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Re-conceiving Britomart

Spenser's Shift in the Fashioning of Feminine Virtue between Books 3 and 5 of *The Faerie Queene*

In Books 3 and 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, the crux of virtue is that one must be able to *conceive* the difference between right and wrong. But what happens when, according to popular 16th-century belief, "conception" – the ability to generate both intellectual knowledge and biological progeny – is limited to the males of the species? Is the female knight of Chastity an oxymoron? This essay examines Spenser's shift in his representation of Britomart's "virtue" in the 1590 and 1596 versions and the implications generated for the fashioning of both Britomart and her female readers – especially Queen Elizabeth. I will show how Spenser espouses a traditional Aristotelian (one-sex) model of creation in Britomart's story in Book 3 in order to demonstrate his shift to an egalitarian, dual-sexed model in her reprisal in Book 5. Spenser's revision of Britomart's capacity for "conception" and the resulting implications for fashioning her "virtue" will also be analyzed via the palimpsest of allusions to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Plutarch's *The Myth of Isis and Osiris*, and Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*.

In his prefacing letter to Walter Raleigh in the 1590 version of *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser claims that the purpose of his "darke conceit" is "to fashion a gentleman, or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."[1] Of concern here is the problem "conceit" poses for the fashioning of virtue in Britomart – the titular knight of Chastity prominent in Books 3 and 5 of *The Faerie Queene*. By definition, "conceit" connotes a duality of intellectual and biological conception that is profoundly problematic when exploring Spenser's representation of Britomart's virtue. A well-known example of conceptual duality in this sense is found in the first scene of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, in which Kent says to Gloucester, "I cannot conceive you," and Gloucester replies, "Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed. . ."[2] Nowhere in *The Faerie Queene* is this conceptual dyad more

1. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1987 [1590]), p. 15.

2. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 1153–1184, 1.1.12–15.

pronounced than in Britomart's character. But what happens when, according to popular sixteenth-century belief, "conception" – that is, the ability to generate both intellectual knowledge and biological progeny – is limited to the males of the species? Since "virtue" invokes an imperative of moral decision making, the ability to "conceive" becomes critical. Is Spenser's female knight of Chastity an oxymoron?[3]

This essay analyzes Spenser's shift in the representation of Britomart's virtue in the 1590 and 1596 versions of *The Faerie Queene* and addresses the implications this shift generates for the fashioning of both Britomart and her female readers. In Book 3 of the 1590 publication, we witness Britomart create a "monster" of her mind that is feeding "within [her] bleeding bowels."[4] After her nurse's herbal remedies fail to help, Britomart is taken to Merlin. Via his prophecy, Merlin fashions Britomart's future and cures her of her ills. The success of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, legitimized by a generous pension awarded to Spenser from Queen Elizabeth, is called into question when the poet reprises Britomart's story six years later in Book 5.

When Britomart conspicuously reappears in Book 5, Spenser does not recall her in order to fulfill Merlin's prophecy, but instead confers on her another prophecy. Although both prophecies appear to be oriented toward Britomart's future marriage and progeny, the origins of initiation and conception are critically different. In Book 3, Merlin initiates Britomart's prophecy, but in Book 5, her character is able to dream of her future independently. Elizabeth Fowler aptly observes that Spenser's "theoretical contribution [to Renaissance poetics] is to identify character as the primary technical tool for producing architectonic effects."[5] These discordant prophecies seriously disrupt the poetic architecture of Britomart's representation of chastity between Books 3 and 5 to problematize Spenser's fashioning of feminine virtue in *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser raises the stakes of fashioning feminine virtue by directly invoking Queen Elizabeth I in the proem to Book 3 as both the addressee and the subject of the poem in her "mirrour" character Britomart.[6] The Elizabeth/Britomart construct extends to Elizabeth's embodiment of the English monarchy in the etymology of

3. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2nd ed.) defines "virtue" in this sense, still in use since the thirteenth century, as "Conformity of life and conduct with the principles of morality; voluntary observance of the recognized moral laws or standards of right conduct; abstention on moral grounds from any form of wrong-doing or vice" (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000; accessed through Joseph P. Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts, 29 June 2009 <http://dictionary.oed.com.temp8.cc.umb.edu/entrance.dtl>).

4. Spenser, 3.2.39–40.

5. Elizabeth Fowler, *Literary Character: The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003), p. 182.

6. Spenser, 3.Pr.3–5.

Britomart's name: "martial Briton." Was it Elizabeth's insistence – famously against Lord Cecil Burghley's advice – on rewarding Spenser for the first edition of *The Faerie Queene* that sparked the poet's recognition of a problem with his initial representation of Her Majesty? Historical evidence is slight, but it is not outlandish to suggest that Elizabeth's favor may have motivated Spenser to change the way he "fashioned" feminine virtue between the 1590 and 1596 versions of *The Faerie Queene*. Moving forward, I will suggest that Spenser follows a then-traditional Aristotelian, or one-sex, model of creation in Britomart's story in Book 3, in order to demonstrate his shift to an egalitarian, dual-sexed model in the reprisal of her character in Book 5. I will then interrogate Spenser's revision of Britomart's capacity for "conception" and the implications for fashioning her "virtue" in Book 5 through the palimpsest of allusions to dual-sexed models of virtue represented in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Plutarch's *The Myth of Isis and Osiris*, and Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*.

In the 1590 version of *The Faerie Queene*, it is difficult to pin down just how Spenser intends to "fashion" the "morall vertues" of his female readership.[7] Premodern faith in the transformative power of poetry cannot be overestimated. Ironically, the same Burghley who scoffed so at the lifetime pension awarded to Spenser for the 1590 *Faerie Queene* is commonly believed to have paid Shakespeare to write persuasive sonnets that might convince his ward, Henry Wriothsley, Earl of Southampton, to marry. Capturing the sixteenth-century faith in the puissant nature of poetry, Spenser's friend and contemporary, Sir Philip Sidney, claims "the ever-praiseworthy Poesy is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness."[8] The phrase "virtue-breeding" is significant for us because the root word of "virtue" is the Latin *vir*, or "man."[9] Sidney is – implicitly or explicitly – suggesting that (manly) "virtue" has the potential to breed, or generate, progeny independently. Indeed, Sidney's claim falls directly in line with the then-popular Aristotelian model of creation that limits the power of initiation of both knowledge and progeny to males of the species. According to Aristotle's philosophy, "conception," biologically and intellectually, takes place when man's *idea* fertilizes the female. In his text, *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle explains:

> [Men and women] differ in their *logos*, because the male is that which has the power to generate in another, while the female is that which can gener-

7. Spenser, p. 15.

8. Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry, or The Defence of Poesy,* ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002), pp. 15–17.

9. "Virtue" is itself sexually contradictory – although the base word is "man," the gender of the declension is feminine. Cf. Frederic Wheelock, *Wheelock's Latin*, 6th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).

> ate in itself, *i.e.*, it is that out of which the generated offspring, which is present in the generator, comes into being.[10]

Aristotle's theory was popular in the 16th century, perhaps in part because the Christian trope of Adam's rib lends credibility to his male-dominated model. Thomas Lacqueur translates the one-sex mindset for modern readers in *Making Sex*: "Anatomy in the context of sexual difference was a representational strategy that illuminated a more stable extracorporeal reality. There existed many genders, but only one adaptable sex."[11] "Adaptation," of course, is determined by the males of the species.

According to the foregoing model, the role of women is limited to that of a kind of walking womb; they can transport "conception," but cannot "conceive" themselves. Elizabeth Spiller has observed that strict adherence to this one-sex model would make it impossible for Spenser to "fashion" a female reader at all: "If reading is an act of making and a way of producing knowledge, then in some important sense this means that only men can truly be readers of *The Faerie Queene*."[12] Given the prominent Britomart/Queen Elizabeth exemplum of Spenser's fashioning of feminine virtue, if Spiller is correct, then Spenser has a problem. As A. Bartlett Giamatti observes, we cannot disregard Spenser's great hope of fashioning his queen:

> He would teach his Queen to overcome the debates of religion, the division of party, the dangers of foreign war, the discontinuity of childlessness, and to win for her people and her land the unity she embodied. He also presumes to show her, within the body of his poem, how the poet's power was in its way as splendid as hers.[13]

Britomart is not only Spenser's knight of Chastity but, again, the "mirrour" character in which Spenser hopes Elizabeth "[her] selfe [she] couet to see pictured."[14] But if Elizabeth-as-reader cannot be fashioned, what might this mean for Elizabeth-as-Britomart? Katherine Eggert has described Spenser's "fashioning of his queen into an appropriate object for poetry" as "anxiety ridden" with good cause.[15]

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10. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals,* ed. T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington, trans. A. L. Peck (1943) (London: Heinemann, 1953), 1.2.12.

11. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990), p. 35.

12. Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), p. 84.

13. A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Elizabeth and Spenser," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia,* ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: U of Toronto P; London: Routledge, 1990), 238–42, p. 240.

14. Spenser, 3.Pr.4.

15. Katherine Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2000), p. 15.

At first it seems ironic that Spenser fashions Britomart as dual sexed; she is a sensually beautiful woman who, more often than not, disguises herself in a man's armor. It is tempting to claim that Spenser composed Britomart as a male/female knight to overcome the problems posed by a single-sexed, Aristotelian model of creation. Inconveniently, however, that is not the case. It is more likely that Spenser initially constructed Britomart as half-male knight, half-maiden in order to mirror Elizabeth's "two bodies." In *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz expands upon the mystical and political duality of the king's person. This "two bodies" concept was originally documented in Edmund Plowden's *Reports*, written during the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. At the time, the crown lawyers were debating the validity of a lease made by the underage Edward IV, since deceased, regarding lands in the Duchy of Lancaster. Kantorowicz explains that it was this case that prompted the lawyers to invent the idea of the "King's Two Bodies" in order to preserve royal interests in the property. Kantorowicz cites Plowden's explanation as follows:

> For the King has in him two Bodies, *viz.*, a Body natural, and a Body politic . . . . [The latter] is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the people, and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in his Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in his natural Body.[16]

Incorporated as one person, the concept of the "two bodies" of the king, or, in this case, the queen, challenges Elizabethan jurists to preserve both the unity and the separation of these two bodies simultaneously.

Queen Elizabeth further complicates the construct of the "King's two bodies" by virtue of the fact that she is a woman. In her renowned speech to her troops at Tilbury, Elizabeth translates the legal definition of the "King's two bodies" in a manner that articulates her recognition not only of her "two bodies," but also of her two sexes: "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too."[17] In the context of then-current events, we recognize how Spenser's fashioning of Britomart as dual sexed powerfully reinforces her relationship with Elizabeth so that Britomart may "mirrour" her more accurately. For Spenser, the direct relationship between the two women is, all

16. Ernst A. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957), p. 7.

17. Stephen Greenblatt and M. H. Abrams, "Women in Power," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8th ed., vol. 1, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 2006), *The "Golden Speech,"* p. 700.

puns intended, a double-edged sword. Just as Elizabeth may reap the praise generated by Britomart's character, any flaws in Britomart – intentional or otherwise – might be interpreted as criticism of the queen.

Britomart's story is first told in Book 3, the Book of Chastity, in the 1590 publication of *The Faerie Queene*. Following her introduction in the first canto of Book 3, Spenser describes the still-anonymous knight of Chastity using masculine pronouns. From the perspective of Redcrosse and Guyon, the narrator relates Britomart's approach, emphasizing a masculine misunderstanding in the very repetition of these pronouns:

> They spide a knight, that towards pricked faire,
> And *him* beside an aged Squire there rode,
> . . . . . .
> *He* them espying, gan *himselfe* prepare,
> And on *his* arme address *his* goodly shield. . .[18]

Readers are deceived for a full four stanzas before the narrator reveals the dominant knight in battle with Redcrosse and Guyon as the "damzell" Britomart.[19] While Redcrosse and Guyon are still unaware of Britomart's sex, Spenser affects dramatic irony as the knights reconcile and bond with "manly might."[20]

In her next adventure, Britomart actively retains her disguise as a male knight at Castle Joyeous. Here, at Malecasta's, the chaste knight is paradoxically placed in an overtly sexual environment. Amidst the description of a lavish mural of the sexually charged story of Venus and Adonis, and a dominant theme of debauchery, Spenser interrupts the scene with an uncharacteristically didactic stanza directed to his female readers:

> Faire Ladies, that to love captivèd arre,
> And chaste desires do nourish in your mind,
> Let not her fault your sweet affections marre,
> Ne blot the bounty of all womankind;
> 'Mongst thousands good one wanton Dame to find:
> Emongst the Roses grow some wicked weeds;
> For this was not to love, but lust inclind;
> For love does always bring forth bounteous deeds,
> And in each gentle hart desire of honour breeds.[21]

18. Spenser, 3.1.4 (my emphasis).
19. Spenser, 3.1.8.
20. Spenser, 3.1.13.
21. Spenser, 3.1.49.

The literary conventionality of the preceding lines, in the vein of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, masks their thematic significance for Britomart. The irony of this invocation for women to "nourish" chaste desires in their *minds* so that they will *breed* the desire for honor foreshadows what we will come to recognize as Britomart's conceptual "pregnancies" in Books 3 and 5. In its placement in the narrative, this stanza serves as a kind of deferred epigraph, as well as a portentous allusion to Britomart's poetic plight. In light of Spenser's construct of "fashioning," the subtext of the knight of Chastity's fertility, both physical and imaginative, breeds almost as many problems as the monstrous Errour from Book 1 has children.

In Book 3, Spenser allegorizes Britomart's character development – or lack thereof – via descriptions of her state of mind. After defeating Guyon with her "enchaunted speare," a suggestive pun emblematic of her dual sexuality, Britomart chooses not to "chace" Florimell: "The whiles faire Britomart, whose constant mind / Would not so lightly follow beauties chace, / Ne reckt of Ladies Loue, did stay behind. . . ."[22] Britomart's "constancy" of mind emerges as that which Spenser magnifies by situating her in the following scene at Castle Joyeous. At Malecasta's, the revelers "make loue & merriment," but Britomart "auoided quite."[23] Joanna Thompson argues that "Britomart's contact with lust . . . provides her with more than just a knowledge of right and wrong; it provides her with an opportunity to grow in the face of adversity."[24] Unfortunately, Thompson does not address the problem that although Britomart "auoided" the orgy taking place, there is no suggestion that her saturation in a scene of unadulterated lust has provided her with any knowledge whatsoever. The only thing Spenser makes clear in this scene is that Britomart is tired from her "long watch, and late dayes weary toile."[25] There is no evidence in this scene that Britomart is making any kind of decision based on the information available – moral or otherwise. Britomart simply wants to go to sleep. Recognizing that another common sixteenth-century definition of "virtue" is "abstention on moral grounds from any form of wrong-doing or vice," it appears that Britomart may be seen to demonstrate little of the quality.[26] Britomart's "constancy" is not represented as an adherence to some kind of moral code, but rather as a static state of mind lacking either reflective or generative properties. Thus far, Britomart's chaste "virtue" appears to be embodied in her sexual ignorance.

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22. Spenser, 3.1.9, 3.1.19.

23. Spenser, 3.1.57–58.

24. Joanna Thompson, *The Character of Britomart in Spenser's "The Faerie Queene"* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 2001), p. 46.

25. Spenser, 3.1.58.

26. *OED Online,* 14 December 2007.

Britomart's virtueless virtue is magnified in contrast with Sir Guyon's preceding quest for Temperance in Book 2. Granted, Guyon's vicious attack on the Bowre of Blisse is far from "temperate," but the fact remains that he is motivated by a moral rationale developed through trial and error in the course of his quest for virtue. In canto 12, readers witness Guyon applying his acquired knowledge:

> Much wondred Guyon at the faire aspect
> Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight
> To sincke into his sence, nor mind affect,
> But passed forth, and lookt still forward right,
> Bridling his will, and maistering his might.[27]

Requiring that he "bridle his will," so that his senses will not affect his mind, Guyon's version of "constancy" stands in stark contrast with Britomart's unconscious portrayal of the quality.

In Book 3, then, Britomart's character does *not* develop as we see Guyon's; her chastity is constant, but untested. Sheila Cavanagh claims that Britomart's unconscious constancy is necessary in order to preserve her "chastity":

> The portrayal of Britomart's behavior [at Malecasta's castle, and in her refusal to "chace" fair Florimell] cannot be explained away as representative of a single-minded devotion to her quest, nor can these incidents be dismissed as amusing but irrelevant details in the epic. Britomart's intellectual dullness performs a unique function in the development and preservation of her particular virtue. In order to uphold the version of chastity lauded in *The Faerie Queene*, Britomart cannot acquire insight or understanding. . . Although male knights are similarly blind at times, there is no other figure whose ignorance is similarly central to her/his virtue.[28]

Cavanagh's commentary begs a review of our conceptualization of "chastity" itself. Notably, the dominant quality of "chastity" is absence. Although "purity" is the primary definition of chastity, purity itself is defined as an absence of contamination. Additional connotations reinforce negative space: "Abstinence from all sexual intercourse. . . Exclusion of meretricious ornament. . . Exclusion of excess or extravagance."[29] Cavanagh and other feminist scholars have argued that the nature of chastity is one of predication-by-absence, thereby prohibiting chastity from joining the men's club of virtue. But the fact is that abstinence involves choice. Lacking the

27. Spenser, 2.12.53.

28. Cavanagh, Sheila T., *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in "The Faerie Queene"* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), pp. 141–42.

29. *OED Online,* 14 December 2007.

ability to inform such a decision herself, Britomart's innocent "constancy" is that which separates her from the "virtue" her title represents.

In the next canto, Britomart's "constancy" dissolves, but not through any conscious act of her own. The cause of dissolution is the image of Arthegall, whom she had seen in her father's magic mirror. Obsessed with the image, Britomart lies to Redcrosse in the hopes of gleaning information, claiming that Arthegall has done unto her "foule dishonour and reprochfull spight."[30] Upon hearing Redcrosse's defense of Arthegall, Britomart "woxe inly . . . glad," and, strangely, describes her joy as analogous to giving birth:

> The royall Mayd woxe inly wondrous glad,
> To heare her Loue so highly magnifiede,
> . . . . . .
> The louing mother, that nine monethes did beare,
> In the deare closet of her painefull side,
> Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare,
> Doth not so much reiouce, as she reioyced theare.[31]

Because this is the story of the knight of Chastity, the foregoing metaphors of pregnancy and delivery are disconcerting. Readers will instinctively perceive the simile in these lines: she felt "as if/like" a rejoicing mother. But Britomart's maternal empathy extends beyond the realm of the affective to that of the physical insofar as she "woxe inly." The conspicuous imagery of gestation in the preceding lines suggests that Britomart is, in a sense, pregnant.

Textual evidence reinforces an Aristotelian model of male initiation by suggesting that conception took place when Britomart first saw Arthegall's reflection:

> Yet him in euery part before she knew,
> However list her now her knowledge faine,
> . . . . . .
> To her reuealéd in a mirrhour plaine,
> Whereof did grow her first engraffed paine. . .[32]

The phrase "him in euery part before she knew" could literally mean that, as we know, Britomart saw Arthegall's image before seeing him in person. "Him in euery part" is, however, also suggestive of physical interaction, and intimates that Arthegall somehow escaped the bounds of the mirror to enter Britomart. Because the

30. Spenser, 3.2.8.
31. Spenser, 3.2.11.
32. Spenser, 3.2.17.

result of her vision is "engraffèd paine," i.e., something that has been grafted, or inserted, these lines imply a form of intercourse by which Britomart has conceived. The repetition of terms related to the forms of knowledge – "knew," "list," "knowledge" – determines that Arthegall informed Britomart's conception and thus destroyed the "constancy" of her mind. In the foregoing stanza, Spenser portrays Britomart's conception as dependent on Arthegall's cognitive insemination. The power of initiation lies in Arthegall, the male, and thus reinforces Spenser's adherence to an Aristotelian version of conception at this point in the narrative.

Reading *The Faerie Queene* through the lens of Britomart's story in Book 3, we can follow Aristotelian logic until we begin to witness the deterioration of her mental faculties. Ironically, Britomart's response to her "engraffèd paine," or as Spiller has called it, her "perverse pregnancy," is not the joy Britomart initially expressed to Redcrosse, but rather "melancholy."[33] Britomart "felt herself opprest," and experienced "ghastly feares," while her nurse, Glauce, "importund [her] not to feare / To let the secret of her hart to her appeare."[34]

Glauce's request for Britomart to confess the "secret of her hart" will be echoed by the priest at the Church of Isis in Book 5, with critically different implications. At this point in Book 3, Britomart's gory confession phraseologically recalls Spenser's earlier descriptions of Errour, the monstrous mother-serpent of Book 1. Upon being mortally wounded by Redcrosse, Errour spews forth her unborn "cursed spawn . . . of deformed monsters [that] sucked vp their dying mothers blood" until their "bellies swolne with fulness burst, / And bowels gushing forth" they too die.[35] Britomart echoes the parasitic imagery in a similar manner: "It is O Nurse, which on my life doth feed /And suckes the bloud, which from my heart doth bleed."[36] Britomart continues to recall Errour as she describes her own "bleeding bowels . . . entrails flow[ing] with poysnous gore . . . running sore."[37] Britomart's rhetorical reminders of Errour emphasize the accrual of "monstrous" imagery that culminates in Glauce's anxious inquiry: "Why make ye such a Monster of your mind?"[38]

Pre-modern implications for the metaphorically pregnant Britomart making a "monster" of her mind are manifold. In the sixteenth century, it was popularly believed that women's thoughts had great impact on the physical fashioning of their children. Marie Hélène Huet refers to the lost text of Empedocles that first de-

33. Spenser, 3.2.29; Elizabeth Spiller, "Poetic Parthenogenesis," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900,* 40 (2000) 63–79, p. 69.

34. Spenser, 3.2.31, 34.

35. Spenser, 1.1.22, 1.1.25–26.

36. Spenser, 3.2.37.

37. Spenser, 3.2.39.

38. Spenser, 3.2.40.

scribed how women, although lacking the power to initiate conception, once impregnated, have the power to deform their progeny:

> Following Empedocles' theory, it was long believed that monsters were the result of a mother's fevered and passionate consideration of images; monsters were the result of an imagination that imprinted on such progeny a deformed, misshapen resemblance to an image – that is, to an object that did not participate in their creation.[39]

The idea that women have the power to mark their offspring is also reinforced in Ambroise Paré's influential sixteenth-century medical text, *Of Monsters and Prodigies*. In this work, Paré, while still essentially espousing an Aristotelian model of initiation, describes the enormous influence the feminine imagination has on progeny.[40] Thus, Glauce's desperate attempts to "vndoe her daughters loue" by giving Britomart "abortifacients" to induce a miscarriage does not seem extreme.[41] Glauce fears Britomart will give birth, quite literally, to a "monster."

Of course, Britomart does not give "birth" in Book 3, but Spenser has conceived an image of monstrous natality in his readers that, by virtue of association, extends to Queen Elizabeth. Like Britomart, Elizabeth retains her virginity, but she also carries with her connotations of motherhood. In her article "The Politics of Reproduction in the English Reformation," Mary Fissell cites prevailing contemporary conceptualizations of Elizabeth by way of Thomas Bentley, who "refers to the Queen as 'the most naturall mother and noble nursse' of the Church of England, but then in the next clause highlights her status as a virgin."[42] Leaving the spectral Virgin Mary out of the equation, the concept of a "virgin mother" itself implies monstrosity. The pre-modern male anxiety surrounding the prenatal power of a woman's imagination to deform her progeny is, via Elizabeth, exponentially extended to the nation of England itself. In "two bodies" of the Queen, the potential for monstrous natality dilates into the potential for monstrous nationality. Positing this concept of monstrous natality/nationality might seem extreme to modern readers, but it was not far from her – male – subjects' thoughts when Elizabeth was crowned in 1558:

> The Marian exile Christopher Goodman asserted in 1558 – the year of Elizabeth I's accession to the throne – that Deuteronomy 17:15, which in-

39. Marie-Hélène Huet, "Monstrous Imagination: Progeny as Art in French Classicism," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991) 718–737, p. 720.

40. Cf. also Spiller and Lacqueur's analyses of Paré's theories.

41. Spenser, 3.2.51; Spiller, "Poetic Parthenogenesis," p. 74.

42. Mary E. Fissell, "The Politics of Reproduction in the English Reformation," *Representations* 87 (2004) 43–81, p. 70.

> structs the Israelites to choose a ruler only from among their "brethren," allows a country to pass over female candidates for the throne in order to find a man more suitable to the job, and hence "to avoyede that monster in nature, and disorder amongst men, whiche is the Empire and governement of a woman."[43]

Elizabeth's matriarchal monarchy was certainly seen by some as a "monster in nature," an idea that Spenser, intentionally or not, summons in his descriptions of the "monster" of Britomart's mind. The threat is assuaged, however, when Spenser invokes Merlin, the most powerful *man* in Faery Land, to "cure" poor Britomart of her feminine freakishness.

When the knight and her nurse reach Merlin, Glauce explains Britomart's symptoms and begs Merlin to cure her charge. In this well-known scene Merlin famously prophesizes Britomart's future marriage and progeny. Via his prophecy, Merlin revises Britomart's "monstrous conception" as the future of the English monarchy, ironically culminating in the birth of Elizabeth I. Because the wizard is responsible for "curing" Britomart, Spiller has observed that Merlin displaces female reproduction with male. But we must remember that Britomart's conception was initiated by Arthegall. I believe Spiller comes closer to the mark in her following comment:

> If Britomart does not know what to do with her idea, Merlin is able to take that monstrous idea, diagnose it, and transform it into his own narrative. As an act of creation, Merlin's prophecy displaces not just Britomart's emotional pregnancy but also her later giving birth.[44]

By virtue of his prophecy, Merlin syncretically defers Britomart's "pregnancy" until a future marriage, while preserving the construct of her chastity. Contextualized with the models of conceptual initiation discussed thus far, Merlin's masculine intervention in the 1590 publication of *The Faerie Queene* appears to confirm Spenser's adherence to the Aristotelian tradition in his conception of Britomart thus far. The problem is that Merlin's prophecy was never realized in either the 1590 or the 1596 version of the poem. Instead, Spenser chose to write another prophecy for Britomart. The question remains: why?

It is only by exploring the palimpsest of allusions to Ovid, Plutarch, and Apuleius in Book 5 of the 1596 *Faerie Queene* that we can answer the foregoing question convincingly. The proem to Book 5 contains the first prominent suggestion of a shift in Spenser's representation of feminine knowledge from 1590 to 1596. In the first

43. Eggert, p. 58.
44. Spiller, *Science, Reading and Renaissance Literature*, pp. 82–83.

stanza, the tone has changed from one of optimism to one of lament: "the world is runne quite out of square . . . And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse."[45] The allusion that follows, to Ovid's story of Pyrrah and Deucalion in *The Metamorphoses*, suggests that Spenser might share Jove's frustration with his original creation. Instead of Jove's flood, however, Spenser will refashion both characters and readers via poetry.

Spenser's frequent echoes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* throughout *The Faerie Queene* reverberate with varying effects throughout the poem, but resound almost metonymically in the course of Britomart's transformation in canto 7. Cora Fox's analysis of Spenser's mode of Ovidian imitation surrounding the character of Adicia in canto 8 is useful to foreground Britomart's transformation in canto 7:

> Imitating Ovid's metamorphic aesthetic, Spenser signals not just his reliance on Ovid's literary style or materials, but also his engagement with the ironic and shifting ideologies that characterize *The Metamorphoses* . . . reveal[ing] a deep and conflicted cultural engagement not just with Ovidian stories but with Ovidian gender politics and constructions of female subjectivity.[46]

Spenser's thematic allusion to Ovid's story in this proem predicates Book 5 as a whole. In Arthur Golding's Elizabethan 'Englishing' of the *Metamorphoses*, Deucalion, one of two survivors of Jove's flood, twice explicitly laments his inability to "facion" men.[47] He and Pyrrha wonder how they might repopulate their world, and they pray for grace at the chapel of Themis. Recognizing that Themis is the goddess of the laws of nature juxtaposes creative power with equity in an emblematic parallel to Spenser's Book of Justice. In Ovid's story, Themis answers the survivors' prayers, and allegorically instructs the two to dig up their "grandaumes bones" and cast them over their shoulders.[48] Pyrrha initially interprets this instruction literally, and requires Deucalion's help to translate "bones" as "stones" from the earth. Pyrrha then conceives her role, and

> The mankinde was restored by stones, the which a man did cast.
> And likewise also by the stones which a woman threw,
> The womankinde repayred was and made againe of new.[49]

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45. Spenser, 5.Pr.7.

46. Cora Fox, "Spenser's Grieving Adicia and the Gender Politics of Renaissance Ovidianism," *ELH* 69 (2005) 385–412, p. 385.

47. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding, ed. John Frederick Nims (Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry, 2000), 1.427, 430.

48. Ovid, 1.453.

49. Ovid, 1.490–92.

Spenser's direct invocation of an Ovidian bi-sexual model of creation in the proem proleptically transforms the former Aristotelian version into an egalitarian archetype. In context with Ovid, and with the Plutarchan and Apuleian versions of Isiac myth, Britomart's accumulation of creative power at the Church of Isis in canto 7 illustrates Spenser's "metamorphoses" in his representation of the sexual origins of generation.

Spenser's double invocation of Isiac myth to represent the embodiment of, and location of, Britomart's transformation reinforces the intentionality of his allusion to Plutarch's version of the myth. Indeed, I believe that Spenser is appropriating the myth of Isis much in the same manner that Plutarch appropriated it from the Egyptians. Daniel Richter analyzes Plutarch's initial motivation in his article "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation":

> In the *de Iside*, Plutarch's tendency is to interpret Egyptian material in light of the Greek poetic and philosophical tradition. Mythic material unsuitable for such interpretation, described in the *de Iside* as "barbarous" and in the *de Audendis poetis* as "fabrication" is to be cast out . . . . As the hermeneutic with which the material will ultimately be interpreted is Greek, this seems to make eminent sense.[50]

By revising Isiac myth in context with Britomart's patriotic heritage, Spenser follows Plutarch in establishing a new – and English – hermeneutic with which his readers will interpret his poem. Spenser's revision of an interpretive methodology, in context with the only female titular knight in this epic, likewise implies a shift in the way English women will both read and be read in this canto.

Spenser's prominent employment of Plutarch's myth in canto 7 again juxtaposes Britomart's narrative with implications of physical and intellectual creation. Isis is, according to Plutarch, "particularly wise and wisdom-loving, seeing her very name doth seem to indicate that knowing and that gnosis is more suitable to her than any other title."[51] Upon her arrival at the Isis Church, Britomart is taken to the "idol" that portrays the goddess: "The which was framed all of siluer fine, / So well as could with cunning hand be wrought. . . / One foote was set vppon the Crocodile, / And on the ground the other fast did stand."[52] Spenser's reiteration of "cunning" to describe Isis, both here and in the third stanza, carries with it a double meaning of both knowledge and creation. The poet's use of "cunning" is, on one level, referent

50. Daniel Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 131 (2001) 191–216, p. 202.

51. Plutarch, *Concerning the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris*, ed. and trans. G. R. S. Mead (Whitefish, NT: Kessinger, 2005), 2.1.

52. Spenser, 5.7.6–7.

to pure knowledge; however, the implied pun is significant. "Cunning" is a synonym for the 13th-century usage of "quaint," signifying "cunning, proud, ingenious." "Quaint" and "queyent" are popular Chaucerian puns for both the medieval and modern obscene synonyms for the birth canal.

Spenser's exploitation of this pun is directly reinforced by the concurrent allusion to Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*, and the repetition of "cunning" and "queint" in reference to Britomart juxtaposes implications for both her chastity and her knowledge.[53] Arguably, the purpose of this double entendre is twofold: First, Spenser's fashioning of the reader is most often effected by representing the opposing poles of our moral compass; thus the lewd magnifies the chaste. Second, representing the construct of chastity is no longer Britomart's primary allegorical purpose; instead, a shift has been made to explore the evolution of her "cunning." In Book 3, Britomart's primary function was to embody the virtue of chastity, a subtext of which was the problematic fertility of the female intellect. Now, however, we see a reversal of priorities: the fertility of the feminine mind is a dominant theme in the allegory, and chastity emerges as a secondary plot.

Spenser's symbolic allusion to the Isaic crocodile in Book 5, canto 7, will come to represent a conceptual crisis emblematically in Britomart's dream. "Rold" around Isis' feet, the crocodile is commonly glossed as a representation of the harmony of the universe: "with her wreathed taile her middle did enfold."[54] Plutarchian crocodiles, however, are kin to Leviathan, the monstrous enemy to all of creation, *excepting* Isis and her disciples:

> And Isis [they say] on learning this, searched for them in a papyrus skiff (baris) sailing away through the marshes; whence those who sail in papyrus hulls are not injured by the crocodiles, either because they fear or rather revere the Goddess.[55]

Significantly, Isis, in her emblematic representation of creation and knowledge, sails in a "papyrus," or paper, skiff in Plutarch's allegory. The image engendered is of "knowledge" on "paper," and by virtue of the allusive context, Spenser suggests that the palimpsestic qualities of his poetic methodology extend to the two versions

53. Cf. Geoffrey Chaucer: "But atte last the statue of Venus shook, / And made a signe, wherby that he took / That his preyere accepted was that day" (*The Knight's Tale,* ed. A. C. Spearing [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995], p. 161, ll. 1407–1410), and Spenser: "To which the Idoll as it were inclining, / Her wand did moue with amiable looke, / By outward shew her inward sence desining. / Who well perceiuing, how her wand she shooke, / It as a token of good fortune tooke" (5.7.8).

54. Spenser, 5.7.6.

55. Plutarch, 18.2.

of *The Faerie Queene* itself. Here, in the narrative of Book 5, attention is called once more to the fact that Merlin's prophecy was never realized – Spenser is rewriting it as Britomart's dream.

Britomart's dream is one of transformation: physical, sexual, and cognitive. Upon falling asleep at Isis's church, Britomart dreams that she has been transformed into Isis herself. Admiring her transformation, Britomart is suddenly imperiled by a hideous tempest of "holy fire" threatening "the Temple."[56] "Temple" is a potent pun. On the surface, the temple appears to be that of Isis, where Britomart sleeps. But "temple" also invokes connotations of the human body, defined by the *OED* as "any place regarded as occupied by the divine presence; *spec.* the body of a Christian."[57] This Pauline context from which the association of temple and body can be made extends to connote intelligence – specifically in its function of maintaining chastity:

> Flee fornication. Euerie sinne that a man doeth, is without the bodie: but he that comitteth fornication, sinneth against his owne bodie. Know ye not that your bodie is the temple of the holie Gost, *which is* you, whom ye have of God? and ye are not your own.[58]

The common metaphorical association of anatomical "temples" with the human intellect has perhaps evolved from the Christian conception of a unified body and spirit that controls human will.[59] Thus, the contextual collision of implications associated with the "holy fire" threatening Britomart's "temple" suggests that her tempest is *internal*: her mind and body have *generated* these "outragious flames."[60] The effect is an incendiary image of Britomart's cognitive and sexual awakening.

While Britomart is blazing, the crocodile at her feet awakens and devours the foreboding flames. After a moment, he threatens to devour Britomart also, but she beats him back, he submits, and their exchange follows:

> Him selfe before her feete he lowly threw,
> And gan for grace and loue of her to seeke:
> Which she accepting, he so neare her drew,
> That of his game she soone enwombed grew,

56. Spenser, 5.7.14.

57. *OED Online*, 27 July 2009.

58. *The Geneva Bible: The Protestant Bible of the Reformation 1560*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 1Cor. 6.18–19.

59. Cf. secondary definition of "temple": "The flattened region on each side of the human forehead" (*OED Online*, 27 July 2009).

60. Spenser, 5.7.14.

> And forth did bring a Lion of great might;
> That shortly did all other beasts subdew:
> With that she waked, full of fearefull fright,
> And doubtfully dismayd through that so vncouth sight.[61]

In the course of her passionate dream, Britomart "accept[s]" the crocodile's love, and bears a "lion" of his "game." Spenser's punning on Britomart's awakening "dismayd" conveys her distress, but more importantly, the pun suggests that she has lost her virginity. Indeed, she has begotten and borne a lion-child. In this stanza, Spenser calls attention to both the knight of Chastity's loss of innocence and her developing awareness of her own fertility.

On a literal level, Britomart's impregnation by a crocodile is bestial and clearly disturbing. As we have seen, however, the crocodile is the enemy to all of creation with the exception of the mother of creation, Isis, and those who sail in "papyrus hulls" (poets?). And, in Plutarch's version, as signature beasts of the Nile, the crocodiles are witnesses to Isis's aqueous asexual reproduction:

> And as they hold the Nile to be "Osiris's efflux," so, too, they think earth Isis's body – not all (of it), but what the Nile covers, sowing (her) with seed and mingling with her; and from this intercourse, they give birth to Horus.[62]

Isis procreates via the dispersal of "Osiris's efflux" in the Nile; and creative power appears shared between the male and female sexes. Despite, or perhaps *because* of her ability to reproduce independently, Isis's chastity remains intact, but it is a *fertile* form of chastity that is engendered by her male-female nature:

> For which cause they call the Moon Mother [Isis] of the cosmos, and think that she has a male-female nature – for she is filled by the Sun and made pregnant, and again of herself sends forth and disseminates into the air generative principles.[63]

In the foregoing passage Plutarch directly expresses his opposition to a one-sex, Aristotelian model of creation. Isis, "of herself," has the capability of sending "forth and disseminat[ing] into the air generative principles." Britomart's dream-state engagement with the crocodile suggests that she has reproduced in a similarly chaste manner, and shares the same generative principles of wisdom and creation as Isis.

Just as Spenser invokes Plutarch's version of Isiac myth on multiple levels of his allegory, so too does he invoke multiple allusions to Apuleius's novel *The Golden*

61. Spenser, 5.7.16.
62. Plutarch, 36.1.
63. Plutarch, 42.7.

Ass: or Being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius, translated by William Adlington and published in 1566. The theme of Isiac conversion in the novel itself echoes Plutarch and compounds the Isiac connotations attached to Britomart's story in Book 5. In the main plot of *The Golden Ass*, Lucius's story of transformation from a man into an ass culminates in his conversion to the Isiac religion and subsequent restoration to human form. Lucius's story is, however, interrupted midway through by an old woman telling the story of Cupid and Psyche in the manner of a play-within-a-play. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser draws from both the central narrative and the subplots of Apuleius's novel to emphasize Britomart's "metamorphoses" in her dream in Book 5, canto 7.

Britomart's monstrous dream of the crocodile alludes to the story of Cupid and Psyche and notably invokes a process of *testing* feminine virtue – specifically Psyche's love for her husband. In *Shakespeare's Favorite Novel*, John Tobin observes that Spenser "based the dream of Britomart and the impregnating serpent (amphibian) lover upon the experience of Psyche whose initially invisible husband she thought to be a monstrous serpent."[64] In Adlington's translation of the myth, Venus entrusts Cupid with punishing Psyche, a mortal, for her "disobedient beauty," but instead he falls in love with Psyche and carries her off to his palace to make her his wife.[65] According to divine law, mortals may not lay eyes on the gods, and therefore Psyche is never permitted to *see* her husband. Although he comes to her bed at night, he remains invisible. Cupid explains to Psyche that no matter how tempted she may be she must never attempt to uncover his identity. As the story continues, Psyche necessarily dissembles about her husband's identity, and her unscrupulous sisters plant the idea that her husband is not human, but a serpent. Frightened, Psyche contrives to discover the identity of her "serpent" by lamplight and discovers the god of love instead. Psyche's discovery shatters her domestic bliss; Cupid flees, and Venus is again enraged. Although both she and Britomart are described as "dismayed" by their nighttime visions, after Psyche miraculously survives the three tasks Venus sets as her punishment, the latter will enjoy a happy ending, resulting in marriage and progeny. Perhaps Spenser employed this echo with the intention of Britomart doing the same, but as the poem remains unfinished, we will never know. The allusion does, however, invoke a model of testing feminine virtue in the tasks set by Venus, a model that Spenser had previously limited to the male titular knights of virtue.

Britomart's dream of transformation also invokes elements of the main plot in *The Golden Ass*, recognizable in the echo of Lucius's conversion to the Isiac religion

64. J. J. M.Tobin, *Shakespeare's Favorite Novel* (Lanham: UP of America, 1984), p. xiv.

65. Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass: Being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius,* trans. William Adlington (1566) (London: Heinemann, [1915] 1971), p. 191.

at the conclusion of the novel. Instead of beginning his story with a character like Britomart, who is representative of virtue, Apuleius introduces Lucius as a personification of sinful behavior. Lucius's insatiable appetite for indiscriminate sex is matched only by his insistent curiosity about black magic. At the beginning of the novel, Lucius seduces Fotis, a witch's servant, in the hopes of learning something of her mistress's craft. Lucius is successful, and Fotis steals from her mistress magic ointment with transformative powers. Experimenting with the hope of becoming a bird, Lucius instead finds himself physically transformed into an ass. Retaining his human intelligence, Lucius has numerous asinine adventures, including a sexual affair with a married woman from Corinth. Just as Britomart's crisis is affected in the altered repetition of prophesies regarding her future, Lucius's crisis emerges in the altered repetition of sexual encounters. Despite his enjoyment of bestial sex with the Corinthian matron, the prospect of public fornication with a murderess becomes too much for him. Lucius escapes, repents, and prays for salvation.

Lucius' prayers are answered by Isis. In exchange for the goddess's aid in his restoration to human form, Lucius vows obedience to her commandment "and addict to [her] religion, meriting by [his] constant chastity [her] divine grace."[66] When Lucius converts to the Isiac religion and priesthood, his conversion is from a life of asinine judgment to one of rational virtue – specifically the virtue of chastity. Spenser's thematic allusion to Lucius's conversion to chastity reinforces the transformation of Britomart's character and narrative. Spenser no longer represents chastity as defined by the absence of sex, but as a virtue achieved by moral choice, and one that is now embodied by men and women alike.

In context with the allusion to Lucius's conversion to the Isiac priesthood, the presence of the Isiac priest at Britomart's awakening magnifies Spenser's revision of chastity from Book 3 to Book 5. In Book 3, chastity is portrayed as a quality of the feminine, but not a quality of virtue as we know it in its active form of being a moral choice. In Book 5, Spenser emphasizes the virtuous qualities of chastity both by permitting the titular knight of virtue to conceive the knowledge necessary to make a moral choice, and by his masculine characterization of the chaste priest. Upon observing Britomart's distress, the Isiac priest echoes Glauce's plea in Book 3: "Say on (quoth he) the secret of your hart."[67] In light of this exploration of conceptual initiation, it is important to recognize that in Book 3 Britomart could not explain her problem directly, but only describe her symptoms – and only to Glauce. And it was Glauce, not Britomart, who begged Merlin to cure her "deare daughters deepe engraffed ill." Finally, Merlin assumed agency over Britomart's future in his initia-

66. Apuleius, p. 551.
67. Spenser, 5.17.19.

tion of her prophecy.[68] In Book 5, however, the prognosis itself has not changed significantly, but Britomart's agency in it has. Speaking for herself, she shares her dream with the priest, and he replies as follows:

> Magnificke Virgin, in that queint disguise
> . . . . . .
> How couldst thou weene, through that disguized hood,
> To hide thy state from being vnderstood?
> Can from th'immortall Gods ought hidden bee?
> They doe [see] thy linage, and thy Lordly brood. . .[69]

In these lines the priest juxtaposes Britomart's physical representation with her intellect. His invocation of her as a "virgin" in "queint disguise" is symbolically dense. On a literal level, she is a virgin in disguise, but in context it appears that what she hides under her "disguized hood" is the knowledge that she is in some manner pregnant. The accusatory tone in which the priest asks how Britomart could "weene," or think to hide her "state," implies Britomart's awareness of her "conception." Despite the fact that the priest generally echoes Merlin in his interpretation of her dream – the Crocodile is Osiris to her Isis, and they will marry and bear a "lion-like" child who will bravely preserve their legacy – Britomart is this time the progenitor of both her pregnancy and her prophecy.[70] Although the unfinished state of the poem leaves Britomart's physical pregnancy unresolved once again, intellectual "conception" is realized in the independent gestation of her prophecy. Britomart's newfound ability to conceive is her first step toward realizing her titular virtue.

Britomart's transformation is underscored by her subsequent actions in the remainder of Book 5, canto 7. After coming to terms with the implications of her revealing dream, Britomart's task remains to fight the Amazon queen, Radigund, in order to free her still-prophesied future husband, Arthegall. After a few touch-and-go moments in this bloody battle, Britomart prevails and Radigund is beaten into the ground – literally. And now, for the first time in the poem, we witness Britomart thinking critically about what to do next:

> the wrothfull Britonesse
> Stayd not, till she came to her selfe againe,
> But in revenge both of her loues distresse,
> And her late vile reproach, through vaunted vaine,

68. Spenser, 3.3.18.
69. Spenser, 5.7.21.
70. Spenser, 5.7.22–23.

> And also of her wound, which sore did paine,
> She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft. . .[71]

Not only does Britomart "come to herself," a phrase suggesting cognitive self-possession, but she also appears to be taking the measure of Radigund's offenses. Significantly, before Britomart decapitates her rival she comes up with three reasons to do so. The fact that Britomart is now, unlike in Book 3, rationalizing what constitutes morally correct behavior is emphasized two stanzas later, when she encounters Talus indiscriminately murdering the remaining Amazons: "That she his fury willed him to slake / For else he sure had left not one aliue, / But all in his reuenge of spirite would depriue."[72] When Britomart kills Radigund, she analyzes her motives and generates a rationale to justify revenge. In her tempering of Talus's thought*less* revenge, it is clear that Britomart is now capable of both recognizing virtue and determining fair punishment. Thus, in canto 7 of the Book of Justice, it appears that the story of Justice is more Britomart's than Arthegall's. Not only has Spenser revised his model of cognitive creation so that it may extend to women, but this model emerges as truly egalitarian.

It is tempting to summarize our argument here, but it is at precisely this point in the allegory that Spenser evokes a traditionally dramatic form of Aristotelian recognition in Britomart's freeing of the imprisoned Arthegall. While Britomart was transforming herself from a woman impersonating a male knight of virtue into a cognizant knight *of* virtue at the church of Isis, Radigund was stripping Arthegall of his masculinity by garbing him in women's clothing. Most editors gloss this scene as based on the myth of Hercules and Omphale:

> The Roman poets . . . elaborate the story, making Hercules dress as a woman and carry the distaff to spin wool. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance the story was used as an exemplum of the reason overcome by the passions, i.e., man dominated by woman.[73]

By defeating Radigund, Britomart overcomes passion and imbues herself with an all-conquering "rationale." Indeed, it seems that Spenser could not think of a more rational action for Britomart to take than to recover the social order by restoring the sexual hierarchy. Feminists might despair, thinking Spenser misses an opportunity via this Amazonian vignette to invert a sexist hierarchy, but it is important to recognize that Amazon rule is grounded in the unreliable and deforming "passions." Therefore, to have restored the Amazonian model would have been a step

71. Spenser, 5.7.34.
72. Spenser, 5.7.36.
73. Roche, "Notes" in Spenser, p. 1196.

backward for women, not forward. Spenser's significant shift, not only in his representation of the power of the feminine intellect between the 1590 and 1596 versions of this poem, but combined with the raising of his expectations for feminine virtue in Book 5, emerges as truly revolutionary.

Despite Spenser's elegant framing of Britomart's story, the fact remains that in Book 3 she is a poor role model for women. Britomart's "virtue" is consistently effected only by her ignorance, and thus, by foregoing definitions of the quality, lacking. Although the Aristotelian model of creation remains viable in sixteenth-century circles, it is apparent that Spenser recognized that strict adherence to this model thwarted his poetic desire to "fashion" feminine virtue. Had Spenser been concerned only with fashioning masculine virtue, he might have abbreviated his purpose in the prefacing Raleigh letter to "fashion a gentleman," instead of appending the qualification "or noble person of vertuous and gentle discipline."[74] In the course of exploring Britomart's transformation, there are several ways we can attempt to trace Spenser's re-conception of Britomart between Books 3 and 5.

It is quite possible Spenser may have been influenced by the growing popularity of neo-Platonic philosophy at the end of the sixteenth century. Marcilio Ficino's late fifteenth-century Latin translations of Plato and Plotinus had certainly made their way to England, but as Isabel Rivers observes, "It is not known how far Spenser was familiar with Platonic literature. . . [He] may have used Ficino's translation of Plotinus when he wrote *Four Hymns*."[75] Still, Britomart's dream-state transformation into Isis is one that loosely conforms to Ficino's model, bringing her closer to God and to the divine intellect that will permit her to make moral choices. Rivers explains:

> In Ficino's system, which is similar to that of Plotinus, each order in the universal hierarchy (God, angels, mind, soul, body) naturally aspires to that above. Man constantly strives to reach God. However, because of the intermediate position of the soul, man can look upwards or downwards; he is free to reach toward the truth or ignore it. This emphasis on human choice and aspiration differs significantly from the emphasis on divine grace and election in Protestant thought.[76]

The "warlike Maide" resting her "earthly parts" under Isis's statue suggests that before her dream, Britomart resides in her most human, bodily state.[77] Her "wondrous vision" of herself as Isis, then, represents a transformation which ideally sug-

74. Spenser, p. 15.

75. Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 36.

76. Rivers, p. 36.

77. Spenser, 5.7.12.

gests that she has "skipped" through the neo-Platonic hierarchy of being to acquire the qualities of divine love, intelligence, and reason to overcome the problems posed by the single-sex Aristotelian model of conception.[78]

Another way to look at Spenser's revision is to infer that he changed his mind about the philosophy of creation, and thus changed the construct of Britomart's mind as well. Or, perhaps, he recognized that according to the Aristotelian model he favored in regard to Britomart's character in Book 3, it would not be possible to "fashion" his female readership, specifically Queen Elizabeth. By revising the construct of feminine conception that had been established in Book 3, Spenser is able, six years later in Book 5, to have at least the potential to achieve his goal of fashioning his female readers, his queen, and by extension, his country. For how could England be virtuous if her leader could not? It is feasible to propose that at some point following publication Spenser recognized the paradox created by his stated intentions in the first edition of *The Faerie Queene*. And, it is not inconceivable that his audience with the Queen following the publication of the 1590 edition prompted his recognition. Whatever the specific tipping point may have been, the palimpsest of the power of feminine creation in Book 5 makes Spenser's allegorical intentions absolutely clear. By invoking Themis, Pyrrha, Isis, Psyche and Lucius to re-contextualize Britomart, Spenser abolishes the single-sex Aristotelian model of the 1590 edition and replaces it with an egalitarian model in the 1596 version. In giving his characters – male and female – the power to generate knowledge, Spenser neutralizes the classical gender bias regarding the conception of "virtue" to bring forth a more modern English version of the quality. By "Englishing" his version of "virtue" via Britomart's character in the second installment of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser follows through on his intention to "fashion" virtue in his readers, his countrymen, and especially his queen.

78. Spenser, 5.7.13.

Balázs Szigeti

The Dialects of Sin

in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* Trilogy

Since its first performance in or around 1606, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has been the target of a vast number of theatrical and cinematographic reproductions. This paper claims that, rather than giving its direct rereading, Coppola's *The Godfather* Trilogy applies the tragic mechanism of *Macbeth* and thus diverges from other types of gangster films. This is shown through the discussion of the consequences of sin and the problem of free will with respect to Macbeth, and the protagonist of the *Godfather*-saga, Michael Corleone. In both pieces, sin is interpreted as a work of art, which through its directive inspiration provides complete artistic freedom to the protagonists, yet at the same time heavily determines their action through that very work of art itself. Resulting from the differences of the two genres, in Macbeth's case the dramatic portrayal of sin condenses into a single act of murder, while in the epic saga of Michael it is broken up into smaller episodes, manifesting themselves in different deeds, which one by one echo various aspects of Macbeth's predicament. However, the two protagonists also create their respective worlds which enclose them more and more; their attempt to escape will prove to be an illusion, and what is most valuable for their lives is destroyed through their own actions.

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this
blood clean from my hand?" (2.2.58–59)[1]

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* depicts fundamental human situations, conflicts, passions and sufferings: the rise and the tragic fall of a couple. *Macbeth* (1606) attracted masses of various taste not only in its own age; its popularity is still intact and in addition to various theatrical productions, numerous film adaptations have been born on the basis of the play. However, the basic patterns and working mechanism of Shakespeare's tragedy can survive in other forms than the various direct (theatrical or cinematographic) reproductions or rereading of the bard's plays. To make my point clear, I have chosen a work of art which today has a similar role in our "global

1. All references to *Macbeth* are to the following edition: Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York & London: Norton, 2008).

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culture" to that which *Macbeth* had in the Globe: a successful but already classic film, *The Godfather* Trilogy (1972; 1974; 1990; directed by Francis Ford Coppola), claiming that the "Macbeth tradition" powerfully survives in the figure of the trilogy's protagonist, Michael Corleone.

This similarity does not mean that *The Godfather* films can be mentioned as artworks directly or indirectly feeding from the influence of Shakespeare's plays. To my knowledge, the creators did not have *Macbeth* or even motifs from the play in mind while producing the film. What I wish to argue is that there is an inherent relationship between *Macbeth* and *The Godfather* Trilogy which ties them together while also differentiating them from other tragic plays and gangster films, respectively. That the audience may observe the internal changes of the protagonist is not a surprising feature of a Shakespeare play where especially monologues and soliloquies provide an insight into the "inside" of the characters; yet the very length of the film-trilogy helps the viewer to a "narrative" comprehension of the career of Michael Corleone, who from a shy and timid young man, having nothing to do with his father's "business," turns into a dreaded but broken mafia chief by the end of Part III. The most striking similarity between the two works, however, is that they have a villain figure in their focus. *Macbeth* is often said to be an atypical tragedy[2] as it puts a murderer on the stage as a protagonist, which eventually brings the plot closer to that of the gangster films. On the other hand, I would like to claim that *The Godfather* is at the same time an atypical gangster film as it places into its focus a vulnerable, conscience-tormented figure who is finally defeated by himself, this tragic pattern bringing the film closer to Shakespeare's tragedy. In other words, the two works meet exactly via their atypical nature in their own genres. As it is primarily the field of sin and murder where the inherent similarity between Macbeth and Michael can be identified, I will provide an analysis from a special aspect, i.e. observing the significant aspects of sin in the drama and the films.

Sin and Its Consequences

> "I am in blood stepped in so far that . . .
> returning were as tedious as go o'er"
> (3.4.135–137)

Macbeth and *The Godfather* both lead the viewer into the world of sin: the protagonists are surrounded by wars, the fume of blood; treachery reaches into the remotest corners of former trust, friendship and love; and the main topic of both

2. Cf. e.g. James Calderwood, *If It Were Done: Macbeth and Tragic Action* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1986) p. 50.

works is committing the sin of murder. Sin in both cases entails pangs of conscience and punishment, and heavily influences the flow of the protagonists' lives.

Macbeth is pushed forward towards a deed which, in turn, leaves him in a predicament he can never escape from. The seduction to murder king Duncan derives from the prediction of the Weïrd Sisters, who may of course be interpreted in various ways.[3] They are present all along, even if they are not visible;

3. In the secondary literature on Macbeth the interpretation of the Weïrd Sisters seems to be one of the corner-stones of the understanding of the play, so divergent views are hardly surprising. As early as 1765, Whately claimed that Macbeth is "represented . . . as a man, whose natural temper would have deterred him from such a design [as the murdering of Duncan], if he had not been immediately tempted, and strongly impelled to it," since initially Macbeth does not lack "the milk of human kindness" (Thomas Whately, "Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare," in *Macbeth: Bloom's Shakespeare Through The Ages*, ed. Harold Bloom [New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008], 69–75. p. 70). According to August Wilhelm Schlegel's famous opinion, the witches undoubtedly are "the ignoble and vulgar instruments of hell"; their chief role is to embody the irrationality of dread. Thus it does not really matter whether the audience or Shakespeare himself believed in the existence of such creatures, since the poet's task is far from giving an anthropological, ethnographic, historical or even metaphysical interpretation of their "status"; it is to make their mystery even more mysterious and to "show them up" as an enigma for ever. (August Wilhelm Schlegel "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," in Bloom, 80–84. p. 81). For Coleridge the Weïrd Sisters are the creations of Shakespeare's own and they stand for "the lawless human nature." They are not necessarily "evil"; they do not do more than give voice to "a reasoning on a problem already discussed in his [Macbeth's] mind, – on a hope which he welcomes, and the doubts concerning the attainment of which he wishes to have cleared up" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge "Notes on Macbeth: *Shakespeare, with Introductory Remarks on Poetry, the Drama, and the Stage*" in Bloom, 91–94. pp. 93–94); thus Coleridge is of the opinion that the witches are the projections of Macbeth's mind. A. C. Bradley's view, which proved definitive for a long time, comes close to that of Coleridge: "The Witches, that is to say, are not goddesses, or fates, or, in any way whatever, supernatural beings. They are old women, poor and ragged, skinny and hideous, full of vulgar spite, occupied in killing their neighbours' swine." Not even Hecate is able to elect them to the status of "real" witches, since she "is herself a goddess, not a fate . . . the prophecies of the Witches are presented simply as dangerous circumstances with which Macbeth has to deal" (A. C. Bradley "Lecture IX: Macbeth," in Bloom, 172–195, p. 179). This opinion still prevailed, for example, in the highly successful 1976–78 performance of *Macbeth* by the Royal Shakespeare Company (director: Trevor Nunn; Macbeth: Ian McKellen; Lady Macbeth: Judi Dench), where the witches were not "the great instruments of Fate and witchcraft that they were in [Orson] Welles' 1936 production, but at most descend[ed] to malicious mischief" (Bernice W. Kliman, ed., *Macbeth: Shakespeare in Performance*, 2nd ed. [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004], p. 132). Thus interpretations have emphasized either the human, human-like or historical character of the Weïrd Sisters, or their transcendental nature, or even the inevitable ('fatal'?) intermingling of all these and their interaction with Macbeth's desires. James Calderwood aptly remarks that when the witches appear for the

they surround the Macbeth couple and control them. They are present in the castle at the beginning and waiting for Macbeth to 'do the deed.' In the very moment the protagonist is knee-deep in sin, the world of the Weïrd Sisters is able to surface. Previously, the Macbeth castle was depicted as an idyllic sight: "This castle has a pleasant seat; the air / Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself / Unto our gentle senses" (Duncan, 1.6.1–3) or "This guest of summer, / The temple-haunting martlet, does approve, / By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath / Smells wooingly here" (Banquo, 1.6.3–6); but after the murder it turns immediately into the castle of horrors, into Hell itself. This is much emphasized in the porter scene (2.3) ("If a man were Porter of Hell Gate"): the porter explicitly describes himself as being the porter of Hell.[4] This is his first (and also last) appearance; he enters right after the murder, as if sin itself had called him into existence; as if he were 'one of the Weïrd Sisters' who had been waiting so far and now is able to take control of the whole palace. From this time on the Weïrd Sisters can start their raving *danse macabre*, creating a whirlpool that will never release the protagonist. After murdering the king and becoming the new ruler, Macbeth will try to get rid of sin, he will try to reject the Weïrd Sisters themselves in order to escape from the castle of Hell; yet he sinks deeper and deeper into bloodshed, and 'tomorrow,' which may bring him relief, remains forever tomorrow, as the word *tomorrow* is itself context dependent, a deictic item of language: it does not denote any kind of individual substance,[5] therefore it will always refer to the future, the thus 'never reachable.'

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first time "it is though we are looking at a painting in which one figure negates itself by pointing to a second which in turn points to a third. . . . This self-annulling aspect of the scene as an action mirrors the self-annulments of its verse – the semantic cross-cancellation of fair and foul and won and lost – and of the Witches' appearance as men-women" (Calderwood, p. 34).

4. The significance of the porter is, of course, a matter of controversy, too. Coleridge's infamous rejection of the whole porter scene is often quoted: "with the exception of the disgusting passage of the Porter (Act ii, sc. 3), which I dare pledge myself to demonstrate to be an interpolation of the actors, there is not, to the best of my remembrance, a single pun or play on words in the whole drama" (Coleridge, p. 91). Almost diametrically opposed to this, Thomas De Quincey argues that "the death-like stillness is broken up" by the very knocking on the gate and the porter's appearance; "the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them." The normal, 'sober' world returns precisely through the fact that the porter is drunk. (Thomas De Quincey "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*," in Bloom, 95–97, p. 96). The porter is both transitional 'comic relief' and, as the gate-keeper of Hell, the travesty of Saint Peter.

5. Cf. Géza Kállay, *A nyelv határai: Shakespeare-tanulmányok* [The borderlines of language: Essays on Shakespeare], 2nd ed. (Budapest: Liget, 2006), p. 376.

In the case of Michael, the tempting sin, represented by the Weïrd Sisters in *Macbeth*, is interiorized. At the beginning, Michael is determined to remain outside of the world of his father, but circumstances push him into the middle of the world he wanted to avoid. First, he wants to protect his father; therefore he takes over his position in the Family and becomes Don, i.e. a kind of "king." One of his first deeds in his new position is to give orders to "settle the family business," i.e. to massacre the heads of the opponent families and organizations. Just as in the case of Macbeth, this turns his world into a prison which never lets him escape. The family house, which was represented as a place of happiness at the beginning of Part I, hosting a wedding party (although, with the shadows of the mafia world also present in the study of old Vito Corleone), has already become a fortress, and this is even more emphasized at the beginning of Part II, after the attempt on Michael's life. After agreeing to be the head of the Family, he undertakes the responsibility of protecting not only his father but the whole organization (kingdom), and also his family in the literal sense.[6] Escaping from this world always remains an illusion for him, it becomes his tomorrow, which never comes; although he believes that the next step will bring him relief, he does not know that, just as Macbeth, he is climbing an infinite staircase. His interiorized Weïrd Sisters are holding him fast, never letting him exit. Michael's words in the middle of Part III are frighteningly relevant from this point of view: "Just when I thought I was out, they pulled me back in."

An important aspect which closely connects the story of Macbeth with that of Michael Corleone is that while they both strive for greatness, neither of them is characterized by concentrating solely on his own benefit. Both characters sink deeper and deeper into the world of sin while keeping the sake of the *Other* in their perspective. Macbeth commits the murder of Duncan for the sake of Lady Macbeth, so that they can become king and queen together. Michael, although he too is characterized by personal ambition, takes his first step into the mafia world for the sake of his father and later on he acts on behalf of the Corleone Family, a large group of people for whom he has undertaken responsibility and wants to defend and take care of. The weight of the two protagonists' acts and decisions is thus increased, as it is not only their own success which is at stake but also the ones they are responsible for and for whom they entered the world of sin. This is why their fall will be so effective and cruel.

6. In *The Godfather*, the use of the word *family* is always ambiguous: besides meaning the circle of close relatives, it also denotes the organization of the mafia.

Sin as a Work of Art

"Confusion now hath made his masterpiece. . ."
(2.3.62)

Macbeth commits high treason: he murders his king and 'kinsman' in his sleep with his own hands, and with this sin he dips his hands in blood both literally and metaphorically. Thus a situation is created where one murder follows the other in the hope of escaping the torments of conscience and punishment; yet in this way the protagonist only sinks deeper and further from the desired relief. What leads Macbeth to the assassination of Duncan? There is no straightforward answer to this question: we may mention the Weïrd Sisters, his Lady, the war, his own ambitions, even his own safety; these can all be influencing factors and it would not be appropriate to emphasize the importance of one particular cause over the others. The reason, therefore, is complex, while the goal seems to be evident: to rule at all costs. But why rule? Wealth can hardly be the main appeal: Macbeth is Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, a great landlord and respected warrior, appreciated by the king and obviously without any financial problems. What are more seductive than money in Macbeth's case is power and the accompanying freedom, which, at least seemingly, is always the king's 'lion share.' Although Macbeth has won in battle and saved his king at the beginning of the play, Duncan names Malcolm as his successor, and the future king does not represent any guarantee concerning Macbeth's position and freedom. Total freedom can only be expected if one can climb up to the highest step of the ladder and the only way there – as the Macbeth couple is convinced – leads through murder.

