6.4

Robert Nabess
Jordan A. Yamaji Smith
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K. Narayana Chandran

the quint

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contents

EDITORIAL

Because only a handful of geese have arrived at the time of my writing, water will introduce the North in this September's *quint*. In *Phantom Lake*, Birk Sproxton points out that in northern Manitoba "you find a tracery of lakes stretching to all the horizons, shining bits of light strung together with thin braids you know to be more or less solid ground" (14): "[o]ne lake runs into another and only huge lakes, like Athapapuskow and Amisk, stand out from the rest...they might hold secrets to the character of this northern place" (14-15). Athapapuskow's and Amisk's serets are well-guarded, but there are ways to discover them. *quint* therefore is delighted and honoured to introduce the work of Robert Nabess, an aboriginal artist whose work expresses the fluidity of the land, its lakes, and northern culture above the 53rd Parallel. Owner and operator of White Feather in The Pas, MB, Robert is a master painter, carver, and craftsman whose art is appreciated and sought after locally, nationally, and internationally. This fall, Robert is sharing his recent work in antler, wood, and moose horn. A detail from one of these carvings is found on the cover of this *quint*. His use of traditional materials is as contemporary and interesting as Guy Cobb's and John Dey's. All his sophisticated carvings are stunning embodiments of Northern culture, and his leatherwork speaks of the North just as clearly and beautifully as his painting and his sculpture. All of Nabess' wearables are functional pieces of art. Welcome White Feather and the work of Robert Nabess to *the quint*.

This *quint* is made for those who love fluidity in thought as well as in art, covering topics concerned with language, writing, and storytelling grounded in the body and in place and time. Poet Timothy Collins' highly plastic verse accompanies articles from thinkers in North America, Tunisia, Iran, and India. The intricacies of Japanese is our opening topic this fall. In "Of Words and Worlds: Toward a Critical Reportage-Translation with Yoshimasu Gōzō and Patrick Chamoiseau," Jordan A. Yamaji Smith takes a transnationalist approach to Yoshimasu's "Mo Chuisle / My Pulse's" treatment of Patrick Chamiseau's use of French, Japanese, Gaelic, and Ainu. Then, Patricia Boyd's "Textual Meaning Making and Writerly Experiences: The Practice of Becoming a Writer in Composition Classes" discusses academic writing as an act of identity. Next, Safia Sahle Reje explains how the body expresses and deconstructs experiences from the margins in "J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*: Storytelling and the Power of the Body." Ruby C. Berryman's well-argued "Distilling Genocide Into Drama: Adaptation of Holocaust and Slave Narratives to the Stage" also explores plastic presentations of ethical dilemmas and Jill Goad's "The Body Can Be Made to Pay": Wartime and Postwar Corporeal Responsibility in Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*" finds that the embodiment of cultural values compensates for the failures of language to express shared realities. Mojgan Eyvazi, Vahid Agha Tabatabaian, and Mohammad Ali Alaeddini's "A Study of the Setting of the English Narratives Based on Vico's Stage Theory," thought-provoking application of Vico's theory to the English literary tradition, suggests that the West's contemporary stories may belong to the first, not the third of Vico's ages and K. Narayana Chandran's playful meditation on Gracy's work, "A Parodic Parable and its Pedagogics," also returns the reader to contemplation of contemporary treatments of traditional methods of expression.

This fall, I'm looking forward to watching the fallout from the solar flares from my back porch until the crops are down and the birds return. Until then, may the Northern Lights bring you much happiness. *the quint* will be back in December with its annual Christmas offering just in time for the holidays.

Sue Matheson
Co-Editor

Tansi /Welcome To White Feather

Photos: Sue Matheson

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess Acrylic

Of Words and Worlds:

Toward a Critical Reportage-Translation with Yoshimasu Gōzō and Patrick Chamoiseau

by Jordan A. Yamaji Smith, California State University, Long Beach, California

The following dialogue is an attempt to transcend critical genres in a way that parallels the transnationalist strategies of the texts on which it builds. We might call this breed *critical reportage-translation*, and it seeks both to enact at the level of style and content the rhizomic structure of transnational texts and to highlight the dynamic affinities between translation practice, translation criticism, and transnationalism.

