The transgressive power of this hybridity, however, ultimately proves to serve an end far removed from the challenge to accepted views of racial binarism Bhabha envisions in *The Location of Culture*. Like with Joe Christmas and *Light in August*, Sam Fathers's hybridity becomes more a tool of the forces that ensure the persistence of racial binarisms, than a space in which to question their assumptions. Nestor Garcia Canclini's work with the subject of hybridity examines the ways in which it is necessarily dictated by the social forces it seems to subvert[9]. Canclini's conception of hybridity differs from Bhabha's in his assertion that "the hybrid is almost never something indeterminate because there are historical forms of hybridization. . . . [T]he principal cultural configurations identified in modernity . . . are the result, as are their crossings, of processes of hybridization that occur in conditions partially predetermined by social systems" (Canclini 79-80). Departing from Mathews, Canclini argues that hybridity is actually a condition created in part by the forces that ensure the persistence of what it appears to be challenging. In this light the seemingly transgressive hybridity of Joe Christmas and Sam Fathers becomes little more than the appearance of racial amalgamation within a structure that is able to repress it at will. Canclini furthers this notion in his assertion that

> rituals institutionalizing transgression tend to occur in a marginal context, for example carnival (so that men may be women, or women men, or the poor rich), all of this has its limits; they are restricted transgressions that have a defined period in which symbolic efficacy can be exercised. When they seek to reach a real efficacy, then repression occurs. (81)

In the case of Joe Christmas and Sam Fathers, transgressive efficacy finds its limits in the incursion into the latter half of the black\white binary. The most threatening form of this incursion lies in the act of

passing.

Joel Williamson cites a 1946 survey conducted by John H. Burma "who estimated the [passing] rate at between 2,500 and 2,750 a year, with some 110,000 living on the white side of the line at that time" (103). With such rampant transgression of an essential binary it is not surprising that a fictional representation of someone caught straddling the color line, like Joe Christmas, would be so violently repressed. While John Matthews asserts that Joe Christmas "is not a black person seeking to pass for white," it seems evident that, at least in the eyes of the white culture that murders and castrates him, he is (206). Sam Fathers, on the other hand, shows no interest in inhabiting the white side of the black\white binary, and is thus spared the fate of Joe Christmas. In allowing Sam Fathers to live in spite of his racial transgressions, *Go Down, Moses* successfully establishes the limits of outward expressions of racial indeterminacy endorsed by those charged with ensuring racial order.

In addition to confirming the effective limits of hybridized behavior in present in the texts, *Go Down, Moses* also serves to further delineate the social rituals that Canclini identifies as tempering the transgressive nature of hybridization. Like Gavin Stevens's invocation of Joe Christmas's warring bloods, *Go Down, Moses* also features a scene in which the interiority a black person is defined by the conflict of competing internal influences. Cass McCaslin's asserts in "The Old People" that Sam Fathers

> was the direct son not only of a warrior but of a chief. Then
> he grew up and began to learn things, and all of a sudden
> one day he found out that he had been betrayed, the blood
> of the warriors and chiefs had been betrayed. Not by his
> father [. . .] he probably never held it against old Doom for
> selling him and his mother into slavery, because he probably

believed the damage was already done before then and it was the same warriors' and chiefs' blood in him and Doom both that was betrayed through the black blood which his mother gave him. Not betrayed by the black blood and not willingly betrayed by his mother, but betrayed all the same, who had bequeathed him not only the blood of slaves but even a little of the very blood which had enslaved it; himself his own battleground, the scene of his own vanquishment and the mausoleum of his defeat. (Faulkner 161-62)

Though this invocation of Sam Fathers's internal struggle is nearly identical to Joe Christmas's, it is here lacking all the farce that made Gavin Stevens sound so ludicrous. It is at this point that the insidiousness of institutionalized segregation reveals itself. The racial binarism of the South does not need to rely on violence alone as a means of asserting its legitimacy. Rather, it is able through the insinuation of acceptable hybridity to mask the ways in which it perpetuates itself. The ritualized blood fetish that allows for the imposition of a conflicted interiority can account for the institutionalized transgression inherent in racial hybridization. As long as the hybridized object remains outside of the latter half of the black\white binary, the imposition of a conflicted interiority disarms any chance that the psychological amalgamation of races alluded to by Sundquist, and so feared by white culture, can threaten the established binary. If the exclusivity of the binary is breached, however, as it is in the case of Joe Christmas, the institutionalized violence of the lynch mob can supplement the ritualized blood fetish and ensure the subjugation of all transgression.

Racial indeterminacy and the transgression of binarism it entails thus becomes a tool by which institutionalized racism can appear to offer an alternative to the radical essentialism of its dogma, while continually asserting the illegitimacy that transgression. Sam Fathers

and Joe Christmas, regardless of how the culture surrounding them reacts to their unstable racial identities, are by the very nature of their location within that culture, forced to assume the essential racial identities bestowed upon them. Though they may appear to defy the legitimacy of these identities in the inability of their physical appearances to definitively assert their space within the black\white binary, they are internally consumed by the struggle that racial indeterminacy naturally entails. That this internal conflict is as much a fiction as the as any outward signifier of racial identity is not important. In the same way that Joe Christmas's blackness is determined in *Light in August* by the mere utterance of racial difference, the ability of a white patriarchal order to suggest that internal struggle is concomitant with racial indeterminacy is enough to make it real. The greatest strength of any type of hysteria is the inevitable sense that the threat it suggests is unflinchingly real. Here that sense succeeds in clouding what is otherwise provocatively subversive writing about the fiction of racial essentialism.

Notes

[1] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pg. 37: "a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, *neither one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics."

[2] C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pgs. 67-149. Though the entire work serves as a fascinating study of Jim Crow from Reconstruction through the 1960's, Chapters 3 and 4 deal most specifically with the period beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and ending in the early 1940's.

[3] Ibid., pgs. 72-74.

[4] Joel Williamson, *The New People Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States*, (New York: The Free Press, 1980). Offers an extremely interesting examination of the role of the mulatto in shaping the course of race relations from before the Civil War until the time it is published. Pgs. 95-96 introduce and

explain some of the "science" behind the formulation of the "one-drop rule." [5] Interestingly Williamson also points out that this problem extended all the way into the halls of Southern government. Apparently "at least three politicians in Reconstruction New Orleans were taken as Negroes but yet had no certain knowledge of their Negro ancestry" (98).

[6] John T. Matthews, "This Race Which is not One: The 'More Inextricable Compositeness' of William Faulkner's South," *Look Away*, ed. Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). While Matthew's entire essay is devoted to the integration of Bhabha into a study of the South, pages 204-05 offer the most concise description of this methodology. [7] The basis for this claim is drawn from Bhabha's lengthy and dense appropriation of Lacan's model of the mirror phase. Matthews points out that "drawing on Lacan's model of the mirror phase, in which the child organizes an ego through an identification of himself or herself as reflected in another person or object, Bhabha outlines how race complicates the process by which subjects are formed in racial societies" (205).

[8] See Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*, (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1991) Pgs. 88-92, Matthews, pgs. 214-15, and Sundquist, pgs. 131-59.

[9] Nestor Garcia Canclini, "The Hybrid: A Conversation with Margarita Zires, Raymundo Mier, and Mabel Piccini" *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995) Pgs. 77-91. It is important to note that though we cover different topics, Hosam Aboul-Ela's "Political Economy of Southern Race: *Go Down, Moses*, Spatial Inequality, and the Color Line," *Mississippi Quarterly: The Southern Journal of Cultures* 57,(2003-2004 Winter) pgs 55-64, was essential both in my discovery of Canclini, and the beginnings of my thoughts regarding hybridity in the texts.

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Pass Me the Wooden Leg:
The Body, the Gaze, and the Performative Nature of Gender in
Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People"
by Jade Hidle

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In 2004, I began writing a fiction piece titled "That Kind of Longing" in which a young girl who, while defecating in the bathroom of a seedy night club, contemplates her ability to connect with men and engage in heterosexual relationships in the wake of her father's death. In my reading of the story, I saw the bowel movement, the sex, and the decay of the father's slowly-dying body as emphasizing material corporeality; I also felt that the juxtaposition of the character's emotional strife and troubled digestive system illustrated how internal turmoil can manifest itself on the body, albeit it in a struggle with constipation. Because issues of female corporeality are important to me and my work, I hoped that the piece would be well received. My story, however, was met with much criticism of and disgust for my character's "vulgar" bodily functions and acts. Upon receiving these responses in

workshop, I donned my thick skin and tried to tune into why my audience responded the way they did. In what ways did I offend their expectations of what a woman's body is supposed to be and do? What are those expectations? And, maybe most significantly, why did the harshest criticism come from male readers?

In searching theory for (potential) answers to these questions, I gravitated toward Michel Foucault and feminist theorists, particularly those who focus their discussions on the female body. Much of contemporary feminist literature acknowledges that feminism is indebted to two main points from Foucault's theoretical work with which readers may already be familiar. First, in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault describes the body as an "inscribed surface" on which history, culture, and power can essentially be read (qtd. in Riley 223). As an inscribed surface, the body can be seen as "a result or an effect" rather than "an originating point or terminus" where natural or innate truths lie (Riley 221). Thus, by studying the body—their own bodies— women can uncover the ways in which their bodies are subjected to the powers at work in the period in which they live. Secondly, in the introductory volume to *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault mentions that under the increased scrutiny of bodies during the "medicalization of sex" (44), bodies became "fixed by a gaze" (45). In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault extends his discussion of the Panopticonal gaze by asserting that it becomes internalized by individuals: "An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself" (qtd. in Bordo 253). The individual, then, becomes complicit in his or her subjection to the disciplinary practices that power expects of and enforces upon bodies. Feminists pick up the discussion at this point to explore how "male dominance and female subordination ...

[are] reproduced 'voluntarily,' through self-normalization to everyday habits of masculinity and femininity" (Bordo, "Feminism and Foucault" 253). Essentially, feminist extensions of Foucault's theories engender the bodies that are disciplined by power as female and the gaze to which they are subjected as male. The engendered nature of the feminist variation of the Foucauldian internalization of the gaze, however, does not necessarily blame only the external male gaze for the subordination of women, but rather investigates the extent to which women perpetuate the "docility" of their own bodies in the practices of femininity which perpetuate their constructed role as the passive, inferior sex.

Although feminist theorists credit Foucault's theories of the body, the gaze, and the general constructed nature of sexuality as a cornerstone for their work, the primary point of feminists' contention with Foucault is his lack of consideration for women's bodies in particular (and, ironically, many feminist essays seem angry that Foucault, a *male* theorist, did not provide a voice for women and their embodied struggles with power). In her book *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz points out that the small portion of Foucault's work that is dedicated to women's bodies is his discussion of 'hysterization.' And, according to Grosz, even that discussion is limited. She directs attention to the fact that Foucault "ignores the possibility of women's strategic occupation of hysteria as a form of resistance to the demands and requirements of heterosexual monogamy and the social and sexual role culturally assigned to women" (158). Like other feminists, Grosz departs from Foucault by suggesting that bodies are not always passively accepting power inscriptions on their bodies, but also using those inscriptions as a form of power, potentially subversive power. Like Grosz, Lois McNay believes that a Foucauldian and passive conception of the body in relation to power's operations "leads to an oversimplified notion of

gender as an imposed effect rather than as a dynamic process" (12).

Aside from Foucault's minimal references to the female body in specific, the rest of Foucault's discussion of the body only speaks of it in neutered terms. Feminists interpret this neutered body as an instance in which the unnamed is, by default, male. In "Corporeal Representation in/and the Body Politic," Moira Gatens asserts that it is because of women's "corporeal specificity" (83) that they have been excluded and rendered voiceless. To allow women to speak from their female corporeality would be to disrupt "the dichotomous thinking which stems from Cartesian dualism and in which man and mind, woman and body, become representationally aligned" and the man/mind is favored over the inferior body/woman (Grosz 4). Gatens addresses that women in their attempt to speak from the body assume the masculine/mind/rational side of the binary, a position forces them to live "from the body of another: an actress, still a body-bit, a mouthpiece" (85). Thus, to understand the female body and the ways in which femininity is inscribed on it is to potentially allow females an "embodied speech" which they have been denied throughout history (Gatens 86).

In reaction to this androcentric perception of the body, feminist theorists emphasize sexual difference as integral to the understanding of the ways in which the female body is subjected to power and disciplinary practices in a different manner than male body is. Susan Bordo expands on Foucault's ideas of the body by writing that the "body is not only a *text* of culture [but also] a *practical*, direct locus of social control" (2362). So, according to Bordo, the body provides us not only with a reading of what is important to a culture at that particular time, but also with an insight into how the female body is regulated. In Bordo's argument, the primary way in which "female bodies become docile bodies" is through practices and even the most mundane acts of daily life (2363). These daily practices, then, constitute

the "construction of femininity" (2367).

As a contemporary of Bordo, Sandra Lee Bartky extends Bordo's discussion of the practices which constitute femininity by addressing women's very specific daily routines and those acts' implication of women's submission to the male gaze. Bartky argues that female bodies are much more "docile" than male bodies because, in order to maintain femininity, women are subjected to multiple disciplinary practices. In "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," Bartky asserts that the disciplinary practices of femininity to which women's bodies are subjected can be broken up into three main categories. Bartky cites heightened body-consciousness (a practice which includes regimented exercise, dieting, eating disorders, and a general restriction of the body's hungers) along with ornamentation (skincare, makeup, jewelry, clothing, etc.) as two of the three primary ways in which women discipline their bodies with the practices of femininity. The third way in which Bartky argues femininity is practiced is by suggesting that women's bodies, if they are to be considered feminine, must be limited spatially, a concept which will prove to be pertinent to the discussion later in this essay.

Given Bordo's and Bartky's theories, femininity is not natural or innate, but rather practiced, acted, and, in Judith Butler's terminology, "performed." In "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions," Butler argues that "sex and gender [are] denaturalized by means of a performance" (418). Thus, without a natural or original state to which it can revert and/or conform, sexual identity—femininity in particular—can be conceived as fluid, ever-changing, and shifting.

The works of Flannery O'Connor have long been neglected by feminists partly due to the author's portrayal of women as domestics and victims and also because the author was so prolific in writing about her writing (Caruso 1). O'Connor claimed that she was not affiliated

with or interested in the "'feminist business'" and that her fiction was about issues of God, spirituality, and redemption (1). Although recently published feminist analyses of Flannery O'Connor's short fiction have respectfully plugged their ears to the voice of authorial intent that has overshadowed previous studies of the staunchly Catholic writer's work, few have utilized the feminist body studies of Bordo, Bartky, and other above mentioned theorists. Natalie Wilson, a scholar who has referenced some of these theorists in her essay "Misfit Bodies and Errant Gender: The Corporeal Feminism of Flannery O'Connor," only applies theory minimally to "Good Country People," the story on which I will focus in this essay. While Wilson's minimal extension of feminist theorists' discussions does offer insight into the ways in which the principal female character referred to as either Joy or Hulga has a "body [that] does not easily abide by her desires for material transcendence" (107) and how Manley Pointer's confiscation of her leg forces her to "confront her corporeality…[in] a realization that the body does, in fact, *matter*" (108), her analysis does not delve deeply into the significance of the other women in the story nor the engendered tug-of-war that transpires between the two characters.

Christine Atkins offers a more in depth analysis of gender and the relationship between Joy/Hulga and Manley Pointer in her essay "Educating Hulga: Re-Writing Seduction in 'Good Country People.'" Like Wilson, Atkins also limits her discussion to the character of Joy/Hulga. Atkins provides insight into the detailed, yet subtle ways in which the character of Joy/Hulga straddles the lines of femininity and masculinity. Atkins, however, uses the "rape script" to trace the narrative arc of Joy/Hulga's experience. Atkins argues that "rape and violation are not only natural to the female existence but also a necessary part of the coming-of-age experience" (121). Thus, Atkins asserts that Joy/Hulga's experience with Manley is representative of the inevitability of

sexual violation that young girls and women face. This reading of the story, though, proposes an inevitably of defeat which coincides with earlier feminist scholars who criticized O'Connor for reducing women to victims.

Although points of Wilson's and Atkins' arguments serve as a crucial foundation for my analysis of the character to whom both critics decidedly refer as *either* Joy *or* Hulga, I will contrast their approaches to the character by using a hyphenated combination of the protagonist's names, *both* Joy *and* Hulga, which seem to represent the feminine and masculine sides of herself, respectively. I intend for this union of the two names to acknowledge both sides of the character's sexual identity, rather than separate them in accordance with binary logic. Further, I will extend the Wilson's and Atkins' arguments to examine the ways in which Joy-Hulga serves as an example of the unfixed, fluid, and complex nature of sexuality and gender as it is inscribed on the body. First, I aim to demonstrate how, by refusing to participate in the practices of femininity laid out in Bartky's essay, Joy-Hulga is rendered as a masculinized woman. This conception of the dual identity of feminine/masculine will contribute to my discussion of how Joy-Hulga demonstrates that the division between the two can be crossed and straddled. Then, I will extend the discussion beyond Joy-Hulga's character to the other women in the story, particularly Mrs. Freeman, who illustrates how the male gaze is internalized and enforced by women. The web of relationships of power, the gaze, and enforced femininity that exists between the women in the story plays an integral role in Joy-Hulga's development of sexual identity, particularly by pushing the girl to rendezvous with Manley Pointer. Finally, I will examine how the interaction between Joy-Hulga and Manley exemplifies how embodied sexual identity is, as according to theorists such as McNay and Butler, a shifting and dynamic process

which lends to the idea that gender is unfixed and fluid. Thus, my major point of divergence from recent feminist criticism of "Good Country People" is the ending of the story which, as I will argue with the help of Bordo, does not necessarily condemn women, but rather further supports the idea that sexual identity is ambivalent, inconclusive, and ever-changing. This argument is valuable because O'Connor's "Good Country People" no longer has to be read as '50's era condemnation of women to domesticity and submission, but rather can be seen as a complex exploration of sexuality and feminine identity. The greater value of examining the ways in which "Good Country People" illustrates the theories of contemporary feminists is that it shows how theory, feminist or otherwise, does not develop in an entirely linear fashion. Although O'Connor wrote her story over fifty years ago, the characters and relationships that she has rendered so vividly still apply to today's conception studies of the female body and gender in general.

The Girl with the Cowboy Shirt On:
Joy-Hulga's Refusal to Participate in the Practices of Femininity

First, I will extend other feminist critics' discussions of Joy-Hulga's character by applying Bartky's theories of the three main disciplinary practices of femininity. O'Connor's descriptions of Joy-Hulga make it clear that the character does not subject her body to the disciplinary practices that render women's bodies "docile," and thus she can only be considered masculine by virtue of practice (or lack thereof).

In "Good Country People," it is immediately obvious that Joy-Hulga refuses to engage in the practice of bodily ornamentation. Although Joy-Hulga is not explicitly mentioned as having rejected participation in the disciplines of skincare, haircare, and makeup application which require an "investment of time, the use of a wide variety of preparations, the mastery of a set of techniques and . . . the acquisition of a specialized knowledge" (Bartky 70), she does

refuse to decorate herself with clothing that is traditionally considered feminine. In fact, Joy-Hulga "[goes] about all day in a six-year-old skirt and a yellow sweat shirt with a faded cowboy on a horse embossed on it" (O'Connor 177). The outfit does not exude the "grace and... eroticism" that women's bodies are supposed to have when moving in their clothes (Bartky 67). Rather, Joy-Hulga's choice of outfit is the "representation of hyper-masculinity as personified in the cowboy" (Atkins 122). According to Atkins, Joy-Hulga bears the image of the hyper-masculine cowboy because she is "hardly the sort of woman to be impressed by the explicit machismo the cowboy represents" (122). The cowboy, though, could also be seen as Joy-Hulga's badge of pride for the sense of masculinity that she feels she has achieved. She does, after all, seem to wear it in order to get a rise out of her mother whose only wish is that her daughter be beautiful by feminine standards. Mrs. Hopewell responds to her daughter's outfits by concluding that they "showed simply that she was still a child" (177). The elder Hopewell woman's comment about her daughter's choice of clothing perhaps suggests that she believes that her daughter merely has not matured into femininity yet, as if the practices which constitute femininity are something into which a woman naturally grows. The perception that femininity is innate and natural is a concept that will be discussed later in this essay as the showdown between Joy-Hulga and Manley Pointer demonstrates that sexuality is not fixed.

"Bodily comportment" is another practice of femininity that Bartky discusses in her essay. Part of women's restricted movement is exemplified by how "[f]eminine faces, as well as bodies, are trained to the expression of deference" (67). Thus, because women, in their bodily movements and elsewhere, are expected to "give more than they receive in return," they "are trained to smile" (67). Coinciding with this point about the feminine smile, Mrs. Hopewell, who wants her

daughter to be more femininely attractive, "think[s] that if [Joy-Hulga] would only keep herself up a little, she wouldn't be so bad looking. There was nothing wrong with her face that a pleasant expression wouldn't help" (176). Mrs. Hopewell later clarifies how her daughter could be better looking by claiming that "a smile never hurt anyone" (177). Joy-Hulga, though, in her aversion to the disciplinary practices of femininity, does not acquiesce to her mother's wishes that she smile more. Significantly, the one instance in which Joy-Hulga smiles in the story is during her rendezvous with Manley Pointer: "The girl smiled. It was the first time she had smiled at him at all" (185). Joy-Hulga's momentary slippage into femininity through a smile will, however, have to be later elaborated in the context of her character's dynamic relationship with Manley Pointer.

In continuing with the ways in which Joy-Hulga refuses to abide by feminine practices only while in the house with the other women, I would like to point out how the repeated description of "large, hulking Joy" (174) attaches the adjectives to her name as if they are inextricably part of her identity. Also, the fact that the adjectives are attached to the name Joy instead of Hulga seems to negate the beautiful, feminine identity that the name her mother gave her is supposed to represent. The modifiers describe Joy-Hulga's physique as not fitting into the category of feminine. Her "large" and "hulking" figure attests to the fact that she does not subject herself to vigorous exercise and/or dieting to maintain the "body of fashion [that] is taut, small-breasted, narrow-hipped, and of a slimness bordering on emaciation" (Bartky 64). Although the ideal female body image surely altered from O'Connor's generation to Bartky's, textual evidence suggests that Joy-Hulga's body is looked upon with distaste because it does take up more space. She is, essentially, spatially burdensome. For example, Mrs. Hopewell refuses to call her daughter by her legally changed name, Hulga, because

it reminds her of "the broad blank hull of a battleship" (175). Mrs. Hopewell, then, edits her daughter's identity by denying her name merely because it has connotations of largeness, a trait which defies the qualifications of feminine beauty. In her discussion of femininity's spatial restrictions on the female body, Bartky points out that a woman "must try to manage her movements with the appearance of grace" (68). For a woman, space does not permit a freedom of movement as it does for men, but rather serves as "an enclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined" (66). In addition to her large physical size, Joy-Hulga continually stumps her wooden leg to make "about twice the noise that was necessary" (182), at least according to her mother. Mrs. Hopewell's irritation with the noise that her daughter makes indicates that the space that Joy-Hulga occupies, even the space the sound of her lumbering demands, is not considered a suitably feminine use of space. Interestingly, the hunting accident which caused Joy-Hulga to lose her leg is only mentioned parenthetically from her mother's point of view. As an aside, the origin of Joy-Hulga's disabled body appears to be one of Mrs. Hopewell's attempts to disregard the accident and the subsequent transformation of her daughter's body as insignificant and unnecessary. It is as if Mrs. Hopewell wishes to deny her daughter's "unfeminine" bodily difference, a difference which is not only an obviously phallic object, but which also provides Joy-Hulga with a sense of masculine power.

Because most of the parts of the text in which Joy-Hulga is described as being "unfeminine" are written from Mrs. Hopewell's point of view, it appears that the Hopewell matriarch serves as the enforcer of the male gaze for her daughter. Mrs. Hopewell's conception of femininity, though, seems to be more reliant on other women in the house than on her own standards. O'Connor writes that "Mrs. Hopewell liked to tell people that Glynese and Carramae were two of

the finest girls she knew and that Mrs. Freeman was a lady" (174). These statements that assert the Freeman women's femininity are repeated by Mrs. Hopewell throughout the story, indicating that she is dependent on those women to define femininity for herself and her daughter. Although Mrs. Hopewell initially appears to be an independent woman because she heads a household and farm after divorcing her husband, she merely fills her husband's role as masculine companion with Mrs. Freeman who "walk[s] over the fields with her" (175), an activity that her ex-husband used to perform. Thus, it appears that Mrs. Freeman, a character often neglected in essays about "Good Country People," is the underlying, more complex source of power.

The Lady by the Refrigerator:
Mrs. Freeman's Subjection to and Enforcement of the Male Gaze

First I will discuss how Mrs. Freeman, unlike Joy-Hulga, submits her body to some of the practices of femininity. In "Good Country People," Mrs. Freeman is described in a manner that serves to illustrate Bartky's discussion of women's restricted spatial bodily existence. Mrs. Freeman is noted as averting her eyes when speaking to Mrs. Hopewell; she "let[s] her gaze range over the top kitchen shelf where there was an assortment of dusty bottles" (173). In her unwillingness to make or maintain direct eye contact with others, Mrs. Freeman illustrates how women are trained to "avert their eyes or cast them downward" (Bartky 67). Mrs. Freeman also seems to accept femininity's "avoidance of strong facial expressions" (69). O'Connor writes that "a direct attack, a positive leer, blatant ugliness to her face—these never touched her" (176). Although Mrs. Freeman's expressionless face can be considered a part of her mysterious character, it, when paired with Bartky's theories, can be interpreted as a means of preventing the aging and wrinkles that taint the ideal feminine visage.

Like her eye and facial movements that are trained to "the

expression of deference" (67), Mrs. Freeman's bodily movement is also very limited. The descriptions that locate her character in the Hopewell home repeatedly position her in the same spot. Each and every day, Mrs. Freeman stands with "one elbow on top of the refrigerator" (175). This lack of movement implies that Mrs. Freeman perhaps illustrates Bartky's theories of the "reluctance" and "confinement" women experience and practice in their every day spatial existence. Whereas Mrs. Freeman's limited movement can be seen as a reinforcement of her subjection to the disciplinary practices of femininity, the activity in which she engages while she is fixed to that spot by the refrigerator suggests that she, more so than Mrs. Hopewell, enforces the male gaze on the other women in the house. In her spot, Mrs. Freeman always "look[s] down on the table" at which Mrs. Hopewell and Joy-Hulga eat (176). Her consistent role as observer—as gazer, if you will—suggests that she can too be read as *an*, if not *the*, enforcer of the male gaze. Thus, Mrs. Freeman engages in "practices which train the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands while at the same time being experienced in terms of 'power' and control" (Bordo, "Feminism and Foucault" 253). Mrs. Freeman can be considered to be both subject to the gaze because of her restricted movements and possessor of the power that she wields over the other women in the house to control their disciplinary practices of femininity.