It is noteworthy that Macbeth immediately thinks about the murder on hearing the prophecy, and this is also referred to in his first monologue after the meeting with the Weïrd Sisters: "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical" (1.3.138), whereas these words do not unambiguously state – and by no means determine – how he will get to the throne. Macbeth interprets the declaration "that shalt be King hereafter" (1.3.48) in the future tense, as an imperative, and wants to fulfill the promise as an active agent. This also supports the supposition that the characters of the Weïrd Sisters basically represent the projection of the inner desires of the main heroes: in the light of the bare prophecy, Macbeth could choose the position of the passive expectant (the role of 'patient' instead of 'agent') in the hope of the fulfillment of the promise (as he also formulates this idea: "If chance will have me King, why, Chance may crown me, without my stir," 1.3.142–3).

In his article on free will, Roderick M. Chisolm claims that it is not important whether an act is done for outer or inner reasons, which means that he considers, from the perspective of committing the deed, the role of outside constraints and

inside desires to be on the same level.[7] This is wonderfully illustrated further by Macbeth's encounter with the Weïrd Sisters: they can be considered to be impulsive forces coming from the outside just as much as mere internal desires; and there is no point in strictly differentiating the two, as they mutually contribute to the deed. At the same time, however long the chain of causes and effects considered may be, at the beginning of the chain there is always an active agent who serves as the starting point of that chain.[8] Consequently, in committing a deed, internal and external forces are both equally relevant; yet, the acting agent, who is responsible for the deed itself, cannot be totally dismissed, either.

To resolve this somewhat paradoxical diagnosis presented by Chisolm, we should ask, considering the circumstances and his own desires, if Macbeth had any chances other than murder.[9] This, it seems, implies the further question whether somebody can be held responsible for his views and desires.[10] Did Macbeth himself cause his tragedy by committing the murder, or was he pushed towards his destiny as a helpless puppet of external forces? In his article on human will, Brand Blanshard argues for the *illusion* of free will:[11] a person during decision-making tends to turn towards his or her future (i.e. Macbeth towards the kingdom through the path of murder), and does not really reckon with the actual circumstances which have brought him or her to the actual deed; therefore, the person will not be aware of the fact that he or she is under very strong constraints. Here the constraints Blanshard's agent is unaware of might be translated into the 'magic strings' of the Weïrd Sisters dragging Macbeth towards the murder. On the other hand, by analyzing morally

7. Roderick M. Chisolm "Human Freedom and the Self," in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 24–53. p. 25.

8. Chisolm, p. 25.

9. The problem of free will is closely related to the appearance of the Weïrd Sisters: those critics who attribute transcendental or fate-like power to them usually question Macbeth's free will, while those who interpret the witches as the projection of Macbeth's desire, or claim that they are not the manifestation of sin but temptation, or even that they are simply, 'ragged, poor women,' will put great emphasis on the freedom of Macbeth to act, thereby putting almost all the responsibility on his shoulders. Thus, for example Bradley remarks that "Macbeth is, in the ordinary sense, perfectly free in regard to them [the Witches]" (Bradley, p. 179); "not only was [Macbeth] completely free to accept or resist the temptation, but the temptation was already within him"; in fact he was "tempted only by himself," since "for all that appears, the natural death of [the] old man [i.e. Duncan] might have fulfilled the prophecy any day" (p. 180). Bradley sternly maintains that "Shakespeare nowhere shows . . . any interest in speculative problems concerning foreknowledge, predestination and freedom" (p. 181).

10. Cf. Chisolm, p. 25.

11. Brand Blanshard, "The Case for Determinism," in *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: Collier, 1961), 19–30, p. 20.

benevolent deeds, Blanshard gets closer to the indeterminist pole, and although murder can obviously not be considered as something morally positive, Blanshard draws a parallel between morally approvable deeds and the arts; for him it is the artist who is liberated most from any kind of determinism.[12]

I wish to claim that Macbeth can be set free from the grip of the deterministic reading if we interpret his deed as an artistic one, and this interpretation of sin as a work of art can also be applied to Michael Corleone. Macbeth, as it were, caught inspiration to compose a heroic poem of his destiny and make himself king: his inspiration is manifested as the vision of the Weïrd Sisters, while the work of art itself is the murder, a deed acted out in a single moment. This view may be supported by the exclamation of Macduff, who, upon returning from the dead king's chamber, cries: "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!" (2.3.62). When talking about the corpse of the king Macbeth himself also depicts the murder, his creation, as an artistic work:

> Here lay Duncan,
> His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
> And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature
> For ruin's wasteful entrance. (2.3.108–111)

At the beginning of the play, the prophecies of the Weïrd Sisters planted a "horrid image" in Macbeth's mind (cf. "why do I yield to that suggestion / Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair," 1.3.133–134). It seems that through the murder, Macbeth has realized this image in order to get rid of it, just as an artist realizes his inspiration in his work. What primarily distinguishes a murder considered to be a work of art from other murders is its emotionally loaded creative feature. Macbeth's deed is not characterized primarily by the aim to destroy, to revenge or *solely* to gain something (e.g. the throne, as is the case in *Richard III*, for instance) but to create something with the act of murder. More specifically: to create, with his wife, a mythology of their own.

We have already touched upon the question of why the Macbeth couple is resolved to kill the king. The most obvious answer seems to be that they commit the murder to gain the crown. If it were so, then their deed could hardly be characterized as an artistic achievement, despite the picturesque, aesthetically loaded depiction of the dead Duncan. However, the crown – although undoubtedly a primary factor – can hardly be regarded as the couple's single motive. Before the murder takes place, the word *spur* appears twice in the text of *Macbeth*. In both cases, the word is part of a metaphor, and since its meaning often implies – also metaphorically – 'impulsive

12. Blanshard, p. 29.

force' and 'motivation,' some textual hint might be gained as regards Macbeth's motives. In the first appearance ("his [i.e. Macbeth's] great love, sharp as his spur," Duncan, 1.6.23) *spur* is associated with Macbeth's love, while in the second ("I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition," Macbeth, 1.7.25–27) it is related to his ambition. Although the two quotations originate from different persons, still, the *spur*-metaphor connects them on the textual level, and thus we may get closer to the motivation, i.e. 'love combined with ambition.' Macbeth wants Lady Macbeth to be queen and Lady Macbeth her husband to be king, or – more precisely – they want to become the royal couple *together*. In the first quotation Duncan is by no means wrong when he associates Macbeth's great haste with love, but it is not the love towards the ruler but towards the wife with whom Macbeth wants to share in deed and success. However, the murder (the deed) and the throne (the success) thus cannot be separated and Macbeth very well knows the consequences of their deed in advance, as he acknowledges in the "*If it were done*"-soliloquy: he is aware that damnation will come upon them on earth (cf. "But in these cases / We still have judgement here, that we but teach / Bloody instructions which, being taught, return / To plague th'inventor," 1.7.7–10). Yet the Macbeth couple commits the murder to create their own mythology, to strengthen their relationship; and afterwards they try the impossible, i.e. to enjoy what they gained, to reach happiness and disregard the cost. The zenith of this attempt will be the banquet scene, when they strive to maintain an idyllic surface, suggesting perfection (cf. "Both sides are *even*. Here I'll sit, i'th'midst," Macbeth, 3.4.9), but this attempt results in failure (cf. "What is the night?" Macbeth; "Almost at *odds* with morning, which is which," Lady Macbeth, 3.4.125–125). To conclude, this creative force of the murder, closely connected to the perspective of the *other*, can turn the deed into a work of art.

The act of murder, thus interpreted as a work of art, represents the paradox of the freedom realized within the artwork and the kind of determinism it still simultaneously implies. According to Blanshard's theory, the work of art takes "the pen away from the artist" and completes itself; this obviously binds the artist on the one hand; yet, it makes him or her free on the other, as it is being determined by the artistic achievement (and nothing else), which is the ultimate goal of the artist's desire.[13] Conducted by a higher vision, Macbeth commits the masterpiece of sin, of which he becomes a slave for the rest of his life, and which finally devours him. Symbolically, the play starts with the appearance of the inspiration, the first words of the Weïrd Sisters, and ends with the death of the protagonist,[14] in complete fu-

13. Cf. Blanshard, pp. 20–29.

14. The play ends with the speech of Malcolm after the head of Macbeth is brought in; but I consider this part only as a 'follow-up' to the plot, giving the impression that order is restored.

sion with the play itself – which means that Macbeth is writing his own tragedy, painting himself on the stage; therefore he is free to the utmost, as he represents the purest form of the creator's freedom. At the same time, he could not be more bound within his "masterpiece": after the assassination, he continuously tries to escape primarily the implications evoked by his deed; he wishes to leave his tragedy, the play itself (i.e. his story, the situation he created with the murder); yet he tries to achieve this through repeated murders, sins, iterated "works of art": in a way, he tries to pull himself up by his (military) bootstraps.[15]

The same questions may be asked in Michael Corleone's case: were there any other possibilities than stepping on the given path, to govern and protect the Family with the instrument of sin? The protagonist asks the same from his wife, Kay, in the third part:

> I loved my father. I swore I would never be a man like him. . . but I loved him. And he was in danger. What could I do? And then later, you were in danger. Our children were in danger. What could I do? You were all that I loved and valued most in the world. And I'm losing you. I lost you, anyway. You're gone. And it was all for nothing. So. . . you have to understand, I had a whole different destiny planned.

So far it seems that the circumstances which have led him to this point can easily be reconstructed behind Michael's destiny: the attempt on his father's life by the other families; the protection of his own family (Michael had to kill Solozzo and the police captain, McCluskey); the death of his first wife, Apollonia, as well as the cruel and humiliating end of his eldest brother, etc. Yet, this is only Michael's reading of his own life, emphasizing the role of the circumstances; and although it might be convenient for the protagonist to hide behind the excuse of the lack of alternatives when looking back on his life, one cannot as yet speak about clear determinism in the case of Michael, as Macbeth cannot be a case of pure determinism, either.

In the following I will argue that Michael's sin can also be interpreted as a work of art, as in Macbeth's case, and although it is more obscure and less obvious here, still it is a dominant characteristic of Michael's tragedy. Just as Macbeth, Michael caught inspiration. Obviously, his deed is not described as aesthetically as it was in the poetic drama, but the creative force of the sin and the perspective of the *other*

15. James Calderwood surveys the meta-theatrical elements in *Macbeth*; he claims that, as opposed to *Hamlet*, in *Macbeth* we do not witness word-play or mad-play but "role-playing," which "enables the hero to perform an act he cannot manage in his own person" (Calderwood, p. 18). Macbeth "shapes his identity in the deeds he performs" (p. 23); "*Macbeth* almost seems to become a tragedy by taking for its subject the actional essence of the tragic genre" itself, constantly shifting "between done and un-done" (p. 33).

elevate the deed(s) to the artistic level and hence can be related to Duncan's murder. In the case of Michael, love and ambition are also very much connected. Ambition and struggle for power are common elements of gangster films, but the importance of love with which it is combined in *The Godfather* Trilogy differentiates Coppola's saga from other films of this genre and may relate it to the Shakespeare play in question. Michael's deeds are not feeding from entirely individual interests. His first steps into the world of the mafia are exclusively motivated by the love towards the father when he decides to defend him in the hospital, where he also kisses the hand of the sick Vito Corleone — a symbol of being involved in the "Family business." Later on, when his ambition rises (when he becomes the Don and starts to lead and reorganize the Family) it does so in the perspective of love and the desire for creation. Michael wants to finish his father's masterpiece, thus his case is the continuation (or even perfection) of a 'work in progress.' He struggles to become a good successor to his father and the films emphasize this atmosphere of comparison: in Part II, the double time line revealing the youth of Vito, while in Part III, the photos of the old Don observing his son from the walls of Michael's study suggest the constant and sometimes depressing omnipresence of the father figure. Michael wishes to create a well-organized empire from his father's work and in a way also a shared private mythology with his father; but with his methods he drifts further from the heritage of Vito Corleone and fails to unite with him. This is further emphasized by the double time lines of Part II when the two eras helplessly separate the two figures, and in the last flashback scene when in principle the grown-up Michael and Vito could finally reunite; yet, Michael remains seated and does not go over to the other room to greet his father. Thus, after Part I, the spectator can never see them together again.

As a result of the love towards the father and his family, which Michael wants to protect, Michael's deeds are thus emotionally loaded despite the characteristic poker-face with which he commits or orders the murders; and this emotional motivation also lends some artistic features to his work. The deeds he commits are usually pre-requisites or first steps in starting to build up something: for example an empire, but metaphorically also his own tragedy. And this productive work is, in a way, freely chosen,[16] although under the influence of several factors. It is not necessary that the control of the Family descend on the youngest son of the Don:[17] this is

16. Anker emphasizes the significance of freedom in Michael's choice and rejects the idea of determinism (cf. Roy M. Anker, "Darkness Visible," in *Catching Light: Looking for God in the Movies* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 19–66, p. 45).

17. The problem of primogeniture is importantly present in *Macbeth*, too; that Duncan names his eldest son, Malcolm, as his immediate heir to the throne is in no way customary in the Scotland of the times; Duncan with this deed in fact establishes a tradition which is

further emphasized by the treachery of the Don's friend and former right hand, Tessio, after the death of Vito Corleone. Michael could have refused the leadership and passed it on to someone else, contrary to his father's decree. However, Michael realizes the possibilities and is determined to continue his father's dream,[18] and forge it according to his beliefs and his personality: in this way he also shares the freedom and determinism of the artist. Still, while in the case of Macbeth the self-capturing artistic work is drama, which is born in the moment of the murder, in *The Godfather* this 'moment' is stretched out in the form of the epic flow of film narrative. Michael continues the family-saga, and in his case there is no single deed which could be emphasized; there is no single act of sin with which Michael would give birth to the "masterpiece of confusion" in a given moment: he first takes part in the Family business by killing Solozzo and the police captain, then, already as a Don, he strengthens the position of the Family by eliminating the heads of the rival organizations; but murdering Fredo, his brother, also has outstanding significance. Here sin does not condense itself into a single dramatic occasion but is disseminated along the whole story-line. Macbeth's case is symbolic as, by this compression, the deed becomes so powerful that the stage can no longer endure it and it has to happen off stage: the audience cannot witness it, they just hear about the event.[19] And this cannot simply be attributed to the avoidance of brutality in a play where a small boy is slaughtered on stage.

Both protagonists hope to achieve complete freedom through sin. Macbeth desires the position of the king, the highest step on the ladder, where he expects to be independent from everybody and everything, as has been discussed above. The Corleone family has similar ambitions: Vito Corleone wishes to make himself independent from any kind of dependency; in his youth he murdered Don Fanucci because Fanucci was posing as a local king in the Italian-American neighborhood and supervised the business of the residents, who lacked any kind of protection. The old Vito explains explicitly his desires of independence to Michael in Part I:

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half-way towards the institution of primogeniture (cf. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. A. R. Braunmuller [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], p. 16).

18. For the differences between Vito's and Michael's methods, see Anker, pp. 31–44.

19. Calderwood, considering *Macbeth* to be the "counter-" or "inside-out"-version of *Hamlet*, not only emphasizes the swiftness of resolution and the rapidity of the deed as opposed to Hamlet's famous hesitation, pointing out that "action in *Macbeth* originates within the hero and issues onward" (Calderwood, p. 20), but he also calls attention to the fact that since the members of the audience are unable to witness Duncan's assassination directly, they are compelled to *imagine* Macbeth's deed and thus they are, as it were, "together with Macbeth" in Duncan's bedchamber, not only as on-lookers with their 'mind's eye' but as accomplices as well (cf. Calderwood, pp. 45–47).

> And I refused to be a fool. . . dancing on the strings, held by all those bigshots. I don't apologize. That's my life. But I thought that when it was your time. . . that you would be the one to hold the strings. Senator Corleone. Governor Corleone, or something.

The Corleone Family shares the same goal as the Macbeth couple:[20] to arrive at a point where complete liberty can be enjoyed; however, they share the same destiny as well: they start on the road of sin but they come to a halt; Macbeth can never enjoy the royal freedom, as it is corrupted by the sense of guilt and external punishment, as Michael can never legitimize the Family either, to make his descendants senators or governors. They are driven to sin in the hope of freedom, and by turning it into an artistic masterpiece, they are in quest of the mirage of independence; but it is sin itself which turns them into pawns: after committing the crimes both Macbeth and Michael turn from active agents into passive figures ('patients'), to whom events 'just happen' but whose own human strength is insufficient to influence their destiny. Therefore, the promise of the agent-role leading to the desired freedom disappears precisely through that which seems to be the only possible way to it: sin. This is especially emphasized in *The Godfather*, when Michael shoots Solozzo and the police captain in the restaurant, and immediately after the deed he is put into a car and then on a plane to Sicily, just like a helpless package which got among the cogwheels of an unstoppable machine.

The meta-theatricality dominating *Macbeth* and being connected with sin has already been discussed. Macbeth judges his own play, called *Macbeth*, to be meaningless, "signifying nothing," since for him it seems no longer possible to arrange the events in a logical-metaphorical way that might help in understanding what really happened; it cannot even be known whether the "story" exists at all. In *The Godfather*, besides sin becoming a work of art, it is the theatre itself, in its own physical reality, which becomes the zenith of Michael's tragedy.[21]

At the end of Part III, in Palermo's Teatro Massimo, the Corleone Family watches an opera, called *Cavalleria Rusticana*, in which Michael's son, Anthony Corleone, plays the protagonist, Turiddu. Previously, there have already been traces

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20. In this respect Bradley's remark is interesting: "We observe in them [Lady Macbeth and Macbeth] no love of the country, and no interest in welfare of anyone outside of their family" (Bradley, p. 183).

21. According to the general public opinion, the third part of the film is not coherently connected to the previous films and does not reach their artistic level. In my interpretation, however, the third part is a necessary and from a narrative point of view an essential continuation of *The Godfather*-films, as it makes the story and the tragedy of Michael Corleone complete and authentic. Due to the limits of the present paper, I will not discuss this question in detail here.

of reality and theatrical fiction reflecting each other, when for example in Part III, walking on the streets of Corleone, Michael and Kay peep into an Italian puppet performance which depicts a scene where a father kills his daughter as punishment for a forbidden relationship with her cousin. This is not only a clear foreshadowing of the death of Michael's only daughter, Mary, but also of its ultimate cause, since in the puppet show it is the father who executes his daughter with his own hands. This short scene serves as a kind of prologue to the monumental opera scene: here the family members, as members of the Corleone Family, are simultaneously put into the role of the audience watching the performance, while at the same time – as the montage-technique applied by the director again allows us to witness it[22] – commissioned men liquidate the Family enemies on orders. In the film, the theatre symbolizes and emphasizes how the masterpiece created by sin devours and consumes the sinner. The music of Pietro Mascagni replaces the film's score and attaches itself to the events taking place outside of the opera, in a way pervading them. Taking place in Sicily, the opera's plot contains many of the trilogy's motifs. The incensed and sanguine Turiddu bites the ear of his enemy, the village teamster Alfio, just as at the beginning of Part III, in Michael's study, Vincent Mancini bit Joey Zasa's ear, indicating that Zasa was challenged to a duel. In the opera, during the celebratory chants of the Easter choir, the same hooded figures carry the statue of Jesus as at the street-celebration during which Joey Zasa is killed, or when young Vito murders Don Fanucci; in various ways we may witness a recounting of the history of the Corleone mafia-family. In the opera performance, where the principles of honor and revenge are just as important as in the life of the mafia, one may not only see the reflection of Michael's world but in fact the opera enters into a much closer relationship with it. In the Easter scene mentioned above, during the uncovering of the crucifix of Jesus Christ, the hooded figures flee, covering their faces, and in the very same moment Michael's secret enemy, the poisoned Don Altobello, dies in his box – as if the image of God appearing on the stage were chasing him out of the world of mortals. The most important connection between theatrical fiction and Michael's destiny, however, does not reflect the past or the present but the immediate future; and this is the most cardinal aspect of Michael Corleone's tragedy. At the end of the opera Alfio, behind the scenes, kills Turiddu, that is, the character played by Anthony Corleone. In this way Michael's son dies in the world of the play, but his 'death' is

22. This montage, simultaneously showing the family enjoying the opera and the vendettas is an unambiguous back-reference to the end of Part I, when Michael's men massacre the enemies of the family during the baptismal ceremony in church. The motif of vendettas during an opera performance is taken over in the film *The Untouchables* (1987), where a policeman (Sean Connery) is murdered on the orders of Al Capone (Robert de Niro), while the mafia-chief is listening to the famous *Vesti Giubba* aria from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.

not followed by tears but applause: the performance, the theatrical illusion has ended; the audience withdraws the willing suspension of disbelief and qualifies the plot for what it is: fiction; parents, relatives and friends leave the auditorium and greet the 'newly risen' actor personally, who is, of course, fit as a fiddle. Not long after Michael regains his son from the world of fiction, his other child, Mary, is fatally wounded in reality on the stairs of the Opera house by the hired assassin who in fact wishes to kill Michael.[23] Mary's death, in turn, evokes unbearable pain, animal-like yelling on Michael's part and bitter, helpless tears instead of applause, as Michael is unable to leave *this* theatre and resurrect his daughter: all this happens in *his own* reality. This reality is enclosed by the opera house and the music of the opera in multiple ways: the mourning of the dead Mary and the last pictures of the trilogy are accompanied by the *Intermezzo* theme of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Michael is unable to escape the epic artwork of his sin,[24] which, by writing 'itself,' demanded the loss of Mary Corleone, just as Macbeth is not capable of breaking out from the masterpiece of his sin, either.

The Aspects of Sin

> "From hence to Inverness, and bind us further to you. . ." (1.4.42–43)

So far the topic has been sin as determining the destiny of the protagonists and its perception as a work of art, which provides a kind of (pseudo-)freedom and real bondage simultaneously. In what follows, I will especially focus on the deed that in both *Macbeth* and *The Godfather* gives birth to sin. As has already been discussed, the tragedy of Macbeth squeezes everything into one single deed, which, in turn, is disseminated along the lines of various episodes in *The Godfather*-saga. This somewhat perhaps boldly-stated claim may also mean that we can gain a deeper insight into some aspects of Duncan's murder if we consider Michael's sins one by one. In the following, I will argue that the assassination of Duncan corresponds to three very important moments in *The Godfather*: first, the murder of Solozzo and the police captain McCluskey; secondly, the slaughter of the heads

23. Naomi Greene connects *The Godfather* also with Verdi's *Rigoletto* because of the motif of a daughter killed because of the sins of the father (cf. Naomi Greene, "Family Ceremonies: or, Opera in *The Godfather* Trilogy," in *Francis Ford Coppola's* Godfather *Trilogy*, ed. Nick Browne [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 133–155, p. 146).

24. The claim that Michael's world is 'devoured' by an 'artwork' which is the symbol of slavery brought about by sin and also mirrored in *Cavalleria Rusticana* is further supported by Naomi Greene in her already quoted essay "Family Ceremonies." Greene emphasizes the opera-like qualities of the whole film-trilogy (Greene, pp. 133–135).

of the other New York mafia families; and finally, the assassination of Michael's brother, Fredo Corleone.

It is the murder of Solozzo and the police captain through which Michael first gets involved in the Family's "dirty business." Solozzo's hired men make an attempt on old Vito's life, and the protection of the father and maintaining the powerful position of the Family seems to be possible in only one way: if an outsider like Michael, freshly returned from World War II and so far not engaged in the affairs of the Family, gets close to the targets and in a restaurant shoots them in the head. Michael voluntarily accepts this role and liquidates the two men; then he flees to Sicily, while at home, the Family ties up loose ends. Accordingly, for Michael this is the first step into the world of the mafia and on the road of sin: the inimical families and the law start chasing him from this moment on and make his position more and more precarious. Macbeth stains his hand with the murder of Duncan when he murders the unprotected King in his sleep. Michael also attacks his victims from a sort of ambush; he takes them by surprise and shoots them from no distance at all. It is noteworthy that Macbeth and Michael are both soldiers; Macbeth is the best general of the king, while Michael is a war hero of the navy: in the former case this is abundantly reported by Macbeth's fellow-soldiers, while in the latter case it is equally likely that the horrors of the war made the two protagonists accustomed to seeing and causing death. However, killing in war in the service of the country differs greatly from murders, and the consequences of the latter, regarding the entire lives of the protagonists, are monumental. In Macbeth's case, the blood staining his hands symbolizes how sin is corrupting his soul and remains stuck to it (cf. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene as well); while Michael is warned of the consequences by his brothers: "What do you think this is the Army, where you shoot'em a mile away? You've gotta get up close like this and bada-bing! You blow their brains all over your nice Ivy League suit." For one it is the blood, for the other it is the brain blown out which symbolizes the infection of sin.

In Shakespeare's time the word *deed* also meant sexual intercourse,[25] hence Macbeth's words, "I have done the deed" (2.2.14), connect the murder with the sexual act.[26] Macbeth, the man of glory, returning to his wife after his long absence on

25. Cf. Alexander Leggatt, "*Macbeth*: A Deed Without a Name," *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity*, in Bloom, 358–383, p. 372.

26. As Calderwood remarks, Macbeth " 'falls in evil' as other men fall in love" (Calderwood, p. 49) and "in the present case, the metaphorizing of murder as coition deconstructs coition no less than murder, leaving the audience with an unnamable monster." (p. 138). William Hazlitt emphasized the sexual side of Duncan's assassination as early as 1817 (William Hazlitt, "Macbeth" in *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, in Bloom, 84–91, p. 87); according to King-Kok Chung, Macbeth "is ready to prove his virility by translating his procreative

the battlefield, does not go to their bedroom with the Lady but to Duncan's bedchamber, so that out of their "nuptials" sin itself might be conceived and born, simultaneously. After the murder, Macbeth identifies the otherwise nameless (and therefore even more frightening) sin, giving it a name, a name of his own, thus standing as 'godfather' to the deed of crime: "Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep,' – the innocent sleep" (2.2.33–34). This "Macbeth," who is born in the moment of the murder, can be connected with the Macbeth couple's never-born child, whose perspective and motive is present throughout the play,[27] and who is metaphorically born in the bedchamber of Duncan: birth is identified with death. (Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth return with their hands dipped in blood, which also makes them resemble 'midwives' who have helped in the process of childbirth.) Their child can not be a 'real' boy, he can only come to existence metaphorically; becoming one with the notion of sin, to which Macbeth is father and godfather at the same time.

Similarly, by accepting the responsibility for leading the Family, Michael gains the title "Godfather." In the Sicilian culture he comes from, this is a highly honorable title, which denotes a sacred relationship between the Godfather and the person

impulse into a destructive one, his fear of female domination into masculine aggression" (King-Kok Chung, "Shakespeare and Kierkegaard: 'Dread' in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35, No. 4, Winter [1984] 432–451, p. 438). For Denis Biggins, Duncan's assassination is tantamount to a rape (Dennis Biggins, "Sexuality, Witchcraft, and Violence in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Studies* 8 [1975] 255–277, p. 266), since Macbeth, in the second half of the dagger-monologue, compares the approach of death (so, ultimately, his steps towards Duncan's bedchamber) to "Tarquin's ravishing strides" (2.1.55), and the story of the Roman Prince raping Lucrece is the subject-matter of a separate narrative poem by Shakespeare (*The Rape of Lucrece*, 1594).

27. There has been a long controversy over Lady Macbeth's enigmatic confession: "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me. / I would, while it was smiling in may face, / Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums / And dashed the brains out, had I sworn / As you have done to this" (1.7.54–59). Where does this sudden impulse of inhumanity come from, and, especially, where is the child, if the Macbeth couple is so emphatically childless? Goethe tried to suppress the query by claiming that Lady Macbeth's words have "rhetorical purposes"; she only wishes to give more emphasis to her locution and the "real Poet," and Shakespeare especially always knows what is right and effective to say in a given dramatic situation, even if content-wise he contradicts himself. (J. W. Goethe, "Conversations with Goethe by Peter Eckermann," in Bloom, 113–114). The problem has become almost symbolic since L. C. Knights' famous essay, "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" in *Explorations: Essays in Criticism, Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), 1–39; cf. also Michael D. Bristol, "How Many Children Did She Have?" in *Philosophical Shakespeares*, ed. John Joughin (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 18–33, pp. 20–26.

under his protection. At the end of Part I, Michael stands godfather to his nephew in a church in the selfsame hour in which the execution of the Family's enemies is carried out at his command. Consequently, he becomes Godfather both in the church and at the very venues of the murder-scenes, so both in the literal (and holy) and in the metonymical (and symbolic) meaning of the word. Just like Macbeth, Michael Corleone becomes Godfather of sin; naming sin in a certain sense, "Michael Corleone."

Therefore, both of them baptize sin which, in the case of Macbeth, can be connected with the phenomenon discussed above: the protagonist evokes and constructs his own drama by committing the deed of sin, which gains his name: "Macbeth." At the same time, being the Godfather of sin and getting united with it provide both protagonists with the possibility of becoming, in a certain sense, 'immaterial' and thus able to be at various places simultaneously. With Macbeth, this is not solely connected to the murder of Duncan but to the assassination of Banquo as well. While the two murderers are waiting for Banquo and Fleance, to cut their throats, a Third Murderer makes his appearance and claims to have been sent by Macbeth, bringing orders from him (cf. 3.3). According to some interpretations, this Third Murderer is Macbeth himself, who is thus present at his friend's liquidation, while exactly in that hour feasting at the banquet with his wife and other thanes in the castle (where Banquo's ghost will appear).[28] Michael goes through a similar 'multiplication': he renounces Satan at the baptismal ceremony in church, while he is simultaneously present in thought and through his orders at every murder committed in that moment, expertly represented by the montage technique made possible by the medium of film.[29]

Finally, the murder of Duncan initiates the everlasting torture of Macbeth's soul. From this aspect, the killing of the king can be connected with the later assassination of Banquo: the memory of both men will haunt Macbeth forever. Analyzing Hegel's concept of sin, László Tengelyi points out that the sinner is deluded when

28. Henry Irving devoted an article to the identity of the Third Murderer. According to Irving the idea that Macbeth might be the third one was brought up in the September 11 and November 13 issue of *Notes and Queries*, but he fails to name the author. Irving finds it more likely that the Third Murderer is one of the servants (Henry Irving, "The Third Murderer in *Macbeth*," in Bloom, 147–150, p. 147). As Goddard notes, Macbeth tells the two murderers, in various ways, four times that he would soon be "with them," so it is very likely that he is the man, if not so much in the physical sense (since he is at the banquet throughout) but, in line with the logic of poetic drama, "virtually" (Harold C. Goddard "Macbeth" from *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, in Bloom, 254–292, p. 280).

29. Anker calls this scene one of the most brilliant montage-constructions in the history of American film (Anker, p. 48).

committing the deed, as they believe that they harm the life of a stranger, whereas they poison, and kill part of, their own life, too. "The dead spirit of the harmed life rebels, 'takes arms against' the deed, just like Banquo, who came to Macbeth as a friend and was not erased by the murder, but soon occupies Macbeth's place – not as a dinner guest but as an evil ghost."[30] Through his crimes, Macbeth will be eternally linked to Duncan and Banquo, just as Richard III is to his own victims, who haunt him in his dreams. Moreover, both Duncan and Banquo emphasize this ominous link before their respective deaths. At the beginning of the play, Duncan says to Macbeth: "From hence to Inverness, / And bind us further to you" (1.4.42–43), and Macbeth takes this frighteningly seriously and binds Duncan's haunting memory to himself in the strongest possible way: by sin itself. Banquo similarly declares in Act 3 during his last conversation with Macbeth: "Let your Highness / Command upon me, to the which my duties / Are with a most indissoluble tie / For ever knit" (3.1.15–18), which soon gains an ominous content, too.

This aspect of murdering Duncan corresponds in Michael's case to the assassination of Fredo. Although Michael does not commit the deed personally,[31] but through one of his body-guards, this does not alleviate his burden of sin, just as the fact that the murder is, after all, to take revenge for Fredo's treachery does not

30. László Tengelyi, *A bűn mint sorsesemény* [Sin as an event of fate] (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1992), pp. 45–46 (my translation).

31. According to Cowie, as opposed to his son, Michael, "Vito possesses the courage to carry out his own executions. Michael never soils his hands with blood [except for the assassination of Solozzo and McCluskey ! –Sz. B.]. He issues orders, condemns his victims with a nod to his bodyguard, until even his brother Fredo must be killed in the remote expanse of Lake Tahoe, while Michael waits firmly in the boat house." (Peter Cowie, *Coppola* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990) p. 102). This, however, is a highly reductive view: Vito is seen to commit murder twice; once to ensure that his family has enough to eat (Don Fanucci) and once to revenge the death of his parents and brother (Don Ciccio) and in both cases there are favourable circumstances to carry out the deed personally. Michael does not remain in the background because he is a coward; this may be proved by the very fact that when it was inevitable, he did shoot Solozzo and McCluskey himself. In fact, after World War II, the position of the mafia was more precarious than before the war and the possibility to carry out deeds of crime personally came to an end: increased security measures and state surveillance made it well-nigh impossible for the heads of the mafia-families to take action into their hands directly. It is by no means accidental that both of Vito's personal criminal arrangements take place in the retrospective scenes (in Part II). Even further, in two of the murder-cases Michael settles his bill with two close family-members, motivated by his own resolute desire to 'clean up,' and this cannot be considered on the same level as the murdering of Don Ciccio, motivated by revenge and anger. Thus we may conclude that Michael's staying in the background is not a sign of cowardice at all.

ease his conscience, either. Moreover, just as Macbeth, he kills his relative; even further, a much closer one: his own brother; while the similarity is even greater in both victims supposedly being under the protection of the murderers: Duncan as a guest under Macbeth's roof (Macbeth being "his host, / Who should against his murtherer shut the door, / Not bear the knife myself," 1.7.14–16) and Fredo as a brother and member of the Family headed by Michael Corleone. Fredo is taken fishing on a boat on Lake Tahoe by Michael's bodyguard, while Michael himself is watching the sad scene from the boathouse on the shore. Fredo is shot in the head from behind after reciting the *Hail Mary* (mainly out of superstition, to catch more fish), while the prayer itself frighteningly refers to Michael's daughter, Mary. The verb *hail* appearing in the first line of the prayer may mean greeting (saluting) and calling somebody to a certain spot at the same time;[32] an example for the latter is a kind of pun spontaneously coined by Michael's sister, Connie, in Part III. When searching for her niece, she cries out: "Where's Mary? Would somebody please hail Mary?" – thus symbolically connecting the girl with Fredo's prayer immediately before his death. And through this connection it seems as if Fredo in his last minute had called precisely Mary to death, preparing the girl as a sacrifice for Michael's sins.

The memory of Fredo also haunts Michael until his death and binds him with a link equally as strong as Duncan or Banquo is bound to Macbeth. In Part III, this connection is constantly emphasized, and underlines the reappearing conscience of guilt. At the very beginning of the third part, a retrospective camera-shot of Fredo's death can be seen, and then the abandoned family house on the shores of Lake Tahoe. The house stands barren, with only some leftover, telltale objects indicating a sudden moving from the house or even an escape. At a certain point the water of the lake penetrated the ranch: the very water Fredo Corleone was executed on and his body thrown into. The image of the house can be interpreted as a symbol, the symbol of Michael's personality, which is penetrated by water: the memory of Fredo has taken almost complete control over Michael's mind. Somewhere in the desolated house, which rather resembles a haunted castle than a once family home, an abandoned doll is lying on the floor, delicately referring to Mary's future death on the stairs of the opera house. Fredo's spirit reappears several times during the film: Michael cries out his brother's name while a diabetic stroke overcomes him, and he is literally weeping while confessing his sins to Cardinal Lamberto in the Vatican.

32. In *Macbeth*, the *hail* of the Weïrd Sisters is of course a greeting, yet ambiguity does play a role here, too: not only is the full sentence (Hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter) both a greeting and a prophecy at the same time but the *hail* part can be taken as a call, a hint at the directions towards reaching the positions of Thane of Cawdor and King.

For Michael, the murder of Fredo is a symbol of another important aspect: Michael's involuntary divergence from his father's, Vito Corleone's, values.[33] Michael does not realize how far he traveled from the world of his father, whose values he wanted to protect and yet destroys. However, as I have already mentioned, the guarding spirit of Don Vito is constantly present: in Part II in the flashbacks showing the young Vito building his 'kingdom,' while in Part III Vito's photos keep reappearing at various places in Michael's house. Michael drifts far from his father's mentality and stabs the knife in the sacrosanct Family he wanted to protect by liquidating his own brother. The blindness of the protagonist in this respect is further emphasized by his monologue at the catafalque of Don Tommasino, when he tries to understand the differences between his own and the world of his father, the old scale of values represented by old Tommasino.[34] His words could be directly addressed to Don Vito as well, while they also become the motto of Michael's tragedy. "Why was I so feared, and you so loved? What was it? I was no less honorable. I wanted to do good." These few sentences are probably the purest annunciation of the failure of Michael's life and work. He does not have Fredo killed on sudden impulse but well after the betrayal; for Michael, Fredo's death is an uncomfortable but unavoidable necessity. It is not the desire to avenge himself; however, Michael firmly believes that it is his obligation to do so. His stubborn idea is that he has to protect the Family, even through internal liquidation,[35] if necessary. However,

33. Marlon Brando analyzed his role of the old Vito Corleone (in Part I) by emphasizing how much he respected the character of Don Vito. Brando claims that he imagined the character as a highly honest and distinguished gentleman, a man of great integrity, who accepts tradition with reverence, and whose natural instincts never break down, but he happened to be born in a world of violence where he is forced to protect himself and his family. Brando defines Vito as an honorable man, in spite of all he had to do; a man who firmly believed in the saving power of the family and who was shaped by events and circumstances as we all are. Vito Corleone was compelled to act the way he did, and meanwhile he put his foot on the road of sin. Cf. Marlon Brando & Robert Lindsey, *Songs my mother taught me* (New York: Random House, 1994).

34. Cowie, focusing on the differences between Vito and Michael, notes: "Both Corleones are withdrawn, watchful, and cautious with their words. Vito, however, could never be so harsh as Michael is in his Family relationships. The Michael who drinks only club soda and who strikes his wife with terrible force, as well as eliminating his older brother, remains light years away from Vito Corleone. Their methods may be similar, but their fundamental approach to life differs according to their circumstances and their epoch." (Cowie, p. 102).

35. This explains Michael's giving orders for the assassination of his brother-in-law, Carlo, too: Michael painfully wishes to maintain the purity of the family and for him the goal justifies the means. His behaviour is the same in both cases: he observes Carlo's death from a distance (at the end of Part I), just as he will Fredo's (at the very end of Part II).

against his will, he precisely destroys part of the *Family*, the very thing to whose protection he devoted his whole life.[36] Macbeth similarly destroys what was the most precious to him: by his deed, he drives Lady Macbeth, his beloved wife mad and brings about her death (which is most probably by suicide[37]).

Hence, Michael Corleone experiences the different aspects of his sin separately, while they are squeezed together for Macbeth in the moment of murdering Duncan. In the first place, Macbeth's sin means the first step on the road of sin, the one-way-street leading to the tragic destiny he can never escape from, by which the deed stains the sinner forever and evokes the constant danger of external punishment. Michael experiences the same by killing Solozzo and McCluskey. Secondly, the murder of Duncan provides Macbeth with the title "king" and the position of the leader, and he ritualistically identifies himself and becomes one with sin in the deed, also becoming its father and godfather at the same time. It is this that makes him able to be present everywhere in all the following scenes where sin is given birth at his command. Michael gains the power (the title "Don") and the title of the Godfather of sin during the baptism in the church and by the help of the murders taking place simultaneously in the distance. In the third place, Macbeth binds the ghost of his victims to himself forever by his sin, in a way becoming its slave; and the deed will eternally haunt his conscience, just as the execution of Fredo means the same for Michael. Both protagonists share the deed and the destiny evoked by creating the artistic masterpiece of sin, and this 'work of art' devours them in a similar way and makes them prisoners of that sin, a sin which stained their hands forever with effused blood.

In the present essay, I wished to demonstrate that *The Godfather*-films adopt the tragic pattern which can be reconstructed from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and thus they diverge from other gangster films. Since the tragedy of both characters unfolds

36. Anker's insight is noteworthy in this respect: Michael "joins a distinguished company of American literary evildoers, ranging from Hawthorne's malefactors and Melville's Ahab to Faulkner's Snopes family and Updike's Harry Angstrom: all are characters who have done evil and should have known better in the midst of doing what they thought was the good or the necessary." (Anker, p. 30).

37. Mrs. Sarah Siddons, the famous actress, who played Lady Macbeth several times in the 19th century, was convinced that Lady Macbeth was not the victim of an accident (which is also possible, since from the play it is not clear how the Lady dies) but committed suicide. Mrs. Siddons interpreted the sleep-walking scene as an occasion for the guilty feeling, suppressed all the time, to come to the surface with so much vehemence and devastating force in the end that the Lady collapses under its weight; while Macbeth's reaction to the all-engulfing horror is in overwhelmingly magnificent poetic images, continuously flowing from his mouth, his wife tries "not to think of the crime" and that takes revenge on her (cf. Mrs. Sarah Siddons, Mrs. Siddons Acts Lady Macbeth – Her Own Remarks on the Character and Observations on Mrs. Siddons [*sic*] Estimate by Thomas Campbell," in Bloom, 114–131, p. 125).

in front of the viewer quite perspicuously, Macbeth and Michael Corleone – despite their cruelty and dreadful nature – are able to become even amiable in the eyes of the spectator, since they both depict something from the very tragic nature of the human being: they appear as flesh-and-blood, vulnerable characters for whom innocence is simply an impossibility. Michael Corleone stands in the storm of destructive forces in constant disharmony with himself: his mafia world is characterized by strict moral rules which go against not only the law but his private life as well. By emphasizing this strong moral aspect of the mafia in which Michael is locked up and, in general, by applying the *Macbeth* pattern to the Coppola-films, *The Godfather* Trilogy secedes from the genre of gangster films and in a way creates the genre of the mafia film. While in a gangster film the greatest enemy of the protagonist is the law and he easily washes the blood off his hands so that he may be able to deceive the authorities, the protagonist of the mafia film is defeated by himself with the force of necessity and the blood on his hand can never be washed off, not even by Neptune's vast ocean.

Ted Bailey

Portraits of Piety

Authenticating Strategies in Slave Narratives and Two Antebellum African-American Novels

This paper first examines the use of authenticating devices in the antebellum slave narratives and then goes on to analyze how the these authorial strategies are carried over from African-American autobiography into two fictionalized autobiographies from the 1850s. In particular, the paper argues for including portrayals of black religious belief as one of the many generic strategies used by antebellum slave narrators to convince their potentially skeptical audience that they were reading "the real thing." In investigating how authenticating strategies are incorporated into Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859) and Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (1855–61?), the relative artistic success of the two writers is evaluated and the implications of borrowing techniques from autobiography for fiction discussed. By looking at texts from the 1850s, a decade when the slave narrative reached its height in popularity and the first fictional works in African-American literature were being composed, a glimpse is gained into a transitional moment in black writing.

Literary traditions invariably have many roots, yet it is difficult to deny the central role the antebellum slave narratives have played in African-American literature. Throughout the twentieth century, from James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912) through Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), the slave narratives have served as one of the main models and templates for black fiction. Their use as historical documents, on the other hand, had to wait until the 1970s, when historians such as John Blassingame and Eugene Genovese helped establish these texts' veracity. At dispute had been the slave narratives' authenticity and general reliability.

Full authenticity of any autobiographical writing would, of course, be impossible to establish, but many of these antebellum texts carried the burden of also having been published for propaganda purposes. Numerous slave narratives appeared between 1830 and 1861, in abolitionist journals, in pamphlets, and about one-hundred as short book-length publications;[1] but the most famous of these – including narratives by

1. John Sekora, "Is the Slave Narrative a Species of Autobiography?" in *Studies in Autobiography*, ed. James Olney (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 99–111, p. 101.

Frederick Douglass,[2] Henry Bibb,[3] and William Wells Brown[4] – were published with the support of abolitionist societies. White Northerners read slave narratives primarily as a means of informing themselves about slavery, not necessarily to learn about slaves as individuals or to be converted to a cause; yet in reading these texts they were confronted in varying degrees with both intentions. Slave narratives were thus inherently ideological texts serving a political purpose: they strove to win support for the abolition of slavery by simultaneously going, as one critic put it, "right to the hearts of men"[5] and appearing as reliable as possible, as well as to tell the individual slave's own tale. Long after the abolitionist societies closed down, however, the slave narratives remained stigmatized as propaganda tools.

The veracity of the antebellum slave narratives was not just a question for such twentieth-century historians as Ulrich B. Philips, who claimed that they "were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authority is doubtful,"[6] but also for their original audience. At the time they were written, the slave narratives faced challenges by Southern slave owners angry at the implicit and direct attacks on their way of life, and the skepticism of Northern white audiences whose racism often predisposed them to question whether blacks were capable of being entirely truthful or even being able to write in the first place. As a consequence, from the very beginning the first black authors – and their sponsors, editors, or amanuenses, where such assisted in shaping the text – developed strategies to authenticate the texts in the eyes of their readers.

Authenticating strategies, in other words, were woven into the very fabric of the slave narratives as these texts coalesced into a genre with recognizable patterns and conventions. Later, as African-American writing began to move beyond autobiography toward more fictional forms, some of these authenticating strategies found their way, consciously or unconsciously, into a number of these texts.

In this article I will focus on this evolutionary moment in the development of the African-American novel, the 1850s, when the slave narrative reached the height of its popularity and the first black novels were published. The purpose of the article is twofold: first, I propose to extend the list of authenticating strategies uncovered by other critics to include the portrayals of black religious life. The piety the slave

2. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself, 1845* (New York: Penguin, 1982).

3. Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (New York: Author, 1849).

4. William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1847).

5. William Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story* (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1986), p. 5.

6. Ulrich Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1929), p. 209.

narrators often display, I argue, is part of a sentimental strategy aimed largely at how a white audience perceives blacks. Secondly, I will look at two novels from the era – Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859)[7] and Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (1855–1861?)[8] – that integrated this particular strategy, and show how their portrayals of the protagonist's piety demonstrate two possible approaches to adapting this authenticating strategy: a strict adaption with heavy reliance on the sentimental, which ends up revealing internal contradictions in *Our Nig*, and a looser, less sentimental approach that allows Hannah Crafts to imbue the strategy with a new purpose. Both texts are generally assumed to be fictionalized autobiographies, and thus represent, like Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861),[9] antebellum attempts to fuse one of the era's more popular genres, the slave narrative, with the novel.

Authenticating Strategies and the Slave Narrative

Early African-American autobiography drew heavily upon the Indian captivity narrative and spiritual or conversion narrative, relying on the reader's familiarity with these genres as a way of validating their authenticity. In the earliest narratives from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries race is largely written out of the text; for example, John Marrant's ethnicity "is almost totally subsumed under his generic identity as [a] Christian pilgrim."[10] Rather than openly challenge their readers' notions on prevailing racial, social, or religious concepts, these narratives present black individuals in white literary forms and show them accepting white values. As Frances Smith Foster notes, "[t]heir emphasis was upon a theme more easily identified with by all heirs to a Judeo-Christian philosophy, the struggle for existence as strangers in an inhospitable land."[11]

It was in the thirty years leading up to the Civil War, when abolitionists recognized the propaganda value of the narratives and began encouraging and sponsoring many of the narratives, that the slave narrative coalesced into a more distinct and recognizable genre. James Olney presents probably the best and most concise summary of the generic conventions that developed. These included, among other

7. All parenthesized references are to this edition: Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig; Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*. 1859. ed. Henry L. Gates, Jr. (New York: Vintage, 1983).

8. All parenthesized references are to this edition: Hannah Crafts, *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, ed. Henry L. Gates, Jr. (New York: Warner Books, 2002).

9. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988).

10. Andrews, p. 45.

11. Frances Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Antebellum Slave Narratives* (Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1992), p. 44.

trademarks, a title that makes the claim "Written by Himself"; testimonials written by prominent whites that vouch for the existence of the slave and truthfulness of the facts presented; an opening sentence that reads "I was born. . ."; an account of the ex-slave's parents; tales of whippings inflicted upon the writer and/or on other (especially female) slaves; an account of how the slave learned to read and write; hypocritical Christian slave owners, who are invariably described as the most brutal; and the successful escape attempt.[12] Two parallel purposes can be readily discerned behind the use of these conventions: to authenticate the accuracy of the narrative and to galvanize the reader's emotions into support for the abolitionist cause. These two purposes went hand in hand. First, the humanity of the slave had to be established so as to make him worthy of the reader's empathy; then the sentiments of the reader had to be touched.

Religion could be used to affect both these ends. In the first case, portraying the narrator as religious and worshipping the same Christian God implicitly established his humanity and equality with the reader. Often the narrator made this explicit, as in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, when Linda Brent quotes a white preacher she heard once: "Your skin is darker than mine; but God judges men by their hearts, not the color of their skins."[13] This could also be accomplished with irony, as William Wells Brown does when describing the case of a slave named Delphia, who is whipped mercilessly by her master and of whom he adds laconically at the conclusion of the description: "She was a member of the same church as her master."[14] The second purpose, which leans heavily on the sentimental, took on two separate forms. On the one hand, the slaveholder might be shown prohibiting any sign of piety or denying the slave access to worship services, as happens to Henry Bibb, who, when upon returning from secretly attending a prayer meeting, is told by his wife that his master has ordered he "should suffer the penalty, which was five hundred lashes, on [his] naked back."[15] In a variation on this pattern, Henry Box Brown mused on what could have become of him had his mother not secretly taught him "the principles of morality": "[i]t is really a wonder to me now, considering the character of my position that I did not imbibe a strong and lasting hatred of everything pertaining to the religion of Christ."[16] Such observations appear calculated to evoke

12. James Olney, "'I Was Born': Slaves Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," in *The Slave's Narrative*, eds. Henry L. Gates Jr. and Charles Davis (New York: Oxford UP, 1985), 148–75, pp. 152–53.

13. Jacobs, p. 111.

14. W. Brown, p. 39.

15. Bibb, p. 120.

16. Henry Box Brown, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself* (Manchester: Lee & Glynn, 1851), p. 3.

in the reader pity for the slave or outrage at the slaveholder's behavior. On the other hand, almost all slave narratives contained the portrayal of a professedly Christian slave owner who prayed on Sundays and whipped slaves mercilessly on the other days of the week. Frederick Douglass summarizes this hypocrisy succinctly in discussing his own experiences: "[t]he pious and benign smile which graced Covey's face on *Sunday*, wholly disappeared on *Monday*."[17] To emphasize the corrupting nature of the institution and the reader's own precarious relationship to it, recently arrived Northerners might be inserted into this role and shown backsliding into brutality. Either way, provoking religious outrage in the reader was an effective strategy; it won the reader to the abolitionist cause by letting him slip into the role of religious redeemer. Helping end slavery would satisfy the missionary impulse by helping the black slave and could prevent one's neighbor or fellow countryman from leaving the narrow path.

As the above examples demonstrate, religious portrayals worked primarily on an affective level, helping modify an image of the slave narrator in the reader's mind rather than definitively proving that he physically existed. However, since the abolitionists' goal was the destruction of a very specific social and economic institution based on race, emotive appeals were as necessary to authenticate the slave's humanity as any objective verification of his story's factuality. Indeed, combining a sentimental authenticating strategy, like religion, with another more objective authentication device could prove highly effective; yet, however one approached the text, verification of the text had become a necessity.

While latent racism fueled suspicion about a text's reliability, it was the controversy surrounding the accuracy of James Williams's narrative[18] in 1838 that lead to authentication becoming a central issue in the publication of all slave narratives. More strategies had to be devised in order to provide an extra dimension of authenticity. Specific names and locations, bills of sale, references to the Nat Turner revolt all gave the feel of authenticity and an extra-textual referent to establish the text's veracity. I would argue that the referent did not always have to be a tangible item or a person; simply adhering to the reader's expectations or preconceived beliefs about abstract topics like race could also be understood as a kind of authenticating strategy. Such a strategy would not objectively confirm the truthfulness of the text, though if it confirms what the reader believes to be true it functions much the same way as an objective authenticating strategy in the reader's mind. In other words, presenting

17. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage, My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), p. 241.

18. James Williams, *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, Who Was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838).

a religious portrayal of blacks that a white reader assumed to be true would make the text appear reliable to the reader. Obviously, this method of confirming a text's accuracy is not without its own – epistemological and moral – problems, as in fact the very case of James Williams makes clear. William Andrews points out that the text's amanuensis, the nationally recognized poet James Whittier, attested to the narrative's veracity not because he possessed any objective, corroborating facts, but because Williams appeared to him to be "a believable narrator."[19] Williams, like James Ball in his ghostwritten narrative published a year earlier, met the expectations of the abolitionist editors as to how a truth-telling black man behaves, with "his emotional restraint, reticence about personal feelings and judgments, and apparent propensity to forgive and pity."[20]

In other words, the Williams case dramatizes how white abolitionists fell victim to their own notions of what George Fredrickson has termed romantic racialism.[21] A form of paternal racism, this concept views blacks as child-like, innocent, and possessing a natural affinity for religion. The Christian values of the era – self-sacrifice, forgiveness, charity – were thus embodied by blacks, the most famous literary example being Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom. Should a white person encounter a black one who displayed these features, either in person or in a text, he would be predisposed to trust the figure. Hence, we can speak of an authenticating strategy when we discover that the majority of slave narrators displayed protagonists with such features.

When reading through the antebellum narratives, one can easily get the impression that most slave narrators were themselves religious, some perhaps more deeply than others, and that if the vast majority of slaves were not religious, this was simply because many of the slaveholders prevented it. Recent scholarship, however, places this belief in doubt. Albert Raboteau finds that church membership in the post-bellum era reached approximately one-third of the African-American population,[22] while Daniel Fountain, in analyzing conversion reports in all slave narratives – the number of post-bellum narratives swamps the antebellum narratives by a ratio of 40:1 – places the size of the Christian community in the antebellum South at one-fourth of the black population.[23] This discrepancy between the impression conveyed by the antebellum narratives and the historians' assessment of the perva-

19. Andrews, p. 88.

20. Andrews, p. 89.

21. George Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper, 1971).

22. Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978), p. 209.

23. Daniel Fountain, *Long on Religion, Short on Christianity: Slave Religion, 1830–1870*. (Unpublished dissertation, U of Mississippi, 1999), p. 145.

siveness of Christianity may have been caused by any number of factors: the nature of the fugitive slaves themselves, the selection process carried out by abolitionists seeking slave narrators, the support of churches in publishing spiritual autobiographies by ex-slaves, or the desire of the slaves to tell their editor/publishers what they wanted to hear. That pressure existed to conform to prevailing standards of Christianity, however, is beyond doubt, as the 1845 narrative by Frederick Douglass, the most outspoken black narrator of the era, indicates. Apparently warned that his comments on religion could be misconstrued, Douglass felt compelled to include an appendix in which he explicitly states that the criticisms "apply to the *slaveholding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper."[24]

The shaping of the slave narratives to meet reader expectations is also evident in areas other than religion. Narrators such as Moses Grandy, Lundsford Lane, and Josiah Henson all present themselves "as exemplar[s] of the traditional Protestant work ethic, worthy of the admiration and sympathy of northern, middle-class America."[25] Frederick Douglass adapts his narrative partly to the Benjamin Franklin tradition of the self-made man, describing the desire to learn reading and writing. William Craft is representative of the many slave narrators who published in Great Britain, with his more open critique of northern race prejudice and his heaping of praise on the English for their more enlightened attitudes. In continuing his story beyond arrival in the North, Craft is clearly both highly cognizant of his audience's nationality and ingratiating toward them: toward the end of his narrative he asks God to bless American abolitionists who are working "to cleanse their country's escutcheon from the foul and destructive blot of slavery" and hopes that "may God ever smile upon England and upon England's good, much-beloved, deservedly-honoured Queen, for the generous protection that is given to unfortunate refugees of every rank, and of every color and clime."[26] Such comments fell on an audience positively predisposed to these observations; as Audrey Fisch notes, contemporary reviews in the British press often constructed the slave narratives as "an indictment of America and a vindication of English superiority."[27] All these generic patterns encourage white readers to see blacks as essentially equal to themselves and as sharing the same values. Religious portrayals, on the other hand, have the added dimension of appealing to the white readers' subliminally racist belief in how they think blacks naturally are: safe, child-like, and forgiving.

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24. Douglass, *Autobiography*, p. 153.

25. Andrews, p. 112.

26. William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom; or, the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (London: Tweedie, 1860), p. 94.

27. Audrey Fisch, "'Repetitious Accounts So Piteous and So Harrowing': The Ideological Work of American Slave Narratives in England," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 1.1 (1996) 16–34, p. 24.

I turn now to examine how religious portrayals were, or were not, integrated into the two novels as authenticating strategies. In particular, it is the appeal to the implicit racism of romantic racialism that the authors borrow from the slave narratives with varying degrees of success. As we will see, black authors were not uniformly successful in employing the slave narratives' authenticating devices.

Our Nig: Religious Portrayals as a Sentimental Strategy

Right off, in its extended title, *Our Nig; or, Sketches in the Life of a Free Black, In a Two-Story White House, North, Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There*. By "Our Nig," Harriet Wilson's text announces its connection to the slave narratives. Strictly speaking, of course, it is not one, as the inclusion of "Free Black" and the reference to the Northern setting indicate. Yet it is perfectly logical for Wilson to invoke the genre; while her novel is unique in the antebellum era in focusing on a black indentured servant in New England, at the same time her story parallels the fate of millions of African-Americans then enslaved in the South. Should her purpose have been to realize a profit to support herself and her child, as she herself states in the preface, then to borrow elements from two of the most popular genres in the 1850s, the domestic novel and the slave narrative, would have made good business sense, especially in advertising the connection to the slave narratives in the title. Also from an artistic and practical point of view much speaks in favor of Wilson using the slave narrative as a template. Beginning with Henry L. Gates, Jr., many critics have noted how Our Nig appears to be "an autobiographical novel,"[28] and what better model to draw upon than popular contemporary black autobiography, the slave narrative. Even if the broad outlines of her story suggest a closer parallel to the domestic novel – violent though her novel is – the slave narrative could also be used to help establish authority and authenticity, and thus act as a counterweight to the fictional format of a novel. Some measure of authenticity would have been useful, since at that point only three other novels had been published by African-Americans in North America.

Aside from the title, *Our Nig* employs another prominent authenticating device from the slave narrative: the appended letters. As we will see, it is here in this authenticating device that Wilson embeds another: religious portrayals that draw on the sentimental strategy of romantic racialism. At first glance, these three letters appear to function in the same fashion as similar letters in the slave narrative, but upon closer examination two major differences emerge, both with wider ranging

28. Henry L. Gates, Jr. Introduction. *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson (New York: Vantage, 1983), xi–lv, p. xxxvii.

implications. In slave narratives the authenticating letters are written by prominent whites, usually males, who attest to the veracity of the narrative. A committee of well-known persons was required to counter challenges to Henry Bibb's narrative, and the nationally famous abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips wrote letters that prefaced Frederick Douglass's 1845 narrative. The authors of the letters appended to *Our Nig*, however, are unknown, the last not even supplying a name, only initials. Although P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald Pitts have recently provided suggestions for the identities of the three, even the professional genealogist Pitts could not discover a Margareta Thorne in mid-19th-century New England.[29] What authenticating value could the letters accrue if their authors disguise their own identities, publishing the letters under pseudonyms or initials? Did Wilson simply borrow the convention but in the end decide, since she was publishing what was ostensibly a novel, that the authenticating device could be fictionalized as well? The situation gets even more complicated when we look at the second major difference, specifically, what the letters actually say.

Appended letters in slave narratives tend to fall into one of two categories: either they attest to personal knowledge of the ex-slave's existence and personal character, or they present general arguments against the institution of slavery, claiming that the experiences the narrative relates are representative. The former may or may not testify to the veracity of specific incidents; however, especially when taken together with bills of sale and advertisements for slave auctions that are often included, they read like legal documents. The letters at the end of *Our Nig* do not fall clearly into either of these categories; with slavery not an issue, the three letters stay on a personal level and avoid legalistic language, though all identify racial attitudes and unchristian behavior as the prime cause of the author's suffering. The third letter follows the slave narrative testimonials the closest, claiming a general acquaintance with the author, while the first two go on not only to corroborate the incidents described at the end of the novel, but to actually elaborate and expand upon them. Rushing quickly to a close, the novel condenses the events after Frado's liberation from the Bellmont household, her illnesses, moves from city to city, courtship, marriage, birth of a son, and abandonment, into some fourteen pages, only to have the appended letters go back and fill in the details of some of these events. The events related – for example, the author's move into a poorhouse – do little to provide extra-textual evidence for the novel's veracity, but seem instead to follow a sentimental strategy. The letters do not function as buttresses for the text but appear instead to enter into a dialogic relationship with the body of the novel.

29. P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald H. Pitts, Introduction. *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson (New York: Penguin, 2005), xxiii–l.

This relationship is most noticeable when we look at how religious references permeate the three letters and how they creep into the close of the text. They are all the more conspicuous given that Frado's religious conversion, a plot element that covers the middle third of the novel, is a failed one; after "resolv[ing] to give over all thought of the future world" (104), the protagonist displays a remarkably unchristian lack of forgiveness toward her tormentor – celebrating Mary's death in front of Aunt Abby in a manner "not at all acceptable to the pious, sympathetic dame" (107) – and almost no pious behavior.

Later, during the rapid rush to the conclusion, an occasional reference to God or the Bible appears, placed at strategic moments that are possibly meant to appeal to Christian readers' sentiments. In the penultimate paragraph, for example, the narrator wraps a plea for assistance in pious language: "Reposing on God, she has thus far journeyed securely. Still an invalid, she asks your sympathy, gentle reader. Refuse not because some part of her history is unknown, save by the Omniscient God. Enough has been unrolled to demand your sympathy and aid" (130). When read in conjunction with the appended letters, however, another possibility begins to take shape: the references may have been made to anticipate and accommodate her sponsors' piety.

It is vital to keep in mind how little is still known about the exact conditions under which this black-authored text finally reached the printing press in the antebellum era. John Sekora urges us to remember that whites controlled the editing process and owned the publishing companies that turned out many of the slave narratives, and so we should not forget that these "black message[s] will be sealed in a white envelope."[30] *Our Nig* represents one of the few black-authored texts which contain no indication of a white editor or any mention in the appended letters that help was at all given in shaping the text. Nonetheless, we know nothing of the negotiations that led to the publication of Wilson's novel. In the only study to date that examines the publishing history of *Our Nig*, Eric Gardner suggests that "the book was produced as an act of charity" by the book's printer, George Rand.[31] Given her impoverished circumstances that both the end of the text and the appended letters allude to, it seems likely that either this was the case or a sponsor was found to cover the printing costs. Potentially, any or all of the letter writers could have been benefactors, and rather than alienate a sponsor Wilson may well have adapted her text to the circumstances.

30. John Sekora, "Black Message, White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative," *Callaloo* 10 (1987) 482–515, p. 502.

31. Eric Gardner, "'This Attempt of Their Sister': Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* from Printer to Readers," *New England Quarterly* 66.2 (1993) 226–46, p. 232.

With these observations, I do not wish to imply cynicism on Wilson's part. In crafting what most critics agree is a fictionalized autobiography – references to Wilson/Frado's son, for example, in the preface, the body of the text, and appended letters match in age, race, and family name with the death certificate discovered during Henry L. Gates, Jr.'s research – Harriet Wilson appears, as far as one can tell, not to have unduly brutalized the facts surrounding her life. The recent discovery of her post-publication career as a medium in the spiritualist movement indicates that she was, like her character Frado, greatly interested in spiritual matters. Indeed, it seems to clear up what happened to this interest after she abandoned the more traditional path of conversion and admittance to a church. She simply does what all writers of fiction and autobiography do, consciously or unconsciously: she repackages the truth to meet the expectations of her fictive readers.