This particular instance is rooted in an encounter between poet of Japan and a novelist from Martinique, one that resulted in the poet's effulgent, sprawling, multilingual interweaving of words smashed into syllables rearranged in the registers of French, Japanese, Gaelic, and Ainu as a tribute to the novelist. This process is situated in a tale spun over several years and various national terrains; that tale delivered to me,

inserting me (well-met interpellation) into the dialogue as the eventual translator of the poem that follows, completing the article while calling for more voices to join and continue the hermeneutic cipher. The poet is Yoshimasu Gōzō, and the Martinican writer Patrick Chamoiseau. For now, I am the translator of the poem that appears as the conclusion to this part of the critical dialogue, though many translators and interpreters working across sign systems and languages collectively helped produced the experience that is Yoshimasu's "Mo Chuisle / My Pulse"—and this article and the poem's translation could easily be credited in the byline to an intermingled hybrid of three personal names. Considerations of some specter of propriety (a haunting of the dead ethical imperative of translatorly invisibility?) causes me to stop shy of switching from the first-person singular to using an abstract, decentered, but no less meaningful "we."

Speaking more traditionally of the poem's author, Yoshimasu has been one of Japan's most prominent and most creatively multimedia poets for the past fifty years. In over fifty books of innovative poetry, photography, interviews and essays combined with his video production, highly performative public readings, and transmedia collaborations, Yoshimasu has earned numerous literary awards and high cultural distinctions in Japan. He is increasingly gaining recognition in the West, as evidenced by a recent interview in the blog for the Museum of Modern Art in New York and by a forthcoming anthology of his works, *Alice, Iris, Red Horse: Selected Poems of Gozo Yoshimasu: A Book in and on Translation*, edited by American poet and translator, Forrest Gander.

Yoshimasu's "Mo Chuisle," both the poem itself and the translation, comes with a transnational history that may be taken as emblematic of the role that translation can play

in facilitating and politically opening transnational encounters into a full-fledged mode, both in lived reality and in the abstract realm of world literature. I stumbled into this history via my work on the project by asking Yoshimasu to select a new or unpublished poem for me to translate. The answer was a warm invitation to dinner on Tsukishima, an island on the Sumida River in Tokyo, over which he told me in enthusiastic detail of the genesis of the poem—one which ended up guiding my translation methods.

In April of 2012, Yoshimasu was invited to Paris for an event with Martinican writer, Patrick Chamoiseau, where Chamoiseau presented his meticulous, insightful reading of Yoshimasu's poetry. Yoshimasu devoted most of the discussion to the effects of the Eastern Japan Earthquake of 2011. He was so moved by this exchange, that upon his return to Tokyo, set himself to reading Chamoiseau's works in Japanese translation, finding particular inspiration in two of Chamoiseau's works: *Biblique des derniers gestes***,** which in Japanese translation became, カリブ海偽典, roughly meaning *Caribbean Sea Pseudepigraphs*, or *Dictionary of Caribbean Lies*); and Chamoiseau's collaboration with Raphaël Confiant, *Lettres Créoles: tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature: Haïti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, 1635-1975* (in the Japanese, クレオールとは何か (lit. "What Is Creole?"). As this poem testifies, the encounters with Chamoiseau and his writings were profound experiences for Yoshimasu.