Although they are mentioned only very briefly, Mrs. Freeman's daughters can serve as testament to the efficacy of their mother's gaze[1]. Glynese and Carramae are, as Christine Atkins points out, "hyperbolized manifestations of femininity" and are "all body" (122). The initial descriptions of the Freeman girls portray Glynese as "a redhead, [who] was eighteen and had many admirers [and] Carramae [as] a blonde, [who] was only fifteen but already married and pregnant" (174). Mrs. Freeman's later mentions of her younger daughter prove to

be revealing of femininity's effects on the latter's body: "'She thrown up four times after supper … and was up twict in the night after three o'clock. Yesterday she didn't do nothing but ramble in the bureau drawer. All she did. Stand up there and see what she could run up on'" (178). The reference to Carramae's sickness, which may be a result of the girl's pregnancy being "'in the tube'" (181), emphasizes bodily functions that stem from her subjection to femininity. Because the only details offered about Carramae's character are about her uncontrollable vomiting, it seems as if her identity is defined solely by her pregnancy. If so, could Carramae's violently projectile reaction to her pregnancy be considered a bodily sort of protest to the feminine role that she's been pushed into at such a young age? The Freeman daughters, however, seem to disappear from the text as Mrs. Freeman focuses her gaze on Joy-Hulga.

Although her gaze seems to be always in effect, Mrs. Freeman does not act particularly masculine with Joy-Hulga until the latter secretly plans a meeting with Manley Pointer. In fact, it is not until Mrs. Freeman realizes that Joy-Hulga intends to engage in a relationship with Manley that she moves from her designated spot by the refrigerator. In an attempt to prevent Mrs. Hopewell from noticing that Joy-Hulga is talking to Manley in private, Mrs. Freeman "move[s] from the refrigerator to the heater so that Mrs. Hopewell had to turn and face her" (181). This movement outside of her usually confined space in order to manipulate Mrs. Hopewell's movement demonstrates that Mrs. Freeman, like males, can "steer a woman" (Bartky 68). Because Mrs. Freeman can spontaneously jump into a bodily role typically attributed to males, she is endowed with masculine power. Further, after she witnesses Joy-Hulga meeting with Manley by the fence in front of the house, Mrs. Freeman begins calling Joy-Hulga by her legal name, Hulga. As a result, Hulga feels intruded upon, "as

if Mrs. Freeman's beady steel-pointed eyes had penetrated far enough behind her face to reach some secret fact" (O'Connor 176). The secret that they share seems to be that Mrs. Freeman now understands that, despite Joy-Hulga's efforts to resist femininity, the girl seems to be willing to submit to and practice it when encountered by a man. Mrs. Freeman, then, as the enforcer of femininity, becomes interested in what will happen to Joy-Hulga, if she will finally fall into the binary of masculine/feminine when in the presence of an anatomically male body. Essentially, Mrs. Freeman is interested in what happens to Joy-Hulga with Manly because if Joy-Hulga does submit to femininity, then her enforcement of the gaze is proven to be successful in its enforcement of the masculine/feminine binary in which masculinity corresponds with the anatomically male body and femininity aligns with the female body.

The idea that Mrs. Freeman's gaze functions as the male gaze is reinforced when the intensity of her stare is equated with Manley's. While Mrs. Freeman's "steel-pointed eyes" penetrate Joy-Hulga, Manley, with "his eyes like two steel spikes," similarly "g[i]ve[s] her a long penetrating look" (187). Although the descriptors of both Manley's and Mrs. Freeman's gazes are obviously invocations of phallic imagery and direct references to male penetration in sexual intercourse, the intrusive nature of their gazes works more subtly too. Both Mrs. Freeman and Manley are fascinated with Joy-Hulga's physical deformity; therefore, their gazes seem to metaphorically penetrate the "truth about her" (187), the truth about where her power stems from—the wooden leg. Mrs. Freeman's gaze in particular concentrates on Joy-Hulga's artificial limb:

Something about [Joy-Hulga] seemed to fascinate Mrs. Freeman and then one day Hulga realized that it was the artificial leg. Mrs. Freeman had a special fondness for the

> details of secret infections, hidden deformities, assaults
> upon children. Of diseases she preferred the lingering or
> incurable. Hulga had heard Mrs. Hopewell give [Mrs.
> Freeman] the details of the hunting accident, how the
> leg had been literally blasted off, how she had never lost
> consciousness. Mrs. Freeman could listen to it any time as
> if it had happened an hour ago. (176)

Whereas Mrs. Hopewell mentions the cause of her daughter's deformity as an aside in attempts to deny it significance or power, Mrs. Freeman emphasizes how unavoidably real the wooden leg is. If Mrs. Freeman's gaze is taken to be that of the male gaze, then her preoccupation with the unfeminine part of Joy-Hulga's body implies that she possibly aims to "re-eroticize" her "potentially subversive bod[y]," thus resubmitting it to the male gaze[2] (Baber 149); or, as the text more directly implies, Mrs. Freeman tries to make Joy-Hulga self-conscious of her leg to the extent that the girl feels more pressured to submit to femininity. When she notices Mrs. Freeman watching her, staring at her leg, Joy-Hulga feels intruded upon, as if the woman were extracting from her body some "secret fact" (176), after which she proceeds to meet with Manley.

Similar to Mrs. Freeman, Manley is captivated with Joy-Hulga because of her wooden leg: "He was gazing at her with open curiosity, with fascination, like a child watching a new fantastic animal at the zoo, and he was breathing as if he had run a great distance to reach her. His gaze seemed somehow familiar but she could not think where she had been regarded with it before" (182). Although Joy-Hulga does not realize it, Manley's "gaze" is familiar to her because it is similar to, if not the same as, the one with which Mrs. Freeman watches her. Joy-Hulga is being subjected to the male gaze through both Mrs. Freeman and Manley, thereby demonstrating that power and the gaze do not stem

from one monolithic, identifiable location but rather that they are exercised through "multiple centers of control" (Bordo, "Unbearable" 2364). The male gaze, then, watches Joy-Hulga within and outside of her home, from both female and male eyes.

The Tug-of-War Between Joy-Hulga and Manley: The Shifting Nature of Gender

In returning to Lois McNay's point that gender is a "dynamic process," I will now examine the shifting of gender roles that seems to occur between Joy-Hulga and Manley Pointer. Prior to their picnic date, Joy-Hulga is prepared to approach the interaction from a masculine position. During the night before she is supposed to meet Manley, Joy-Hulga "imagine[s] that she seduce[s] him" (183). Interestingly, though, Joy-Hulga's conception of seduction is not so much physical as it is mental and intellectual. During her seduction fantasy, she reflects that "[t]rue genius can get an idea across even to an inferior mind. She imagined that she took his remorse in hand and changed it into a deeper understanding of life" (183). Because Joy-Hulga envisions her seductive power as being derived from her intellectual capacity, she illustrates how the mind and rationality are part of the favored, more powerful side of the mind/body dichotomy in which males and masculinity are aligned with the mind (Grosz 4). Her identification with the masculine mind, then, demonstrates that she can only identify herself and her power within the paradigm of dichotomous thinking. Her association of power with masculine rationality serves to reinforce the binaries of masculine/feminine, mind/body in which she and Manley shift roles and power.

Joy-Hulga's intent to maintain the rational, masculine power that she asserts at home, though, is soon disrupted when she submits to feminine practices and disciplines of the body. While Joy-Hulga

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is walking to the picnic spot, O'Connor makes note of the fact that Joy-Hulga had changed out of her usual, very unfeminine attire into "a pair of slacks and a dirty white shirt, and as an afterthought, she had put some Vapex on the collar of it since she did not own any perfume" (184). Even though the dirtiness of her masculine ensemble of shirt and slacks (at least at the time in which the story was written) and her substitution of the medicinal smell of Vapex for perfume do not coincide with the typical ideal of feminine beauty, Joy-Hulga's efforts to look and smell better than usual indicate that she abides by the rules of femininity to the extent that she is changing her appearance to better fit the image that Manley, who, as a male, represents the "panoptical male connoisseur" (Bartky 72). Thus, in her attempts to please his male gaze, Joy-Hulga has, at this moment in the story, acquiesced to the demands of the disciplinary practices of femininity. And, while Joy-Hulga and her body seem to occupy a feminine state, Manley appears, using his body in a way that asserts his masculinity: "Then suddenly he stood up, very tall, from behind a bush on the opposite embankment" (184). This image of Manley is "an explicitly phallic representation" (Atkins 125). The emphasis on the characters' bodies leading up to their confrontation demonstrates "the subtle and often unwitting role played by our bodies in the symbolization and reproduction of gender" (Bordo, "Unbearable" 2365). Their bodies, at this point, serve as signs of the gender identities with which they will be approaching their encounter. Because both of their bodies serve to directly oppose each other, the body serves as a basis for sexual identification and power and thus Joy-Hulga's power of the mind seems to become secondary and, as is seen later in the story, rather ineffectual.

In the beginning of her date with Manley, though, Joy-Hulga's reactions to his initial advances reveal that she does rely on her mind for a sense of power and control over the physicality of the interaction.

When Manley kisses her for the first time, Joy-Hulga feels that the "power went at once to the brain" and that "it was an unexceptional experience and all a matter of the mind's control" (184). After having allowed her body to signify a rather feminized identity when meeting Manley, Joy-Hulga now reacts by re-emphasizing her mind. In associating her power with the mind, she is again attempting to identify with the masculine side of the binary and denying the inclusion of her body. Anthony Di Renzo indicates that Joy-Hulga's tendency to identify with only the mind is epitomized by her admitted favorite philosopher, Malebranche, who "espoused the belief that the human mind alone is real" (qtd. in Wilson 117). Her embrace of the mind alone, though, gives her a sense of masculine power that makes her "feel untouchable, out of reach of hurt" (Bordo, "Unbearable" 2372). This power, though, is, according to Bordo, "illusory" (2373). Merely because she associates herself with the masculine mind does not mean that her body can follow to be treated with "male privilege and power" (2373). Joy-Hulga is, as I pointed out in Gatens' argument earlier, not allowing herself to speak from an embodied female voice. Thus, O'Connor's characterization of Joy-Hulga at this point in the story illustrates that although individuals can shift their gender through practice, they are still limited to the masculine/feminine binary in which women are deemed inferior to the extent that they feel pressured to disregard their female selves in exchange for a masculine persona.

After having reflected on the power of her "masculine" mind, Joy-Hulga smiles and it is "the first time she had smiled at [Manley] at all" (185). According to Bartky, the smile may constitute another slippage into feminine practice. In the context of the story, though, it is clear that Joy-Hulga only smiles at her date because she pities the stupidity she sees in him when he asks her, "'Then you ain't saved?'" (185). If taken in context, Joy-Hulga's smile illustrates how she uses

typically feminine acts to emphasize the superiority of her rational, masculine mind. In this part of the story, then, Joy-Hulga straddles the line between femininity and masculinity in a complex and ambivalent way which suggests the division between the two gendered identities is not as clear cut as it appears on the surface. Joy-Hulga subsequently has the potential to disrupt the binary of sexual difference which Denise Riley argues limits women's ability to render a "purely self-representing 'femininity'" (225). That potential, however, seems to be negated by the fact that Manley is unaffected by or oblivious to the sarcasm of Joy-Hulga's smile because "[n]othing seemed to destroy the boy's look of admiration" (185). In his unrelenting efforts to perpetuate the male gaze on Joy-Hulga, Manley exemplifies the male gaze's sadistic intent to "fix and freeze its object, to insist on absolute difference, to forbid movement" (Riley 222). Therefore, Manley's insistence on making and keeping Joy-Hulga a simplified, only-feminine body does not allow her to exercise the shifting, moving reality of her sexed body.

When the two approach a ladder in the barn, Manley considers Joy-Hulga's wooden leg and concludes that "'[i]t's too bad we can't go up there'" (185), assuming that her disabled body renders her incapable of climbing the ladder. Joy-Hulga, however, refuses to be considered incapable, passive, and thus feminine; she "g[i]ve[s] him a contemptuous look and putting both hands on the ladder, she climb[s] it while he [stands] below, apparently awestruck" (185). In this act, Joy-Hulga reasserts her idea of her wooden leg as being a source of power. Immediately after Joy-Hulga exerts her masculine power, Manley "mumble[s] about loving her and about knowing when he first seen her that he loved her" (186). He also pleads with Joy-Hulga to reciprocate his affection by saying that she loves him. According to Atkins, Manley's "pleas for Hulga to confess her love for him seem to situate him in a more submissive/feminine position"

(125). It seems, then, that Manley's feminized reaction is a reaction to Joy-Hulga's masculine act, indicating that, in their relationship, one person is always occupying one side of the masculine/feminine binary which sets them in opposition to one another. Accordingly, it is only when Joy-Hulga refuses to say that she loves him and reinforces her intellectual power by telling him that she has "'a number of degrees'" (O'Connor 186) that Manley reassumes his masculine and aggressive identity, indicating that gender, as read on the body, shifts according to its "relation to whatever else supports it and surrounds it" (Riley 222). In response to Joy-Hulga's identification of herself as an intellectual and thus part of the traditionally male/masculine position in the gender binary, Manley reacts aggressively, attacking her wooden leg. He demands that she "'show [him] where [her] wooden leg joins on'" (O'Connor 186). And then, when she acquiesces to his first demand, he orders her to "'show [him] how to take it off and on'" (187). Although this very invasive interest in her body emphasizes the Foucauldian idea that external power can literally extract pleasure and power from her own body, Manley's emphasis on the fact that her leg, her source of masculine power, can be taken on and off seems to rather illustrate the idea that neither gender or the body are never fixed, that "perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization" (Butler 418). Thus, given the fluid movement of Joy-Hulga's bodily identity in and out of masculine and feminine, the ending of the story does not necessarily have to be read as her character's condemnation to the defeat and passivity of femininity.

The Denouement: Protest or Submission?

The ending of "Good Country People" has plenty of signs that support readings such as Atkins' which reflect on the apparent defeat of Joy-Hulga. And indeed, Manley Pointer does successfully take

Joy-Hulga's symbol of masculine power, her wooden leg, and put it in a suitcase full of other women's artificial body parts that attest to Manley's triumphant and "commodified view of corporeality" which subjects women's bodies to its power as it travels the country, collecting (Wilson 108). The suitcase, too, offers Joy-Hulga and the reader a glimpse of a deck of cards with an "obscene picture on the back of each card" (188); this one last glance at ideal femininity, a sexualized and subjugated body, tells Joy-Hulga and women in general what they will always be attempted to be made into, despite the fact that they may themselves never try to exist in that image. Although these details and the obvious fact that Joy-Hulga is left alone in the barn without her leg and is essentially "dependent on Manley" (Atkins 126) can be used to argue that the ending does indeed constitute Joy-Hulga's defeat, I hope that my discussion of the ambivalent and ambiguous nature of Joy-Hulga's (and Mrs. Freeman's) sexual identity can show how the ending can be considered not so much a final sentence but rather a momentary shift in the ever-changing realm of constructed sexual identity. By "offer[ing] only a vague vision of the outcome of Hulga's experience" (Donahoo 22), O'Connor seems to be denying an ultimate answer to the question about gender roles and feminine/masculine identity positions that Joy-Hulga poses. Joy-Hulga's ending, then, is inconclusive and all but final.

In addition, readers cannot ignore the fact that O'Connor deftly pulls us out of Joy-Hulga's point of view before we can get a sense of whether or not she has surrendered to the male gaze's insistence that she submit to femininity once and for all. Rather, the reader is transported back to the world of Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman who are "in the back pasture, digging up onions" (189). This fertile image could be argued as a reassertion of the feminine world that awaits Joy-Hulga back at home, but I would like to draw attention to the last lines of

the story, a snippet of dialogue spoken by Mrs. Freeman. While "Mrs. Freeman's gaze drove forward and just touched [Manley] before he disappeared," Mrs. Freeman says that "'Some can't be that simple... I know I never could'" (189). These lines do, on one level, serve to reassert the idea that Manley, in his deceptive guise as an innocent Bible salesman[3], is not "good country people," that he is not truly a man of God. Given my argument, a train of thought altogether outside of O'Connor's intended sphere of Catholic reference, these last lines of the story can arguably be read as the ultimate complexity of sexual identity. Mrs. Freeman, who, as I have discussed earlier, represents an ambivalent embodiment of the male gaze and thus cannot be, nor can anyone be, "simple." People's complexity, then, can be read as the ultimately shifting, ambivalent nature of the formation of gender identity, a process which, in Joy-Hulga's case, is often a struggle. Susan Bordo points out that those women, like Joy-Hulga, whose identities are conflicted "between male and female sides of the self" and thus straddle masculinity can be interpreted as either (or both) a submission or a protest to the patriarchal powers that subjugate women's bodies [4](2369). Neither interpretation of the story's end as protest or submission is definite, conclusive, or tied up in a neat little narrative bow. Therefore, reading O'Connor's rendering of Joy-Hulga is like reading all lasting pieces of literature: it does not offer the reader any absolute answers, but rather causes him or her to think, to question, to become aware of and challenge the constructions that have previously restricted perceptions of reality.

Notes

[1] I realize that I am leaving out the fact that the Freeman girls are also subject to the presence and possible male gaze of their father. Unlike the Hopewells, the Freemans have a man in the house. Notably, Mr. Freeman is mentioned as being "a good farmer"

(174), a typically masculine line of work. Also, in the same sentence that mentions Mr. Freeman, Mrs. Freeman is noted as being known by the townspeople as "the nosiest woman ever to walk the earth," an invasive involvement in other people's business that later proves to be true in her interest in Joy-Hulga. This line may also reflect people's general aversion to Mrs. Freeman's power.

[2] See Honi Fern Baber's essay, "Foucault Pumped: Body Politics and the Muscled Woman," for a detailed discussion of the ways in which female bodybuilders draw attention to the artificial distinctions between male and female by forcing people to reread the aesthetics of the body.

[3] I understand that I have omitted any discussion of the significance of Manley Pointer's name being a pseudonym. This could, I suppose, be read as his character's own play on gender, considering that the name is an obvious and humorous take on masculinity. His fake name also contributes to the artifice of his character. Significantly, Manley claims that he has the same heart condition from which Joy-Hulga suffers. This all too convenient coincidence suggests that he intends to get to Joy-Hulga by associating with her through the body. Mrs. Hopewell falls for it, thinking the two are meant for each other because "[he] and Joy ha[ve] the same condition!" (180).

[4] For a more detailed discussion of the ways in which women are pressured to inhabit both masculine and feminine worlds through the condition of anorexia nervosa, see Bordo's *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* and "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture."

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Ibn Mujāhid's Seven Readings, *Sab'ati Ahruf*, and
Their Proposed Application as a Qur'ān Hypertext
by A. David Lewis

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The reasons for the Qur'ān[1] existing as an oral recitation are obvious, in that this was the original medium by which revelation was delivered, namely through Muhammad orally; but, why is the Qur'ān a book? Partly, the answer is that it needed to be recorded in a manner other than memorization. "At the time when Muhammad made his appearance, a major revolution in this technology [the codex] was well advanced in the Near East," recounts Michael Cook, writer of *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (51). While the early Christians adopted this medium, the first Muslims likely had it at their disposal already; "by the time of Muhammad it was the normal format for writings of any length" (52). In most cases, it has remained bound to this medium throughout the ages, a stability that reflects nicely on the Qur'ān's own permanence. "The transmission of the Qur'ān after the death of Muhammad was *essentially* static, rather than organic"

(Brockett 44, my emphasis). This adverbial qualifier is noted so as to not overlook the history of the Qur'ān's transmission; while it has remained "essentially static," it is difficult to agree with the claim of Fethullah Gulen, who says, "its text is entirely reliable. It has not been altered, edited, or tampered with since it was revealed." Some tailoring, even if only to right errant, wandering transmissions, has been chronicled in the Qur'ān's history. As, while the Qur'ān might be a closed corpus in that it welcomes no further additions, Asma Barlas deftly notes, "insofar as all texts are polysemic, they are open to variant readings" (5).

Returning to the original question at hand, perhaps it should be restated as: Why is the Qur'ān *still* a book? Understand, please, that this is not about the message or validity of the Qur'ān; the exploration being undertaken by this paper is concerned, rather, with the suitability of the Qur'ān's written medium and what has been both lost or gained in its name. As Barlas further states, "If emphasizing the Qur'ān's textual polysemy allows me to argue against interpretive reductionism, however, it merely reiterates modern definitions of the text and also a well-known historical fact; it says nothing specific about the Qur'ān itself" (5). Of course, here, the issue is not "interpretative reductionism" but instead a sort of "mediative reductionism." As a product of both oral and textual traditions combined, is the Qur'ān, particularly in regard to its history of varied recitations, best suited for print?

"The Qur'ān was recorded in a medium very different from the digital world," states Gary Blunt in his book *Virtually Islamic: Computer-mediated Communication and Cyber Islamic Environments* (19). Does this mean, though, that it is ill-suited to the digital world? Sounding similar to Barlas, Jay David Bolter, author of *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, assesses, "It is an

almost impossible task for the reader to remain open in a medium as perfected as print" (143). Though there have been a number of ergodic print works that resemble the basic linking concept to online hypertext, "electronic writing restores a balance between the production and the performance of the text, a balance that has been lost in the age of print" (Bolter "Rhetoric" 273). Therefore, after a review of the events leading to Ibn Mujāhid's Seven Readings (*sab'ati ahruf*) and a brief overview Islam's presence online, this investigation will attempt to reconcile the applicability and potential need for the Seven Readings' revitalization by proposing that their significance is best presented in a multicursal, digital medium alongside – parallel to – the traditional printed text.

The Seven Readings

There already exists a tension, better documented and debated elsewhere, between the Qur'ān being the direct, unaltered words of Allah and claims of its existence as an edited, amalgamated mix of Muhammad's wisdom only claiming such authenticity. Rather than wade in to this debate, accepting that the former stance is that which practitioners of Islam believe maintains the focus of this particular discussion, overall. That is, the Qur'ān should first concern its adherents, then its critics. Thus, it would be antithetical to reject or scrutinize "the predominant Muslim belief that the Qur'an was protected from any loss or addition in the Prophet's memory and in the subsequent process of transcribing it" if one's purpose is to further explore Muslim culture's own history and dogma (Esack 80). Rather, the position of this paper will be to accept the former premise wholly and assume that, whatever events followed Muhammad's death, did so by the grace and guidance of Allah.

That said, a number of righting procedures are documented to haven taken place between the final revelation by Muhammad and the proposal of the Seven Readings. While the third Caliph 'Uthmān is

credited with the 7th century collection of the Qur'ān – and prescribing the destruction of all other deviating materials – Cook says this edition did "not seem to have acted as a textual authority of last resort for posterity" (62). Adrian Brockett, in his essay "The Value of the Hafs and Warsh Transmissions for the Textual History of the Qur'ān," locates a source of the further disparities that would eventually arise: "For Muslims, who see the Qur'ān as an oral as well as written text, however, these differences are simply readings" (34-35). Even with the same 'Uthmān-approved core text, differences in regional dialects would produce new variations.

By the 10th century, the burgeoning variety of Qur'ānic recitations would compel Muslim scholar Ibn Mujāhid to revise 'Uthmān's codex into *sab'ati ahruf*, "seven acceptable variants or readings (*qirā'āt*) of the Qur'an beyond which no reader might go" (Melchert 5). Yet, the criteria by which Ibn Mujāhid selected his corpus – Nafi through Warsh and/or Qalun, Ibn Kathir through al-Bazzi and/or Qunbul, Ibn Amir through Hisham and/or Ibn Dhakwan, Abu Amr through al-Durri and/or al-Susi, Asim through Hafs and/or Abu Bakr, Hamza through Khalaf and/or Khallad, and Al-Kisa'I through al-Duir and/or Abu al-Harith (Esack 96-97) – remain opaque. While "each of the seven traditions selected by Ibn Mujāhid was that of a prominent reciter of the eighth century" (Cook 73), Christpher Melchert, in his essay "Ibn Mujahid and the Establishment of Seven Qur'anic Readings," comments, "It is remarkable that most of Ibn Mujāhid's Seven Readings themselves did not, for the most part, come from notable traditionalists" (7). That is, Ibn Mujāhid, "who notoriously did not travel" (9), was located exclusively in Baghdad, and, at that time, "Baghdadi traditionalism was still quite extreme" (7). Rather, "he was personally much closer to the traditionalists' semi-rationalist adversaries [, ...] evidently sympathetic to the Shāfi'i school" (5). All

this is to say that his approach likely employed "the rational techniques of *kalām*" (6), the pursuit of knowledge through religious dialectic, rather than scripture alone.

Ibn Mujāhid's selections were hardly random, for, by some accounts, they were preordained by Muhammad himself. Melchert reports, "Ibn Mujāhid argue[d] that it is a blameworthy innovation to read any variant that agrees with the unpointed text, regardless of whether a previous authority has so read" (15). For instance, when choosing between the two diacritical options given by Cook regarding *aya* 163-166 of Al-Araf concerning the Sabbath-breakers (73), one should not select arbitrarily. Some look to exegetical accounts of Muhammad to explain Ibn Mujāhid's selection of the seven – "the hadith report that the Qur'an had been revealed in seven *ahruf*" (Melchert 19). John Gilchrist chronicles several of those explanations and their sources in his book *Jam' Al-Qur'an – The Codification of the Qur'an Text*:

> The Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven different ways, so recite of it that which is easier for you. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 6, p.510)

> When [Umar and Hisham ibn Hakim] came before the Prophet of Islam he confirmed the readings of both companions, adding the above statement that the Qur'an had been revealed *alaa sab'ati ahruf* – "in seven readings."

> Ibn Abbas reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Gabriel taught me to recite in one style. I replied to him and kept asking him to give more (styles), till he reached seven modes (of recitation). Ibn Shihab said: It has reached me that these seven styles are essentially one,

not differing about what is permitted and what is forbidden.

(*Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 2, p.390) (Gilchrist)

Though these explanations spread, they were likewise met with debate and suspicion. "There was a Shī'ite view that they were simply the fault of the transmitters" (Cook 73). Melchert seems to agree with wariness in linking Ibn Mujāhid's Seven Readings to those of the hadith report (19), and Gilchrist, after reviewing the accounts themselves, is inclined to concur. "There are no other records in the earliest works of Hadith and Sirat literature to give any indication as to what the seven different readings actually were or what form they took," thus "the hadith records about the *sab'at-i-ahruf* are really quite meaningless," and "the figure 'seven' has, thus, no relevance at all to what we are considering" (Gilchrist). Of the writings reviewed, Farid Esack, in his *The Qur'an: A User's Guide*, seems the only author to remain at all open this connection (93).

The specific Seven Readings themselves are not as significant here as the cultural urgency Ibn Mujāhid saw for them:

> When someone asked Ibn Mujāhid why he had not himself
> chosen one reading, he said, "We need to engage ourselves
> in memorizing what our imams have gone over more than
> we need to choose a variant for those after us to recite." This
> might point to a realization that it was impossible to achieve
> absolute uniformity. It still seems to me more indicative
> of a perceived need to put a stop to the multiplication of
> readings, hence limiting the burden of qur'anic scholarship.
> (Melchert 18)

Like 'Uthmān, Ibn Mujāhid was looking to control the integrity of the Qur'ān by means of written text, not recitation. As Melchert points out in 'Uthmān's approach, "Muslims would not have believed it unless they had been accustomed to relying on writing for the transmission

of the Qur'an" (15). Despite the mixed oral/textual Muslim culture of even the 10th century, Cook supports Melchert's proposition that a written Qur'ān held dominion as early as the 7th century: "[I]n general, we can safely think of the Koran as a codex from the time of its collection" (52).