In fact, in consciously shaping her text with an eye to the appended letters, Wilson follows a literary tradition that Robert Stepto has identified in the slave narratives. Stepto evaluates the literary quality of a narrative based on how well the authenticating materials are integrated into the narrative itself; he uses Henry Bibb's narrative as an example of a text where the tale itself and the authenticating documents perform only minimal interactions, the latter framing the former. More sophisticated narratives, Stepto claims, are drawn toward each other "by some sort of extraordinary gravitational pull or magnetic attraction."[32] In the case of Frederick Douglass's 1845 text, the narrative integrates and subsumes the appended letters, while William Wells Brown's 1853 narrative, published together with excerpts from his speeches and his own novel, *Clotel*, becomes part of the authenticating strategy itself. Harriet Wilson's novel represents a version of the sophisticated use of authenticating documents, with the body of the text and the appended letters reaching out to meet and support each other. The letters expand on the events in the novel's rushed conclusion, filling in precisely these gaps – the career as a sower of straw, the story in the poor house, the details about her son – that the novel has only skimmed over. The religious references in the novel's hasty closing not only work as a sentimental strategy, but also set the stage for the authenticating letters' testimonials to Wilson/Frado's Christian character. Religious belief becomes the ground upon which the novel meets its authenticating documents.

The religious dialogue established between Wilson's text and the letters finds a mirror image in the letter by Allida. Interestingly enough, she chooses to include both a letter and a poem from Wilson in her own letter, thus providing the

32. Robert Stepto, "I Rose and Found My Voice: Narration, Authentication, and Authorial Control in Four Slave Narratives," in *The Slave's Narrative*, ed. Henry L. Gates, Jr. and Charles Davis (New York: Oxford UP, 1985), 225–41, p. 237.

unusual twist of the authenticating letter being authenticated by the very person whose identity is meant to be validated in the first place. At this point, however, let us turn our attention to Wilson's poem, which presents an interesting contrast when read in conjunction with another poem Allida inserts at the end of her letter. Although it is unclear who wrote the second poem, it is clearly intended to be Allida's response to Wilson's poem, "calculated to comfort and strengthen this sorrowful, homeless one" (137). Wilson places herself in the poem as a supplicant to God, begging him "O God, forsake me not," and identifies herself in social rank and plight with Jesus: "He chose a lowly lot; / He came unto his own, but lo! / His own received him not. / Oft was the mountain his abode, the cold, cold earth his bed" (135–36). The second poem "lend[s] a gracious ear" to these pleas, repeating God's answer of "I will help thee"; three times to the supplicant. The use of quotation marks for this phrase, yet the insistence on a first person point of view for all but the second line, makes determining the poem's voice difficult. Is the speaker intended to be a human, as the opening suggests (" 'I will help thee,' promise kind / Made by our High Priest above") or God, as later lines imply ("Thy spirit find a peaceful home / In mansions *near my face*")?

Assuming Allida to be white, which is in keeping with both Foreman and Pitt's recent research and the slave narrative tradition of appended letters, the second poem reveals an authoritative and paternalistic voice of a white/God responding calmly, benevolently, and shelteringly to the supplicating black of the first poem. The dialogue between these two poems thus recreates the black voice of the novel speaking with the white voices in the appended letters, and simultaneously fulfills the paternalistic desires of the white readership. As William Andrews shows with the example of Lunsford Lane, presenting the self as a "black 'child of sorrow' safely deposited in the endlessly rocking cradle of white love and support" was one way of catering to white readers in the North.[33] The dialogue of the two poems with each other thus functions as an authenticating strategy by casting Wilson herself in the romantic racialist image of blacks, a tactic made necessary by the novel's refusal to completely portray Frado in this light.

The inclusion of Wilson's letter in Allida's testimonial helps reposition Wilson as a Christian in other ways, too. It is not only the similarities in style that Gates has noted which serve to tie authorship of the novel and the letter to each other,[34] but mention of the Bible she carries with her, presumably the one Frado receives from Susan, refers back both to the text and to Wilson's piety. Along with allusions to the story of the Biblical prophet Elisha, these incidents function to portray Wilson as a

33. Williams, p. 117.

34. Gates, Introduction to *Our Nig*, p. xxii.

thoroughly Christian individual. Yet even a casual reading of Wilson's letter also reveals a heavy dose of sentimental affect. The reserving of "a place nearer my heart" (135) for the Bible and the coincidental opening of the holy book to an appropriate passage remind us that Wilson the letter writer was fully aware of the conventions of sentimental or domestic literature.

The use of anonymous and pseudonymous authenticating letters, the reversion in the letters to a highly religious persona – one not supported by the failed conversion in a supposedly autobiographical novel – and the use of sentimental language at appropriate moments in both the novel and the personal letters all lend some support to Elizabeth Breau's assertion that the appended letters may have been written by Wilson herself.[35] Yet in lieu of evidence to the contrary, one should perhaps be generous enough to assume that the letters are what they claim to be, and that the authors themselves had reasons to conceal their identities. As mentioned above, Wilson would certainly have needed some form of sponsorship, either financial or a personal recommendation, in order to have her novel published, and the letter writers are the most likely source of such support. What the letters do finally suggest, though, is some degree of collusion between Wilson and the letter writers: almost certainly Allida, Margareta Thorn and C.D.S read the manuscript before composing their testimonials; and it is also possible that Wilson crafted the novel's ending, with its sentimental references to religion, not only with an eye to garnering her readers' sympathy, but also her sponsors' and to maintaining their good will. Additionally, I would suggest that Wilson authorized Allida's use of her private letter to a third party. Although Allida implies that it was her own decision to include it, the letter fits so well into an overall authenticating strategy that it may well have been part of Wilson's plan.

Conspicuously, the letter presents Wilson referring to her white benefactress twice as "mother" and places the twenty-something black person in the position of a small child being read to. Claudia Tate sees the maternal discourses in *Our Nig* as Wilson's attempt at an "act of heroic maternal transformation" and "the preface and appendix [as] textualiz[ing] Wilson's self-esteem as a black person, a woman and a mother,"[36] yet the implications of Wilson projecting Mrs. Walter as her own mother is something Tate glosses over. Far from bolstering Wilson's self-esteem, it returns her to childhood. I read this passage as another ploy to romantic racialism, an attempt to make the author credible to the white reader by fulfilling stereotyped beliefs about safe and trustworthy blacks. Reinforcing the image of romantic racialism

35. Elizabeth Breau, "Identifying Satire: Our Nig," *Callaloo* 16.2 (1993) 455–65, p. 458.

36. Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 38.

by putting the words into Wilson's mouth, along with a renewed emphasis on sentimental religion, becomes necessary because several pages earlier the final chapter has, by presenting Wilson's ex-husband as an imposter, raised the question of authenticity and the slave narrative. Indeed, the "disclosure that he had never seen the South, and that his illiterate harangues were humbugs for hungry abolitionists" (128) undercuts the authority of the slave narrative genre that Wilson is borrowing from, and draws the reader's attention more closely to its authenticating devices. Hence, when one does arrive at the appended letters, they are embellished both in tone and with the addition of Wilson's own voice, as if any residual doubts about her piety – and hence credibility – following the failed conversion need to be overcome.

But what is one to make of this contradiction? How is one to reconcile a text that first raises the question of a genre's authenticity and then relies on the same genre's authenticating strategies? Many critics, eager to impute political motives to Wilson, simply overlook the appended letters and the implications of Frado/Wilson's re-emergent piety, preferring instead to focus on how the body of the novel itself attacks "prevailing social constructions of Christianity, race, and womanhood."[37] One of the few critics to deal with the appended letters, Elizabeth Breau claims the letters to be fictional, asserting they are part of Wilson's overall ironic and satiric portrayal of white abolitionists; yet, in discounting any autobiographical intent, Breau neglects both Wilson's stated purpose in writing the narrative and the verifiable facts concerning her life that the text bears out. Certainly Wilson's ability to use irony is evident in her reference to herself in the title as "Our Nig," and we can, of course, read the appended letters as ironic when placed in the context of Frado's failed conversion. However, given the firm control whites held over the publishing industry, we must assume supporters lurking somewhere in the background. Unmitigated irony from the title page to appendix, though attractive to modern scholars, would seem unlikely to attract the necessary help in publishing a book, especially when the primary purpose was to support her family. Backtracking to varnish an autobiographical novel appears a more likely approach.

Certain incidents in *Our Nig*, particularly in the early chapters, are obviously products of Wilson's own invention. The events before Frado's birth, dialogues between Mag and Jim, and some occurrences before Frado is sent to the Bellmonts at the age of six are all certainly results of a creative and imaginative process. Other events in the novel and letters have been substantiated by legal documents: the birth certificate of her son, his admission to the poor farm, and the marriage license to Thomas Wilson. Even the existence of the Bellmont family, in actuality the Hey-

37. Elizabeth West, "Reworking the Conversion Narrative: Race and Christianity in *Our Nig*," *MELUS* 24.2 (1999) 3–27, p. 3.

wood family of Milford, N.H., has been verified by Barbara White, although White also suggests that Wilson combined characters and changed the chronology "in the interest of streamlining the narrative."[38] Other events have almost certainly been reshaped for reasons of discretion or due to the nature of memory, yet it is fairly safe to say that the failed conversion is accurate. There would be little reason to falsify such an event and everything to be gained in having her fictional alter ego become a believer, especially given the expectations in a domestic novel or slave narrative. The spiritual struggle is possibly autobiographical, the failed conversion certainly is.

We can also view the novel as failed, at least in this sense. It remains a strong indictment of northern hypocrisy regarding racial prejudice, but from the perspective of incorporating slave narrative devices into an autobiography it allows fact and fiction to contradict each other. Literary appeals designed for a white readership, *Our Nig* inadvertently suggests to us, did not always convey the reality of black writers.

The Bondwoman's Narrative: Moving toward Literary Authenticity

As an unpublished manuscript, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* lacks the external authenticating apparatus of appended letters. Stored alone in a box for at least fifty years prior to its rediscovery in 2001, the text was unaccompanied by any indication of its unknown author's intentions regarding how it should be published or marketed. Internal evidence from the text, however, suggests Hannah Crafts might well have forgone the formality of testimonials had her novel reached the presses during her lifetime. Although Crafts positions her text as a slave narrative – proclaiming herself on the title page as "A Fugitive Slave Recently Escaped from North Carolina," and commenting in the preface, in the best tradition of the slave narrative, that the text presents "the plain, unvarnished facts" and "the truth" – practically none of the genre's authenticating devices are used. In particular, the portrayal of the protagonist's religious faith displays none of the slave narrative's characteristic appeals to a white readership's sense of how blacks experience religion.

Antebellum slave narratives, as a rule, took pains to present black religious practices as fairly similar to white religious worship and beliefs, avoiding or toning down ecstatic and enthusiastic practices that other contemporary observers frequently noted.[39] Some narratives did mention superstitious beliefs and conjuring that a Christian would frown upon, but they are always careful to distance themselves from these practices. William Wells Brown, for instance, flatly states in his

38. Barbara White, "*Our Nig* and the She-Devil: New Information about Harriet Wilson and the 'Bellmont' Family," *American Literature* 65 (1993) 19–52, p. 44.

39. Raboteau, pp. 66–73.

1847 narrative "I am no believer in soothsaying," when he discussed his contact with Uncle Frank, a black fortuneteller.[40] Indeed, Wells belittles the prophecy he receives, clearly painting this kind of clairvoyance as a fraud: "He further said, that in trying to get my liberty I would meet with many severe trials. I thought to myself any fool could tell me that!"[41] Similarly, Henry Bibb, in describing two incidents where he sought the help of a conjurer, points out that "I had *then* great faith in conjuration and witchcraft"[42] and at the same time attempts to assure his white readers that blacks harbor no ill intentions when they turn to the supernatural. "This is all done for the purpose of defending themselves in some Peaceable manner, although I am satisfied that there is no virtue in it at all."[43] Both Wells and Bibb practiced these stories on the abolitionist lecture circuit and knew what worked with white audiences and what did not. Tales of superstitious Africans were both exotic entertainments and a way of confirming white beliefs of how blacks behaved as well as Christian religious superiority. The tales could only be believed, though, if the teller shared the audience's own value system.

Crafts, on the other hand, has no qualms about presenting herself as both thoroughly Christian and superstitious at the same time. In introducing her new mistress, Mrs. Vincent, Crafts even gives her superstitious side a racial origin: "I am superstitious, I confess it; people of my race and color usually are; and I fancied then that she was haunted by a shadow or phantom apparent only to herself, and perhaps even the more dreadful for that" (27). There is, of course, no reason why a person cannot believe both in orthodox Christianity and the supernatural, but the point here is that in doing so Crafts forfeits the authenticating function of religion for her narrative. Her nineteenth-century audience would have been reassured by the narrator's professing a belief they expected a black to have, yet certainly suspicious of a narrator who never firmly rejects such beliefs and completely adopts their own religious ideology.

Even Frederick Douglass, one of the most eloquent and intellectual of the slave narrators, was at pains to link himself clearly to Christianity: not only did he include an appendix to his 1845 autobiography to "remove the liability of . . . misapprehension" and assert his love of "the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ,"[44] but ten years later in his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), he extended and deepened the one section that shows his dealings with African religious practices. In the 1845 narrative, he briefly describes how a slave convinces him to carry a root in his right pocket to prevent him from being

40. W. Brown, p. 93.
41. W. Brown, p. 92.
42. Bibb, p. 26 (my emphasis).
43. Bibb, pp. 25–26.
44. Douglass, *Autobiography*, p. 153.

beaten by Covey, the brutal "nigger breaker," and the apparent initial success leaves him to conclude that "as it was, I was half inclined to think the root to be something more than I at first had taken it to be."[45] Left simply with that remark, the reader may also be "half inclined" to speculate on where his subsequent courage to stand up to Covey came from. In the 1855 autobiography, however, Douglass more clearly dissociates himself from faith in magic even before he takes the root, an idea which he now considers "very absurd and ridiculous, if not positively sinful."[46] After his early luck with the root, the inspiration for his rebellion is clearly attributed to his own resolve and not to superstition. "All went well with me until Monday morning; and then, whether the root had lost its virtue, or whether my tormentor had gone deeper into the black art than myself (as it was sometimes said of him) . . . it is not necessary for me to know, or to inform the reader. . ."[47] Here, the tables are turned; his foe is now identified with "the black art" and not Douglass, whose physical resistance and determination place him firmly in the tradition of self-reliant American individualism that allows the audience to trust him. The process of seeking freedom in the slave narrative is thus not only the movement from "South to North . . . chattel to man, sin to salvation,"[48] but from paganism to Christianity.

Crafts, however, leaves the distinction between mainstream Christianity and folk superstition blurred. Her unyieldingly devout slave protagonist is "led . . . to the foot of the Cross" (10) in the opening pages, and later declares that "even freedom without God and religion would be a barren possession" (109). Despite this strong evangelical Christian orientation, Crafts never allows Hannah to fully complete the transition from paganism to Christianity that slave narrators accomplish. Instead, just as she "[is] not considered a servant, neither [is she] treated exactly as a guest" (124) in Mrs. Henry's household, Hannah remains in a religious sense a liminal character, fusing a strong Christian identity that brings her credibility with her white audience, and beliefs in superstitions that she locates in her racial background. A later instance when Hannah denies possessing even "a particle" of superstition (139) should be taken with a grain of salt, for here she is talking to Mrs. Henry, a white woman with whom she desires to be on good terms. In this situation Hannah is performing a balancing act between two worlds, that of the superstitious slaves who believe there is a ghost in the house, and that of the religious Mrs. Henry with whom she enjoys a special relationship, being neither exactly servant nor guest. Privy to the secret that the ghost is in reality a runaway slave, Hannah is not

45. Douglass, *Autobiography*, p. 111.
46. Douglass, *My Bondage*, p. 239.
47. Douglass, *My Bondage*, p. 241.
48. Foster, p. 127.

lying when she claims in this particular instance not to be superstitious. By limiting her reply to the present circumstance, Crafts can uphold Hannah's ties to a more general superstitious nature and still stand in good stead with Mrs. Henry.

The Christianity Hannah espouses, while certainly similar to that of a white nineteenth-century audience, is not presented in *Our Nig* as a sentimental value. Instead, Hannah appears as a somewhat self-righteous individual, sure of God's grace when embarking on her two flights toward freedom, and pitying toward non-believers. In a moment of despair, she is guided by a chance opening of her Bible, much as Harriet Wilson is in Allida's appended letter. But whereas Wilson opens to the self-pitying phrase "'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me'" (135), Hannah finds the passage where Jacob flees Esau, interpreting it as a sign that she must follow suit: "[t]rusting in the God that guided and protected him I will abandon this house and the Mistress who would force me into a crime against nature" (207). Later, when she befriends a fellow fugitive slave and discovers that he cannot find faith in God in himself, she can only feel sorry for him: "I could only regard him with compassion that in his trials, and difficulties he was unaware of the greatest source of abiding comfort" (217). Hannah's piety throughout the novel is that of an unabashed Christian and is not aimed at having a sentimental effect on her audience.

Walking the line between devout Christianity and a supposedly racially determined belief in superstitions serves a distinct purpose in Crafts's novel. If disavowing a belief in conjure and the supernatural is meant to ingratiate the slave narrator with white readers, Hannah's superstitious nature serves the literary end of foreshadowing coming events. Thus when Hannah stands before her master's portrait in "superstitious awe," pondering the arrival of his new bride, the changes she sees in the picture presage the coming tragedy that will lead to her flight from Lindendale and her master's death.

> But was it prophecy, or presentiment, or why was it that this idea was attended to my mind with something painful? That it seemed the first scene in some fearful tragedy; the foreboding of some great calamity; a curse of destiny that no circumstances could avert or soften. And why was it that as I mused the portrait of my master seemed to change from its usually kind and placid expression to one of wrath and gloom. . . (17)

Belief in the supernatural is presented here not as something to be disowned but rather as a literary device.

In portraying Hannah as both superstitious and pious, Crafts has created, I would argue, a character unusual in antebellum African-American literature, namely a protagonist who adopts Christianity while maintaining a link to pre-Christian beliefs. She accomplishes this by emphasizing a variation on one of the slave narra-

tive's authenticating strategies: belief in blacks' predisposition to superstitions being rooted in the romantic racialism that sees blacks as possessing an inherent, child-like inclination to religion. Indeed, in the following passage she uses the romantic belief that children and the unschooled possess an instinctive wisdom in order to underscore her narrator's reliability.

> I have said that I always had a quiet way of observing things, and this habit grew upon me, sharpened perhaps by the absence of all elemental knowledge. Instead of books I studied faces and characters, and arrived at conclusions by a sort of sagacity that closely approximated to the unerring certainty of animal instinct. (27)

Interesting here is that now the authenticating strategy is associated not with other blacks, as in the slave narratives, but with the narrator herself.

What Crafts's text shows us is how an authenticating strategy can mutate and take on a different meaning when used in different literary contexts. Authentication of the text – to have the reader believe that all the events of the narrative are literally true – is not Crafts's primary purpose, as the blending of apparent factual and obviously fictional elements shows. Coincidental meetings, such as Hannah's reunions with Aunt Hetty or with her mother, and melodramatic deaths, such as that of her mistress from Lindendale, should not be taken as literally but as literarily true. By this I mean that the authentication Crafts seeks is for her text as a literary work, not as a testimonial to its truthfulness. Many critics, lead by the text's re-discoverer, Henry L. Gates, Jr., have noted the links in the text to real places and people – the North Carolina locales, the government official Mr. Wheeler – and have treated Crafts's text as primarily a slave narrative with fictionalized and fictional elements added to it. While the crossing out and simplification of names suggest attempts to fictionalize real people and events,[49] we should not overvalue Crafts's statement in the preface that the narrative represents "the truth." Her wholesale borrowings from Dickens that Hollis Robbins has pointed out demonstrate that she was attempting to validate her novel as a literary work as well.[50] Similarly, using the Gothic convention of superstitious beliefs, not to mention the falling portraits, cursed houses, and terrifying storms, indicates that Crafts was reaching out for a literary authenticity and authority in her narrative.

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49. Joe Nickell, Appendix A. "Authentication Report: *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," in *The Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts (New York: Warner Books, 2002), 283–315, p. 306.

50. Hollis Robbins, "Blackening *Bleak House*: Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," in *In Search of Hannah Crafts: Critical Essays on* The Bondwoman's Narrative (New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2004), 71–86.

Concluding Remarks

Overall, Crafts's greater willingness to blend fact and fiction, and to adopt literary conventions to different genres, makes her novel artistically more successful than Harriet Wilson's. Wilson's use of slave narrative authenticating strategies leads us to read *Our Nig* as an autobiographical novel, yet if we do so the related facts – the failed religious conversion – undermine the authenticating devices. Crafts, on the other hand, largely avoids any but the most perfunctory authenticating strategies, such as simply asserting that the text is "the truth," and when she does borrow an underlying concept from the slave narrative's authenticating devices – a romantic racialist belief in black religious life – she places the reference in a gothic context that infuses it with a new meaning. The white reader's racialist belief that Africans possess a closer relationship to religion and nature is invoked not to assert the factuality of a slave narrative but the credibility of the narrator's Gothic intuition.

Part of Crafts's success lies also in the different approach she takes to spirituality. Wilson exploits spirituality for sentimental purposes, juxtaposing Mrs. Bellmont's religious hypocrisy with Frado's heartfelt search for salvation in order to garner reader sympathy for her protagonist. Rather than invoking a sentimental version of religion, however, Crafts takes a matter-of-fact approach to Hannah's religious belief, where divine retribution is a given for those who commit evil acts, such as Mr. Trappe, or who lack sufficient religious faith, such as Jacob. By the end of her novel, Crafts's words in the preface have come to fulfillment: for those "of pious and discerning minds can scarcely fail to recognise the hand of Providence in giving to the righteous the reward of their works, and to the wicked the fruit of their doings."

Thus, on the eve of the Civil War, as black writing begins to extend into realms of fiction, these two novels demonstrate different ways of incorporating earlier traditions into new genres. *Our Nig* shows the peril of relying too heavily on older forms, while *The Bondwoman's Narrative* suggests that authenticity may be achieved without catering to the ideologies of a white audience.

Robyn Russo

"When Children Are Not Glad"

Sympathy, Performance, and Power in Abolitionist Children's Literature

In antebellum American society, neither women nor children were seen as full citizens, and neither group possessed any direct political power, consigned as they were to the private, domestic sphere. And yet, many women produced stories ostensibly written for children that packed a quite radical political argument: abolitionism. This essay hopes to add to existing work on abolitionist women's writing by exploring how the literature abolitionist women wrote expressly for child readers provided a unique opportunity for both the writer and the reader to advance the abolitionist cause. This literature became a device for women to teach their children about slavery, as well as a forum for speaking to each other, even across racial divides, about the abolitionist cause. This essay will pay special attention to how female authors of abolitionist children's literature performed a conservative notion of their gender identity – mother and moral teacher – in order to call for progressive change. Additionally, the focus these women placed on young enslaved characters forces readers to recognize how slavery prohibited the newly-formed, but deeply important, nineteenth-century ideals of childhood and the performance of this identity. Thus, abolitionist children's literature had a twofold power: it used the unique features of the child's identity to elicit sympathy and make a persuasive argument against the slave system, both of which provided a "safe" space for women to contribute their political expression.

Introduction

The message at the end of Lydia Maria Child's 1831 story "Jumbo and Zairee" is uncomplicated enough for her presumed reader, a young child, to grasp: a white, slaveholding man buys freedom for an enslaved African-American family. He voices his rejection of a system which allows the family to be treated not as humans, but as chattel; after doing so, everyone weeps with joy. In this story, published in *Juvenile Miscellany*, the children's magazine Child edited in addition to

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her many other profitable and popular domestic writing ventures, she depicts African culture as worthy and intelligent. She holds that all humans, both black and white, come from the same God. And, when Child's slaveholder character, Mr. Harris, declares, "I have tried to show my gratitude to the negroes by being a kind master; but I am satisfied this is not all I ought to do. They ought to be free. What is wrong in the eyes of God, cannot be made right by man," her argument, though spoken through a fictitious children's tale, is potent.[1] The slave system must be abolished, and immediately.

Just two years after the publication of "Jumbo and Zairee" Child published a tract called *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*, where she expressed such similar political ideas as those in the aforementioned story as immediate emancipation of enslaved peoples and racial equality. But her *Appeal* was written for adults, so the abolitionist, anti-racist argument was overt. Child delivered it in her own voice, not hidden in the words of fictional characters – and its reception was dramatically different. Upon the publication of *Appeal* her hitherto best-selling domestic advice books went out of print, many publishers refused to accept her new writings, and she lost her editorial post at *The Juvenile Miscellany*, as outraged parents (presumably the same who had happily read Jumbo and Zairee's tale to their children two years earlier) cancelled subscriptions in droves. The storm of backlash plunged Child and her husband, already cash-strapped from their joint abolitionist work, into financial despair.[2]

The striking contrast in the reaction to these pieces raises questions about why a woman could express such ideas about slavery and race in a story for children without backlash, and yet be so soundly condemned when she published the same views in a political tract. But, even more so, the question must arise: why would Child – or any woman living in nineteenth-century American society – choose to write anti-slavery, anti-racist literature for a child reader during this period when neither women nor children had any political power, and when neither was considered a full citizen? In the following pages, I argue that children's literature became a vital space in which women voiced resistance to dominant pro-slavery and racist views without jeopardizing their position as a "true woman" within nineteenth-century gender ideals. The nineteenth-century American woman's only "proper sphere" was the home, and intellectual pursuits were la-

1. Lydia Maria Child, "Jumbo and Zairee," in *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, ed. Carolyn Karcher (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997), 153–159.

2. Carolyn Karcher, "Introduction: Children's Literature and Domestic Advice," in *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, ed. Carolyn Karcher (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997), 99–100.

beled both unnatural and dangerous;[3] thus, political speech and action always placed women in a precarious situation, where their very identity as "female" could be questioned for overstepping their socially-accepted role. Yet, a political argument could be made with much less scrutiny in works which ostensibly upheld the antebellum feminine ideal of domesticity, such as sentimental writing, with its focus on emotions (particularly, sympathy) and family life (particularly, the mother and her children).

While much the same could be said of any type of sentimental abolitionist literature, including the literature for adult women that has received significant attention in recent scholarship, the lesser-studied body of work written expressly for young readers offered perhaps an even more useful venue for the abolitionist argument. As the conflicting public responses to Child's two works show, writing for children provided a sort of safe space for women to express political views, a forum not only for women to teach their children, but to speak to each other about the abolitionist cause.

Although this rhetorical veil was important to the genre's goal, the figure of the child – both the child character in the writing and the child reader – is equally crucial to this body of work's impact. As the notion of childhood as a separate identity emerged for the first time in the nineteenth century,[4] authors of abolitionist children's literature focused on how slavery inhibited these new, but deeply-held, ideals of a child's social role in order to condemn the slave system overall. Such a critique was made all the more biting for how it unmasked the fallacy of one of pro-slavery critics' most crucial arguments: slavery was "patriarchal" in its aims. Additionally, since early American women were tasked with raising a new generation of "good" Christian citizens,[5] by placing their abolitionist argument within children's stories (a genre most didactic in aim during this era) the authors essentially manipulated the conservative role of the moral educator for a progressive aim. Indeed, by both utilizing and subverting conservative ideals of femininity and childhood, abolitionist children's literature offered a persistent and persuasive call for a progressive change – a call that was less controversial because of its platform, but no less powerful and significant in its contributions to the cause.

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3. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18.2 (Summer 1966) 151–174.

4. Deborah C. DeRosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830–1865* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).

5. Deborah C. DeRosa, *Into the Mouth of Babes: An Anthology of Children's Abolitionist Literature* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Press, 2005), p. xvii.

1. Womanhood and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America: The Identity as Performance

Before examining any of the abolitionist writing itself, however, it is necessary to understand what it meant to be a woman and a child in antebellum America, as well as how these identities should be performed, or enacted in visible ways. When I refer to "performance," I am using a definition that draws from Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. That is, identity is not something inherent or innate, but rather socially constructed. The way societal expectations and constructions influence identity is so powerful that indeed identity is not expressed in an act, but rather identity *is* the performance of an act itself: you are what you do, and your society will name you by this.[6] For Butler, there is no stable identity outside of the actions; gender does not exist as a noun outside the gender expressions which are said to be its result.[7] Her theory of performativity, however, does not imbue subjects with the ability merely to shrug on and off many identities (or any identity) at will, as an actor playing many parts. Rather, the individual subject is constrained by the normative standards of his or her society and must meet these standards in action to claim a socially-recognized identity. In order to claim "woman" as an identity, for instance, an individual must continually reiterate those actions deemed "feminine" by her specific society.

Although Butler's work focuses on more modern interpretations of gender, the feminine identity of antebellum America displays both this socially defined and continually reiterated nature. Indeed, as Barbara Welter describes in her essay "The Cult of True Womanhood," a certain socially-legible performance was central to claiming the identity of "woman" within this era. The nineteenth century woman was judged to be a "true" woman by displaying – to herself, to her family and to her larger society – four vital characteristics: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. "True women" were devoted to their Christian religion, and used their supposedly "natural" inclination to faith to shine salvation on their husbands and families. To be a true woman, she must also protect her virtue at every turn, for without purity, she was "no woman at all," and subject to madness, desperation and even death. True women followed their husband's will; where he acted, she responded, an order seen as vital to the continued functioning of the republic and even the greater universe.[8] Her most important stage for performing this role was her own household; by displaying all her other virtues while keeping up a comforta-

6. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1990).

7. Butler, p. 33.

8. Welter, pp. 154–164.

ble and cheerful home, she could raise a family of good, American Christians, thus keeping her country strong.[9]

Slipping in the performance of any one of these cardinal virtues meant not just societal disapproval, but indeed a stripping of her identity as a woman, as evidenced by females who did eschew the order being termed "no woman," "semi-women," and "hermaphrodites." As Welter puts it, the women who do not perform this set of values are "read out of the sex."[10] That is, women who transgressed by not performing the cardinal four virtues in their own writing – women like early American feminist writers Margaret Fuller and Frances Wright – were condemned by the larger society with the barrage of articles in popular women's magazines which decisively deny the title of "woman" to such deviants.[11]

It is essential, however, to recognize that "true womanhood" could not extend to all females in antebellum America: the constraints of its many demands meant only white, free, middle-to-upper class women could possibly hope for admission into this group. For enslaved black women, not to mention the legions of poorer women of any race, the ideal of sitting quietly by the hearth, instilling Christian lessons to her docile children all day was impossible, due to the economic necessity of work outside the home. Still, the ideals of true womanhood came to be embraced by certain sectors of the black community, particularly for the small-but-growing community of free blacks in the Northern states. True womanhood, as practiced in the white free world, was the antithesis of slave women's reality, where they served a dual role as physical laborer and sexual commodity. Thus, for free black women who strove to attain the ideals of true womanhood, the performance became a reclamation of an identity that the slave system denied so many of their sisters.[12]

Indeed, while the economic realities meant a "perfect" performance of true womanhood was impossible for most black women, African-American women in the abolitionist movement consciously championed these virtues in their own group

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9. Welter, p 171. It should be noted, however, that this notion of woman as the moral educator for a nation appears before the 19th century. Often termed by historians as "republican motherhood," it appeared with the emergence of the nation itself. Women's domestic roles as mothers were seen as inherently civic, for they were charged with raising children who would uphold the republican ideals of the new nation. See Linda K. Kerber's extensive work on Republican Motherhood, particularly her 1980 book *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (University of North Carolina Press).

10. Welter, pp. 154, 172–173.

11. Welter, p. 173.

12. Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828–1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

as a way to draw parallels between the races.[13] As such, the performance of "true womanhood" became vital as a sort of bridge, a commonly-held ground between upwardly-mobile and middle-class black families and their white counterparts. I will later argue that Harriet Wilson, one particularly interesting writer of abolitionist children's literature, uses this performance to establish her authority in making her political argument.

Alongside this standard of true womanhood, a new conception of childhood as an identity with its own culturally-accepted performance began to emerge in the nineteenth century. As Karen Sánchez-Eppler argues in the introduction to her book *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth Century Culture*, the cultural conception of childhood as a time of life distinctly different and separate from adulthood was not always a given, but rather a "gradual and uneven transformation" spurred, in large part, by economic changes.[14] Sánchez-Eppler writes that, while at the beginning of the nineteenth century most children were still participating in some form of labor to support the family, as the century progressed with increasing industrialization as well as new child-labor laws, children gradually began to lose their economic value. "Childhood – valued for love, not labor – demonstrates the nature of this new mode of social organization even more clearly than changes in the status of women, for whom love, after all, was seen as a type of work," she writes.[15] Sánchez-Eppler argues that while this change did not happen all at once, or even uniformly, for the country, the shift became most noticeable as the nineteenth-century progressed, and ideas of the child as naturally depraved also shifted to conceptions of children as natural innocents, as "blank slates" on which parents could inscribe their own moral values. Like the adult "true woman" dependent on and submissive to her husband, the "true child" also could expect to be dependent on his or her parents for protection, for care, and – perhaps most important to the young American child – for the moral guidance needed to become a good citizen of the republic.

Even more than adult women, the child's identity came to be seen as a state of perfect purity, of godliness. Indeed, as Welter points out through her extensive examples of stories about the need to "protect" virtue, an adult woman's purity was always at risk; the "fallen woman" trope was so popular because this purity could so easily be compromised by one slick man's seduction.[16] But as Deborah DeRosa argues in her book on antebellum American juvenile literature, children were seen as

13. Yee, pp. 46–48; 58–59.

14. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth Century Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. xvii.

15. Sánchez-Eppler, p. xviii.

16. Welter, p. 156.

"naturally" good and innocent, full of play and joy, and holding a "more profound awareness of enduring moral truths."[17] Likewise, as Jane Tompkins describes the notion of childhood in her examination of the most famous American abolitionist novel, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, children had a "natural sanctity," making them angelic forces able to lead their county's adults closer to Christian notions of salvation.[18]

Because children were seen as blank slates to be molded into good American citizens, DeRosa argues that much nineteenth-century children's literature focused on teaching values which would secure the nation's future, such as the abundant morality tales stressing a Protestant/capitalist work ethic as the way to reach one's happy ending. Abolitionist children's writers appear quite aware of this plot formula; however, their works show a manipulation of the expected narrative trajectory, where the hard worker is not rewarded. In Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*, for instance, the author depicts a hard-working serving girl who attempts to obey every order, but is beaten instead of praised.[19] Such deviations are quite effective because they necessarily force the nineteenth-century American reader to question the current social order when the expected plot goes "wrong."

These two identities – womanhood and childhood – lend a sort of dual power to abolitionist children's literature. The true woman, imbued as she was with her higher piety and virtue than her male counterpart, was charged with shaping her family's, and especially her children's, morals. As DeRosa notes, most domestic writing was considered "non-threatening" because it did not conflict with the performance of femininity; but writing children's literature was perhaps the "safest" form for women writers. Indeed, since teaching children was a crucial tenet of true womanhood, penning didactic tales or verses was an ideal performance of this identity.[20] In addition to the special power of the child as a figure in nineteenth-century society, then, the genre also provided a sort of cloak for political discourse. As much of this writing was published in family magazines, meant to be read by a mother to her children, the supposed "safety" of children's literature proved a clever circumvention of social barriers: authors necessarily had to imagine a dual audience, and anything said to the child was thus also said to the

17. DeRosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, p. 9.

18. Jane Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History," in *Sensational Design: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1986), 122–146, p. 129.

19. Harriet E Wilson, *Our Nig, or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North, Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There*, ed. P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald Pitts (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

20. DeRosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, p. 9.

adult woman imagined to be reading the story as well. The juvenile literature of the day thus became a space for women to speak to each other, to share ideas and to gather support for the abolitionist cause.

2. Sympathy's Role in the Performance of Identity

Of course, both Sánchez-Eppler and DeRosa are quick to point out that qualities embedded in a "cult of childhood" or true childhood were available only to the middle- and higher-class free society in nineteenth-century America – a society that was, save a few exceptions, overwhelmingly white. Yet, the ideal of true childhood, like true womanhood, was enthusiastically embraced by this power-holding group, and this thus gave the abolitionists writing children's literature a crucial place for critique. If one performed true childhood by being joyful, innocent and playful, then the slave child's clear inability to perform this role could be displayed and emphasized in order to criticize the slave system as a whole. For an enslaved child, joy was destroyed by savage beatings and the pain of watching parents or siblings sold away; innocence was shattered by the countless acts of violence they suffered or witnessed; and playtime was swallowed by work. Their childhood, as it would be known in dominant culture, was lost, and nearly all abolitionist children's literature displays a pressing anxiety about this loss.

One writer who was very concerned with the loss of childhood was Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, a Boston native and Unitarian Sunday school teacher who became one of the city's leading reformers. In the juvenile magazine she edited, *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine*, Follen includes many poems which focus on this loss of childhood. One poem, simply titled "Lines: On hearing of the terror of the children of American slaves at the thought of being sold," which was printed in an 1844 edition of the magazine, includes two stanzas bluntly contrasting the ideal performance of childhood and the way slavery forbids this performance. It reads:

> When children play the livelong day
> Like birds and butterflies,
> As free and gay sport life away,
> And know not care nor sighs:
> Then all the air, seems fresh and fair,
> Around above, below
> Life flowers are there, and every where
> Is innocence and love.
>
> When children pray with fear all day,
> A blight must be at hand;

Then joys decay, and birds of prey,
Are hovering o'er the land:
When young hearts weep, as they go to sleep,
Then all the world seems sad:
The flesh must creep, and woes are deep,
When children are not glad.[21]

Here, the picture of true childhood is very clear in the first stanza, with its pictures of play and happiness. This is what the nineteenth century middle-class audience thinks childhood should be; so Follen includes a picture of childhood familiar to both the white child and the secondary audience of the white mother sitting next to the child.

And yet the second stanza completely contradicts this picture. Although Follen does not explicitly name the subjects in either stanza, her title lets us know that the children who "pray with fear all day" must be those terrified children of American slaves. The slave children here get to experience none of the ideal traits of childhood Sánchez-Eppler and DeRosa lay out; but perhaps most troubling for the mother/adult side of the dual audience is the fact that the mother cannot perform her role as caregiver and comforter, either. The slave children's prayers of fear come because they know their parents cannot offer them the protection and happiness which a true child should have.

The poem certainly aimed to teach a lesson, as was common for conventional nineteenth-century writing for children, which often showed the moral or social correction of a young protagonist. But, as DeRosa states, juvenile abolitionist literature modified this trope by presenting "young victims who do not need moral reform but instead need rescue from an immoral system."[22] Follen's fearful, praying children – doing nothing wrong but suffering nonetheless – certainly need this rescue.

3. The Reformative Power of Sympathy

Follen's poem does not aim merely to teach about slavery's existence; instead, its goal is to teach sympathy for the slave, or to teach "right feeling." Lines like "a blight *must* be at hand," or "the flesh *must* crawl" can be read as ones which simultaneously allow the reader to perform sympathy and teach the performance of this emotion.

21. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, "Lines: On hearing of the terror of the children of American slaves at the thought of being sold," *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine* (April 1844) accessed via The American Periodicals Series Online.

22. DeRosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, p. 43.

The words let Follen perform her own sympathy through the image of a skin "crawling" with disgust. On another level, the word "must" shows the words to be a tool for teaching children this right feeling. For, by writing "must," she is instructing her (mainly white) children readers about the correct way to respond to this sad scene; she is saying that they, too, should feel their flesh crawl and feel a "blight" over their homeland.

"Feeling right," of course, was not limited to the juvenile sect of abolitionist writing. In her essay on pain and sympathy in antebellum America, Elizabeth B. Clark argues that, as religious thought at the time moved to celebrate the body's integrity and the ideal of a benevolent God, depictions of slaves' suffering bodies – including graphic descriptions of beatings, abundant references to tears or screams, and ruminations on bodily pain – came to have "strategic value" for abolitionist writers. As Clark explains, sympathy – a term which in the nineteenth century also encompassed the modern-day understanding of empathy – was "a complex process in which the observer's willed attentiveness to another's suffering gave rise to an intuitive empathetic identification with the other's experience."[23] As such, abolitionists tried to use this "intuitive" identification to show why slavery could not be tolerated: if one felt right, then one would necessarily object to and protest the system.

For the female writer charged with the moral upbringing of her family, then, teaching sympathy to a young reader, as Follen aims to do in this poem, was part of this ideal performance of womanhood, for it combined both the cardinal virtues of piety and domesticity. Follen, too, is assuming the voice of a moral instructor here. Even the reading itself is performing womanhood: the woman reader feels sympathy because Follen uses tropes of true womanhood and true childhood, from the piety implied by the child's praying to the references to innocence and play. Additionally, because of the assumed double audience of abolitionist children's literature, the "lesson" of how one should feel about slavery could be clearly and boldly repeated to adult women as well. Follen – and other female abolitionists – thus can perform true womanhood through their own sympathetic feelings, and, at the same time, rally other women into abolitionist activism.

Readers can see the teaching of sympathy at work in another of Follen's poems, "The Slave Boy's Wish." The verse begins with a list of fanciful wishes from free children: "I wish I was a bird," or "I wish I was that butterfly" – all images that fit the performance of a true child's playful happiness. Halfway through the 32-line poem, however, the speaker clearly changes into a child who cannot experience this

23. Elizabeth B. Clark, " 'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy and the Culture of the Individual in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History*, 82.2 (Sept. 1995) 463–493.

playfulness. He states he wishes to be a fox, hidden away, or a cloud near heaven, for he is a slave, ending the poem by lamenting:

> What wicked action have I done
> That I should be a slave?
>
> I saw my little sister sold.
> So will they do to me;
> My Heavenly Father, let me die,
> For then I shall be free.[24]

By starting with the free children's happy wishes, Follen allows the free child reader to see himself in the poem; but the quick changeover to the slave child's voice extends this sense of identification to the enslaved youth as well. DeRosa terms such moves as "emotional analogy," and such a description seems apt here: the child first sees himself, and then sees someone who at first seems so much like him, but turns out to be very different indeed. Follen thus makes the assumed reader – a white, free child – to see the parallels between himself and this child slave – and as such, she aims to teach sympathy.

Again, the didactic tale is not a moral corrective for the child – the implied answer here to "What wicked action have I done?" is clearly "nothing." Instead, it is the larger slave system that is condemned by the boy's final wish to die, for it is his only way to freedom. The correct performance of childhood is utterly impossible here – for what could be further from being a joyful, innocent creature "valued for love, not labor" than suicidal wishes – and hence both child and adult audiences are taught that slavery has to be wrong if their ideals of childhood are to be maintained.

Importantly, the sympathy Follen calls for here is not just for the physical pain of the suffering enslaved boy she depicts, but also sympathy for his lost childhood, which thus refutes a very important pro-slavery argument: that slavery was a beneficial institution, with African-Americans figured as the child in need of protection. DeRosa notes that in the pro-slavery children's literature, which was widely published in the Southern states around the same time as Follen's poems, slaves are referred to as "kindly treated," hugged by their young masters and cared for. Pro-slavery literature showed slaves as "good children," and indeed, even the slave system was often referred to by its supporters as a "patriarchal" institution.[25] But Follen's poems insistently deny this by showing the absence of childhood, the inability

24. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen. "The Slave Boy's Wish" *The New England Farmer; A Monthly Journal*. Feb. 1859. Accessed via The American Periodicals Series Online.

25. DeRosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, p. 40.

to perform true childhood as a slave. Essentially, Follen's poems argue that since even slave children cannot truly be children, we cannot believe adult slaves are also happy "good children" under the firm but loving father of the slave master. Her work shows that there are no children in slavery.

* * *

Abolitionist writing that relies so much on sympathy may fall subject to the same criticism as all sentimental literature, which is that the work allows readers to stop at this "right feeling." If people reach sympathy and cry for the poor suffering slave, critics of the genre argue, then they can pat themselves on the back for being good Christians and feel superior and go on their way – or, as Marcus Wood puts it, the slave's suffering becomes "only relevant as the key site for the individual witness's exploration, or testing, or his/her capacity for sympathy."[26] Sympathy and sentiment thus can relieve the reader of the need to act; the free white reader's reaction matters, not the actual enslaved black body's suffering, and nothing changes.

Despite the fact that recent scholarship has shed light on the important problems with sympathy and the sentimental genre, I argue that this mode of critique obscures the truth of the simple but quite radical intervention these women attempted. These were Northern, free women, living physically and emotionally removed from the enslaved blacks, and yet, through their focus on qualities like love and mothering, they elide that great chasm. In their work, they strive to make sympathy supplant difference. The psychoanalytical critiques such modern critics as Wood, Saidiya Hartman or Marianne Noble[27] use to focus on what "pleasure" a white reader took in a slave's suffering does a disservice to the original writers by too quickly dismissing their aims, and their effects. As Jane Tompkins argues in her groundbreaking work on the power of sentiment in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it is faulty to consider that abolitionist writing was somehow choosing feeling over action, because, for the authors, the moral revolution would necessarily precede any legal and political upheaval. For an abolitionist, nineteenth-century woman writer, changing feeling *was* changing reality; moving Americans' moral compasses to recognize slavery as evil was the most vital step in reforming the world.[28] The currency of true womanhood becomes quite real here: in re-affirming the well-entrenched social ideals of family and Christianity through depicting slavery's denial of these very

26. Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography*, (Oxford University Press, 2002).

27. See Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* and Noble's *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature*, for these critics, like Wood, place much focus on the pleasure the reader takes in scenes of suffering and pain.

28. Tomkins, p. 133.

beliefs to other human beings, a writer necessarily calls for a revolution of both thought and action. Or, as Welter argues, an abolitionist woman writer's use of feeling demands action, for it suggests those who share her "right feeling" might be better suited to leading the burgeoning republic than the men "making such a hash of things."[29]

This power of sentiment to effect change manifests itself even more clearly in abolitionist children's literature, where writers often quite explicitly show feeling right and acting right as inextricably entwined, rather than opposed. With their pedagogic aims, I argue, these writers want to make young readers learn that adopting these morals can lead to a better world.

In the Lydia Maria Child story discussed earlier, "Jumbo and Zairee," this goal of social change through changing hearts is quite clear. Child, one of the most prolific writers of both abolitionist and conventional domestic literature, writes a story about an Englishman, Mr. Harris, who finds himself shipwrecked along the African coastline. The king and queen of the nearby tribe, Jumbo and Zairee's parents, care for and shelter him like an honored guest. While everyone gets along well, Mr. Harris eventually must return home to England, and when Jumbo and Zairee try to sneak aboard Harris's ship, they accidentally land on a slave ship bound for America. Their father, too, ends up in the American slave system, and eventually Jumbo and father find out that their old friend Mr. Harris lives nearby. The pair beg Mr. Harris to buy them away from a cruel master, and to buy Zairee, who was sold to another plantation, as well. Mr. Harris buys them all to reunite the family, but then chooses not to enslave them, instead damning slavery as against God and sending the family home to freedom in Africa.[30]

The story closes with scenes of jubilation, and Mr. Harris' elevation to Christ-like status as Zairee falls to her knees and cries over his kindness.[31] The earliest parts of this story focus on feeling, aiming to incite sympathy with descriptions of such events as Jumbo and Zairee's painful Atlantic passage; but Child clearly shows that this feeling necessarily leads to action: when Mr. Harris looks at his old friends, and feels sympathy for their plight, he must reject slavery.

As the free, white child reader would still be a dependent, the direct action of literally freeing slaves could not, of course, be repeated immediately. Yet the story nonetheless decidedly leads young people to a real change, through such scenes as Child's description of the cruel slave ship captain: "You will ask me if this man was

29. Welter, p. 174

30. It should also be noted that Child was still a supporter of colonization, or returning slaves to Africa, when she wrote this story. Child later reverses her viewpoint, calling for slaves to be released and treated as full citizens in America.

31. Child, p. 159.

an American? One of our own countrymen, who will make it their boast that men are born free and equal. I am sorry to say that he was an American," she writes.[32] The change asked of the child reader, then, is thinking differently about their country and feeling the gap between what it supposedly represents and the reality of its current slave system. As the tale closes with freed slaves, Child shows here how sympathy is the vital impetus for a changed society.

The style of Child's writing here is also noteworthy: although it is couched in a very childlike tone, it is a most biting critique on the hypocrisy of slavery existing in a country founded on ideals of freedom. The words may be simple, but the message is weighty and quite political: how can the "land of the free" so visibly and completely suppress so many human beings' freedom? Here, Child manipulates one of the central tenets of the newly-formed ideal of childhood – innocence, being a "blank slate" – to make a very potent point about American ideology.

Like Child, Follen aims to teach sympathy as a spur to social change in many of her writings, particularly in her clever didactic device of adopting the voice of a child to write faux "letters" to her juvenile magazine. In one such letter, "A Pic Nic at Dedham," from the October 1843 edition of *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine*, Follen assumes the voice of a young boy writing a letter to his mother. The "young boy" writes about his visit to Dedham, a suburb of Boston, where he watched an anniversary celebration for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies nine years earlier. As he listens to the speeches and looks at the banners around him (which he says are printed with slogans like "God never made a tyrant or a slave" and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"), he finds himself questioning his parents' views on abolitionists. "When you and father speak of the fanaticism of the abolitionists, you can't mean this I'm sure," the "boy" writes.[33]

Later, full of abolitionist sympathy, the boy hears of Christian men selling other Christian men and is truly horrified. "I think if the men don't all do something about slavery soon, we boys had better see what we can do, for it is too wicked." Through the boy's growing consciousness of slavery's evils, Follen teaches her young readers sympathy, but even the letter itself – replete with the child's addresses to the adult reader to stop slavery immediately – can be seen as Follen's attempt to change a system though teaching feeling. One especially interesting action is implied because Follen addresses the faux letter to a "mother." Follen thus suggests that sympathetic children readers will turn and teach their parents what they take away from her writing, the perfect performance of true childhood as endowed with a near-angelic

32. Child, p. 155.

33. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, "Pic Nic at Dedham," *The New England Farmer; A Monthly Journal* (Feb. 1859). Accessed via The American Periodicals Series Online.

quantity of innocence which can guide others to greater salvation. As Follen's young boy speaker in this letter says, "the men" haven't done anything about slavery yet, so perhaps the emotional responses to their own children's pleas will move them where the political arguments of other adults did not.

In other such faux letters, Follen makes this connection between feelings and abolitionist action even more immediate, as in one selection from an 1847 edition of her magazine, titled "Letter V: To a Young Friend." Here Follen writes to a fictional young girl called "Alice" about a box of goods sent to sell at an Antislavery Fair she helped organize, and opens the letter with praise for the pretty objects, showing her sense of excitement that they will earn lots of money to support the cause. She then asks: "Who filled up these numerous great boxes with such beautiful things? Was it the great, the powerful, the rich, in the worldly sense of these terms? No, not these alone," she writes, before going on to describe how the toys and trinkets had notes attached saying they were made by young English schoolchildren. She closes this letter by describing the children's small sacrifices so they could save pennies to buy supplies, and asks her children readers "Shall we do so little, when so called strangers do so much?"[34] Such letters are particularly important because they also require American readers to question the verity of their fundamental national mythology by showing England – the supposed tyrant, shrugged off less than 100 years earlier – as a place more dedicated to the cause of freedom, as a place which has already abolished the repression still thriving in the "new" world. Similar to Child's use of a "child" asking whether a slaveholder could claim himself to truly be American, Follen here sharply criticizes the hypocrisy of slavery. The change she shows as resulting from sympathy is simple and direct: sympathetic children can financially support the anti-slavery cause, even in a small way.

Both of Follen's letters show how abolitionist feeling, and intervention, become part of the performance of true womanhood and true childhood. The true child – pure, joyful, "naturally" godly and more closely aware of "enduring moral truths" – will listen to these stories and both feel sympathy for the slave and want to act to change the state of affairs. The true woman – the moral nurturer, whose most vital role is raising her children well – will not only have to feel sympathy over slavery's "lost childhoods," but also intervene when her own children question the evils of slavery, if she intends to be a sound moral teacher. The authors know that adult women readers must validate the child's concerns in order to maintain their performance of true womanhood, of piety and moral-guide mothering, and thus this vexing tension could bring more people to the abolitionist cause.

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34. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen. "Letter V: To a Young Friend" *The Child's Friend and Family Reader* (Feb. 1847). Accessed via The American Periodicals Series Online.

It is also striking that these writers clearly intend to teach monogenesis, or the idea that all humans were created by the same God, and thus endowed with the same natural abilities and subject to the same rights. Slavery's apologists often rested their argument on the theory of polygenesis, which held that the races were created separately – a view that was also held by many anti-slavery activists who still saw blacks as inferior, despite their arguments against the slave system. Follen, for instance, often repeats statements such as "we are all one family" or other such sentiments calling for a unity between races.[35] Child's "Jumbo and Zairee" takes an especially pluralistic view, as Child recognizes difference in cultures between the Africans and the whites, but doesn't see this difference as hierarchical. She praises Jumbo and Zairee's parents and depicts African culture as intelligent and worthy. Hardly a radical statement by modern standards, this view was quite subversive in antebellum America. Many of the same people who called for an end to slavery still displayed a lack of knowledge of African culture, a belief in polygenesis, or a pervasive fear over racially-mixed marriages.[36]

In these cases, DeRosa's argument about children's literature as "safe" space for women to express political ideas seems true, for a woman expressing the same sentiment in such public forms as speeches likely would meet repercussions for declaring such radical beliefs; but she can embed these same ideas freely in a didactic morality tale for children. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, just two years after the publication of "Jumbo and Zairee," Child's tract *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* brought her harsh criticism for voicing the same ideas she wove through the children's tale. The crucial difference was not in the politics, but the platform: what could be written in a kid's story, it appears, could be dangerous in an adult political tract.

4. Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*

While Follen and Child twist morality-tale standards from showing a young protagonist in need of moral reform to instead showcase a system in need of reform, Harriet Wilson's 1859 novel *Our Nig* perhaps best manipulated the reward/punishment trope. Indeed, Wilson's tale begins in the most archetypal way, with a Cinderella-style young lead: a poor, but pretty and sweet girl, who scrubs and cleans and fetches all day long, working under the cruel direction of an evil mother-figure, only to retire to a cold, hard bed at night. But in *Our Nig*, there is no prince, no fairy godmother – no real person,

35. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, Letter V. To a Young Friend," *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine* (Feb 1847). Accessed via The American Periodicals Series Online.

36. Carolyn Karcher, "Introduction: Slavery, Race and Reconstruction," in *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, ed. Carolyn Karcher (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997), 135–152.

nor imagined deity – who saves the overworked, underfed heroine, Frado. Wilson shows Frado receiving constant counsel to "be good" to her mistress, Mrs. Bellmont, and includes many details of Frado starting the day before sunrise or working through a sickness to demonstrate her attempts at obedience and industry. Yet "being good" brings Frado no reward. As such, Wilson both relies on and refutes the morality-tale standard of happy endings for good, obedient children: in the stories in a traditional juvenile magazine, a child protagonist might perform some work or learn to obey a command, but the tales there end in praise. When Wilson's Frado is "good," however, she still receives a scolding, or, more often, a beating.

Although *Our Nig* is a novel, it is mostly autobiographical. Both Wilson and her character Frado were mulatta girls whose parents died young and left them abandoned to indentured servitude in a wealthy white family. Wilson (and her novelized self, the character of Frado) was not technically a slave but rather a servant; her poverty and the entrenched racism of nineteenth-century America effectively rendered her in bondage throughout her childhood. The book's subtitle – *Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North, Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There* – also shows that the story is essentially one of human bondage. As such Wilson, although living in the Northern free states, was just as much "owned," just as much oppressed, as her counterparts in the South, due to her race-based destitution.

According to Harvard literary scholar Henry Louis Gates, in his 1983 re-print of the tale (its first introduction to modern American readers), *Our Nig* is the first novel published by an African-American woman.[37] That alone makes the book remarkable; but the fact that the book appears to have been received as children's literature makes the volume even more interesting – and, it proves again how children's literature could be a vital space for abolitionist women of diverse backgrounds to enter the political debate which was otherwise difficult to enter, and further a cause many wanted to ignore. Eric Gardener, in his study of the original owners of *Our Nig*, finds that nearly all the documented owners were white, middle-class people who lived near Wilson's home in Milford, New Hampshire, and who were under 20 years old when the book was printed in 1859. Gardener admits that his evidence is scant, for he located only 34 copies of the first printing of *Our Nig*, but through his tracing of ownership via signatures, inscriptions and library acquisition records, he concludes that "the book's purchasers either interpreted or deployed *Our Nig* as a book geared toward the moral development of young readers.[38]

37. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. "Introduction," *Our Nig: or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North, Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There* (New York: Vintage, 1983).

38. Eric Gardener, 'This Attempt of Their Sister': Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* from Printer to Readers." *The New England Quarterly* 66.2 (June 1993) 226–246, pp. 227–28.

Yet, while the documented owners may have been white, Wilson says her intended audience is blacks, writing in her preface: "I sincerely appeal to my colored brethren universally for patronage, hoping they will not condemn this attempt of their sister to be erudite, but rally around me a faithful band of supporters."[39] So, where Follen, Child, and white writers of abolitionist children's literature had a sort of dual audience – white children and the adults (most likely, the mothers) reading to them – Wilson's story can be seen, in a way, as having four "audiences" in the white children and parents Gardener documents, as well as the literate black parents and children she had hoped to reach. Beyond Gardener's evidence, the book also can be read as children's literature because nearly all the action takes place when Frado is between six and 18 years old, making the process of a child's growth the focus. To establish her authority as a writer, Wilson also relies on many of the conventions of domestic sentimental literature's reliance on true womanhood's virtues. She continually calls for God's help to showcase her piety, and in her preface she maintains that her writing is not meant to show herself "erudite" but is rather an act of the utmost domesticity: she is attempting to mother by writing the book, for she claims hopes its sales will sustain her child. Certainly, while the perfect performance of "true woman" meant she did not work outside the home, as Wilson needed to, Wilson calls upon other aspects of true womanhood which she can perform – her mothering, her Christianity – to make a bridge between herself and white Americans.

Yet while Wilson does try to establish common ground between herself and the larger traditions of true womanhood and children's literature, she subverts these ideas to make a more effective critique of slavery and inequality. For instance, Wilson uses the ideal of a child as an innocent, a "blank slate," when a severely-beaten Frado cries about her state to James, one of the family members who is kind to her. When she asks "who made me so?" James answers "God," and Frado continues, asking if the same God made him and sweet Aunt Abby as well as the diabolical Mrs. Bellmont. When James answers yes to all, Frado says "Well, then I don't like him." James asks why, and Frado says with heartbreaking simplicity: "Because he made her white and me black. Why didn't he make us *both* white?"[40] While Frado is constantly silenced throughout the book – Mrs. Bellmont even stuffs her mouth to keep the neighbors from hearing her during beatings – as a child, she can speak the truths others cannot.

Here Wilson is also cleverly manipulating the true woman's virtue of piety: an adult woman is supposed to be secure in her knowledge of Christianity, but as

39. Wilson, p. 4.
40. Wilson, pp. 28–29.

a "blank slate" ripe for moral guidance, Frado/Wilson can show confusion. Her rejection of the God known by her white masters is certainly a departure from the traditions of both true womanhood, where Christian piety was central to identity, and also the many religious children's tales, where learning more about God brings a child more happiness and peace. When Frado seeks an answer to better understand her budding spiritually, however, the supposed teacher – James, as the adult – is speechless; there is no moral guide who can lead her from this thicket. "'I don't know; try to go to sleep, and you will feel better in the morning,' was all the reply he could make to her knotty queries. It was a long time before she fell asleep; and a number of days before James felt in a mood to visit and entertain old associates and friends," Wilson writes.[41] Here, she shows the hypocritical gap between Christian ideals and the reality of Christian practice in a slaveholding country; she shows how bondage actually makes both the enslaved and the master suffer a spiritual crisis. Thus, the scene uses and subverts traditions simultaneously, making for a very cunning and potent condemnation of dominant American ideology.

Such scenes, read by a white child, could be seen as trying to teach sympathy in much the same way Follen's and Child's works do. But Wilson, as a mulatta herself, does something her white counterparts do not: she shows the potential for action, however small, for the black child reading the book, a child who is an object without agency in much of the work by white abolitionists. Even while showing how her bondage inhibits the performance of true childhood, Wilson includes moments when Frado shows resistance to the limits of her role. For instance, she has much fun at school, quickly winning friends, for her "jollity was not to be quenched by whipping or scolding."[42] Here, the display of a true child's identity – the expression of joyfulness and play – is a sort of resistance, for Frado tries to reclaim the identity of child denied to her by her masters.

Frado makes other moves to assert her agency as well: when Mrs. Bellmont insists Frado eat off of her already-used dessert plate, Frado has her dog lick it clean first, essentially saying "I'd rather touch what a dog licked than what your mouth touched" to the mistress. And, perhaps most importantly, when she does reach her teenage years, she finally yells "Stop!" before a beating and vows not to do any more work if she is touched again.[43] Follen's and Child's works leave the black children they feature voiceless. But even though Wilson's Frado literally cannot speak throughout the majority of the book, Wilson allows her to regain

41. Wilson, p. 29.
42. Wilson, p. 22.
43. Wilson, pp. 22, 39, 58

this often-suppressed voice by writing the story from Frado's point of view. For the young black reader, then, Wilson teaches that they can resist, that they should seek empowerment – and that it is the system that is not "good," not them.

5. Conclusions: A Subtle Power

In a culture where women's passivity and submissiveness were regarded as both a natural inclination and a vital pillar upholding American civilization, abolitionist children's literature opened a space for women to express a political argument without jeopardizing their identity as "true women." Certainly, there were American women fighting for abolition at this time who actively worked to break down limiting boundaries of this gender ideal: Sojourner Truth, baring her muscled arms and proclaiming her physical prowess while offering her famous "Ain't I a Woman" speech in 1851, or Elizabeth Cady Stanton's regular mix of women's equality throughout her decades of abolitionist work, offer just two examples.

And yet, as the instance of Lydia Maria Child's near-ruin following her political tract *An Appeal* so vividly shows, breaking from the standard performance of womanhood could be perilous. Child's reception was far from unique: Sarah Jane Clarke Lippincott lost her position as a *Godey's Lady's Book* editor once she began publishing newspaper articles in abolitionist newspapers, and sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimke often faced violence when speaking at abolitionist rallies.[44] Once relinquished, the mantle of true womanhood was hard to reclaim, and, impressive though women like Truth and Stanton might have been, they were still outliers.

But I do not mean to suggest that writers who did express their abolitionist sentiments through a performance of true womanhood chose this venue for fear of ostracism alone. On the contrary, with her responsibility as the moral guide for a whole nation, as the pedagogue to bring up a new generation of Americans as good, Christian citizens, there was a power in performing the identity of true womanhood, as well as power in the figure of the child they included in their works, as a newly-recognized identity. Relying on the social importance of each of these identities gave the authors power to change feelings, and through that, move America to end its most damning institution.

To be sure, the bulk of abolitionist children's literature may not have the bold drama of those abolitionist works which loom largest in the contemporary American imagination, such as Truth's speech, Abraham Lincoln's proclamations, John Brown's impassioned courtroom defense of his Harpers Ferry raid, or Frederick Douglass's narrative. As an expression which combined two of women's most cultu-

44. DeRosa, *Into the Mouths of Babes*, p. xv.

rally affirmed roles – the mother who teaches her child and the pious guide for her household – it gave her a platform to spread a message of revolution from a stance which upheld the most traditional of beliefs. But traditional positions certainly did not preclude revolutionary politics, for Wilson, Child and Follen were proclaiming racial equality in the abolitionist message they delivered inside children's magazines nearly 20 years before Lincoln's Emancipation proclamation.[45]

Beyond Wilson's book, abolitionist children's literature is a fragmented body of work, pieced together from poems, letters and short stories which usually appeared in magazines alongside such innocuous fare as stories counseling children to play nicely with their siblings or Sunday School songs. Perhaps it is a body of work which speaks more subtly; yet, taken together, it comprises a persistent, persuasive call to change in the course of America's move to better meet the ideals on which it was founded.