In November of 2012, Yoshimasu reciprocated for the Paris event, inviting Chamoiseau to appear with him at the Institut Français in Tokyo. This event featured Yoshimasu's poem dedicated to Chamoiseau's "writing hand," translated simultaneously in French for Chamoiseau by Sekiguchi Ryōko, a Japanese poet and

translator resident in France, and was moderated by Michaël Ferrier, a professor at Chuo University. Yoshimasu read "Mo Chuisle" slowly so that the French version would resonate as a close echo, meaning that Yoshimasu could feel Chamoiseau's visceral, affective responses to his poem at the moment it was first read aloud. This corporeal exchange corresponds to the importance of the text's own materiality.

Yoshimasu completed this framing tale, and I left the evening toting a bag full of Yoshimasu's personal copies of Chamoiseau's writings in Japanese translation, replete with disheveled rainbows of sticky notes protruding from every margin. And copies of Yoshimasu's handwritten poem, ""我が鼓動　/ Mo Chuisle."

A reading of the poem begins and ends with the title phrase: though it crowns the poem with a macaronic twist, and we learn its basic meaning at the beginning, we come to understand the full meaning of its sonic resonance only at the end. The Gaelic phrase (pronounced "mō ẖush'luh," beginning with a lightly throaty Germanic *ch*, like a softer Hebrew ח or the Arabic خ) literally means "my pulse," and functions generally as a term of endearment. Yoshimasu's title glosses it with the Japanese phrase "*wa-ga kodō*" (我が鼓動), literally meaning "my pulse," but without the normal register of the term of endearment.

This literality of translation is embedded in my non-translation of the word *kokoro* (心). In the lines about the tree standing in the speaker's "kokoro," would normally be translated "heart." But as noted in 1957 by Edwin McClellan, the translator of Natsume Soseki's modern classic novel, *Kokoro*, the word does not quite correspond to the English "heart." McClellan kept the Japanese word as the title for the English version, explaining that it can suggest something like the *emotional center* as it does in English, though it does not designate the anatomical heart—indeed, in Japanese, the anatomical word for heart incorporates the character *kokoro*, but is semantically and phonically distinct (*shinzō* 心臓).

This character "*kokoro*" (心) is also present within the Japanese word for "center" (*chūshin* 中心), used elsewhere in "Mo Chuisle." I have therefore translated phrases like "center of the book" ("書物の中心") as "heart of the book" to extend the resonance of *kokoro*. Since, despite McClellan's creative intervention through Soseki, *kokoro* is often translated "heart" or the equivalent in Western languages, the change from the more literal "center" of 中心 to "heart" might also be thought as the insistence of the metaphor in Japanese *ecriture*.

Several others of Yoshimasu's innovative constructions must remain in Japanese, rewarding readers for their diligence. Japanese readers would encounter the word with only slightly less initial confusion: the meaning of the individual characters would stand out, but there would be no clear way to pronounce them—the *signifieds* would be mentally present, but the spoken sense of the *signifiers* would remain blank. This is therefore one of those instances when translation pulls an interpretive riddle into the spotlight. The most prominent is "樹-間," which functions in several ways through the poem: as *tree*, *to stand*, or (tree) *bark*. It parallels the Japanese word for *human*, 人間 (*ningen*), one rich in philosophical implications. The word 樹-間 itself is Yoshimasu's own invention and combines a slightly literary character for *tree* (樹) with that for *space* or *between* (間) separated (or connected?) by a hyphen. Philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro's analysis of the Japanese concept of human—embodied in the word 人間–as an entity based essentially on a relational *betweenness* (*aidagara* 間柄), a being constituted through a set of relations to others in constantly varying situations and environments. Sensing this resonance with Watsuji's theory, I

left the word in the original with bracketed explanations adjacent as meanings change.

The uses in the poem are:

Original:	**Pronunciation:**	**English Meaning:**	**Translation:**
樹-間	*ta*	stand(ing)	樹-間[=stand]ing
樹-間肌	*kihada*	treeskin	樹-間skin
樹-間	*ki*	tree(s)	樹-間[trees]
樹-皮	*kawa*	(tree) bark	樹-皮[bark]

The first usage boldly grafts the semantic meaning of *standing* onto 樹-間. The second, combines 樹-間 with 肌, a word usually used for animal (including human) skin. The third implies that trees also gain their existence, essence, or "treeness" through relations with other trees, animals, humans, and with the environment. The fourth relates to the second, but 肌 is replaced with 皮 (*kawa*), suggesting a leathery hide.