The varied readings – and any future deviations they might catalyze – could be stabilized by means of putting them into canonized writing. While "they were never formally ratified or even universally accepted," says Melchert (22), Cook affirms that Ibn Mujāhid's selection nevertheless acquired a kind of canonical status" (73). The more pressing question, which this paper will later address, is what traditions of recitation, like 'Uthmān's *ayah*, did Ibn Mujāhid have to sacrifice in order to arrive at his Seven Readings?

Islam Online

True to his name, Blunt makes the singularly direct observation, "The Qur'ān in cyberspace does not physically resemble the Qur'ān on my desk" (*Virtually* 1). The world of the codex and the world of the hypertext are widely and obviously two very different realms. Thus, the problem suggested by Cook, "how to dispose of a worn-out or disintegrating Koran" (60), finds a solution with "electronic copies of the Koran [proving] a marked simplification" (61).

Another obvious statement would be to say that the Internet and digital media drastically alter the shape of community, communication, and even religion and textuality. "There is no single Cyber Islamic identity of community" (Blunt *Virtually* 133), yet, true to the paradoxical nature of the online experience, "Cyber Islamic Environments are in a transition period" (139). That is, just as the Internet may promote individuality, it can also generate community. For instance, at *IslamOnLine.com*, they see the Internet as having "opened in the opportunities for communication, and we pledge to use

them to achieve the highest levels of integrity and precision in content and in creative professionalism in design" ("About Us"). Therefore, even as they aim "to present a unified and lively Islam that keeps up with modern times in all areas" ("About Us"), sites like *Islam Question & Answer* features Sheihk Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid stating, "There are in fact many down sides in the Internet, which contain great evil and this is what pushes one to think of the necessary ways to fix the ills on the Internet" (Al-Munajjid).

In keeping with the spirit of hypermedia, Muslims, like any modern global religion, have a multiplicity of views and stances both online and about being online. "One webmaster in the United Arab Emirates noted...'There are serious risks too involved in propagation through the Web'" (Blunt *Virtually* 8-9), such as terrorism sites as well as Muslim smear campaigns; "a non-Muslim platform [SuraLikeIt] establishing a site based around fabricated verses from the Qur'ān caused controversy in 1998" (9), and it would not be the last. On the other hand, as a tool for teaching and guidance, the Internet is an almost unsurpassed invention. Sermons can be expressed online to a wider community; "Nobody need see the imām in order to follow him" (104). Likewise, "E-fatwas are certainly challenging the roles and duties of some imams" (Blunt "Beyond"). As with any new and vital technology, there are risks, obviously, for misuse, but that should not hold back its careful utilization. With its strength and legacy, the Qur'an, a work that has already endured shifts between media, is not itself in jeopardy by going digital.

The Internet, however, is not a wholly transparent medium despite its pervasiveness, thus these "e-fatwas," as Blunt calls them, oftentimes must address issues specific to Muslims now being online. For instance, according to Mufti Ebrahim Desai of *Ask-Imam.com*, "The Nikah performed through the internet is not valid" ("Is online"), yet

"divorce takes place" if a husband types out his desire to separate from his wife four times through an online chat system ("if the husband"). It is permissible, says Desai, to chat online with a non-Muslim of the same gender – "however they should not be made close friends ("Is it permissible") – even though he is "aware of many such people who have caused ruin to their lives especially by chatting on the internet" ("As chatting").

How should a digital Qur'ān be regarded? Even in codex form, the exact and precise mandates for using the Qur'ān are still somewhat uncertain. Lines 77-80 of *Al-Waqia* are interpreted variously to determine who might properly touch the Qur'ān; Cooks notes, "One eighth-century scholar is said to have allowed the ritually impure to touch the *margins* of a copy of the Koran, but not the writing itself" (56). However, Blunt comments, "In a sense, an online Qur'ān cannot be physically touched – although, in reality, pages can be downloaded, printed and integrated into other textual forms which may not be seen as appropriate by some" (*Virtually* 18). Therefore, any iteration of the Qur'ān online carries with it a good deal of perceived precariousness. Even when providing three alternate English translations, the Muslim Students Association of the University of Southern California still included the "warning that 'ANY translation of the Qur'ān will most definitely contain errors'" (23). Despite its first appearance online circa 1994 (22), and its first online audio recitation in 1997 (26), the definitive online translation of the Qur'ān is yet to be published, if such a thing is even possible. "The Qur'ān can be accessed (and copies manipulated) by anyone with a modem. Members of different religions (and those without allegiance) can explore and discuss the sacred texts online" (15).

Even without a definitive English iteration online, the Qur'ān as an online text exists and, therefore, must be properly regulated.

Returning to Ebrahim Desai momentarily, he judges, "It is not permissible for a female in the state of menses to recite the Qur'aan in any way. That includes reciting through the computer or internet" ("Please clear"). Likewise, "It is permissible to have the Quraan on the mobile phone though it is discouraged...If one has loaded the Quraan on the mobile, it will not be permissible to take the mobile into the toilet" (Desai, Muhammed).[2] *IslamOnline.net* consults with two separate scholars, both of whom provide elaborate qualifications, to determine whether verses from the Qur'ān may be used with photos in a digital Flash media environment ("Qur'anic Verses"). There are few simple answers as to how a digital translation of the Qur'ān is to be used, much less how it is to be constructed. Again, the issue that remains unposed is what such a version of the Qur'ān might do that its written brethren cannot.

Digital Seven

Returning now to the Seven Readings, it would seem that Ibn Mujāhid's agenda might have been too successful: Instead of capping the variety of recitation to seven, the number of legitimate versions appears to be dwindling further. "Today, the sub-tradition 'Hafs from 'Āsim is in effect the standard text of the Koran" reports Cook (75), while Brockett adds, "The Hafs transmission is found in printed Qur'ān copies from everywhere but West and North-West Africa, where the Warsh transmission is employed" (31). Gilchrist predicts, "[I]n time this [Hafs] version is likely to become the sole reading in use in the whole world of Islam."

While Brockett sees this as having no discernible impact – "The simple fact is that none of the differences, whether vocal or graphic, between the transmission of Hafs and the transmission of Warsh has any great effect on the meaning" (37) – Gilchirst sounds much more concerned:

> [Maulana] Desai claims that Uthman eliminated six
> of the readings and retained just one in the interests
> of standardising a single text of the Qur'an. On whose
> authority he reduced the Qur'an to just one of seven
> different forms in which it was said to have been revealed
> Desai does not say. (Gilchrist)

Therefore, to lose additional variations that grew out of 'Uthmān's severely pruned text extinguishes any hope, from an anthropological or cultural religion perspective, of fully appreciating the customs, readings, and linguistics of culled texts.[3] In many ways, this paring came as a result of its analog medium – a result of static *writing* – but need not do so now. As Gilchrist notes, "Ibn Mujahid's determination to canonise only seven of the readings then in circulation" was conducted "at the expense of the others" (Gilchrist). With the built-in multiplicity of the Internet or the stand-alone completeness of hypertext CD-ROM data, for instance, such an expense need not be sacrificed with modern and emerging technologies.

If the goal was to maintain the tradition of all Seven Readings yet also have one – or the most – definitive Qur'ān, then the multicursality of hypertext would be a potential solution. By "multicursal," the term is being adopted from its use by digital theorists and hypertext critics such as Bolter and Epsen J. Aarseth, who explores this terminology as it pertains to multilinear fiction, or stories which have any number of paths and conclusions:[4]

> But what to make of the term *multilinear*? And whose lines
> are they anyway – the producer's, the work's, or the user's?
> Clearly, a topology of nodes and links is not linear (or
> unilinear) if there's more than one possible path between
> node *A* and node *B*. The question is, then, which of the
> two terms, *nonlinearity* and *multilinearity* is better suited to

> describe such a network…If we refer to courses, *multicursal*
> would be a much more accurate term than *multilinear* ,
> indicating that the lines are produced by movement rather
> than drawn in advance. (44)

Admittedly, the "courses" Aarseth has in mind are from one hypertext lexia to another – from link to link. However, for this 'multicursal Qur'ān,' they can be repurposed to see each of the Seven Readings as its own course, with a linking mechanism to move between them fluidly. His use of "topology," though, still pertains nicely to the Qur'ān, especially, but not only, when being translated out of the Arabic:

> Topographic writing challenges the idea that writing should
> be merely the servant of spoken language. The writer and
> reader can create and examine signs and structures on the
> computer screen that have no easy equivalent in speech.
> (Bolter "Rhetoric" 285)

In his book *Writing Space*, Bolter further qualifies, "All our topographic writers in print (Sterne, James Joyce, Borges, Cortázar, Saporta) are 'difficult' writers, and the difficulty is that they challenge the reader to read multiply" (143).

Given that the Qur'ān, in various forms, already exists online and is often treated as a legitimate, functional iteration of the text even in cyberspace, then the leap towards multicursality for the Seven Readings is not a chasmal. In fact, a number of hypertextual properties already exist within the Qur'ān, thanks to its unique nature and organization. For instance, with perhaps the exception of the *Yussif* surah, the disconnected-yet-repeating nature of the Qur'ān's narratives make it fertile ground for "the little-known figure of *ploce*…A à B à A, where episode A is now changed in some way as the result of a visit to episode B" (Bolter "Rhetoric" 285). Thus, reading about Moses initially changes based on the text that in encountered between the first

and next ayah addressing his tale. Likewise, the Qur'ān, with its reverse-chronological order and aforementioned split-narrative structures, also exhibits elements of hyperbaton; "it is any departure from conventional order...In this sense hyperbaton is a defining quality of hypertext" (277). While there have been a number of Qur'ān online *in* hypertext, there is yet to be one available *as* hypertext.

Would a multicursal Qur'ān hypertext be accepted by Digital Age Muslims? Nothing is certain, of course, but reflecting on the words of William Graham, from his book *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, proves useful:

> Instead of an argument for the displacement of the written Qur'ān by the spoken one, I am putting forward one for the functional primacy of the oral text over the written one – but always alongside it, not in competition with it. Both are dimensions of the same sacred reality for the Muslim: the presence and accessibility of God's very word in the created world. (110)

Likewise, one would hope that a Qur'ān hypertext could also stand beside the written, tangible codex, neither seeking to replace nor marginalize it. Shaikh Al-Islam Taqiud-Din Abul-'Abbas Ahmad bin Taymiyah authorizes an education in each of the various recitation styles as "a kind of respectable effort." "Bearing all this in mind, the one who is knowledgeable in the field of the methods of recitation and practices them is better than the person who knows only one method of recitation" ("Fatwas Subjects"). To this, one can only add that, if these multiple methods are approved and commended, perhaps multimedia would be as well.

Notes

[1] The various sources quoted for this paper spell and punctuate "Qur'ân" in any number of ways; there has been no attempt made to correct them or create a consistent format for this, out of respect to the authors and their traditions.

[2] The Mufti of *Islam Today. Com* might disagree in regards to PDAs: "Such devices do not take the same ruling as a printed Qur'ân because the text has to be interpreted from a different format before it can be read. The format in which the text is recorded is a digital format that needs to be interpreted by a specific program in order to be displayed on the screen in a recognizable character set. Bear in mind that this digital code only displays the Qur'ân in conjunction with a compatible program. Without that program, the code will not necessarily display the Qur'ân on a screen." ("Holding")

[3] Unless, of course, this is what Allah wills.

[4] This is not to be confused with the term "multiform" as employed by Janet Murray in *Hamlet on the Holodeck*: "I am using the term *multiform story* to describe a written or dramatic narrative that presents a single situation or plotline in multiple versions, versions that would be mutually exclusive in our ordinary experience" (30).

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Christopia: A Purer Than Pure Nation
by Christian Hanz Lozada

Lozada likes his misspelled name because it represents his social and ethnic background. Filipinos tend to pick eclectic names, and Christian's father wanted children with alphabetical and rhyming names. Christian is the third of four brothers. His mother tried to give the name class by making it literary, but she was slightly uneducated. Christian is named after Hans Christian Anderson.

Christopia. Population 1. Christopia's flag is a generic "no" symbol, a circle with a slash through it. The ruler of Christopia, me, has the authority to insert whatever is or is not part of the nation, and thus, through the process of negative relation, the world is defined by what it is not. I formed Christopia to mark my territory in the workplace after returning to my desk to find another stapler or pair of scissors missing or a cup of coffee that was not mine residing on the center of the cleared tabletop. To separate items that were mine from items that were communal, I would tape a hand-drawn flag to the item, my no symbol and "Property of Christopia" or "Annexed by Christopia" written above and below the symbol. At the time, I did not know I was playing with the same choices and conflicts that are at the foundation of Biracial identity. The pertinence of Christopia became clearer when my White girlfriend absolutely refused to let me

hang my flag, Christopia's insignia drawn with black Sharpie on an off-white twin bed sheet, from the flagpole mounted over our front porch. We had just moved into a neighborhood with a decidedly multiethnic demographic, a drastic change from my upper-middle class, predominantly White upbringing in Orange County, California. My girlfriend and I broke up shortly afterward due to my immersion in a multiethnic environment and the confusion that immersion created in my identity. As I learned what it meant to be Biracial, Christopia changed from being a labeling system to stop people from taking my stuff, to a statement of Biracial individuality. For me, Christopia was the first step in discovering the control (and the absence of control) I have over my ethnic identity and, in turn, the ambiguity my skin creates.

Literature tends to generalize Biracials as either ambiguous or confused or a bridge between two worlds. Books, essays, and journal articles concerning Biracial ethnicities are titled with ambiguous terms like "mixed," "multi-," and "neither/nor" while treating a subject that is as ambiguous for the object of study (Biracials searching for identity) as it is for theorists (critics and sociologists trying to find a generalizable theme in their studies). Characterizations of Biracials include descriptions of Biracials as inhabiting a space between extremes of one race or the other, most often Black and White, while actually being both. Biracials are also characterized as possessing the ability to slip between one racial identity and the other, depending on the situation but are never seen as both races at the same time. These two contrasting, yet prevalent perspectives limit the validity of the elements that make up Biracial identity, robbing Biracials of adequate role models. The elements of Biracial identity are conflict and control. In addition, the emergence and recognition of Mixed-racials aids the study of Biracials while also ignoring the Biracial's distinct characteristics. An example of

the tendency to bundle Mixed- and Biracials together can be seen in Maria P. P. Root's definitions for Mixed- and Biracials in the glossary of her book *The Multiracial Experience*. In the glossary, she writes, "biracial can also refer to someone who has parents of the same socially designated race, when one or both parents are biracial or there is racial mixing in the family history that is important to the individual" (ix). In other words, Biracial encompasses anyone with mixed blood if differing racial distinctions are important to the individual. Unfortunately, Root's all-encompassing definition negates the Biracial choice to have a single-ethnic identity as well as the importance of the relationship in Biracials between conflict and control; however, Root does acknowledge that "the social and psychological experience of the person who uses the term this way may be different from someone who is a 'first-generation' biracial" (x). Root defines Mixed-racial or Multiracials as "people who are of two or more racial heritages" and acknowledges that this term "is the most inclusive term to refer to people across all racial mixes" (xi). At the heart of Biracial identity is the conflict between inclusion and exclusion and, depending on the day-to-day outcome of the conflict, enacting power over the contrasting elements written on and beneath their skin. Biracials choose—because it is about control it is about choice—between one race over the other, between one race or both, and between one race or neither, existing virtually as a chameleon, with no solid racial allegiances. The existence of Biracial choice distinguishes Biracials from Mixed-racials. The absence and necessity of Biracial role models in literature makes the distinction between Mixed- and Biracials an important one. Without Biracial role models, who must make an individual choice between their conflicting races, Biracials become countries unto themselves, feeling constricted by the color of their skin, leading them to embrace single-ethnic identities too readily. This paper will discus the distinctions between Mixed- and Biracial

and compare Mixed-racial literature themes to Zadie Smith's Biracial text.

For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to distinguish the differences between Mixed-racial and Biracial terminology. Theorists interchange these two terms as if they are synonyms. Mixed-racial refers to individuals who may have one parent of a specific and singular racial identity and a Biracial and/or Mixed-racial parent. This paper will focus primarily upon the term Biracial, which refers to individuals who have a White parent and an ethnic minority parent. In America, the word mulatto is often used to describe Biracials. The origin of the word *mulatto* and its implication creates an overlooked distinction between Mixed- and Biracial. *Mulatto*'s root word is the Latin *mulus*, which means mule. A mule is the hybrid of a donkey and a horse. Hybrids in nature cannot procreate. The inability of hybrids to procreate implies that Biracials are more likely to have Mixed-racial offspring due to the limited amount of partners with the same type of lineage.

The distinctions between Mixed- and Biracials are important and should be considered within the context of what Maria P. P. Root termed as the "racial ecology" (4). Racial ecology is a web of ethnic and economic structures that create an ethnic hierarchy beneficial to selected groups (4). It is important to note that race and ethnicity, like Mixed-racial and Biracial, are not synonyms. They are often confused as synonyms, since "race can contribute to ethnicity, [but] it is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for assuming one's ethnicity" (4). Ethnicity is the combination of race and culture. When analyzing Biracial identity, the focus is on ethnicity, not racial identity. Biracials are already both races but might not be accepted by the ethnicities attached to both races. Mixed-racials are affected by the identity choices made by their Biracial parents (which explains some of the confusion between Mixed- and Biracials). Unlike Mixed-racials, Biracials generally

have some control over their identities and their place in the racial ecology by "exercis[ing] choices that are not congruent with how they may be visually or emotionally perceived" (7). Mixed-racial children share some traits with their Biracial parent; however, Biracials have generalizable traits and identity choices that separate them from their Mixed-racial children (whose choices, in many cases, have been made for them by their parents). Biracials have major psychosocial tasks that involve appeasing internal, ethnic conflicts that include conflicts about their choice in sexual partners and their dual racial or ethnic identities (Rockquemore 22). These two conflicts distinguish the difference between Mixed- and Biracials and subsume other conflicts that include education and social marginality.

Biracials control their identity by deciding between one ethnicity over the other within social boundaries, but control creates repression and conflict. In the essay, "The Illogic of American Racial Categories," Paul R. Spickard states that race and ethnicity are made up of "social content that inform[s] whether an individual becomes marginalized or unaffiliated, [has] a unique role in several social groups, adopt[s] a monoracial social label, or create[s] a new group label" (32). In other words, the control between the Biracial's dual racial and ethnic identities defines the Biracial's place in society. Biracial control is a choice between a singular, mixed, and fluid identity. Without suitable role models—Biracials cannot look to their parents for guidance—this choice is individual and alone. At this point, however, it is important to return to Root's racial ecology. Biracials control their identities but only within the boundaries of social validation. With the ability to slip racial definition, Biracials challenge the racial ecology, creating concern among "groups that are the most distant culturally and socially, [such as] Blacks and Whites, Japanese and Blacks, and Japanese and Whites" (Root 6). The racial ecology limits class and racial interaction and, for

Biracials, exposure to both cultures, creating Biracial conflict. When part of Biracial heritage is withheld, they face the conflict of ethnic identities. They are both races but can only express one. The common outcome of this conflict is a singular-ethnic identity.

Singular-ethnic identity is an emphasis on one part of the Biracial's dual-race makeup. An example of the development of a single-ethnic identity would be the children of a Pacific Islander/White family in America. In a predominantly White environment, there is a tendency toward a "pure blood" outlook because "if one [is] a member of a race at the top, [in this discourse, the White majority], then it [is] essential to maintain the boundaries that define one's superiority, to keep people from the lower categories from slipping surreptitiously upward" (Spikard 15). Biracials challenge this system, so they will gain little acceptance for their White heritage, and instead, will be lumped into a minority status to maintain the hierarchy's structure. Left wanting half of their racial/ethnic identity, Biracials begin to embrace the ethnic identity allowed to them. The Pacific Islander/White children are more likely to embrace the Pacific Islander culture because of the absence of White acceptance. However, the move toward the Pacific Islander culture is problematic. To ensure acceptance by the ethnicity allowed to them, Biracials consciously choose to be purer than pure—in this case, more Pacific Islander than "pure" Pacific Islanders—by demonstrating more cultural knowledge and a tendency to reject or discriminate against those outside of their ethnicity. They do so by focusing on same-race (the chosen race) sexual partners and creating a negative perception toward passing. Passing is the ability for Mixed- or Biracials to enter into racial groups with a higher status in the racial ecology. The creation of a singular-ethnic identity might be due to the belief that mixed-ethnic identity is "considered inherently damaging to identity formation because the conflicts with dual racial membership [are] assumed to

undermine the integrity of the [Biracial's] self-concept and contribute to moral and general inferiority" (Bradshaw 77), but this is caused by the lack of viable choices. Biracials choose single-ethnic identities in the absence of Biracial role models who demonstrate accurate and healthy choices. The change from racial identity to ethnic identity, be it singular or mixed, involves choice. This is where misconceptions arise. Biracials are already both races. The flesh beneath their skin is a text with a meaning that changes with experience. The only thing Biracials lack in comparison to single-racials is ethnicity, and, even in the absence of choice, they choose or do not choose an ethnicity with which to identify.

Like singular-ethnic identity, mixed-ethnic identity is problematic because it derives from "a joint process, in which both the individual and relevant outsiders together agree on ethnic identity" (Stephan 52). Unlike singular-ethnic identity, mixed-ethnic identity is possible in an environment where the individual can move from and experience both cultures in their Biracial makeup. Multiethnic environments create a positive outlook for Biracials because they "buffer [Biracials] from the negative experiences suffered by single-[ethnic] minority group[s]" (Stephan 61). More importantly, Biracials do not develop the same type of purer than pure attitude stemming from rejection due to the availability of mixed-ethnic role models. Multiethnic environments can also create, "[f]or some individuals, ethnic identity changes with changes in roles or situations" (Stephan 63). In other words, multiethnic environments can create a fluid identity for some Biracials. At the same time, some theorists argue that "ethnic identities do not seem to involve conscious selection" (63), using the argument that when Biracials were asked about their ethnic identities, they "render[ed] accounts for their identities [and] they constructed justifications for their identities on the basis of their past experiences"

(63). These justifications are skewed because they are in response to rejection and do not recognize gradability within different ethnicities. These justifications are in response to why Biracials have chosen one ethnic identity over the other rather than how they have taken control over the ethnic identity allotted to them. Arguments against conscious identity selection undervalue the purer-than-pure mindset and the conscious racial aspect in the selection of sexual partners.

Based on the discussion above, Biracial is a separate group from Mixed-racial. Though these two groups may share some characteristics, they are distinguished by generalizable trends and the absence of role models. In the absence of role models, conflict and control becomes the core of Biracial identity because their hybrid nature sets them apart from their parents. Conflict is the base. As Biracials begin to recognize social boundaries, they begin to make choices about the identities their skin represents. Literature only acknowledges the conflict, depicting Biracials as a bridge between two worlds or tragically conflicted because of the impossibility of dual ethnicities. In the book *Mixed Race Literature*, John Brennan attempts to define what a "mixed race text" or a "mixed race writer" are by exploring "themes and literary strategies that often inform mixed race texts, including narratives of passing, formations of new racial space, multiple naming, redefining and challenging racial categories, gendered racial crossings, [and] grappling with the tragic mulatto" (20). Using autobiographical information supplied by "mixed race" writers to inform his text, Brennan focuses on Mixed-racial with little regard for differences between Mixed- and Biracial, much less for single- and mixed-ethnic identities. Brennan's mixed race approach is hindered by its selective focus on writers who state their Mixed-race identities while encompassing both Mixed- and Biracial themes.

Brennan examines the writer Okah Tubbee for Mixed-race

themes, though Tubbee is Biracial. Tubbee's work displays themes that are related closer to Biracial identity than Mixed-race in that Tubbee "deliberately developed a Choctaw textual identity, suppressing the African American identity . . . His autobiography, however, contains elements from both Native American and African American literary traditions, thus revealing itself as a mixed race text" (21). Tubbee's racial (and possibly ethnic) identity is set between opposing elements, causing him to suppress his African American heritage for an ethnicity with a higher position in the racial ecology. More important to this discussion is that Tubbee's development of a Choctaw identity demonstrates the control Biracials exert over their identity. Tubbee emphasizes the Biracial choice by fictionalizing a Choctaw father. Brennan categorizes Tubbee's autobiography as a "passing" text. From the Biracial point of view, Tubbee's rejection of his African American heritage is an example of the Biracial's purer-than-pure attitude. Brennan goes on to write "the prevailing notions of race . . . require these writers [like Tubbee] to choose one identity, thus erasing others that they might assume" (21). While re-emphasizing a theme in Mixed-race literature—in this case the theme of passing—Brennan fails to understand that this theme is the application of Biracial identity.

Using Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography as an example, Brennan explains how "mixed race writers problematize their identities" (22), with a willingness to pass from one racial definition to another but at the same time emphasizing that they have one ethnicity. The Mixed-race writer's ability and desire to slip from one racial and ethnic identity, as a theme, is supported by how "careful [Hurston is] to argue that she does not view her multiple identities as an opportunity to pass out of African American heritage, and she (typically) rejects racial politics surrounding mixed race" (22). This also supports the idea that Mixed-race individuals have a better grasp on the plurality of their

racial makeup than the conflict inherent in Biracials because Mixed-racials can slip from one identity to the other while continuing to have single-ethnic identity inherited from her parents. The possibility to understand Mixed-race plurality has its foundation in Biracial identity because the choice to be one or the other has already been made for the Mixed-race individual by his or her Biracial parent(s). Hurston's attempts to redefine and recreate her identity through her refusal to accept a solid Mixed-race/African American identity describe the "challenge to narrate the 'facts' of racial identities in place of prevailing 'legends'" (23). In other words, Hurston's ethnic identity, or the inability to define her ethnic identity, in the racial ecology challenges preconceived notions. Hurston's challenge is the Mixed-race writer's challenge, and it leads to the "appearance of the tragic mulatto (or half-breed or Eurasian), whose identity is always deeply conflicted, most often leading not to a new challenge to racial categories, but to a reinforcement of the legitimacy of existing categories" (23). The tragic mulatto, when written by Mixed-race writers, is a characterization of the challenge to remain undefined.