45. In addition to the stories and poems mentioned above, see, for example, Follen's full cycle of "Letter to a Young Friend" pieces published concurrently with the life of *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine* (1853–1848), where many times, enslaved people (as well as other degraded races, such as Native Americans) are depicted as equal to whites, or stories such as "The Little Greek Girl" (1827) or "The St. Domingo Orphans" (1830) from Child's *Juvenile Miscellany*, where children of different races are shown to have the same capacity for feeling and thought.

Előd Pál Csirmaz

"Sailing" to "Byzantium"

A Voyage into Symbolism

While William Butler Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" is often described as "less complex" than "Byzantium," the differences between the two poems appear to have rarely been considered on levels other than meaning or referents. This essay aims to unearth a basic textual difference which may account for the above judgement with the help of a framework rooted in structuralism and influenced by the theories of Alexander A. Potebnja. The analyses of the two poems allow the conclusion that while "Byzantium" can be regarded as a symbolic text, "Sailing to Byzantium" approximates that mode of writing without being entirely controlled by it.

Introduction

To one scanning a selection of the overwhelming amount of scholarly work prompted specifically by the two Byzantium poems of William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium," it might appear that, faced with two texts of multiple interpretations, analyses often turn to sources outside the poems in order to underpin a reading or a paraphrase. Such sources might include biographemes from Yeats's life, other writings of Yeats (in an attempt to regard Yeats's quasi-mythology as a largely unified system), or historical accounts of Byzantium and Ireland. T. R. Henn, in his 1965 book, went as far as suggesting that "Byzantium" deals with the poet's "real or imagined loss of sexual power."[1] In like manner, differences between the two poems, if they are addressed at all, are treated as differences in meaning, reference or degree.

It is on the level of theme that Richard J. Finneran captures the main dissimilarity between the texts. According to him, "Sailing to Byzantium" explicates the reasons for the necessity of Art, while "Byzantium" considers how a work of art is

1. T. R. Henn, "Byzantium," in *The Lonely Tower: Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats* (London: Methuen, 1965), 220–237, p. 236. See also Brenda S. Webster, "A Psychoanalytic Study: 'Sailing to Byzantium,'" in *Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Palo Alto, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1973); reprinted in *Literary Theories in Praxis*, ed. Shirley F. Staton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 307–312.

created.[2] Marjorie Perloff, who bases her analyses on formal considerations (rhyme pattern), also places the difference on the level of meaning, suggesting that "Sailing to Byzantium" expresses tensions, as opposed to "Byzantium," which is characterized by reconciliation.[3] F. A. C. Wilson, capturing the difference on the level of symbols, sees the central element, Byzantium, as referring to the realm of intellect and spirit in "Sailing to Byzantium," while the same word, in "Byzantium," symbolizes life after death.[4] Just as the nature of the underlying troubling experience and the interpretation of symbols in these two poems remain unclear, so it remains uncertain to what "Byzantium" may actually refer in the texts. Finneran enters into polemics with Frederick L. Gwynn, who argues that the city in "Sailing to Byzantium" is taken from its real-world counterpart in the early sixth century (which, as he suggests, might correspond to Yeats's Phase 15), while the Byzantium in "Byzantium" is modelled on the city as it stood around 1000 (which may correspond to Phase 28).[5] By contrast, Finneran, considering other sources, suggests that in both poems the model of the city was Byzantium in the 900s.[6]

According to a cursory glance at a portion of the analyses of the Byzantium poems, such are the differences which appear to have been considered most often – apart from passing remarks on the general nature of texts. These remarks treat "Byzantium" solely as a sequel to, or even a development over, the previous poem, "Sailing to Byzantium." G. S. Fraser remarks that "Sailing to Byzantium" is "rather abstract" compared to "Byzantium";[7] and while T. R. Henn adds, in parentheses, that "Byzantium" "wears less well than the other [poem]," he also suggests that "in 'Byzantium' the system of tensions is more complex, the overtones more significant."[8] John Unterecker simply states of "Sailing to Byzantium" that it is "clear enough,"[9] while A. G. Stock claims that it "explains itself."[10] Finneran, it

2. Richard J. Finneran, introduction to *William Butler Yeats: The Byzantium Poems*, ed. Richard J. Finneran, The Merrill Literary Casebook Series (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1970), 1–10, p. 6.

3. Marjorie Perloff, "The Rhyme Structure of the Byzantium Poems," in *Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats* (New York: Humanities Press; The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), 122–131, 141–143; reprinted in *Literary Theories in Praxis*, 21–32, p. 21.

4. F. A. C. Wilson, *W. B. Yeats and Tradition* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1958), p. 231.

5. Frederick L. Gwynn, "Yeats's Byzantium and its Sources," *Philological Quarterly* XXXII (January 1953) 9–21, pp. 10–11.

6. Finneran, pp. 3–5.

7. G. S. Fraser, "Yeats's Byzantium," *Critical Quarterly* II (Autumn 1960) 253–261, p. 256.

8. Henn, pp. 236, 228.

9. John Unterecker, *A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats* (New York: Noonday Press, 1959), p. 171.

seems, agrees to a certain degree, admitting himself that "it is clearly a simpler poem than its companion-piece."[11] Anthony L. Johnson also deems "Byzantium" to be more complicated, but not at all to its advantage: he suggests of "Byzantium" that "its obdurate resistance to glossing has been erected by some critics into a patent of aesthetic merit."[12]

I do not think, however, that such remarks (often bordering on value judgments) are to be done away with. Instead, they should be treated as genuine responses from educated readers, and textual evidence should be searched for to account for their apparent congruence.

In this essay, I will analyse both Byzantium poems. The aim of my analyses is to point out an underlying, basic difference between the two texts, which may also account for why "Sailing to Byzantium" strikes most readers as simpler or less complex than "Byzantium." This difference, however, shall not be sought on the levels of interpretation or referentiality, but on the textual level, or, one might say, in the structural set-up of the poems. I will argue that while "Sailing to Byzantium" does converge toward symbolism, "Byzantium" is a genuinely symbolic poem, especially if read *against* the previous text. I am not, however, suggesting that "Byzantium" is a development over the previous poem, especially as the differences between the two texts point in various directions.

In my analyses I will primarily adopt an approach based on the reception of the poems by a present-day reader. I will, in other words, limit references to the biographical Author, either his life, other writings, or knowledge, or a (re)constructed compositional process.[13] Instead, I attempt to focus on the texts themselves (their final versions), and seek intra- and inter-textual features, similarities and dissimilarities. The relations to be pointed out may, I hope, further our understanding of the workings of the two poems and their continuingly strong effect on us as readers.

The concepts and strategies I will utilize in my readings are derived partly from Alexander A. Potebnja's theory of literature and partly from other structuralist approaches. For easier reference, I have coined the phrase "representational framework"

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10. A. G. Stock, *W. B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 202.

11. Finneran, p. 7.

12. Anthony L. Johnson, "Sign, Structure, and Self-Reference in W. B. Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium'," *Annali della Scuola normale superiore di Pisa, Classe di lettere e filosofia* 8 (1978) 213–247; reprinted in *Literary Theories in Praxis*, 135–154, p. 135.

13. Yeats's manuscripts have been considered in A. Norman Jeffares, "The Byzantine Poems of W. B. Yeats," *The Review of English Studies* 22.85 (January 1946) 44–52; a meticulous analysis has been provided by Curtis Bradford, "Yeats's Byzantium Poems: A Study of Their Development," *PMLA* 75.1 (March 1960) 110–125.

to refer to this approach. Scrutinizing it further in application has, in fact, been an indirect aim of the following analyses. The framework focuses both on larger structures or *images* and on their building blocks, on elements on the level of words. This latter facet, which echoes close reading, is anticipated by David I. Masson, who, in the first half of his treatise, considered repeated words and their contexts in "Byzantium" in a way reminiscent of Claude Lévi-Strauss's analyses of myths based on mythemes.[14] Johnson's structuralist analysis is also instructive in this respect.

Of image-based reading, precisely what I set out to provide of the two poems, William Empson declares: "I find here a breath-taking assumption that language can never be used to tell a story; that the only 'literal' meaning it can have is the pictures it makes in your head."[15] Empson's intention was to criticize F. A. C. Wilson's approach to Yeats's poetry in *W. B. Yeats and Tradition*, claiming that Wilson disregarded literal meaning in favour of a symbolic one. And yet I think that – albeit unintentionally – Empson here gave a key to an understanding of the workings of the Byzantium poems. I agree with Caroline Roberts, who sees Yeats's language as one that demonstrates that "all language is irreducibly figural."[16] Let me start my analyses with a brief introduction of the framework I will attempt to utilize.

The Representational Framework[17]

This framework, generally speaking, postulates that the extra-textual author gains representation in the form of an intra-textual author or the lyrical "I," and that the original experience of the extra-textual author gains representation in the text in a visual model centred around subjects, or, as I shall refer to them, exhibits. Such a segregation of extra-textual and intra-textual layers – along with certain categories I shall introduce – may strike one as outmoded from a post-structuralist point of view. However, these concepts and categories prove to be flexible enough to incorporate suggestions that have been used to criticize structuralist approaches to literature.

Parts of the framework have been influenced by the theory of Alexander A. Potebnja on the threefold structure of literary works, which has been presented and

14. David I. Masson, "Word and Sound in Yeats' 'Byzantium,' " *ELH* 20.2 (June 1953) 136–160.

15. William Empson, "Mr. Wilson on the Byzantium Poems," *A Review of English Literature* I (July 1960) 51–56, pp. 53–54.

16. Caroline Roberts, "Images 'Fresh Images Beget': Yeats, De Man, and Deconstruction," in *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies* XVI, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 84–99, p. 85.

17. The following concepts were influenced by Éva Babits's views and theories presented during discussions between 1997 and 2001.

meticulously analysed in a monograph by John Fizer.[18] This framework postulates the existence of three layers both in the process of composition and in that of reception of a work of art; the processes are regarded symmetrical.

Layer III is, on the first level of approximation, situated outside the work. In the compositional process, it is the original experience, problem, etc. experienced by the author which becomes represented – according to this model – in the work of art. In reception, layer III is the interpretation created by a reader. Generally, it is supposed that the original experience of the biographical author is irrecoverable from the text and that interpretation differs among readers. *Layer I* is the textual level. It is the message transmitted during the artistic communication, but it can also be considered to contain connotations and associative elements generally available to members of the interpretive community in which the artistic discourse is taking place. And, finally, *layer II* is defined as the structures generated by the text in the reader during the act of reading. Theoretically, this layer is supposed to contain all possible structures; I suggest that it is during interpretation (generation of layer III) that readers emphasize certain structures in line with their interpretation, and suppress others. This suggestion could be complemented by the idea that the generation of layer III might be optional at least in the sense of formulating a conscious and verbalized (thus necessarily abstracted) interpretation of a work of art. Layer II, therefore, has a dual nature. On the one hand, strictly speaking, it exists only in the reader and is a result of reading; on the other, during its generation, in theory, no inter-reader differences have yet been introduced. It is supposed, in other words, that layer II is identical across readers and that it contains the same structures in both the reception and composition processes.

In Potebnja's theory, a similar set of three layers can be found: the external form (cf. layer I), the internal form (layer II) and signification, content or idea (layer III).[19] His views agree with mine in suggesting that signification "changes markedly in every new perception";[20] in that the internal form tends to expire, reducing the structure of literary works "to two constituents – external form and signification – and its potential polysemy to a referential monosemy"; and in that one of the main

18. John Fizer, *Alexander A. Potebnja's Psycholinguistic Theory of Literature: A Metacritical Inquiry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute–Harvard University Press, 1988).

19. Fizer, pp. 23, 37.

20. Alexander A. Potebnja, *Из записок по теории словесности [Notes on the Theory of Verbality]* (Kharkiv: Izd. M. F. Potebni, 1905), Slavic Printings and Reprints, 128 (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), p. 101; quoted in Fizer, p. 23.

differences between poetic and non-poetic (scientific, in the extreme) texts is that the latter lack internal form.[21]

Despite these similarities, there are also a number of differences between my framework and Potebnja's theory. Most importantly, Potebnja appears to have embedded the above-cited ideas in an inherently Romantic and 19th-century view of language, suggesting, for example, that language mirrors and originates from perception.[22] Moreover, in his view, the poetic work contains its internal form, which, like the external one, is internalized during the act of reading.[23] In opposition to this view, I hold that it is only the external form (layer I) that is transmitted and internalized in the strict sense. The linguistically coded nature of layer II in Potebnja's theory possibly makes more sense if one considers his suggestion that the word has a threefold structure identical to that of literary texts[24] – a notion entirely missing from the framework I am presenting.

Similarly to Potebnja, I regard as one of the central structural building blocks of layer II the *image*. In the present framework, it functions as a sample structure with which an attempt is made to analyse and describe structures in layer II. For Potebnja, however,

> while it was relatively simple to define the internal form of the word, inasmuch as Potebnja equated it with its etymon, the image of the work of poetic art eluded an easy definition. His theory, in spite of the central importance of internal form, gave no definition of the image.[25]

My definition of the image is relatively simple and flexible. It is a set of related textual elements which describe – that is, create a model which can be visualized – the element at the centre of the image, the *exhibit*. The image and its exhibit are said to be *motivated* by elements related to them. The elements that I consider capable of motivating images are those which are able to trigger immediate (usually visual) associations. I shall use *concreteness* in the sense that a concrete element triggers more associations than an *abstract* or conceptual one. These properties do not imply a difference of character; rather, they represent a one-dimensional graded cate-

21. Fizer, pp. 27 (see also 33), 36.

22. These ideas pervade his writings: *Мысль и язык [Thought and Language]*, *Из записок по теории словесности [Notes on the Theory of Verbality]*, and *Из лекций по теории словесности [Lectures on the Theory of Verbality]*, trans. to Hungarian G. S. Horváth, K. Szitár, K. Horváth, A. Molnár, K. H. Végh, in *Poétika és nyelvelmélet [Poetics and Language Theory]*, ed. Árpád Kovács (Budapest: Argumentum, 2002), 5–250.

23. Fizer, p. 47.

24. Fizer, passim, see especially p. 37.

25. Fizer, pp. 40–41.

gorization. Concreteness, moreover, is essentially the same as the level of abstraction of names of objects (categories) as defined in cognitive science, and as used, among others, by Eleanor Rosch.[26] According to her definitions, when two object names (categories) are related to each other via class inclusion, it is easy to determine their relative concreteness, as greater inclusiveness means a higher level of abstraction. To take an example, *swallow* is more concrete and less abstract than *bird*, as the latter contains the category *swallow*, and the subordinate category is not exhaustive of *bird*, the super-ordinate one. This implies that *swallow* has a more specific size, outline and plumage than a generalized *bird*, even if prototypicality is taken into account. *Swallow* is also associated with *summer*, based on the idiom, which contributes further to the associations this element can trigger. In a similar fashion, short noun phrases (e.g. *kitchen table*, *stone table*) are more concrete than what they specify (*table*).

When, however, none of the elements (categories) are included in the other, an indirect comparison has to be made. Rosch introduces the notion of *basic objects* (e.g. *table*) which are the most inclusive categories whose members still share a large number of attributes. She also suggests that most basic objects are at the same level of abstraction.[27] I consider basic objects the most abstract elements that can motivate images, as super-ordinate categories (e.g. *furniture*), that is, concepts, are usually not sufficiently able to be visualized. In fact, Rosch suggests that basic objects are the most inclusive categories which can have a mental image.[28] With basic objects defined, it is possible to compare the concreteness of two unrelated elements by comparing their perceived distance from, that is, their inclusiveness relative to, their respective basic objects.

Regarding grammatical categories, I have found that elements motivating images are most often nouns or short noun phrases. However, certain verbs (consider *fighting* or *plucking*, for example) or other content words may also be visual enough to be included in this class.[29]

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26. Eleanor Rosch, "Principles of Categorization" (1978), in *Concepts: Core Readings*, ed. Eric Margolis and Stephen Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 189–206.

27. Rosch, pp. 192, 191.

28. Rosch, p. 195.

29. Rosch herself extended the notion of basic objects to events. Moreover, concreteness and abstractness may also be related to the amount of information a given element conveys. In this respect, *swallow* is more concrete than *bird* because it selects a more limited set of entities. In order to restrict the number of entities an element refers to, it needs to provide more information regarding the entities themselves, and a greater amount of information enriches an image to a greater degree.

Analysing the distribution of these elements has proved fruitful partly because they can be regarded as unaltered during their translation from layer I to layer II in the perception process. In this respect, these elements behave like minimal, atomic building blocks, and based on this property, I also refer to them as *minemes*. It can also be suggested that the set of elements associated with a mineme is more or less fixed in a given interpretive community, while, at the same time, such associations will, naturally, be altered by the context, by other minemes in the same image.

This framework goes further, however, in forcing a prescribed structural set-up on layer II. It postulates that images themselves are ordered hierarchically, allowing images to be part of, or to motivate, larger images than minemes do. Images at the centres of these hierarchies are *basic images*. Sometimes it is possible to select one basic image for a whole work, the global basic image, the exhibit of which is the *global exhibit* of the text.[30]

It is also worth noting that while Potebnja himself did not define the image, Fizer attempted to abstract a definition from his arguments. According to him, Potebnja regarded the construction of images as happening either step by step, combining representations in words, or suddenly, at certain points in the text, where the internal form of a word dominates those around it.[31] My definition of the image appears to be a combination of these two modes inasmuch as every image is postulated to have a centre, while it is enriched by a series of other elements at the same time.

I define the *theme* of a work of art as its experience or interpretation abstracted to a level which is common to all interpretations and the experience. (In this framework it is supposed that it is possible to do so, based on the similarity of readers in an interpretive community.) *Metathesis* refers to the relationship between the represented theme / experience / interpretation in layer III and the representing layers II and I. In other words, it relates the experience centred around the theme to the representation centred around the global exhibit of a work. If there is no metathesis, that is, if layer III is rendered directly into layer I, and layer II is missing, then the text is considered to be non-artistic.

The *lyrical "I"* is the intra-textual addresser of the message in the artistic communication. I termed the relationship between the author and its representation "the lyrical 'I' *alienation*" mainly because I generally suppose them to be distinct and connected by nothing else than the representational relationship. I regard metathesis and alienation as parallel and hardly separable processes, as one describes rendering the object, the other the subject of an experience into the object and the

30. Despite certain differences, Potebnja's "main image" might be related to what I mean by basic images. See Fizer, p. 45.

31. Fizer, p. 48.

subject of a representation. Thus, as far as the scope of the present framework reaches, alienation, similarly to metathesis, is required for artistic texts. This requirement echoes the notion of the death of the author as a necessary step (technique) in writing. T. S. Eliot and Mark Schorer, among others, refer to the alienation of the experience from the original experiencer, the author, as essential in artistic creation.[32]

Images, however, are not the only tools with which the distribution of minemes in layer II can be investigated. Elements can be divided into two categories according to the roles they play in figures as similes, metaphors and symbols.

The descriptive relationship between two elements in a simile or a metaphor is asymmetrical. While both the described and the describer elements (or the tenor and the vehicle in the case of metaphors) are evoked, it is the implicit goal of these figures to provide further information about the described using the describer. While it does happen that the describers build up a hidden textual layer inside the work, or that the described and the describer are reversed, these techniques are notable especially because they deviate from the norm. The describer is thus usually secondary to the described and is referred to only in the context of the latter, while it is the described that the focus falls on and is understood as the one that needs to be placed alongside other elements in the text. Take, as an example, the following sentence: "He winced at the sight of the laundry as his hand was already as dry as the back of a camel after a week's journey in the Sahara." In this very basic case of an explicit simile, it is immediately understood that the focus falls on the *hand*, and that while a vivid image of the desert might be evoked, it is not to be aligned with *laundry*, *wincing* and *hand*. In other words, all minemes in the describer are removed from the sphere of the described, and they are hardly ever thought of as being in a physical connection with them. Referring to the imaginable physical environment of an element as its *reality*, this means that the describer is generally absent from the reality of the described, and that the described is almost always considered to belong to the reality of its larger textual context or to that of the text itself.

Taking this statement to the extreme, by investigating various figures in a text it may be possible to determine which elements create its reality, and which are absent from it; in other words, which minemes function more as describeds and which more as describers. Following Éva Babits's terminology, I will refer to the class of describeds as *view* or *layer A*, and to the class of describers as *vision* or *layer B*.

32. See T. S. Eliot "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), in *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. D. Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), 71–77; and Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery," in *The World We Imagine* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), 3–23.

As I attempted to show in my paper titled "Incorporation and Dissociation: Changes in the A/B Structure between Realism and Modernism,"[33] the figure of the symbol can be analysed as a describer element originally belonging to layer B but moving to layer A to take the place of an absent described. This proposed analysis is not without parallels. It is, among others, closely related to Roman Ingarden's remarks on symbolization:

> It is part of the essence of the symbolizing function that (1) what is symbolized and that which symbolizes it belong to *different* worlds . . . (2) what is symbolized is in fact only 'symbolized' and *cannot* attain self-presentation. As something symbolized, it is, according to its essence *directly* inaccessible, it is that which does not show itself.[34]

In the same paper, I also argued that myths essentially have a similar internal structure, which suggestion, in turn, can be related to the observations on the nature of myths by S. A. Tokarev and Y. M. Meletinsky, who argue that symbolism is the most important feature of myths, which manifests itself in the unclear distinction between subject and object, between object and sign. They also state that concrete objects, without losing their tangibility, may become signs of other objects or phenomena, that is, they may replace or represent them symbolically.[35] These two propositions will, in fact, make it possible to assess the symbolic nature of the texts to be scrutinized.

"Sailing to Byzantium"

"Sailing to Byzantium" was written in 1926–1927 and first appeared in *October Blast* in 1927 and later as the opening poem in Yeats's volume of poetry titled *The Tower* in 1928. As each stanza of the poem can be read as a self-contained image or pair of images, let me start studying the text by considering its stanzas one by one.

The minemes found in the second sentence of the first stanza – which spans almost the whole portion – motivate an image describing a series of habitats bursting with life (see, for example, *young*, *birds*, *salmon*, *mackerel*, *summer*) – and temporality, as added by the more conceptual phrases in lines 3 ("Those dying gen-

33. In *Első Század* 2006/2: 81–102.

34. Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature*, trans. George G. Grabowicz (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 299–300.

35. These notions are taken from S. A. Tokarev and Y. M. Meletinsky, "Mitológia," in *Mitológiai enciklopédia*, ed. S. A. Tokarev et al., trans. György Bárány et al. (Budapest: Gondolat, 1988), 1:11–21, p. 13.

erations") and 6 ("Whatever is begotten, born, and dies").[36] With this image is contrasted the mineme *old men*, which appears to be aligned with the "monuments of unaging intellect" (8). These, in turn, are described as being in opposition to the life-image built up during the course of the stanza. This dualistic arrangement of elements will be perceivable throughout the poem, with nearly all minemes clearly belonging to the *life* or the *monument* (art) side of the world-model the poem appears to suggest.

The exhibit of this stanza may be *young*, as it appears in the first line, as it is this mineme that in itself carries the notion of life and reproduction which all other, connected elements point to; and which the mineme *old men* is contrasted with. The use of "fish, flesh, or fowl" in line 5 is worth a closer perusal, especially in the light of this suggestion. It is not only a list of elements easily merging with *birds*, *salmon* or *mackerel*, but which also span a *whole* in the sense of "all of a type of thing," as the negative of this list, "it is neither fish, flesh, nor fowl" means "a food fit for no class of people."[37]

The second stanza does not offer itself easily to an image-based reading. There are few words or phrases that are undoubtedly analyzable as minemes (*aged man*, *tattered coat*, *stick*, *hands*, *tatter*, *dress*, *monument*, to list the ones which, in my view, are more capable of visualization), and most of these elements describe the *aged man* employing a metaphor that spans the first two lines ("An aged man is but a paltry thing, / A tattered coat upon a stick"), and which is also enriched by the introduction of the *soul* and its *mortal dress*. This latter element, through the repetition of the notion of *tatter* (11–12), is linked to the element the metaphor described, the *aged man*. This reading implies that the element most motivated by this scarecrow-image is the *aged man*, which, thus, serves as the exhibit of this portion of the poem. The second half of the stanza, however, contains almost no elements easily capable of visualization. The fact that it is at this point that the first reference to the lyrical "I" ("And therefore I have sailed the seas" [15]) is found will be of special importance when analysing the overall structure of the poem.

The dualism of the first stanza continues in this one as well. The set of minemes consisting of a song-less *aged man*, *tattered coat*, *stick* and *mortal dress* is contrasted with *singing*, for "An aged man is but a paltry thing . . . unless / Soul clap its hands and sing" (9–12). *Singing*, in turn, is linked to the *monuments* already introduced at the end of the previous section: "Nor is there singing school but studying /

36. References to the poems are to W. B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium," in *Yeats's Poems*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (London: Macmillan–Papermac, 1989), 301–302, 363–364, respectively. All parenthesized references are by line numbers.

37. E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1898; Bartleby.com, 2000), s.v. "fish3" <http://www.bartleby.com/81/6492.html>.

Monuments of its own magnificence" (14–15). With the ending, it becomes apparent that such monuments are to be found in Byzantium.

The dualistic distribution of minemes also characterizes the third stanza, where the *sages*, aligned with *gold*, *mosaic*, *wall*, *fire*, *gyre*, *perne*[38] and the concepts *artifice* and *eternity* are set in opposition to the *heart* of the lyrical "I," linked to mortality, to a *dying animal* (21–22). The elements motivating an image of an eternal artwork, the mosaic, are introduced by a rhetoric figure, a simile, as the "sages [are] standing in God's holy fire / *As* in the gold mosaic of a wall" (17–18, my emphasis). Because of this fact, and in line with the definition of layers A and B, the mosaic and the elements related to it will reside in layer B.

One finds the same set-up in the last stanza, where the image of the golden handiwork is introduced as "a form *as* Grecian goldsmiths make" (27, my emphasis) with the help of a simile continuing for three lines. This image is enriched further by a reference in the last three lines of the poem probably to an automaton of Byzantine Emperor Theophilos Ikonomachos. This automaton consisted of artificial birds on a tree, emitting various sounds, all of gilded bronze;[39] which are thus "of hammered gold" and are "set upon a golden bough to sing" (28, 30).

Determining the exhibit of the previous stanza, the third might be problematic, as this section is the one which yields least to a reading based on minemes. Once

38. *Gyre* and *perne* may only be partially decipherable for a reader less familiar with Yeats's personal mythology and terminology, and thus, strictly speaking, any reading beyond the literal meaning of *gyre* should be excluded from an analysis which attempts to disregard information related to the biographical author. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the editors of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* felt it necessary to explicate the phrase in question in a footnote, attributing to it the meaning *to "whirl round in a spiral motion"* based on a reading of *perne* (pirn) as *bobbin*. This motion is then connected to the all-encompassing force of fate and history in Yeats's system (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 7th ed., ed. M. H. Abrams et al. [New York, London: W. W. Norton, 2000], 2:2110).

39. Liudprand reported on this automaton when sent on a mission to Constantinople in 949. See Liutprandus Cremonensis, *Antapodosis*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1854), vol. 136, column 0895. I thank Anna Tüskés for her kind help in locating this source. Additionally, a long list of possible sources has been compiled for the artificial bird imagery in the two Byzantium poems based on various considerations. Jeffares, who was advised by Mrs. Yeats on her husband's readings, ultimately decides that the exact source cannot be identified. Thomas L. Dume, in his "Yeats' Golden Tree and Birds in the Byzantium Poems" (*Modern Language Notes* 67.6 [June 1952] 404–407), lists a number of books Yeats probably read; the list is lengthened by Gwynn's account of possible analogues in other works (see especially pp. 13–18). Perhaps one of the most intriguing suggestions is made by Ernest Schanzer, who, in an essay titled " 'Sailing to Byzantium,' Keats, and Andersen" (*English Studies* XLI [December 1960] 376–380), links the image to Andersen's tale "The Emperor's Nightingale."

again, this characteristic coincides with a prominent textual presence of the lyrical "I." Still, as most minemes motivate the image centred around the *sages* (consider *fire*, *gold*, *mosaic*, *wall*), this may be the exhibit searched for.

Within stanza four, determining the exhibit is an easier task, as the text culminates in the description of the automaton, of which the most important part is what the lyrical "I" strives to become, an artificial, gilded bronze bird. As this concrete image flows naturally from and specifies the previous, more general "form as Grecian goldsmiths make" (27), I regard *bird* as the exhibit. It has an inverse relation with the lyrical "I," as with the desired transition to the eternal state direct references to the lyrical "I" gradually disappear from the text, as if it were dissolved in the anonymity of eternity. The last reference, a personal pronoun, is to "*my* bodily form" (26).

The temporal dimension of the poem, as shown by the exhibits of the stanzas, spans almost a human lifetime. From the *young* of the first stanza, the description moves to the *aged man*, culminating at the *sages* of stanza three, who are already situated half in the natural, half in the eternal world. By the beginning of the fourth, the status of being "out of nature" is already reached by – ironically and in a circular manner – the exhibit *bird*, an originally natural element.

As an aside, let me point out that the life cycle as presented in this poem might be related to a whole cycle in Yeats's system of Lunar Phases "ending" in complete objectivity, in, perhaps, the sages, monuments and Byzantium. This would imply that the poem is not passively "stuck" in Byzantium as Phase 15, as Frederick L. Gwynn suggests, but provides a dynamic model of this facet of Yeats's system.

From the temporal perspective, the appearance of the lyrical "I" in the second stanza has a particular significance, as it defines the lyrical "I" as similar to the *aged man* the stanza in question describes. This placement of the lyrical "I" is further supported by the slightly distanced depiction of the country of the young with which the poem begins. Moreover, in earlier drafts of the text, this placement was even more apparent. In the composition process of "Sailing to Byzantium," as reconstructed by Curtis Bradford, the successive drafts show not only an eradication of specifically Irish allusions and the abandonment of the "poet of the Middle Ages" that Bradford sees as a model for the lyrical "I," but also a gradual obliteration of direct references to the lyrical "I." A first version of a portion that made it to the published poem contains such a large number of such direct references as to make it clear that the poem evolved from a text with a highly personal tone:

> As in God's love will refuse my prayer
> When prostrate on the marble step I fall
> And cry aloud – "I sicken with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal

Cannot endure my life – O gather me
Into the artifice of eternity."[40]

Determining the global exhibit of "Sailing to Byzantium" is hindered by the fact that the stanzas present themselves as self-contained, separate images; and almost none of their exhibits is motivated by the other images which could elevate a local exhibit to the global level. There are, however, two related elements which reappear, in one form or another, in most images: *bird* and *song*. While strictly speaking *bird* appears only in the first and in the last stanzas via the reference to the Byzantine machinery, the element of *song*, if the verbal form is regarded as an equivalent, does appear in each image. Based on this fact, I regard the *bird–song* complex as the global exhibit of the poem, the elements placed at the centre of layer II. Furthermore, these are the two elements that do not conform to the dual arrangement of minemes. In the first stanza, both *bird* and *song* are aligned with the ageing, natural world (see "birds in the trees / – Those dying generations – at their song" [2–3]), while as early as in the second stanza *singing* is presented as something that lifts the mortal *old man* out of its earthly existence: "An aged man is but a paltry thing . . . unless / Soul clap its hands and *sing"* (9–11, my emphasis). In the fourth stanza, the metal *bird* is precisely what the lyrical "I" strives to become in order to be preserved outside nature. In other words, the *bird–song* complex, the global exhibit, bridges the two realms, the mortal, natural world and the eternal world of art.

Although analyses do not agree on the meanings and referents of specific elements, and on the existence and nature of a more general "idea" behind contrasting art with nature and mortality – that is, the ephemeral with the eternal – they all seem to agree that this dichotomy is a central theme in the poem, as shown also by the dual arrangement of minemes. In some respect, the same underlying theme appears to be elaborated in John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," but, as William Empson points out, Yeats's poem may contain a pinch of self-mockery as the lyrical "I" strives to become a "clockwork dickey-bird . . . scolding like Donald Duck."[41]

Richard J. Finneran interprets the last four lines in a similar way, suggesting that to sing "to keep a drowsy Emperor awake" and "to lords and ladies of Byzantium" (29, 31) demeans the artificial bird and its desired eternal state in Art. Moreover, it would sing of mutability, of "what is past, or passing, or to come" (32), hence we are led back to ephemeral nature in a complete cycle.[42]

Incidentally, this reinterpretation of *bird* more as a referential, even natural thing as opposed to a kind of an emblem – which state it reached in the Byzantine

40. Bradford, p. 113. I have omitted phrases deleted in the manuscript.
41. Empson, p. 55.
42. Finneran, pp. 6–7.

setting – may provide a miniature model of Paul de Man's view on the progress of Yeats's oeuvre as first moving from natural imagery to symbols/emblems; but then "Yeats soon wearies of a purely emblematic style, dismisses it as allegory or mere 'embroideries' and returns, after 1900, to what seems to be a more natural kind of image."[43]

In summary, the poem does not appear to be image-driven in the sense that it contains passages which resist a mineme and image-based reading, and the minemes themselves appear to be more abstract. It will be of special importance that, according to the separation of minemes between layers A and B, the description of Byzantium resides in its entirety in layer B.

Sailing to "Byzantium"

The cyclical structure of "Sailing to Byzantium" outlined above may be behind the most often cited reactions to the poem. Yeats appears to have received this criticism on "Sailing to Byzantium" from his friend T. Sturge Moore, which, ultimately, appears to have led to the writing of "Byzantium." Moore wrote: "['Sailing to Byzantium'] lets me down in the fourth [stanza], as such a goldsmith's bird is as much nature as a man's body."[44] Indeed, the element *bird*, as it bridges the natural and the eternal realms, is partly in nature. Moore's criticism, therefore – contrary to a widespread suggestion – might not have been seen by Yeats as an observation that invalidated the structure of "Sailing to Byzantium." It might have merely meant, as Yeats himself wrote to Moore, that "the idea needed exposition."[45] Finneran, along similar lines, suggests that "Moore had explicated the main idea of 'Sailing to Byzantium' rather precisely – while thinking that the poem was attempting to say something else."[46]

"Byzantium," written in 1930, does reiterate many of the elements of "Sailing to Byzantium"; moreover, its internal structure shares some characteristics with the other poem. In "Byzantium," the stanzas also seem to motivate separate images, but they are connected by more than a temporal link and the recurrence of certain minemes – connections that could also be found in the earlier poem.

At the beginning of the first stanza, we find the element of the *Emperor*, whose "soldiery are abed" (2). The description of dusk already contains a dual set-up of

43. Paul de Man, "Image and Emblem in Yeats," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1984), 145–238, p. 172.

44. Finneran, p. 5, quoting *W. B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence, 1901–1937*, ed. Ursula Bridge (New York, 1953), p. 162.

45. Finneran, p. 5, quoting *W. B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore*, p. 164.

46. Finneran, p. 5.

elements reminiscent of the two contrary worlds of "Sailing to Byzantium." On the one hand is "a starlit or moonlit dome" (5) which "disdains" things placed on the other: *man*, *complexities*, *fury*, *mire*, *veins*. These latter elements motivate a sub-image of mortal life in the same manner as the first stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium" contains a description of life in nature. Opposed to this image one finds celestial elements (*star*, *moon*) and an artificial, artistic element serving as the exhibit of this portion of the text (*dome*), which may evoke the idea of eternity as represented in/by undecaying, seemingly timeless phenomena.

The second stanza starts with a rhetorical device that will be repeated in the third. The first two lines, "Before me floats an image, man or shade, / Shade more than man, more image than a shade" (9–10), introduce the description of an image centred around the element of the *mummy*, which includes its spiral wrappings: "Hades' bobbin" is "bound in mummy-cloth" (11), and it "may unwind the winding path" (13). The result is an image-complex that reiterates the notion of spiralling movement from "Sailing to Byzantium" (c.f. "perne in a gyre" [19]), and therefore – turning to the extra-textual author – may be related to Yeats's idea of the gyre, which controls fate and the progress of the world. The presence of *bobbin* – like that of *perne* (possibly *pirn*, *bobbin*) in "Sailing to Byzantium" – may reinforce this connection by evoking the Fates, who control the thread of life.

It is this mummy-image that is further motivated by the introduction of the element *mouth*, itself serving as a centre to a sub-image spanning lines 13–14. This image, which may refer to the "Opening of the Mouth" ritual in ancient Egypt, is that of a mouth which is devoid of its crucial characteristics, as it "has no moisture and no breath" – like a mouth of a mummy – , and which, as it may summon "breathless mouths" (14), appears to have been conjured up by a member of its own kind – which, in other words, is described as autogenetic.

It is in this stanza that the lyrical "I" appears for the first and last times in the poem. Line 9 contains a reference to "me," before whom the mummy-image appears, and lines 15 and 16 make it clear that the lyrical "I" approves of the appearance of the vision: "I hail the superhuman." With the verbs *hail* and *call*, these lines (along with the beginning of the stanza) almost merge the lyrical "I" with the implied author during the act of composition, for it is the author before whom the vision appears that is transformed into the text.

The third stanza starts with the same rhetorical device as the second, first listing elements joined by the conjunction "or," then, in the second line, expressing a preference for one element over the others: "Miracle, bird or golden handiwork, / More miracle than bird or handiwork" (17–18). In this case are introduced the elements *bird* and *gold*, which have also played important roles in the previous poem. *Bird* here is described in more or less the same manner as in the last stanza of "Sail-

ing to Byzantium," with the same reference to the Byzantine construction. What is notable here is the recurrence of the elements *star* and *moon*, as the artificial bird is "planted on the star-lit golden bough" (19) and is "by the moon embittered" (21). In the first stanza, these very elements were used to describe the *dome*, which was contrasted with *man* described by *complexities*, *fury*, *mire* and *veins* – here repeated as *complexities*, *mire* and *blood* in lines 23–24, now related to the *common bird*. In other words, the structure of this stanza also conforms to the dualistic set-up of minemes, with the *bird* (the exhibit of this part of the text) appearing on both sides, on one as a metal, on the other as the common, bird.

The exhibit of the image in stanza four is the *flame*. Its description, spanning all eight lines, mirrors that of the *mouth* in lines 13–14. On the textual level, the expression in line 26: "Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit" echoes "a mouth that has no moisture and no breath," while thematically, the concept of the mouth devoid of mouth-ness surfaces in the concept of an un-flame-like flame described in lines 27 and 32: a flame no "storm disturbs"; a "flame that cannot singe a sleeve." Similarly to the *mouth*, to the *flame* is also attributed an autogenetic nature. The usual sources of fire have already been denied in line 26, while line 27 expresses the notion of autogenesis directly: "flames begotten of flame."

The question naturally arises that if all minemes are arranged in the dual structure of the material and eternal worlds, to which side do *mouth* and *fire* belong? Since both are deprived of their everyday qualities, and as they are autogenetic, they have no heterogeneous antecedents, that is to say, they are supposed to have been in existence since the beginning of time, they appear to belong to the eternal realm. Furthermore, this placement of *fire* is consistent with its usage in "Sailing to Byzantium," where it was aligned with *holy*-ness, *gold* and the *sages*.

Complexities and *fury* reappear in line 29: "complexities of fury leave," presumably fleeing from the *spirits*, which are "blood-begotten" (28): that is, they originate from the realm to which *man* belongs (c.f. "veins" and "blood" in lines 6–8 and 24). It is the fire that burns away the material side of *man*, as complexities of fury are "Dying into . . . / An agony of flame" (29–32). As *spirits* are contrasted with both *complexities* and *fury*, and they originate from the world of *man*, they are also presented as elements that bridge the ephemeral and the eternal realms.

Stanza five furnishes us with one further element bridging the two worlds; its exhibit, the *dolphin*. The eternal realm is represented by the now cleansed *spirits*, which, however, are "astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood" (33), that is, on the material, earthly side of the creatures. The spirits are to be carried across the "dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea" (40). In this stanza, one can also witness the reappearance of *Emperor* and *gong* from stanza one, creating a frame around the

poem. While it is as early as the fourth stanza that the element *Emperor* reappears – along with an important time adverbial – it is the fifth stanza, where it is paired with *gong*, that serves as a counterpart, or a continuation, a closure of the scene starting in the first one. This technique may enhance a feeling of formal cohesion, thus creating a sense of unity in the reader.

Like "Sailing to Byzantium," this poem also has a temporal dimension. The first line suggests that the time is around dusk, while by line 25, it is already "at midnight." According to these elements, the narrative layer of the poem spans a few hours only – up to the moment usually associated with supernatural events. This temporal span is more concrete and more closely connected to the representation, to the images, than the time-span of "Sailing to Byzantium," which covers a whole course of life and is more related to the interpretation.

Since the structure of "Byzantium" is similar to that of "Sailing to Byzantium" in that it also contains a series of almost self-contained images, I will follow the same strategy of establishing the global exhibit of this poem: namely, by searching for minemes which are present in most of the images. Similarly to the case of the previous poem, and somewhat stretching the definition of the exhibit, I suggest that it is not a single mineme that is the global exhibit of the poem, but a complex of several ones. Since the elements *complexity*, *fury*, *mire*, *vein / blood* appear in all the images (stanzas) except the second, let me assume that in layer II of "Byzantium," they occupy the position of the global exhibit.

The properties of the minemes in the two poems show interesting tendencies if compared to each other. Generally, these elements in "Byzantium" appear to be more concrete, that is, more readily able to be visualized than the ones in "Sailing to Byzantium." To illustrate this proposition, let me compare the minemes in the two bird-images in the two poems instead of attempting to catalogue all the elements in the texts which can be analysed as minemes. Specifically, the comparison is between the fourth stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium," consisting of 8 lines and 58 words, and the third stanza of "Byzantium," containing 8 lines and 47 words. The table below lists words and short phrases that I consider minemes.

In the analysed stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium," 13 words have been selected as belonging to minemes (either stand-alone or integrated into phrases), whereas in the other poem, I found 19 words related to minemes, of which one is not a content word. Taking into account the number of total words in these passages, the higher percentage of mineme-related words in "Byzantium" is striking. This phenomenon might be related to the more nominal style of the latter poem.

	"Sailing to Byzantium" lines 25–32	"Byzantium" lines 17–24
total nr. of words	58	47
minemes	nature drowsy Emperor lords ladies Grecian goldsmiths hammered gold gold enamelling golden bough	bird (2×) cocks of Hades moon metal common bird petal mire blood golden handiwork (2×) star-lit golden bough
nr. of words selected	13	19
% of words selected	22	40

Minemes in one stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium"

The sheer number of minemes, however, does not, in itself, guarantee a more effective motivation of images. The quality of the minemes to trigger associations, to be capable of visualization, their concreteness, is a more important factor. Still, the concreteness of these elements shows the same difference between the poems. To take an example from the stanzas analysed above, the sub-image of the *bough* in "Sailing to Byzantium" is motivated by the sole adjective *golden*, whereas in "Byzantium," *star-lit* can also be found adjoined to it. As suggested above, any further specification makes a mineme more concrete and more easily able to be visualized; therefore, *star-lit golden bough* is the less abstract element. Also, while the scrutinized stanza of "Byzantium" does contain a number of abstract minemes (e.g. *bird*, *metal*), the *mire*, *petal*, *cock* elements found among its one-word minemes are more concrete than *lords and ladies* or *nature* found in the stanza in the other poem. *Nature* is on the borderline of being a concept, and, as such, conveys only general visual information. It also includes *mire*, *petal* and *cock*, making it more abstract than those three elements. The phrase *lords and ladies*, in turn, refers to a whole social class, and, I think, is closer to its respective basic object (*person*) than, for example, *cock* is to *bird*, the basic object that it is a part of. Similar comparisons may show that in the whole text of "Byzantium" minemes are more abundant and usually more concrete than in "Sailing to Byzantium."

This effect is enhanced further if, when reading "Byzantium," one takes the mythological interpretation of the *dolphin* as a vehicle or avatar of the soul in transit into account. The connotations raised by the "bobbin bound in mummy-cloth" (11) can

also enrich a mythologized interpretation. As concreteness is primarily reliant on the ability of a mineme to trigger associations – which enables the reader to construct a more detailed visual model – these mythological associations also suggest the more elaborated concreteness of the latter poem. "Sailing to Byzantium," according to my reading, contains fewer elements with similar connotations, which is not to say that it is devoid of them. Like "Byzantium," it also refers to the Fates, through *perne* aligned with *gyre* (19); however, this reference might not be immediately interpretable for some readers. Conversely, *golden bough* (30) does open up a wide range of possible connections, but this element also appears in the later text, and, therefore, cannot contribute to the differences between the two poems.

This difference in concreteness also characterizes the exhibits of the stanzas of the two poems. Setting *bird* aside, which appears as a local exhibit in both texts, *young*, *aged man* and *sages* – the exhibits in "Sailing to Byzantium," which are all subcategories of the rather general *person*, specified by mostly one property only – appear to be less concrete than the exhibits of "Byzantium": *dome* (a quite specific subordinate category of the basic object *house*), *mummy* (a subcategory of *corpse*, or even the general *person*), and *dolphin* (following a naïve taxonomy, a subcategory of *fish* easily capable of visualization). *Flame*, the exhibit in "Byzantium" not mentioned so far, may be at the same level of abstraction as *aged man*. Moreover, *young*, *aged man*, *sages* and *bird* are more connected to the represented interpretation (layer III) than to the representing images (layer II), echoing the difference between the texts already established, based on their different time-spans. Comparing the global exhibits yields similar results. The global exhibit of "Sailing to Byzantium," *bird* and *song*, is a complex of two rather abstract minemes if compared to the minemes occupying this position in "Byzantium." *Song* may be a basic-level object itself, but as it refers to an auditory phenomenon, it conveys little visual information. *Bird* is a good example of a basic-level object, and, perhaps more importantly, it contains a large number of subordinate objects (from *albatross* to *woodpecker*) designated by a single word. Turning to "Byzantium," I will set two of the minemes (*complexity* and *fury*) serving as its global exhibit aside, as they are quite abstract, concept-like elements. The remaining ones (*mire*, *vein* and *blood*) still show a higher level of concreteness than either *song* or *bird*. While it is doubtful whether *mire*, *vein* and *blood* are basic objects or parts of one (perhaps of the objects *land*, *vessel* and *fluid*), in neither case does either of them contain as large a number of subordinate objects as *bird* does. In other words, while *bird* only evokes an averaged example of many, more concrete objects, *mire*, *vein* and *blood* refer to less varied and therefore more concrete categories.

At the same time, however, the shift of the global exhibit from *bird/song* to the *fury/mire/vein/blood* complex also makes it part of the dual arrangement of min-

emes in the later poem. *Bird* and *song* in "Sailing to Byzantium" were elements which bridged the realms of ephemeral nature and eternal art. The *fury/mire/vein/blood* complex, in contrast, belongs undoubtedly to the natural side of this dichotomy. This is not to say that "Byzantium" lacks bridging elements; in fact, it contains more than its companion piece. *Bird* appears on both sides in the third stanza, and the bridging nature of *spirit* and *dolphin* has already been suggested. Also, while in "Sailing to Byzantium" the bridging elements *bird* and *song* are closely related, in "Byzantium" *bird* stands apart from *dolphin* and *spirit*, even if the latter two are connected via the mythic interpretation. The larger number and separated nature of bridging elements, in turn, may slightly lessen the effect of the latter poem by obscuring the world model it depicts: transition from ephemeral to eternal is now possible not only via (Byzantine) art represented by the bird and singing (possibly signifying the very act of writing), but also via a more mythological route across *the* sea. Incidentally, while both the dome of Hagia Sophia and, more importantly, the *dolphin* are present in the early drafts of "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats abandoned them in the writing process.[47]

The extent of alienation in the two poems can be determined based on the presence and the positioning of the lyrical "I." I have suggested that in "Sailing to Byzantium" references to the lyrical "I" in layer I are more frequent, and their placement also allowed situating the lyrical "I" as an "aged man," which suggestion connects the lyrical "I" with a reconstruction of the biographical author at the time of the act of writing. Compared to this, the presence of the lyrical "I" in "Byzantium" is extremely limited, and allows no further inference about its position than that of the addresser of the text. These observations show that alienation is more complete in "Byzantium" than in "Sailing to Byzantium."

The extent of metathesis in the two poems shows, expectedly, approximately the same distribution. Representing an artist by a singing bird, as happens in "Sailing to Byzantium," does not appear to be a metathesis wide enough to open up an unprecedentedly wide range of possible interpretations. The feeling that its central theme, the contrast between art and nature, is rendered into layers II and I in an unpretentious manner is enhanced by the direct, almost conceptual phrases in the poem itself. In "Byzantium" the set-up is not inherently different, but more complicated in the respect that the ephemeral side of the "I" in layer III is represented by the more concrete image of the *complexities* of *fury*, *mire*, *veins* and *blood*. The (re)introduction of *spirit* and *dolphin* to complement the bridging elements *song* and *bird*, while it can obscure the world-model of the poem, may well serve to pro-

47. Bradford, p. 115.

vide an alternative to the representation of the transition of the artist to that of a singing bird, a somewhat conventional metaphor.

However, I do not see the main difference between the two Byzantium poems as one on the level of meaning, interpretation or referents. A basic dissimilarity that determines many of the textual structures reveals itself if one considers the distribution of minemes in layers A and B. The two similes in "Sailing to Byzantium" put all elements related to the city (the mosaic and the machinery) in layer B. In "Byzantium" it is almost impossible to determine a straightforward descriptive relationship between images or minemes. Apart from the simile in line 20, according to which the bird "can like the cocks of Hades crow," the minemes are more coordinated than subordinated to each other as describers and describeds. This arrangement has the consequence that all images – starting from the dome, including the mummy, the bird, the flames and the dolphin – are placed in layer A, in the layer of the view. That is to say, while "Sailing to Byzantium" depicted the desired, eternal state in layer B, "Byzantium" does this in layer A.

If one interprets the latter poem against the previous one, the fact that this series of images has originally been a vision becomes apparent. "Sailing to Byzantium," in other words, allows one to suppose that all elements in "Byzantium" originally resided in layer B, and have moved to layer A by the next "version" of the text. This is the movement characteristic of symbolism and of myths. Turning to the biographical author once more, one may note that a piece of writing whose textual organization is reminiscent of that of myths fits well in Yeats's oeuvre. Moreover, this affinity of "Byzantium" to myths may also put in a new light the fact that it is in this text that more and more direct mythological allusions have been found.

The suggestion that "Byzantium," in itself, contains only a covert indication that what it presents as view has been, in fact, vision, may explain why "Byzantium" appears to be a harder, more complex text to many readers. Read without the other Byzantium poem, it can fail to guide the reader to a reassuring interpretation, placing the images it conjures in relation to one another and in relation to the reader and the lyrical "I." Presenting a vision that is already "there," the text offers few entry points for the reader into the depicted realm.

The titles of the poems may also be related to this observation: in "Sailing to Byzantium," Byzantium, the eternal state, is a mere vision towards which the lyrical "I" strives.[48] The movement itself guarantees that the reader, identified with the lyrical "I," is guided into the symbolic city. In "Byzantium," the lyrical "I" is already in the city, as the vision is already there in the view.

48. The first complete version of "Sailing to Byzantium" was, significantly, titled "Towards Byzantium" (Bradford, p. 113). "Byzantium" does not appear to have had an alternative title.

Conclusion

The analyses of the two Byzantium poems of W. B. Yeats have shown how a common theme may be treated in essentially different ways. "Sailing to Byzantium" contrasts the view of the ephemeral, worthless world with the vision of eternal art and Byzantium; its structure is more linear, with the temporal dimension rooted in the interpretation, not in the representation, as happens in "Byzantium." In the latter poem, vision takes over, expelling view, and becomes the view itself; the lyrical "I" is more suppressed; linearity, apart from some vague hints at the passing of time, almost disappears.

At the same time "Byzantium," especially because of the disappearance of the view, is harder to interpret in itself. It is as if the poem relied on "Sailing to Byzantium" for a context against which it becomes intelligible.

All of the differences between the poems listed above and taken from different layers and levels point to the suggestion that "Byzantium" is an inherently symbolic text whereas "Sailing to Byzantium" approximates that mode of writing without being entirely controlled by it. This conclusion links and puts in a new light the various observations (regarding the presence of the lyrical "I," the use of rhetorical figures, etc.) made about the two Yeats texts, and it also connects the arrival at symbolism with the arrival in the city of Byzantium, a place constructed entirely out of a vision that appeared in front of the traveller.

Ákos I. Farkas

As McFate Would Have It

The Author's Joycean Cameo in *Lolita*

Establishing multiple instances of intertextuality between Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, this article seeks more significant analogies between the two works than some curious but easily demonstrated instances of gender and ethnic related motivic echoing. Thus it is shown that Nabokov believed himself to be emulating Joyce's example of breaking the narrative frame of his novel to make room for his own authorial self. The essay asks, but declines to answer, whether the authorial hide-and-seek observed in the two novels provides evidence of Joyce and Nabokov having both been proto-postmodernists of sorts, or else the very ease with which their self-referential riddles can be solved locates them in an earlier tradition of the novel.

The claim made by Vladimir Nabokov in an interview, that he had found nothing to puzzle him in *Ulysses*, that "most lucid of novels," is anything but puzzling.[1] Unless, of course, the great Russian-American puzzler's definition of a puzzle excludes all that he himself was able to solve as he solved, or believed to have solved, the riddle posed by the most special of all James Joyce's incidental characters: the Man in the Brown Macintosh. "Now who is that lankylooking galoot over there in the macintosh?" a nonplussed Leopold Bloom wonders in the "Hades" episode of *Ulysses*, catching a glimpse of an unaccounted-for stranger attending the funeral of Paddy Dignam (115).[2] The identity of the thirteenth mourner at the Prospect Cemetery of Glasnevin remains, as far as Bloom is concerned, an unsolvable "selfinvolved enigma" throughout his daylong citywide peregrinations. Not so for Professor Nabokov. As we learn from the edited version of his Cornell University lectures on *Ulysses*, the "chap in the macintosh" is none other than James Joyce himself. The clue, we are told, is given in the library episode known as "Scylla and Charybdis,"[3]

1. Herbert Gold, "Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," in *Nabokov: Criticism, Reminiscences, Translations and Tributes*, eds. Alfred Appel Jr. and Charles Newman (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 195–206, p. 203.

2. All parenthetical references are given to this edition: James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922, London: Minerva, 1992).

3. Although Nabokov, with Joyce himself as he believed, found the "pseudo-Homeric titles" applied to the episodes of *Ulysses* entirely inappropriate (cf. Vladimir Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980],

where Stephen Dedalus explains how the great Shakespeare "has hidden his own name, a fair name, William, in the plays, a super here, a clown there, as a painter of old Italy set his face in a dark corner of his canvas. . ." (*Ulysses*, 221). This, as Nabokov concludes from evidence hinted at earlier on in his lecture, "is exactly what Joyce has done – setting his face in a dark corner of his canvas. The Man in the Brown Macintosh who passes through the dream of the book is no other than the author himself. Bloom glimpses his maker!"[4]

Whether it is indeed his maker, James Joyce, whom Bloom glimpses whenever catching sight of Mr mysterious M'Intosh – at eleven points in the course of his Dublin wanderings – is something I prefer to leave undecided. Thus I will ignore, rather than try to substantiate or challenge, the noted Joyce scholar Julian Moynahan's claim that "[t]here is no tradition in Joyce scholarship that says the man in the brown macintosh is James Joyce wearing an absurd disguise. The identification shows Nabokov at his most playful and arbitrary."[5] This may or may not be so; however, for my purposes here it is more important to find out what Nabokov thinks and makes, in his own fiction, of the perceived identity between implied author and stray fictional character, than to decide whether any similar identification is in fact made by Joyce in *Ulysses*, as Nabokov would have us believe.[6] I propose that beyond his conviction of having correctly deciphered the riddle of the macintosh-man in *Ulysses*, Nabokov proceeded to do to the protagonist of his classic novel *Lolita* the very same thing that he believed Joyce to have done to Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*. As his Dublin predecessor and fellow-connoisseur of fine perfumes, pretty sights and adolescent girls is assumed by Nabokov to have been, so Humbert Humbert is also made to see, without recognizing, his own creator and the omnipotent ruler of his universe in the fictional world that he inhabits in Nabokov's provincial America.

285–370, p. 288), I will risk being classed with Nabokov's "scholarly and pseudoscholarly bores" and refer to the episodes of *Ulysses* as "Hades," "Scylla. . ." "Laestrygonians" or "Cyclops" as the case may be.

4. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 320.

5. Julian Moynahan, "Nabokov and Joyce," in *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. Vladimir Alexandrov (New York: Garland, 1995), 433–44, p. 441.

6. Without trying to settle the issue one way or another, I find one thing noteworthy about Nabokov's insistence on the macintosh-man's being a cryptic self-portrait of the author. The Nabokov argument that the figure of the "man in the brown macintosh who loves a lady who is dead" is given more emphasis than any other pair of lovers on Bloom's long list of loving couples because of his Joyce-like grief as the motherless son does not sound particularly convincing (*Ulysses*, p. 352; Nabokov, "*Ulysses*" p. 318). The mournful lover of a dead mother, if a mother the lady in the quotation is, may just as well be Stephen Dedalus as James Joyce himself.

Where and in what guise then does his creator appear during Humbert's trans-American automobile trek? And what are the clues pointing to his own presence that Nabokov leaves lying about, half concealed, half-revealed, in the manner of that purloined letter in Poe's much-cited tale? Before answering these questions, it seems unavoidable to examine whether the figures of Leopold Bloom and Humbert Humbert themselves are worth comparing in the first place. Is there anything remarkable to connect Joyce's Irish advertisement canvasser of a Jewish-Hungarian background to Nabokov's newly nationalized American litterateur of a mixed French, Austrian and English descent?

At first sight there may appear nothing strikingly similar between the two, aside from their shared weakness for pretty young females, described as girlwomen in *Ulysses* and nymphets in *Lolita*. Different as their respective ages may be – at 21, Bloom's Gerty is safely over the age of consent, whereas "little Lo" is but 12 (note the inversion of digits here!) when Humbert first glimpses her – the similarity between the two girls is truly unmistakeable. Indeed, what looks like mere analogy may have been a case of no less than homologous creation, as suggested by Neil Cornwell in an article tracing *Lolita* back to *Ulysses*. The functional parallelism between the two young female figures – both the objects of the illicit desire sparkling in the male gaze directed at them – is painstakingly demonstrated to be more of a genealogical than an accidental nature in the Irish academic's piece on Lolita's Irish "precursors."[7] However, locating one more of Lolita's likely precursors in Dublin would not, in itself, establish between the two nymphets, or colleens, a link strong enough to legitimize a meaningful comparison between their respective admirers. And yet the careful reader of *Lolita* will find that there is much more to the Bloom vs. Humbert analogy than the circumstantial evidence of there having being a Celtic Lolita or two in the back of Nabokov's mind as a result of a youthful journey he apparently took to the Emerald Isle.

To begin with, Humbert himself is twice mistaken, on account of his name being misspelled as Humberg and then for his darkish Mediterranean looks, for what Leopold Bloom now distressfully, now defiantly, claims himself to be – a Jew. First it is the receptionist of a hotel advertising itself as an establishment "near churches" – a cryptic message known to have been used by certain midwestern landlords in the nineteen-fifties to discourage any Jewish patrons – who misjudges Humbert's ethnic background. Later on in the narrative it is the turn of the protagonist's counterpart to make the same mistake: Clare Quilty tries to expel the gun-toting intruder from his manor, a vengeance-driven Humbert darkened by violent anger as much as by his congenital pigmentation, with words

7. Neil Cornwell, "*Ulysses* and *Lolita*," *James Joyce Broadsheet* 71 (2005) 1.

redolent of anti-Semitic sentiments as odious as they are misdirected.[8] "This is a Gentile's house, you know," goes Clare's high-handed gambit. "Maybe, you'd better run along" (*Lolita*, p. 297).[9]

It is worth noting that despite his lifelong scorn for all sorts of ethnic bigotries, Nabokov is not out to solicit our sympathy for Humbert as a possible victim of misplaced anti-Semitism. These instances of Humbert being mistaken for what he is not are meant to suggest, in the circuitous way not uncharacteristic of Nabokov, what the novel's protagonist most certainly is: an alien in the setting that he moves about in. His own being a double, or indeed triple, alien in America is repeatedly emphasised by Humbert himself. At one point he refers to his father, and by implication himself, as "a salad of racial genes." Replace French with English and Hungarian, and the description given in *Lolita* of Humbert père's "mixed French and Austrian descent, with a dash of the Danube in his veins" can equally well be applied to "Rudolf Virag of Szombathely, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, London, and Dublin," as Bloom's father was introduced by Professor Nabokov to his undergraduate audience at Cornell.[10] It hardly needs pointing out that the "blonde Austrian soldier" in Bloom's ancestry is duly noted in Nabokov's Joyce lectures.[11]

In this context, Humbert's remark on his own manly good looks of a "pseudo-*Celtic*" character (*Lolita*, p. 104; my italics), or his playful self-description as a "Franco-*Irish* gentleman" (122; my italics), will strike the attentive reader as more than coincidental. The "semblance of an Irish sub-theme," as the phenomenon has been dubbed by Neil Cornwell in his above-cited article, is reinforced by more than Humbert's references to Lo as a "little colleen" here and a half-Irish daughter there (*Lolita*, pp. 113 and 239). The Irish scholar wonders whether Nabokov was aware that Leopold Bloom's prototype might well have been a man called Hunter. Examined in the neon light of The Enchanted Hunter, the hotel where Lolita falls prey to her stepfather's wolfish lust, the significance of Humbert's name suggests a very definite yes to Cornwell's query. Drop an "m" from Humbert and what you get is *Hu*bert, patron saint of hunters, himself an enchanted one.

It is of further interest in this connection that a consonant added here or taken away there often results in a name transparent to one essential quality or another

8. Highlighting such "hints of anti-Semitism" aimed more or less openly at the figure of Humbert at various points of the novel, Brian Boyd nevertheless cautions readers of *Lolita* against being snared by a self-pitying narrator's stratagems into seeing him as some kind of victim (cf. Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* [Princeton: PUP, 1991], p. 253).

9. All parenthetical references are made to this edition: Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1995).

10. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 319.

11. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 316.

exhibited by the characters peopling Nabokov's novels, *Lolita* being no exception. A marginal figure mentioned by Humbert during a visit he pays to the office of the dentist Dr Ivor Quilty in Lolita's native Ramsdale is a man referred to as "charming Dr Molnar" (*Lolita*, p. 291). The good Hungarian-born doctor's competence in practical odontology is held up by Humbert to Ramsdale's Dr Quilty as an example the latter could never possibly emulate. But then this is nothing to wonder at: aside from the intrusion of an "n" in the middle, the name Molnar reads as *molar*, a one-word advertisement of its bearer's medical profession. Remarkable as yet another indicator of Nabokov's ingenuity may be the fact that the Hungarian "dentist's name aptly contains a molar," as Alfred Appel Jr. astutely observes, is of lesser significance to my purposes here than the name's ethno-geographical provenance. Even if one were to accept Appel's somewhat dubious proviso that no allusion was intended on Nabokov's part to the Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnár, the writer's name would probably have been familiar enough to Nabokov, and possibly to his potential readers, too, to clearly suggest the bearer's national background.[12] The association of Humbert with yet another Central European immigrant, and a Hungarian at that, seems to add one more stroke to Humbert's Joyce-Bloom-like portrait, which then further reinforces the legitimacy of looking for other, more pertinent, parallelisms between *Ulysses* and *Lolita*.