Yoshimasu's writing is rich in puns and macaronic wordplay. Particularly signature is Yoshimasu's use of a type of wordplay known as "*ateji,*" wherein the characters typically used for writing a word are replaced with homophonous but graphically distinct characters, a kind of visually dissonant *homophonographic play*. The meaning is *found in sound*, so rather than translate the semantic meaning of either the sonic or viscerally orthographic signifiers, I chose to translate the integrity of happenstance.

If a translator of Yoshimasu were to bemoan the losses of translation, surely the mourning would begin with the necessity of this primary decision: whether to privilege the graphic or the phonic in instances of *ateji*. To suture the gap created by this compulsory choice, I have taken the liberty to downplay semantic-centered translation and attempted to create new forms of wordplay that arise naturally from the sounds of English. I set the semantically designated phrase first, then add a literal translation and Romanization of the phonemes at play. Given that puns and wordplay are often signaled as the antithesis of translatability, this form of translatorly play should be read not only as a recuperative translation technique, but as working in tandem with cross-lingual puns to bind languages and cultures.

The first *ateji* phase in the "Mo Chuisle" is pronounced "while touching" (*sawari-nagara*), written using the *ateji*: 左 (*sa*/left), 環 (*wa*/ring), 離 (*ri*/distance), 奈(*na*/what) , 加゛(*ga*/add), 裸 (*ra*/nudity). In this vein, Yoshimasu also uses the character 毛 (hair / *mō*) to stand for the homophonous Japanese particle も (*mo*). Fortunately the context of each usage allowed me to translate using the word "more," which I've glossed as "(mō)re" to allude to this instance of *ateji*. The article を (pronounced as a long *o*) indicates the preceding phrase as the object of the verb; Yoshimasu grafts over it the character 緒 (*oh*), meaning thread, clue or beginning. He switches 加゛ (*ga*) for "but," thereby implying "addition" of something else.

A second instance contains two *ateji*: the repeated line, "Ri-ri-gya, jiba – reversing the syllables made a splitting sound." The first is 裂毛留 (*sakeru*, usually written 裂ける, meaning *to split/rend*): 裂 (*sa*/split), 毛 (*ke*/hair), 留 (*ru*/remain); when Yoshimasu applies his *ateji*, I render it "sp.lit.ting." And the second is the word "sound" (usually written 音), which becomes 於止; 於 can be a generic phatic sound, "ahh," of either relief or disappointment, and 止 means "stop"—a somewhat paradoxical, onomatopoeic instance of *ateji*.

The poem's final *ateji* is comes in three parts. In the first, 不伽差 replaces *fukasa* (深さ depth): 不 (*fu*/non- or un-), 伽 (*ka*/entertain or nurse), 差 (*sa*/difference); I render this

The second, 不伽久なり (*fukakunari*), clearly homophonizes "deepen," with the same *ateji* characters as the first, adding 久 (*ku*/long time or old story); allowing meaning to arise naturally from the English sounds, we find "grow.wing deep.her" in this translation. The third, 不伽之 (*fukashi*), is more ambiguously suggestive. It adds 之 (*shi*)—meaning "this" or "'s"—to the base characters of the first and second (不伽). Some of the strongest homophones suggest immortality (不可死), invisibility (不可視), and depth (深し); this translation conveys all three senses by expanding the word to a phrase: "the immortal, invisible depths."