The tragic mulatto is an exaggeration of Biracial experience adopted by Mixed-race writers and others. At the same time, the characterization of the tragic mulatto exaggerates the very real choices the mulatto or the Biracial must make. Brennan's examination of the tragic mulatto finds that "literary depictions of tragically mixed race subjects [specifically Biracials] follow a common trajectory, leading to 'discoveries' and interrogations of racial identity, and often resulting in the death of the mixed race subject" (23). Brennan's examination also omits the reason for the tragic mulatto's trajectory. Due to common occurrence of interrogation and discovery, Brennan's tragic mulatto is an extension of the passing text and an exploration of the negative connotations passing has for Mixed-race writers. Ironically,

the tragic mulatto is a characterization of the origins of Brennan's Mixed-race writer—the mulatto is a characterization of Biracials and the source of Mixed-racials—yet Brennan does not argue the accuracy of the tragic mulatto whether written by Mixed-race writers or others. The conflict inherent in the tragic mulatto, the essence that makes him tragic, is shared by Biracials, but what is left out of the tragic mulatto's characterization is the Biracial's ultimate reconciliation. The tragic mulatto might be an exaggeration, but it is also one of the most common descriptions of Biracials. The tragic mulatto is common because it symbolizes the ownership of an ethnic-minority identity in a predominantly White environment. Henry Louis Gates describes this as reconciliation between being African American and American as opposed to being Black and White. At the same time, the tragic mulatto is not a proper representation of Biracials. Without proper representation, without proper role models, Biracials have no voice. Their conflict is described in tragic tones, but their control goes unrecognized. Brennan is more interested in the Mixed-race writer's universal and fluid sense of ethnic identity, which creates a foundation for the trickster in Mixed-race texts.

If the tragic mulatto is a depiction of Biracials, the trickster is the characterization of Mixed-racials. The trickster encompasses many traits attributed to Mixed-racials, like creating a new racial space, challenging and destroying preconceived philosophies, and playing with identity. Brennan emphasizes how "traditional trickster narratives are often marked by identity transformations" and "appear in many mixed race texts when characters pass between worlds, assume new identities, or cast off old identities" (24). The trickster's ability to shirk ethnic identity is supplied by Biracial control. While conflicted between dual ethnic identities, Biracials choose to be single-, mixed-, or non-ethnic beings. Biracial control becomes an inherited identity in Mixed-racials

because of the large part ethnicity plays in the Biracial's selection of sexual partners. Mixed-racials mature in an environment where ethnic identity, as a large binary decision, has been made. Without Biracial conflict, Mixed-racials can play with their identities and slip between one ethnic group, depending on exposure, to another.

In a list of Mixed-race writers, Brennan's theory becomes questionable. Rather than listing writers who specifically address Mixed-race themes, he lists ethnic writers who have mixed blood. The most notable are writers of the Harlem Renaissance like Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Jean Toomer. These authors are associated as being African American. Toomer's denial of being African American might make him an exception, but writers who address themes that are specifically African American or focus their politics toward the African American movement should be treated in the light that they wish to be treated. Their texts may share Mixed- and Biracial themes, but denying these writers the choices that they had made toward their ethnic identities would be a re-visitation of any attempt they had made to be something other than African American. By using racial heritage as the measure, Brennan opens the door for any writer who has a drop of "other" blood, while ignoring Mixed- and Biracial conflicts and themes. By using racial heritage as the measure, the tragic mulatto will continue to breathe and the Biracial will continue to feel the absence of role models. In the end, what should separate Biracial writers from any other writer is an ability to treat ethnic identity from both single- and mixed-ethnic perspectives. But where are the Biracial writers? The Biracial writer exists, but many of them are buried under singular-ethnic identities, many of them do not see themselves Biracial. This is due to few Biracial role models in real life and in literature.

Zadie Smith is a contemporary Biracial writer, whose novel, *White Teeth*, contains primarily Bicultural and Biracial characters

with ethnic origins ranging from Caribbean to Bengali. It is the story of three families, each representing a different multiethnic dynamic. The Chalfens are a middle-class, White family, the Iqbals are an immigrant, single-ethnic family, and the Joneses are a White/Black family. Because of Smith's Biracial background, she acts as and creates Biracial role models. Each family has interpersonal and emotional issues that resemble everyday problems. These issues resemble the themes of conflict and control at the heart of Biracial identity. Magid and Millat Iqbal are twins separated at a young age. One is sent to Bengal to be more Bengali while the other is immersed in English culture. Irie Jones, the daughter of a White father, Archie, and a Black mother, Clara, struggles with her appearance, with how Black she looks, and her inability to find connection with anyone. *White Teeth* is, if nothing else, a survey of the ways identity is controlled within the confines of social validity.

The Iqbals' core conflict is the fear of their eventual assimilation into Western culture. Like Biracials, Iqbal racial identity is not in question because they will continue to be Bengali with or without the Bengali culture. What is in question is the stability of their cultural or ethnic identity. This fear forces Samad and Alsana, Magid and Millat's parents, to send one of their children back home to learn their culture; however, this plot point reveals the author's Biracial identity more than it examines the immigrant's concept of ethnicity. Sociological trends show that first generation immigrants, like Samad, show a greater emphasis on assimilation because it is a conscious choice to leave their motherland for the opportunity the West provides. Yet, sociological trends are general rules with many exceptions, and the Iqbals are an exception that reveals an underlying Biracial intent in Smith's novel. Samad repeats the idea that his "sins" will be visited on his children. His sin is seeing himself as a "split [person]. For [him]self, half of [him]

wishes to sit quietly with [his] legs crossed, letting the things that are beyond [his] control wash over [him]. But the other half wants to fight the holy war" (150). It is possible that Samad is describing the Bicultural condition, but his assimilation into the West is conscious. He leaves Bengal for a better life, rejecting his old one. Samad is describing what it is like to be White and Bengali. Part of him feels the Western culture is natural. The other part knows that assimilation threatens its existence. These feelings might be characteristic of bicultural tendencies, but the Iqbal family deals with Biracial conflict. Biracial conflict, however, is not acted out in Samad but in his children. His twin sons, Millat and Magid, are the Biracial conflict and singular-ethnic choice represented in two people. As they age, Magid embraces the Western way of life with dialogue that depict him as "more English than English," (172) as his father repeats throughout the novel, and Millat becomes steeped in Islam. Their identity choices represent the extremes of single-ethnic Biracial identity. Rather than leaving them as separate characters, Smith unites them symbolically through Irie Jones. Irie sleeps with both Magid and Millat on the same day and conceives a child. Because Magid and Millat are identical twins, there is no way to differentiate the child's paternity. According to Irie, "whichever brother it was, it was the other one too" (426). The twins' singular-ethnic identities are reemphasized by the novel's ending where "eyewitness statements . . . identified Magid as many times as Millat . . . [and made] a court case so impossible the judge gave in and issued four hundred hours community service to both twins" (448). Though the twins are individuals, their extreme differences reveal Biracial tendencies and their unification through conception emphasizes the Biracial aspect of the writer and story. This reemphasis is the compression of the Biracial issues in *White Teeth*.

Irie is one of two Biracial characters in the novel, yet, of the

four teenagers in the book, her identity is the most assured. At the same time, though, she yearns for acceptance due to the absence of role models. From her conception, Irie represents the singular role afforded only to the Biracial, as seen when her father, Archie, knows what his child will look like because "the genes [his and his Black wife, Clara's] mix up, and blue eyes! Miracle of nature" (59). His certainty that his child will have blue eyes hints at the known uncertainty when racial groups mix. The product is Irie's Biracial conflict represented in her body image. She has a fixation with weight-loss advertisements and doodles outlines of her body before and after such weight-loss treatments. Her fixation, her identity, is focused on how different she is compared to other people, how "[t]here was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection" (222) and without her father's blue eyes. Irie is without reflection because she is mulatto, a natural hybrid, who has not and may never come to terms with her Biracial identity. Due to the boundaries of social validity, Irie has already bought into the one-drop rule (where one drop of Black blood makes you Black). In other words, because she looks Black, she is accepted as and accepts being Black. Her acceptance, however, is repression, leaving her "without reflection" and without a role model. Smith addresses the absence of role models in a scene where Irie's class is analyzing William Shakespeare's Sonnet 127. The poem is a description of Shakespeare's dark lady. Starved for comparison, Irie cannot help asking if the dark lady was black. Irie's teacher responds with "'No, dear, she's *dark*. She's not black in the modern sense. There weren't any . . . well, Afro-Carri-bee-yans in England at that time, dear'" (226). The teacher's response negates Irie's attempt to find a role model. "As a stranger in a stranger land," Irie is left alone with only her appearance (222). In her appearance, Irie finds the essence of Biracial conflict, finding that "underneath it all, there remained an ever-present

anger and hurt, the feeling of belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere" (225). Throughout the novel, Irie searches for identity and attempts to find the origin for her problems, an attempt to find the origin of her identity. In her search, she finds the concept of homeland because "its particular spell over [her], was that it sounded like a beginning. The beginning of beginnings. Like the first morning of Eden and the day after apocalypse. A blank page" (332). The beginning is a place before the races mixed, when everything was pure. At the same time, though, the beginning for Irie is a destination and the promise to start over with a new identity. The blank page is the unwritten text of her skin. In the end, Irie finds the homeland and takes control of her identity in the same way Hortense, her Biracial grandmother, took control of hers. Where Hortense's selection of a sexual partner was a decision for "marrying black, [for] dragging her genes back from the brink," Irie chooses to remain Biracial and selects her sexual partners based on individual desires (272). At the same time, Irie cuts her daughter's "paternal puppet strings" (448) and raises her without her father's influence. Irie becomes the role model for Biracials and for her daughter. According to the one-drop rule, Irie is Black. This makes her daughter half Black—though really a quarter but for Irie's single-ethnic identity. Her daughter's father is Bengali. By refusing her child's paternity, Irie refuses the Biracial conflict for her daughter while at the same time reconciles her own. Her choice, though a single-ethnic identity, is the right one because it is a choice she makes to stabilize her identity. Her daughter, being a quarter Black, will have a Black ethnic identity because it is the identity Irie embraces.

It is essential for Biracials to have adequate role models to understand the conflict and control inherent in their racial makeup. Without adequate role models, Biracials fumble in the dark toward some source, any source, of identity clarification alone. Without adequate

role models, Biracials are stunted where others develop normally. It is not a coincidence that the main characters of *White Teeth* are teenagers reaching adulthood. Like all teenagers, Biracials search for individuality, but at the same time, the Biracial is already an individual and chooses to hide in acceptance. Millat and Magid embrace the ideas that come to them. Irie tries to hide in her family history. All three of them grasp at individuality and acceptance because they do not know what they are supposed to be. Acceptance in a disparate environment, however, is single-ethnic identity at the cost of repression. Though the choice to be one race, one ethnicity, over the other is the right one for identity stabilization, it is a crime. Biracials are both races. They should be both ethnicities. They should be able to express a unique perspective that highlights both worlds. Yet, for the Biracial, single-ethnic identity is correct, too, if not too common. The Biracial is silent in literature because it is more important to receive acceptance as one thing than nothing at all; however, it would be nice to choose.

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The Postmodern Chaucer: From a Procession of "Sondry Folk"
to the Precession of Simulacra
by Shawn W. Moore

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Pour Baudrillard:

Le formidable spectacle que n'existait jamais en hyperréalité

I believe the question has to be asked, what's so bad about postmodern theory and Chaucer studies? Part of the answer lies with the theoretical approaches that dominate Chaucer studies, which attempt to find meaning within Chaucer's text, or like the approaches of historicism, which attempt to reconstruct Chaucer's history in order to find lost meanings and fixed origins in his text. Any way you look at it, these theories all rely on one common goal: the search for meaning. Postmodern theory, then, would immediately disagree and counteract these approaches since, for the postmodernist, meaning cannot be found in the metanarrative. Not only can it not be found, most postmodern theorists would argue that the text is better understood in the absence

of a whole. Nevertheless, Chaucerians "have yet to see a no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners combination of Chaucer and contemporary theory" like that suggested by Faye Walker who admits, "In some ways, this criticism could be the most threatening and the most thrilling" (579). "Threatening" and "thrilling" tend to be the words used when describing such theories as postmodernism and gender theory, and what's "threatening" must always be destroyed, right? But as we all know you can't destroy something that doesn't really exist; that only makes it more real.

It is my intention in this essay to do what some say can't be done. Using the postmodern theory of Jean Baudrillard I will argue that Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, especially the relationship between Chaucer the poet and Chaucer the pilgrim, follows Baudrillard's order of simulacra as put forward in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*. Applying Baudrillard's theory of the simulacra to Chaucer's poem, I will analyze the correlation between the order of the simulacra and *The Canterbury Tales*. The first order of simulacra will analyze the portraits of the pilgrims in the General Prologue as poetic copies of the 'real,' or original, human form. I will then argue that the continual characterization of the pilgrims and the production of their tales become the copies that are scattered with refractions of truth, creating the simulacrum of the second order. As a postmodern reader of Chaucer, I will analyze how the reader's ability to choose which tales are read is a condition of the copies already generated by Chaucer the pilgrim. As a result, it's Chaucer's removal from his position as a figure of authority that creates not only another independent copy, but also a copy that determines the real. This occurs whether or not the reader chooses Chaucer's pre-constructed frame narrative. Either way, the choice determines the real while creating another copy that precedes and determines the real image of the poem's pilgrims revealing the

precession of simulacrum that constitute Baudrillard's third order.

A daunting task indeed, I know, but by using Baudrillard's theory I hope to show a strong argument for the Chaucerian community that postmodern theory should be regarded as not only at the same level as traditional criticism in its ability to provide theoretical discourse, but that postmodern theory can help conceptualize, through Chaucer's poetry, the way in which the postmodern reader perceives the medieval self through the postmodern self. Finally, I will discuss other avenues for the postmodern theorist in connection with Chaucer studies so that the fragmented environment will become an embraced perception of Chaucer's poem, bridging the gap between Chaucer studies and the postmodern world.

I. Postmodernism: The Phantom Menace

The argument against the incorporation of postmodern theory and Chaucer is the belief that postmodernism is an idea that is historically situated against the modern era; thus Chaucer as a postmodern poet could not be possible. Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, however, argues that the modern cannot become modern without already being postmodern, "Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant" (79). With this understood, Chaucer as a postmodern poet does exist because the idea is an always emerging state, which, like Jameson argues, makes a mockery of historicity and the critics who attempt to fix Chaucer as merely a medieval poet.

Already we have an idea of what the postmodern represents, but Jean Baudrillard takes this fragmented perception further in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, and even though Baudrillard does not go so far as to call himself a postmodern theorist, the criticism in this book expands on the postmodern theory of Jameson and Lyotard.

Baudrillard and Lyotard are similar in the way in which they interpret perceptual information and knowledge. Baudrillard's chapter on the "Precession of the Simulacra" dissects the way in which the postmodern subject perceives the "*real*." Here the "real" stands for the original which existed before the first copy. It is not to be confused with the Lacanian "real." For Baudrillard, and for the postmodern subject, the commodification of products has created a precession of simulacra which could be defined as the representation of copies of the real where these representations not only proceed, but also determine what we know as the "real." However, this precession does not materialize by itself. According to Baudrillard there are three orders of the simulacra. The first order is associated with the pre-modern era where the copy of the real is understood as a counterfeit, or a place marker for the original. The second order appears as the connection between image and representation begin to corrupt through the mass production of the copies. The final, or third, order is nothing but the continual precession of simulacra where the representation of the image proceeds and determines the real, which Baudrillard then argues as being so far removed from whatever real there might have been that it becomes a hyperreal, or it creates a real replacing the unknown real.

Although some of Baudrillard's terms seem to inhibit their acceptance into other fields like medieval literature, Baudrillard never defines these terms as being segregated to the postmodern era. For Baudrillard, "production" does not simply imply industrial production of commercial things. In fact, Baudrillard's first example of production is the maps of cartographers. Therefore, production applies to anything that is produced by knowledge; this then would also apply to, say, a poem that is produced by the knowledge of a poet. Here's where Chaucer and postmodern theory intersect. I don't believe anyone denies Chaucer is the creator and producer of *The Canterbury Tales*;

thus it is possible to view the poem as a production of knowledge, which is applicable to Baudrillard's theory. The bulk of my argument that follows will be to view Chaucer's poem, specifically the production of human figures in the pilgrims' portraits in the General Prologue, as the first order of simulacra. The further characterizations of the pilgrims and their tales then, as productions of not only Chaucer the poet and pilgrim, but also productions of the Canterbury pilgrims, remove the real for the sign, which fulfills the second order of the simulacra. In the third portion of my argument for the third order of simulacra, or the precession of simulacra, I will examine the reader's ability to create a subjective world of copies as conditioned by Chaucer the pilgrim when narrative authority is given to the reader leaving the reader with the ability to create and determine the "real." I will argue that this choice determines how the postmodern reader perceives the pilgrims as hyperreal caricatures leading to a fragmented environment of perception, thus fulfilling the postmodern reception of knowledge. For both Postmodern theory and Chaucer studies this reception of knowledge is important. Without Chaucer's removal from the authority of the narrative, the reader would not be able to legitimize the narrative through their creation of a "real."

Of course to do this with every pilgrim and every tale would require a scope so large that it would not only be unnecessary, but would also lead me into the postmodernist's trap of attempting to bring totality to Chaucer's already fragmented text. Instead, for the first order of simulacrum, I will examine the copy of Chaucer the pilgrim. Much has been written on the dynamics of Chaucer as poet and Chaucer as pilgrim, but through Baudrillard's simulacra, Chaucer the pilgrim is a direct copy of the "real" Chaucer, the poet. Hence, Chaucer's representation projects the image as a copy, which not only creates the simulacra, but more importantly, it establishes Chaucer as

a postmodern poet.

II. Attack of the Clones: Simulacra, Simulation, and Chaucer

i) *Simulacrum of the First Order:*

Throughout the years, Chaucerians have referred to the General Prologue as a gallery of human images, which represent the varying range of medieval identities. In fact, Arthur Hoffman agrees that most Chaucerians have adapted the metaphor of the tapestry in order to describe the portraits of Chaucer's pilgrims (1). The metaphor of the tapestry is interesting because I see the tapestry as a map—a map that guides the reader from left to right in a social and political digression. Like Baudrillard's example of the cartographers in the Borges fable who create a copy of the Empire's terrain, Chaucer's tapestry is a creation that captures "real" human images mapping medieval society.

Referring to the pilgrims as "real" assumes that it was Chaucer's intention to recreate real images, but what I am arguing is not that it was Chaucer's intention, but that the reader of Chaucer would automatically interpret the pilgrims as real figures. In fact, Lyotard acknowledges that the pre-modern reader reads in order to gain knowledge from the narrative. John Ganim describes this tendency in his article "Identity and Subjecthood":

> Most readers instinctively understand literary characters as if they were real people. We even judge the success of fictional or dramatic works by holding their characters or narrators to the standard of "real life", even if we demand more consistency from literature than we do from life itself. (224-25)

Ganim's argument articulates two important aspects of the simulacra that are Chaucer's pilgrims. First, the instinct to adopt these representations as copies of the original is always in the reader's perception. Second, and more important, these copies are expected to fit a standard that

must maintain a consistency in their representation of the real.

Chaucer as poet and pilgrim is at a distinct advantage in maintaining this consistency. As poet, Chaucer represents what he knows, but as a pilgrim, he can only present what he sees. In this way, Chaucer the pilgrim does not present a copy of a pilgrim, like Chaucer the poet; he presents the "real" pilgrims: "Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun / To telle yow al the condicioun / Of ech of hem, so as it semed me" (I. 37-39). That last interjection, "so as it semed me" gives authority to the pilgrims he presents in the General Prologue, and it provides by what standard the reader will judge the pilgrims: by the observation of Chaucer the pilgrim, not Chaucer the poet. Nevertheless, if the reader expects the representation to hold up to the standard of real life, then Chaucer the pilgrim's presentations of the pilgrims would be subjected to the same standard of Chaucer the poet, strengthening the connection between the pilgrim Chaucer as a copy of the real life poet. The pilgrims' claim, "so as it semed me," legitimizes Chaucer the pilgrim's portraits as "real" copies from the narrative knowledge of Chaucer the poet, but at the same time, it places Chaucer the pilgrim as a subjective creator and observer.

Since Chaucer the pilgrim stands as the subject for presenting the portraits of the pilgrims, the Canterbury pilgrims then stand as objects in their representations. These relationships between the subject and the objects of representation exist through the relationship between Chaucer the poet and his copy, Chaucer the pilgrim. Although it would be futile to argue a reason for Chaucer the poet's representational intention for each of the pilgrims, it is reasonable to argue that Chaucer the pilgrim's intention is to present these pilgrims, not by the their deeds, but as objects. After Chaucer finishes the portraits he re-iterates his task: "Now have I told you soothly, in a clause, / Th'estaat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause" (I. 715-16). The first three criteria

present each pilgrim as an object rather than a human subject. The pilgrims are described by their place in life, how they are dressed, their names (even though Chaucer only allocates a given name to a small number of pilgrims), and finally their cause, which could be read as the cause for their position, or the cause of their being on the pilgrimage. I am more secure in arguing for the former reason. But even their cause represents an object status, since as Ruth Nevo notes, "there is no portrait which does not take its orientation from an attitude to money or from the dealings with money, whether in the form of illicit gain or of legitimate hire" (105). All of these descriptions depict a tapestry of objects rather than a tapestry of human life. I am not the first Chaucerian to point this out, but this does create a tapestry of copies of real pilgrims, which includes Chaucer.

Although this may seem troubling to some, Baudrillard would only see the representation of the simulacra of the first order. The pilgrims, including Chaucer the pilgrim, become copies and in their copying, become objects to be consumed by the reader. Nevertheless, because Chaucer the pilgrim is never presented as an object in the General Prologue, the reader cannot legitimize the copies' ability to present the objects, thus the objects become the reader's way of representing Chaucer the subject. This is an unstoppable process according to Baudrillard: "the subject no longer provides the representation of the world (I will be your mirror!) It is the object that refracts the subjects" (14). Because the reader cannot legitimize Chaucer the pilgrim, the subject loses all its abilities of representation leaving the objects themselves as Baudrillad argues. This leads to the way in which the postmodern reader accepts the characterizations of the pilgrims before and during their tales. I argue that the tales are accepted not through the storytelling of Chaucer the pilgrim, but by the way in which the pilgrims are presented as copies of the pilgrims

where the tales are expected to reflect some aspect of the teller through the reader's representation of the teller. The tales are thus products that lead to a further breakdown of the "real" from the representation of the General Prologue, becoming Baudrillard's simulacra of the second order.

ii) *Simulacra of the Second Order:*

At this point, it's hard for me not to view Geoffrey Chaucer as a postmodern poet. As noted above, *The Canterbury Tales*, and the General Prologue specifically, reinvent the human form as an object, or a copy of the real, and because Chaucer the poet fails to represent his copy as an object, the objects are forced to speak for themselves in terms of their deeds and other internal representations. By doing this, Chaucer the poet not only refuses an authorial legitimization through Chaucer the pilgrim, but he also removes the pilgrims further away from any "real" representation refusing, once again, to bring any totality to the pilgrims' tales. However, because Chaucer the pilgrim is once again in charge of re-telling the tales, any "reality" that the tales held becomes displaced in the poetic production of the tales. This is a complicated production, but one in which Chaucer the poet does very well in bringing the tales into the second order of the simulacra.

For Baudrillard, and for Chaucer, the second order of the simulacra represents a proliferation of copies, which continue to put further distance between the real and the copy. For Baudrillard, this is indicative of the industrial age, where a continuous production of copies further displaces the real by trying to reconnect and continually copy the real. But as I noted before, Baudrillard does not limit this process to a specific era; he argues that it is most clearly seen in the industrial age, but does not limit the second order of simulacra as only belonging to this period. For the pilgrims then, the tales become an attempt to reconnect with the real through their own story-telling, which adopts

the realities presented in the prologue. Nevertheless, because Chaucer the pilgrim re-tells the tales, the tales become a product of Chaucer the pilgrim that further distances the real and the copy. As a result, what makes this the simulacra of the second order is that the tales, as produced by Chaucer the pilgrim, attempt to replace the images of the copies as depicted in the General Prologue. This is done by replicating the "real" qualities of the pilgrims in their presentations before and during their tales and through the communication between the other pilgrims, masking any reality there might have been in the first order of simulacra.

The game is simple. Each pilgrim will tell two tales towards Canterbury and two tales back. The pilgrim who tells the best tales, as decided by the host Harry Bailly, will win supper, which will be paid for by the losing pilgrims. Anyone who refutes the judge's decision will automatically lose. The tales are expected to be "of best sentence and most solas" (I. 798), but what these tales present are further representations of the pilgrims that build from the prologue portraits. The chivalric Knight tells a tale of chivalry and courtly romance; the Miller, a teller of jests, tells a tale about a cuckolded carpenter; even the Wife of Bath tells a tale about marriage. More often than not, these tales are directed towards, or are reactions against, the other pilgrims, which build upon their representations in the General Prologue, creating a fragmented form of communication between the pilgrims. Take, for example, the Miller. Even though it is not his turn to speak, he interjects after the Knight's tale and demands to tell his tale before all others. What's interesting is that he wants to tell a tale in order to "quyte," or repay, the Knight's tale (I. 3127). Since the Knight has just finished a tale that represents chivalric aspects of knighthood, the Miller demands to tell a tale just a noble as the Knight's as a way to prove he is of the same caliber as the Knight. Not only is the Miller

attempting to prove his status among the other pilgrims, but he is also re-affirming the character portrait originally drawn by Chaucer the pilgrim. On this basic level, the pilgrims' tales become copies of the prologue copies, but there is no denying that these copies cannot be seen outside of their teller, who is always Chaucer.

As true as Chaucer the pilgrim intends his re-telling of the pilgrims' tales to be, he cannot escape his own accountability for the pilgrims' tales. This is important because the tales can no longer be viewed as the pilgrims' independent attempt to reconstruct their reality, but become another representation by Chaucer the pilgrim so that the tales copy the reality of the prologue portraits, becoming another aspect of the real. I am not alone in making this connection between Chaucer's portraits and their connection with the later tales of the pilgrims. H. Marshall Leicester Jr. agrees: "After all, we like to read Chaucer this way, to point out the suitability of the tales to their fictional tellers" (140). Leicester's argument not only shows the link between the perception of the pilgrims as copies where their tales fit their portraits, but it also shows that Chaucer's poem is suited to be read this way. In this way, Chaucer is aware of this process since the pilgrim also acknowledges this representation, as I will discuss later. But for now let us return to the Miller.

Although the Knight is first in the prologue and is the first pilgrim to tell a tale, the Miller refuses to allow any other pilgrim tell a tale before him, even though his portrait is near the end of the prologue. The Miller's insistence to jump ahead of the other pilgrims matches his description in the prologue: "Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, / Or breke it at a renning with his heed" (I. 550-51). The Miller is bull-headed, ready to break down any door with his head in order to get what he wants. But this isn't the Miller describing himself. Chaucer the pilgrim draws particular attention to his stubbornness,

and then repeats that characteristic after the Knight has finished his tale. Chaucer has copied the Miller's characterization from the stubborn characterization of the prologue to an even more stubborn and demanding Miller during the ride to Canterbury. What this does is masks any "real" characteristics that may have been associated with a Miller on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. These couplings of copies, which create the tenacious Miller, become the sign that replaces the real. From this point forward the sign created by Chaucer will always replace the Miller. This presentation is not limited to my understanding of Chaucer's work.