Dr Ivor's Christian name adds another touch to the ethnically rich texture of the broader picture in which Humbert's likeness is set. What first meets the eye on the Ramsdale dentist's name-plate – identifying a man whom Humbert looks up on the thin pretext of some hazy dental complaint to elicit information on Dr Quilty's nephew Clare – is that it is another name speaking to the same professional brotherhood that Dr Molnar belongs to. The name Ivor is, after all, a cognate of ivory, the

12. See Alfred Appel, Jr., "Notes," in *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 291. I find Appel's caveat less than fully convincing in light of Molnár's once phenomenal popularity in America on the one hand, and Nabokov's familiarity with things Hungarian , as suggested by at least another communication recorded by Appel in his annotations to *Lolita* ("Notes," 407–8, n207/3). The latter quotes Nabokov's recollections of how he had once seen James Joyce in the audience gathered for a lecture on Pushkin that the young Russian émigré writer was asked to give as a replacement for a then immensely famous Hungarian lady novelist. Interestingly, Nabokov could recall the French title of the bestselling Hungarian novel (*Le Rue du Chat qui Pêche*) but not its writer, whom he stood in for on the occasion (Jolán Földes, as identified by Peter Lax back in the late 1980s). The mnemonic lapse, together with what might after all be a subconscious allusion to Ferenc Molnár, can be taken as another, minor, symptom of the "cryptomnesia" attributed to Nabokov by the German scholar Michael Marr on account of the writer's having suppressed whatever memories he might have had of the German short story "Lolita," another candidate for being Dolores Haze's precursor (cf. Michael Marr, *The Two Lolitas*, trans. Perry Anderson [London: Verso, 2004]).

material of an elephant's tusks, something Dr Quilty might be better qualified to deal with than Humbert's precious molars. Also, the word ivory has accumulated a wide range of connotations by the time Humbert's fake visit to "Uncle Ivory's" surgery takes place. The colour and feel of the off-white dentine have by now come to be closely associated with Lolita's tantalizingly smooth skin and the maddeningly pale legs of a fellow-nymphet (*Lolita*, pp. 66 and 126). However, it is only in retrospect that Humbert's Ramsdale acquaintance Jean Farlow's description of "fat old Ivor in the ivory" will be fully understood as the double entendre it is intended to be. Highlighting the visual contrast between a black bather she has seen plunge into the ebony waters of Hourglass Lake, and the old quack's sallow body imagined to be splashing about in the early morning whiteness of the pond, the amateur painter unknowingly establishes an associative link between Humbert's and the Quilty nephew's shared passion for curvatures of an ivory surface. What Jean almost blurts out a moment later could serve Humbert with a timely clue to the identity of his future enemy. But as Jean is prevented by her husband's arrival from retelling Uncle Ivory's "completely indecent story" about his nephew's shameful – because presumably paedophiliac – liaisons, Humbert is doomed to a prolonged and frustrating hunt for Clare Quilty, his sinister rival for Lolita's immature favours.

If Ivor thematically relates his nephew Clare to Humbert, the younger Quilty himself establishes a threefold link between his relative Ivor, his own nemesis Humbert, and – intertextually as it were – the distant Joyce prototype of the latter in the figure of Leopold Bloom. An anecdote in Cornwell's above-cited article sends a young Nabokov on "a small field trip to Ireland," where the tyro lepidopterist had supposedly spent "a week or so in the early 1920's"[13] – in *Quilty,* County *Clare*. In itself, the possibly apocryphal story might not amount to very much. What makes the story truly remarkable, however, is a bit of hard textual evidence to be found in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Repeatedly mentioned in the novel is one Mr Bloom, emphatically introduced by Nabokov to his students as a man who is "no relation to Leopold."[14] A dental surgeon whose real-life model is believed to have been one Marcus J. Bloom, this mysterious namesake of Poldy's not only shares Ivor Quilty's profession but has his Dublin residence on Clare Street, an address echoed in the first name of Ivor's nephew. In the light of this, the location of a young Vladimir Nabokov's putative field-trip to the town of Quilty in County Clare, Ireland will appear to have more than cursory relevance to the Russian-American writer's name-giving practices. The question, raised by Cornwell, of Nabokov's possible awareness of all this onomastic echoing can be confidently answered in the affirmative. For what other reason

13. Cornwell, p. 1.
14. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 326.

should Nabokov have involved, in the dentistry-episode, an extra dentist with that incongruous Hungarian name? That *Lolita*'s writer must have been fully aware of Dr Bloom's address in Dublin, and the importance of that address, is revealed by the fact that Professor Nabokov inserts a parenthetical correction into a passage he quotes from the eighth episode of *Ulysses* in his Cornell lectures. In the quotation from "Laestrygonians" highlighted by Nabokov for his students, Leopold Bloom offers to help a blind youngster – the sightless piano-tuner – in the street: "– Do you want to go to Molesworth street? Bloom asks: –Yes, the stripling answered. South Frederick street. [*Actually he heads for Clare Street*]," notes Nabokov's amendment.[15] Professor Nabokov also provides the Joyce reader of his own *Lolita* with strong evidence of his awareness of where his character's name came from. Needless to say, the identity, or at least medical profession, of that other, shadowy, Bloom, Dr Marcus J., is also indicated in the Cornell lectures.[16]

Shadows play an important part in *Lolita*, too. Cognate with *umber, penumbra or umbrella*, Humbert's name translates as *shadow*, provided one does not, as I have done, tamper with that "m" in the middle. And indeed his simian body casts a long shadow over Humbert's victim, little Lolita, whose girlhood he monstrously despoils. Guilty Humbert is himself shadowed later – by that other molester of girl children, his spiritual doppelganger, Clare Quilty, until the two of them swap roles and Humbert the Terrible embarks on his vengeance-driven pursuit of his counterpart to become his shadow's shadow.[17] The shadowy doubling in *Lolita* does not stop here. Fairly early on in his narrative, Humbert comes to suspect the presence of a force beyond his control, an awesome power directing the course of events that he and his victims are all caught up in. This superhuman power Humbert names McFate, after one of his worshipped Lolita's classmates, the list of whose names, a poem-like catalogue not unlike Joyce's lengthy enumerations, he fondly commits to memory. Right before destiny receives its name and sex as Aubrey McFate, Humbert visualizes his doom as a devil – a *he*-devil at that. This is how he explains his narrow escape from being exposed as a paedophiliac in Ramsdale: "The passion I had developed for that nymphet . . . would have certainly landed me again in the sanatorium, had not the *devil* realized that I was to be granted some relief if *he* wanted to have me as a plaything for some time longer." Remarkably, this passage is immediately followed by the first invocation of the same devilish fate as a woman: "It would have been logical on the part of Aubrey McFate (as I would like to dub that *devil* of mine) to arrange a small treat for me" (*Lolita*, p. 56, my italics).

15. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 324 (italics and square brackets in the original).
16. Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," p. 326.
17. I was made aware of this by my doctoral student Rudolf Sárdi.

Another Joyce-like touch reminiscent of the sexually ambiguous characters of the Bella/Bello Cohen type, or the occasionally feminized Bloom himself in *Ulysses*, is the fact that Fate is not the only gender-bender in *Lolita*. The celebrated dramatist and scriptwriter Clare Quilty is always accompanied by his secretary, one Vivian Darkbloom. Despite the Oscar Wilde-like ambiguity of the first name Vivian, Darkbloom's sex is clearly given as female in an early reference to "*her* best book" by John Ray, Jr., Ph. D., putative editor of Humbert's memoir (*Lolita*, p. 4).[18] But then, in an argument flaring up between a jealous Humbert and a rebellious Lolita, the latter responds to Humbert's lame remark about the glamorous celebrity Clare Quilty's secretary as "quite a woman" with the bizarre proposition that "Vivian is the male author, the gal author is Clare" (*Lolita*, p. 221). True, the seriousness of Lolita's "correction" is called into question by the absurdity of her next claim, that the "woman" Quilty is forty, married and has "Negro blood" (*Lolita*, p. 221). The deliberate absurdity of Lolita's remark does not, however, quite cover the pert quip's relevance to the novel's anti-racist subtext. This subtext is reinforced, among other things, by hints scattered throughout the first, Ramsdale, episodes of *Lolita* of certain qualities of a minor character called Leslie Thomson, endearing this black gardener and chauffeur not only to the narrator but very likely to the implied author, too. With his fondness for early morning dips in the ebony waters of Hourglass Lake mentioned above, the figure of this "very amiable and athletic Negro" provides a cheerful counterpoint to "Uncle Ivory" and his similar but far less appealing habits of plunging (*Lolita*, p. 73). More importantly, the likable and sympathetic young man who favours a dip at dawn is turned, at one of the narrative's most dramatic points, into the fatal, or authorial, messenger who reports on the gruesome death of Humbert's wife, "the Haze woman," to the incredulous husband (*Lolita*, p. 97).

Returning to doubts concerning the sexual, as opposed to the ethnic, identities of Darkbloom and Quilty, once aroused, that uncertain feeling stirred up by little Lo's misconstruing Clare as Claire and her reading Vivian *as* Vivian and not Vivienne - as it should be if the name's bearer was undoubtedly female - is not so easily laid to rest either. The reader's suspicions are certainly not dispelled by Humbert's own description of Ms Darkbloom as "a hawk-like, black-haired, strikingly tall woman" (*Lolita*, p. 221). This confusion is further darkened, or clarified,

18. Wilde famously gave the names of his sons Vivian and Cyril to the two interlocutors of "The Decay of Lying." In the dramatic essay Vivian, as opposed to his nature-loving brother Cyril, is used by Wilde as a mouthpiece for his own aesthetic hedonism. According to Ferenc Takács, it is this etiolated philosophy of art that relates Nabokov to Wilde and the Hungarian poet Dezső Kosztolányi to Nabokov.

when we come to realize, with or without benefit of Alfred Appel's annotations to the text of *Lolita*, that Vivian Darkbloom is an anagram for Vladimir Nabokov.[19]

As an anagram requires reading now this way now that, the pages of *Lolita* too are to be turned back as well as forwards. Leafing back in the novel to the episode where little Lo's classmates are listed, the reader will find that the name "McFate, Aubrey" is preceded by "McCrystal, Vivian." Encouraged by such further instances of easily misinterpreted "enjambment" in the list of classmates as "Duncan, *Walter / Falter*, Ted . . . Miranda, *Viola / Rosato*, Emil" (*Lolita*, p. 52; my italics) one easily falls into the customary pattern of reading where first names do in fact come first. Errors can indeed be portals of discovery: making the same sort of revelatory mistake repeatedly, one will soon arrive at the highly suggestive, albeit doubly fictitious, name of *Vivian McFate*. Can it be then that Vivian Darkbloom, writer of "My Cue," her "best book" and possibly Clare Quilty's biography, is one and the same as Vivian, rather than Aubrey, McFate, author of Humbert Humbert's destiny? At one point in his narrative Humbert recalls reading, once in his youth, a French detective tale where the clues were actually in italics. That, however, "is not McFate's way" Humbert ruefully adds. No it isn't. Neither is it the way of Vivian Darkbloom Vladimir Nabokov (*Lolita*, p. 211).

How then is all this related to James Joyce and his *Ulysses*? Portentous as it is, the dark presence of that Bloom-bit in the Nabokov anagram may after all be wholly coincidental. But is it? Not if examined in the light of another literary recollection of Humbert's, made apropos of a forgettable theatrical performance seen in the "kurortish" place called Wace. The only detail meriting Humbert's acknowledgement is based on the idea of children-colours "lifted by authors Clare Quilty and Vivian Darkbloom from a passage in James Joyce" (*Lolita*, p. 221). Together with some thirteen more unmistakable allusions to Joyce listed by Alfred Appel, Jr. and belaboured variously by Neil Cornwell, Joseph Frank, Julian Moynahan and others, the incident does seem to establish the missing link. If the man in the brown waterproof is a disguise for Joyce, the merging of those fateful Vivians – a Darkbloom and a McFate – provides Nabokov with his persona. Bloom's mysterious M'Intosh then indeed appears to play much the same part in *Ulysses* as the role given in *Lolita* to Humbert's Vivian Darkbloom McFate. When it comes to Joyce or Nabokov, we had better believe Humbert: "a destiny in the making is . . . not one of those honest mystery stories where all you have to do is keep an eye on the clues." It does help, though, if we "learn to recognize certain obscure indications" (*Lolita*, pp. 210-11). If we do, we will gladly accept, with Julian Moynahan, that "creative artists, with an assist from McFate, a. k a. Macin-

19. Appel, p. 322.

tosh, call the tune."[20] And yet, this particular commentator prefers to enunciate the name of Humbert's authorial nemesis with his own thick accent as McFate, thus making it sound like the word *megfejt*, which means, in his native Hungarian, 'solve.'

Whether James Joyce had deliberately hidden his cameo-style self-portrait in *Ulysses*, as Nabokov insists in his Joyce studies or not, there can be little doubt that the writer of *Lolita* did but little to veil his own, quasi-authorial presence in his best-known novel. We have seen how a distinctly Nabokovian figure keeps reappearing throughout *Lolita*, now in the shape of Clare Quilty's amanuensis and biographer Vivian Darkbloom, now in the figure of a mysterious Aubrey-Vivian McFate, a near-namesake of Joyce's equally shady "M'Intosh." The assumption that Nabokov believed himself to emulate the Irish master's example in breaking the narrative frame of his novel to make room for his own, authorial, self is supported by further analogies and homologies that hold between various characters of the two novels examined. It is another matter whether such instances of narrative metalepsis in either or both works in question are to be taken as further proof of Joyce and Nabokov being both classifiable as postmodernists of sorts; or else the relative ease with which the riddles devised by each of our writers locates them in an earlier, modernist tradition of the novel. Such involved questions of period-based classification are perhaps better left open for the time being. At a later point the issue might be worth addressing with more scholarly rigour than the original, oral, medium of this light-hearted piece called for. The question is very likely to prove rather harder to answer than puzzling out the identities of the various nymphets, nymph-hunters and their McMakers met here has been.

20. Moynahan, p. 444.

Rudolf Sárdi

Nabokov's Cold Pudding

The Stylistic and Structural Impact of *Finnegans Wake* on *Lolita*, *Pale Fire*, and *Bend Sinister*

Vladimir Nabokov was noted for his barbed criticisms on any number of the major 19th and 20th-century writers and their celebrated works. James Joyce is one of the few elect who escapes being tipped into Nabokov's disposal by dint of his extravagant stylistic accomplishment in *Ulysses*, while *Finnegans Wake* is wittily described as "a formless and dull mass of phony folklore, a cold pudding." In spite of Nabokov's disdainful comments on *Finnegans Wake*, this paper attempts to demonstrate the stylistic and structural influences Joyce's work exerted on *Lolita*, *Pale Fire*, and *Bend Sinister*.

1. Punnigans Wake: Nabokov's bête noire

The fact alone that Vladimir Nabokov protested against all suggestions that *any* writer had ever influenced his literary craftsmanship has sent many officious academic pigeonholers on an even more sustained pursuit of what would surely have caused the professed insomniac another series of wakeful nights.[1] Nabokov inveighed against all those who had the courage to challenge the originality of his *oeuvre*, implying not merely a close kinship with certain literary figures – to which Nabokov would have unreservedly subscribed – but definite influences too. Many such adversaries strove to put him in the same group with names whose mere mention immediately provoked the author's ire. In *Strong Opinions* Nabokov outspokenly discusses his few likes and numerous dislikes in literature and elsewhere. The list is almost endless, and Nabokov relentlessly poked fun at his *bêtes noires*, such as Dostoevsky and Freud, who recurrently appear amidst scurrilous attacks as "a slapdash comedian" (42) and "the Viennese quack" (47), respectively.[2] In an interview, Nabokov was proud to claim that

1. Nabokov's nocturnal habits as a writer are well documented. Brian Boyd writes that "[e]nergy and inspiration could keep [Nabokov] writing for twelve hours at a stretch, often until 4 A.M., and rarely would he be up again before midday" (*Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990], p. 345).

2. All parenthetical references are given to this edition: Vladimir Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973).

> [a]s for influence . . . *I've never been influenced by anyone* in particular, dead or quick, just as I've never belonged to any club or movement. In fact, I don't seem to belong to any clear-cut continent. I'm the shuttlecock above the Atlantic, and how bright and blue it is there, in my private sky, far from the pigeonholes and the clay pigeons. (*Strong Opinions* 116)

What in this passage develops into some lighthearted Nabokov wordplay is but the austere disavowal of the existence of most "antecedents" who might have been given a crucial role in sculpting the author's fictional worlds in more ways than one. Interestingly enough, James Joyce appears as one of the few literary figures whose art Nabokov did not *entirely* dislike, even though was known to have "operated a landfill for literary reputations into which he tipped any number of the late nineteenth century's prominent authors and their acclaimed works."[3]

In several of his interviews and one penetrating lecture on literature that Nabokov delivered at Cornell University, he ranked *Ulysses* high on a scanty list of his preferences; at the same time other works of the Irish master remained callously underrated or unmentioned. *Finnegans Wake* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* both appear at the fag-end of Nabokov's carefully compiled list.[4] In one of his famous "strong opinions" Nabokov declared his genuine admiration for *Ulysses*.[5] Despite the claim made by Alfred Appel, Jr. that Nabokov "consciously profited from Joyce's example without imitating him" (*Strong Opinions* 72), the author himself insisted that he had learned "nothing" at all from the author of *Punningans Wake*, as he once wittily referred to the novel (*Strong Opinions* 102). In his discussion of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*,[6] the author openly admits to being a night-owl when he rejects the novel as "nothing but a formless and dull mass of phony folklore, a cold pudding of a book, a

3. Julian Moynahan, "Nabokov and Joyce," in *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. Vladimir E. Alexandrov (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 433.

4. Shortly after Nabokov had moved to America, he launched his survey course, "Masterpieces of European Fiction," at Cornell University (1950–1959).

5. In a television interview given in 1965, Nabokov said: "*Ulysses*, of course, is a divine work of art and will live on despite the academic nonentities who turn it into a collection of symbols or Greek myths. I once gave a student a C-minus, or perhaps a D-plus, just for applying to its chapters the titles borrowed from Homer, while not even noticing the comings and goings of the man in the brown mackintosh. He didn't even know who the man in the brown mackintosh was. Oh, yes, let people compare me to Joyce by all means, but my English is patball to Joyce's champion game" (TV-13 NY [1965]). His fascination with *Ulysses* is also reflected in Nabokov's plan to translate the novel into Russian, so much so that he even sought Joyce's permission to do so.

6. Alfred Appel, Jr. and Vladimir Nabokov, "An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," in *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature*, A Special Number Devoted to Vladimir Nabokov, 8.2 (Spring 1967) 127–152. p. 137.

persistent snore in the next room, *most aggravating to the insomniac I am*." Nevertheless, it has been convincingly proven that the structural and stylistic oddities of Joyce's works, including his much-derided *Finnegans Wake*, resonate powerfully in Nabokov's novels written during his American period. One may easily detect numerous analogies between the writings of Joyce and Nabokov, who both heartily encourage their readers to embark on a journey of intellectual adventures. Artistic independence, verbal prestidigitation, unorthodox speech and linguistic patterns, experimentation, authorial *alter egos*, the widespread use of obscure allusions, and imaginary, unknown lands of conundrum-laden languages which create an air of verisimilitude, while always keeping the reader at a distance from true reality are only an exiguous number of examples connecting the two writers. The present paper, however, will not undertake the insurmountable task of identifying the innumerable echoes of Joyce in Nabokov's works, nor does it intend to study the oft-discussed literary relationship between the two authors.[7] Instead, it examines how the structure, language, and style of *Finnegans Wake* have been partially incorporated into Nabokov's text. The examination of the circular structures of Giambattista Vico underlying *Finnegans Wake* and the Joyce-like constant of fluidity will provide the basis of the following discussion. Paramount to the elaboration of my argument is the fact that Nabokov only sought to employ an incomplete portion of Joyce's techniques in *Finnegans Wake*. As regards the entirety of his techniques, it would be virtually impossible to measure Joyce's work to any novel written by Nabokov. Knowing that the proof of the pudding – however cold it may be – is in the eating, I shall attempt to test certain Joyce-like paradigms on *Lolita*, *Pale Fire*, and *Bend Sinister*, where both the latent and the manifest influence of *Finnegans Wake* are perceptible.

Since its publication in 1939 the reading of *Finnegans Wake* has remained one of the most redoubtable tasks that readers were to tackle during the sixty-odd years of painstaking philological work surrounding Joyce's well-known "work-in-progress."[8] If the experimental gimmicks widely utilized in *Ulysses* prove how a novel can break loose from its hinges, then *Finnegans Wake* signifies the limits of representation. John Gross has claimed that in *Finnegans Wake* "words take on a capricious life of

7. In addition to the oft-documented allusions to Joyce in Nabokov's work, scholars often call attention to the personal encounters between the two luminaries of twentieth-century literary life. In one interview Nabokov claims to "have dined with Joyce and have had tea with Robbe-Grillet" (*The Sunday Times*, 1969); and, on another occasion, Nabokov was delivering a speech in Paris (instead of Jolán Földes, a Hungarian writer) and described his encounter with the Irishman as follows: "A source of unforgettable consolation was the sight of Joyce sitting, arms folded and glasses glinting, in the midst of the Hungarian football team" (Boyd, p. 434).

8. Roland McHugh's *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* is a case in point (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

their own,"[9] and it seems that even today many readers are exasperated by the apparent unintelligibility of its language.[10] In 1926 Joyce sent a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, providing an explication for the rationale of *Finnegans Wake*: "Today I restarted. One great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot."[11] It is true of *Finnegans Wake* that its verbal experimentation calls for an "activity not dissimilar from that of the translator."[12] In like manner, many of Nabokov's later works (especially the magically flowing style of *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*) have also aroused critical controversy about their modes of representation and about the extent to which the stylistic bravura of the author obfuscates the general comprehension of his readers. The intricately patterned works of meta-fiction for which Nabokov has enjoyed an enviable reputation often seem to require translation, or, rather, the deciphering of not purely linguistic but cultural, historical, and biographical codes as well. While in the case of the polyglot Russian-American writer the unconventionality of style and language only constitutes one, but all the more significant part of the novels, *Finnegans Wake* turns into a vast lexical playfield, where the reader must provide his own subjective annotations and may cast aside all the predefined solutions that *Wake* scholars have relentlessly forced on the consumers of Joyce's text.[13] "Words in *Finnegans Wake*, with their deliberately ambiguous orthography, offer an invitation to the reader to use his puzzle-solving ingenuity and imagination with an arbitrariness which, in turn, is certainly licensed by Joyce's implied purpose in creating the text."[14]

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9. John Gross, *Joyce* (London: Fontana/Collins. 1971), p. 76.

10. Gross, p. 77.

11. Cited in Pieter Bekker, "Reading *Finnegans Wake*," in *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, ed. W. J. McCormack and Alistair Stead (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 187.

12. Cited in Bekker, p. 185.

13. *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*, Nabokov's richest and most passionate novel, is a highly revealing example of the role of languages in his novels as opposed to the Joyce world of *Finnegans Wake*. Set in the imaginary land of Antiterra (or Demonia), Nabokov integrates three existing countries (Russia, France, and the United States) into a single geographical space which appears to be strikingly similar to our own world. The code-switching among and the occasional convergences of the three different languages (Russian, English, and French), which are simultaneously spoken in Nabokov's "familiar-yet-alien make-up of the projected world" (Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* [New York: Methuen, 1987], p. 19), are a clear indication of a slightly distorted yet recognizable locus of events, while the setting and language spoken in *Finnegans Wake* remain obscure and irrational, making the reader's task more enigmatic and puzzling than was Joyce's original intent at the time of publishing *Ulysses*.

14. Ferenc Takács, *Szombathelyi Joyce/The Joyce of Szombathely* (Szombathely: Önkormányzat, 2005), p. 6.

Sailing through the indisputably rough seas of *Finnegans Wake* may very well remind the reader of the absurd coinages and *portmanteaux* of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* and the long tradition of nonsense verse in Anglo-American literature. One must, however, note that Joyce's *idioglossia* is far more convoluted in its dimensions, as the "eclectic and eccentric erudition [Joyce] accumulated along the way" should, in some measure, also be at the disposal of a generation of postmodern readers. Perhaps they are better prepared to produce (rather than consume) an avant-garde text gravitating toward *occultation*, that is, a disorienting experience owing to the multiple meanings the text accommodates, instead of offering the kind of pleasure one would expect from an essentially readerly text.[15] I strongly agree with Gross, who endorses the view that "*Wake*-talk is anything but empty gibberish . . . On the contrary, what we have to contend with while trying to decipher it is an unmanageable excess of meaning – or rather, of secondary meanings, minor associations and allusions which continually send the reader off at a tangent."[16] Whilst the polysemy of Joyce's text has discouraged many readers from experiencing the enchantments of the unwearied philologist, it is worthy of note, as Margot Norris also asserts, that "the text's 'unreadability' becomes [for others] not an obstacle, but a cause for appreciation."[17]

2. Children-colors in *Lolita*

Cryptic as certain literary allusions may appear throughout Nabokov's works, *Lolita* seems to comprise numerous echoes of Joyce, including a fairly straightforward example of an intentional allusion to *Finnegans Wake*.[18] Several *eisegetes* of Nabokov's texts were long preoccupied with the possible congruence between HCE (Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker) and *Lolita*'s Humbert, whose name is transfigured into different droll forms, implying occasional coincidences "with a few of Joyce's punning phonetic variants."[19] Of course, as would be expected of a Nabo-

15. Margot Norris, "*Finnegans Wake*," in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 159.

16. Gross, p. 78.

17. Norris, p. 157.

18. Careful readers and re-readers of *Ada* will also take cognizance of how deftly Nabokov ingrains another direct reference to *Finnegans Wake*. He writes: "Did he like elms? Did he know Joyce's poem about the two washerwomen? He did, indeed. Did he like it? He did" (*Ada* 48). In the online annotations to *Ada*, Brian Boyd points out that the line alludes to the end of the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" chapter (Book One, Chapter 8) of *Finnegans Wake*, where "Tell me," in its last transformation becomes "Tell me, tell me, tell me elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone" (*Ada Online*, http://www.ada.auckland.ac.nz).

19. Alfred Appel, Jr., ed. "Notes," *The Annotated Lolita*, by Vladimir Nabokov (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 414. See notes 221/1 in *The Annotated Lolita* for a list of examples (pp.

kov bereft of influences of all sorts, this is but mere speculation or coincidence, because Joyce's novel is "a very small and blurry smudge on the mirror of my memory," as the writer of *Lolita* claimed.[20] Even so, a conscious allusion to the *Wake* is made in *Lolita*. In his tortuous memoir, Humbert depicts a memorable scene where he and Lolita attend a play, whose exact plot he is unable to recall, but writes that

> [t]he only detail that pleased me was *a garland of seven little graces*, more or less immobile, prettily painted, bare-limbed . . . and were supposed to represent a living rainbow, which lingered throughout the last act . . .. I remember thinking that this idea of *children-colors* had been lifted by authors Clare Quilty and Vivian Darkbloom *from a passage in James Joyce*.
>
> (*AL* 220–221, my emphases)

Clare Quilty, the playwright, and Vivian Darkbloom, his arcane collaborator, plump for a passage from *Finnegans Wake* in lieu of another work by Joyce venerated by Nabokov. Appel, who considers the "seven little children" to stand for the colors of the rainbow, persuasively explains that the *Wake* begins – or rather, opens – with a reversed rainbow, in which each clause of the second paragraph makes use of a color.[21] In fact, Joyce's "living rainbow" is not only condensed into the short opening section of the *Wake* but prevails throughout the whole book. Whether we are confronted with Humbert's inadvertent misreading of the book (unorthodox for the learned littérateur, unless his reading of it lies in its unreadability, as scholars would often put it) or a simple test of our erudition and conversance with the *Wake* is a question left on an indeterminate note. The one thing to be taken for granted is that Quilty's preference of what to "lift" from the *Wake* and not from another, less disparaged work by Joyce is likely to correspond with Nabokov's own choice. This

413–414). Much as I appreciate the meticulous philological work of Nabokovians whose main interest lies in the formalistic aspects of the author's fictional universe, such hypotheses, to my mind, are mostly groundless, hence unconvincing. This conviction is especially pertinent in the case of *Finnegans Wake*, a novel whose allusiveness and titanic holding capacity accommodate *anything* and *anyone* reverberating later in world literature.

20. Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 414. Small and blurry as it is, Nabokov was among the first to peruse a copy of *Haveth Childers Everywhere*, a fragment of Joyce's *tour de force*, written eight years before its publication *in toto* (1938). Brian Boyd writes that Joyce himself handed over the copy to Nabokov at a dinner invitation at Paul Léon's home (Boyd, p. 504).

21. *Joyce's Use of Colors:* Finnegans Wake *and the Earlier Works* by J. Colm O'Sullivan offers an interesting insight into the color patterns of the *Wake*. In it, he claims that Joyce's reason for utilizing patterns of color associations is the fundamental ordering device in the novel, employed for the purpose of finding what these patterns are and elucidating the themes of the work, which would otherwise require superhuman efforts to unravel.

assumption might be confirmed if one supposes that Vivian Darkbloom, vile Quilty's collaborator, also helps the playwright make his choice; or, on the contrary, one might conclude that Quilty is the one helping Darkbloom, whose full name is an anagram for Vladimir Nabokov – *deus absconditus*, or rather, a semi-hidden god, who has retired, as it were, from the world he had created but has not yet grown entirely weary of involvement in his fictional universe. In light of this frequent observation on the constructing of anagrams in *Lolita*, it should come as no surprise that Darkbloom/Nabokov alludes to *Finnegans Wake* – a hateful choice of a hateful character.

3. Finnigan's Wake in *Pale Fire*, Winnipeg Lake in *Bend Sinister*

The cycloramic view of world history in *Finnegans Wake* calls to mind the well-known influence of Giambattista Vico, who argued in *Scienza Nuova* that civilization is but a recurring cycle and has therefore become the progenitor of the unconventional structure of Joyce's novel, journeying on the river Liffey as the reader's cicerone. The "commodius vicus" of the first paragraph is often read as a direct reference to Vico's cyclical theory of history; the rump sentence with which the novel sets off also provides the continuation of the concluding sentence of the book ("A way a lone a last a loved a long the [628] . . . riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs [3]).[22] The fact alone that the book begins where it ends is more than likely to have exerted an influence on some of Nabokov's work, particularly on the creation of *Pale Fire*, a quintessentially postmodernist work, whose circular pattern is akin to that of Joyce's text. *Pale Fire* is a blending of literary genres: it consists of a Foreword, a 999-line poem in heroic couplets ("Pale Fire") by the fictional poet, John Shade, and followed by a lengthy commentary (supposedly written on index cards) by a self-appointed editor, Charles Kinbote, alias King Charles "The Beloved," who claims himself to be the exiled king of the imaginary "distant northern land" of Zembla. John Shade was assassinated before he could complete his poem, which lacks only one line. The manuscript is acquired by Kinbote, who edits and copiously annotates the poem; however, instead of explicating the nuances of Shade's text, Kinbote recounts his circuitous flight from Zembla by alluding to selected parts of the poem. In the Foreword, Kinbote hypothesizes that "there remained to be written only *one* line of the poem (namely verse 1000) which would have been identical to line 1 and would have completed the symmetry of the structure."[23] The annotation of the non-existing line 1000 swerves the reader

22. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 3.
23. Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, p. 8 (emphasis in the original).

back to the opening line; and in doing so, the recurring cycle establishes the elaborately drawn, circular shape of the novel. It is worthwhile to look at how the title of the last index card ("*Line 1000* [= *Line 1:* I was the shadow of the waxwing slain]" [*PF* 206]) stitches together the opening and closing lines of "Pale Fire," the poem:

> But it's not bedtime yet. The sun attains
> Old Dr. Sutton's last two windowpanes.
> . . . . . .
> And through the flowing shade and ebbing light
> A man, unheedful of the butterfly –
> Some neighbor's gardener, I guess – goes by
> *Trundling an empty barrow up the lane*.[24]
>
> *I was the shadow of the waxwing slain*
> By the false azure in the windowpane;
> I was the smudge of ashen fluff – and I
> Lived on, flew on, in the reflected sky.[25]

However, it seems to me that Vico's theory of *corsi* and *ricorsi* alone may not be able to provide irrefutable evidence for the similarities between the two works because circularity is not exclusively a feature of Joyce's works, in literature. The only reason why I find this resemblance between *Pale Fire* and *Finnegans Wake* especially striking is because the poem's (apparently) end-stopped last line is smoothly held over by the opening line, as demonstrated above. In the Foreword, Kinbote asserts with conviction that Shade had a "combinational turn of mind and subtle sense of harmonic balance," which would have prevented him from shattering the mirror-like symmetry of his composition. It is then Kinbote who overrules Shade's authorial decision by arbitrarily gluing line 1000 to the poem, and, in place of an annotation proper, he begins to weave his own story. Should the reader concur or not with Kinbote's speculation concerning the "missing line"? Is he, as the editor of Shade's text, allowed so much freedom that he can even fabricate his own story from bits and pieces of the poem? Although Nabokov himself claimed that *Finnegans Wake* "has no inner connection with *Pale Fire*" (*Strong Opinions* 74), Annalisa Volpone believes that, in addition to the circular pattern, there are common features which create an intimate link between the two texts.[26] Volpone's assertion

24. Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, p. 29 (line 999; emphasis added)

25. Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, p. 49 (line 1; emphasis added)

26. Annalisa Volpone, " 'See the Web of the World': The Hypertextual Plagiarism in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Nabokov's *Pale Fire*," in *Nabokov Online Journal* 3 (2009), August 2009 <http://etc.dal.ca/noj/volume3/articles/05_Volpone.pdf>.

that the novels have a narrative structure that calls for the reader's active involvement in the process of reading brings to mind Barthes' idea of *writerly* texts, according to which the consumer of the text becomes its producer (or rather, author).[27] Such is the case of Joyce's and Nabokov's novels, both of which challenge the reader's traditional notion of reading by disrupting the narrative flux of the text with a structure and a verbal extravagance (much more so in the case of Joyce) which incapacitates the reader from unthinkingly consuming or enjoying the story.[28] It is the non-linear, non-sequential, and fragmented nature of both novels (with their occasional and incessant linguistic experimentation, respectively) that compels the reader to "re-establish formal hierarchies" by attempting to "define the author's role both in *FW* and *PF*, since it must be negotiated and reconfigured page after page."[29] Aside from the rich referentiality of both novels, the herculean task one must tackle in *Finnegans Wake* is dealing with its alien yet strangely familiar language, while in the case of *Pale Fire* the non-sequential arrangement of the index cards and the deliberately misleading editorial instructions (Kinbote's irksome commands as to how the reader should hopscotch among the annotations) cause the reader to advance watchfully. Irrespective of the level of vigilance exercised as one proceeds, one cannot but realize that there is no ready-made solution as to the proper way of reading either novel, and that the reader is invested with the power to establish his or her textual supremacy over the narrative discourse. The coinages of "Finneganese" are endowed with multiple meanings, and it is largely dependent upon the reader how he or she interprets a word or a phrase. As regards *Pale Fire*, it is not only Kinbote who can take the liberty of imposing his own story upon the text, but the readers are also silently urged to read, decode, and reinterpret the novel as they please.

In the commentary appended to line 12, Kinbote openly alludes to Joyce's work by sustaining Nabokov's repugnance for Joyce's novel. Much to the reader's satisfaction, Nabokov's disapproval of *Finnegans Wake* is combined with his devious wit in the passage that follows. Kinbote believes that delivering a lecture on *Finnegans Wake* is far more fitting for a scholar than subjecting *Ulysses* to critical scrutiny.

> Of course, it would have been unseemly for a monarch to appear in the robes of learning at the university lectern and present to rosy youths *Fin-*

27. Volpone uses the term "hypertextual narrative" as a suitable expression to characterize Joyce's and Nabokov's textualities. She says "[t]hey do not write their novels consecutively, chapter after chapter, page after page. Rather, they juxtapose episodes and crucial narrative events following a personal mental pattern, which highly affects their unconventional prose."

28. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wange, 1974), *passim*.

29. Volpone.

> *nigan's Wake* [*sic*] as a monstrous extension of Angus MacDiarmid's 'incoherent transactions' and of Southey's Lingo-Grande ('Dear Stumparumper,' etc.).[30]

In her ingenious commentary of the above passage, Volpone clearly supports the validity of her argument that plagiarism and thievery are symptomatic of both Joyce's and Nabokov's texts both on the linguistic and thematic levels. She considers *Pale Fire* to be "a masterpiece that is surreptitiously built on the practice of purloining," as the title of Nabokov's novel derives from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*:

> I'll example you with thievery:
> The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
> Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,
> And her *pale fire* she snatches from the sun.[31]

Nabokov's allusion to Shakespeare's work is the first instance of literary "theft" in the production of *Pale Fire*. The second theft occurs – now at the intradiegetic level – as Kinbote appropriates Shade's poem to attach to it his *apparatus criticus*, which turns out to be his misuse of "Pale Fire" (the poem) by his heavy reliance on Shade's words to fabricate his own narrative. The Commentary thus "parasitically draws life from the dissected main text [the poem], whose broken sentences and words are recycled for a different narrative."[32]

In addition to *Pale Fire*, where the cyclical configuration of Joyce's text imposingly resonates, *Bend Sinister*, Nabokov's dystopian novel, also abounds in allusions to *Finnegans Wake*. The novel is set in an illusory Central European country whose inhabitants speak both German and Russian, and a moment later an amalgamation of the two, making *Bend Sinister* less accessible to the common reader than many of Nabokov's other books; yet the occasional snatches of a foreign tongue are still a far cry from the weirdly looping sentences of *Finnegans Wake*. In his

30. Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (New York: Lancer Books, 1963), p. 55.

31. William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, August 2009 <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext98/2ws3710.txt> (my emphasis).

32. In Volpone's reading, Hugh MacDiarmid's emergence in the previous passage from *Pale Fire* is a highly revealing example of how thievery connects Joyce's text with that of Nabokov. A prominent member of the "Scottish Renaissance," MacDiarmid was instrumental in establishing a national tradition for Scotland, akin to Macpherson, the controversial "translator" of the still debated Ossian cycle of poems. Volpone writes that "[s]imilarly to MacPherson, Joyce is (re)creating a national epic, intentionally forging a tradition that does not exist. From this perspective, the *Wake* becomes for Kinbote the highest example of literary deceit, a model reference to make Zembla more tangible. Indeed, to turn his imaginary land into a real place, Kinbote needs to endow it with a national history, a culture and, of course, a language."

article, Michael H. Begnal explains that both Giordano Bruno and Giambattista Vico appear in *Bend Sinister* as: "Hamlet at Wittenberg, always late, missing *G. Bruno's* lectures" (112)[33] and ". . . suited his liquidity to a tee: *cp. Winnipeg Lake*, ripple 585, *Vico* Press edition" (114).

Begnal then goes on to add that "[t]he 'p' in '*cp*,' instead of '*cf*,' might be explained by the fact that the river god Alpheus mentioned in the text just before contains the initials of ALP [Anna Livia Plurabelle] and is also the last name of the river Heracles [*sic*] used to cleanse the Augean Stables."[34] Joyce's fascination with liquidity, bodily functions, and fluids is a dominant feature of his texts. Margot Norris also notes that the "sinuous sentence" introducing *Finnegans Wake* "continues a journey: by water, by bodily fluid, by verbal fluency."[35] Several sources underscore the importance of lexical items pertaining to the discharge of bodily fluids (micturition, defecation, and the like), which, among other things, are meant to buttress the smoothly flowing structure of the novel, which is reminiscent of the cyclical movement of natural waters. In Ojibwa, an Algonquian Indian dialect, the town name "Winnipeg" (in *Bend Sinister*) indicates "filthy stream," affording justification for the preponderance of lighthearted punning in matters pertaining to bodily functions in *Finnegans Wake*.[36] In *Bend Sinister* Nabokov makes a deliberate and very successful attempt at reproducing Joyce's *idioglossia*, more precisely, the well-known river speech of the novel: "Lithe, lithping, thin-lipped Ophelia, Amleth's wet dream, a mermaid of Lethe" (114). It is interesting to note that the numerous allu-

33. All parenthetical references are given to this edition: Vladimir Nabokov, *Bend Sinister* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

34. Michael H. Begnal, "*Bend Sinister*: Joyce, Shakespeare, Nabokov," in *Modern Langauge Studies* 15 (1985) p. 23.

35. Norris, p. 24.

36. In his discussion of Hungarian in-jokes (jokes meant for an audience that has access to cultural and linguistic codes readers of other nationalities cannot understand), Ferenc Takács brings forward as evidence several examples of Hungarian and non-Hungarian puns alluding to the excretion of bodily fluids. The passage he cites in his article "Joyce and Hungary" seems intelligible for speakers of Hungarian: "it came straight from the noble white fat, jo, opewide sat, *jo, jo*, her why hide that, *jo, jo, jo* the winevat, of the most serene *magyansty* az archdiochesse, if she is a duck, she's a douches, and when she has a *feherbour* snot her fault" (cited in Takács, p. 8). "Feherbour" (Hungarian "fehérbor" means "white wine") serves as a reference to the urine; "snot" indicates the mucus from the nostrils; "douches" is a *double entendre*, both pointing to the noble birth of the woman described and calling to mind the irrigation of the vulva, administered by a douche-bag. The passage continues: "now is it? artstouchups, funny you're grinning at, fancy you're in her yet, Fanny Urinia" (*FW* 171). Here the name "Fanny" denotes the female genitalia in argot, and the name of Urania (the muse of astrology in Greek mythology, meaning "heavenly") is also changed to signify bodily fluids.

sions to *Finnegans Wake* are not simply interwoven into the disjointed sections of the novel but also dominate its plot structure at large. Speakers of Russian are more likely to make this assertion, since the name of Adam Krug, the protagonist, is a *double entendre*: it means "circle" in Russian and "jug" in German. It is this circle that encompasses the whole microcosm of the novel and sets apart Krug's "mirok," his inner world, from the "mir," or the world that exists outside him.[37] The circle of the novel is similar to the corresponding patterns of *Finnegans Wake*. The beginning and ending of *Bend Sinister* are thus worth observing to see how the "puddle" of the following passages is used to fabricate the framework of the novel:

> An oblong *puddle* inset in the coarse asphalt; like a fancy footprint filled to the brim with quicksilver; like a spatulate hole through which you can see the nether sky. Surrounded, I note, by a diffuse tentacled black dampness where some dull dun dead leaves have stuck. Drowned, I should say, before the puddle had shrunk to its present size. (23, my emphasis)

> I could also distinguish the glint of a special *puddle* (the one Krug had somehow perceived through the layer of his own life), an oblong puddle invariably acquiring the same form after every shower because of the constant spatulate shape of a depression in the ground. (212, my emphasis)

If one concurs with the somewhat recursive yet pertinent statement of William York Tindall that "*Finnegans Wake* is about *Finnegans Wake* . . . about everything," then a similar observation can be made about the all-encompassing quality of Nabokov's work, too.[38] Critics have claimed that Nabokov's *Bend Sinister* is as much a dream as *Finnegans Wake*, in which the "I" of the novel is the dreamer of a dream. Krug is not only the dreamer but also the participant in it; and there appears in the plot "a nameless, mysterious genius who took advantage of the dream to convey his own peculiar code message . . . the presence of someone in the know," who is identified in the *Introduction* as "an anthropomorphic deity impersonated by me" (*Bend Sinister* 64 and xii). In his famous lecture on *Ulysses* Nabokov speculates at

37. "Oh, 'philosophy.' *You* know. When you try to imagine a *mirok* [small pink potato] without the least reference to any you have eaten or will eat" (*Bend Sinister* 18). The "mirok" of the sentence is the diminutive of the Russian word "mir," denoting world. In *Pnin*, the eponymous hero purchases a soccer ball for his son, and, much to the surprise of the shop assistant "with wrists and palms he outlined a portable world. It was the same gesture he used in class when speaking of the 'harmonical wholeness' of Pushkin" (Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin* [London: Penguin, 2000], p. 82).

38. William York Tindall, *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), p. 237.

length as to the identity of the Man in the Brown Macintosh, who reappears in the novel on several occasions:[39]

> Do we know who he is? I think we do. The clue comes in chapter 4 of part two, the scene at the library. Stephen is discussing Shakespeare and affirms that Shakespeare himself is present in his, Shakespeare's, works. Shakespeare, he says, tensely: "He has hidden his own name, a fair name, William, in the plays, a super here, a clown there, as a painter of old Italy set his face in a dark corner of his canvas. . ." and this is exactly what Joyce has done – *setting his face in a dark corner of his canvas*. The Man in the Brown Macintosh who passes through the dream of the book is no other than the author himself.[40]

Just as Joyce orchestrates the diverse elements of Earwicker's dream, so too does Nabokov keep authorial control over those of Krug and everything else he had created in his private, fictional world.[41] The fact that Krug is but another of a series of authorial *alter egos* (the aforementioned "anthropomorphic deity" of the *Introduction*) proliferating in Nabokov's novels also establishes an intimate connection with Joyce's doubles all through his career.[42]

4. Conclusion

I have claimed in the foregoing that a similitude of techniques in the works of the two masters calls for stimulating discussions. Whilst the experimental language of *Finnegans Wake* and Joyce's methods of unimpeded stream-of-consciousness often come close to being impenetrable, both the novel's circularity at the most obvious linguistic level and the prevalent theme of fluidity make its reading highly entertaining and, at a local level, fairly transparent. In addition to several other components of the Joyce heritage that Nabokov skillfully integrated into his own texts, it is the stylistic accomplishment of both writers within the literary traditions that places them on nearly equal footing. The sinuously constructed, literally

39. For a discussion of authorial self-representation in *Ulysses* and *Lolita*, respectively, see Ákos I. Farkas, "As McFate Would Have It: The Author's Joycean Cameo in *Lolita*," in the present issue of *The AnaChronist* (111–120).

40. Vladimir Nabokov, "*Ulysses*," in *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), pp. 319–320.

41. Begnal, p. 25.

42. See my MA thesis, "The Questions of Identity in Nabokov's Fiction," for a detailed discussion on doubles and novelistic self-representations in Nabokov's *Despair* and *Lolita* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University, 2006).

overflowing story of *Finnegans Wake* has clearly found its way into Nabokov's fiction under the name "cosmic synchronization" in *Speak, Memory*. J. B. Sisson, who has offered the most systematic treatment of the subject to date, describes "cosmic synchronization" as "the posited desire of the artist to apprehend the entire universe by an awareness expanding rapidly outward from the artist's consciousness. . . . This process ideally occurs so rapidly as to create an effect of instantaneity."[43] As opposed to *Finnegans Wake*, Nabokov's cosmically synchronized scenes create the impression that the novel is composed of disparate elements; but then these elements, "by a process of imagined superimposition,"[44] come together in a unified, synchronous whole, a concatenation of images, constituting pieces of a huge puzzle waiting to be assembled in the very fashion the "anthropomorphic deity" of the text enjoins. Nabokov's *raison d'être* for thinking unsympathetically of some of Joyce's novels is elucidated by a fleeting reference to "poor Stream of Consciousness, *marée noir* [black tide] by now" in *Ada*.[45] To Nabokov, the unrestrained and continuous flow of self-perceptions and feelings is unsatisfactory, because, he claims, an ordering principle in both art and life is indispensible; disjointed fragments and unconnected thought-processes ought to be consciously arranged in the intricately patterned designs for which Nabokov is highly credited as a writer.[46] It is this dearth of rational and organized thinking that dehumanizes *Finnegans Wake* and keeps it at a distance from Nabokov's novels. The only rule, one may conclude, to be observed in *Finnegans Wake* is that there are virtually no rules; or rather, the rules of the game are created as much by the reader as by the writer himself, thereby implying that the most important difference between Joyce and Nabokov is the respective amount of freedom they allow the reader. Nonetheless, it must have been Joyce who taught Nabokov how to compose fiction as if it were a dream. Strangely enough Nabokov remained a wakeful dreamer all his life.

43. J. B. Sisson, "Nabokov's Cosmic Synchronization and 'Something Else,'" *Nabokov Studies* 20 (1994), p. 155.

44. Sisson, p. 177.

45. Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada or Ardor, A Family Chronicle* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 237.

46. In *Lolita*, Humbert admits to having composed his memoir with an elaborate pattern in mind: "Quietly the fusion took place, and everything fell into order, into the pattern of branches that I have woven throughout this memoir with the express purpose of having the ripe fruit fall at the right moment" (*The Annotated Lolita*, p. 272).

Éva Antal

Pygmalions' Reading of Reading Pygmalions

Rhetorical Self-Quest in de Man, Rousseau, and Ovid*

This paper discusses issues of autobiography, or life-writing, that is, the writing of (a) life/self, focusing on two images: the stony statue and the sealing, melting wax that appear in the readings of narcissistic Pygmalions and their prosopopoeia. Although the *apropos* of this reading is provided by the 'blind statue' of Rousseau and Pygmalion, I cannot help writing about Narcissus, who as a wax-figure or, rather, 'as a reverant ghost' keeps reappearing. While the text is concerned with the question of self/life-writing and life work in literary criticism, I also pay attention to the self-reflexive, life-giving and all-demanding irony of postmodern reading theories. Although the analysis centres on Rousseau's works (*Narcissus*, *Pygmalion*), the central classical Ovidian figure is Pygmalion, whose creative 'life-giving' story is often alluded to in Anglophone deconstructive critical writings.

> Is the status of a text like the status of a statue? (Paul de Man)

I

In his "Autobiography As De-Facement" Paul de Man claims that "autobiography . . . is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts."[1] If every text is autobiographical, then the study of autobiography, being the figure of reading, cannot reveal self-knowledge, but presents "the impossibility of closure and of totalization (that is, the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions."[2] In my paper I discuss self-quest and life-writing, that is, the writing of (a) life/self,

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1. Paul de Man, "Autobiography As De-Facement," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), 67–81, p. 70.

2. De Man, p. 71.

focusing on two images: the stony statue and the sealing, melting wax that appear in the readings of narcissistic Pygmalions and in their versions of prosopopoeia. Although the *apropos* of my reading are the blind Rousseau and Pygmalion,[3] I cannot help also writing about Narcissus, who, as a wax-figure, or rather 'as a reverent ghost' keeps reappearing in the text.

Why is Rousseau presented as a blind statue in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* and in de Man's "Shelley Disfigured?" We can suspect that it can be explained by the main concern of romanticism with architecture and statuary, as de Man refers to it. But we cannot forget about de Man's phrase, namely that the romantic poet was deeply concerned with the "encrypted statues of Truth" of philosophy.[4] For Shelley, Rousseau is basically the philosopher of the self-quest, though in *The Triumph of Life* he is shown to fail in his quest for self-knowledge. In the figural language of the poem, as de Man points out, Rousseau's brain becomes 'sand,' his eyes turn to 'stony orbs,' that is, Rousseau is disfigured, defaced.[5] In de Man's text the self-reflexive moment of reading is beautifully displayed with the 'seeing' sun-eye, the reflecting well, and Narcissus' rainbow-like iris. But what if we take into consideration that "the sun 'sees' its own light reflected, like Narcissus, in a well that is a mirror and also an eye"?[6] What if in the frozen moment of self-understanding the viewer is stoned and blind, and his iris/the rainbow becomes "a rigid, stony arch"? As we know in (rhetorical) reading/understanding "the text serves as a mirror of our own knowledge and our knowledge mirrors in its turn the text's signification."[7] The romantics favoured the idea of "monumentalization;" consequently their texts can be read as their epitaphs and monumental graves. As de Man adds, "they [viz. the romantics] have been made into statues for the benefit of future archaeologists"[8] – all readings are monumentalization.

In "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self" de Man also highlights that contemporary criticism has found relevant the problem of the self and the problem of the 'speaking voice' in the romantic works. The main concentration on the emergence of the self in Wordsworth's, Shelley's, Keats's, Hölderlin's, and Rousseau's

3. Actually, the *apropos* of the text is provided by the re-reading of my own paper, "The Ironical Allegory of Remembrance and Oblivion (In Memory of Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida)," *The AnaChronisT* 11 (2005) 233–252. For an overview of "à propos of à propos," see Derrida's "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2)," in Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), 71–160, pp. 76–77.

4. De Man, "Shelley Disfigured," p. 95.

5. De Man, "Shelley Disfigured," p. 100.

6. De Man, "Shelley Disfigured," p. 109.

7. De Man, "Shelley Disfigured," p. 112.

8. De Man, "Shelley Disfigured," p. 121.

works goes together with their realisation of the problematic relationship between origin and totality, what's more, the temporality of literary language. De Man finds that the problem of "the split, the disjunction between the empirical and what we have called the literary, or poetic self" is still crucial in the understanding of writing and reading.[9] It is obvious that the abyssal or labyrinthine structure of self-writing invites the reader to join the writer's self-quest with the "presence of a double self in the terms of self-knowledge and self-deception."[10] While reading, we fancy/imagine that we identify ourselves with the speaking voice and Rousseau is a test case for de Man, claimed "a philosopher of the self."[11]

In his works Rousseau dramatises the (ironic) duplication of his empirical self and the one appearing in his work; the most remarkable 'duplication' can be noticed in his *Dialogues*, where the two conversing figures are called Rousseau and Jean-Jacques. According to Jean Starobinski, Rousseau succeeds in escaping the dangers of reflection, as "he claims to be entirely separated from his own existence, pushing the reflexive disjunction (*dédoublement)* to the point where the reflected image would become, for the reflecting consciousness, an objective figure, kept at a distance and observable as from the outside. . ."[12] It is true that we can observe some "oscillation between materialistic naturalism and transcendental intuition in Rousseau's works" and that Rousseau tends to call his imaginative works *fiction*, referring to the "fiction-engendering faculty" of the self; but the pragmatic self uses imagination for the benefit of its own pragmatic purposes. De Man thinks that Rousseau's self-transparency is only a trick; the above mentioned "oscillation is . . . a succession of flights from self-knowledge."[13] I would rather think that Rousseau thematises the face-giving and face-taking of memory, writing 'the history of his

9. Paul de Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminar and Other Papers*, ed. E. S. Burt, Kevin Newmark, Andrzej Warminski (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1993), 25–49, pp. 25–26.

10. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," pp. 27–28. Thus, it is not by chance that Rousseau's readers had mistaken the author's voice several times for his own; for instance, Mme de Staël adored the passionate voice of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, while Hazlitt disliked his over egotistical self-centredness.

11. Paul de Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," in *The Allegories of Reading* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979), 160–187, p. 163.

12. Quoted in de Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 35.

13. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," pp. 37–38. He also quotes Starobinski's telling passage to show Rousseau's double perspective about the work of remembering in *The Confessions*: "By abandoning myself *simultaneously* to the *memory* of the impression I received and to the present sentiment, I will paint the state of my soul in a *double perspective*, namely at the moment when the event happened to me and at the moment I described it" (p. 38, my italics).

soul.' It seems that an autobiographical piece cannot work without the (double) irony of *dédoublement* caused by the allegorical-ironical structure of forgetting and recollecting embedded in the ironic context of writing *itself*.

Similarly, de Man says that in prosopopoeia, behind the mask of Rousseau's conceitedness, "an element of distance, of disinterestedness is introduced from the start, and the confessional statement is admittedly fictionalized, changed by an imaginative act of writing, which prevents it from coinciding entirely with itself."[14] To understand Rousseau's confrontation between the artist and his work, dramatised in the questions of selfhood, de Man analyses two of Rousseau's brief dramatic works: an early piece, *Narcisse* (with its "Preface") and *Pygmalion*, that was written between the philosophical-literary and the confessional parts of his life-work in 1762. In another writing, de Man says about *Pygmalion* that it focuses on the self's getting closer to being in artistic creation, where the work is given priority over the self.[15]

II

Before reading Rousseau's version of Pygmalion and others' versions of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, it is quite fruitful to re-read the 'original' story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Although in Ovid's narrative most mythical transformations are related to love and passion, human artists and skilful artisans – for instance, the weaver Arachne, the poet Orpheus, and the inventor Daedalus – are punished, as the Olympian gods cannot endure human rivals. The sculptor Pygmalion's story about his bringing the self-made statue to life is a central and a uniquely positive one in the work. The myth – more exactly, Ovid's telling of the myth – is placed within the song of Orpheus, who has a verbal power over death, while Pygmalion has a visual and tactile power over dead material; Ovid has all kinds of power displayed in his work, as Philip Hardie puts it.[16] Actually, the Ovidian narrative of the 'life-giving' artist's story is another reading of 'Pygmalion.' In an earlier one, in Philostephanus' version of the Cyprian legend, Pygmalion was a king, not an artist, who was "lustfully infatuated with a statue of the goddess Venus, which he took from the sanctu-

14. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 39.

15. Paul de Man, "Madame de Staël and Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in *Critical Writings, 1953–1978*, ed. Lindsay Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 178: "the fiction, by the intermediary of artistic creation, brings the private self closer to being. The same movement occurs in Rousseau when Pygmalion's self, engendering Galatea, permits her to become the self's true centre. The priority of the fiction is achieved in self-renunciation."

16. Philip Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 188.

ary and polluted with his embrace."[17] It is important to emphasise that Ovid changed the source story because in his version he *made* the King of Cyprus (or of Paphos) from "the perverse *agalmatophiliac* [viz. statue-lover] of the traditional version to a pious lover."[18] Pygmalion becomes the elegiac lover and the artist who in his creative fantasy fulfils his desire. While in the Greek myth Pygmalion was a tyrant and sinner who offended Venus, in Ovid's version he is made a shy sculptor who turns away from love and women. More exactly, he turns away from women after seeing the lechery of the prostitutes in Cyprus. In Ovid's poetic version of the myth the "loathsome Propoetides" are punished in a highly inventive way – they are turned to stone. To quote from the *Metamorphoses*: "Then, as all sense of shame left them, the blood hardened in their cheeks, and it required only a slight alteration to transform them into stony flints."[19] Readers of the passage find different meanings of the stoniness of women here: while Kenneth Gross takes it as a chiastic relation, Joseph B. Solodow remarks on the metaphoric 'hardness' of the prostitutes that is made literal by Ovid playing on its figurative and literal meanings.[20] It is not difficult to see Ovid's irony in the prostitutes' turning to stone and, as a refusal, Pygmalion's making of a perfect ivory statue to avoid the 'stony' ladies. As it goes from stone to stone:

> When Pygmalion saw these women, living such wicked lives, he was revolted by the many faults which nature had implanted in the female sex, and for a long time lived a bachelor existence, without any wife to share his home. But meanwhile, with marvellous artistry, he skilfully carved a snowy ivory statue. He made it lovelier than any woman born, and fell in love with his own creation.[21]

After its creation Pygmalion starts to court his 'stony' maiden: speaking and giving presents to it, dressing and embracing the statue. In some readings of Ovid's Pygmalion story, the (quite obvious) eroticism of the myth is highlighted by the reminiscence of the original story in which the King of Cyprus wanted to have sex with the

17. Elaine Fantham, *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), p. 59. See also Jane M. Miller, "Some Versions of Pygmalion," in *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Martindale Charles (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 205–214, p. 205.

18. G. K. Galinsky, *Ovid's Metamorphoses. An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 89 (my italics).

19. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (Penguin Books, 1955, repr. 1961), p. 231.

20. Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1992), p. 72 and Joseph B. Solodow, *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 2.

21. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 252 (10.243–49).

statue of Venus, and, ultimately, he contaminated it. Jane M. Miller thinks that the sexuality of the source tale is balanced with the life-giving power of art in Ovid's version.[22] It is true that Pygmalion's story becomes a metaphor for the creative process, but it is also revealed in one hint that Pygmalion may have had a sexual relationship with the statue, using it as a substitute for a mistress, "calling it his bedfellow." Returning home to his statue from the sanctuary, Pygmalion leans over their bed and kisses it. Then he senses that it, or rather, for the first time, 'she,' seems warm:

> he laid his lips on hers again, and touched her breast with his hands – at his touch the ivory lost its hardness, and grew soft: his fingers made an imprint on the yielding surface, just as *wax* of Hymettus melts in the sun and, worked by men's fingers, is fashioned into many different shapes, and made fit for use *by being used*.[23]

Practically, the statue is softened by Pygmalion's life-giving rubbing that naturally produces warmth, melting stoniness; and that rubbing can be read as the act of love-making. The statue melts like wax in the warm hands of the lover/creator; where wax is the "emblem at once of the unity and changeability of all matter."[24] We can say that the co-operation of the seeing/heating sun and creative human hands results in a true, a real metamorphosis. After melting, the wax becomes solid again, taking its final shape in the form of a real woman. I find Leonard Barkan's summary appropriate here: "And, once the wax has softened and changed its form, it does not stay in the shadowy realm but rather becomes real. . . . Pygmalion is potentially narcissistic since he falls in love with his own creation, but metamorphosis through his art and his belief in his art makes of shadow a very real substance."[25]

We should agree with Barkan that Pygmalion's treatment of the statue as a living human recalls, (or *echoes)*, Narcissus' "passionate devotion that refuses to know the identity of its object and cannot distinguish between shadow and substance."[26] Pygmalion's blind devotion to his self-made lover resembles Narcissus' obsession (*furor*) and his tragic inability to extend beyond himself. But in the artist's 'imaginative' story – let us imagine – there are two lovers, while Narcissus himself is simultaneously the lover

22. Jane M. Miller, "Some Versions of Pygmalion," in *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 205–214, p. 206. Kenneth Gross even claims that Pygmalion's courting of the statue does not lack the impression of fetishism and necrophilia (Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, p. 75).

23. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 253 (10.280–86) (my italics).

24. Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh. Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986), p. 77.

25. Barkan, p. 78.

26. Barkan, p. 76.

and the beloved in his life and in his death. Hardie also thinks that Pygmalion's and Narcissus' stories are similar, though in the former there is a progression from death to life via the image, while in the latter it is in the opposite direction; Narcissus' own image and his realisation of it being just an image of himself causes his death.[27] His stupefied gaze (viz. Greek *narke*, numbness) and his motionlessness make the image at which he marvels even more like a statue. In his pool he takes his illusionary reflection as an image of a marble statue: "[s]pellbound by his own self, he remained there motionless, with fixed gaze, like a statue carved from Parian marble."[28] Narcissus, like Pygmalion, is praying for the coming to life of (t)his statue, but his statue is literally his own reflected image in the virgin pool. His statue's coming to 'life,' that is, his realisation of loving his own *image (imago)*, causes his death. Barkan says that Narcissus, like the other figures of the great stories of discovery, 'acts' in the spirit of *nosce te ipsum* (know thyself) and they are all figures of the mirror:

> *intus habes quem poscis* 'he whom you seek is within you.' . . . It stands in a credo for human experience in the world of metamorphosis. We contain our own identity, and we find it in the mirror of transformation. We contain our destinies within us, petrifications of ourselves into stone and image. Narcissus-like, we often seek in love what is within us, and it is revealed through transformation.[29]

His death means his entering the realm of images expressed in the imagery of dissolution: like the melting wax he pines away while his tears are flowing in his eyes. The heat of his fiery passion is balanced by the cold surface of the water, his mirror. As Barkan puts it, "the boy has entered completely into the mirror realm," as if through the tear-stain he had gone to the other side of the mirror.[30] While Narcissus is literally reduced to an image of himself, the artist Pygmalion (like the other artists in the *Metamorphoses*) creates an/the image of himself. Actually, the two processes seem to be different but are in chiastic relation, and, quoting Barkan, "all metamorphoses are in a sense transformations to imago . . . the turn to *imago* is . . . in fact identical to the stony transformation."[31]

In Pygmalion's story "Ovid creates a figure for the viewer rather than the artist, producing a narrative about the 'beholder's share' in creating the impression of real presence in a work of art."[32] The opening 'close' reading gives life to the stone-like

27. Hardie, p. 189.
28. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 92 (3.418–19).
29. Barkan, p. 92.
30. Barkan, p. 52.
31. Barkan, p. 90.
32. Hardie, p. 189.

closed text, so that the particular reading should melt it like wax so as to freeze it again into stone, into another reading. In reading, passionate attention and ardent vigour are needed so that the text should produce its meanings in different forms of interpretations. "Each critic becomes a Pygmalion,"[33] when in his/her Narcissistic petrifaction, he/she gives life to a stony work of art in the chiastic structure of reading. In Narcissus' gaze we should recognise a general paradigm for the beholder of a work of art and the narcissistic quality of the beholder's response. Philip Hardie describes the narcissistic features of reading very well in his *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*:

> the viewer reads into the image his own phantasies, and in so doing transgresses the boundary between the world of the viewer and the world of the artwork. . . . The surface of the pool is also the interface between reality and illusion for those outside the text. Narcissus is a figure for the desiring reader, caught between the intellectual understanding that texts are just texts, words with no underlying reality, and the desire to believe in the reality of the textual world. Narcissus turns into a sophisticated reader at the moment he recognises that the reflection is himself.[34]

Narcissus' situation mirrors that of the engaged reader as he/she knows with his/her rational mind that the reflection has no reality, but cannot stop thinking as if it did. Metaphorically, the reader becomes one with his/her image-reflection, and in a (narcissistic) text, the voice/persona is able to become one with his/her image in the images/figures of rhetoric.