As in the first order of simulacra, when the pilgrims are presented as objects, those defining terms presented as characteristics, before and during their tales, replace any real connection to, say, a miller, or a reeve. During the game, the "real" copy is replaced by the sign, which attempts to make the copy more real. The Miller's qualities become the sign from this point forward, creating a copy of a copy (as Dr. Arroyo would say: I guess you can say it's turtles all the way down). But let's not forget that Chaucer the pilgrim is aware of this process. A copy of a copy is representative of Plato's theory of the ideal, where everything is a copy of the ideal that exists outside of our ability to represent the ideal. Any copy of the original copy becomes an even worse copy. This idea transcends to the art of writing.

For Plato, writing is an imperfect way of representing something, but if one does write then the deeds must match the words. Chaucer the pilgrim acknowledges this idea in the General Prologue as a way to reassure the reader that what he says will be as true as what actually happened: "Eek Plato seith, whoso can him rede, / The wordes mote be cosin to the dede" (I. 741-42). I like Chaucer's term, "cosin" because it implies that the words don't have to be directly connected to the deeds; they are not "brothers," but the word must be somewhat related, maybe

being as close as first cousins. Nevertheless, this allows the replacement of the words to be the sign, which will now be representative of the pilgrims during the storytelling process. It also allows for more copies and more signs to be generated through Chaucer's language. The fact that Chaucer is aware of this process is important in understanding the way in which the pilgrims become hyperreal copies of their copies in the prologue.

Chaucer understands his re-telling will be imperfect since another copy only further distorts what might contain some truth, or representation of the ideal. However, Chaucer never argues that his attempt at re-telling the tales will bring any further reality, or truth, to the pilgrims, but there is no other way to produce the copies. Baudrillard's statement, "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (Simulacra 2) holds true to Chaucer the pilgrim's words and deeds. If we think of the prologue as representing mere copies, or imitations of the real, then the real threat to that order of simulacra is the change of removing the real and substituting them for signs. This replacement signifies the shift of the second order of simulacra towards the third order.

iii) *Simulacra of the Third Order:*

This transition from the second order to the third order is, what I believe to be, the strongest argument for the Postmodern Chaucer. Recognizing the process of replacing the real with the sign does two things. First, it acknowledges the inability to create true human objects in the text. Secondly, it creates a need for the reader to re-represent the pilgrim as an original copy, which only further displaces any real that may have existed. Nevertheless, the re-representation of the pilgrim is never set by the reader. In this third order the production of the copy is done on a consistent basis with each hyperreal copy preceding the

previous copies so that the reader does not fix a particular copy as the "real;" they only add another copy in the attempt to fix meaning. Baudrillard knows this and so does Chaucer: "what every society looks for in continuing to produce, and to overproduce, is to restore the real that escapes it" (*Simulacra* 23). As critics and scholars attempt to transfix meaning onto the pilgrims, their attempted production of meaning only creates a further displaced copy. Chaucer's fragmented pilgrimage depicts this attempt even though Chaucer the pilgrim has already identified his inability to produce ideal copies. Nevertheless, the production of copies will continue, but the new copies will supplant the real they attempt to discover, leaving nothing but a continuous precession of simulacrum.

Baudrillard's third order of simulacra is arguably the most difficult to conceptualize. Essentially, Baudrillard's theory argues that the copies produced within the first and second order continue to be produced to the point where there is no longer an original, or "real;" the only thing left after these copies are copies, which become more "real" than the originals. For Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, the portraits in the General Prologue are copies of "real" Canterbury pilgrims; however, as the pilgrimage and the storytelling begins, the pilgrims assimilate to the copies of themselves presented in the prologue and their tales become products of Chaucer the pilgrim who re-tells all the tales. The third order of simulacra, where the copy becomes more real than the original copy, is created in a subtle gesture to the reader through Chaucer the pilgrim.

This gesture occurs during the interruption of the Miller's prologue as Chaucer the pilgrim speaks out to the reader. We have already discussed the Miller's insistence to tell his tale before all the others, but before he is allowed to tell his tale, which is being re-told by Chaucer the pilgrim, Chaucer comments on the character of the

Miller and his tale, along with his regret that he must tell it as true as his wit enables. Because of his regret, Chaucer provides a way to bypass these types of tales, thus providing the reader with a map and the opportunity to choose his/her destination:

> Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;
> For he shal finde ynowe, grete and smale,
> Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
> And eek moralitee and holinesse. (I. 3177-80)

By allowing the reader a choice in which tales he or she reads, or does not read, Chaucer the pilgrim releases control over how we interpret and read the pilgrims. Even though Chaucer emphasizes grander tales of morality and holiness, we have the choice to read any tale "grete and smale" (I. 3178). Thus, the tales become a map, which precedes the tellers by the reader's ability to choose any destination. As Baudrillard notes, the map now determines the terrain (*Simulacra* 2). At the same time, our choice is conditioned by Chaucer's warning regarding which tale we choose: "Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis. / The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this" (I. 3181-82) Here Chaucer relinquishes all authority: "Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame; / And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game. (I. 3185-86). Chaucer's representation of the Miller as a churl and Chaucer's exclamation, "ye knowe wel this" (I. 3182) becomes the "real" Miller since the choosing of his tale is only to be blamed on the reader and not Chaucer. This affects not only the Miller, but also all of the other pilgrims, like the Reeve as noted above. Chaucer the pilgrim's representation becomes how the reader determines the "real," which precedes what tale we choose. In this way, our choosing becomes the third order of simulacra.

Chaucer's copies become more real only because the first and second order have created a copy that is more real than the original, which then allows the reader to choose by what is now the only real

that is recognized. The Miller is presented as a churl, so naturally his tale will be churlish. This process of choosing not only replaces the prologue copy, but also destroys the original communication between the pilgrims and their tales. Even though we like to read the tales as a continuous communication between the pilgrims, Chaucer's allowance for choice conforms to Baudrillard's simulacra of the third order where, "rather than creating communication, it exhausts itself in the act of staging communication" (80). Thus, whatever communication that might have existed between the Canterbury pilgrims becomes staged by the reader's choosing of tales. Again, this choice then replaces the original copy created by Chaucer the pilgrim by allowing Chaucer's copy to be more real than the copy. This in turn is the hyperreal. There are no "real" pilgrims anymore. As the reader moves from one tale to another, that copy becomes the "real" and is interpreted as such. There is another aspect to this replacement of the real that only exists when the subject is devoid of all power.

Since the objective reader gains control over the tales that are read, this creates a world independent from Chaucer's frame narrative. The signs and the models of the pilgrim have become the "real" by which we choose while being assimilated into this subjective world. Temenuga Trifonova discusses this process in the article, "Is There a Subject in Hyperreality?" For Trifonova the creation of this world creates an absolute representation of the subject that becomes the "real" representation, in turn replacing all those other copies that came before (29). The power of representation needs to be removed from the subject in order to become the third order of the simulacrum. The power of representation that is transferred to the reader also transfers the power of representation, which is conformed by the reader's representation of the "real." Thus in the reader's hands the tales become independent worlds that are determined by the simulacra.

III. Revenge of the Postmodern:
Chaucer and the Theory of the Postmodern

The transition into the third order of simulacra is difficult and complex, but because Chaucer does it in such a subtle manner, the reader is often left to try and rediscover the "real" by interpreting the hidden meaning in the text. This need to interpret meaning and to find origin has dominated Chaucerian criticism as noted in the first part of this essay. This need is directly connected with the proliferation of copies presented by Chaucer. Barbara Nolan reflects on this type of criticism in regards to the passage examined in the last section: "Chaucer the pilgrim…thus turns the text over to the audience, who will have to interpret or translate the signs into meaning, discerning the 'true' inner structure" (164). For Nolan, and for many scholars of Chaucer studies, Chaucer's inability to represent a whole, along with his fragmented poetic discourse, manufactures the need to discover "Chaucer" and to re-interpret his text so that we can find the meaning and truth in his poetry. Whether it is by historicizing his text, or through close readings, which offer insight into the mind of Chaucer the poet, these criticisms attempt to create and legitimize Chaucer's text. Because Chaucer's poem denies these attempts at finding meaning and origin, this type of criticism copies the fragmented copies of Chaucer the pilgrim, contributing further to the third order of simulacra.

It could be argued that the limitation to Chaucer the poet/ pilgrim throughout this essay denies the ability to break away from this postmodern stronghold. Some might argue that there are tales which do not fit this precession of simulacra. However, as noted earlier, to make an argument for every pilgrim and every tale would be useless strictly since any view outside of the Chaucer poet/pilgrim paradigm would be analyzing a copy, which would re-represent it as another copy falling into the third order of simulacra. For the postmodern reader

of Chaucer, it is important to be aware of how those representations reflect the representation of our postmodern society.

It was my goal in this essay to discover a new Chaucer: the postmodern Chaucer. Taking Walker's advice, I applied postmodern theory to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* in order to show that postmodernism does have its place in Chaucer studies. I agree with Stephanie Trigg, who argues that contemporary theories like postmodernism, "and the transformation of literary studies mean more than simply reading Chaucerian works from different perspectives" (196). My attempt at utilizing postmodern theory as a way to analyze Chaucer is not just another way to simply look at Chaucer's poetry; it's a way of understanding how we respond to Chaucer's poetry as readers of Chaucer in the new millennium. By surpassing the need to find meaning and truth, we as Chaucerians are able to perceive and appreciate the unpresented (using Lyotard's term) fragments of Chaucer's poetry, bringing Chaucer into the 21st century. The application of postmodern theory allows Chaucer to be presented as a poet rather than a social authority. More importantly, it allows non-medievalists enter into the current discussion of Chaucer studies, demolishing a barrier that has too long dominated the department of Medieval studies.

Keith M. Booker was correct in his announcement that "both Chaucer and the postmodernists tend to transgress boundaries, destabilize hierarchies, and question authority of all kinds" (566). Chaucer, then, is the perfect postmodern poet. In fact, both *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus & Criseyde* refuse totality by destabilizing the hierarchy of the narrative authority, making them applicable to postmodern theory. Although postmodern theory allows this destabilization to be perceived, it does not intend to discover meaning in its destabilization. This is often the basis for the argument against postmodern theory and Chaucer studies. If the intent is not to re-

discover Chaucer's meaning, or revive Chaucer's historical position, then what is the purpose of this fragmented viewing of his poetry? I would argue, as I have throughout this essay, that postmodern theory is not just a fragmented representation of Chaucer as a postmodern poet, but also a fragmented representation of the postmodern reader. This understanding allows the postmodern reader an insight into the narrative of the postmodern era and its connection with medievalism.

Even though I limited this essay to Baudrillard's theory of the simulacra, I believe Chaucer, through postmodern theory, has much to teach us about the way we perceive and understand the authority of the grand narrative, and its inability to represent the "real." For the postmodern and for Chaucer there is no "real," but the real we create. Thus, the search for meaning is the search for something that doesn't exist. And that's not such a bad thing after all. Often in life, what is perceived by others is not what defines us; what defines us is what's unpresented. What's unpresented is the "real," so in the words of Jean-Francios Lyotard: "Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witness to the unpresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name" (82).

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Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer:
Seeking Transcendence Across the Void
by David Pendery

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> Why does a man who's tumbling into the void
>
> Want to tumble in silence, without a cry?
>
> --Carl Dennis, "Audience"

Introduction

Were we to address the question in Carl Dennis's poem to Eugene Henderson of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* (1958), or Eric Packer of Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) —those two overwrought, probing petitioners so in need of answers to life's most pressing doubts and questions—they would no doubt defiantly answer, "*I don't! I don't!*", mirroring Henderson's corrosively self-absorbed, compulsively acquisitive spur to his own tortured psyche: "*I want, I want!*" But we might suspect a hint of doubt in their anguished cries, and intuit that they were covering up some essential truth. And then perhaps with additional prodding we might find them amending their disavowal,

maintaining Henderson's affirmative urgency, but reinscribing it into a plea for help: "But *I do, I do*...want answers to the questions that torment me: Why am I dissatisfied in a world of plenty? Where can I find meaning, relevance and order in an insecure world?"

On the surface Henderson and Packer seem as different as night and day—one a forty-something, Ivy League, blue-blood Brahmin who inherited his fortune, a traditional American he-man in an era in which such men were venerated, on the cusp of a new age the essential thrust of which he seems to sense, but which will probably see the likes of him relegated to the dust-heap of history; the other little more than an adolescent, a self-made Internet-boom parvenu, a post-generation-Y boy-man with no appreciable life experience outside his hermetic Wall Street tycoon existence and the go-go world of IPO millionaires and many another get-rich-quick wannabe, the fêted vanguard of a new age of gluttonous materialism that is itself on the verge of being history.

Different as these two seekers appear, however, in a most important sense they have identical concerns, which have long emerged out of a haunting contradiction in American life: the desire to harmonize material comfort and worldly gain with a spiritually rewarding existence and sense of psychological completeness. These conflicting aims, complicated by life in the nation's outsized culture and political economy (itself complicatedly emplaced within an ever-metastasizing global environment that serves up both threat and opportunity), have vexed Americans for decades and decades, leaving many of the nation's citizens adrift between poles of experience and understanding.

In this paper I will review Eugene Henderson's and Eric Packer's cries across an expanse of time from the 1950s to the early 21st century, their quests for peace, wholeness and well-being in the midst of fractious social, economic and spiritual conditions in American life. In my examination, I will refer to certain key earlier analyses that

have recognized these disputatious conditions, as well as philosophical frameworks long-embraced by Americans in their search for answers to what amounts to a permanent clash of ideals and values that has colored American culture for generations—as we witness with Eugene Henderson—a conflicted figure from a relatively comfortable and hopeful recent past—and Eric Parker—a dispirited denizen of the postmodern age. Severely distressed Henderson and Packer may be, but we will find that they are up to the task of constructing new belief systems to provide them guidance in their anxious, smarting lives. Ultimately these systems become unifying philosophies that seek no less than the integration of their lived experience and beliefs, and the very constitution of the natural world and the cosmos, yielding a vast concord of conscious physical and spiritual existence.

Problems

Having seen an America that had experienced the very heights and depths of political and economic success, Eugene Henderson finds himself living with the good fortune of growing up in and then inheriting comfortable wealth, which in the time of *Henderson the Rain King* is further augmented in the economic up-cycle of post-war Eisenhower America. In spite of these advantages, however, Henderson finds that "from earliest times I have struggled without rest" (61).

Eric Packer, meanwhile, appears to be even richer than Eugene Henderson, but he wanders aimlessly through his huge New York apartment, finding only "the briefest of easings, a small pause in the stir of restless identities" (6). Both men live lives infused with "trials, ordeals, and suffering" (Bellow 45), and are clearly overdue for personal and spiritual exploration!

Henderson and Packer find themselves facing a problem that has dogged Americans for virtually hundreds of years—how to find spiritual comfort and belonging amidst an avowedly materialistic culture that

dangles before its citizens not only the possibility of real comfort and economic security, but even the chance of dazzling wealth. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrestled with this conflict in the early 19th century, and his response can be seen in his Transcendental philosophy, a philosophy that has influenced American life and culture from Emerson's time into the 21st century. Emerson saw the value of a carefully-attended calling, which can yield economic security:

> Wealth is in applications of mind to nature; and the art of getting rich consists not in industry, much less in saving, but in a better order, in timeliness, in being at the right spot. One man has stronger arms, or longer legs; another sees by the course of streams, and growth of markets, where land will be wanted, makes a clearing to the river, goes to sleep, wakes up rich. ("Wealth")

But also reminded his readers of a dark side to this pursuit:

> The merchant's economy is a coarse symbol of the soul's economy. ("Wealth")

In his effort to make peace between these discordant views, Emerson embraced a world view that discarded the trivial, and built a life on authentic experience:

> Nothing can pass there, or make you one of the circle, but the casting aside your trappings, and dealing man to man in naked truth, plain confession, and omniscient affirmation. ("Oversoul")

Emerson—a man searching for "naked truth, plain confession, and omniscient affirmation" amidst superficial "trappings." These thoughts are more than applicable to our protagonists' experience: ". . . you are very sore, oh sir! Mistah Henderson. You heart is barking," Willatale, the tribal queen, tells Henderson during his sojourn in Africa (72). The relentlessly self-examining Henderson responds, "Yes, yes, I'll

confirm that .... Tell me, tell me, Queen Willatale! I want the truth. I don't want you to spare me" (72). Packer, meanwhile, simply desires a slice of valid experience and integrity to provide some backbone to his life: "I'm hungry for something thick and chewy" he tells his wife (19), and later as he looks onto a crowd immersed in music and camaraderie in New York City, he savors how the experience "brought a clear emotion to the night, a joy of intoxicating wholeness" (155).

Ralph Waldo Emerson, of course, came from a long line of Protestant Christians in the United States, but his Transcendentalism was a free-thinking, rebellious response to his Puritan forebears and colleagues. Elements of the doctrinaire religious conservatism that Emerson rejected emerged from Puritan doctrine developed from the 17th century onward, which blossomed in American life during this time, and which in key senses endorsed for its devotees: 1) belief in the value of a disciplined, ascetic life and an emphasis on hard work; 2) the importance of finding one's "calling" and according it with God's mission—"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings" (Proverbs, 22:29);[1] and 3) the spirit of entrepreneurial individualism (combined with the "calling," and to some extent with Enlightenment rationalism). Observing these religious and cultural factors in American life, Max Weber wrote in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that there was a markedly "greater participation of Protestants in the positions of ownership and management in modern economic life" (37), but he also ominously observed that elements of Puritan doctrine result in "a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual" (104) and an economic life lived in "an iron cage" (181).

We can extend our analysis of the internal contradictions of capitalism, materialism and the search for emotional and spiritual health, and link them back to Puritan doctrine, with a look at another

piece of this American puzzle. Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer find themselves in a crisis of identity that sees them seeking security and satisfaction through an ambiguous amalgam of community *belonging* and individual *independence. Belonging* in American society can be sought in various ways—membership in churches or civic organizations is the classic de Tocquevillian way, but for our discussion, participation in the over-arching American economic ideology is salient. This ideology offers up a veiled paradox that includes the prominent conception of *independence*—and here I don't mean political independence, proper, but economic independence stemming from worldly success—realized through a given *belonging* in the *laissez-faire* economic order. In sum, these dualistic pursuits create an insoluble contradiction in American society: the existence of a given economic *cooperative ethic* contrasted by a no-less-than-rapacious pursuit of *individual gain*.[2] The economic side of this contrariety is crystal clear in terms of our two extravagantly wealthy protagonists, and so to ease their discomfort—as de Tocqueville reported many Americans do—they seek stable and fulfilling membership in reciprocal communities. We find Eugene Henderson searching for communality among rural African peoples, while Eric Packer returns to his childhood home, noting that "people used to live here in loud close company . . . and happy as anywhere . . . and still did, and still were" (181).

And yet there is another facet to Eugene Henderson's and Eric Packer's predicament. For the individual/community, spiritual/material conundrum in America is further complicated by the fact that the country has long embraced deep interaction and various roles in the milieu of a global economy-*cum*-"global casino" (Castells 363). Life in this economic house can dismay with its perplexing ability to at once provide and deplete, foster and diminish, justly reward and wickedly pilfer. Taken to the global scale—obvious in Eric Packer's world, but to

be sure emergent in Henderson's—these contradictions wax, mutate, oscillate and transform, complicating matters for our protagonists. In short, Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer find themselves enmeshed in a modern, capitalist economic order with global reach, which not only results in the birth throes of "a new society" but also in the "structural transformation" of "the relationships of experience" (Castells 360). Both of our protagonists face such a metamorphosis—with the results in both cases the same as they ever were. For, simply put, Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer—those two "scavengers with ravenous hearts"—have, materially, more than they could ever wish for, but spiritually, they are vacuums.[3] In the end they are faced with the essence of Ranier Maria Rilke's unstinting demand in "Archaic Torso of Apollo": *they must change their lives.* And set out to do this they do. In the course of their search for unity, meaning, autonomy and belonging they craft personal philosophies that, first, hark to Emersonian Transcendental philosophy. That is, Henderson and Packer, in the vein of many another eminently American self-help, "find your true self" philosophy since Emerson, seek to "walk on our own feet ... work with our own hands ... speak our own minds" (Emerson, "The American Scholar"). At the same time our two protagonists seek a unified Emersonian admixture of "infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one" ("Divinity School Address"). Tall order, these approaches, but Henderson and Packer go yet further, with each adjoining these Emersonian elements with various new responses that emerge from the ages and conditions in which they live—Henderson's booming 1950s America—a brave new world with not a little brooding, existential angst lurking between the floorboards of the new tract houses that were springing up in suburbs across America like flowers in a hothouse; and Packer's booming, high-tech Internet age at the dawn of the millennium—with its own decentered, postmodern angst wafting through the newly-built bastions

of shockingly opulent wealth in hot spots in America including New York, Boston, Houston, Seattle and San Francisco. Broadly, I will term these mutative philosophies two versions of a *naturalistic positivism*. At a fundamental level, this philosophy attempts to perceive coherence between the natural *cosmology* and the human *polis*, seeking—to refer to myself from above—the integration of psychic experience and the cosmos, yielding a limitless concord of spiritual and physical existence.[4] To these philosophies, I now turn.

Solutions: Eugene Henderson

Eugene Henderson finds himself in a culture comprised at once of bland Eisenhower-era capitalism and economic growth, and an age of global conflict and antagonism (just emerged, after WWII, and just entering, with the Cold War) that was getting "worse and worse" (7). Henderson's life is a dyspeptic *cul de sac* of unfulfillment, in which he compulsively bolts from one fruitless experience to another, with his pantingly avaricious "*I want, I want!*" (16 and elsewhere) hounding his psyche. His beliefs and feelings a confused mass, the frenzied Henderson finds life "pile[s] into me from all sides," and "turns into chaos" (7). In such a life, as we might expect, "there always comes a day of tears and madness" (30), and with the death of his housekeeper—who he had terrorized to the point of stopping her heart during one of his rages—that day came for Henderson. "'Oh shame, shame!'" he wails after he finds his housekeeper's body. "'You too will die of this pestilence. Death will annihilate you and nothing will remain'" (37). Obviously, only drastic action will jolt Henderson away from his pent-up, self-centered life, and he orders himself, "[w]hile something still is—*now*! For the sake of all, get out'" (37). We thus find him boarding a plane for Africa in search of unity, belonging and personal healing in rural, unspoiled communities and environments in Africa.

Henderson's essential hopes will be familiar to many Americans,

for stemming out of Emersonianism is the unity I have referred to, a spirited (that is, transcendental) impulse to personal, social and universal union, linking life upward from its basic elements, through the myriad of human experience, toward pure godliness and sanctification. From the 19th and into the 21st centuries in the United States this impulse—called by Roger Asselineau a "fertilizing undercurrent" in American life and letters (5)—has underpinned many a social and personal quest for greater personal freedom, free-form spiritual growth, a return to nature and natural sensibilities, and rebellion against social and political regimentation.

Soon after he arrives in Africa, Henderson hints at his essential desire for unity when he ponders that "[t]he earth is a huge ball which nothing holds up in space except its own motion and magnetism, and we conscious things who occupy it believe we have to move too, in our own space" (69). Such a spatial conception will unfold into Henderson's positivistic philosophy—an understanding of the linked relations of the human and natural will and worlds—that will, ultimately, provide him with the safe harbor he seeks. This overall picture of unity also fits neatly back into the transcendental impulse, proper. Wrote Emerson in his famed "Divinity School Address":

> But when the mind opens, and reveals the laws which traverse the universe, and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched. Behold these outrunning laws, which our imperfect apprehension can see tend this way and that, but not come full circle. Behold these infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one.

Henderson is given a description of his inner craving for

coherence and unity when he is living with the second African tribe he encounters. In the nether regions of the tribe's King Dahfu's dwelling, the king forces Henderson to face his fears by facing death in the guise of the lioness, Atti. King Dahfu reassures the terrified Henderson, "[a]ll the pieces fit properly. It will presently be clear. But first by means of the lion try to distinguish the states that are given and the states that are made. Observe that Atti is all lion. Does not take issue with the inherent. Is one hundred per cent within the given" (221). To be "one hundred percent within the given" is no doubt a conception of congruence that is Henderson's principle aim, a conception noted earlier in the narrative when he had told readers, "believe me, the world is a mind" (142). His thoughts again mirror Emerson's philosophy:

Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind.
I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow
receptive of the great soul . . . . ("Oversoul")

Later, after he has passed many a test of judgment and character, Henderson's philosophy appears complete and coherent, and he informs his friend,

Oh you can't get away from rhythm, Romilayu,'.... 'You just can't get away from it. The left hand shakes with the right hand, the inhale follows the exhale, the systole talks back to the diastole, the hands play patty-cake, and the feet dance with each other. And the seasons. And the stars, and all of that. And the tides, and all that junk. You've got to live at peace with it...you can't get away from the regularity. (276)

These various parameters of Henderson's homespun positivist philosophy create a world in which "[t]he spirit of a person in a sense is the author of his body" (200), and here the door opens for Henderson to move away from his "day of tears and madness," to his

"*hour that bursts the spirit's sleep*" (67, emphasis in original). Henderson now embraces a warm solution that will, again, ring familiar to many Americans—for he finds that love is "a natural force, irresistible" (217). "Whatever gains I made were always due to love and nothing else" (284) Henderson reminds himself as he escorts the nameless orphan boy to the United States on his return home at the end of the tale, and then, reaching toward a linked history extending beyond his experience and imagination, he ponders a world that is "new to life, altogether" but that "had that ancient power, too" (285). For Henderson, his epiphany will no less than allow him to "*leave the body of this death*" (239, emphasis in original), and, whole at last, he will find "Life anew!" (164).

Solutions: Eric Packer

Eric Packer: a tortured man, driven by doubt into any number of nooks and crannies of history and philosophy in his search for coherence and substance. Eric Packer: a man who, like Eugene Henderson, felt that "[n]othing existed around him" (DeLillo 6). Eric Packer: a 21st century mirror image of Eugene Henderson, a man who has it all and yet finds himself indifferent, even hostile to his wealth, and instead treads a demanding path toward spiritual fulfillment. It's *déjà vu* all over again, indeed...[5]

Eric Packer finds himself in a "new and fluid reality" (97), at "the point, the thrust, the future" (93)—that is, the crazed late-20th century Internet economic boom that created and destroyed lives and billions of dollars worth of wealth. Something of a self-made master of the universe on the one hand, deep inside Packer suspects that the control he exercised to amass his huge fortune was only an exception to the true norm of existence. From the outset of the narrative he is restless and disturbed, "unworthy and pathetic" (156), pondering various ways he can patch up his wavering psyche. Packer's essential belief is in order,

a positivist order that, as noted, unifies the *cosmos* and the *polis* with "balance, beautiful balance, equal parts, equal sides" (229). His is no less than a search for "a pattern latent in nature itself" (73), a veritable "affinity between market movements and the natural world" (99). His view eerily echoes that of that great theorist of society, Max Weber:

> The capitalist economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action. (54)

But Packer's search won't be easy. His is a world wracked by dangerously out-of-control *laissez-faire* economics that is leeching the very life out of existence, creating a world of people that hate themselves: people, he ponders

> "don't exist outside the market . . . there is no outside . . .
> The market culture is total. It breeds these men and women.
> They are necessary to the system they despise. They give it energy and definition. They are market-driven. They are traded on the markets of the world. This is why they exist, to invigorate and perpetuate the system" (104; the fascinating concordance with the quote by Weber, above, goes without saying).

Further, Packer's world is structured on brittle digital datametrics, "information made sacred" (93), a structure that menacingly results in the irruption of random all-purpose interrogatives in search of *something, anything* to identify, quantify, signify—"You do this *what*"; "*What*. Do nothing"; "The situation is *what*"; "When in fact, *what*" (50, 52, 76, 98; emphasis added). And yet if the disposition of Packer's

existence and interaction seems to lack essential coherence and genuine significance, it also mysteriously evinces an elegant harmony—"market cycles can be interchangeable with the time cycles of grasshopper breeding, wheat harvesting" (228), and embodies an alluringly sensual vitality—data "was soulful and glowing, a dynamic aspect of the life process" (27), and the veritable "heave of the biosphere" (27). We see a hint of the positivist unity that Packer seeks—if embedded within a contradiction that threatens the very unity of life itself.

I noted above that Eric Packer was "hungry for something thick and chewy," a slice of real life and experience. Indeed, we have detected that Packer is more than the soulless, money-grubbing Wall Street broker we typically visualize when we think of the Internet bubble years. Indeed, he is "visionary" (21), and is subtly "receptive to mysteries" (34), as his journey through a range of world philosophies indicates.[6] Ultimately, however, none of his detours are enough, and Packer, like Eugene Henderson, must return to the very roots of existence as the ultimate move into real meaning and order. He turns toward history, and the importance of time and change in life (unevenly pondering a negative "coldest possible prospect" of "no culminating moment ahead" (193), a positive experience of "two lovers…free of memory and time" (202), and then outwardly to "a story…a brooding folklore of time and fate" (194); belief in the value of a single person's autonomy, and self-estimation—"He was alert, eager for action, for resolution. Something had to happen soon, a dispelling of doubt and the emergence of some design, the subject's plan of action, visible and distinct" (196); and communitarian connection to family and neighbors—"feeling what his father would feel, standing in this place" (182). During his transition across this mindful terrain, while an old order collapses around him, Packer at times rises above it all, and he placidly "watched the major issues breeze by and felt purified in

nameless ways to see prices spiral into lubricious plunge" (123). With this recognition he is able to "let his head fall back and [open] his mouth to the sky and rain" (123). But there is threat afoot, and Packer feels not a little uneasiness about his search for meaning, for in spite of his hard-won grip on the universe's functioning, his place within it may not, after all, accord with his beliefs. Packer finds with a hint of disappointment near the end of the tale that, "the things that made him who he was…[were] not convertible to some high sublime, the technology of mind-without-end" (238). Is his philosophy failing to link him down to the elemental, and then up to the universal, in an Emersonian/positivist imbrication of the human and the natural? In fact not, for in the end, after flirting with nihilism and chaos—a stab at assigning a kind of flattening, inanimate order and significance to febrile economic melt-down conditions: "Have all the worlds conflated, all possible states become present at once?" (235)—Packer finds the peace, the unity, the *ultimate* order he seeks…in death. This should not surprise us, for DeLillo (or Packer) had predicted this destination early in the novel when he said explicitly, "[w]hen he [Packer] died he would not end" (6). With this realization made concrete at the end of the novel, Packer finds that his "situation ha[d] changed in the course of a day" (231)—just as Eugene Henderson's experience was reduced to a single "hour that bursts the spirit's sleep." "[M]y thoughts have evolved," Packer tells his murderer late in the evening (232), and he feels a reassuring "blood hush, a pause in midbeing" (234). In a word, Eric Packer has found what he *wants*, and for him, now and always, "[t]he idea was to live outside the given limits . . . a consciousness saved from void" (236), and although he is "already dead" (232), he is "still alive in original space" (240) and for him, "this is not the end" (240).

Conclusion: "This is the end, my only friend, the end"[7]

Throughout this essay I have posited that the incessant command

of *I want, I want!* figures and conditions both Eugene Henderson's and Eric Packer's lives. Their *want*, their heartfelt desire, has proven to be an unruly combination of hope and despair, of desire for both material gain and spiritual contentment, and a divided urge toward individual autonomy and community involvement. Such a quest is rooted in American philosophical and social traditions that compete cantankerously—some encouraging celebration of community life and a fulfilling place in the cosmos; some glorifying the rabid pursuit of individual gain, and shallow materialism. Navigating such desires in a political and economic environment that is global to the extreme, often a mire of conflicting aims, intractable problems and a seemingly endless series of built-in contradictions, has been an ongoing quest for Americans for a long, long time. Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer find themselves on this quest. And if Henderson's final outcome seems more encouraging, utopian—he announces that "[t]here are reasons for it all" (279), and he is last seen "leaping, leaping, pounding, and tingling over the pure white lining of the gray Arctic silence" (Bellow 286)—perhaps Eric Packer's somber denouement is simply the reverse side of this coin of the realm.[8] For, more encouragingly, and more in accord with Eugene Henderson's own peroration, Eric Packer finds that in the end his life is "fine, it's nothing, it's normal" (DeLillo 239), and even the losses that destroy him make him "feel free in a way I have never known" (139).

Notes

[1] The quote from Proverbs is also cited by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 53.

[2] My argument here further echoes that of de Tocqueville, who worried that Americans in pursuit of economic independence disconnected themselves from community by "thinking of themselves in isolation," with each "shut up in the solitude of his own heart" (508).

[3] Quote based on DeLillo 7.

[4] Note that this conception of positivism is essentially different from other "rational" positivisms, such as that of the 1920s Vienna Circle, or a Cartesian/Newtonian view of the reciprocal structures of the natural and human worlds. In contrast to this "hard" positivistic approach, Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer create a "soft" Emersonian-based positivism. Note that both these "hard" and "soft" positivisms often seek to provide comfort and security in threatening, dehumanizing worlds.

[5] Hats off, of course, to Mr. Yogi Berra.

[6] During his quest Packer explores no less than: Sufi beliefs, Zen Buddhism, the Dao de Ching, Plato, futurism, chaos theory, Nietzsche, Marxism, anarchy, hedonism, palm reading, aestheticism, ancient/pre-modern philosophy and folklore, Freud, astrology, and St. Augustine (forgive me if I've missed one).

[7] "The End" (1967), by John Densmore, Robbie Krieger, Ray Manzarek and Jim Morrison.

[8] In short, it is dystopian. My discussion here could be linked to Emersonian thinking, for its many optimistic, buoyant elements have often been interpreted in a utopian vein with opposing negative, dystopian elements. I think, however, it is clear that the conditions and experiences of Eugene Henderson and Eric Packer—the existential and the postmodern, if you will—in many ways exclude this approach.

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American Self-Censorship and the Need for Neologisms
by Sarah Reynolds

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Chinese Internet censorship affects both Chinese and American citizens. In the case of Chinese citizens, such as Shi Tao, it affects them directly (Amnesty International 15). In the case of American citizens, it affects them indirectly. Shi Tao, a thirty-four year-old journalist in Beijing, submitted an email to a pro-democracy website in the United States. Tao was sentenced to imprisonment for ten years because the American company Yahoo! volunteered his private information to the Chinese government. His trial focused on his allusion to a Chinese "state secret" because he commented on directions from Chinese officials not to write about the Tiananmen Square massacre—which occurred because of a pro-democracy rally. Because the Chinese government successfully targets and censors words by locating key words and phrases that Americans have exported to developing countries, Chinese citizens such as Shi Tao, who desire to present, challenge, or even gain information about the current political, social, and economic structure

of their country, are oppressed.

Americans indirectly assist in such human rights abuses when they use words, phrases, and ideas in non-descript and uncreative ways and then export these words and phrases to developing countries such as China. Americans also participate indirectly in oppression of Chinese citizens since they support American trans-national companies like Yahoo! through federal legislation and consumer-driven use of the Internet. However, Yahoo! is not the only company contributing to censorship in China. For instance, Google and Microsoft have also faced charges of preventing the free flow of information on the Chinese Internet (Amnesty International 4). Together, these three information technology companies assist the Chinese government in selecting and prohibiting words and phrases that Chinese officials perceive to be threatening to the stability of their country (Amnesty International 4). With the American Internet companies' help, the Chinese government censors the Internet with what is considered "the most extensive, technologically sophisticated and broad-reaching system" in order to protect "state secrets" (Amnesty International 15-16). Together the Chinese government and Internet companies target words like "democracy," "human rights," "Tiananmen Square," "Tibet," "Falun Gong," and "freedom" (Mondics C15; Einhorn and Elgin12).

If China continues to monitor these words even when many people know about their actions, one cannot help but to ask, "How many more words and phrases that are considered to be threats to the 'interests of "serving socialism," "upholding the interest of the State," and "correctly guiding public opinion"'" are censored as well (Amnesty International 16)? Although the U.S. government and numerous human rights organizations are examining the actions and cooperation of these companies, very few investigators ask how the decline of the English language enables the Chinese government to censor words

(Lee D1).

The decline of the English language is demonstrated by the overuse of words like "democracy" or catchy rhetorical phrases like "human rights" as well as mass media being written and spoken in approximately a sixth grade level or that Americans only employ approximately 1500 words from the English vocabulary. The pervasiveness of the declining English language not only undermines American's expressions of ideas but also those in developing countries, who import and employ the terms created in American society. Throughout both the reports of the United States and organizations such as Amnesty International and Reporters without Borders, explicit statements about the role of the Internet and the importance of free expression of ideas are made (Einhorn and Elgin 12). However, the implied sentiment in these reports reflects that certain words aid in facilitating and creating ideas, and more importantly, if these words are monitored, people are hindered (Amnesty International 8). The sentiment that the English language is declining demonstrates that the problem lies not within the words or sentences themselves but how the American society perceives language to function.

Central to the arguments presented in this paper is the notion that the English language is declining. Yet, what does it mean for a language to be in decline? The noun "decline" means deterioration in quality, strength, or degree or the terminal period of something, ending in a death or disappearance. Therefore, for the English language to be in decline, specific aspects of usage must suffer. First, the speakers and writers of the language begin and continue the decline as they select words and phrases that lack precision, imagery, and effectiveness—all of which are necessary for general communication and specific critiques of ideas. Second, the language users perpetuate the decline as they refuse to revert to an intensive study and incorporation of the proper use—in

grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation—of the language.

The English language fails to communicate effectively, thereby undermining the ability of English language users to critique and reform the political, social, and economic situations. It seems evident that Americans frequently do not understand the meanings of words, are inundated with inaccurate and dead metaphors, and live in a society where improper use of grammar and vocabulary is not important. As a result, not only are the American people unable to criticize meaningfully the society they live in, political language in general suffers from overuse, vagueness, and inability to effectively communicate to the citizens of the United States. Fortunately, the American expression of language can still be remedied.

In order to discuss the decline of the English language and as a result how political, social, and economic critiques are threatened, I will focus on George Orwell's "Politics and the Decline of the English Language" and a case study of Internet censorship in China. Orwell's commentary provides a better understanding of the English language and, although it is dated, accurately expresses the current state of the English language. When Orwell's article is combined with contemporary rhetorical theories, particularly rhetorical grammar and service-oriented pedagogies, the argument that incorporating intentional instructional methods can reverse a declining language is demonstrated. With a combination of Orwell's analysis, rhetorical grammar, and service-oriented pedagogies in mind, a case study on censorship in China allows the reader to become familiar with a current event that is directly related to the decline of the English language and ways that the Chinese situation and critiques of politics, society, and economics in general can be improved.

George Orwell's article, "Politics and the English Language," delves into a diagnosis of the declining English language. He argues that

the general public is aware that the English language is declining and seems to think the decline is irreversible. Orwell suggests that people believe the decline is irreversible because they have a "half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes" (177). People also prefer the current English standards because they are easier and the user is not compelled to search for words and create rhythmic sentences (Orwell 182). His analysis of the English language is pivotal to the issue of Chinese Internet censorship because the components upon which Orwell reflects demonstrate the general demise of the English language. For instance, Orwell attributes the cause of the decline to political and economic factors. He asserts, "All issues are political issues, and politics is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia" (185). Another factor Orwell acknowledges is the typical American citizen's willingness to continually misuse grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary (177). Orwell proposes that political and economic factors and the misuse of the English language are related in that both aspects of the decline stem from "staleness of imagery" and "lack of precision" (179). To support this proposition, Orwell offers examples of dying metaphors, verbal false limbs, pretentious diction, and meaningless words. Orwell intends for these examples to express the vague and inarticulate language American's commonly use.

Orwell implies that the poor use of the English language comes from those who are seeking to defend indefensible actions of the government. He argues that those supporting the bad actions make their speech and writing vague so as to prevent mental images that make the actions they are supporting deplorable. For an example, Orwell suggests the following phrase: "I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so." He claims that today this phrase would be substituted with:

> While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement. (184)

Inaccurate and vague language results in other people talking in similar ways as they repeatedly hear such political "phraseology." However, the root of the problem with the decline of English has more at stake than defending deplorable actions: A general atmosphere that is bad results in language suffering (Orwell 185).

Orwell diagnoses the decline of the English language with samples of writing containing particular words, phrases, and metaphors he perceives to be especially bad. Despite his own evidence as to the decline of the language, he still concludes that the direction of the English language can be reversed. In fact, he hopes that a reverse can and will happen, which, for Orwell, means a positive shift in the "general atmosphere" of society. He suggests six simple rules that a user of the English language can employ to correct usage:

(i)   Never us a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

(ii) Never us a long word where a short one will do.

(iii) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

(iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.

(v)   Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

(vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything

barbarous. (186)

Although he believes these rules will help the declining English language, he does not believe that they necessitate good English speech and writing. The user must be conscious of how and why they are using the language. He concludes with hope of improving the English language, saying, "One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase...into the dustbin where it belongs" (187).

Sidney Dobrin attacks the English language's increasing deficiency in rhetorically powerful structures in Constructing Knowledges: The Politics of Theory-Building and Pedagogy in Composition. Dobrin asserts that practice of language must be founded on theory (6). Dobrin points out that less theory in the classrooms and more anti-intellectualism among the public results in continued a misunderstanding of grammatical, structural writing as impractical. He recognizes that as long as theory is minimized and anti-intellectualism is increased, the English language will decline. His goal then is to support theory as equal with practice by discussing the pitfalls of anti-theory movements and their inability to help language users critique and create ideas. Part of his argument is that "In order for rhetoric and composition (or any field, for that matter) to evolve, debates concerning useful knowledge must proliferate" (19). During the first chapter of the book and throughout the rest of it, Dobrin argues that incorporating both theory and practice in writing helps individuals construct knowledge and if theory occurs without practice, or vice versa, the chances of gaining knowledge are reduced. Therefore, he addresses what is essential in reversing the decline of the English language—theory and practice must be reunited. He believes that together theory and practice create a balance that perpetuates "constructive conversation" (27).

Since service-oriented writing serves as a focus in this paper, it is interesting to note that Dobrin criticizes David Bleich's service-oriented, anti-theoretical stance. Dobrin is more concerned with Bleich's disregard for theory than his service-orientation—since Bleich argues that theory has nothing to do with practice—and contends with him on points of theory, not service-oriented writing. Dobrin responds to Bleich, stating, "If we define the field as solely service-oriented, then, certainly, all theory in order to be useful must lead to helpful classroom practices. Rhetoric and composition, however, entails more than this limited definition" (21). However, Dobrin ultimately dismisses Bleich's anti-theoretical approach as "a misunderstanding of the use of theory and how the activity of theorizing operates" (22).

Yet, David Bleich's analysis of language serving as an instrument in society to critique and improve upon political restructure enhances the argument for users of the English language to reverse its decline. In a review of Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement, David Bleich determines that, based on the collection of articles in Rhetorical Democracy, "the study of rhetoric can create for all citizens civic engagement through access to the language uses, spoken and written genres, discourses, vocabularies of government, law, and culture" (1).

Laura R. Micciche's article "Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar" aims "to establish grounds for teaching grammar rhetorically and for linking this pedagogical effort to larger goals of emancipatory teaching" (2). She argues that if language users employ her methods for writing and analyzing language, critical thinking and cultural critique improve. Improvement in language occurs because the user understands that grammar creates meaning actively and that deliberate structure and grammar requires the user to have the ability to link corresponding ideas (2-3). Micciche's emphasis on rhetorical grammar

reveals her commitment to language as a tool that encourages political critiques and discussions. When a language user evaluates a political text with grammar in mind, the person can recognize the rhetorical force of the piece and develop a specific response to the political text (6).

Interestingly, Micciche refers to Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" in her article. She comments on his article because Orwell's work demonstrates that language practices develop as a result of society. She suggests that works like "Politics and the English Language" offer "students a framework for understanding how grammar and language practices are schooled and maintained in culture...that grammar use can sometimes function as a form of resistance" (4).

David Coogan's "Service Learning and Social Change: The Case for Materialist Rhetoric" discusses his desire to solicit community change based on rhetorical writing situated in historical moments. He suggests the purpose of writing is to make "good citizens" and create social change, which occurs when the language user becomes familiar with and analyzes institutional power. He states that service learning is a "unique opportunity to discover the arguments that already exist in the communities we wish to serve; analyze the effectiveness of those arguments; collaboratively produce viable alternatives with community partners; and assess the impact of our interventions" (2). He proposes that his theory of materialist rhetoric is unique from other scholar's community-based approaches since they "limit the scope of rhetorical analysis to the process of deliberation" (2), which is, according to his theory, where materialist rhetoric prevails. Coogan's goal is to emphasize how materialist rhetoric does not just promote activism driven by desired outcomes but encourages rhetorical scholarship in the community.

James A. Knapps's "Essayistic Messages: Internet Newsgroups

as an Electronic Public Sphere" considers the growth of mass media, specifically the Internet, as an opportunity for the public to discuss and create opinion increase. He argues that private, disparate opinions gathered on the Internet encourage the "dominant rhetoric" to be questioned, evaluated, and redefined (183). However, Knapp finally poses in what appears to be his thesis whether revising the "dominant rhetoric" is helpful when "...objectivity and technical expertise often take a back seat to personal representation in such messages" (187). This sentiment guides the rest of Knapp's argument and provides a great way of understanding the issue of Chinese censorship. He contends that language on the Internet is problematic because, while the Internet " provides a freedom unavailable in earlier media" it is not completely a "liberated space," due to lack of objectivity, technical expertise, and information restrictions (191). Knapp rightly points out that if the expansion or access of the Internet is restricted, then its status as a location of public space is minimized. In fact, Knapp believes that if the Internet is restricted, those limiting the ability to access information must give justifications for censorship.

Mark Poster's article, "Cyberdemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere," reviews how the Internet is used as a tool for democracy. Poster states,

> But the aspects of the Internet that I would like to underscore are those which instantiate new forms of interaction and which pose the question of new kinds of relations of power between participants. The question that needs to be asked about the relations of the Internet to democracy is this: are there new kinds of relations occurring within it which suggest new forms of power configurations between communicating individuals? In other words, is there a new politics on the Internet?

Poster adds important information to the issue of Internet censorship since censorship hinders the development of democracy, which, in the case of China, is technically part of their governing system. The Internet provides access to gaining, posing, and critiquing new ideas—actions that are essential for individual and communal improvement.

Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" presents strong arguments for how to reverse the decline of the English language and thereby improve its ability to comment on political and social situations. However, this article cannot stand by itself. Orwell's position on the decline of the English language combined with the positions of composition theorists such as Dobrin, Bleich, Micciche, Coogan, Knapp, and Poster provides a coherent approach for critiquing current political situations and applies to the situation in China. The position that language is declining and is lacking strong grammatical and service-oriented capabilities is cohesive because service-oriented pedagogies and rhetorical grammar critique cultural and political situations. If grammar and service-orientation do not combine in writing or speaking, the English language's ability to successfully change current thoughts—by reversing the declining language—on politics and society is weakened.

The articles selected reveal common faults in how the English language is used and offer possible solutions. All of these contemporary sources enhance Orwell's critique of the decline. Dobrin argues that recognizing grammatical and structural developments in language enables people to gain knowledge by seeing the progression of ideas. Likewise, as Micciche points out, for a language user to create meaningfully or critique political texts, they must recognize how grammar enables them to link common ideas. Coogan's article reflects a progression of Micciche and Dobrin's arguments. He centers his argument on using rhetorical writing strategies to solicit social change.

These four theorists anticipate theoretically the practical applications expressed in Knapp and Poster's articles. Knapp suggests that limiting texts on the Internet prohibit the community from interacting and communicating about political and social events. Furthermore, Poster asserts that online discussions increase democracy because communication improves and when the Internet is censored, stating and critiquing ideas—the key tools of democracy—are limited.

When an Orwellian critique of language and service-oriented and rhetorical grammar theories are combined, they have the power to critique not only the decline of the English language and offer solutions for an improvement in the language's usage, but to illuminate how the English language affects the current issue of Internet censorship in China. By noting the decline of vocabulary and grammar in English, one can understand how it is relatively easy for Chinese authorities to tag certain words for censorship. However, while it may be recognized that Americans contributed to the overuse of words and phrases and therefore to the decline of language, it may not be clear how removing access to words on the Chinese Internet poses a problem. What is at stake for Chinese Internet users—who are not permitted to discuss, learn about, or contribute to knowledge about "democracy," "human rights," "freedom," and many other words—is their right to free expression of ideas.

Two questions arise from the claim that Chinese users suffer in their right to free expression of ideas: (1) are words like "democracy," "human rights," and "freedom" essential for a critique of political, social, and economic systems; and (2) do these words demonstrate a declining English language? In order to answer these questions, a review of the etymology of democracy, human rights, and freedom as well as their contemporary usage is necessary. In the anthology New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society edited by Tony

Bennett and Meaghan Morris, Gregor McLennan, Bhikhu Parekh, and Andre Frankovits discuss the development and usage of common and rhetorically powerful words, like democracy, human rights, freedom, and many more.

In the entry for "Democracy," Gregor McLennan states that democracy has often been associated with positive political values because it intends for the majority to make decisions and that all people are equal before the law (72). However, its traditional meaning is not always the one that is used, as the situation in China demonstrates. China is technically called, "The People's Republic of China" and claims also to have a democratic government. McLennan points out that "Communist regimes used this doctrine to legitimate the 'people's democracies' by reference to their provision of public good and local participation in official or party arrangements, rather than to political freedom and general elections" (72-73). Even more generally, today democracy also refers to the diverse perspectives exchanged by individuals in a particular community and to "cyberdemocracy" as Poster argues and as China demonstrates (75). McLennan concludes that in the English language "the idea that democracy furthers the achievement of an ideal society through transparent and harmonious resolution of political differences has probably retreated" (76).

If McLennan is right that the word "democracy" is not as powerful as it once was and has broad and inclusive meanings, why is it a concern that the Chinese government has removed access on the Internet to "democracy?" The answer is that it restricts the ability of the Chinese citizen to even gather information about the word and the ideas associated with it, however many there may be. Democracy might not provide the ideal political model for today's global economy, but it has historical and social roots that Chinese Internet users should be able to gain information about and comment on.

Another word that the Chinese authorities censor and is listed in New Keywords is "freedom." Bhikhu Parekh states, "In its ordinary usage freedom means absence of restraints or restrictions" (132). Parekh argues for several reasons that "freedom" is rhetorically powerful. First, freedom is associated with the natural condition of humans. Second, freedom reflects human's dignity, self-respect, and pride. Third, freedom allows people to make their own choices and suffer the appropriate consequences for those choices (133). Parekh demonstrates through the variety of definitions of "freedom"—all of which contain at their root a different understanding of the word "freedom" and the identity of people—that there is no clear agreement of what freedom is or does for humanity.

Why would the Chinese government want to censor a word like "freedom" which affirms the natural qualities and abilities of humans and reflects many understandings about the human condition? It seems that the Chinese authorities are concerned that, if their citizens learn about freedom and ask if they have it, rebellions against the current form of government might occur. They want it to appear to both their citizens and to powerful countries throughout the world that they are economically and socially progressive and can effectively govern and educate their citizens. If they allow their citizens to ask if the Chinese government and its policies are legitimate, the government of China could be perceived to be weak according to the perspective of first-world countries. "Freedom," therefore, seems to be censored because it could incite social upheaval. Given what the various concepts of freedom can do, it also seems to be censored because it is a political buzzword connected to overused American phrases calling for liberation movements. The overuse of "freedom" has diminished American's ability to describe the concepts of freedom in alternative ways.

Another commonly used American phrase that has lost rhetorical

power because it is tagged on to almost any political, social, or economic agenda is "human rights." Again, this phrase is both censored by the Chinese government and is found in New Keywords. Andre Frankovits' article "Human Rights" shows the progression of the phrase since its creation with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. While rights language was used as early as the seventeenth century and referred primarily to restricting the powers of kings, the idea of rights grew to include equality, property, life, liberty, legal process, and happiness by the eighteenth century (168). However, Frankovits suggests that "the rights-based approach to development is another term increasingly void of meaning" and "is now part of the policy statements of most development agencies as well as non-government development organizations" (169).

"Human rights" is a term that definitively demonstrates the impact of the English language on developing countries. China censors the phrase on their Internet because, like "freedom," it can encourage people to ask what should be guaranteed to them by their government. This particular phrase reveals the decline of the English language since Americans do not find more effective ways of combating political, social, and economic injustices through use of the English language. If Americans desired to do so, they could find more concrete and accurate ways of describing the situations faced by economically, religiously, and educationally oppressed people than by overusing the phrase "human rights." Instead, it is much easier for Americans to disguise all of their frustrations with the government under the phrase, proven to be rhetorically powerful, "human rights." The use of the term has raised awareness in America about certain injustices, so it is obvious why citizens in China who want to confront the injustices in their own country would use a successful phrase in American reform. However, the use of the term in America and subsequently its exportation to

China no longer liberates, since those using it on the Internet in China are reprimanded.

American self-censorship needs to be corrected. Americans employ the easy tactic of "censoring" themselves and not using language effectively. They censor themselves when they merely reduplicate common sentence patterns and phrases and do not expand their vocabulary. As a result, Americans discuss concepts—particularly political, social, and economic ones—using non-descript terms that communicate nothing substantial or new and mimicking words that they do not understand, neither in definition nor in etymology. Clearly the decline of the English language and its negative impacts on developing countries needs to be reversed.

When the various elements discussed in this paper are combined, a solution to the problem arises: Americans must become intolerant of verbal sloth. The best place for this to begin is within college composition classes. When American students are unfamiliar with the fecundity of the English language, they have no choice but to be trite in their descriptions of complex political, social, and economic systems. Employing rhetorical grammar and service-oriented pedagogies in the composition classroom initiates the reverse of the English language's decline. Students must learn to analyze rhetorical force within sentences by understanding how grammar and punctuation provide a variety of modes for expression. As they develop facility with the tools of the English language, the students will recognize the bankruptcy of political discourse and, therefore, will critique the political, social, and economic systems. For instance, when American options for international policy no longer can take the rhetorical form of "stay the course" or "cut and run," then American policy issues will have to be framed in more semantically rich structure. When this occurs, the public figures framing the debate will be forced to use language

articulately, and this will further facilitate a reverse in the decline. At this point, the English language will have regained its vitality.