What Hardie says about the narcissistic reader is strikingly *echoed* in what J. Hillis Miller expresses on the Pygmalion-quality of reading in his *Versions of Pygmalion*. Miller puts personification and prosopopoeia in the centre of his analysis, claiming that "the act of personification [is] essential to all storytelling and storyreading."[35] In his "Proem: Pygmalion's Prosopopoeia" he discusses the story told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and again emphasises that for him one of the characteristic features of Ovid's narrative is that each metamorphosis can be seen and defined as "the literalization of a metaphor." Miller straightforwardly blames the rhetorical figures of language: "[i]n the cruel justice of the gods we see the terrible performative power that figures of speech may have. . . . The *Metamorphoses* shows what aberrant figurative language can do. The power of the gods to intervene in

33. Leo C. Curran, "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," in *Arethusa* 5 (1972) 71–91, p. 71.

34. Hardie, pp. 147–148.

35. J. Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1990), "Preface," vii. Although de Man's 'prosopopeia' is spelled here as 'prosopopoeia,' and there is a footnote referring to de Man's ideas, his works are not cited in "Proem."

human history is the allegorization of this linguistic power."[36] He also calls attention to the interrelatedness of stories in Book 10, emphasising that Venus seems to have overwhelming power in the happenings, bringing the statue to life so as to be overcome by something greater than herself, love or rather passion in the Adonis episode. Pygmalion, whose self-celibacy is caused by his aversion to the 'stony' and 'painted' prostitutes, is destined to fall in love with a stony and painted statue. This is to say that Miller pays attention to the textual irony of the narrative and concentrates on figurative language, which I have also done in my rhetorical reading.

Miller sees Pygmalion's error in "taking prosopopoeia literally," since he regards metamorphosis as the literalising allegory of the face-giving prosopopoeia. The trope gives face, name, and voice to the absent, the inanimate and to the dead, as it is also the trope of mourning. To quote Miller's summary on the myth:

> For Pygmalion, the other is not really other. Pygmalion has himself made Galatea. She is the mirror image of his desire. His relation to her is not love for another, in an attachment always shadowed by the certain death of the other. It is a reciprocity in which the same loves the same. Here Narcissus' vain desire seems fulfilled . . . . For Galatea, to see at all is to see Pygmalion and to be subject to him. It is as if Narcissus' reflection in the pool had come alive and could return his love.[37]

In Pygmalion's story an inanimate object comes to life, that is, an anthropomorphism takes place, while in the other stories the transformation goes in the other direction: from human being to animal, plant or object. Thus, the story of Pygmalion is a unique one: in Miller's phrase, it is "a prosopopoeia of prosopopoeia."[38]

Miller also refers to the 'waxing' erotic passage in the narrative, when the ivory becomes flesh. Here, on the one hand, he emphasises the importance of male productive work on passive (female) material, taking wax as the traditional figure of/trope for man's shaping power.[39] On the other hand, he clearly sees the possible

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36. Miller, p. 1. In my paper I retain the name Galatea (this spelling is also kept by most of the cited critics, e.g. J. Hillis Miller); de Man names the statue-work Galathea while some critics – Williams Huntington and Shierry M. Weber – keep the French Galathée in their analysis of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (cf. notes 41 and 71 below).

37. Miller, pp. 4–5.

38. Miller, p. 6. Pygmalion's story can be read as a face-giving story of a face-giving, and in this phrase (in the reading of the phrase), even this 'of' is to be taken metaphorically. For the metaphorical 'of,' see also Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986), pp. 16–17, and J. Hillis Miller, *Theory Now and Then*, pp. 355–356.

39. Miller, p. 7.

"abuse" or "misuse" of Pygmalion's creative "use" of wax, which is also related to his own self-abuse, taking prosopopoeia literally. Not only does Pygmalion make the mistake of taking a figure of speech literally. According to Miller, in reading we are likely to take the statue as a real person, or to think of "black marks on the page" as stories of real persons. Readers, critics, and teachers personify, that is, give faces to the characters in the narrative of the texts: "stories are all versions of Pygmalion and Galatea, that is, stories in which the act of prosopopoeia essential to any story-telling is overtly thematized, as when someone falls in love with a statue."[40]

III

Now, it is time to return to Rousseau and his self-questi(oni)ng narcissistic version of Pygmalion. Williams Huntington, in his thorough study entitled *Rousseau and Romantic Autobiography*, analyses the relationship between two important concepts in the oeuvre: *amour* and *amitié*, that is, love and friendship. Huntington differentiates between *amour* and *amitié* on the basis of their relationship to imagination; while in *amitié* it is an "extrinsic catalyst," in *amour* it is an intrinsic, final cause. On the other hand, "*amitié* implies a symmetrical, reciprocal, and essentially circular relationship, based on identity," but "*amour* implies an asymmetrical, non-reciprocal, relationship, based on difference."[41] Rousseau is greatly concerned with the differences between the real and the illusory, and *amour*, intensifying these differences, makes him aware of this discrepancy. For him love is not a dialogue between two persons, but between the actual world and the third party, imagination.

Rousseau made distinctions between self-love (*amour de soi*) and vanity (*amour propre*): the latter is an infectious disease and "the most corrosive of emotions," while the former means the natural and "the unreflective, loving passion." He also claimed "in his evolutionary story of the human heart" that self-love was corrupted by the later kind of love.[42] de Man sees that "in contrast to the solitary self-concentration of self-love, *amour propre* is entirely directed towards the approval of others": while the paraphrase of self-love can be '*je m'aime*,' of

40. Miller, p. 14.

41. Williams Huntington, *Rousseau and Romantic Autobiography* (Oxford: OUP, 1983), pp. 56–57.

42. John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), pp. 155–157. He also associates *amour de soi* with the Freudian 'primary narcissism' and sees a unique combination of the two kinds of love in self-writing: "Autobiography may be a form of writing directed to the satisfaction of the writer's *amour-propre*, but he will use it, uniquely, for the expression of his *amour de soi*, or true self-love" (pp. 156–157).

amour propre it is '*on m'aime*' or '*je suis aimable*.'[43] Rousseau's early dramatic piece *Narcisse ou l'Amant de lui-même* (*Narcissus, or, the Lover of Himself*) is a comic play where Valère (with a telling male-female name) falls in love with his own portrait disguised as a woman. Valère is a classical comic figure, the type of conceited young fop who is mystified by vanity. He is not like Ovid's Narcissus, who recognises that he loves his own image, since Rousseau's Narcisse remains blind *in/to* his self-love and fails to realise his own self-centredness. On his wedding day Valère is tricked and deluded by the 'fake' portrait and only with the help of the other characters can he get back to his senses. He is not an artist and the portrait is painted by his sister, who wants to play on her brother's vanity and is also tricked by the others in the play. *Narcisse* is about delusion and self-delusion in love. Through the interplay between self-love (*amour de soi*), vanity (*amour propre*) and the love of others, Valère's misreading of the portrait mainly presents his vanity. His narcissism is not metaphorical, or tropical, as it only reveals his *amour propre*, making the comedy satirical and didactic. Thus de Man's statement, namely that "the self here never really becomes another, but remains all too much its own interested self," is true in relation to all the characters.[44]

In the rhetoric of *Narcisse*, there are many puns and grammatical plays on the reflexive mode. The most frequently quoted is in Scene XIII when Valère's drunk valet Frontin reveals the secret of the portrait to his master's sister, the trickster: "It is a portrait. . . metamor. . . no, metaphor. . . yes, metaphorized (*métaphorisé*). It is my master, it is a girl. . . you have made a certain mixture."[45] The portrait is associated with a metaphor but we can take it as a slip of tongue as the drunk valet could have wanted to say that the portrait has been 'metamorphosed.' Frontin also says here that Valère has fallen in love not with the portrait, not himself as he failed to recognise himself in it, but with the "resemblance." That is, he is suspended between self-love and the transitive love of the others – between the love for the self and the love for the other. Similarly, the portrait is not entirely fictional since it exits in the mode of simulacrum. De Man thinks that "resemblance is 'loved' because it can be interpreted as identity as well as difference and it is therefore unseizable, forever in flight."[46] Valère, who is Rousseau's Narcisse, (mis)reads his own portrait and the

43. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 165.

44. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," pp. 41–42.

45. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Narcissus, or, the Lover of Himself*, in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 10, ed. and trans. by Allan Bloom, Charles Butterworth and Christopher Kelly (Hanover and London: Univ. Press of New England, 2004), 125–160, p. 150. See also in French: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Narcisse ou l'Amant de lui-même*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, II (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 959–1018, p. 1006.

46. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 168.

misread self-portrait stands for the beloved. According to de Man, "the portrait is a substitution, but it is impossible to say whether it substitutes for the self or for the other; it constantly vacillates between both. . . . [L]ove, like perfectibility, is structured like a figure of speech. The portrait allows for a bizarre substitution of self for other, and of other for self, called love."[47] The portrait is "beloved" and partakes of *amour de soi*, though in the displaced version of an imagined other; and it becomes a figure: "the metaphor of a metonymy." In the play we cannot know whether the beloved is "a person or a portrait, a referential meaning or a figure" – here "selfhood is not a substance but a figure."[48] In *Narcisse* Rousseau "portrayed" the action as a "painter," and as the author of the text his main concern is the rhetoric of self. As a result of this, he produces a misreading in his self-quest. But it is not only Rousseau who can be taken here as the rhetorician of the self since de Man's main concern is also the rhetoric of self-quest. Valére's self-love is a "representation of a rhetorical structure . . . that escapes the control of the self," which shows that the rhetorical resources of language are incompatible with selfhood. This is the revealing passage about the ironic relation of rhetoric (language) and the self, in full:

> Rhetoric all too easily appears as the tool of *the self*, hence its pervading association, in the everyday use of the term, with persuasion, eloquence, the manipulation of the self and of others. Hence also the naïvely pejorative sense in which the term is commonly used, in opposition to a literal use of language that would not allow the subject to conceal its desires. The attitude is by no means confined to the popular use of 'rhetoric' but is in fact a recurrent philosophical topos, a philosopheme that may well be constitutive of philosophical language itself. In all these instances, *rhetoric functions as a key to the discovery of the self*; and it functions with such ease that one may well begin to wonder whether the lock indeed shapes the key or whether it is not the other way round, that a lock (and a secret room or box behind it) had to be invented in order to give a function to the key.[49]

In this allegorical passage of highly refined rhetoric, de Man not only questions the relation between the Self/selves shown as locked rooms or boxes, and language with its keys to the locks, but he also suggests that some rooms/boxes should be

47. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 169. Taking love as a rhetorical figure recalls Freud's ideas, for instance, on the narcissistic partner choice. Moreover, de Man refers to Ricoeur's statement on Freud showing him as "the rhetorical undoer and the hermeneutic recoverer of the self" (de Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 174).

48. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 170.

49. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 173 (my italics).

kept locked. However many boxes (books?) are opened, there will always be other (locked) ones – perhaps in the form of Chinese boxes (*mise en abyme*).

According to Huntington, in his *Narcisse* Rousseau shows the relationship between imagined and real objects of love, as "the literary or linguistic model mediating between the sentiment of the lover and the object of his love insures that they will never fully coincide."[50] *Amour* relates to its object indirectly, through '*autre univers*' (Rousseau), or world of imagination, and it develops through the confusion of an imagined model of love with an existing person, and on the assumption that they can be one and the same. Moreover, Huntington claims that the rhetorical figures of language – especially in the literary discourse of love – are to be blamed for the linguistic confusions, when the figures are taken for actual referents. In *Narcisse* the man, not recognising his own portrait, actually loves resemblance, while in *Pygmalion*, if

> Galathée's birth is a shared identification among two persons, it is also a 'réveil,' the instant of awakening in a reverie, in which the primary identification is not between two persons, but between the illusory and the real. Galathée moves from illusion toward reality, Pygmalion from reality toward illusion. From different starting points, they meet in one 'Moi,' at a point somewhere between illusion and reality, or even prior to such a distinction.[51]

Similarly to the other critics, Paul de Man, in two of his writings, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self" and "Self (Pygmalion)," presents Rousseau's dramatic pieces as the key-texts to understand self-writing and writing of the self. While *Narcisse* (the work that he is supposed to have written at the age of 18, though, according to de Man, he is probably lying) marks the beginning of his creative period, *Pygmalion* rather shows the problem of the fictional versus empirical selves in retrospective meditation. He says, "in the figure of the sculptor Pygmalion contemplating his handiwork, Galathea, we thus have a clear equivalence of Rousseau reflecting on the feelings that develop between the author ... and the fictional character he has invented in that work."[52] In his self-quest, the "scène lyrique" *Pygmalion* marks Rousseau's transition from theoretical and fictional to autobiographical works. Correspondingly, the main theme here is that an author/maker is confronting his own finished work and the relation(ship) between the work of art and the artist is focused on. Leaving behind Narcissus' lonely stone-like wax-figure, or rather melting him so as to be re-shaped, we move to the stony world of Pygmalion. According to de Man, Rousseau's Pygmalion, simi-

50. Huntington, p. 53.
51. Huntington, p. 62. About the different spellings of the statue-woman's name see fn. 36.
52. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 40.

larly to his Narcissus, is mystified and does not show a progress from error to truth. To support this contention he refers to the sculptor's last statement to the statue/Galatea: "Yes, dear and charming object: yes, worthy masterpiece of my hands, of my heart, and of the Gods. . . it is you, it is you alone: I have given you all my being; I no longer live except through you."[53] Nevertheless, we can see some steps in Pygmalion's progress: at first, he admires the statue, then examines it and finally desires it. The very first step of his 'fetishism' recalls Narcissus' vain contemplation on his counterfeit image, when Pygmalion says "Vanity, human weakness! I cannot grow weary of admiring my work; I intoxicate myself with amour-propre; I adore myself in what I have made. . ."[54] In his admiration of the statue Pygmalion's *amour propre* is clearly presented, which is akin to Valère's 'je m'aime aimant.' There is another similarity between the two works, namely that Pygmalion is also in love with resemblance, saying: "It is not at all this dead marble with which I am infatuated, it is with a living being who *resembles* [*ressemble*] it; it is with the *face* [cf. *shape* for de Man; *figure* in French] that it offers to my eyes."[55] On the level of appearances, he is in love with something that is shaped/made by/in his own mind. On the one hand, it refers to *Narcisse* where Valère was in love with resemblance, on the other hand, it starts "the tropological pattern of substitution that makes *Pygmalion* into an allegory of figuration."[56] Moreover, de Man's statement makes the life-giving artistic Pygmalion's story the allegory of reading, as in reading not the dead leaves of paper but the rhetorical figures of the text will incite desire and give the illusion of life to the eyes/mind.

In his desire Pygmalion is ashamed of himself, but the pattern of Pygmalion's/Rousseau's desire can be read as "truly aesthetic."[57] In desire the conscious-

53. In his "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self" de Man himself translated the quoted lines, but here I quote from the 'standard' collection of the English translation of Rousseau's works. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 10, ed. and trans. by Allan Bloom, Charles Butterworth and Christopher Kelly (Hanover and London: Univ. Press of New England, 2004), 230–236, p. 236. Cf. in French: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Pygmalion, Scène lyrique*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, II (Gallimard, 1961), 1224–1231, p. 1231.

54. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 232. Cf. *Oeuvres II*, p. 1226.

55. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 233 and in *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1227 (my italics). Also quoted and translated in de Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 183. De Man translates the French *figure* as 'shape,' while in the English collection the word is translated as 'face,' which is closer to de Man's prosopopeia. I would prefer to keep the original *figure* in the sentence, relying on the Pygmalion-quality of rhetoric offered to my eyes. See also de Man, "Autobiography As De-Facement," p. 76 and "Shelley Disfigured," p. 100.

56. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 183.

57. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 45. In his other text on *Pygmalion* de Man admits that Pygmalion's desire is not only "truly aesthetic," as the sculp-

ness moves toward something that it has lost, and now wants to possess to be complete again. It shows Pygmalion's desire as a lack, as a shortcoming, as a striving for/after a "beautiful soul." Desire is a temporal experience caused by the loss of the source of being and "the text of *Pygmalion* makes clear that the source is not located in the self of the artist, but that it exists in the work that he has created."[58] Accordingly, as the source is outside the empirical self, the painfully desired union would imply the death of the self:

> Alas! it stays immobile and cold, while my heart, set ablaze by its charms, wants to leave my body in order to warm its body. In my delirium I believe that I can hurl myself out of myself; I believe that I can give it my life, and animate it with my soul. Ah! that Pygmalion might die in order to live in Galatea![59]

In this 'apocalyptic moment' the desired unity would result in an absolute negation/annihilation of the self due to the desired exchange between the self and other. Besides *echoing* Narcissus' struggle with his own reflection, the confused Pygmalion is also speaking about himself in third person, not only in the above quoted wish, but also earlier in his worshipping of the perfection of his creation. Then in his meditation Pygmalion realises that the dead self loses not only its own life but the contact with the other. Here the paradoxical dialectic of selfhood and otherness is revealed: how can one truly experience the other without giving up one's self? The dialectic of self and other in the act of reflection, and the dialectic of self-love and desire, are also shown in the linguistic complexity of Pygmalion's cry: "No, that my Galatea live, and that I not be she. Ah! that I might always be another, in order to wish always to be she, to see her, to love her, to be loved by her."[60]

Actually, Rousseau's Pygmalion does not get (and cannot get) closer to the self in his quest for the experience of the other. I agree with de Man that in this "ironic epiphany"

> the [real] progression has taken place, not in Pygmalion, but in the figure of Galathea, who, at the end of the scene, has not only come to life but has

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tor's sexual aggression is quite literal in the story. We should not forget that, in the Greek narrative, the King of Cyprus wanted to copulate with the statue of Venus. See de Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 181.

58. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 46.

59. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 233.

60. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 233. In French: "Non, que ma Galathée vive, et que je ne sois pas elle. Ah! que je sois toujours un autre, pour vouloir toujours être elle, pour la voir, pour l'aimer, pour en être aimé. . ." (*Oeuvres II*, p. 1228).

> been able to define the nature of her own selfhood in relation to herself, to Pygmalion, and to the natural world. And a similar progression has taken place in us as readers, who are now able to understand the entire complex relationship that exists between the three entities (the artist, the live sculpture, and the piece of marble); this progression is a correlative of a progression that has taken place in Rousseau himself as the author of the play, who controls the patterns of truth and error, of insight and blindness, that organize the action.[61]

In the end, following an ironic reciprocity, Galatea's coming to life freezes Pygmalion and astonishes him – he is petrified with astonishment. Now Galatea exists as a self, claiming to be (her)self, uttering "Me" [*Moi*]," and, pointing at the marble, she says: "This is me no more [*Ce n'est plus moi*]."[62] She becomes self-conscious and, as a work of art, she is still flawless. Although art can achieve the ultimate triumph of consciousness by an act of imagination, it cannot recapture the fullness of Being. At the end of the play Galatea puts her hand on Pygmalion and says, sighing: "Ah, still me [*encore moi*]."[63] It shows Rousseau's efforts to transcend his actual self into a language, a work that now exists outside himself. But his writings only record his failure to transcend his own selfhood. As de Man concludes: "The work is 'encore moi,' the half-resigned, ironic mood of self-reflection that predominates in Rousseau and in the readers who recognise themselves in him. The romantic artist is still Narcissus, though a Narcissus who has come back alive from his trip to the other side of the mirror – perhaps what Rilke will call later, in one of his French poems, *le Narcisse exaucé* – the demystified Narcissus."[64]

However, there is a great difference between Valère's deluded self-love and Pygmalion's worship of his self-made creation, namely that the sculptor sees a goddess in the statue. As an artist, he used to make statues of gods and goddesses, that is, he was/is capable of giving shape to the divine. Although we can read it as the sign of extreme self-adoration, in his allegorical reading of *Pygmalion*, de Man takes it as Pygmalion's experience of the sublime. He says that in the story the artist "is paralyzed by the feeling of awe that is characteristic, to use Kant's terminology, of the sublime."[65] In the third *Critique*, Kant's sublime is not an exterior power but it has rather much more to do with imagination *reflecting* on that power. The sublime displays "the dominance/power [*Gewalt*] which reason exercises over imagina-

61. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 43.
62. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 235 and in *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1230.
63. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 236 and in *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1231.
64. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 49.
65. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 177.

tion with a view to extending it to the requirements of its own realm (the practical) and letting it look out beyond itself into the infinite, which for it [viz. the imagination] is an abyss."[66] On the one hand, the ambiguity of imagination seems incongruous – it fails by being incapable of comprehending the infinite greatness, and succeeds by functioning as the agent of reason for the law. On the other hand, in a forced way the Kantian imagination functions as the agent of reason and exercises power over itself for the sake of linking the absolute with the human world.

Pygmalion regards his work of art as godlike/divine, and "the goddess metaphor is an aptly monstrous concatenation of self and other."[67] Without realising it, with these remarks de Man alludes to Ovid's original, or perhaps to the origin of Ovid's narrative, where the confrontation – either spiritual or physical – with the divine is more emphatic. Right from the beginning, in accordance with the dichotomy of human vs. divine, in the dynamism of the text, as readers we are to *face* several antinomies that are engendered by the arch-antinomy of the two polarities: the self vs. the other. Besides the most obvious cold vs. hot – expressed in the coldness of the marble statue and the figurative coldness of Pygmalion's 'virginal' condition that is opposed by his melting passion and his fire of creation – de Man lists several other antinomies, such as inside/outside, art/nature, life/death, male/female, heart/senses, hiding/revealing, eye/ear, lyric/dramatic etc.

With the introduction of the sublime, de Man seems to move away from the rhetorical reading of the ending and tries to interpret it with reference to the generality implicit in the sublime itself. However, he still shows the ending of Pygmalion as aporetic, but he reaches this conclusion through a different argument. Pygmalion wishes for their union but, "instead of merging into a higher, general Self, two selves remain confronted in a paralyzing inequality,"[68] as Galatea's 'moi' is more self-assured than Pygmalion's amorous 'moi.' And when Pygmalion starts kissing the woman's hand, she utters "encore moi" with a sigh. She has just previously stated that she is no longer the stone, and now she accepts that she is one with Pygmalion. Their union can hardly be labelled as an ecstatic one as Galatea, leaving her stone-prison, is just about to enter Pygmalion's 'love-prison.' De Man thinks (or rather presupposes) that Galatea should be taken here as 'the Self,' that is, she has to contain all individual selves including Pygmalion's. Galatea's disappointment can also mean "a persisting, repeated distinction between the general

66. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 115, collated with Kant, *Kritik der Ästhetischen Urtheilskraft*, in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, *Band 4* (Köln: Könemann, 1995), p. 135.

67. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 177.

68. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 185.

Self and the self as *other*."[69] Thus, de Man reaches the same aporetic conclusion, although via *another* route:

> Galathea's coming alive rewards the access to his advanced level of understanding. The point of the text however is that even this mode of discourse fails to achieve a concluding exchange that would resolve the tension of the original dejection. The part of the action that follows Galathea's epiphany disrupts the dialectical progression that leads up to it and merely repeats its aberrant pattern. The discourse by which the figural structure of the self is asserted fails to escape from the categories it claims to deconstruct, and this remains true, of course, of any discourse which pretends to re-inscribe in its turn the figure of this aporia. There can be no escape from the dialectical movement that produces the text.[70]

IV

To find a way out of the self in a text about the Self, I will be assisted by Shierry M. Weber's article "The Aesthetics of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*."[71] In the article Weber places Rousseau in the context of 18th and 19th-century aesthetics, questioning and defining the status of the work of art and its relation to reality. But Rousseau – somehow close to Kant's critical ideas – does not give primacy to the artist's consciousness or to the absolute expressed in the work: "he shows how artist and work can both be characterised in terms of selfness and yet be different, and he tries to relate that difference to the physical existence of the work of art, its presence within 'earthly life.' "[72] According to Weber, in the work, the main concern for Rousseau is Pygmalion's desire for Galatea; and in the ending, after Pygmalion has given (his) being to Galatea, Rousseau seems to give priority to the work over the artist. By that I mean that Rousseau/Pygmalion gives priority to his *Pygmalion*/Galatea. Weber's main focus is on Rousseau's notion of the reflective, discontinuous nature of the self that is thematised in the work, culminating in the final utterances of the two characters: "Ah, still me. – Yes, dear and charming object: yes, worthy masterpiece of my hands, of my heart, and of the Gods. . . it is you, it is you alone: I have given you all my being; I no longer live except through you."[73]

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69. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 186.

70. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 187.

71. Shierry M. Weber, "The Aesthetics of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*," *Comparative Literature* (December 1968) 900–918.

72. Weber, p. 902.

73. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 236. In *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1231.

Weber also refers to different mis-readings of the work, for instance, to Goethe's attack on *Pygmalion* which accuses Rousseau of degrading the spiritual work of art to a sensuous object, or, to Starobinski's misinterpretation of Pygmalion's desire as narcissistic – longing for a complete union of self and other, and she could also have mentioned de Man's aporetic rhetorical reading. All err since Rousseau's ideas are akin to Kant's, emphasising the negative or paradoxical presence of the absolute in the work of art. Opposed to the previous readings, and recalling de Man's sublime re-reading of the work, Weber sees that in *Pygmalion* "the sensuous artistic representation thus points beyond itself to the infinitude of the supersensuous realm."[74] The aesthetic image for Rousseau leads not *to* but *away* from the natural. From Pygmalion's point of view priority is given to the work of art, as Galatea can be taken as his "externalized better or past self and thus seems free from the negativity of reflective consciousness."[75] Going beyond Rousseau's ideas, we can think that the work, with its non-reflexivity, is given priority over consciousness. Ironically, Rousseau's *Pygmalion* shows the differences between the result of the reflected artistic activity and the un-reflected status of the work, while both can be reflected upon in other artistic or critical pieces.

In Rousseau's work the negation of the self happens earlier (not only in the 'work'), when Pygmalion makes the statue, his masterpiece. He feels that he gives away his genius to give 'life' to the work of art, uttering: "I have lost my genius" [J'ai perdu mon génie]."[76] His genius becomes – later? – Galatea's animating spirit, as if it/she had been imprisoned in stone, in a 'stony' slumber.[77] Pygmalion dies in some sense (similarly, love-making is little death) creating Galatea, but he survives to experience the consciousness of the "scène lyrique." Weber calls our attention to a crucial point, namely that Rousseau presents to us not the action, not the creation of the statue, but the artist's reflection on it:

> *Pygmalion* is a phenomenon of reflective consciousness . . . . The recapitulation of Galathée's creation is an internal reliving of it, and the scene is Pygmalion's mind. Rousseau shows us the aesthetic subject not as producer but as one now contemplator, having been artist. He shows us not

74. Weber, p. 903.

75. Weber, p. 916.

76. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 231. In French in *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1225.

77. I cannot help remembering Wordsworth's "A slumber did my spirit seal," where the life-forgetting slumber makes the persona forget about the mortality of the beloved so that he should realise/remember that the girl is 'stony' dead. Pygmalion's story definitely moves backwards from the beloved's motionless stony thing-like 'existence' to her coming to life. But, on the whole, both girls are imprisoned in the lover's text, telling their story.

> Pygmalion making a statue but *Pygmalion reflecting on the act of making it*, Pygmalion interpreting creation as animation. . . . In that what reflection examines is not only action but the transition from action to reflection – for the act of making the statue is itself the transition, the transfer of being – it is a movement inward toward the self, as reflective consciousness.[78]

Thus Pygmalion has finished his (act of) creation and now he is reflecting upon the completed action. I can accept this version of *Pygmalion*, but I still wonder what we mean by creation. Weber admits that Rousseau's *Pygmalion* is a reflection on the Greek story, not a nostalgic one but it moves to a further stage in aesthetic thought. In a footnote Weber refers to the third meaning of Rousseau's reflective *Pygmalion:* a *Reflexion in sich*, that is, 'reflection in itself' (borrowing Hegel's term), which reflects on the progress of consciousness in the making of the statue. It is not clear what she means here since Hegel distinguishes the 'reflection in itself' from the 'reflection in something else' (*Reflexion in Anderes*) by their relationship with the essence: the former is associated with the Being/Self that shines in its own (light), while the latter shines in the light of another/others.[79] *Pygmalion* displays a creative self (Pygmalion or Rousseau) reflecting on the (be)coming of another (self) – on the implications of the 'reflection in itself' (viz. *Reflexion in sich*) and the reflection of the self/Self while creating Galatea's self/Self (viz. *Reflexion in Anderes*). Weber does not realise that Rousseau's work (always-already) undoes not only the Hegelian dichotomy of the two kinds of reflection but also the duality of action vs. reflection. Reflecting on an action is another acting that can be reflected on so that the other reflected action should be reflected on again (and again) 'in the progress of consciousness.' Moreover, Rousseau's version of Pygmalion's reflecting on the creation of the self, that is, his *Pygmalion*, is read (reflected on, or acted on) by Weber here; and now I will re-act/reflect upon her reading of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, that is, her version of *Pygmalion*, in my self-questing text with Pygmalion duplicated in its title.

Pygmalion's desire is ideal, not real; it is aesthetic rather than sensual, simply because if his were a real desire then it would display a subject having desire and an object being desired. But, as Weber points out, in *Pygmalion* "the self encompasses the polarities subject and object, self and other. The ideal moment of desire, as op-

78. Weber, p. 905 (my italics). For the different spellings of the statue-woman's name, see footnote 36.

79. See also G. W. F. Hegel, "Die Reflexion," in *Wissenschaft der Logik: Erster Teil, Die objektive Logik* <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/8wsl110.txt>; G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London & New York: Allen & Unwin, 1969).

posed to its real or sensuous moment, is desire for something which is self and other at once."[80] In the end, 'the lovers' turn out to share the same self, and Pygmalion should recognise that his desire is ideal, not real. First, he moves towards the object, longing to be united with it; then, realising the impossibility of love, he has to move back, away from the object, "because the love relationship is possible only when lover and beloved are separate. In order to love Galathée, Pygmalion must be other than she."[81] Weber, though analysing the dynamism of desire well, reads the ending as self-alienation, since Pygmalion seems to have given up his selfhood to the other. I do not approach it so radically. I think that the self goes full circle here, or rather makes his journey along a spiral-line: through the momentary confrontation with the *other* the *self* becomes *another* (self). In fact, when the artist utters at the end that he has given his being/self to Galatea, he is affirming that he has become another. What Weber says about Rousseau's notion of desire, namely that it "does not have the assimilation or destruction of the object as its goal but rather preserves the object in negating, momentarily, the subject," recalls Derrida's impossible claim about "allowing the other to come in its otherness."[82] Weber calls attention to Rousseau's irony, reflecting upon the paradoxical structure of desire since at the end of *Pygmalion* the work and the artist have once again become separate. As she claims: "desire involves the other becoming self and the self becoming other. The 'real,' authentic self is separated from the experiencing self, and the experiencing self seems to be merely the negation of that other, real self."[83]

If we accept that in the ideal the real is negated and annihilated, what could we claim about the status of the work of art? The statue has a physical reality and Pygmalion is struggling to define the source of (its) beauty. Having realised that he has sexual desire for the statue, he speaks about the spiritual beauty of it, referring to the beauty of (its) soul: "How beautiful the soul *made* [l'âme faite] to animate such a body must be!"[84] We must see that in his reflection Pygmalion is speaking about the making of a soul, that is, he is speaking about the beauty of his soul in his 'spiritual' narcissism. He tries to go beyond the polarities of body and soul, giving the

80. Weber, p. 907.

81. Weber, p. 908.

82. Cf. "to allow the coming of the entirely other [laisser venir le tout autre]" in Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Inventions of the Other," trans. by Catherine Porter, in *Reading de Man Reading*, ed. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 25–65, p. 55 and in Jacques Derrida, "Psyché. Invention de l'autre," in *Psyché* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), 11–61, p. 53. Derrida's ideas on 'the (im)possible coming of the other' greatly influenced me in the writing of the paper.

83. Weber, p. 909.

84. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 232 and in French in *Oeuvres, II*, p. 1227 (my emphasis).

source of beauty an aesthetic form. He is still praying to find a model that resembles the statue, as it surpasses all the models in beauty. But he knows that the only model is an imaginary one, or an absent one, as Galatea is a perfect work. Pygmalion says that "such a perfect model be the image of that which is not [qu'un si parfait modele soit l'image de ce qui n'est pas]" – that is, the statue is image in itself, the statue is the image of an image. Pygmalion's prayer is heard by Venus, and in the culmination of his error, the animation of Galatea, fulfils his false desire. As Weber summatises: "Pygmalion prayed for the original of the statue, and the result was the animation of the statue. The statue thus has no model other than itself; it is its own original. But it remains an image as well as its original; it is not real as a natural object or a living person is real."[85] Galatea's first movement is reflective, "the work of art is selfness as it has been constituted by reflective consciousness. The statue derives not from nature but from Pygmalion's consciousness . . . it is the image of his negativity. . . . Consciousness constitutes itself through its negativity as negativity, as lacking the continuity of the organic."[86] The animation of the statue means its realisation as an image, but it also has a negative aspect, being the image of a reflective self and the negation of the real. In *Pygmalion*, reflection shows the act of the petrified consciousness.

In the scene when the artist sees Galatea come to life he remarks that "it is too funny for the lover of a stone *to become* a man of visions [il est trop heureux pour l'amant d'une pierre *de devenir* un homme à visions]."[87] On the one hand, this statement can be read as if in his ecstasy (recalling his ecstatic love-making that gives life to the statue in Ovid's story) the 'mad' Pygmalion imagined that the stony beloved was brought to life. On the other hand, in the moment of his insight into the blindness of his passion Pygmalion becomes not only the man of visions but also a man of rhetoric, because for Rousseau, figural language is the playground of love. Huntington shows that Pygmalion also marks the point when in Rousseau's works "the tension between fiction and reality begins to take the rhetorical forms." In several *loci*, the figurality of language is discussed together with the passion of *amour*. Huntington explains: "Like *amour*, Rousseau's linguistic world will be open-ended and valuable because his use of language can never attain a reciprocal, one-to-one correspondence with its referent. Any final referent, if we ourselves must name one, must result from the process of taking an illusory passion for an actual referent."[88]

85. Weber, p. 914.
86. Weber, p. 915.
87. Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, p. 235 and in *Oeuvres*, *II*, p. 1230 (my emphasis).
88. Huntington, pp. 115–6.

Weber also refers to the second preface written to *Nouvelle Héloïse*, where Rousseau speaks about the relation between love and the aesthetic, claiming that love is an illusion – it is ideal. Moreover, in the language of love the figures of speech used are "ideals constituted by consciousness"[89] – as de Man summarises, " 'love' is a figure that disfigures."[90] Similarly, a passion – perhaps, the passion of the 'mad' Pygmalion – that figures and disfigures works in reading. According to de Man, for readers

> the critical insight seems to occur at the moment when the consciousness of the reader and that of the writer merge to become a single Self that transcends the two empirical selves that confront each other. This encounter forces the reader to leave behind his own everyday self, as it exists at this particular moment of his history, to re-establish contact with the forgotten origin of this self, and to gauge the degree of conformity he has maintained with his origin.[91]

This may describe the process of reading an autobiographical text and the process of reading in general. It is highly philosophical, alluding to a universal *Dasein*; and at the same time it leads us to the interrelatedness of *amitié*, *amour* and pity in the forming of human relationships – reading is a bond-creating activity.

Nevertheless, Weber also thinks that Rousseau, like Kant, sees the irony of human existence, showing reflection and desire as the "manifestations of an ironic negativity of the self, a discontinuity within the self."[92] This negativity simply means that the self is finite and mortal, which makes Pygmalion's ideal desire for Galatea ironic. Huntington also ends his book on Rousseau with the discussion of irony; to be precise he ends it with the discussion of the lack of irony in Rousseau's character. However, his conclusion is more concerned with the irony of criticism and the irony of the critical position:

> the ironist never claims to understand, and actively refuses to identify with any form of textual world. He remains instead in a virtual position of withdrawal, the better to proclaim fiction as no more than fiction, and to deflate the claim for understanding that anyone so 'mistaken' as an auto-

89. Weber, p. 917.

90. De Man, "Self (Pygmalion)," p. 198.

91. De Man, "Rousseau and the Transcendence of the Self," p. 32. In "Allegory (Julie)" (in *Allegories of Reading)* de Man clearly connects the self vs. other substitutions of the lovers in *Narcisse* and *Pygmalion* with the relationship not only between the author and the work but also between the author and the reader (p. 213).

92. Weber, p. 911.

> biographer might make. . . . [T]he ironist . . . remains . . . sceptical about everything, and most of all about himself [or herself]. This response aptly characterises the critical spirit. Some critics, giving close attention to texts, have come to see irony as the limiting rhetorical category, not just as one among several possible character traits. When this position is taken to its logical conclusion, misunderstanding and the impossibility of reading are the norms for the author and the critic. They become trapped in the *alluring mirror-play of the textual worlds* that they or other writers create.[93]

The mirroring surfaces that make all these reflections possible are in the receptive minds and in the works. The very first mirror, in this case the mirror of mirrors, is Galatea, the work of art. The other mirroring surfaces (sur-faces) are the texts and their readings. In the reflection and in the works of reflections through endless 'ironic' mirror-play, the self – of the maker, the writer, the reader, or the critic – in the act of confronting with the Other/other, or each other, can/will become another. The acts of confronting can be associated with the (more or less) passionate 'wax-melting' efforts made in reading, writing, interpreting, and understanding. In the ironic narrative of the rhetorical/figural self-quest,[94] my text, reflecting on Pygmalion-reflections, can/will be(come) *another* "petrified" mirror that tells the story of "Pygmalions' reading of reading Pygmalions."

93. Huntington, p. 223 (my italics).

94. In "The Concept of Irony" de Man reminds us of the instability of irony (have *I* ever forgotten it?) and he also warns us that "the self is never capable of knowing what it [viz. the narrative] is, can never be identified as such, and the judgments emitted by the self about itself, reflexive judgments, are not stable judgments" (in Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996], 163–184, p. 176). Although the infinite mirror-play of my 'passionate' reading is in accordance with ideas de Man received from Schlegel, ideas about the disruptive function of irony, his analysis of the Fichtean analytical, synthetic and thetic judgments – especially, the flashing of the empty thetic judgment, "I am" – can show Pygmalion's and Galatea's self in quite a different light.

James R. Keller

Whiteness [In]Visible

Eminem and the Politics of White Male Privilege

This essay examines Eminem's uneasy relationship with race. He has capitalized on a traditionally African-American art form while emphasizing and simultaneously effacing his own racial heritage. Indeed, one must see Eminem as both black and white in order for his public image to be fully coherent. His speech, gestures, friends, colleagues, economic fortunes, and artistic influences are all Hip Hop clichés while his hair and flesh are stark white. He complains about the difficulty of making it as a Rapper because he is white, and thus invokes the traditional complaint of white labor competing with African-Americans in the workforce, and at the same time admits that his whiteness made him an unprecedented success in the Rap music industry. The essay applies the theories of racial construction to Eminem's lyrics as well as to the film *8 Mile*, in which the rapper is impeded in his struggle for success by bias within the African-American Hip Hop apparatus. Thus Eminem is cast in the traditional narrative of the underdog who overcomes doubt and discrimination in order to achieve dazzling success, yet ironically this scenario is played out against a power structure that is the tradition target rather than the perpetrator of discrimination.

In November of 2003, Raymond Scott, a.k.a. "Benzino" and David Mays of the Hip Hop periodical *The Source* released a tape intended to discredit Eminem by revealing his hidden racist sentiments. Recorded by Mathers when he was a teenager and before he had produced his breakthrough *Slim Shady LP*,[1] the track is certainly inflammatory in its denigration of African-American women:

> And all the girls that I like to bone
> Have the big butt, no they don't
> Cause I don't like that nigger shit
> I'm just here to make a bigger hit. . .
> Blacks and whites they sometimes mix
> But black girls only want your money cause they're dumb chicks
> So I'mma say it like this

1. *The Slim Shady LP* (Aftermath/Iterscope, 1999), referred to hereafter as *SS LP*.

> Don't date a black girl, take it as a diss
> If you want, but if you don't
> I'mma tell you like this, I surely won't
> Never date a black girl cause blacks only want your money
> And that shit ain't funny. . .
> Black girls and White girls just don't mix
> Because black girls are dumb and white girls are good chicks.

The publishers' effort to offer further substantiation for the bigotry that is everywhere apparent in the rapper's lyrics, and for which he has been roundly condemned since his first album, may at first seem redundant. However, the lyric is the first evidence of racial prejudice within Eminem's inventory of intolerances. While the rapper has been willing to speak freely about any offensive topic that inspires him, on the issue of racism and the use of racial slurs, he has actually shown reticence, an omission that resembles respect.

At first, Eminem's response to the humiliating and professionally damaging revelation was to impugn the credibility of those who released the tape. He explained that he has had a longstanding "beef" with Benzino who has repeatedly ridiculed him in his lyrics, referring to him as "2003 Vanilla Ice" and the "rap Hitler," and attributing Eminem's success to his racial heritage. Over the years, Eminem has offered a few of his own criticisms of *The Source*, complaining that he is unable to get a judicious review in the Hip Hop periodical: "Cuz we dope as fuck and only get a two in *The Source*" ("As the World Turns" *SS LP*). In "What You Say" (*The Eminem Show*),[2] Eminem maintains that if he ever received the full "five mics" in the publication's rating system, he would die of incredulity, but he is not holding his breath. In answer to the release of the scandalous recording, Mathers issued a press release explaining the circumstances under which he had made the recording and asking for his audience's understanding:

> The tape they played today was something I made out of anger, stupidity, and frustration when I was a teenager. I'd just broken up with my girlfriend who was African-American, and I reacted like the angry stupid kid I was. I hope people will take it for the foolishness that it was, not for what somebody is trying to make it into today.

The rapper's conciliatory tone on the issue of racism is a dramatic reversal from the defiance and exacerbation which have been his routine reactions to previous detractors from other segments of the special interest spectrum. "Mr. Don't Give a Fuck" clearly does care about one subject, and his reticence to offend the African-

2. *The Eminem Show* (Aftermath Records, 2002), abbreviated hereafter as *ES*.

American community is understandable, considering he is an interloper in a distinctly black art form, and he is the first white rapper to earn sustained respect and credibility in the medium. Even if his audience is largely comprised of white suburban teens, he nevertheless owes his success to the rap establishment which is largely African-American. A credible accusation of racism could expose Eminem as a fraud who exploited a black art form in order to enrich himself, while he felt only contempt for those who assisted him in his ascension to the apogee of Hip Hop stardom. Thus on the track "Yellow Brick Road" from *Encore*,[3] he offers a sustained explanation and an apology for the provocative lyrics, explaining that he had dated an African-American woman in order to make his former girlfriend Kim jealous. He had the intention of dumping the new woman once he had generated the requisite passion in Kim, but he was instead the rejected party. Thus his hateful lyrics were a response to the humiliation of his failed venture. However, in his typically defiant fashion, he reveals that he is only sorry about having singled out a particular race "cuz no matter what color a girl is she is still a [bitch]."

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Eminem's early recording is his use of the racial epithet "nigger," a word which, according to his interviews, is "not even in [his] vocabulary."[4] While Eminem's use of such a slur is, indeed, reprehensible, his close association with African-Americans over many years makes an accusation of prolonged racism less credible. Despite his resolution in the offensive lyric, he does go on to date at least one more African-American woman, Mariah Carey, although evidently this relationship was less than successful as well. Nevertheless, his entire crew – D12, the Detroit Dozen or the Dirty Dozen – is African-American, as are his producer Dr. Dre and several longtime friends and colleagues. Of course, it is conceivable that he does harbor an occulted acrimony for all of these people, but it seems improbable.

The politics of racial epithets problematizes the rapper's lyrics. Our culture has so completely abjected the word "nigger" that any white person who would utter it is construed as an incorrigible racist, capable of a multiplicity of villainies, and incapable of reformation. Consider as illustration the predicament of Mark Furhman, investigator in the first O. J. Simpson trial. Furhman under cross-examination stated that he had not used a racial epithet in ten years. When a tape surfaced during the trial that revealed his use of the term seven years before, his veracity was so completely discredited that he was considered capable of having framed an African-American celebrity for murder, an act which would seem improbable had he used a racial slur even the same day of his testimony. The defense lawyers' insistence on

3. *Encore* (Aftermath, 2004).
4. Chuck Weiner, *Eminem. . . In His Own Words* (New York: Omnibus, 2001), p. 55.

specifying a time frame in which the witness had not used the "n-word," particularly a time frame so broad, was an invitation to perjury. It would seem implausible that a person could remember the words s/he had used in any given month – a period of ten years guarantees fabrication even when the word is as divisive as a racial epithet. While the gap between Eminem's racial slur and his statement that the word is not part of his vocabulary may be much shorter than Fuhrman's, its usage does not necessarily render him an intransigent racist. However, it does not help his credibility either.

Benzino's postulate that Eminem's success is attributable to the color of his skin seems an appropriate catalyst for the body of this discussion. While Eminem's whiteness has, in many ways, worked to his advantage, to suggest that race is the exclusive basis for his success is reductive and, perhaps, facetious. Race did not sell 19 millions copies of *The Eminem Show* although it might have added the requisite momentum to make him, for a time, the most successful solo rapper in the industry. Eminem is a talented lyricist and satirist, and that must be factored into the equation of his success. Moreover, the idea that whiteness could be the key to success with a fan base that has been extremely reticent in its acceptance of creative contributions from Caucasians seems counterintuitive, particularly following the all too memorable shame of Vanilla Ice. Instead, Eminem's success is a negotiation between black and white. As with many issues in the rapper's canon of perfidies, racial tension has been a contributing factor, creating the furor that has kept him in the public eye and compelling more and more people to purchase his albums in order to hear for themselves the words and sounds behind the scandal.

In the past decade, contemporary theorists have turned their attention to the social construction of whiteness as a race, and these theories can assist us in our understanding of the complex relationship to race that defines Eminem's public persona. In her study entitled *Whiteness Visible*,[5] Valerie Babb seeks to reveal the artificiality of racial categories within American culture and literature, to expose the mechanisms of white privilege that permit Caucasians of European descent to pass for the norm or for generically human. Caucasians are the race that is not one. In contrast, other races and ethnicities are often defined by their failure to conform to the white paradigm and, subsequently, consigned to second class status. Babb observes that the people of diverse national and ethnic ancestry, who have in America been collectively defined as "white," had little or no sense of racial commonality before their immigration to the North American continent. As the history of warfare in Europe reveals, the multiplicity of regional groups has shown very little sense of

5. Valerie Babb, *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture* (New York: New York UP, 1998).

shared racial heritage, but instead has fixated on tribal or cultural differences to define unique social identities, i.e. Bosnia/Serbia. However, in America, the same groups have developed a unified identity in their effort to distinguish themselves from African slaves as well as the indigenous people of the western hemisphere. Babb concurs with such other racial theorists as Kwame Anthony Appiah, who maintains that race is a "biological fiction" masquerading as "an objective term of classification," and Theodore Allen, who argues that such categories are a "political invention" calculated to ensure white privilege.[6]

Both Valerie Babb and Richard Dyer, the author of *White*, suggest that whiteness in America signifies a social system in which special license and freedoms are granted to people of European origin. Dyer defines white privilege as "special provisions, assurances, tools, maps . . . passports, visas" that allow European Caucasians a greater amount of access to power and prosperity.[7] In addition, one of the liberties enjoyed exclusively by whites within American culture is the right to be "considered individuals – diverse, complex, and changing," the right to be excluded from racial stereotyping. The paradoxical quality of whiteness as a racial construct is that it must remain at once "visible and yet invisible."[8] The power of white privilege, particularly since the civil rights revolutions of the mid-twentieth century, is commensurate with its capacity to conceal the instruments of domination. White privilege can only be sustained by veiling or sublimating its organizational qualities. Even many of those who are constant recipients of this secret social boon would revolt against its fundamental injustice were they fully cognizant of its existence, particularly since such privilege flies in the face of the American emphasis on self-reliance. White liberals pay lip service to equalities while remaining willfully blind to or guarded in the maintenance of those cultural benefits that attend their own racial heritage. In his poem "Dinner Guest – Me," Langston Hughes illustrates the not-so-subtle hypocrisy of those who are ostensibly supportive of social equality. The speaker of the poem muses over the social naïveté of the rich white liberals who invite him to dinner to express their regret over the shameful injustices that the white establishment perpetrates against African Americans. At the same time that they repudiate their own whiteness, the hosts sip Champaign and eat fancy desserts in their luxurious Park Ave. apartment, oblivious to the economic inequality that is central to racial injustice, and ignorant of the need to dismantle white economic privilege in order to guarantee true social equality. The speaker of the poem graciously chooses to leave his hosts' illusions intact, accepting the invitation in the spirit that it was offered for the sake of one night's comfort.

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6. Babb, pp. 9–11.
7. Babb, p. 9.
8. Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 45.

Physical whiteness must also remain visible in the sense that those who are granted admission to the treasury of racial preference must constantly display the appropriate credentials – their light skin, straight hair, and long noses, etc. Whiteness is visible as well in the display of prosperity. To be white is to have greater access to economic resources and to put those resources on display for the purposes of social legitimacy. The binary construction of racial categories in America necessitates that whites be on display in order to define the racial spectrum white/black or even white/racialized other. A recuperative attribute of such binaries is that it also highlights the centrality of the opposing category. If white is defined in contrast to black or non-white, the same process that prioritizes whiteness nevertheless depends upon its opposition in order to give the prior quality meaning. Whiteness is just as dependent upon the attributes of blackness as it is on its own qualities, because it is those antithetical and marginalized attributes that give the center meaning. There could be no advantage in being racially white if there were no minorities whose unenviable social predicaments are repulsed by the Caucasian establishment. Thus white privilege requires the degradation of the racialized other.

The abject nature of blackness has ensured the social cohesiveness of the diverse peoples of European origin who immigrated to America. Indeed, the American dream of freedom, democracy, and "economic security" that compelled so many Europeans to travel to the western hemisphere in order to escape political persecution, draconian class systems, and/or social immobility also ensured that they would defend the racialized system of preferences when they arrived. The alternative was to be reintroduced to limitations like those they had sought to escape. The dream of social mobility necessitates that someone be left behind. Thus, paradoxically, the support of racial inequality that deprived the racialized other of the American dream was advantageous to the immigrant white population, and if possession of the American dream is indeed the defining quality of Americans, then, for at least two centuries, to be an American was to be white, and the American dream was a specifically white bourgeois fantasy. To be prosperous and powerful required that others be poor and disenfranchised.

Binary constructs are socially constituted and easily dismantled, and Eminem's role in both his lyrics and his public persona problematizes or deconstructs the simplistic divisions that define racial politics in America. He has exploited his whiteness both as a privilege and as an impediment. When it has suited his purpose, he has argued that his connection to the white community is advantageous; and, at other times, he has sought to demonstrate his close alliance with the African-American community, particularly by emphasizing his underprivileged upbringing. Indeed, the effort to reveal his rap credentials seems to be one of the primary ongoing objectives of his lyrics.

The subject of rap music is most often rap music, the players citing the urban credentials that justify their rage, touting the disenfranchisement that has compelled them to speak and, through the severity of their words, to rebel. The rap audience requires a measure of authenticity or at least believability in the anti-social/anti-establishment posturing of the performers. It is certainly no asset for the player to come from a privileged middle-class background, and it can be detrimental to the rapper's career. Thus the desire to be perceived as a danger to order and reason is a fundamental compulsion within a segment of the Hip Hop culture. However, the ideas pivotal to hardcore rap – i.e. violence, misogyny, larceny, etc. – are also equated to "blackness" and not just as a spiritual, but also as a racial attribute; and thus the lyrical art form contributes to negative racial stereotyping. Within this context, it could be construed as politically advantageous for the African-American rap establishment to introduce a white rapper who is perceived to be just as dangerous a presence as his black colleagues, thus breaching the behavioral binaries that often define racial politics in America, putting on display the universality of antisocial behavior within the racial and ethnic spectrums. Eminem's posture as the most dangerous threat to the good order to emerge from rap since Snoop Dog's murder trial brings into focus the wide appeal of rap to all segments of the youth market, and dismantles the assumption that rap is an exclusively African-American problem.

Eminem has spent much of his lyrical and satirical prowess apologizing for his whiteness and distancing himself from the comfortable lives of the white bourgeoisie. In his effort to assert his right to rap, he has had to affirm his right to complain, and he does this by relating the deplorable conditions of his upbringing. He blames his mother for abusing prescription medications and neglecting him, for tending to her own needs rather than his. He fantasizes about killing his deadbeat dad who, he claims, abandoned him when he was an infant (although the father maintains that Debbie Mathers abandoned the marriage, leaving him no means of contacting her). He bewails the financial difficulties of his family that forced them to live in low-rent housing and to move constantly from one residence to another. He reviles the larger boys who bullied him in school and complains of minimum wage jobs that ensured the cycle of poverty. Most importantly to the content of this discussion, he grumbles about the obstacles he faces as a white artist in a largely African-American medium.

Paradoxically, a portion of Eminem's strategy for success has been to arraign the rap establishment and audience for reverse discrimination, to portray himself as marginalized from the margin, forced into the center, a victim of persecution by the persecuted. This constitutes a strategy that both allies him with and alienates him from the African-American community, a contrast that defines his complicated relationship with his audience and his art form. If rap, like the blues, is a vehicle for complaint about social inequities, then Eminem has refocused it to the benefit of the

white under-classes who are also forsaken, estranged from mainstream American prosperity and opportunity. In essence, Eminem invites his audience to consider the parallels between the white underclass and the African American poor. His thesis (were he aware of it) is fundamentally Marxist, arguing that economics is as equally a revealing factor in understanding social inequality as is race. While it may be hyperbolic to suggest that the predicament of the white poor is analogous to that of the working class African-American community who face the twin indignities of racism and destitution, the comparison has some merit. The principal argument that black and white racism are not equal maintains that whites control the instruments of power, perpetuating that power through their hegemony, and thus possess a significant capacity to affect negatively the lives of African-Americans, while the opposite is not true of black racists.[9] This argument, which has a great deal of legitimacy, can also be applied too broadly since it suggests that there is a pan-Caucasian unity within American culture where whites circulate the power and prosperity equally amongst their intra-racial community. A moment of reflection will testify to the willingness of the white upper classes to exploit and degrade the Caucasian poor with almost as much impunity as they debase racial minorities. Of course, as has been argued above, pale skin, straight hair, and long noses can be construed as passports to easier access within the white power structure, but the benefits of that access vary wildly within the white population. Not all whites have access to all the power, and many (perhaps even most) whites have access to very little power and opportunity, and is this not a condition sufficient to produce a musical satirist? Just because a person does not have the most reason to complain does not mean that s/he has none. Poverty and inequality are pan-racial problems, and their greatest concentration within the minority population is a cause for great regret and concern; however, the broader issue of economic disparity as it applies to the American population is an issue that warrants comment as well as organized civil action.

Eminem's satiric barbs are aimed at those institutions that he believes have impeded his efforts at success as he sought to raise himself out of poverty in the same fashion as those African-Americans who have become fabulously wealthy from rap music or other forms of popular entertainment. While he is willing to confess that his white skin has been an occasional "benefit" to him, he also sees himself as the victim of many of the same social constraints as his African-American colleagues: low

9. Joe L. Kinchloe and Shirley R. Steinberg, "Addressing the Crisis of Whiteness: Reconfiguring White Identity in a Pedagogy of Whiteness," in *White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America*, ed. Joe L. Kinchloe, Shirley R. Steinberg, Nelson M. Rodriguez, and Ronald E. Chennault (New York: Saint Martin's Griffin, 1998), 3–30, p. 15.

socio-economic expectations and a formative environment fraught with neglect, violence, and poverty. However, he includes the rap establishment within his list of those who have unfairly inhibited his struggle for recognition. Thus he becomes the mouthpiece for a trend among white lower and middle classes to perceive themselves as victims of discrimination within the new "color blind society":[10]

> Some people only see that I'm white, ignorin' skill
> Cause I stand out like a green hat with an orange bill. . .
> How the fuck can I be white? I don't even exist.
>
> ("Role Model" *SS LP*)

This lyric echoes the grievances of many white workers within the industrial sector who cite racial quotas for their failure to achieve professional success, whether it be in hiring or promotion; and while there may be occasions in which minority workers are unjustly preferred over whites, the universality of the complaint would suggest that black candidates are always less qualified. No one ever admits that they were justly passed over in favor of a highly qualified minority applicant/candidate. Of course, this may only be a reflection of the complex intersection of disappointment and self-esteem.

In the final line of the above quotation, the rapper co-opts the trope of invisibility developed in such African-American literature as Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*[11] and Richard Wright's *Native Son*.[12] The theory of invisibility places African-American's outside the ken of Western culture's institutions, save perhaps its judicial apparatus. In effect, minority's needs are ignored or discounted, only acknowledged when their engagement can serve the objectives of perpetuating power within the white establishment. This is the thesis of Ellison's novel, in which the nameless invisible man discovers that even the Marxists, who ostensibly advocate social equality, are only interested in harnessing black rage to their advantage. In addition, African-Americans are invisible in the sense that the white establishment refuses to perceive or represent them accurately, the argument of Wright's *Native Son*, where whites are incapable of seeing Bigger Thomas' humanity; they only see the savage black predator defined by the newspapers.

While Eminem is, on one level, utilizing the invisibility metaphor in much the same way as Ellison and Wright, his usurpation of the image also has a uniquely white application. The rapper contends that the music industry was blind to his

10. Michel W. Apple, "Forward," in *White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America*, ed. Joe L. Kinchloe, Shirley R. Steinberg, Nelson M. Rodriguez, and Ronald E. Chennault (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), ix–xiii, p. ix.

11. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

12. Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1987).

talents because he did not conform to the standard racial profile of a successful hip hop artist. The invisibility trope in this instance generates a synesthesia: because his critics can see him, they cannot hear him; thus he is, at this point, not so much invisible as inaudible. The idea is further complicated by the ostensibly contradictory statements that he stands out "like a green hat with an orange bill," yet in the subsequent line argues that he is invisible or does not exist. These ideas are, nevertheless, reconcilable: he argues that his racial distinction from the Hip Hop collective has placed him beneath the consideration of those who dole out opportunities and positive reviews to promising young rappers. The declaration of his invisibility can have yet another application to his career. The content of the track "Role Model" (from which the quotation is derived) is largely facetious. He offers a catalogue of his perfidies in a parody of parents and detractors, thus lampooning their concerns about his socially reprehensible lyrics. So when he states that he does not exist, he can be referring specifically to his psychotic persona Slim Shady, who is merely a theatrical fabrication created to promote his rap ambitions.

Similarly, in the track "Bad and Evil" from *The Slim Shady LP*, Shady refers to himself as "a ghost trapped in a beat." Here again, the Shady character only exists as an artistic invention. Since the beats in rap music are frequently generated by a "machine," the above line may be a play on the philosophical slogan "ghost in the machine," which captures the mind/body dialectic and instigates the draconian debate over the problematic connection between body and soul, a nexus of seemingly incongruous ontological terrains. In Eminem's lyric the "ghost trapped in a beat" certainly alludes to the insubstantiality of the characters who speak within his verse, suggesting that their ravings are inspired by rhythm, but more interestingly, the phrase also suggests that he is "trapped" in an industry whose practices, decisions, and policies are as predictable as a drum machine, and within that institution, he is invisible. Finally, Eminem's claim to invisibility in "Role Model" involves a uniquely white implication. As argued above, "white" is an artificial racial construct imposed upon reality for the maintenance of power. Therefore, the rapper may be suggesting that "white" as a coherent racial category is a fabrication, and consequently distinctions predicated upon the supposed difference between black and white are logically indefensible; thus his detractors should look past his pale skin to his skill. In this context, the verse is potentially controversial, implying reverse discrimination and suggesting that if differences predicated upon race are unacceptable when the skills of African-American are under consideration within traditionally white areas of influence, then the same should be true for whites within the black enclaves.

Lyrically, Eminem seems mindful that he is an interloper within an African-American art form. However, his commentary on the subject is predictably erratic, moving from complaints about the difficulty of making it as a white rapper to consi-

dering the advantages that he has enjoyed being the first Caucasian Hip Hop star with any street credit or longevity. Predictably, *The Marshall Mathers LP*[13] is the most defensive about his racial heritage. His second CD on a major label is a repository of rebuttals aimed at those who objected to *The Slim Shady LP*. His guardedness against the accusation of white colonization of black art is manifest in the first verse of two tracks. He opens "Who Knew" with a claim that his music is not racially constituted but is directed at anyone (black or white) who enjoys "thug rap": "I don't do black music, I don't do white music / I make fight music for high school kids." He suggests that the audience for rap music can be characterized more accurately in terms of age ("high-school kids") than in terms of race. Similarly, the opening verse of "The Real Slim Shady" mocks the incredulity of his audience who are stunned at the audacity of a successful white rapper: "Y'all act like you never seen a white person before. . ." Part of Eminem's popular appeal involves the disorientation created by the flaunting of his whiteness in a predominantly black background. His mere presence on the stage or television or in the CD player constitutes not only a revolt against the racial uniformity of the Hip Hop performance, but also a menace to the white middle-class establishment who fear that their children will emulate the African-American urban lifestyle popularized in hardcore rap: "they're talking back / Talkin black, brainwashed from rock and rap" ("Sing for the Moment" *ES*).

On *The Eminem Show*, the rapper becomes more apologetic and less defiant about his racial heritage. Perhaps the wealth that he accumulated between the two albums stirred his white guilt; he could afford to be more modest and generous with his praise. In "White America," he offers a sustained commentary on the role of whiteness in advancing his career. He does not attribute all of his success to his Nordic heritage, but he is willing to surrender half: "Look at my sales / Let's do the math, If I were black, I woulda' sold half. . ." He suggests that his racial background is probably the reason he has become a superstar, but not the sole reason for his impact. After all, half of his current sales would still be millions of units. Developing his math equation further, he speculates that the white fans were drawn to him, while his producer and co-artist Dr. Dre attracted Eminem's black following; and he concedes that whiteness has begun to "work to . . . [his] benefit now." The tone of *The Eminem Show* is not entirely conciliatory, however. In "Without Me," he provokes his detractors, playfully flaunting his supposed threat to the integrity of rap music and boasting of his exploitation of the art form for his own enrichment and glorification: "I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley, / To do black music so selfishly / and use it to get myself wealthy." He facetiously implies that he is the vanguard of an invasion of whites who will colonize rap music

13. *The Marshall Mathers LP* (Interscope Records, 2001).

and who will recognize him as their professional catalyst: "20 million other white rappers emerge. . ."

A portion of Eminem's strategy for negotiating his place within a predominantly black profession is to advertise his own alliance with the African-American rap establishment by repudiating those figures who have previously given white rap a bad reputation. His favorite target is, predictably, Vanilla Ice, who singlehandedly made white rappers ridiculous and indefensible. As revolting as Vanilla Ice was, he actually appeared to be following a trend in Hip Hop music begun by MC Hammer, which was to improve the showmanship in the performances by adopting gaudy costumes and choreography. But Vanilla Ice made the mistake of fabricating his past, and when his true origins as a privileged, middle-class white boy were revealed, he lost credibility. Eminem has repeatedly advertised his slight regard for Vanilla Ice. In the lyrics of "Role Model" (*SS LP*) Shady "grab[s] Vanilla Ice and rip[s] out his blonde dreads," and in "Marshall Mathers," Marshall scoffs at his rival's ineffectual efforts to deride him: "Vanilla Ice don't like me / He said some shit in *Vibe* just to spite me / Then went and dyed his hair just like me" (*MM LP*). Eminem's popular momentum is so great that even his enemies wish to emulate him. Mathers does not limit his abjuration of white entertainers to a single target. He is less than supportive of the Beastie Boys, and his hatred of the Insane Clown Posse (ICP) is legendary. Moreover, he offers a long list of insults for the white pop stars who dominated the musical charts in the mid- to late 90's, i.e. Britney, Christina, N'Sync, Backstreet Boys, etc. One act that is conspicuously absent from the list of targets (save for a single reference) is Kid Rock. In "Cum on Every Body," Eminem tells two women that he is Mike D from the Beastie Boys and that they should meet him at Kid Rock's next concert, adding that he would be "standing next to the Loch Ness monster." Shady's allusion to the mythical monster clearly lampoons the women's intelligence, comparing the likelihood that he is a member of the Beastie Boys to the probability that he will be in the company of the elusive serpent. The line could also suggest that there is an equal measure of improbability in his attending a Kid Rock concert, and while such a point would constitute a very clever satire, it seems unlikely that he is deriding his fellow Michigander, as the two of them worked together early in their careers. If Eminem sought to target all white players, he could hardly ignore Kid Rock whose work, in the past, has been taken seriously as a synthesis of rock and Hip Hop, although the universally country strains of his *American Bad Ass* suggest that his emphasis on his musical versatility has taken a pathological and self-destructive turn. If the Kid did not warrant ridicule before, he may now.

Eminem has been much more guarded in his satire of African-American artists. His trepidation is in all likelihood a deliberate effort to avoid alienating his black audience or being perceived as antagonistic toward the Hip Hop mainstream. The

majority of allusions to black rappers involve adulation; he is particularly effusive in his praise of Tupac and has produced collections of previously unreleased Tupac raps, but he extols the virtues of many others, including Jay Z, Nas, and Biggie, etc. In spite of his clear reticence to attack African-American artists, Eminem does reserve a few of his poison darts for Lauryn Hill, reviling her now infamous declaration that she "can't stand white people"; and there are certainly some choice words for Benzino and Ja Rule on tracks from *Encore*. The latter began his dispute with 50 Cent, and Eminem inherited the dispute, which rages across many tracks on *Encore* as well as Obie Trice's *Cheers*. Dr. Dre has been the recipient of some of the rapper's playful jabs, but here the objective of the satire is to flaunt the close relationship between the two artists, a technique that Eminem has exploited to appropriate Dre's weighty reputation in the industry. Eminem kills Dre twice on *The Marshall Mathers LP*, but the objective is clearly to demonstrate that they are close enough to jest with each other. The murder of Dr. Dre in Mathers' lyrics also helps to develop the Slim Shady persona, who is crazy enough to kill one of the patriarchs of gangsta rap. A Freudian analyst might find the repetitive imaginary act of killing his mentor (not unlike the imaginary murders of his absentee father) as a sign of a sublimated resentment that the younger rapper harbors for his producer, a form of the Oedipal urge to be liberated from paternal authority and restraints; and this same idea could have a racial dimension. The recurring fanciful murder of a giant in the African-American Hip Hop industry can be understood as a hopeful metaphor for the ascendency of white rap, or at least a dramatic announcement of its arrival and its determination not to be turned away - a trend that has yet to materialize except in the single instance of Eminem. The stylized argument between the two rappers in "Guilty Conscience" (*SS LP*) reveals, at first, a mellowed, matured, and moralizing Dre who can look back at his own youthful rage with wisdom, skepticism, and, perhaps, some regret. However, the youthful exuberance of the white rapper succeeds in rekindling Dre's fury. While this, of course, is a metaphor for Eminem's role in bringing Dre back to the top of the charts, it can also be understood as a broader comment on the necessity of resuscitating Hip Hop or more particularly gangsta rap with a new gimmick, a psychotic white rapper who is perceived as an even greater threat to the white establishment than his African-American predecessors; and while it may be indefensible to suggest that Hip Hop needed or needs the assistance of a white boy, there is little doubt that Eminem has succeeded in bringing a whole new audience to rap.

In the construction of whiteness as a race within America, the dominant Caucasian culture has fashioned the category of black as a repository of most negative attributes, thus the establishment has banished certain behaviors by projecting them onto marginalized social groups. Valerie Babb argues that the symbolism of color within racial difference served the interests of the white population whose

complexions coded them as "romantic, family oriented, socially and personally trustworthy, and desirous of freedom," while people of color were invested with those negative qualities counter to the interests of white power and hegemony: "barbarism, servility, savageness, and ignorance."[14] Joe L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg, in "Addressing the Crisis of Whiteness: Reconfiguring White Identity in a Pedagogy of Whiteness," concur with Babb, observing that white has come to signify "orderliness, rationality and self-control" and non-white "chaos, irrationality, violence and the breakdown of self-regulation."[15]

Hardcore Hip Hop has exploited these negative racial differences to its advantage, marketing the abject to an alienated youth audience not yet ready to adopt the values of the older generations and aligning it with the adolescent hormonal rampage that fuels youthful rebellion. Thus the African-American thug rapper is (in his lyrical persona) proud of his ability to commit violence, perpetuate social chaos, behave irrationally, and live in excess – "all out of compass," and this formulaic lifestyle proved gold, or more literally platinum, within the music industry. The content of violent rap lyrics is a litany of antisocial behaviors, and yet those African-Americans who are successful in rap become increasingly white, ideologically. If prosperity and privilege are equated with whiteness within American culture, then paradoxically the rappers who have made fortunes perpetuating the white establishment's negative stereotypes of African-American – barbarism, irrationality, chaos, and violence – have become "whiter" in the process. One of the frequent subjects of rap lyrics and videos is the social mobility of the successful black rap star who can now afford to drive expensive cars, live in Beverly Hills mansions, eat in fancy restaurants, wear tailored clothing, sponsor wild and elaborate parties, and engage in extravagant shopping sprees. The image is one of the invasion of formerly white enclaves by the icons of urban chaos; yet once that transition to excessive wealth has been made, the assumption of the rapper's dangerous influence diminishes. The rap star may then face a credibility problem with his fan base; he can no longer convincingly complain about many of the subjects that are fundamental to the content of rap lyrics: racism, street life, poverty, and random violence.

Eminem's rise to preeminence within the most violent, anti-social, and anti-white segment of the Hip Hop genre generates a racial paradox. Eminem's success has resulted from his being even more anti-social than most of his musical colleagues, by intensifying the violence recounted in hardcore rap lyrics. The Slim Shady persona took the element of danger in rap into the realm of the psychotic; the rapper is not a disgruntled ghetto youth willing to sell drugs to earn a living, to

14. Babb, p. 170.
15. Kinchloe and Steinberg, p. 5.

murder his rivals for the sake of territory or women, or to impugn white America for its racial inequities; Slim Shady is an escaped lunatic whose violence is not validated by racial injustice. He is driven by impulse, by phantom voices, by perverse tumultuous pleasures; he is the serial or spree killer of rap: Jason, Freddy, and Norman Bates all in one. In his racial politics, he has usurped and intensified the negative black stereotypes associated with rap and turned them white (and not with horror). Figuratively, he has become "blacker" in order to become "whiter," and this paradox has at least two conflicting resolutions. Like other successful rappers, Eminem has, by commandeering the negative imagery arbitrarily associated with black America, transcended the social limitations that initiated his vexation, the same that motivated him to rap about his unhappiness. To paraphrase John Donne, in order to be "raised up," he needed to be "thrown down." Sinking beneath his station within American racial politics, he found the weaponry to mount an assault upon those barricades inhibiting access to prosperity and privilege. He manipulated black in order to emerge at the top of the white social and economic hierarchy. The second resolution to the paradoxical black/white dialectic in Eminem's career is more progressive in scope. Having exploited negative racial profiles, he has turned them white by revealing, through example, that the qualities unfairly attributed to African-Americans and other people of color are just as common within the white population. He is white and more excessive than his black colleagues. Moreover, he has transformed the urban gangsta's random violence into serial killing, a predominantly white phenomenon, a negative white stereotype: i.e. mental illness and methodical murder. Whites may be less inclined to ride through Compton, California, firing guns from their car windows, but they will systematically herd people into cattle cars, transport them to a remote location, unload them into specially designed shower rooms, and gas them. American ideology and propaganda code chaotic gangland vendettas as the great threat to social stability while they continue to perpetuate a rationalized and systematic violence against minorities, thus perpetuating the real threat to peace and freedom through its hidden murderous mechanisms, its violent invisibilities.

8 Mile and the [White] American Dream

On that light note, let us turn to a discussion of Eminem's successful film debut *8 Mile*[16] which comments at length on his relationship with the African-American rap community. The film is quasi-biographical, a vehicle for Eminem to reveal the conditions of his upbringing and the source of his rage. Despite the fact that he is one of the most financially successful rap solo acts and was the biggest name in the music indus-

16. *8 Mile*, dir. Curtis Hanson (Universal, 2002).

try for a half decade, he evidently felt the need to defend his right to rap, and the $115 million that *8 Mile* generated indicates that America is interested in hearing Eminem explain himself. The narrative is a classic example of the American dream mythology, the story of a young man who overcomes adversity through raw talent, hard work, and determination. The ironic twist within the narrative is that a traditionally oppressed minority is the social group holding back the young American hero. He must triumph over the African-American community's disdain for his creative efforts.

The protagonist of *8 Mile*, Jimmy Smiths, a.k.a. Bunny Rabbit, has reached a pivotal time in his life. The character's name coupled with the song title "Run, Rabbit" seems a probable allusion to John Updike's novel *Rabbit, Run*,[17] published in 1960, and indeed the two narratives seem to share a variety of details. Updike's protagonist is a former High School basketball hero who is having difficulty with his transition into responsible adulthood; even his name Harry Angstrom, a.k.a. Rabbit, suggests the torment that he faces in his efforts to negotiate between his high expectations of life and the tedium of his middle-class suburban existence. Consequently Harry tries to dodge all of his duties as a husband and provider. He leaves his wife to cohabitate with a prostitute, Ruth, and then returns to his wife when he finds out she is pregnant only to leave her again once the baby is born. His wife's subsequent alcoholism results in her accidentally drowning their child. At the end of the novel, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom is still unable to resolve his "angst" driven restlessness and panic. Similarly, the hero of *8 Mile*, Bunny Rabbit, is disappointed with his life, restlessly pursuing his longing to become a rap star. He eschews responsibility for his pregnant girlfriend and embarks upon a series of disappointing efforts. He is humiliated in a rap battle in the first scene of the film. The disappointed white boy is facing additional stress in his life. Having left his girlfriend, he is forced to live with his mother, whose new live-in boyfriend, Greg, an obnoxious and abusive hick who is not much older than Rabbit, ridicules him and his buddies for what he perceives to be their indolent and inconsequential lives. In addition, Rabbit holds a thankless factory job in which his African-American boss is excessively critical of his work. Even his triumph at the conclusion of the film does not rectify the problems the young man is facing. He has vindicated himself at a local Detroit rap battle. The successful event, in spite of its emotional fulfillment, has done little to remove the limitations that poverty imposes on Rabbit's life and expectations. He is still drifting at the conclusion of the film, just like Updike's hero.

The dramatic tension within the film derives from the uncertainty of Rabbit's career choice: Will he become frustrated and quit rapping? Will he ever be able to prove

17. The parallels between Eminem's *8 Mile* and Updike's novels would warrant a separate full-length paper.

to the Hip Hop audience that he, in spite of his whiteness, is a skilled MC? Will he choose a more conventional career route and concentrate on attaining a decent blue collar job? The film dramatizes the process whereby Rabbit musters the confidence to perform at the next rap battle, and his triumph at the conclusion of the narrative is a consequence of his desperation. By the end of the film, he has discovered that Wink, the acquaintance who promised to introduce him to talent scouts, is a fraud; his new girlfriend Alex (played by Brittany Murphy) has cheated on him and is leaving town; his best friend, Cheddar Bob, has accidentally shot himself; Rabbit has alienated most of his other friends through his hostile and combative disposition, including Future (Mekhi Phifer) who has been his biggest advocate; his mother is being evicted from her trailer because Rabbit drove away her boyfriend who was set to receive a large lawsuit settlement; and he has been beaten mercilessly by The Leaders of the Free World, a rival rap crew. The only portions of his life that have improved by the end of the film are his performance at his dead end job and his relationship with his mother.

In short, Rabbit is so desperate when he enters the final rap battle that he has nothing to lose, and he raps with a withering rage that stuns his opponents. His success results from his willingness to ridicule himself. When he battles Papa Doc for the championship, he steals his adversary's thunder by turning the satire upon himself, reciting all of the criticisms that could be leveled against him before turning to the other combatant and exposing him as a pretender. Papa Doc is left with nothing to say and must concede defeat without dispute, a reversal of Rabbit's humiliation at the beginning of the film. With this technique, Rabbit wins by exploiting his own vulnerabilities, exposing himself as a truly disaffected individual, one who has much about which to complain. The same qualities that make him the object of scorn are also those that legitimize his rap. The Free World finds it amusing that he lives with his mother in a trailer, but it is that same wretchedness, degradation, alienation, and rage that has long inspired hardcore rap.

8 Mile allegorizes its message in the rap personas of its principal characters, revealing a black rap hegemony that is determined to maintain its domination as well as the racial purity of its performers. The designation "Leaders of the Free World" for the rival crew suggests equal opportunity, a free world for everyone to fulfill their personal ambitions; however, the crew acts in a fashion contrary to the touted inclusiveness of their name by actually limiting access. (The appellation is also potentially a satiric swipe against American bourgeois ideology that markets America as the land of freedom and opportunity.) The leader of The Leaders is aptly named Papa Doc after the despotic ruler of Haiti who embodied black privilege, not over whites, but over a nation populated by the descendants of former slaves and who ruled with savagery, keeping his people in fear and degraded poverty. *8 Mile*'s Papa Doc exhibits similarly repressive tendencies, obviously within a much more limited

scope; he sits arrogantly at the top of the rap hierarchy in Detroit surrounded by his crew of fashionable thugs – Tupac "wannabes." He and his crew are clearly well-financed, driving a brand new SUV and suited in expensive matching apparel. The Leaders dominion is displayed not only in their repeated success in rap battles, but also in their violence and seeming ubiquity. They intrude into every rap venue in which Rabbit tries to excel, except the lunch line at his job. The leaders become the embodiment, both literal and figural, of what Rabbit must overcome in order to achieve success as a rapper. The fascist imagery associated with Papa Doc comments on the rigorous uniformity that had been imposed upon rap prior to the emergence of Eminem in the late 90's. The rapper image had evolved from the gangsta outsider to the affluent, excessive Hip Hop mogul or mafia don, flaunting his wealth, skill, and influence. With the introduction of Eminem, the anger of disenfranchisement was reintroduced to rap.[18] The Leaders of the Free World must be overthrown, and, with them, their style of rap, which has become tedious.

The Leaders are a visual contrast to the rag tag collection of losers and intellectuals represented by Rabbit's crew. When The Free World encounters Rabbit and his friends preparing for the final rap battle, the Leaders quip that the upstarts look like a "handicap convention." This arrogance increases The Leader's humiliation when they lose the climactic confrontation. In contrast to The Free World's opulent vehicle, Rabbit's unnamed crew drive a broken down wreck that seldom starts. The Free World's obvious wealth (for which the film offers no explanation) is juxtaposed with the honest poverty of their rivals who wear very modest clothing, but also clothing that signifies their individuality. Rabbit and Cheddar Bob dress like white trash while DJ IZ, the traditional Black Power intellectual, wears an army jacket, suggesting an old school pre-gansta militancy, and Future's dread locks allude to the tranquil disposition of Caribbean islanders, a quality which suits him for the role of MC and peacemaker at the rap battles; he is the film's politician.

Future's name, of course, signifies his ability to recognize the next wave of rap incarnations, the next transmogrification of the culture. The film gives Future the role of MC at the rap combats, asserting the primacy of his taste over that of the Hip Hop club crowd. He is MC because his skills at discerning quality rap are impeccable. Moreover, he sees Jimmy Smiths as a "genius" and dedicates all of his energies to Jimmy's promotion, trying to compel the rap community to see past Rabbit's whiteness to the raw skill that the upstart wields. The film does not seem to imply that the future of rap is white, but that the art form must be willing to introduce radical innovation to recognize talent wherever it lies in order to remain vibrant and

18. Anthony Bozza, *Whatever You Say I Am: The Life and Times of Eminem* (New York: Crown, 2003), pp. 142–143.

relevant. Based on the role that Proof (Eminem's friend and colleague from his crew D12) played in promoting Eminem's early efforts, Future may recognize that his own success depends partially upon the accomplishments of his protégé. He continues to encourage and champion Rabbit even after the latter lashes out at him, complaining that he is the "future of nothing," a hateful barb intended to express doubts about his own perceived foolishness in pursuing a rap career. After his success in the final combat, Rabbit is offered an opportunity to co-host the rap battles with Future, but instead chooses to do his "own thing." Future, in this cinematic moment, embodies an avenue that Rabbit is rejecting, not so much, in this case, a career in rap, but a more limited success as an MC in a local challenge.

Rabbit's name retains several potential significations. The name evolves from a disparaging allusion to his failure in the initial rap combat to a designation that identifies one of the principal qualities that will contribute to his future success. Initially, the name "Rabbit" suggests his diminutive stature; he is small, timid, and vulnerable, and gets no respect within the musical venue where he is trying to prove himself. The name suggests that he is a frightened but nimble creature facing a pack of wolves who will tear him apart at the first sign of weakness or ineptitude. He has stage fright and is reluctant to leave the bathroom for his first rap battle. The negative significations of his stage name become even more pronounced when he is unable to refute the lyrical taunts of his competitor and leaves the stage without competing. This moment involves a [mis]recognition by the club audience, who believe that Rabbit has nothing to say in response to his opponent's satiric jabs. Instead he is frightened into silence by the audience who are expecting to preside over his failure. By the end of the film, his name has shifted in signification to reveal his greatest attributes: he is vigorous and enterprising; he employs his rabbit-like skills – his ability to listen carefully, critically, and productively to the denunciations by his opponents and frame his rebuttals to the rhythms of the DJ and the world around him; his capacity to dodge and weave in the face of a frontal assault; and his ability demoralize his opponents with the rapidity of his wit. He will work hard and hustle to attain success, and when he starts to run, his speed and evasiveness will make it very difficult for others to catch him. The final lines of the *8 Mile* soundtrack capture the latter meaning of his name:

> I'ma win this race
> And I'ma come back and rub my shit in your face, bitch
> I found my niche, you gon' hear my voice
> Til you sick of it, you ain't gonna have a choice
> If I gotta scream til I have half a lung
> If I had half a chance I'd grab it – Rabbit, run. ("Run Rabbit")

The appellation suggests that he will compensate for the disadvantages of being white in a black art form by being more determined and quicker than his competitors. The name "Rabbit" may carry several other significations based upon potential cognates, including 'rap it.' Interpreted as an imperative, "rap it" seems to motivate the protagonist in his professional ambitions, urging him to keep rapping; however, the name may also allude to the expression "wrap it," perhaps an abbreviation of "wrap it up," which could carry contradictory meanings. It simultaneously urges the rapper to give up and/or to finish off his opponents with speed and move on with his career. The emphasis is on the necessity of making a decision quickly because his life has become unmanageable and he must embrace meaningful change. This contradiction captures the central tension of the narrative. The protagonist can either get serious or stop trying. The name may also allude to "rapid" or "rabid," both of which capture the rapper's style, the former once again suggesting his speed (quick wit and devastatingly rapid delivery) and the latter his rage. The allusion to "rabid" certainly accords with the anger and desperation that characterizes Rabbit's disposition when he enters that final battle.

The allegorizing of the characters within the narrative produces some unexpected troublesome racial implications. Since Rabbit's efforts are the central focus of the film and the allegory, the other characters are in a sense dehumanized, reduced to objective embodiments of Rabbit's inner struggles. From this perspective, Future's role is diminished until he is no longer the future of Hip Hop, but instead the personification of Rabbit's career options, and ones that the rapper seems to reject at the completion of the film. Wink plays a similar role in the narrative. He is a dreamer and a con man with big plans, who raises Rabbit's expectations of imminent opportunity and success, but who is eventually revealed to be an imposter. His name, "Wink," which suggests conspiracy and complicity, also captures Rabbit's self-deception. He is so desperate for success that for a time he is blind to the evidence that Wink is deceiving him, a fact that is clear to Future from the beginning of the film. Moreover, the authoritative and forbidding presence of Papa Doc is the obstacle that Rabbit must overcome, the racial uniformity of rap culture. The allusion in the name "Papa Doc" to the political paradigm of the Latin American strong man ruler suggests that Rabbit is going to have to be very determined and well-supplied to mount his revolution in the interests of freedom and opportunity.

Perhaps the most racially provocative attribute of the film is the theme of reverse discrimination. All of the obstacles (outside of his own family) that hinder Rabbit's success are African-American, embodied in the recurring images of the intimidating all-black crowd at the club where he performs. Rabbit's act of overcoming is to triumph over the skepticism of the black audience. His story is one of the more recent iterations of the self-affirming mythology of the American dream; but

the unsettling twist on the thematic is the representation of a traditionally oppressed minority as the power structure that is inhibiting the young, white, American hero's apotheosis. The black audience is portrayed as rigid and unreasonable, although they do eventually embrace Rabbit because his skills and charisma are so incontestable that they can no longer deny him. In addition, the film subtly subverts the authority of the black audience even in the area of expertise which white America deems undeniably African-American – Hip Hop music. While the audience in the film is ostensibly expert in the determination of rap talent, the audience watching the film (which can be assumed to be mostly white if it is filled with Eminem fans) is implicitly more knowledgeable of the protagonist's skill. The tension within the film revolves around the uncertainty of whether the club crowd will ever recognize Rabbit's talent. The film crowd – already aware of it – are pulling for the young hero, hoping the African-American audience will be able to overcome its racial preconceptions and admit a white boy to the Hip Hop pantheon. The trope both within and without the film becomes not only socially irresponsible, but absurd: Caucasians trying to help African-American understand their own culture and overcome their racial biases.

In fairness, *8 Mile* does dramatize a variety of encounters between Rabbit and encouraging African-American friends, including Future, Sal George (Omar Benson Miller), and DJ IZ (De'Angelo Wilson), yet they are portrayed as the enlightened exceptions to the rule of black racism, perhaps because they too are outsiders or individuals, rebelling against the obligatory conformity of the Hip Hop community in Detroit. Despite the confidence and support of his African-American friends, Rabbit's deepest intimacies develop between himself and the other white characters, Cheddar Bob (Evan Jones) and Alex (Brittany Murphy). Cheddar Bob is the character who retains a simple-minded devotion to Rabbit and derives personal affirmation from his success. When Jimmy Smiths wins the rap battle at the conclusion of the film, the camera, mimicking Rabbit's perspective, turns to Cheddar and Alex to evaluate their personal exultation in his success. Alex in particular displays a combination of elation and smugness, suggesting that she knew all along what the black crowd had only recently discovered: the measure of Rabbit's talent.

The volley of knowing glances bandied between the white characters in the film's conclusion suggest a complicity that also has an application to the role of *8 Mile* in our culture. In reaffirming the validity of the American dream, the film relegitimizes, or even re-invents, a uniquely white bourgeois narrative. When cinema stages a dramatization of the values of hard work and determination which contribute to the protagonist's triumph over poverty, that protagonist is typically Caucasian. The tradition of the American Dream did not encompass people of color until long after the narrative was a staple of American mythology, and even to this day,

the tradition seems fixated on the struggles of white Americans for fame and financial success. Hollywood frequently depicts African-Americans who are wealthy, successful, and powerful, but that is only the American Dream implied. The inspirational narrative focuses on the battle for success, emphasizing the process as much as or more than the exultation and achievement. Seldom does the narrative of overcoming apply to African-Americans except when the obstacle to surmount is racism; then the apotheosis is usually freedom and survival, not as often wealth and power.[19] *8 Mile* is one of the first major Hip Hop films that dramatizes the urban poor kid overcoming obstacles interior and exterior to win adulation and respect; and ironically the protagonist is white, struggling for a place in a black world. To make the racial politics of the film even more problematic, *8 Mile* has adopted the single manifestation of the American dream narrative that is uniquely related to the predicament of minorities: the process of overcoming prejudice to create a place for people of color in an oppressive white hegemony. Rabbit does not get rich in the film. It is questionable whether he even plans to pursue his rap ambitions following the film's conclusion. In the final shot, he leaves his friends and the scene of his triumph to go back to work. The film then becomes a white man's success in a black man's American dream. The co-opting of black culture that has been a part of the criticism of Eminem since his emergence on the public stage has been valorized in his film debut.

Yet another compelling attribute of *8 Mile* is the way in which the narrative winks at the presence of Eminem on screen. Just as the rapper invites his audience to perceive him simultaneously as both black and white, the film necessitates that the protagonist be viewed as both Eminem and Jimmy Smiths. To cast Eminem playing himself and dramatizing the auto-biographical details that are a staple within his lyrical content is to urge a recognition of him on screen; and the narrative requires that his presence be acknowledged in order to generate a sufficient amount of anticipation for his climactic triumph. The film offers little to verify the protagonist's so-called genius before the end of the film, save for the encouragement and praise of his friend and a few brief and unimpressive freestyles. The expectations of his success that keep the film audience interested are generated mostly by the recognition of Eminem on screen and the supplemental knowledge that he is a proficient MC. Moreover, the film script is calculated to continue the process of defending Eminem's right to rap by enacting the details of his difficult upbringing and explaining his true sentiment toward minorities, both racial and gendered. No doubt the names have been changed, so that any cinematic details that are not accurate will not be assumed so, thus creating still more

19. Some notable exceptions include *Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) and *What's Love Got to Do With It* (1993).

misunderstanding about the rapper's intentions, or inspiring any further accusations that he is fabricating his difficult past.

The conclusion of the story also urges the audience to recognize the rap icon in the part of Jimmy Smiths. The characters' celebration following the final battle implies that Rabbit has done more than win a local contest and the support of a skeptical black audience. He has become a star. Even though Rabbit returns to his factory job after his success and rejects the invitation to host the rap combats with Future, the narrative urges its audience to assume that he will go on to fortune and fame because that is story of Marshall Mathers, who triumphed over low expectations. Even the lyrics of the Oscar winning song "Lose Yourself" invite assumptions that the climactic battle in the film has a great deal of significance: "You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow / This opportunity comes once in a lifetime." The film implies that the final contest is his one shot that he does not waste. Yet ostensibly there are no talent scouts, label representatives, or even any agents at the event; so logically the audience is supposed to assume that Rabbit is Eminem, and that he will have many additional opportunities to "blow." The film can also be understood as a metaphor for the rapper's Hollywood debut. His stage fright at the beginning of the film and his growing confidence and determination record Eminem's gradual adaptation to the medium, until he becomes a full-fledged actor/movie star in the film's culmination, so that Rabbit's recognition as a rapper parallels, for movie goers, Eminem's exultation as an actor.

Recuperating Eminem's Racial Politics

In his lyrics, Eminem often slips imperceptibly between one of his personas and another, thus problematizing authority and veracity, allowing him to gambol away from responsibility for the hateful, abusive, and/or socially reckless content of his lyrics. Even the example cited in the opening anecdote of this chapter relies upon the audience's inability to determine the true nature of Marshall Mathers' sentiments. He wants his fans to recognize that an entirely different character was speaking when he recorded the mean-spirited, racist freestyle about black women; this time it was the specter of youthful rage, disappointment, and stupidity speaking. Eminem plays a game of peek-a-boo with his racial background, or rather the parlor trick – "Now you see it; now you don't." His racial heritage is calculated to be simultaneously visible and invisible. He expects to be appreciated for his skill, not dismissed for his race (as is the theme of *8 Mile*); but he also capitalizes on the advantages of his whiteness in a variety of ways, some subtle, some not so, and paradoxically, even his acknowledgments that his whiteness has been an advantage perpetuates his racial elusiveness. When he admits in "White America" that his race has helped him to sell

twice as many records as he would have if he were black, he also creates a scenario in which he can defend his skills and his right to rap. Half of the millions of albums sold world wide still constitute phenomenal success, and those remaining sales are attributed entirely to skill. The admission is made at the height of his fame when he can afford to be magnanimous, when the question of a white man's right to rap is moot; he is already rich and famous. The song in which he acknowledges the advantages of his racial heritage is the same in which he portrays himself as the worst fear of the white establishment, thereby aligning himself with the racialized outsider in spite of his affirmation of whiteness; he occupies the center and the periphery of American culture simultaneously.

Eminem's efforts to combat those aspersions of racism generated by the rogue verses released by Benzino and *The Source* include the most clichéd solution – to protest that some of his best friends are black – and his unique way of expressing that is to release an album with his African-American crew, *D12 World*.[20] While the effort is very politic, it is also quite transparent and constitutes yet another manifestation of privilege. Few people have the opportunity to refute accusations against them by releasing a CD and having it produced and promoted with all of the resources of Interscope, Shady, and Aftermath records. The videos released for *D12 World* simultaneously refute, affirm, and burlesque the charges leveled by Ray Benzino. *The Source* alleges that Eminem has exploited his African-American colleagues for his own financial advantage, refusing to give them a fair portion of the royalties, failing to help talented rappers such as Proof and Obie Trice to become "multi-millionaires."[21] The video for "My Band" both affirms and ridicules this idea, showing Eminem as a privileged and insolent tyrant within the D12 power structure, refusing to share his opulent lifestyle with his crew, and daring them to complain. While he travels on a bus, his crew rides separately in a small van, and while Eminem has lavish accommodations for his dressing room, D12 shares a janitor's closet. The video also suggests that he monopolizes the microphone and the publicity, refusing to let anyone else speak or perform. The audience is supposed to understand the protests of his band as affirmation of their support and friendship. They are willing to ridicule the idea that he is an egomaniac who insists upon his superiority and his privilege. Yet they have an ulterior motive for doing so (even for misrepresenting their predicament), which is to create a successful song and album that will refute the charges of selfishness, financial inequity, and racial prejudice by bringing a greater degree of wealth and fame to his African-American crew. Even if they agreed with the accusation that Eminem is exploitative, they would neverthe-

20. D12, *D12 World (Shady Records, 2004)*.

21. Kim Osorio, "The Real Slim Shady," *The Source* (February 2004) 70–78, pp. 76–77.

less have a strong financial motivation for cooperation. However, in fairness, Eminem is also lending his high public profile to the project, which virtually guarantees its success and ensures his band mates' financial prospects. The irony of the "My Band" burlesque lies not in its lyrics or its imagery but in the DVD supplements to *D12 World*. Here the imagery of the band during recording sessions for the LP emphasizes the friendliness and easy interaction between Eminem and his African-American colleagues, its objective to show that there is no tension within the organization; however, the result is to confirm some of the accusations made against Shady in the media. In the DVD, he does come across as a camera hog and an egomaniac; he repeatedly usurps the eye of the camera, redirecting it when it strays to other subjects of interest. The DVD also contains the video for the track "40oz." which includes the clichéd Hip Hop imagery of a rap posse's celebrations. Each rapper has an opportunity to address the camera, while he offers his contribution to the rap medley, and Eminem's contribution is not first, last, or longer; its prominence is de-emphasized; he respectfully waits for his opportunity to rap. Interestingly, the two music videos on the DVD contradict each other in the representation of the racial and economic politics of the organization, while the imagery from the recording studio seems to confirm both of the antithetical views of Eminem's behavior. This ambivalent position is one in which he seems very comfortable, simultaneously mocking, affirming, and denying accusations against him through which he can refute his critics and maintain his public image as an unyielding, unapologetic, and insolent ass.

White privilege has produced some unacknowledged advantages in Eminem's career. When critics attribute the rapper's extraordinary success to his whiteness, the conclusion seems counterintuitive, since there is a recognized mistrust of white players in the black medium. Yet there is a more subtle logic to the critique, one that does not necessarily diminish the importance of Eminem's skill. His whiteness has allowed him to stand off brightly on an entirely black background; after all, it is a rule in painting that dark colors recede and light colors move to the foreground. Eminem's lightness might also have focused greater attention on his rhymes, since his very presence on stage or on MTV and BET necessitated that he must have something very important to say and be proficient in his art in order to have been given the chance to rap in a national venue; so his audience listened closely to what he had to say. The controversy over his right to appropriate African-American culture to his advantage was an invitation to explain himself, and generated the compelling subject matter which has become his trademark: his unpleasant childhood experiences.

Eminem's need to explain himself created a media blitz. The press wanted to cash in on the rapper's stardom by featuring articles about the white artist who is out of his element and is infuriating everyone. Foremost among the advantages of

the racial controversy was the opportunity to star in a film based on his life, and one that dramatized the circumstances that made him angry enough to identify with the socially disaffected and begin to rap about his rage. There are no memorable films about the lives of other successful rappers who have overcome disadvantage to attain Hip Hop stardom, and yet the story is as much or more central to their experiences than to Marshall Mathers'. Eminem was the first given this opportunity because it was not unique to hear of a black man or woman overcoming many daunting racial obstacles; yet when a white man has similar experiences, the story is evidently compelling enough to warrant a major motion picture. One can only hope that the success of *8 Mile* will convince the film industry of the viability of such narratives.

Writing Tudor Humanism and Barbarism

Zsolt Almási and Mike Pincombe (ed.), *Writing the Other: Humanism* versus *Barbarism in Tudor England* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

In 2006, Hungary's Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Piliscsaba hosted the Fifth International Conference of the Tudor Symposium under the topic of "Humanity and Barbarism in Tudor Literature." The recently published collection of essays generated by this meeting, *Writing the Other: Humanism* versus *Barbarism in Tudor England*, edited by Zsolt Almási and Mike Pincombe, acts as a testament to what was evidently a lively and thoughtful event, neatly situated, as the volume points out, in what was considered in the English Tudor era to be the "frontier between Christians and the others, the human, humane and the barbarian" (1). The volume's eleven articles, together with Almási's Introduction, represent a rich and varied investigation, valuable for students of humanism, Renaissance conceptions of Otherness, and of Tudor literature.

In his Introduction, Almási cleanly sketches his approach to the volume, merging discourses of English protocolonialism with those of history of the book. Writing in Tudor England, he suggests, "in the new context of print culture," served as "a tool for creating a self-identity with an eye on the rhetorical, religious, poetic, [and] national expectations of the readers" (2). Humanism, which through the Tudor era had become reoriented from its lofty philosophical chains of being towards issues of pragmatism, became invested instead in "specific social, sociological, religious, and cultural" self-definitions (6). Apparently, Almási follows coeditor Mike Pincombe in seeing a shift in the late Tudor perspective towards questions of humanism, as humanism came to be regarded not only as a high-minded philosophical endeavor, but also as a practical one – sometimes even with skepticism and an emphasis on its mere "technical expertise and stylistic flair."[1]

Among the practical processes of defining humans socially, sociologically, religiously, and culturally, according to Almási, was representation in opposition to a Hegelian Other – the barbarian. Almási finds anxiety in evidence in the writings of the Tudor era, produced by the paradoxical distancing and simultaneous closeness to such Others which occurred through the act of representation and projection. His closing example, taken from a text published just after the end of the Tudor era, reads this collapse of self-confirmation and self-critique in John Finet's translation of Rene de Lucinge's *The Beginning, Continuance, and Decay of Estates* (1606).

While the text predictably presents its Turkish Others as demonized barbarians, at the same time the Christians appear to be weaker, less loyal, and greedier than their Turkish counterparts. Furthermore, as Lucinge enjoins the Christian states to unite in opposition against the Turks, he recommends that books with "a shew pleasentness and delight" be used to subtly spread the poison of doubt for their religion throughout the Turkish territories. In this way Lucinge's text calls into question the moral superiority of the Christians it addresses over the barbarians they are to conquer, and the book, which ought to lift the Christian learner towards the divine, becomes instead "a means of mass destruction" (17).

The gladiatorial opposition in the volume's subtitle, *Humanism* versus *Barbarism*, with a wink, evokes its dichotomy only to dismantle it as "naïve boundaries . . . disappear" (8). Several articles in the volume closely follow the Introduction's model, reading accounts of barbaric Otherness which act both as distancing confirmers of selfhood and self-superiority and, at the same time, evocative reminders of similar domestic barbaric tendencies. Elizabeth Heale, for example, examines Stephen Parmenius of Buda's travel narrative *De navigatione* in which the Catholic Spaniards' barbaric treatment of the comparatively innocent Amerindians (who wait openly for conversion) highlights their status as Other, while at the same time the poem echoes the cruelty of the English's own colonial campaign. And Andrew Hiscock demonstrates the manner in which Sir Walter Ralegh "invites his readers to identify possible versions of themselves and their cultural experience with those of the inhabitants of a continent across the Atlantic" (198) and to contrast themselves with Catholic Spaniards, only to reveal at the end of his career glimpses at the similarity between the Spaniards' behavior in the Americas and the English colonization efforts in Ireland.

The articles in this collection challenge the dichotomy set up by the title through an exuberant menagerie of *barbarisms* and *barbarians* and of *humans*, *humanes*, and *humanisms*. Barbarians may be residents of Barbary, and Francis Guinle sees a conscious effort in George Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* to use the term to signify "North African," a designation of race rather than religion, and not necessarily negative within the play's dramatic (rather than historical) perspective. Yet barbarians are not always non-Western, nor even non-Protestants, like the Spanish in Heale and Hiscock's discussions, but may even be English. Kinga Földváry sees William Harrison's depiction of poverty in *A Description of Elizabethan England* as a project of criminalizing and dehumanizing the English poor – one which may have had its roots in the rhetoric of the humanist Mirandola's chain of being. Erzsébet Stróbl explores the figure of the wild man in pageants designed for Elizabethan progresses and

entertainments and his openness to "humanizing" in response to courtly virtue. As Amina Alyal shows in her exploration of the rhyme and rhythm debate in Renaissance literary theory, popular "home-grown" poetic forms could be viewed as barbaric in contrast with courtly imitations of Classical forms – opposing conventions both accommodated in Shakespeare's versification.

Humanism's Classical roots also play a key role in Gunilla Florby's article, as she argues that the lauding of barbarous cruelty present in George Chapman's *Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* stems directly from engagement with Classical heroes and texts. Peter Happé examines the protean identities of both humanism and author John Heywood, providing the volume's most detailed account of English humanism – which was "hardly a coherent philosophy or set of beliefs" (119) – and demonstrating the degree to which Heywood's work does and does not reflect his humanist models. Ágnes Matuska demonstrates that the characters called Vices in English Tudor drama, despite their barbaric nonsense language and evident links with popular culture, are at the same time surprisingly not antithetical to humanism's spirit of logical joking, nor are they necessarily rejected by the plays in which they feature.

Defining barbarism in terms of its relation to comprehensible language, as Matuska does, is a key feature of several of the collection's articles. As Hiscock points out, "the very notion in the West of barbarism, that which is culturally antagonistic and othered, looks back to . . . those who could not decode the Ancient Greek language (*barbaros*) and who seemed to communicate with empty mouthings[:] 'bar bar' " (198). Pauline Blanc notes this original meaning as she suggests through her reading of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking Glasse for London and England* that the late 1580s saw a change in meaning of *barbarism* from indicating an incomprehensible mode of speech to an uncivilized, uncultured, and ignorant condition – one which could be present at both ends of seemingly hierarchical oppositions. And, carefully tracing humanist treatments of the term *barbarus* as signifying someone incapable of conveying ideas or comprehending civilized language across the sixteenth century and through several languages, Benedek Péter Tóta explores a network of texts connected to Sir Thomas More's *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* and its account of the Ottoman victory over Hungary at the Battle of Mohács, effectively echoing the conference's Hungarian location and its relation to Tudor Europe.

Recent years have seen a number of reexaminations of humanism and the host of explorations of early English responses to Otherness which has steadily increased since the 1980s; but *Writing the Other* provides a useful drawing together of these subjects in a thought-provoking spirit of plurality. The vol-

ume's eclecticism necessarily trades cohesion for this diversity, but its articles represent well the investigative richness of this topic. Almási acknowledges – even celebrates – in his Introduction the critical problem that "a complete, comprehensive and unified picture" has not yet been "drawn of all the cultural-literary phenomena that can be classified under the heading: 'humanism,' 'human' *versus* 'barbarism,' 'barbarian,' " yet the volume's variety of voices layers in an effective outline in colorful decoupage.

Karen Kettnich

Note

1. Mike Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (London: Pearson, 2001), p. 12.

Portraits for Milton

Neil Forsyth, *John Milton: A Biography* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008)

The cover page of Neil Forsyth's new book on Milton consists of two paintings. One is a portrait of the mature poet, with long, curly locks and a characteristic look of self-confidence and pride. The other, due to its size and placement appearing somewhat like a background for the portrait, is a Civil War battle scene, featuring Oliver Cromwell in its centre. Milton and Cromwell face each other, so at first glance it seems that a Lilliputian army is engaged in a hopeless fight against a Gargantuan, invincible Milton. This cover is meaningful in more than one way; in fact, it seems to imply the *ars poetica* of the volume. Through a detailed account of Milton's life (and works), filled, at the same time, with as much background information as possible, there unfolds a constant struggle in front of the readers' eyes, a battle between Forsyth and the topic which stresses the boundaries of the short book to the extreme. The imaginary struggle is eventually won by the author; however, as is often the case in battles, there are notable casualties.

The modest title of the book is somewhat misleading, since not only do we get a clear-cut biography of Milton, but most of his works are also introduced in a compelling way, with many a carefully selected quotation. Tone is instantly calibrated by the tiny *Preface*, which is a weird but honest authorial apology. The jocular voice is immediately catching, first in the confession of guilty dreams about unique Milton autographs, and then, when the purpose of the book is explicitly declared: "to transmit to as wide a readership as possible the results of the scholarly researches of others, along with some of my own opinions" (7). No illusions here: instead of long lists of footnotes and detailed bibliographies (although the primary debts – to Gordon Campbell, and to Barbara K. Lewalski – are aptly recognised), we should anticipate a good read intended for the general reader.

The 230-page-long book is divided into twenty-four numbered chapters, plus *Preface*, *Introduction,* and *Epilogue*. The chapter "*Introduction: Blind Love*" is similar to the promotional trailers popular in the world of movies. It begins with two lines from *Sonnet 23*, in which Forsyth first emphasises the emotional intensity, then identifies the numerous classical authors invoked. Afterwards he sheds light upon the difficulty of relating the overabundant historical data available about Milton to the complicated emotional background. He briefly hints at the problematic nature of Milton's attitude towards women, and even engages in historical ponderings. It seems that no text about Milton nowadays can afford itself to completely ignore the topic of sex – it appears as early as this pre-chapter, and permeates the whole book, fortunately not in an exaggerated manner. Milton the fierce pamphleteer and Milton the master of the language also make short appearances on the stage. Besides arousing interest in the reader, the *Introduction* also tells a lot about the main focal points of the book and the chief preoccupations of its author.

The first two chapters provide some information about the family in which Milton grew up, but the key topic here is the poet-to-be's education. Milton began his studies at St Paul's, and Forsyth emphasises the high esteem toward ancient authors at the school, as well as the fact that, by the time Milton was there, the greatest of the English poets had also been incorporated into the curriculum. The earliest works of Milton are mentioned, and key topics (mass slaughter, intense friendship) are noticed here, as well. Chapter 2 offers a well-written summary of the chaotic atmosphere of the 1620s in Cambridge, and Forsyth draws a dual portrait of the university student Milton. On the one hand, he appears as an exceptionally witty student, engaging in all the usual merriments of university life; on the other, even in moments of high cheerfulness, he can be gravely serious, concerned for the cause of national and international Protestantism. Forsyth traces early signs of Milton's Protestant and anti-Royalist inclinations in some of his early works, among which his often unmentioned early tracts, the *Prolusions*, are also examined.

Together with some other early poems, the third chapter proposes an attentive reading of *On Shakespeare* and *L'Allegro/Il Penseroso*. The former is considered only partly as homage; according to Forsyth, in the poem Milton is also distinguishing himself from the poetry represented by the great predecessor. Duality is discovered in the famous verse-pair, too, as in Forsyth's reading the two poems correspond to the cheerful and the serious strains of Milton. The fourth chapter is about the great solitary reading programme of Milton, touching upon the possibility of debates between father and son (in connection with *Ad Patrem*), and offering a fairly detailed analysis of the first im-

portant commission of Milton, the masque *Comus*. Forsyth shows how Milton reshaped the genre by putting much more weight on the poetry part of it, and he explores the sensitive nature of the venture, originating from the scandals around the commissioning family. Alongside an in-depth analysis of the language of the masque, Forsyth notes the lack of the usual Puritanical worries concerning this aristocratic genre, and he even uncovers some explicitly anti-Puritan passages. This and some other remarks by Forsyth question the early presence of devoted Puritanism in Milton.

It is no accident that the only shorter poem occupying a separate chapter is *Lycidas*. In Forsyth's view, this was Milton's ticket to the hall of fame, the first among his poems that became an unavoidable point of reference for later poets engaging in anything similar. Characteristically enough, out of the hundreds who at some point wrote something about *Lycidas*, it is Samuel Johnson, one of the more widely known and more notorious haters of the poem, who is discussed in detail. Johnson's big miss is attributed by Forsyth to the fact that he failed to "accept – or at least read across – those pastoral conventions" (50) which were already felt to be artificial in Johnson's time. The numerous classical authors invoked are listed next, whereas a close reading of the first line reveals the complexity of Milton's language. The real novelty in Forsyth's reading comes when he tries to explore the poem's attitude towards the person commemorated in it, Edward King. Starting out from the etymology of the word 'Lycidas,' Forsyth finds a new explanation for the presence of the most intrusive passage of the poem (the interlude of Church criticism with the famous "creeping wolves"). The Greek word can be read as "wolf's whelp," and so it becomes clear that the interlude is a very carefully constructed criticism of King, who had already set off in a Royalist-Laudian direction.

Chapter 6 offers a lively description of Milton's European journey, focusing on the high esteem prominent Italians held him in, as well as on influential personal encounters, perhaps most importantly with Galileo Galilei. Forsyth suggests that even in the nest of Roman Catholicism Milton kept to his views in a stringent way, which made things less facile at times. The next chapter describes the England he finds upon his return. With his homeland shrunk in the Civil War, Milton moves to London and with all his strength tumbles into the pamphlet wars, of which an informative yet vivid account is given. Milton's satirical voice is praised, unlike the way in which the great poet sometimes becomes far too personal (adapting to his enemies' tone). Tracking Milton's intellectual development, Forsyth finds that by this time he had not only reached a Presbyterian position, but had already surpassed it, arriving at some sort of Independent standpoint. Confusion of the times is well reflected by the compli-

cated story of Milton's first marriage (to Mary Powell), narrated in a sensitive way in chapter 8.

Chapter 9 turns back to the stage of nationwide politics, where Milton performed several debated acts. Forsyth offers subtle observations concerning Milton's divorce tracts, while in the analysis of *Areopagitica*, even though he calls it "one of the greatest of all works of English prose" (89), he does not suppress the spotted inconsistencies (like excluding Papists from universal toleration). All in all, the portrait of a belligerent pamphleteer emerges, who is at his best when personal interests are also involved, like his own marriage, or his vanity as a writer, and as a man. Besides these, the chapter also provides an atmospheric description of the turbulent times. Chapter 10 again shifts back to the family matters for a short while, to depict the reconstruction of the interrupted Powell-marriage, and the way this new family life made Milton busy and tired. Meanwhile, preparation of the *Poems* volume of 1645 was underway, recounted by Forsyth with an interesting story about the misfit portrait on the title page of the book.

Chapters 11 and 12 trace Milton's activity during the most dubious phase of the Civil War: the trial and the execution of the king. The description of the events is sometimes so extensive that we lose sight of Milton for some time. Thus there is a long passage on the execution of the King and about the propagandistic book (*Eikon Basilikē*) that was ghost written on his behalf. This is of course necessary to explain how the fierce battle between Milton, writer of a reply to that work, and those who condemned the execution, developed. A description of the general confusion is also needed to understand how Milton, first defender of the freedom of the press, becomes a censor. Forsyth tries to exempt the poet from this to the extent possible: he suggests that the job was not taken too seriously by the poet. The commissions from the Parliament account for the total blindness of Milton, which is discussed in chapter 13. That chapter also follows up the often ugly battle going on between Milton and the Royalists.

Chapter 14 explores the strange relationship between Milton and Cromwell in the detailed context of a country getting worryingly "messy." The problem of the emerging sects is discussed in brief, with some of the more extreme examples (Anna Trapnel, James Nayler) serving as illustrations. Forsyth is not convinced that Milton really did favour the Lord Protector, yet thought that he could effectively shape Cromwell's foreign policy through his important position as secretary of foreign languages. Chapter 15 is a glimpse at early plans for *Paradise Lost*, and at some of the theological issues appearing in *De Doctrina Christiana*. The central themes of the epic – free will, the nature of Christ, creation – are inspected in the theological treatise, and Forsyth draws a parallel between these meditations and the psychological depth of Milton's characters.

The book then addresses Milton's disillusionment with the regime (chapter 16). In the works written around this time, political freedom and freedom of conscience are equally urged, and Milton even questions the necessity of a division between clergy and laity. Events accelerated, and Milton soon faced new dangers when the "good old cause" was finally lost. His brief imprisonment and the surrounding events are discussed in chapter 17, and Forsyth calls attention to the consistency of Milton, who did not turn coat, like John Dryden, for example. This is followed by a chapter on the completion of *Paradise Lost* (chapter 18) in the rural retreat. An interesting idea is suggested about the structure of the first edition: according to Forsyth, Republicans preferred the ten-book-model of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, whereas Royalists were fonder of Virgil and the model of the *Aeneid*.

Chapter 19 begins with a brief description of the Great Fire of London, which is exciting and impressive even if it has little to do with the biography itself. The chapter then regains its focus and speaks of the material circumstances of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. Chapters 20 and 21 offer elaborate insights into *Paradise Lost*, of course not in a comprehensive way, but rather following the trailer-like manner of the *Introduction*. Besides emphasising the love-story nature of the great poem, Forsyth also guides the reader into the maze of Milton's language, giving some support with first steps, then leaving them completely to their own devices. Chapter 22 deals with the final works, most extensively with *Samson Agonistes*. Forsyth discusses the parallels with Milton's own life, as well as the question of post-9/11 interpretations of the drama. The text obviously became problematic after the attacks, since it is in fact a monument to a suicide terrorist act. Forsyth calls for Walter Benjamin's help: "There is no work of civilization that is not also a monument to barbarism" (199). Even if such an explanation seems artificial, it perfectly illustrates how Milton's time and thinking are both close to and far from us at the same time. Chapter 23 is actually a long catalogue of the reasons why *Paradise Regained* could not match up to its prequel. Chapter 24 deals with some late attacks against Milton, and, in addition to a discussion of his last publications, there is a detailed analysis of the effect of the structural changes in the second edition of *Paradise Lost*. Dryden's rhymed version (*The State of Innocence*) is also mentioned. The *Epilogue* discusses the reception of Milton and his works in some detail, with a main focus on T. S. Eliot's dislike of Milton.

The general structure of the book is determined more by chronology than by the popularity of Milton's works. "Less" known writings and the magnum opus thus receive similar treatment, which is more profitable in the case of the minor works. The arrangement never questions the special position of *Paradise Lost* – all information

Forsyth provides gains its full significance by its relation to the great work. Such an approach becomes odd only when it drives Forsyth to utter questionable value judgments, as in chapter 7, writing about the early, historically oriented epic plans of Milton: "We may be glad that he did not now get started on the project for the epic: it might have been about historical heroes like Alfred – or, in a year or two, Oliver Cromwell" (75).

The author performs the task of filtering the excessive quantity of information with exceptional care, and he is apparently skilful in the creation of arresting openings. Especially likeable are chapter 5 (a personal memory of a 2008 London ceremony commemorating the 400th anniversary of Milton's birth), and the concise history of the Great Fire of London in chapter 19, as well as the parts which offer a detailed picture of the world surging around Milton. Chapter 7 is exceptionally well-written: not only does it offer a comprehensible summary of the beginnings of the Civil War, it does so in an exciting way. When dealing with sensitive matters, Forsyth always tends to keep the balance between the extremes of opinions. For example, concerning the question of Milton's misogyny, Forsyth first demonstrates how inconsistent Milton was, and instead of resolving the inconsistency, he maps the complexity of the issue at hand, and makes the reader ask "Could Milton have been consistent on this matter at all?"

The one quality of the book that will probably not be admired by all of its readers originates in its assumed wide audience. Since there is a constant need for explanations, in some instances they become wearisome, or in worse cases, they are far too trivial. Of course, in a work that accuses itself of "haute vulgarisation" (7) these are unfair charges, yet dismissing *sola scriptura* in the following manner is not elegant: "Only the Bible will do as an authority, a doctrine that most Protestants share, and that is known as *sola scriptura*" (72). We also receive a light definition of *imitatio Christi*: "In the *imitatio Christi* tradition that is so important within Christianity, and that this poem [*Paradise Regained*] takes up and extends, one tries to be like Christ" (201). Another problem, arising from the same grounds, is a lack of depth in certain cases. Although compared to the length of the book, some issues are discussed in a relatively detailed way (for example, the chapters on the outbreak of the Civil War) no space could be devoted to the elaborate discussion of challenging issues. Thus the reader may wrongly assume that questions regarding 17th-century English radicalism, or the English sects of the Civil War era, are settled, while, on the contrary, these are the fields in which many new results are available, the incorporation of which into this tiny volume would simply not have been possible, nor would it have been necessary.

As for the references in the book, there are not many. Each chapter contains none to twelve footnotes, but we often have to make do without specific sources of information. Mention must be made of the high number of internet references: many websites are listed, another sign that the book tries to reach those who are just becoming familiar with Milton (but are not obsessed enough yet to go to the library). The *Index* is helpful, if not always consistent. For example, the name of John Dury appears twice in the book, and accordingly, there are two references in the Index, whereas Samuel Hartlib, who is mentioned at least seven times in the book (always as a friend of Milton, a point some people would doubt), is not listed in the Index at all, and there are other omissions as well: Jean Bodin, Robert Boyle, Ephraim Pagitt to name but a few.

Altogether, Forsyth's book is something that had to be written on Milton: a short, easy-to-follow, accessible guide to the man and his works. In its two hundred and thirty pages it delivers everything it can, and more. The book is full of information, but it is also full of humour. The author is light-hearted from the first to the last sentence, and at the end of the day, one realises that he is not reading for Milton, but for the book itself. Many of the problems listed above arise from the reviewer's unjust position. This book should not be read at a desk, with full scrutiny, going from chapter to chapter, line to line, looking for all the mistakes and omissions. It should be read with a nice cup of tea in an armchair. And reading it that way, we come to realise that out of the battle mentioned in the beginning, despite all the losses, not only did the author emerge as a victor – he did it with a knowing smile on his face.

Csaba Maczelka

A Fresh Start

Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006)

To make one look at an often-discussed, thoroughly investigated, exhaustively catalogued, frequently trite-looking topic with a fresh pair of eyes; to introduce flexibility into a matter solidified to the point of rock-hardness over the centuries; to open an unseen horizon before the literary adventurer; and to initiate the inexperienced reader into a world all too distant in time but ever so close in everyday routines, apparently too difficult in language but ever so exhilarating in vividness of detail and variety of theme – these are the hallmarks of the truly lasting works of literary criticism. And these are the hallmarks, also, that one would expect of such an eminent, versatile, and prolific critic, nay, *reader*, of English literature as

former President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Patricia Meyer Spacks.[1] And one's expectations are not in the least frustrated by *Novel Beginnings*, her synthesis of all there is to be told in a guide to the origins and beginnings of the English novel, the experiments that preceded, caused, and accompanied its emergence.

It is only so far that one can proceed without entangling oneself in the guiding metaphor of Spacks' book: the polysemy of 'novels,' 'experiments,' and 'beginnings.'[2] It takes a fine sense of proportion not to push these terms beyond the meanings they can possibly carry, and Spacks is clearly in possession of that sense. Demonstrating this, she surveys the cultural, political, religious, gender, and financial changes and developments that took place in the period following the Restoration of the English monarchy and the Glorious Revolution subsequent to it. In this sense, she remains true to the notion of 'beginnings'; in her view, the 18th century had its beginning in the second half of the 17th, while some of its grassroots went back even further, to Tudor times.

It is the same organic view of development that pervades and authenticates Spacks' narrative of 18th-century English fiction. For it is a narrative about narrative fiction, combining the chronological view with a clear idea of evolution perceptible in all walks of 18th-century life, encompassing an extraordinary range of novelties. In doing so, Spacks creates a veritable *tour de force* that inexorably leads one through a story all too often seen or presented as impenetrable, complicated, dull, or irrelevant to 21st-century readers. *Novel Beginnings* underscores once more the (by now well-established) fact that there is far more to 18th-century fiction than a few works by Defoe and Swift, a pocket Fielding or a modernized Richardson, a selection of Sterne or the early Austen.

What often seems outdated today used once to be novel, Spacks argues, and that novelty in itself may affirm the instrumental role it played in later developments. But that is just part of the story. Namely, the first chapter proves that many of those innovations are valid even today, and later fiction – knowingly or not – builds on the fundamentals laboriously raised and established by the first, heroic decades of novel writing. Spacks' knowledge and experience of contemporary fiction lends further credence to her argument.

This chapter, "The Excitement of Beginnings," might almost be read as a separate treatise of the antecedents and early forms of the novel. These shared a common interest in the new phenomena concomitant with the rise of modern civilization. Spacks covers an incredible variety of such novelties, including but not limited to the change in epic directions and dimensions; the growing importance of monetary issues; struggles for literary and political

authority; expanding literacy among the lower classes, children, and women; shifting marriage models increasingly preferring money to property; (re)definitions of 'nature' and 'natural' facts and occurrences; transnational exchanges; and an alteration of what *reality* should be understood to be in the first place. Spacks here looks at the authors (mostly 'part-time') and the genres (awaiting 'emancipation'). She considers the gender roles both in creative impulses and character descriptions. She highlights differences in class, property, modes of existence, and levels of erudition – only to outline an evolutionary view that incorporates and transcends all those differences.[3]

Otherwise, the structure of the book is fairly conservative. It surveys the long-established categories of fictional genres and styles, proceeding from novels of adventure through the novel of development, novels of consciousness, the novel of sentiment, the novel of manners, and Gothic fiction, to the political novel.[4] The last chapter[5] is dedicated to *Tristram Shandy*, described by Spacks as "the most eccentric novel of the eighteenth century," which paradoxically "exemplifies the genre's developing resources and the sense of wide possibility that had accrued to it" (254). It is not only confirmed as "the most typical novel in world literature,"[6] but also as the grandest meta-novel. Once again, it is not the novelty of actual fact that prevails but its logical demonstration and organic placement in the contexts of English fiction.

Instead of having to break new ground, then, Spacks is in a much more rewarding situation: she needs only to a minor degree to rearrange the canon. Her amendments here and there (most importantly through the addition or promotion of a few lesser-known or more seldom researched women writers) merely serve to make the global picture more complete. The introduction of questions of gender, such as in the chapter on "Gothic Fiction" (191–221), also refine our received image of the era.[7] But it is not in this that the book offers the greatest amount of added value.

No, it is the graceful style, the synthesizing view, and the persuasive presentation that enchant the reader. Clearly, the purpose here is not primarily the academic treatment of a specific theme, as in so many of Spacks' other writings, though the book is, needless to say, profoundly researched through and through. Here, the scholarly narrative's persuasive power derives not so much from the author's intimidating knowledge of apparently all secondary literature as from a whole life dedicated to reading and rereading the greatest as well as the more modest, but still important texts of English literature. This volume is almost a literary autobiography or memoir.

I have called Spacks a reader, and her book a guide. As a reader, she is one of the most informed one is likely

ever to encounter; moreover, her experience of, and love for, the books she reads is not overshadowed by her vast knowledge *about* them. And as a guide, this is as fine an initiation as one is ever likely to get into the seemingly familiar, yet so distant and mysterious world of 17th and 18th-century English fiction. A book that not only relevantly informs the reader about an incredibly broad selection of texts but in fact urges one to go and get those works, to read them for oneself, and thus to join the ranks of literary adventurers who are not satisfied by second-hand data and prefabricated notions about their past.

Novel Beginnings is not merely a book *about* novels. One has the impression that it presents one with the novels *themselves*. And I believe that to be the greatest praise one can offer to a comprehensive work like this one.

Boldizsár Fejérvári

Notes

1. During the half century since her inaugural treatise on Thomson's *The Seasons* (*Varied God: A Critical Study of Thomson's* The Seasons [Berkeley: U of California P, 1959]), she has published extensively on eighteenth-century poetry (e.g. *An Argument of Images: The Poetry of Alexander Pope* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1971]) and prose (e.g. Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-century England [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1976], *Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-century English Novels* [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990], or *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-century Self* [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003]), as well as editing crucial literary texts such as a selection from Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) and the Norton Critical Edition of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (New York: Norton, 1995).

2. This is by no means the first take, of course, on this theme. Another, very different but equally exciting rumination on the same theme can be found, for instance, in Mikhail Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London & New York: Longman, 1988), 125–156.

3. Among numerous other sources, Spacks draws both on such classical surveys as Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1957) and on more recent works, such as John Richetti, *The English Novel in History, 1700–1780* (London: Routledge, 1999) or J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: Norton, 1990).

4. These categories supply the titles of the respective chapters as well.

5. In fact, this 'last' full chapter is followed by a no less relevant "Afterword," which seamlessly ties the developments of the late 18th century to the *novelties* of the 19th.

6. Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, quoted 254.

7. In this, she capitalizes on the arguments raised by Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987) and others.

The Recluse and the Activist, Or Opposites Attract

Brenda Wineapple, *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, 2008)

Brenda Wineapple's *White Heat* is not a traditional biography of Emily Dickinson or her friend, literary advisor and later editor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Nor is it literary criticism, as the author claims in the Introduction (13). It is a double portrait, a context for certain poems of Emily Dickinson and an enjoyable account of the relationship of these unalike, opposite characters. Brenda Wineapple tries to understand and make the reader understand the improbable friendship of the two opposite personalities. After all, opposites attract.

Emily Dickinson is known to have been a recluse who withdrew from the world and would not leave her family home. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the essayist, was an activist of women's rights and a militant abolitionist, commander of the first Union regiment of African-American soldiers during the Civil War. Unfortunately, his letters to Dickinson have not survived. However, the author imagines his part of the correspondence and recreates their unusual relationship, using both people's works to evoke their voice. The facts are richly illustrated by poems, extracts from letters, and Higginson's articles and essays, as well as thirty-two photographs. Wineapple manages to show both people as human beings, and she calls up vivid scenes from the friends' lives. The close-ups give the impression of peeping into their homes. The reader is often tempted to check the sources in the extensive list of notes only to realize that all facts are based on documentary information. While the book contains well-known biographical facts about Emily Dickinson, mostly relying on Richard Sewall's Dickinson-biography,[1] and not so well-known ones about Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the way Brenda Wineapple views their relationship and the conclusion she draws are quite original.