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This Machine Kills Propagandists:
Developing the Propriety of Metaphor in Theory
by Peter Schelden

Peter Schelden was born and raised in southern California's Inland empire. He is a full-time student at California State University, Long Beach, where he is pursuing a master's degree in English literature. His academic focus is 18th-century British literature. His personal focus is on his parents, Kerry and Jayne, his brother, Luke, and his girlfriend, Angela.

"Explication," or elaboration of the metaphor's grounds, if not regarded as an adequate cognitive substitute for the original, may be extremely valuable. A powerful metaphor will no more be harmed by such probing than a musical masterpiece by analysis of its harmonic and melodic structure. No doubt metaphors are dangerous—and perhaps especially so in philosophy. But a prohibition against their use would be a wilful and harmful restriction upon our powers of inquiry. Black, 79 (sic)

The use of metaphor has become increasingly accepted in academic writing. The style has become so prevalent that the hostility philosophers once directed at figurative language seems bizarre. In the past, metaphor was disdained for its approximating, imprecise

treatment of its subject. Thomas Hobbes listed metaphor as the sixth cause of absurdity. He criticized

> the use of metaphors, tropes, and other rhetorical figures, instead of words proper. For though it be lawful to say, for example in common speech, the way goeth, or leadeth or thither; the proverb says this or that, wheras ways cannot go, nor proverbs speak; yet in reckoning and seeking of truth, such speeches are not to be admitted. (20)

Indeed, metaphor is so common today that Hobbes' criticisms seem, at best, quaint, and at worst, polemical and hegemonic.

Many now believe metaphor lies at the very beginning of human understanding. By considering the work of child psychologists, author Ellen Winner collaborated a list of rudimentary metaphors created by children: "comb' for centipede . . . 'drooling' for water dripping down from the ceiling; 'cornflakes' for freckles" and so on (90). The studies she compiled show that children as young as three can produce and understand simple metaphors (185). Such an early development of the capacity for metaphor suggests that humans are literally made to find and create meaning through the formerly maligned device. Indeed, while human cognition remains largely a mystery, a growing number of researchers believe metaphor is an important, if not central, characteristic of understanding itself.

Still, it is perhaps too hasty to reject the intention of the philosophers when they argued against metaphor. As Max Black warns at the conclusion of his defense of metaphor, the device can be dangerous, particularly to philosophers. Perhaps the best way to explore this danger is to consider the job of the literary theorist.

Primarily, theorists attempt to understand and explain writing. The job of the theorist is to use writing to render literature or related concepts more explicit. Proper theory is accomplished through clarity,

accuracy and carefulness in writing. It must be so: theoretical writing that is unclear, inaccurate or careless fails in its primary function. Above all, theory must describe actual things in the world, whether these things be relatively concrete, like the grammar of a sentence, or more abstract, like the mind of the author.

If it aims to change things in the world, i.e., political theory, a theory must do more than simply describe problems. It must submit recommendations for improving the problems. Without this, political theory easily becomes the bastion of solipsists, narrow-minded cynics and idlers, but also, more dangerously, propagandists who know reality and intentionally distort it, sometimes under the pretense of political action.

To begin this exploration into the rights and wrongs of metaphorical argumentation, a consideration of the basic function of metaphor is in order. Philosopher John Searle's definitions serve the purpose of this paper because he is a clear and careful writer, he employs accurate examples, and he has the advantage of writing recently on the subject. His definitions both encapsulate a majority of the foregoing thought on metaphor and improve on that thought.

According to Searle, the difference between a literal and a metaphorical statement is a difference between "word and sentence meaning, on one hand, and speaker's meaning or utterance meaning, on the other" (249). He claims, "Metaphorical meaning is always speaker's utterance meaning" (250). Implicit in this idea, to understand a metaphor always necessarily requires one to understand, guess, approach, approximate, or otherwise discern the speaker's intended meaning. This definition even accomodates Roland Barthes, whose proclamation of the "death of the author" recognizes the fundamental importance of reading, which he calls "the true place of writing" (1469).

This suggests one of the biggest problems concerning metaphor: The device is at once both linguistic and cognitive. This confirms I.A. Richards, who was one of the first to recognize this property: "[Traditional theory] made metaphor seem to be a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words, whereas fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts" (51, his emphasis). Disagreements about the way this process is shared between language and cognition have caused an ongoing discussion in linguistics, philosophy and related fields. This is an exceedingly difficult area of inquiry, and even a fundamentally sufficient presentation of the arguments would expand this paper beyond reason. Instead, I will consider a specific thread of the conversation regarding metaphor.

John Stuart Mill writes that metaphor "is not to be considered as an argument, but as an assertion that an argument exists" (375). In other words, he believes metaphors don't solve problems, they just show the problems that need to be solved. The problem with metaphor, it seems, and perhaps of language in general, is that it can't ever make a truly natural connection to the world. It always approximates reality. Maybe this approximation is necessary, but if so, that means imprecision is always already a part of any description of reality. When language or any other tool is employed to describe the world, the description will always be distorted by that tool. Metaphor sometimes exacerbates this distortion, and sometimes reduces its effect.

Black, Slavoj Žižek, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty pursue this problem in their discussions of language. Black, an Azerbaijani immigrant to London, is best known for his work in the philosophy of language. He wrote roughly contemporaneously with Merleau-Ponty, a French phenomenologist/existentialist writing in the middle of the 20th century. Žižek is a contemporary Slovenian cultural theorist who

approaches theory from a post-Lacanian/Marxist perspective. These widely disparate thinkers share one interesting commonality: Each of these writers describes the gap between reality and language in essentially the same way. Each of these theorists even uses the same metaphor; the screen.

Primarily interested in the way language works, Black describes metaphor in the following way:

> Suppose I look at the night sky through a piece of heavily smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear. Then I shall see only the stars that can be made to lie on the lines previously prepared upon the screen, and the stars I do see will be seen as organized by the screen's structure. We can think of a metaphor as such a screen . . . We can say that the principal subject is "seen through" the metaphorical expression—or, if we prefer, that the principal subject is "projected upon" the field of the subsidiary subject. (75)

Black claims that metaphor screens out potential meanings in language. By allowing only a particular variety of meanings, metaphors impose limits that allow thought and concentration to exist. This is similar to Ferdinand de Saussure's claim that "without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula," in that signs (in our case metaphors) act as the partitions which shape and define human thought (967).

Merleau-Ponty went further than Black in describing the role of metaphor. He believed, according to Jerry H. Gill, that "literal propositions must be substituted for metaphoric expressions if cognitivity is to be maintained: Merleau-Ponty flatly denies the dichotomy between these two "kinds" of language" (126). Merleau-Ponty employs the same metaphor of a screen to describe the reality-language relationship. In his poetic way, the philosopher argues persuasively that speaking is not merely a furtherance of lies, but instead

language can bring us into a closer relationship with the world:

> If . . . we consider the speaking word, the assuming of the
> conventions of his native language as something natural
> by him who lives within that language . . . that language-
> thing which counts as an arm, as action, as offense and as
> seduction because it brings to the surface all the deep-rooted
> relations of the lived experience wherein it takes form, and
> which is the language of life and of action but also that of
> literature and of poetry. (126)

For him, language is not just an alien impediment to "real" experience with or understanding of the world; it creates the ability for our bodies to experience and understand. This is why he employs the metaphor of an "arm;" just as an arm functions to explore and recognize objects in the tactile world, so language explores and recognizes thoughts, ideas, and communicates them to others. Arms are like native language in that both are tools of the Self, and each is similarly natural.

Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty recognizes a distortion at the fundaments of language. This is a necessary distortion, he says, because this is the way our bodies assimilate phenomenal information:

> There is no vision without the screen: the ideas we are
> speaking of would not be better known to us if we had
> no body and no sensibility; it is then that they would be
> inaccessible to us. (150)

The distortion of language so disdained by past philosophers, the metaphor which imposes a mediation between self and other, between self and the world, becomes the only point of access between these dichotomies.

Black and Merleau-Ponty share the thought that further understanding can be elucidated through distortion, and since Merleau-Ponty grounds all language in metaphor, each is describing

the process of learning through metaphor. Žižek picks up Merleau-Ponty's argument that the body necessitates metaphor. But Žižek describes the phenomenon in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, which will be particularly useful in the following consideration of Lennard Davis. For Žižek, the distorting screen of language is the Real:

> The Real is not the abyss of the Thing that forever eludes our grasp, and on account of which every symbolization of the Real is partial and inappropriate; it is, rather, that invisible obstacle, that distorting screen, which always "falsifies" our access to external reality, that "bone in the throat" which gives a pathological twist to every symbolization, that is to say, on account of which every symbolization misses its object. (67)

The key distinction between the distortion of language/metaphor and an out-and-out falsehood is a matter of degree. As such, its position will necessarily change depending on the metaphor and the way it is used. Nonetheless, metaphor's work as a screen should follow the screening process of phenomenal recognition of the world: It should describe the world as it exists as nearly as possible, with as little imaginative distortion as possible, in order to render an account of the world as universally true as possible.

One common misconception of imagination inhibits this process. Often people say that the imagination is boundless, that it is unlimited. This often leads them to believe that the imagination is arbitrary, that the images come from out of nowhere. While there may be an infinite number of ways a person can imagine a particular thing or act, there are nevertheless limits to our imagination. I couldn't possibly imagine an object I've never known or an act with which I've had no phenomenal experience. Turner defines the three imaginative limits as "knowledge, our experience, and our modes of cognition" (16). Assuming the

position of Žižek and Merleau-Ponty, each of these imaginative limits is distorted by the body.

Part of the danger that metaphor presents is that it can be incorporated into further human understanding unchecked by critical analysis. It can produce values which limit understanding and propagate dogma. This process is described by John J. Clancy, an information systems executive and CEO who considers the way metaphorical distortions in reality can lead to failed business decisions. He uses a demonstration of the metaphorical use of "up" as a sign of western progress:

> In our culture, "up" is a positive direction. Hence, "More is better" is derived from "More is up" and "Up is good". Similarly, "Bigger is better" is derived by way of the same reasoning. The future is also "up" for us, so the future will be better and there clearly will be "more" in the future. Since higher status is also "up," your future will bring a better lot. The future as bigger, better, and more prestigious is nothing less than the "idea of progress," perhaps the most fundamental tenet in the West since the Enlightenment and still an article of faith for millions. (25, sic)

Clancy is describing the devices of metaphor which propagate a concept which has been repeatedly criticized as unsustainable by authors as disparate as Oswald Spengler and Terry Eagleton. Also the criticism often occurs more popularly in environmentalist criticisms of capitalist society. But partly because of the popularized metaphors adopted by western society, these criticisms seem outlandish. Such is the power of a falsifying metaphor.

This leads me to Davis, author of "Enforcing Normalcy." In this article, Davis hopes to convince us, among other things, that we falsify our imaginary construction of the Venus de Milo by imagining

her with arms, and this is the reason why we are able to consider her "the most beautiful female figure in the world" (2401). Davis tells us that for art historians to appreciate the beauty of Venus, they use their imagination as a psychological defense mechanism to fill in her missing arms and make her whole. He writes:

> The art historian in essence dons or retains the armor of identity . . . The art historian's defense is that mirror-like shield that conjures wholeness through a misrecognition linking the parts into a whole. (2411)

To give a short explanation of this complex metaphor, Davis means that the arbiters of beauty, in this case art historians, and probably by extension all "normal" people (though he is somewhat ambiguous on this point), use the imagination to fill in the fragments of bodies, both theirs and others. Davis borrows from Lacan the concept of *corps morcele*, which the footnote defines as "to divide up into pieces" (2409). Davis asserts that as early infants, humans experience their bodies as fragments. He associates this with the Lacanian Real:

> The realm of the 'Real' in Lacanian terms is where the fragmented body is found because it is the body that precedes the ruse of identity and wholeness. (2411)

The imagination later creates a unifying identity which allows us all to make coherent sense of our bodies, and which I presume allows us many of our basic motor functions and cognitive abilities.

This is a complicated metaphor. Foremost, this is an allusion to the Greek hero Perseus (identified with reason), whose story Davis reiterates earlier. In the myth Perseus decapitates Medusa, first avoiding her image by viewing her through a reflective shield. Medusa is not Venus, but for his metaphor to work, Davis would like to make that as obscure as possible.

When presenting the two figures, Davis never writes that Medusa

and Venus are the same. In fact, he explicitly calls them opposites. But some of the language he uses is suggestive of a pairing, somewhat like the grade-school game of telling someone not to think of a pink elephant: The image is in the mind before it can be rationally removed. He says that Venus is "dialectically linked with Medusa," that she is "tied to" Medusa, that they are appropriate figures of comparison, that Medusa is a "poignant double" to Venus (2404). If I may suggest a metaphor, Davis is planting seeds of similarity in the imagination of his reader.

Five paragraphs later, Davis points out that several Venus statues are currently without arms and heads. Davis wants us to accept that this historical accident is enough to combine the two figures: "The headlessness and armlessness of Venuses link them, structurally, with the Medusa tradition" (2406). Perhaps sensing the weakness of his own conflation, Davis suggests the statues were intentionally dismembered in two weakly-worded sentences:

> There *seems* to be a reciprocal relationship between the decapitations of Medusa in myth and of Venus in reality. It *seems* that the Venus is really only made possible in coordination with the Medusa. (2406, my emphasis)

Exactly how the Venus statues lost their "arms" and "heads" was never recorded. He admits, "We do not know and will probably never know what happened to these statues," (2406). Davis nonetheless takes this lack of record as an opportunity to assert his own fiction:

> Did all these statues lose their arms and heads by sheer accident, were the structurally fragile head and limbs more likely to deteriorate than the torso, were there random acts of vandalism, or was a particular kind of symbolic brutality committed on these stone women? (2407)

In the same way Intelligent Design creationists assert that a lack of

certain layers of fossilized record is enough evidence to reasonably conjecture that an intelligent creator brought life to Earth (in the process contradicting all scientific indications to the contrary), Davis uses the banal limitations of historical record to posit his own ideologically-charged theory. He writes,

> Did vandals, warriors, and adolescent males amuse themselves by committing focused acts of violence, of sexual bravado and mockery on these embodiments of desire? (2408-09)

He then associates the imagined desecration of these historical artifacts with male sexual perversity and phallic hegemony. Did the statues decay naturally? Were they actually vandalized? Do the actual events even matter? Davis doesn't have to take a stance on these points: If his audience imagines wild, reckless teenaged warriors lustily lopping off the heads of Venus statues (and who can help it?), the work of his argument is already done. Rather than study the fractures and fissures of the stone work, Davis conjectures.

Let's return to the other metaphor, the one that needs us to construe Venus in terms of Medusa. Lest you think I'm avoiding Davis' more literal arguments by focusing on his most metaphorical, I will later examine the reason the "art historian . . . dons or retains the armor of identity." But first, allow me to comment on a pernicious uncertainty within the quoted passage. Davis says that art historians (and, by likely extension, all normal people) don *or* retain the imaginative function of identity, which allows us to see the Venus as beautiful. Whether they don or retain the imaginative function may seem inconsequential, but it is actually of the greatest consequence to his argument. Do we intentionally hallucinate the correct image of a disabled person, or is this an unconscious need to correct something we automatically perceive as wrong? In other words, are we active in the perception of a

disabled person as someone who needs to be fixed, or do we passively experience the impulse to fix that person? This is a point which Davis censoriously avoids. His language suggests that normal people are responsible for this imaginative act, which he calls a delusion, but his argument rests on Freudian and Lacanian theories of the unconscious.

Davis' language makes it difficult to pin him to a position, but it can be done. Where he comes at odds with Žižek is in the definition of the Real. Davis implies that the Real can be known: "the fragment, the disabled parts, can be seen as the originary, familiar, body made unfamiliar by repression [the Imaginary]" (2412). In other words, a body completely in the dimension of the Real, without an Imaginary (deluding, as he puts it) function, can be "familiar," or in other words, know itself in some way (2411). He finds a center in the body in terms of the Real: "We all—first and foremost—have fragmented bodies. It is in tracing our tactical and self-constructing (deluding) journeys away from that originary self that we come to conceive and construct that phantom goddess of wholeness, normalcy, and unity—the nude" (2411).

As if answering Davis directly, Žižek counters this interpretation of Lacan:

> One should emphasize that the Lacanian Real is not *another* Center, a "deeper," "truer" focal point or "black hole" around which symbolic formations fluctuate; rather, it is the obstacle on account of which every Center is always displaced, missed. (67, his emphasis)

For Žižek, the Real is *not* another center. It is *not* the "originary, familiar body" as Davis would have it (2412). It is, rather, the way our perceptions are distorted by the unattainable world. By suggesting that the Real should be preferred in our understanding of the disabled body over the Imaginary, in that the Real is "first and foremost," Davis

misses the whole function of the Real in Lacanian thought.

But back to the armor of identity. Davis believes that disability is a social construct. He argues that people with disabilities have to perform in society like disabled people, an argument that on its own is strong and convincing. But to convince his readers that this is true, Davis appeals to the Freudian term *spaltung*: an act of splitting. He claims that cultures make decisive, dialectical splits between good and bad, as well as between abled and disabled. To explain this, he describes the experience of an infant: "When the child is satisfied by the parent, the parent is the good parent; when the child is not satisfied, the parent is bad. As a child grows out of the earliest phases of infancy, she learns to combine those split images into a single parent who is sometimes good and sometimes not." (2403). Davis uses this model of infant development to identify society at large. Put in Paul De Man's terms, *spaltung* acts as a symbol for Davis, in the sense that it "postulates the possibility of identity or identification" rather than designating a distance between society and its origin in human infancy (210). This has the effect of conflating the two improperly.

Spaltung is plausible as a definition of child development, but the construction of social values based on this model is suspect. First, *spaltung* is a description of the unconscious. Society and social mores and values are largely determined by their social construction, through political bureaucracy in the case of the United States. It is not sufficient to claim that democratic social policy, at least in its bureaucratic and legislative function, are constructed directly from the unconscious. The connection he provides in this chapter is insufficient and suggests a reliance on the basic genus-species logical fallacy.

Davis suggests that for societies, it is "imperative" (his word) to employ *spaltung* to distinguish between the good and the bad. At this moment, *spaltung* sounds like a necessary thing. Davis says that it

"neatly cover[s] up the frightening writing on the wall that reminds the hallucinated whole being that its wholeness is in fact a hallucination, a developmental fiction" (2403). In other words, without the function of the *spaltung*, we would be perpetually horrified by the fragments of our body parts. We would fail to appreciate the body as a whole body.

But *spaltung* is also the "mirror-like shield" which deludes us. Davis writes,

> We all—first and foremost—have fragmented bodies. It is in tracing our tactical and self-constructing (deluding) journeys away from that originary self that we come to conceive and construct that phantom goddess of wholeness, normalcy, and unity—the nude. (2411)

Perhaps, just as Davis combines the beautiful Venus with the dreadful Medusa, just as he fails to distinguish the active illusion of wholeness from the passive, he also cares little about the ethical or unethical possibility of the human use of *spaltung*. More likely, he is being careless, which has the same ultimate effect.

In his work on metaphor, Turner gives an excellent explanation of a fundamental mistake made in deconstructive readings of Saussure's linguistics. This seems to be a fundamental mistake perpetuated by Davis. Turner explains that the "distributional contrasts" between words, like /d/og and /c/og, allow difference in phonemes[1] which in turn create the distinctions in language that make language possible (6). On this point, Turner and the deconstructionists agree.

He takes issue, however, with the way deconstructionists extend this relationship to lexemes, which are "for the most part, words" (6). He writes, "The details of this extension have never been anything but murky," but he nonetheless attempts to find the logic with which deconstructionists connect phonemes and lexemes. He writes that the conflation relies on two assumptions. First: the phonemic system

is grounded nowhere but in itself, which Turner claims has been discredited by modern linguistic research. Second: lexemes work like phonemes, an assertion Turner calls "wrong on a grand scale" (6). He writes,

Words are not sound segments and meanings are not phonemes. The putative linguistics presupposed by the principle of the free play of signifiers has no serious basis in contemporary linguistics or cognitive science. If anything, the opposite seems to be true. (7)

Turner demonstrates the results of this faulty conflation: "To the deconstructive critic, presence can mean absence, or anything else; up can mean down, or anything else; mother can mean father, or anything else" (7). In Davis' case, missing "limbs" of statues can be caused by historical accident or reckless, depraved teenaged boys, or anything else. The Real can be a source of disintegration or originary wholeness, or anything else. *Spaltung* can be a social necessity or a social evil, or anything else.

Critics ought to be allowed some authority in the interpretation of meaning. Their job is to faithfully account reality, to construct the real world in the most accurate and precise language possible. Most often a bit of play exists within a given text, which allows for reasonable theorists to disagree. But critical interpretations like Davis' exaggerate the gap between reality and language, finding play where no play exists. This not only harms the reader, but it harms the disabled people he intends to help by making their argument for fair treatment appear ridiculous. Disability critic Michael Bérubé may have had in mind just this when he wrote, "We need to remember . . . that there's a *there* there, that the biological materiality of the body is susceptible to a finite . . . number of constructions" (341). Are the harmful effects of *spaltung* avoidable? Can disabled people be accepted as people, not

just as broken bodies? Of course we all hope they can, but by writing difficult and obtuse metaphors in the service of avoiding basic physical truths, or of determining any truth whatsoever, Davis fails as a theorist and in the process, disseminates propaganda.

Metaphor is inescapable, and its uses and abuses should be studied and recognized in literary theory. The application of metaphor which is inaccurate or imprecise does more than create headaches for critical readers: it slips uncritical suggestions into the readings which take time and care for future generations to remove. This is a waste of mental effort that could be better applied to solving serious problems. Instead of hazardously inscribing loose metaphors, a good theorist engages the difficult questions, suggests possible answers, offers legitimate and constructive arguments in favor of those answers, and gives due weight to opposing arguments. Anything short of this demonstrates a tendency of deception and manipulation, and serves no one but the propagandist.

Notes

[1] which should not be confused with simply word-sounds; these are mental concepts as well.

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Mary, Queen of Scots: An Unauthorized Text
by Keri Wolf

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How are we to read and interpret Mary, Queen of Scots? This question, which caused unceasing debate during Mary's life and reign, persists today more than 400 years after she was beheaded at the order of her cousin, Elizabeth I of England. In an effort to answer it, critics, historians, and authors have proposed numerous contradictory representations of Mary and Elizabeth. These women, whether portrayed in opposition or relation to each other, have been seemingly haphazardly categorized as mothers/wives and whores throughout the last four and a half centuries. As James Emerson Phillips asserts, some of the most vibrant oppositional depictions and images concern Mary, Queen of Scots: "One is the image of a sinister and adulterous murderess constantly plotting with every Machiavellian trick to destroy England and Protestantism. The other is that of a supremely beautiful woman, a devoted wife and mother, and an innocent martyr for the

faith in which she died" (7). Two contemporary characterizations of Mary aptly illustrate Phillips' observation. In *A Defence of the Honour of the Ryght Hyghe, Ryght Myghtye and Noble Princesse Marie*, John Leslie refers to Mary as "a ladye and Princes" of "noble byrthe," "honorable state," and "princelye education," who lived a "godlye, and vertuouse lyfe" (3-4). However, George Buchanan dedicates *A Detection of the Actions of Mary Queen of Scots* to proving the contrary view, calling Mary a woman "greedily coveting untempered authority," who planned the murder of Darnley and her marriage to Bothwell through "mad love, infamous adultery, and vile parricide" (58-59). How could one figured so innocent also be read as veracious harlot? Examining the early modern connection between the circulating woman and the circulating text illuminates answers to this puzzling question.

In "The Printer to the Reader" prefacing the 1570 John Day publication of *The Tragidie of Gorboduc; or of Ferrex and Porrex,* the book is explicitly gendered female. Commenting upon a 1565 publication and circulation of a "corrupted" edition of the play, the publisher compares it with the circulation of a ravished woman; thus, the circulating text becomes the circulating woman. The text is thrust out of doors to wander about, yet the publisher places responsibility for what happened to it on the text itself, claiming that the authors "were very much displeased that she [the text] so ranne abroad' without leaue." The source of the authors' displeasure lies in the fact that they lose control of their text because it is placed into circulation through print. Significantly, although the authors view her as corrupted and defiled, the text attains a type of power through her separation from her creators because she no longer conforms to their intentions. As "The Printer to the Reader" initially states, "this tragedie was for furniture of part of the grand Christmasse in the Inner Temple . . . and never intended by the authors therof to be published." Through publishing

an "authorized" version of *Gorboduc*, the authors attempt to contain the wanton text and again subjugate it to their control, re-dressing her according to their desires and preferences and then sending her out again with their stamp of approval, or mark of control.

Written in 1570, just after the murder of Darnley and Queen Mary's subsequent marriage to Bothwell, this preface provides a useful context in which to evaluate the two "circulating" women of the time—Mary, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth of England—and their writing. As seen through her trial records and Buchanan's account, *A Detection of the Actions of Mary Queen of Scots*, Mary became a type of unauthorized text. Just as the ravaged text of the *Gorboduc* play assumed an autonomous power because it circulated apart from its authors' intentions, Mary posed a danger to society by operating outside of social conventions, often through her own writing. Society attributes the title of *whore* to Mary because she circulated uncontained, removed from the authorship of the patriarchal society. Mary's hearing and trial documents focus on her circulation (as a desirable woman, a French and Scottish ruler, and a claimant to the English throne) through her letters. She overstepped the bounds society prescribed for her, a fact symbolized through her letters. And, ultimately, she was condemned on the basis of letters attributed to her.

When she refused to conform to patriarchal society's intentions for her, Mary became a whore to society, an unauthorized text. As the sovereign, she posed a serious threat to the patriarchal hierarchy. Because she was an educated woman who could write, the threat reached an even more dangerous level. Wendy Wall summarizes the link between harlotry and the writing woman in the early modern period: "Constrained by the norms of acceptable feminine behavior, women were specifically discouraged from tapping into the newly popular channel of print; to do so threatened the cornerstone of their moral and

social well-being" (280). Although this threat of the educated female ruler is more commonly discussed in conjunction to Elizabeth, it could actually be more relevant to consider with Mary as the focus. While Mary was a small child, the men surrounding her acted to prevent her from becoming a governing, ungovernable woman. Autonomy was denied to her from birth as adult men—Parliament and Henry II—charted the course of her life: after the French forces besieged Haddington in 1548

> Parliament convened in the nearby Abbey and, after only the shortest of discussions, approved the treaty between Scotland and France. The French lieutenant-general, André de Montalembert, Sieur d'Essé, explained that Henry II had 'set his whole heart and mind for [the] defence of this realm' and sought to betroth Mary to his son. Parliament quickly acceded to this as 'very reasonable.' (Guy 41)

Society prescribed her position and role for her: Mary was to be a wife. With Mary betrothed to the Dauphin Francis at five years old and married less than ten years later, it would seem she was firmly secured in a subordinate position.