Why Emily Dickinson refused to publish her poems – except for a few which were published anonymously – and chose to remain a private poet – sending her poems only to an elected circle of friends – have always been riddles for scholars. The author clarifies the misconceptions about Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who is famous – or rather infamous – for discouraging the poet from publishing. He is remembered as the graceless conservative editor "who shamelessly cut Dickinson down to Victorian size" (281). In Richard Sewall's view, "one of Emily Dickinson's failures of judgment was to turn to Higginson for literary advice."[2] Similarly Vivien R. Pollack also accuses him of hindering the poet from publishing, though she acknowledges that Dickinson could not have been persuaded to become a public

poet: "Although there is some reason to believe that if Higginson had hailed her at the beginning of a great career and urged her not to 'delay to publish' Dickinson might have been prevailed upon to yield up some of her least obviously autobiographical poems to public view."[3] Unlike other critics, Brena Wineapple treats Higginson as an equal, offering a detailed presentation of his works to change the situation that Richard Sewall describes as follows: "It is ironic that a man so prominent in his time – Abolitionist, reformer, preacher, army officer, litterateur with a bibliography of some five hundred items – should now be known principally as the friend and editor of Emily Dickinson."[4] Wineapple attempts to explain Higginson's considerations as an editor. She presumes that, although he was aware of Dickinson's unusual talent, he wanted to protect Dickinson from the literary world both in her life and after her death. She also believes that as Higginson was only the co-editor of the first editions, it is the other editor, Mabel Loomis Todd, who was responsible for many of the changes in the poems. Wineapple agrees with John Cody's view of Higginson as "a sensitive and perceptive man"[5] when she presents him as someone who was well-chosen by Dickinson: "Dickinson had not picked Higginson at random. Suspecting he would be receptive, she also recognized a sensibility she could trust." The author tries to reveal why the poet appreciated his friendship so much. " 'Of our greatest acts we are ignorant –' she told him . . . recollecting then what his attention, his courtesy, his comprehension offered her during their first months of correspondence. 'You were not aware that you saved my Life' " (118).

To reveal the details of the relationship that resulted in a life-long friendship and almost twenty-five years of correspondence, Wineapple sets the scene by vividly describing the circumstances of how Higginson received the poet's first letter, in which she sought his opinion about her poetry. Wineapple uses the narrative techniques of novel-writing to evoke the characters: "Thomas Wentworth Higginson opened the cream-colored envelope as he walked home from the post office, where he had stopped on the mild spring morning of April 17 after watching young women lift dumbbells at the local gymnasium" (3).

After the Introduction, the book consists of three parts: "Before," "During" and "Beyond the Dip of Bell." Part One offers a summary of the protagonists' earlier lives: their family backgrounds, their childhood years and early friendships, their educations and their readings. The reader learns about the early career of Emily Dickinson, who had already taken up the vocation of poet, which Higginson only longed to do. The author provides an unusually accurate portrait of Higginson, as well, revealing the dual nature of his character. He was an activist, a literary man, and an essayist, who was inclined to live a reclusive life, like Emily Dickinson, preferring

nature to people. When Wineapple draws a parallel between the lives and the personalities of her two protagonists, she finds similarities, such as Higginson's withdrawal from the field of actions and Dickinson's withdrawal from the world. Their attitude to religion and nature, their love of poetry are also highlighted as common features of two seemingly different people. It is obvious that the author's intention is to detect as many similarities as possible, not only in the biographical facts but also in their writings, to reveal what drew them toward each other. The structure of the book reminds us of two convergent lines starting from the different backgrounds of two different personalities. Then the lines keep coming closer to each other as more and more common features are explored, to end up in the intimate closeness of the poet and her friend.

Part Two is a detailed presentation of their correspondence and their relationship, the events of their lives serving as a background. Throughout the whole book, but especially in this part, the author quotes a considerable number of poems, offering a critical reading. The epistolary friendship is marked by Higginson's two visits to Amherst, only the first of which is chronicled in detail, due to the lack of any surviving documents concerning the second. As much as possible the author relies on the evidence of documentary material, thus creating a dialogue with the help of the texts. We get an original insight into the real nature of their friendship. Higginson is presented as someone who admired and praised Dickinson in spite of acting, at her request, in the role of critic and editor. Brenda Wineapple suggests that Higginson, staying on the borderline of writing poetry and publishing mostly articles and essays, was secretly viewing Dickinson with fearful respect: "Should you think my poetry *breathed*, *quick gratitude*: if only he could write like this" (5). Wineapple also provides an interpretation of his works to highlight how they may have influenced Dickinson's poetry or, rather, how she incorporated his ideas into her poems.

Part Three is an account of the posthumous publication of Dickinson's poems and a description of Higginson's role in the work. As in the previous part, Wineapple wishes to do justice to him by presenting him as a supportive editor. The final chapters also provide information about his career after Dickinson's death.

In spite of Brenda Wineapple's intentions as outlined in the Introduction, the genre of the book does not seem to be clear. Though most of the text is a kind of critical biography, the book can be read as a documentary novel, as well, the climax of which is the first encounter of the friends after eight years of correspondence. However, some parts of the book read as a romance. Brenda Wineapple, a reputed biographer of Gertrude Stein and Nathaniel Hawthorne among others, seems to be overwhelmed and inspired by Emily Dickinson. A good storyteller, she sometimes gets carried

away and provides a text which gives the impression of a novel: "In the pinkish twilight of a September evening in 1904, after nearly twenty-one years abroad, Henry James was back in America, strolling along the brick streets of Cambridge" (302). The book is not a mixture of genres in a 3-in-1 way; rather, there is a mashing of genres due to the lack of consistency of the style.

Another problem is that the interpretation of certain poems is rather artificial and not convincing, as if interpretation was aimed solely at providing evidence for Higginson's influence on Dickinson's poetry. There are too many presumptions about the poems, as well as about Higginson's reaction to them. In connection with "As imperceptibly as grief," for instance, the author writes: "Her description of the summer may be her description of him: the guest that would disappear, if he ever came. . . . And he could assume that the diaphanous summer, making its light escape, is like Dickinson herself" (168). Certainly, Dickinson's cryptic poems often lend themselves to several possible readings; however, merely the notions of "guest" and "escape" cannot justify an interpretation that identifies them with the two characters.

Despite these shortcomings, *White Heat* is a remarkable work, interesting for scholars and non-academics alike. The author achieves her aim of providing a historical, political and artistic context for the poems, as well as throwing new light onto the work and friendship of Dickinson and Higginson. It is unique since it focuses on both personalities, not just the poet. Written with unusual intuition and empathy, the book reveals much about Emily Dickinson and creates a new image of Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Judit Kónyi

Notes

1. Richard Sewall, *The Life of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974).
2. Sewall, p. 575.
3. Vivan R. Pollack, *Dickinson: The Anxiety of Gender* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 228.
4. Sewall, p. 573.
5. John Cody, *After great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press & Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 21.

Genial Pound

A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet. A Portrait of the Man and his Work. Volume 1: The Young Genius, 1885–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Being a Pound scholar may be an awkward position. All those questions about Pound's fascism and his confinement to an asylum are ample reason for embarrassment. And if this were not enough, we have Pound's extravagance on the one hand, and his works, often regarded as inaccessible or straight gibberish, on the other.

There could be a lot of issues to bother one. However, A. David Moody is not the man to give in to such worries. His biography of Pound is neither apologetic, nor negligent of facts. When he accounts for Pound's early prejudiced remarks on Judaism, Moody rushes ahead to face the problem and makes a committed statement: "Here it would be very easy to short-circuit our search for understanding by simply writing Pound down as antisemitic and so being done with the vexing problem; but the fact is that there is too little evidence in his writings up to 1920 to support such a heavy judgement at this stage. Just half-a-dozen prejudicial remarks don't make a case. . . . We will come to that [most grave failing of judgement in the 1930s and after] in its proper time and place. The troubling question won't go away" (370–71).

Moody's attempt to explain how Pound's much-commended literary philanthropy could give way to his irremediable politico-economical delusion will be presented only in the second volume, which will cover the poet's life and work from 1920 onward. However, at this stage Moody is more concerned with presenting Pound's works comprehensively: his responsibility is to sketch a portrait of the Man and his Work – without preliminarily touching on later political issues.

As the title page reveals, Pound and Moody agree on one point without hesitation: both of them are convinced of Pound's genius: the title of Moody's first volume is *The Young Genius*. Besides appearing twice on the title page (the second time in the epigraph from a letter of Pound), the word "genius" is also the very first word of the text (in the preface). Moody cannot emphasize enough his conviction of Pound's genius, since he, as a Pound scholar, must be painfully aware of how the reception of Pound's works has been overshadowed by a preoccupation with his politics, even with respect to the parts of his *oeuvre* that are untainted by fascist ideology. Moody's credo involves his respect for the man's literary accomplishment and his undeniable pity for Pound's monstrous ideological failure: "There is a great deal more to the full story of Ezra Pound than is allowed for in the received ideas which would make of him simply an outcast or an icon, or both. There is more of the human comedy; and in his end there is a tragedy to arouse horror, compassion, and awed comprehension. He was in his own way a hero of his culture, a genuine representative of both its more enlightened impulses and its self-destructive contradictions. And his poetry is prophetic, at once revealing something of the mystery of the contemporary money-dominated and market-oriented Western world, and envisioning a wiser way of living" (xi).

The title of the overall work (*Ezra Pound: Poet*) is not accidentally reminiscent of Moody's earlier monograph on Eliot. A. David Moody, Professor

Emeritus at the University of York, established his scholarly reputation with, among others, writings on T. S. Eliot's life and work. The first edition of his renowned biography, *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet*, was published in 1979, and has been in print ever since. Moody explains the choice of title in the introduction of his previous book. "The 'Thomas Stearns Eliot' of my title is a collection of writings, and the 'Poet' is the author within his poems. For his readers Eliot now is an *oeuvre*, just as Shakespeare is."[1] Thus man and work are so intertwined in the case of a poet that only a joint discussion can yield an authentic portrait. The subtitle of the Pound biography (*A Portrait of the Man and his Work*) indicates the double perspective of the biography more explicitly: the book, answering the challenge of the times, is a 2-in-1 package of biography and literary history. Not only does David Moody present the facts of Pound's life most meticulously but he also investigates his poetical output with vigorous critical skills. The early, formative volumes, including *A Lume Spento*, *A Quinzaine for this Yule*, *Personae of Ezra Pound*, *Exultations*, *Canzoni* and *Ripostes*, which are usually underrepresented in research, are covered by a roughly equally measured six to eight pages, while more acclaimed works like *Lustra*, *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, the Ur-Cantos and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* are treated slightly more extensively. The discussion ranges from Moody's outlining of the perceived structure of each book (which is indispensable to a proper understanding of Pound's poetics in the case of volumes that even the informed reader knows only from selections), through explaining the poetic concepts, themes and inspiration characterizing the volume, to the analysis of major poems.

The fifteen chapters of the first volume span Ezra Loomis Pound's birth in Hailey, Idaho, on October 30, 1885, to his leaving London at the end of December 1920. The two major sections reconsider a chronological divide of Pound's life: while a 1978 essay collection edited by Philip Grover pronounced the years 1908–1920 the "London years,"[2] Moody departs from this tradition, describing only the years 1911–1920 as forming the era of Pound's London – since he spent most of the year 1910 and the first half of 1911 in France, Italy, the United States and Germany. The reader is first made familiar with the genealogy of the Young Genius. This is followed by a detailed account of his studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Hamilton College, both official and extracurricular, and by a satisfyingly compact description of his courtship of Viola Baxter, his romances with the poet H. D. or Hilda Doolittle and Katherine Ruth Heyman, his passing engagement to Mary Moore of Trenton and his friendship with Mary Moore Young at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana (where he was appointed

as an instructor) – as well as his camaraderie with William Carlos Williams. The minutely precise narrative tracks Pound to Gibraltar and Venice, where he has printed his first collection of poems, *A Lume Spento*, ensuring that he could enter the literary circles of London a *poet*. Moody records events of Pound's days in London on the basis of diaries, memoirs, letters, prose and verse works; the biographer can rely on Pound's fiancée-to-be Dorothy Shakespear's jotting down of every minor incident as well as on his numerous literary friends' letters, including those of T. E. Hulme, Ford Madox Hueffer, W. B. Yeats – and later of Wyndham Lewis, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. The book pays special attention to Pound's attempts to participate in – and re-conceptualize – literary reviews he came across, including *Poetry* in Chicago, *The New Freewoman* (later *Egoist*), *BLAST*, the *New Age*, and the *Little Review* in New York. The focus, however, is not on his prose contributions but on his poetry, if economic hardships did not hinder him from producing some.

While Noel Stock's earlier biography set out to discriminate the "luminous details" of Pound's life, especially prominent persons, emblematic places and works indicative of his literary progression, and to construct a coherent narrative around them, Moody's professed aim is to recover "a sense of the complexity of the man" (xii). His implicit, and undeniably ambitious, goal is to reconstruct the working of Pound's mind: what drove him to become engaged in certain activities, why he chose certain paths and how his pursued literary ideals were merged into each other. Moody comes to the conclusion that Pound's main motives included a quest for beauty (which implied both a fervent search for an earthly muse, and the adoption of classical and Renaissance aesthetic values), a conviction in the social, cultural and political power of artistic excellence (for this reason, he advocated fellow artists' work even more ardently than he did his own, and sometimes even let his talent be wasted in petty strife for money – for others) as well as a conscious effort to develop his craftsmanship and to find his proper form and themes through imitation and experimentation. However thorough Moody's notions are his effort to fit Pound's various moves into his scheme sometimes undermines his original aim of presenting the "complexity of the man."

While highly organized in its presentation of ideas, the biography is occasionally unbalanced in its reliance on citations. For example, readers receive the impression that they are informed about every message between Ezra and Dorothy during their long courtship. After their marriage, however, the discussion of their relationship stops abruptly. Probably, as there were fewer letters after they united in holy matrimony, Moody refrained from forming

an opinion based on unverifiable hearsay. The slightly disproportionate treatment of the couple's relationship, however, may leave readers with such puzzling questions as how intimate their wedlock was or how supportive they were towards each other's work.

Moody selects his anecdotes in accordance to their relevance to the overall picture, and his style is also at its best in these parts of the narrative. By strategically placing an old story he makes sure that after reading this volume, one remembers Pound by means of an iconic old pair of brown shoes: When Eliot first met Joyce in Paris, Eliot was commissioned by Pound, the already established American poet, to deliver a package to Joyce, who, Pound knew, was struggling financially. Unaware of the content of the parcel, and also of Joyce's conditions, Eliot handed over to the author of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* what turned out to be the best-he-can-afford gift of the worrying parent-like Pound: a used pair of brown shoes. What could have been (at least with Pound's presence, Moody suggests) a rare constellation of modernist writers thus ended in sheer embarrassment.

Although the inviting orange and ochre cover hides a somber black block of a book, Moody is careful not to alienate a more general reading public, and specialists of the field will benefit from his book, too. Firstly, Moody's aim is obviously not only to provide authoritative answers but also to facilitate further research by giving tools to other readers of Pound. He generously provides samples of published and unpublished material alike, *and* references his sources thus enabling further enquiries on a subject. The endnotes, exceptionally detailed in this genre, run for more than sixty pages and identify the source of quotations, give suggestions for further reading and also carry additional comments. Secondly, while in Noel Stock's rather puritan but for a long time definitive *The Life of Ezra Pound*[3] there were no supportive devices to the text, Moody's book supplies the reader with a chronology at the beginning of the volume, high-quality illustrations embedded in the main text, and at the end "an outline of Pound's writing career" (411), the notes and finally the index.

Twenty years ago John Tytell, in his portrayal of Pound as an agent of the Risorgimento, dismissed the idea of a "behemoth biography, [a] nine-hundred-page loose and baggy monster in three volumes whose parade of facts would scatter like an army of ants in all directions."[4] With all respect to Tytell, this is exactly what the Pound community has been hoping for: a "behemoth . . . monster" of a biography that was relatively impartial (Noel Stock's biography has been subjected to cosmetic surgery carried out by Dorothy Pound), full (*The Last Rower* by David Heymann[5] and *The Caged Panther* by Harry Meacham[6] concentrated only on

certain problematic periods of Pound's life) and incorporated insightful literary criticism as well (unlike Carpenter's *A Serious Character*[7] or Tytell's own *The Solitary Volcano*). A. David Moody has answered the call, and, fortunately, is in the process of answering it some more – with his usual first-rate scholarship and insightful analyses.

Réka Mihálka

Notes

1. A. David Moody, "Introduction," *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 [1979]), p. xvii.
2. Philip Grover, *Ezra Pound: The London Years 1908–1920* (New York: AMS Press, 1978).
3. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Penguin, 1974 [1970]).
4. John Tytell, *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano* (New York: Doubleday, 2004 [1987]), p. i.
5. David C. Heymann, *Ezra Pound, the Last Rower: A Political Profile* (New York: Viking Press, 1976).
6. Harry M. Meachem, *The Caged Panther: Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeths* (New York: Twayne, 1967).
7. Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988).

Bringing Conrad Closer to Us

Laurence Davies, and Gene M. Moore, (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Vol. 8: 1923–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008); and Laurence Davies, Owen Knowles, Gene M. Moore, and J. H. Stape (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Vol. 9: Uncollected Letters and Indexes* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007)

Letters are a sensitive medium in at least two senses of the word. First, they reflect fairly directly and faithfully the writer's state of mind at the moment of composition, in a manner comparable, if only remotely, to some examples of lyric poetry. This quality makes them particularly valuable to scholars, especially when the letters are those of a major writer such as Joseph Conrad. As Frederick R. Karl points out in his general editor's introduction to Volume 1 of *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, letters "provide patterns and schemes which move beyond conscious planning," as opposed to journals, memoirs or diaries.[1] Yet the letter-writer can also choose to adopt a certain tone, depending on the nature of his or her relationship with the addressee. A trivial but amusing example of this is provided by Conrad's letters to his agent James Brand Pinker written between May 1910 and (probably) March 1912. The form of address Conrad chose when writing to Pinker in this period of time (after four months of silence) reflects his changing attitude towards the man with whom he had had a serious quarrel in January 1910. For well over a year Pinker was addressed simply as "Dear Sir." As time passed and Conrad's anger subsided,

Pinker became "Dear Mr Pinker," only to regain his former privilege of being addressed as "My dear Pinker" by March 1912 (see *CL*9, 147–164).

But also, letters constitute a sensitive medium because, once they are published, they can be potentially offensive to people who were not originally meant to read them, or they can show their writer in a bad light. In order to avoid such consequences, editors may suppress certain letters and tamper with the text of others. This is what the editors of some previous collections of Conrad's letters did, notably G. Jean-Aubry, whose *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters* had been the only comprehensive collection before Cambridge University Press published the first volume of *The Collected Letters* in 1983.[2] Karl, in his introduction to the latter, goes as far as to say that "many, possibly most, of the letters as printed in [Jean-Aubry's] edition are unreliable" (*CL*1, xliii). It is in this context that one must see the recent publication of the final two volumes of *The Collected Letters*. Not only does the edition as a whole include nearly 5,000 extant letters, over a third of which were previously unpublished; but as it is a critical edition it also prints them in full, as Conrad originally wrote them, with only a minimum of interference to enhance readability. The Conrad scholar, or indeed anyone with a more than superficial interest in Conrad, cannot but show deep appreciation for this large and ambitious project which has taken a quarter of a century of textual scholarship to complete. (To take the wordplay a little further, one might say that the letter of course is also a sensitive medium, insofar as the material on which it is usually written is fragile and thus easily destroyed, as were Conrad's letters to his maternal uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski in a fire in 1917.)

Reviewing Volumes 8 and 9 of *The Collected Letters* in a single piece is not an easy task because in one sense each makes a very different sort of reading. While Volume 8 includes all of Conrad's letters from the last two years (nineteen months) of his life, Volume 9 brings together letters discovered since the publication of the previous volumes, ranging from the beginning of Conrad's writing career almost to its very end. The penultimate volume – as do earlier ones – gives us a sense of reading a fairly detailed narrative, the main character of which is Joseph Conrad. In contrast, Volume 9 can offer only glimpses of the writer's life, even though the extensive footnotes, which characterise the edition as a whole, do much to fill the gaps in the narrative. What makes the final volume particularly valuable is that it includes more accurate versions of some letters (this time transcribed from manuscript) which in previous volumes were taken from printed texts; it features a revised corrigenda and addenda for Volumes 1–7 and a consolidated index of recipients and names for all the nine volumes; in addition, some letters in Vol-

ume 9 shed new light on previously published ones, modifying the latter's dating or point of origin.

In the last nineteen months of his life, Conrad did little creative work. Only sporadically did he write a few pages of his last and unfinished novel *Suspense*, and that novel too is arguably of low quality, along with much of his later work. Yet Jeremy Hawthorn, in an excellent review of the final two volumes of *The Collected Letters*, is right to suggest that whether we agree with the division of Conrad's work into achievement and later decline, Conrad as a letter-writer shows no decline, his mental abilities not having diminished at all.[3] Indeed, there are quite a few letters of aesthetic interest in Volume 8 as well, in the most interesting of which Conrad, among other issues, touches on how the reader complements and gives existence to his works, thus anticipating later phenomenologically based criticism (see *CL*8, 131; cf. also *CL*9, 25). But the final years of Conrad's life were also those of his rise to great popularity. His promotional visit to the United States in May 1923, organised by his main American publisher F. N. Doubleday, as well as the sale of Conrad manuscripts at an auction in November that year, were excellent publicity for his works. Nevertheless, Conrad saw the shady side of his popularity. In one of his letters he remarked wryly in connection with the auction that "[p]eople who had never heard of me before are now aware of my name, and others quite incapable of reading a page of mine to the end have become convinced that I am a great writer" (*CL*8, 227). With popularity also came financial success and offers of honorary degrees by illustrious universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and Yale. Conrad consistently but very politely declined all of them, as well as the knighthood offered to him by the Labour Prime Minister J. Ramsay MacDonald in 1924, without any explanation as to his motives.

What impresses itself most obviously and inevitably on Volume 8 is the sense of impending death. The chronological arrangement of the letters and the benefit – or, in this case, the curse – of hindsight make it virtually impossible to read the volume without being constantly aware of what fate awaited Conrad on 3 August 1924. It is especially when he talks about plans never to be carried out that one cannot escape a feeling of sadness. In a letter of 28 April 1924, Conrad, writing about his family's intention to leave their current home and rent a new house from September onwards, remarks: "we will be in this house up to September Ist unless something utterly unexpected happens to call us away" (*CL*8, 347). We know that death did call him away three months later, and so nothing came of the plan. In this respect Volume 8 can be somewhat depressing reading, even though there are also a good many letters whose tone is cheerful or even truly humorous.

Complaints about different sorts of illnesses feature heavily in the penultimate volume. However, Conrad had suffered from various ailments almost all his life, and in this sense his death from a heart attack on that particular day, 3 August 1924, was sudden and unexpected. One of the diseases that were a recurrent nuisance to him was gout, which at times rendered him unable to hold a pen and thus prevented him from writing, unless he resorted to dictation to his secretary. In a letter of 13 December 1905, he laments: "Another week wasted out of my life. Seven days without a single line" (*CL*9, 107). Considering that, in general, Conrad wrote slowly, the additional delay caused by attacks of gout must have been distressing to him. But surely one of the reasons for his slow progress with creative work was simply that he took his art seriously, of which his letters provide ample evidence. That he did so from the very beginning of his writing career is something I find remarkable, bearing in mind that Conrad had been a seaman for almost twenty years before becoming a novelist. What is more, his letters reveal that between late 1895 and early 1896 he was actually considering going back to sea. By that time, his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (1895), had already been published, but Conrad "wanted to have something fixed to depend upon" because "[w]ith books one never knows" (*CL*9, 23).

Yet even while entertaining such thoughts, he did not regard writing as a mere way of earning his living. To his early publisher, T. Fisher Unwin, he wrote in April 1896 (in reference to some essentially positive reviews of his recently published second novel, *An Outcast of the Islands*): "I am glad to think that, whatever the financial result may be, I shall not be found altogether unworthy of the faith you have shown in me" (*CL*9, 27). A year and a half later, he remarked: "*As to style*: I must be myself – I can't write a boy's book of adventure" (*CL*9, 57). Astonishing as it may seem in retrospect, in his lifetime Conrad was repeatedly and conveniently labelled a writer of sea or adventure stories by some undiscerning (and probably lazy) critics. Understandably, he disapproved of such simplistic categorizations of his work and protested against being compared to writers like Robert Louis Stevenson or Jack London (see *CL*8, 36–37, 308; *CL*9, 27). As late as 1923, he felt moved to remark in his usual wry manner that his former career as a seaman had "about as much bearing on [his] literary existence, on [his] quality as a writer, as the enumeration of drawing-rooms which Thackeray frequented could have had on [Thackeray's] gift as a great novelist" (*CL*8, 130). Ultimately, it remains a mystery to me how the author whose best work includes such complex political novels as *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes* – none with anything but (at most) a marginal connection to the sea – could ever be pigeonholed as a writer of maritime

fiction. In this context, F. R. Leavis comes to mind, who, in *The Great Tradition* (1948), famously declared that "Conrad's great novels, if they deal with the sea at all, deal with it only incidentally."[4]

The editing of the final two volumes, like that of the previous ones, deserves praise. One can hardly imagine how much work must lie behind the transcription of the manuscripts or the meticulously researched and extensive information in the footnotes. It is impressive to read, for instance, how the editors managed to locate certain undated letters by year, month or even day, as if fitting together the pieces of a complicated jigsaw puzzle. Yet there are also some inaccuracies, omissions and inconsistencies in the editing of Volumes 8 and 9 that need to be mentioned at this point. Beyond the inevitable but few misprints, there are cases when in the footnotes there is either no biographical information at all on the addressee of Conrad's letter (cf. *CL*9, 222), or the information – inconsistently – does not accompany the first but a subsequent letter written to that addressee (cf. *CL*9, 69 and 105). Inversely, while a footnote provides the necessary biographical information, an addressee may not feature in the list of Conrad's correspondents at the beginning of the volume (cf. *CL*8, 40n5 and 403; *CL*9, 263n5). These are minor problems, however. More interesting and perplexing to me are certain editorial practices, though I hasten to add that I do not pretend to any authority whatsoever when voicing my concerns. First of all, there is the case of a letter written by Conrad's secretary, Miss L. M. Hallowes, to John Galsworthy (see *CL*9, 215). Its contents may have been suggested entirely by Conrad himself, yet I do not quite see why this letter formulated by Miss Hallowes and with her signature had to be included in an edition bearing the title *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*. It would probably have been better to incorporate this short letter into a footnote. Secondly, it seems to me inconsistent that, while Conrad's letters in French are translated into English, in the footnotes extracts from letters in French written to Conrad are only provided in that language. Those who do not understand French sufficiently (or at all) – and there may very well be such readers of these volumes – will also have difficulties in locating the passages that the footnotes in the French texts refer to. It would have been more reader-friendly to insert the footnotes into the English translations or to mark in the latter as well the exact places referred to.

However, this is not the note on which to end a review of the final two volumes of such a magnificent edition. The letters raise several interesting issues, only a few of which could be touched upon here, and are likely to open up new territories for researchers to explore. But every reader of the volumes, whether scholar or not, would probably feel that what Conrad

himself said about the letters of the novelist W. H. Hudson could be applied to *The Collected Letters* as well: "I was glad to have the man brought close to me" (*CL8*, 233). These volumes may offer less comprehensive information on Conrad's life than a biography can provide, yet it seems to me that the sensitive medium of the letter is the best way to bring him closer to us.

Balázs Csizmadia

Notes

1. Frederick R. Karl, general editor's introduction, *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Vol. 1: 1861–1897*, eds. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (1983. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), p. xxvii. Henceforth, all parenthesised references to *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* are marked by *CL*, followed by the volume and page number.

2. See G. Jean-Aubry, ed., *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1927).

3. See Jeremy Hawthorn, review of *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, Volumes 8 and 9, *The Joseph Conrad Society (UK) Official Website*, 20 March 2008, 15 September 2008 <http://www.josephconradsociety.org/13Hawthorn%20-%20Review.pdf>. Hawthorn's review was to be published in the Autumn 2008 issue of *The Conradian* but was available only in electronic form when I was writing my own review. For the achievement-and-decline thesis, see Thomas C. Moser, *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957). Moser argues that Conrad's work after 1911 shows signs of enervation and qualitative decline.

4. F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 18.

Surviving Modernism

Marina MacKay and Lyndsey Stonebridge, *British Fiction after Modernism: The Novel at Mid-Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

What if a literary movement is so powerful that it wipes out all other possibilities while alive and leaves an unprecedented vacuum after its dispersal? Modernism devoured everything around it, incorporation indeed always stood in the very core of its nature. Criticism on modernism has been extensive and manifold, but what came after has had difficulty leaving the shadow cast by the modernist output. Admittedly, the present volume aims to give a new literary and historical context for a generation of writers whose work has been hard to characterize. In many ways what we have at hand is a comprehensive guidebook; as co-editors Marina MacKay and Lyndsey Stonebridge sum up: "This collection aims to restore some significance to a critically awkward phase of twentieth-century writing. Focusing on the years between the late 1930s (just after modernism) and the late 1960s (just before postmodernism), its contributors suggest what it meant for writers to work in the wake of modernism's achievements" (1–2).

Although the title of the collection is *British Fiction After Modernism*, the co-editors also attempt to rethink mid-century British fiction: "When we say

that we are interested here in what happened to the novel 'after' modernism, then, we do not quite mean 'after' in an innocently chronological sense, but that many of these writers are so indebted to modernism that they have to be read in relation to it" (4). Right at the beginning of the introductory section the reader is left with little doubt that he is in for a surprise: besides the explicit focus on this unjustly neglected period, the question remains whether there really is anything that could survive the sweeping force of modernism. Perhaps the single most decisive literary trend of the twentieth-century *will* remain a constant reference point; surely, "[t]hese writers knew there was no returning to a time before modernism" (8).

The list of contributors is rather impressive, and it invariably urges the reviewer to take a comprehensive approach and avoid the exclusion of any piece of writing that contributes to the present collection. Nonetheless, I have consciously taken the liberty of leaving the bigger mass of the essays out of consideration and focus on just a selected few. I have taken two essays, Steven Jacobi's and Andrzej Gasiorek's, as examples of the fascination with an individual literary figure, namely Angus Wilson and Graham Greene, respectively, and two other essays, Bernard Bergonzi's and John Mepham's, as examples of the concern with a single decade of British literature, namely the 1960s and the 1930s, respectively. The importance of these two decades is also highlighted by the co-editors, while Greene and Wilson nicely fit in the line of established yet controversial authors of the time. Furthermore, it is also to be noted that the order of the essays in the volume does not correlate with the order of my reviewing them, for reasons of convenience in the argument. My selection is mainly an account of a personal appraisal of the chosen critical texts, which to my mind also sheds light on how the rest of the MacKay and Stonebridge volume manages to handle whatever came after modernism.

In Angus Wilson one may detect an almost erotic fascination with the English language, resurfacing mainly in the tense dichotomy of humour and seriousness. If there is anything that can be safely stated about Steven Jacobi's "Angus Wilson: No Laughing Matter and *No Laughing Matter*," it would be its smooth adaptation to Wilson's own style of writing while presenting "a writer who was celebrated for short stories and novels which blended wit, acute social observation and a love of the macabre" (121). What is there in Wilson is all there in Jacobi, too: a "habitually waspish, satirically denigrating wit," a "savage and direct" attitude towards our "fellow mortals" and an "intelligently persuasive deployment of pitiless humour" (121). On the same account, Jacobi avoids being falsely overheated by admiration towards Wilson but cannot, or rather *will not*

avoid paying homage to the author of *No Laughing Matter* (1967) by cracking up witty phrases fit for Wilson's magnitude. Perhaps one of the most lucid examples of this would be the closing sentence of Jacobi's study on Wilson: "A sense of humour is a serious business, and not having one isn't funny" (130). In many ways it sounds so appropriate that it could easily become the single best catchphrase of Wilson studies in general. Thus, while reflecting upon Wilson's double-edged attitude towards laughter (fun versus seriousness), Jacobi's own writing is packed with traces of humour and irony all through. Indeed, the Jacobi text has been born in the heritage of that distinctive Wilsonian self-reflexive criticism it has chosen for its subject matter. Yet obviously in the halo of Wilson's satiric heritage, Jacobi never fails to take himself seriously enough, especially when gathering data from the Wilson oeuvre. Although everything in Jacobi's universe revolves around *No Laughing Matter*, he always finds room to mention either "Wilson's short stories and early novels – *The Wrong Set and Other Stories* (1949), *Such Darling Dodos and Other Stories* (1950), *Hemlock and After* (1952), *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* (1956), *A Bit Off the Map and Other Stories* (1957) and *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot* (1958)," or novels from the author's mature period, such as *As if by Magic* (1973), where Wilson is finally willing to undermine his own notorious defensive humour (124). And Jacobi does all the above with a Wilson-like linguistic tour de force.

Bernard Bergonzi's condensed overview of a single year of British fiction after modernism is rather exhaustive, and perhaps not only in one way. The argument moves along a single clear-cut line with no, or little deviation from its set course: even when Bergonzi talks about novels and their writers before or after 1960, he does so with a sole purpose, namely to pave the way for *his* selection of novels published in 1960. Each road for Bergonzi leads to British fiction in 1960 (the title of his study bears witness to it: "The British Novel in 1960"). He has the preconception in mind that that year really was something of an *annus mirabilis*, similar to 1954, the year which saw the first novels of Kingsley Amis (*Lucky Jim*), William Golding (*Lord of the Flies*) and Iris Murdoch (*Under the Net*). And when Bergonzi meticulously lists names and titles in an alphabetical order, his mentioning of the two years 'on the same page' finally becomes clear. In fact, intentionally without doubt, he launches his essay with an impressive list of novels published in 1960: Kingsley Amis's *Take a Girl Like You*; Lynne Reid Banks's *The L-Shaped Room*; Stan Barstow's *A Kind of Loving*; Anthony Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* and *The Doctor is Sick*; Lawrence Durrell's *Clea*; David Lodge's *The Picturegoers*; Colin MacInnes's *Mr Love and Justice*; Anthony Powell's

Casanova's Chinese Restaurant; C.P. Snow's *The Affair*; Muriel Spark's *The Bachelors* and *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*; David Storey's *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden*; and Raymond William's *Border Country*. These are the novels Bergonzi places under thorough examination, and in one single essay he succeeds in doing so with such enthusiasm and skill that their place within the British literary canon is ultimately rendered unquestionable. His persuasive force partly derives from the fact that he quite often uses the first person singular, for instance when he says, "[w]ith David Lodge's *The Picturegoers* we cross the river [Thames], to the southeastern suburbs where he – and I – grew up" (209). Bergonzi not only supplies first-hand information to the reader but also evokes a general sense of being there, being lucky enough to be part of it all: "I am old enough to remember the excitement they caused [Angus Wilson's collections of short stories *The Wrong Set* (1949) and *Such Darling Dodos* (1950)], and which I shared when I read these books soon after their publication" (204). Bergonzi also appears to have some additional information on the young Cambridge don called Lester Ince, a lesser character in C.P. Snow's *The Affair*: "Ince is evidently meant to be a version of Kingsley Amis – an identification that Snow himself indeed once confirmed to me" (205). In addition to its appealing clarity, the strength of Bergonzi's essay lies in its critical tone based on its author's personal experience and his willingness to voice justifiable literary stances. Bergonzi is not afraid, on the one hand, to claim that, although David Lodge's *The Picturegoers* "is ambitiously organised . . . parts of it are patently immature" and, on the other hand, to state that David Storey's *This Sporting Life* "is original and powerful, and I regard it as the best first novel in 1960" (210). Even with the extensive use of the first person singular, which of course is a mark of subjectivity carrying a good deal of value judgement, or perhaps especially because of that, the Bergonzi text is a delightful touch worth including in the present volume.

In his essay entitled "Varieties of Modernism, Varieties of Incomprehension: Patrick Hamilton and Elizabeth Bowen," John Mepham embarks on exploring the immediate heritage of what is most widely considered as the heyday of modernism, namely the 1920s. Mepham points out that "[a]fter a decade of uncompromisingly experimental modernist fiction in the 1920s," the upcoming years saw some writers who still can be found in the halo of modernist findings and who still "employed and explored experimental fictional tendencies" (59). That high modernism left its fingerprint on literary achievements to come is a statement not at all surprising or novel; but Mepham goes even further by claiming that "post-1930s' fiction broke not only with nine-

teenth-century traditions but also with the conventions developed in the period of avant-garde modernism, for example in the works of Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf" (59). His approach is double-edged: while accepting the apparent and undisputed force of modernism (Mepham is cautious enough to avoid futile disputes with devoted believers in perhaps the most decisive literary movement of the twentieth century), he sets out to do justice to British fiction born in a period overshadowed by modernism. And indeed, with the use of a conservative English fit for a retired university professor, Mepham's achievement is more than remarkable: a revitalisation of the neglected. His choice to focus on the periphery is a rather bold approach, even if not unheard before; but it is especially justifiable in the heritage of modernism and is deeply routed in a soil unimaginable without the modernists. In actual fact, Mepham happily admits the grandiosity of such geniuses as Joyce and Woolf; what he refuses to accept is that life ceased to exist after them. As an example, probably the most interesting element in Mepham's whole argument is formulated around the entangled concepts of, as he calls them, *intersubjectivity* and *inner subjectivity*. According to Mepham, in the writings of Patrick Hamilton and Elizabeth Bowen characters linger in interactions "in the social context within which the personal goings on take place" (*intersubjectivity*); whereas in the modernists like Joyce and Woolf "the major technical innovations . . . centre on the rendering of what is going on in characters' minds when they speak, on their inner worlds, on their stream of consciousness (a notoriously elusive concept)" (*inner subjectivity*) (60). Furthermore, and opposing David Lodge, Mepham doubts that modernism was "uninterested in talk – after all there is hardly a scene in *Ulysses*, in *Mrs Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse*, or in the stories of Katherine Mansfield, that is not the setting for a conversation" (60). One may safely say that with a fair devotion and a sense of propriety Mepham manages to paint an attractive retrospective panorama of the literary landscape *after* modernism, which consists of – despite Mepham's indication in the title of his essay – not just varieties of modernism.

Graham Greene, too, comes after modernism. To Andrzej Gasiorek the place Greene took in British fiction becomes clearly identifiable only when one looks at him from the perspective of modernist writers such as Eliot, Joyce and Pound. Perhaps not surprisingly, what Gasiorek has to say about Greene would be meaningless without the great predecessors, who lived and worked in an era immediately after the First World War. Gasiorek follows in the safe line of those critics who hold 'the Great War' responsible for the soaring of the modernist literary trend: "The First World War has long functioned as a convenient point of depar-

ture for discussion of what we now think of as the period of high modernism that immediately followed it" (17). Admittedly, without that devastating historical upheaval, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, for instance, could never have been born. Having quickly sketched the decisive members, the timeline and the background of modernism, Gasiorek can now go on to render justice to Greene, who was *not* part of it all; as the title of his essay "Rendering Justice to the Visible World: History, Politics and National Identity in the Novels of Graham Greene" equally testifies, Gasiorek intends to do as much justice to Greene's novels as to their author. Greene's most apparent saving grace as to why he was never part of modernism is the simple fact that "Greene was just ten in 1914, and he came to maturity within the post-war milieu" (18). The most intriguing question that Gasiorek can ask as the next step of his argument is "[h]ow, then, does Greene position himself in relation to his immediate predecessors?" Since it was Greene's own personal dilemma in the first place, which arguably kept him preoccupied throughout his life, the question is all too valid. Gasiorek acknowledges Greene reaching back a little further in literary history when he claims that "[i]n fine, he [Greene] chooses to skip a generation, bypassing figures such as Joyce, Lewis and Pound (although Eliot was important to him) so as to proclaim his affinity with writers such as James, Conrad and Ford" (19). That so far does not sound either surprising or new – since that is exactly how Greene himself would identify his own literary stance – but then Gasiorek becomes overtly critical by saying that "[b]y invoking them, Greene not only signals his allegiance to one kind of writing rather than another but also distances himself from direct competitors and aligns himself with the safely dead" (20). Nonetheless, this is Gasiorek at his most vicious. By regarding him as a lesser writer than the modernists, he is far from trying to decipher Greene in any way. On the contrary, Gasiorek holds the writer of *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), to mention just one of Greene's most well-known novels, in great esteem. The most obvious way he can pay homage to Greene is by dissecting a selection of his novels: *It's a Battlefield* (1934), where the author's tone of scepticism peaks in describing a society splintering into fragments; *England Made Me* (1935), where the individual's escape from the past and uncontrolled insertion into the selfish present has made him anachronistic; *A Gun for Sale* (1936), where the protagonist is a victim of "extreme poverty"; and *Brighton Rock* (1938) and *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), where "sentiments such as patriotism, duty and justice no longer seem credible" (26–27). And throughout his study Gasiorek never forgets to bear in mind and remind his readers too that his "Greene comes *after* modernism, *after* the great upheavals and experiments

that have now been so belauded and canonized" (19).

As I have intended to suggest, every piece of writing included in Marina MacKay and Lyndsey Stonebridge's collection of essays on British fiction after modernism is very much like a soil sample taken from a distinctive literary land, each helping the reader to set up a definitive diagnosis of the status of that land. Bit by bit these samples support one another simply by originating from the same time period, and thus the individual pieces also add up to a whole to be analysed. By doing so these critical texts mimic the way their subject matters, the actual novels of the mid-century English literary arena, line up neatly to form a unified entity. The reader at the same time (either by reading the novels or their critical reviews) will remain the ultimate benefactor, since the co-editor's collection eventually grants the pleasure of sampling to him. Now what has survived modernism and what has survived of modernism is down to the reader to decide; but that the present volume does function as a kind of long awaited literary compass is undeniable.

Krisztián Zsolt Bakó

Other Countries

István D. Rácz, *A másik ország: Az angol költészet 1945 után* [The Other Country: English Poetry after 1945] (Debrecen: Kossuth, 2006)

The problems of a critic who chooses to write an extensive and comprehensive survey of the last fifty years' poetry are completely different from the difficulties of research in any period prior to our own. His or her main task is not only to rethink or relate to the already existing list of well-known and widely researched works of art, but to freeze the running film of contemporary poetry with a firm hand and to sketch the main outlines of the scene quickly, but precisely. Inevitably, the choice of authors and texts in itself is an interpretation of the present-day literary scene, making the study even more intriguing for the interested reader.

After a book on Larkin[1] and a monograph on dramatic monologue,[2] István D. Rácz's third book is about English poetry after 1945. He has chosen a title that bears more than one literary connotation. First, as he explains in his Preface (12), it evokes the title of its sister-book, Tamás Bényei's *Az ártatlan ország* [The innocent country],[3] which is a study of the English novel in the same period. Second, the phrase *The Other Country* is borrowed from a significant figure of contemporary poetry, Carol Ann Duffy, whose 1990 collection of poems was published under the same title with the following synopsis on the back cover: "Carol Ann Duffy's third collection takes us to 'the other country'—the places that we visit in fantasy, memory and imagination." Besides, it is also obvious that the

working material and mother tongue of authors introduced in the book differ from the audience's host language, therefore the direct opposition of the title (*the other* vs. *our*) touches the problem of reception of non-native poetry. In the last decades, no overview about the whole of contemporary poetry of Great Britain has been published in Hungarian and by a Hungarian author.[4] Would such a study be intriguing just for the limited group of professionals? Certainly not – although perhaps one of the central aims was to provide material for the students of English poetry courses. To go even further, the general, underlying, although not always well-advertised aim of those who *write* about poetry is to persuade the audience to *read* poetry, and a well-written study on the subject is the best preliminary step to entice future readers. Besides, an outline of contemporary English poetry may have the potential to influence the academic life in the subject, to draw attention to Hungarian translations, to revive or initiate the translation of certain poets.

The Hungarian subtitle of the book uses the phrase "English poetry," which is certainly appropriate for briefly summarizing the study in Hungarian, but is obscure enough to require clarification. Therefore, a significant step is to mark the borders of the study and to define the target of the work. As István D. Rácz notes, there are many *poetries* written in the English language as a result of the special postcolonial positions, without having one universal English poetry (28). He also states in the introduction that the poets of Great Britain (i.e. England, Wales and Scotland) are the protagonists in his book and that this choice is, of course, deliberate and arbitrary. He also explains that the exclusion of Irish poetry has a practical reason, because its numerous excellent authors would have doubled the size of the book (12). Hopefully, one may add, this decision inspires a Hungarian study of the multi-faceted Irish poetry somewhere in the future as well.[5] The oeuvres of those poets whose main pieces had already been written before 1945, although they lived past that date, are left out as well.

The time-aware structure of the book follows a logical and rational order. It opens with a brief overview of the poetry in the first part of the 20th century and discusses the social and cultural context in the post-war era. The opening chapters clearly serve the interest of the reader, as the summary of post-1945 poetry would be rootless without briefly touching the most important figures and tendencies of the previous decades, which unquestionably do influence the coming years and coming literary streams. Peculiar characteristics of today's literary scene are also sketched with a few strokes, such as the popularity of poetry readings, the problems of institutionalization, and the role of anthologies.

After the opening chapters, the one-by-one enumeration of the chosen

poets (and occasionally groups of poets) builds the backbone for the study. The organization concentrates on presenting tendencies, transitions, influences, and oppositions that help the overall reception of such a wide topic. One of the greatest assets of the book is its micro-structure, the constant willingness to find (hidden) connections that gives the reader food for thought. As an experienced teacher, István D. Rácz often refers to the previously discussed poets and movements, mobilizing and building upon the already presented data and ideas. The text, as a result, is not difficult to follow and is appropriate for the interested, but less well-informed reader, while it does not lack in complexity and is able to satisfy the expert audience as well. For the former audience, the study may serve as a detailed guide through the last fifty years' poetry that might also arouse interest in further readings. The reader who approaches the text with more of an expert eye may be intrigued by the oscillating layers of interpretations, the transient problems of a now-forming canon, the parallels and opposites of underlying tendencies, and the list of secondary readings. The study of British poetry that is (not exclusively, but) the most often referred to throughout the book is Anthony Thwaite's *Poetry Today*. Thwaite, a critic and poet, is mainly associated with the Movement and Philip Larkin, and this book can be read as a representation of the mainstream view of contemporary British poetry. Thwaite's study, however influential it may be, has been widely criticized because of this very approach: the dispute over the existence of several different British poetries (i. e. mainstream and non-canonized) even resulted in the birth of independent anthologies.[6] This phenomenon could have also been touched upon while discussing the importance of anthologies in the first chapter.

The titles of the chapters indicate not only the name(s) of the poet(s), but a characteristic feature of their poetry too, which is discussed in detail throughout these parts. As a rule, all the chapters contain numerous poems, or parts of poems, choosing close reading as the central working method throughout the book. The study, as a result, encourages its audience to find the complete texts or other pieces from the author in question. István D. Rácz attempts to include Hungarian translations if possible, quite rarely, unfortunately, with the (possible) secondary aim to draw attention to the Hungarian translation scene. Another appealing characteristic of the book is that it never forgets the cultural and literary background of its reader. The occasional references to Hungarian authors, such as János Pilinszky, and Imre Kertész (210-11) besides Byron, Keats and other well-known English poets, help the Hungarian audience internalize the possible parallels.

The first poet introduced in the volume is John Betjeman, followed by

Philip Larkin, who is given the longest chapter in the book, and an independent piece about the *Movement*. Ted Hughes, Geoffery Hill, Peter Porter and Peter Redgrove follow. After leaving behind the *Group*,[7] the reader goes through Edwin Morgan and concrete poetry, Douglas Dunn and the Scottish tradition, to reach Roger McGough and the Liverpool poets. To Tony Harrison, Craig Raine, James Fenton, and Peter Reading are devoted separate chapters as well. The reason to list these first thirteen authors presented in the book is to compare their position to the last five poets in the last three chapters. It raises a serious and thought-provoking question concerning arrangement and macro-structure.

Fleur Adcock, and Carol Rumens, Carol Ann Duffy, and Wendy Cope, Thomas Gunn, and gay poetry share the last three chapters of the volume. The macro-structure of the book suggests – as their lifting out of the (roughly) chronological order and the placing prove – that women's writing and gay poetry should be or are worth being presented as different entities from the previously discussed male poetry. Is the distinction really that obviously productive? As István D. Rácz develops, contemporary English literary criticism handles women's writing as the product of a minority group (198) simply as a result of the deeper understanding of the influence of gender on literature. On the other hand, criticism, of course, has not stated that "women's writing" is an easily definable term. Just as a quick example, Claire Buck,[8] the editor of the *Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature*, severely called it an "unstable category" (xi). The question is not whether the peculiar position, background, possibilities of interpretation of today's women writers should be discussed in detail, since the answer is a definite yes – and the reader of *A másik ország* is apparently satisfied in this sense. Rather, the question revolves around the suggestion that it may have been fruitful to integrate women poets, or the last chapter about the gay poet, Thomas Gunn (and the peculiar questions in relation to their work and "status"), *within* the already discussed male poetry, as it would have offered a more generic view of the subject, stressing the naturally heterogeneous characteristics of contemporary poetry in Great Britain. The last three chapters of the book can be seen as an attempt to lay emphasis on the inevitable topic of gender and/or minority in today's culture and literature, but also strengthen a certain feel of artificial marginalization, despite women and gay poets' integral roles in the whole of the literary scene. *Integrating* instead of *ghettoizing* seems to be a central tendency to follow in today's studies in (contemporary) literature. As Tamás Bényei[9] writes highly about Philip Tew's monograph[10] on the contemporary British novel: "he is careful throughout to avoid the pitfalls of what

he sees as critical ghettoizing, and gender, for instance, is practically absent as a key organizing notion" (359).

In the last pages of the study, the Afterword shows the reader new directions by listing the undiscussed characters of today's poetry, like the *New Generation*, suggesting contemporary topics for independent literary monographs, such as postcolonial voices, children's literature, or light verse.

The Afterword is followed by the lengthy and extensive list of primary and secondary literature (the latter is especially rich in materials from the 1990s, but may be completed with material published after 2000) that can be a good starting point for those who wish to investigate the topic further. For the Hungarian reader, though, the MLA style references–not only at the end, but throughout the text, especially in the case of the titles – the volumes in bold and the poems between quotation marks – may be somewhat unfamiliar or unusual.

A másik ország focuses on the poetry of Great Britain after the Second World War till today. Written in Hungarian, for the special needs of the Hungarian reader, it fills a long-existing hole in the Hungarian scene of English studies. Although it handles problems such as "gender," or "mainstream" in a somewhat disputable way, its colorful material and complex message do effectively draw attention to English poetry. On another level, the study may also be beneficial for the audience of today's Hungarian poetry, as it focuses on literary intersections, phenomena and tendencies that can be familiar to modern readers of any nationality. István D. Rácz suggests several ideas that can serve the base for further monographs. Hopefully, there are many more to come.

Veronika Végh

Notes

1. István D. Rácz, *A szép majdnem igaz: Philip Larkin költészete* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1999).

2. István D. Rácz, *Költők és maszkok: Identitáskereső versek az 1945 utáni brit költészetben* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1996); reviewed by Zsolt Maróti in *The AnaChronisT* [4] 1998: 306–11.

3. Tamás Bényei, *Az ártatlan ország: Az angol regény 1945 után* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 2003).

4. The last monograph meeting the claim of being extensive was published in 1970; cf. László Báti and István Kristó-Nagy, eds., *Az angol irodalom a huszadik században* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1970).

5. The 2007 November issue of *Korunk* focuses on contemporary Irish literature; initiatives like this may bring a whole monograph closer to reality.

6. See for instance Richard Caddel and Peter Quartermain, eds., *Other: British and Irish Poetry since 1970* (Hanover, NH and London: UP of New England for Wesleyan UP, 1999). Its introduction states: "One purpose of this anthology is therefore to uncover what the forces surrounding *The Movement* and its successors have helped to bury."

7. Peter Porter, Peter Redgrove, Alan Brownjohn, George MacBeth, and Ted Hughes are mentioned as members of *The*

Group, although Martin Bell (1918) was also a prominent, though older figure of the circle.

8. Claire Buck ed., *The Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1992).

9. Tamás Bényei, "Texts, Theories, and Lives," *The AnaChronisT* 11 (2005) 359–368.

10. Philip Tew, *The Contemporary British Novel* (London: Continuum, 2004).

Is Variety the Spice of Postcolonial Criticism?

Anne Holden Rønning and Lene Johannessen (ed.), *Readings of the Particular: The Postcolonial in the Postnational* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007)

Rodopi publishers are well-known for their academic publications, which include more than sixty series; the volume under discussion here came out as the 89th of the 96 issues published so far in the "Cross/Culture – Readings in the Post/Colonial Literatures in English" series since its launch in 1990. The majority of these numerous volumes usually have a broad theme to explore, but occasionally individual authors (e.g.: Wole Soyinka, Wilson Harris etc.) or countries/regions (e.g.: India, the South Atlantic etc.) come under scrutiny.

As its title reveals, *Readings of the Particular* belongs to the former category: the editors in their "Introduction" emphasize globalization and the concomitant transculturality as forces with a powerful impact on the postcolonial, whose present position they try to clarify with the help of the selected essays. "The process of transculturation and the focus on the particularities of the realities underlying various locations form the background for this volume of critical essays" (ix–x), describes the context in which scholars, though taking various perspectives, present their analyses. It is by combining the examination of globalization, a worldwide phenomenon, with observations of its local forms that the volume tries to strike a balance between the two competing tendencies of postcolonial criticism.[1] One of them is more cosmopolitan and fits a postnational approach, as it focuses on migrant writers and their fluid identities and hybridity, a phenomenon itself closely related to transculturality. However, the editors of the volume are very much aware of the fact that such an approach could be regarded as conflating issues and homogenizing cultures, and might thus come under attack, as did Homi Bhabha himself, whose work, especially *The Location of Culture*, theorizes about what happens in the contact zone to produce hybridity.[2] To counterbalance such possible universalization, the editors have made great efforts to include in their collection essays that examine cross-cultural exchanges in works produced in clearly identified

regions where a plurality of voices can be heard. This kind of dialogue between the global and the local is both a merit and a challenge in the volume as a whole and, as the book suggests, an examination of the interactions between the two – with a special emphasis on the local refractions of the global grand narrative – could be fertile ground for postcolonial criticism.

In keeping with a pluralistic approach then, the book is divided into three main sections; in addition, there is the abovementioned "Introduction" to orient the readers, which is especially useful in a collection of such diverse essays. All this is further expanded with a "Prelude" placed after the "Introduction," and a poem beginning the last section of the book, giving the reader quite a bit of surprise, as no hints whatsoever have been made to it in the "Introduction," while all the pieces which follow it have been properly highlighted. The separation of the "Prelude" from the rest of the essays becomes understandable after one reads its few opening pages, which, unlike the other writings in the collection, contain no references to literary works, but become a rather theoretical exposé about cultural belonging, be it related to a diaspora or citizenship in a society at large. The diasporic experience resulting from dislocation has by now become a common topic in postcolonial studies, and Wenche Ommundsen's essay only enhances its significance as a site where identity becomes especially problematic – due to its unavoidably hybridized nature and the dissolution of the binary of the local and the global because "diasporas [are] national, transnational and postnational sites of cultural allegiance" (6) and as such are "the exemplary communities of the transnational moment" (Tölölyam quoted in Ommundsen 6). Later on, several of the essays will return to the quintessential question of the diasporic experience as it is treated in various literary works. On its fifth page, however, Ommundsen's writing takes a turn towards literature and becomes, as the last word of her title has promised, a kind of "airport fiction," a parable of the diasporic situation (x). In this unorthodox yet entertaining manner, she illustrates problems a diaspora faces, such as discrimination, stereotyping, assimilation and cosmopolitanism.

Another work of literature, Geoff Page's poem, however, has been made part of section three, entitled "Poetic Sites of Intertextuality," which gives the impression that the essays in the collection have been grouped according to the type of literary work they examine, the third section thus being dedicated to poetry and giving, quite naturally, room to Page's poem "I Think I Could Turn Awhile." It is a lyrical meditation of an Australian on his chances of imitating American models in his poetry, ending with a rejection of American examples and, at the same time, including some of Robert Frost's

lines together with a re-affirmation of his own Australian identity. All this expresses an ambivalent attitude to intertextuality, which, with the dialogues it creates between literary works, between literatures from two different cultures, as in the above case, can easily be related again to transculturation, one of the main themes of the whole collection, as one form of hybridity. Interestingly enough, the editors have not chosen the related term "appropriation" instead of "intertextuality," "appropriation" being much more commonly used in postcolonial criticism in studying the relationship between cultures, though its meaning is often contested because of its political edge, which "intertextuality" lacks. But by the time the reader reaches the end of the section this choice will be justified because intertextuality will not represent a dialogue between cultures in the majority of the cases if it appears in a meaningful way at all, and it is not intertextuality through which the question of transculturality emerges in the works discussed in the section. Then why have the editors given this term such a prominent place, one wonders.

Returning to the beginning of the volume, however, it can be observed that the first chapter is unified by the overarching topic revealed in the title "Novels and Their Borders," which is a much more appropriate description of the whole section than the title of the third chapter. As indicated, all the essays focus here on fiction, even if not on novels in each and every case; but borders and their crossings, either in a literal or a metaphorical sense, are touched upon in each article in the section; this topic is an integral part of postcolonial critical discourse and organically connects with the question of transculturality and hybridity. If in the above-mentioned part of the collection citizenship theory and globalization theory have supplemented the already heterogeneous field of postcolonial criticism, now a theory of borders is added by Johan Schimanski. He uses the tools of border poetics to discuss the meanings of temporal, symbolic and topographical borders in the short story "The Wind and a Boy" by Bessie Head, a naturalized Botswanan of South African origin. Addressing the question of the postcolonial border, "the border between the local and the global – an embankment separating the village and its outside" in the story (85), he also provides insights into the neocolonial situation of Botswana.

A border theory usually implies the existence of homogenized binaries on its two sides, appearing in the form of the local and the global, or the portmanteau "glocal" as the concept is denominated in this collection; but as already inherent in the term used by Priscilla Ringrose, the binary is often transcended in transcultural relationships. As she explores "beur" narratives, narratives by descendants of North-African migrants to France, she presents even more levels on which

"the self is shaped culturally" (31) in a diasporic context. Hybridity resulting from engagement with different cultures is a key feature of Alan Freeman's perceptive article on the ambivalent attitude of the Scottish to Britain and its empire in nineteenth-century novels by Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, and also in novels by the contemporary writer of Scottish descent William Boyd.

This chapter becomes more focussed, however, on Africa than on Europe, as novels by South African authors André Brink and Zakes Mda come under scrutiny. Writing in a postmodern mode, a more or less Western phenomenon, about the need in post-apartheid South Africa to preserve memories and construct history, especially from a female, so far marginalized and unfamiliar, point of view, "[Brink's] approach is indeed transcultural, and his writing-practice aims at a dialogue between European ideas and South African identities" (58). In his first three novels, published in the late 1990s, Zakes Mda concentrates more on his particular, vernacular region, as he presents oppressors – "imperialist Europeans, the neocolonial rulers of African states, or the leaders of the revolution in the new South Africa" (95) – exercising their power to silence the oppressed. To give voice to this silent majority and to help bring about cultural renewal, he emphasizes the need for the revival of authentic traditions and the creation of a synthesis between the old and the modern, because that is the way to a flexible, live African culture. Yet another region, the Caribbean, is represented at the end of this chapter through a textual approach to Jean Rhys's "On Not Shooting Sitting Birds." Ulla Rahbek examines the question of control in the short story by considering the issues of memory, character and interpretation, explaining that the colonial aspect of the tale about the encounter between a white Creole woman and a young Englishman is only one of at least three: the feminist, the colonialist and the modernist (115).

"Performing Possibilities," the second chapter of this collection, includes essays mainly about Canadian drama, though it starts with a filmic piece about Langston Hughes and gay masculinity. The poet and the Harlem Renaissance, that is, the literary aspect of the essay, usually recede into the background to give room to more theory related to the methodology of interstitial or intercultural cinema while examining the decolonization of the gaze and spectation. It is followed by Evelyn Lutwama's informative, yet rather descriptive historical survey of African (theatrical) performances from precolonial times through the colonial period to modern day African theatrical practices, emphasizing the results of Western influence on issues of gender in the world of the theatre. She is very much aware of the danger of homogenization implied in her treatment of African theatre as such, but tries to

counterbalance it by selecting her examples from various regions of the continent to prove her points. Similarly, Anne Nothof's article on contemporary Canadian drama has a broad scope, as the piece examines the discrepancies between the term "national drama" and Canadian multicultural society it addresses. As national symbols and myths are deconstructed in the plays she has selected, they turn out to be the products of a transplanted European culture ignorant of the local diversity. Two Canadian Native playwrights, Tomson Highway and Daniel David Moses, are the subjects of case studies locating borders, this time between the reservation of the indigenous population and Toronto, presented as the predominantly white city; however, the appropriation of culture can take different directions, producing diverse results in the two plays. The penultimate piece in this chapter is another example of curious positioning, since its analysis of the intertextual use of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* by the black, "Africadian" poet George Elliott Clarke, in his *Execution Poems*, would find a more fitting place in the third chapter.

Identity formation is a central issue not only at the beginning of the collection but throughout and as such it is very much foregrounded in the articles in the third section as well, where a poem together with a novel by David Dabydeen, and poems by William Butler Yeats, Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon are examined. However, in the first essay of the chapter the question of intertextuality, so much emphasized in the title, as a basic tool of analysis is almost wholly absent: it does not play a part in the discussion of Dabydeen's work on black identity as it meets English culture here; moreover, the question only appears in a fleeting reference in the second essay, as "Yeats's adoption of Eastern practices" (212) is mentioned in connection with his use of masks. Yet its focal problem, "whether he [Yeats] should be placed in the camp of the dominating or the subjected powers, or whether he is of essence a more liminal figure" (206), turns this essay into an absolutely relevant contribution to the volume as a whole.

With its references to Yeats, Ruben Moi's essay forms a logical sequence, and it promises to fulfil the expectations raised by the title of the chapter finally by stating that "this article intends to examine the transtextualities between Paul Muldoon and Seamus Heaney" (218). Its supposition that Muldoon is a postmodern alternative to Heaney, not afraid of creating controversies, is amply supported by textual evidence. The transtextual relationship between the two is especially apparent in their respective poems on forms of ancient or more contemporary barbarity as analogies of British brutality in "Northern/Ireland." On the other hand, the examination of their resemblances and differences as users of

classical mythology in poems published at about the same time in the late 1990s hardly qualifies as intertextual analysis, unless the more diffuse, "weaker," usage of the term applied by Roland Barthes is employed.[3] The closing piece of the collection starts with a narrower definition of intertextuality and uses it accordingly, documenting "the artistic influences, or literary conventions, that occur between writers of . . . different generations" (229). To explore black male identity in America and the supportive function of communal traditions, especially the blues, the article focuses on the interconnections between novels by Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray, puzzling the reader again by its inclusion in this part of the volume, as these novels can hardly be defined as poetic sites per se.

On the whole, the divisions of this book are often baffling, and the heavy reliance on various theories and its jargon-ridden style do not make it an easy read either. Even after carefully studying it, the reader may not be any more certain than before as to the direction postcolonial criticism is about to take: the discipline is already diverse enough and even more diversity is added by the multiplicity of approaches taken and issues addressed in the collection. However, some of the theories open up new possibilities as combined with postcolonial criticism and provide food for thought even if the reader is not familiar with all the primary texts the articles cite. In this way the collection is a real eye-opener, and, due to the emphasis placed on some questions – such as border crossings and intertextuality as related to transculturality in postcolonial literatures – the reader does find routes worthy of further exploration.

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Notes

1. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford & New York: OUP, 1995), p. 249.
2. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).
3. Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," in *Untying the Text: A Post-structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, trans. Ian McLeod (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 39.