Yet Mary refused to act passively as a paper to be written upon and instead set herself into circulation by making decisions based upon her own will. Buchanan records this transformation of Mary from merchandise to merchant in his Preface to the *Detection*:

> At five years of age (the Scots seeing they were likely to make better merchandize of her in France, than in England). . .sent her into France, and at 12 married her to the Dauphin, afterward Francis the first, who at two years left her a widow, and so she returned to Scotland. . . . She [her mother] being remov'd, the Queen came to be Master of herself, and soon after in a gaity took Henry Lord Darley

[sic]. . .to her Husband. (i-ii)

Buchanan's use of verbs emphasizes Mary's rise to autonomy and self-empowerment. At first, she is an object of the will of others both grammatically and as a person: others send her to France and marry her to the Dauphin. However, she transforms into the subject after the death of Francis and is the one performing actions of her own will: she returns to Scotland and takes Darnley as her husband.

In becoming "master of herself," Mary usurped the social order and became hazardous to society. John Knox airs his fears concerning the possibility of the ungovernable governess in *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*:

> To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire above any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance, and finallie it is the subversion of good order, of all equitie and justice. (21)

As he argues, a woman ruler creates an imbalance of justice and equity because she is not subject to the presumably natural order[2] and thus assumes a dangerous autonomy. And power necessarily accompanies this autonomy.

Buchanan, in compiling his evidence for Mary's harlotry, illustrates how her own power over her body and her stereotypical womanly unrestrained passion gave her complete power over the men in her life—not only her husbands but also her lovers. Because she controlled her body, she dictated when Darnley could access her. Consequently, her husband was forced to earn her affection. Indebted and subjected to her whims, he constantly chased after Mary: "The King[3] . . .followed her [Mary]. . .by land, and there overtook her, in purpose and hoping to enjoy the mutual loving fellowship of marriage," but instead, "he was enforced to get him away in haste again,

on pain of further peril" while the queen "pastimed there certain days …in unprincely licentiousness" (7). Buchanan's most graphic depiction of Mary's unrestrained appetitive power over men almost likens her to a kidnapping rapist. According to him, Mary dispatched the former harlot Lady Rerese, "a woman of most vile unchastity" (8), to bring Bothwell "captive unto her highness" (8), and "running to Bothwel's chamber, she [Lady Rerese] gate the door open, and out of his bed, even out of his wife's arms, half asleep, half naked, she forceably brings the man to the Queen" (9). Yet Mary's unbounded nature was not limited to her bodily appetites.

Mary can be seen as a wandering woman because she was also uncontained in her written work. Wall notes that "the female writer could become a 'fallen' woman in a double sense: branded as a harlot or a member of the nonelite" (281). However, Wall seems to gloss over the power that is inherent in being "fallen." The harlot experiences freedom in exempting herself from social rules, and she can do what she wishes with her body. Likewise, the wanton woman writer can circulate her "body" through her writing. Thus, the mere physical containment of Mary would not suffice. Mary's letters became an extension of her: they issued forth from her in her handwriting, bearing her signature. Writing transformed into a symbol of, and evidence for, Mary's bodily circulation. It is through letters that Mary circulated her body, extended her power, and increased her autonomy. Consequently, her letters symbolize her harlotry because they are a part of the excess early modern society considered inappropriate in women.

From the beginnings of the debate concerning Mary's circulation, letters have been inextricably tied to her female body. Mary allegedly used letters as a means to affect her harlotry both in a symbolic and physical sense. The Casket Letters controversy exemplifies and expounds this issue. These letters, allegedly written by Mary to Bothwell, were

produced in the Westminster proceedings as physical evidence of Mary's conspiracy with Bothwell to kill Darnley and marry Bothwell. Buchanan perpetuates this allegation when he claims that "now, I suppose, I have briefly declared. . .of what purpose, by what counsel, and upon what hope, that heinous murder was attempted with what cruelty it was executed, by what tokens, advertisements, testimonies, and letters of the Queen herself, the whole matter is proved" (84). Letters were an effective way in which she instituted her will, and they are thus a method of extending power. Letters simultaneously became representative of Mary's excess and a means to achieve it.

Consequently, for Buchanan, constraining Mary's physical body was only one part of the solution to restraining the circulation of this unconventional queen and re-inscribing her into the position society deems appropriate for her—the submissive lady in conformance with the will of her male "superiors." Her letters also had to be prevented from circulating. However, some letters had already been exchanged when Buchanan wrote. Thus, in *A Detection*, Buchanan attempts to accomplish the identical result as the printer of *Gorboduc* does in his Preface to the reader—damage control. Both the 1565 print version of *Gorboduc* and Mary "circulated" unauthorized, and the Preface to *Gorboduc* points out that this circulation cannot be reversed: "the authors. . .seing the case, as it is, remedilesse, haue, for common honestie and shamefastnesse, new apparelled, trimmed, and attired her in such forme as she was before" (503). The problem did not dissipate: the text was free to roam about without authorization.

As a result, the authors resorted to containing and subduing the text by re-contextualizing it and placing their own mark upon it to signify its subjugation. In the printer's metaphor, he sends the text forth with these final words:

If she be welcome among you, and gently enterteined, in

> fauor of the house from whense she is descended and of
> her owne nature courteously disposed to offend no man,
> her frendes will thanke you for it. If not, but that she shall
> be still reproched with her former missehap, or quarelled
> at by enuious persons, she, poore gentlewoman, will surely
> play Lucreces part, and of her-self die for shame; and I shall
> wishe that she had taried still at home with me, where she
> was welcome, for she did neuer put me to more charge but
> this one poore blacke gowne lined with white that I haue
> now geuen her to goe abroad among you withall. (504)

This passage emphasizes the text's utter dependence upon the author and the printer. The reference to the house from which she descends grounds her within social boundaries because the descendant is dependant upon the parents for its existence and the house is governed by a hierarchical structure with the oldest male as the head. Thus, women are subjugated to men by virtue of the family structure. In the case of the feminine *Gorboduc* text, the mark of the authors is a dress. The clothing given to her by a man covers the body of the text that was once freely displayed. This covering indicates a return to the place prescribed to her by her male authors. She is to be displayed only how and when they wish. In selecting her clothing, they contain her body, dressing it and presenting it to suit their own purposes according to their own desires. With this gown, she assumes the modesty deemed appropriate to her station as a constructed being dependant upon her authors for protection and clothing. And in this prescribed position, she is to offend no man.

In *Gorboduc*, the clothing in which the men attire the wanton text is the Preface itself. The act of attaching a preface to the text re-dresses it by placing a stamp of the authors upon it. Readers are to experience the text as the authors want them to since the text derives

its authority to roam about from the authors. Although it is tempting to read Buchanan's *Detection* as a work complete in itself, it actually functions as a preface to the Casket Letters, written in order to rein them in.[4] The physical act of attaching it to copies of the Casket Letters attributed to Mary demonstrates an attempt to contain the letters and contextualize them. Printing the three most incriminating letters with Buchanan's *Detection* in one bound volume ensured that the letters could not circulate freely and autonomously. Instead, they were inextricably connected to the *Detection,* which prescribes how readers are to view the letters and Mary, the accused author of them. As the Preface to the Reader notes, "Bothwel came into favour, and that how swiftly and powerfully you may perceive by the Letters annexed to the Discourse," and throughout the remainder of the text, Buchanan continues to remind the audience that "Mary's" letters prove her harlotry and deceit. Through this process, Buchanan and the social structure in which he lived simultaneously created and limited the power of the letters and the figure they are construed to represent, Mary. Allowing them to circulate autonomously without Buchanan's *Detection* would give them power: after reading them, readers could draw their own conclusions concerning Mary's innocence or guilt in the murder of Darnley and her association with Bothwell. But Buchanan seized this power from the letters by attaching the *Detection* to them, introducing the letters to the audience and prescribing an interpretation of Mary for his readers.

Mary's reliance on letters and her own writing in her second trial demonstrates the interconnectedness between her and her letters, illustrating how they served as an extension of her own body. Mary stated that "the laws and statutes of England are to me most unknown; I am destitute of counselors, and who shall be my peers I am utterly ignorant. My papers and Notes are taken from me, and no man dareth

step forth to be my advocate" (95). Later, she similarly remarked that "I, if my Notes were at hand, could answer particularly to these things" (104). Furthermore, the recorder quotes her as saying that "if her papers had not been taken away, and she had her Secretary, she could better confute the things objected against her" (106). Writing became a part of Mary. It was through her letters that she could extend her own body.

Mary's "whorish" excessiveness is connected to her letters because they allowed her to affect her will. They were not passive but were used to accomplish some intention of the author. In the record of her 1586 state trial, Mary offers her bodily containment as a weak defense against the charge that she conspired with Babington: "being shut up in prison, she could neither know nor hinder what they [the Catholics in England] attempted" (101). Yet clearly nearly twenty years of bodily containment in England did not completely restrain Mary. Amias Paulet, Mary's keeper in the years prior to her execution, was aware that

> there were several laundresses on the staff [at Tutbury] who lived outside the castle walls, and he was worried that Mary might suborn them to smuggle her secret correspondence. He warned that 'unless the women be also stripped unto their smocks' every time they passed the gates, he could not undertake to prevent this (Somerset 425).

Paulet's concerns physically connect Mary's letters with the bodies of women. Mary managed to carry out a secret correspondence for years although her body was immobile, so she clearly must have relied on her serving women to conceal her letters in their clothes and transport them for her. During her years of captivity, letters circulated in the form of women coming and going to Mary's chambers, again exemplifying how the connection between the wandering woman and

the unauthorized text in *Gorboduc* can illustrate the circulation of Mary's ideas and body.

Elizabeth herself seems to have recognized the powerful ability of Mary to use letters to enact her will and denied Mary written access to her during Mary's trial, although the two did correspond earlier.[5] The trial record notes that

> From hence she [Mary] fell into other speeches, that she
> had intended nothing to the destruction of the queen; that
> she had been incensed with injuries and indignities; that
> she should be a stone of offence to others, if she were so
> unworthily handled;. . .that she would have defended her
> innocency by letter, but it was not allowed her; and finally,
> that all the offices of kindness which she had tendered these
> twenty years, were rejected. (97)

Mary's words proved so compelling that her supporters sought to kill Elizabeth and place Mary on the English throne. The fact that Mary was not allowed to write a defense of herself indicates a complete attempt at containment of all aspects of Mary's circulation.

Ultimately, for Mary, Queen of Scots, letters functioned as not only a source of her power and autonomy but also the means for her opponents to attempt to constrain her. In her trial record, the evidence centers upon letters that she purportedly wrote, and the court makes an obvious effort to condemn her on the basis of her letters. Testimony in favor of her prosecution does not consist in eyewitness accounts that Mary was involved with a plot to murder Elizabeth, as would be expected. Instead, witnesses attempted to prove that the letters indicating such a plot were written by Mary. Her two secretaries testified to the authenticity of the letters entered as evidence: "Then pressed they her with the Testimonies of her Secretaries, Nau and Curle, out of Babington's Confession, and the Letters sent to and fro

betwixt her and Babington, and the whole credit of their Proofs rested upon their testimony" (103), to which Mary replied "that Babington and her Secretaries had accused her to excuse themselves," and "as for her Secretaries, seeing they had done contrary to their duty and allegiance sworn unto her, they deserved no credit. . . . Nau had many times written otherwise than she had dictated unto him, and Curle wrote whatsoever Nau bade him" (106-7). Permitting Mary's "secret" correspondences to continue allowed Elizabeth and England to gain power over Mary in the same way as the publishers gained power over the wanton text of *Gorboduc* that "ran abroad," away from its authors. Mary, as a circulating text, separated herself from the intentions of her authors, or society's prescription for her. Likewise, society attempted to constrain Mary by seizing her letters and attributing their own interpretations and intentions to them. Consequently, Mary's instrument of autonomy ultimately became a means for her opponents to imprison her and demand her death.

Interestingly, though, Mary's "circulation" endures through both the diffusion of the records of her execution and the description of her death itself. According to Robert Wyngfield's account of Mary's execution, even as she was about to die, Mary was concerned with perpetuating her own circulation in society, and she exhorted her servant Melvin to "carry this message from me, that I die a true woman to my religion, and like a true Queen of Scotland and France" (115). As Lewis comments:

> Wyngfield apparently produced his 'Circumstantial Account' for his distant relation, Elizabeth's treasurer, Lord Burghley, and though the account was initially intended for Burghley's eyes only, its fine attention to detail eventually made it the official report of the execution. It was often reprinted as such. (114)

Even the report of Mary's execution separates itself from the intentions of the writer and, like the woman herself, cannot be contained. Furthermore, Wyngfield's description of Mary's dead body mirrors the excessiveness that characterized her life to patriarchal society. Wyngfield reports a massive spread of Mary's blood that covered her clothing and a small dog after her beheading: "The dog, imbrued in her blood, was carried away and washed, as all things else were that had any blood, save those things that were burned" (120). Even Mary's belongings were prevented from leaving the scene and circulating about: "The executioners were sent away with money for their fees, not having any one thing that belonged unto her" (120). But death failed to supply a neat and tidy way to suppress the insuppressible woman. Although beheaded, the life of Mary's body, her blood, continued to stain all that touched it, and the accounts of her death cause many readers to venerate her as a heroine and martyr of the Catholic faith.

Whereas Mary might have failed to rule in conformity with societal norms, she succeeded in gaining more autonomy than other women of the time, including Elizabeth. Mary did not negotiate the boundary between the authorized, controlled text (wife) and the unauthorized and uncontained text (whore); rather, she simply embraced the unrestraint that prompted her society to place her in the category of the whore. But Elizabeth negotiated this boundary. Styling herself as a virgin, Elizabeth positioned herself in the middle of the opposites of wife and whore. As such, she was afforded more autonomy than the wife but was not completely uncontained by social boundaries as is the whore. So although Elizabeth succeeded in gaining relative authority within her social boundaries, she did not challenge them as forcefully as Mary did.

It may seem that for Mary and Elizabeth, a binary opposition existed between virgin and whore, and based on bodily openness

and closure, the wife would fall in the middle of these two opposites. But perhaps we can understand Mary and Elizabeth's social positions better by reconfiguring this supposed opposition. Constructing an opposition between the wife/mother and the whore creates a more accurate way to view the relationship between these three categories. A consideration of power and containment rather than the traditional bodily openness and closure supports the legitimacy of this structure. A woman fulfilling the role of a wife/mother is not a threat to patriarchal society because her role derives its legitimacy from the codes of this society. This woman has the least power to assert and attain her own will. She is like an authorized version of a text, and as such, she bears the printer's imprint signifying her subjugation to an author, a power which fashions her. As discussed with Mary, in terms of power and containment, the whore is the complete binary opposite of this wife/mother figure. She is the "unauthorized" text of society because she is uncontained, subject to no one and thus free to wander abroad and interact with whomever she pleases.

Considering the binary opposition in this way allows for the supposition that Elizabeth succeeded as a ruler in a masculine society not because she placed herself in opposition to Mary but because she negotiated the slippery boundary between the wife/mother figure and the whore by situating herself between them. Stylization as the Virgin Queen allowed Elizabeth more power and autonomy than a wife/mother but not as much as the whore. In the early modern period, the wife had no control over her body and desires. The husband could access her as he pleased, and she was "covered" by him through the clothing he provides her. However as the example of Mary's "capture" of Bothwell illustrates, the whore has some power over her body and her passions because she operates outside of the patriarchal hierarchy, making her a danger to societal norms since she has no need for

restraint. In the middle of these two opposites lies the virgin, who has more power and control over her body and passions than the wife, but not as much as the whore. She retains control of her own body because she has no husband, but she must concurrently subdue her emotions and passions in order to remain a virgin. In this precarious position on the border between wife and whore, Elizabeth exposed herself to the possibility of slipping in to the category of whore and thus losing the uneasy support of the patriarchal society she worked within as Mary did.[6] Yet at the same time, this risk gave her authority and some autonomy although she did not confront gender assumptions through unbounded abandon like her cousin. Elizabeth's success at negotiating this boundary in a patriarchal society ultimately entailed Mary's failure. Mary had to be silenced in order for patriarchal control to be nominally exercised through Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen.

Notes

[1] Wendy Wall notes that the word *abroad* was "commonly used to describe publication, travel, and harlotry" (299). Thus, the text running abroad carries a triple connotation binding the notion of the text to a wanton woman. The early version of *Gorboduc* ran abroad in three senses: it was published, that publication traveled about, and it became a harlot because it was an unauthorized version.

[2] "A naturall shamfastnes oght to be in womankind" (23).

[3] By giving the title of *King* to Darnley, Buchanan implies that Mary should, under the "natural" order, be doubly subjective to Darnley because he is not only her husband but also her king. A. E. MacRobert reminds us that Mary's husbands were not always indisputably recognized as kings. For example, with regard to her third husband, "Mary did not accord Bothwell the title of King after their marriage and. . .the marriage contract provided that her signature was required for any official correspondence and any gifts, dispositions and privileges" (18).

[4] Phillips notes that "Buchanan apparently wrote the *Detection* originally in Latin as a covering letter to accompany the notorious Casket Letters that were presented in evidence against Mary at the conferences at York and Westminster" (62). That Buchanan's

work was intended as a *cover* letter again relates to the metaphor of the wandering text as a wanton woman who is in need of a covering. Once society has placed an acceptable cover over her, she is appropriated into the social order and loses her autonomy. Margaret W. Ferguson observes another reference to the covering of women in the Renaissance in her discussion of signatures placed on wills:

> Wives were defined by Common Law as 'femes couvertes' (covered women), a phrase that denotes their status as the property of their husbands; 'covered' by the husband's legal being, wives could not own property in their own right, and hence were unlikely to sign a legal document unless they were widowed or were exempted from the law of coverture. (148)

[5] Jennifer Summit argues that

> Poetry played an important role in Elizabeth's attempts to manage the Queen of Scots affair. The two queens never met in the flesh and only communicated directly through the letters, poems, and tokens that passed between them, coded by both the participants and outside observers as the private exchanges of affectionate women. (190)

Granting Mary a certain amount of cunning, she posits that "as a poet and a rival queen, Mary both appropriates and reverses the same poetic topoi, postures, and meanings that formed the basis of Elizabeth's poetics of queenship" in her communication with Elizabeth (201).

[6] Thomas Dekker's *Whore of Babylon* figures this anxiety about the potential danger of unrestrained power in the possession of a woman. When Titania, Dekker's representative of the recently-deceased Elizabeth, signs a death warrant, she remarks: "Witness: so little we in blood delight, / That doing this work, we wish we could not write" (4.2.38-39). Eve Sanders argues that "Dekker focuses on the queen [Elizabeth] as a focus for male anxieties about loss of control" (175) and "presents the danger inherent in writing as one of unchecked female power" (176). But Titania's comment can refer to the power of the pen in Elizabeth's hand, prompting the audience to recall the other "writing woman" of the period, the Scottish queen, and the treachery, sedition, and harlotry she supposedly enacted through her own letters.

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A Review of Andrew Epstein's *Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar American Poetry*

by Aaron M. Carroll

After receiving his BA in English and Comparative World Literature, Carroll is currently pursuing his MA in English at California State University, Long Beach. While his interests remain varied, his primary area of academic study is American literature of the nineteenth century, particularly of the antebellum period. Carroll resides in Long Beach with his art-historian wife, Sarah Jaffray.

Andrew Epstein takes the title and the overarching cue for *Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar American Poetry*, from Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1841 essay, "Friendship":

> A friend, therefore, is a sort of paradox in nature....Guard
> him as thy counterpart. Let him be to thee for ever a sort
> of beautiful enemy, untamable, devoutly revered, and not
> a trivial conveniency to be soon outgrown and cast aside.
> (Epstein 3)

For Epstein, this quotation not only reveals the complex nature of friendship, but also the traces of Emersonian pragmatism which he identifies as coursing through the lineage of American literature—even to the post-World War II New York City avant-garde. Epstein explores how friendship is not just a formative influence on the poetry of this period, but represents such an important and ubiquitous presence that it can be discovered repeatedly in the poetics of America's foremost

postwar avant-garde personalities.

Beautiful Enemies focuses the majority of its attention on three New York based poets, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, and Amiri Baraka. O'Hara's close relationships with both Ashbery and Baraka have been explored in such detail in the past that it would at first glance seem as though Epstein's project is tedious and unoriginal; but, as he is careful to point out in his introduction, he is not so much concerned with the biographical curiosities which have been well documented in the past as he is with the complex paradox that the competing ideas of community and avant-garde individualism create in the poetry from this period.

In many ways Frank O'Hara is the central character in Epstein's book. Generally considered one of the most sociable of postwar avant-garde figures, O'Hara is usually presented as an acolyte of friendship, promoting his friends and his love of them through his own poetry and through collaboration with many of them. However, Epstein complicates this consensus. Using his conception of the inherent paradox represented by battling allegiances to community and individualism within avant-garde movements, he demonstrates through a multitude of means how O'Hara's poetry complicates friendship by emphasizing the conflict, competition, and other anxieties associated with social relationships.

Baraka on the other hand has rarely been considered as anything but a social acquaintance of O'Hara and the other New York School poets—his best poetry usually being wholly separated from their sphere of influence and identified with his late sixties Black Arts Movement period. In the interest of his investigation, Epstein delves deeply into Baraka's earlier poetic output to reveal a high degree of similitude with O'Hara and Ashbery. In addition to furthering his argument about the complicated role of friendship in postwar poetry, Epstein delivers an important reassessment of Baraka's work by placing him more closely to the poetics of the New York School than has generally been the practice of critics.

Ashbery, whose poetry has often been conceived of as distant

and cold, reflecting the—as the publisher's note on *Beautiful Enemies* states—"archetypal American poet singing a solitary 'Song of Myself,'" is refigured by Epstein as a poet preoccupied with interpersonal dynamics as reflected in the ebb and flow of intense friendship. It is this limited view of the American poet as individualist maverick that Epstein attempts to undermine in *Beautiful Enemies*, but not by shifting—as is so often the case in criticism—to the opposite extreme of conceiving American poets in a cozy community of friends. Rather, Epstein recognizes, as did Emerson and the other pragmatists of the nineteenth century, that there is an inherent paradox exposed by friendship— especially within the context of the avant-garde—that results in an intense anxiety between the self and the community; and this anxiety reveals itself over and over in the poems of many postwar Americans.

Epstein, Andrew. *Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar American Poetry*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.

From Discursive to Progressive:
A Review of Eric Paras' *Foucault 2.0*
by C. Travis Webb

Born and raised in Southern California, Webb completed his BA in Philosophy at University of California, Irvine, and his MA in Religious Studies at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). He's currently finishing a second MA in English also at CSULB. His research interests include the poets Robinson Jeffers, Wallace Stevens and the no-longer-loved Oswald Spengler.

To say that Foucault is one of the most influential thinkers in 20th and 21st century Anglo-American thought is, of course, to state the obvious. His intellectual statuary litter the papers, seminars and colloquia of anthropologists to queer theorists: *Archaeology of Knowledge, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, The History of Sexuality* (in multiple volumes*), Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*... His influence is Caesarian in scope, but despite his popularity, or perhaps because of it, there is, Eric Paras argues in *Foucault 2.0*, a significant amount of misunderstanding surrounding Foucault's thought as it evolved towards the end of his life.

As Paras' work is an intellectual biography, he begins by contextualizing Foucault's work in the political and intellectual climate of 1960's France. It is not insignificant, argues Paras, that the same clime that produced not only Foucault, but Derrida, Deleuze,

Barthes and the journal *Tel Quel*, also produced the uprisings of May 1968. Foucault's early works, *The Order of Things* and in particular *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, were not merely academic, they were passionate, and in the case of *Archaeology*, direct responses to Jean-Paul Sartre's Marxo-humanist philosophies. Philosophies that a new generation of thinkers questioned as not only outmoded, but based on a faulty premise: the primacy of subjective experience.

That Foucault was deeply engaged with the intellectual and cultural politics of his generation is the backbone of Paras' thesis—though certainly not its most interesting consequence. It is an argument to be made, apparently, because much scholarship surrounding Foucault has interpreted his various philosophical turns as detours necessitated by self-perceived fractures in his theoretical schema. For example, his eventual turn to genealogy from archaeology arose because, as Paras cites Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, not only did Foucault conflate the ideas of observed *regularities* and prescriptive *rules* in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "the archaeologist" was forced to attribute, "causal efficacy to the very rules which describe these practices systematicity" (53). Though Paras does not dismiss this critique, he emphasizes Foucault's close association with Gilles Deleuze, and Deleuze's work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* to explain Foucault's shift in thought, just as Foucault's close association with the Marxist thinkers surrounding him in the 1960's, Jacques Rancière, Judith Miller and Henry Weber, helped produce the crypto-Marxist language of *Madness and Civilization*. A language that, according to Paras, would leave him entirely by the time *Discipline and Punish* appeared in 1975.

Discipline and Punish's complex reformulation of agency and its concomitants, individuality as tool of oppression and the diffuse circulations of power in non-hierarchical nodes, produced yet another powerful critique of the subject as free willing historical actor. Indeed,

Discipline and Punish and the subsequent *The History of Sexuality Volume I: The Will to Knowledge* are where what is commonly understood to be Foucauldian thought expresses itself most forcefully. The problem is, according to Paras, by the time *The History of Sexuality Volume I* was released, Foucault was already moving in another direction. Due, once again, not to a purely analytic struggle with historical texts, but because of Foucault's hope for, then disappointment in the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

This final turn in Foucault's thought, beginning around the year 1980, saw Foucault engage positively with concepts and ideas he had spent his entire career eviscerating: namely, subjectivity, agency, the soul and freewill, particularly in the form of what Foucault would come to call, "the arts of living." These "arts of living" were, Foucault stated, a "minor genre": manuals of a sort that were popular until the 2nd century C.E. These books were not of the "self-help" variety, but were rather artistic manifestos that employed techniques to transform human existence into an artistic project. Foucault argues there was a subtle shift in this literature beginning with the Christian apologist Tertullian in the 2nd century, and he uses this to show the attending movement away from existence as an aesthetic expression of a uniquely unfolding virtue, to existence as the discovery of "a singular profound truth" (144), which was, essentially, the West's movement from a pagan to a Christian soul. Paras' argument for this radical turn is a strong one; he cites not only the lectures given by Foucault at the Collège de France during his last years, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, *The Government of the Living*, *Subjectivity and Truth*, he also makes use of the latter two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, to produce a compelling picture of the late philosopher. Indeed, the premise that Foucault was a passionate and mercurial philosopher engaged in the pursuit of life as artistic expression throughout his career is Paras' most

provocative and intriguing suggestion. It would seem Foucault himself intimated this very possibility towards the end of his life: "My books are, in a sense, fragments of autobiography" (148). Much to his credit, Paras' Foucault avoids simple classification: one is reminded of that old anti-dogmatist saw, "Christ was not a Christian; the Buddha was not a Buddhist." In that way it would seem that Foucault, was no Foucauldian.

Paras, Eric. *Foucault 2.0*. New York: Other P, 2006.