Another technique Yoshimasu plies in "Mo Chuisle" is writing in Roman letters. The word "ura"—which I generally translated as "the reverse"—was particularly enmeshed in some polyvalent semantics. In Japanese, the meaning of "ura" (which appears both by itself and in "URA-KAZE") depends entirely on context and character used: 浦, 裏, 怨, or 恨. Writing it in Roman letters is another strategy by which Yoshimasu can have it all ways. 浦 means "sea," so URA-KAZE can simply mean "sea breeze." But given that Yoshimasu uses *ura* (裏) in earlier lines, I translate his Romanized "URA" in closer relation to the concept of "the reverse" when he writes it as 裏.

This 裏 forms a conceptual pair in Japanese: *omote*/*ura*. Literally, this pair designates the exterior surface (*omote*) vs. interior depth (*ura*), but can also signify front/back. American anthropologist Ruth Benedict introduced the concept to broad readerships in the West and Asia in her anthropological treatise on Japan, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). Benedict characterizes "omote" as the "public face" people offer in daily

interactions, while "ura" is that side of the self that only emerges in the most intimate of relationships: the private inner self. When Yoshimasu writes of the "裏" (*ura*) of mist meteorites, then later "URA-KAZE" (wind of the reverse/interior), it is impossible to quite articulate the term's spatial dimensions. So I aim in the translation to poetically invoke space in ways that—rather than stake ground as a final solution—provoke further discussion on the imagery through their texture. (Incidentally, URA-KAZE is also the name of the Japanese navy destroyer in the War of the Pacific; shortly after rescuing the crew from the sinking Tanikaze destroyer, it was sunk by a U.S. submarine.)

"Ta … Tama …" are the emerging sounds of "tamarind," and appear as simple *hiragana* phonemes in the Japanese. However, the sounds also suggest 多 (*ta*/many) and 魂 (*tama*/soul). Finding the affinity between "so" of "so many" and "so" of "souls" seemed uncannily to echo both the Japanese semantic resonance and fit with the previous stanza on the tsunami victims and the following stanza on the voice of Rikuzen Takata; this may be stretching the limits of the translator's invisibility, a la Borges.

Yoshimasu's use of the creole word *apatoudi* also plays into his translingual approach to transnationalism. It refers to vernacular epigrams and forms the opening phrase of the epigram, meaning roughly, "It's not enough [to say or have] …," followed by a phrase indicating that "one must also [say or have…]." The French formula given is: "*Il ne suffit pas de dire faire ou savoir telle ou telle chose, il faut encore dire faire ou savoir telle ou telle autre chose.*" Chamoiseau brings *apatoudi* into *Biblique* (256-7, 260, etc.) when a narrating character recalls a woman who spoke in *apatoudi*: "Ethnographers have picked up on proverbs, nursery rhymes, *titimes*, but not on *Apatoudi* that most frequently were derived, and that formulated

the popular philosophy of our oral literature in a different tone" (my translation). In other words, they are the inaudible vernacular—that which evades the radar of the specialist.

As will be obvious, Yoshimasu quotes extensively from Chamoiseau's writings in this poem, interweaving them into his own speech, finding new affinities of sound and meaning. These quotations all come from the masterful Japanese translation by Tsukamoto Masanori (Professor of French language and literature at Tokyo University) from Chamoiseau's French. For this English translation, I render most of the quoted passages directly from the Japanese translation of the French original. However, on at least one occasion, I have preferred to follow Chamoiseau's original French text more closely than Tsukamoto's Japanese translation, which Yoshimasu read and quoted. Take for example the passage Yoshimasu quotes from the first line of page 134 of Chamoiseau's *Biblique des derniers gestes* in Japanese: "彼らを古い時代の亡霊たち、最後の逃亡奴隷たちの目立たない化身たち、ここでの生活になんの影響ももたらさない[社会の周辺]の人々と、私はみなしていたのである" (quoted passage underlined; the part in brackets, [社会の周辺], meaning "the socially marginalized," is found in the middle of the corresponding French phrase). The French original is, "*Je les considérais comme spectres des temps anciens, obscurs avatars des derniers nègres marrons, marginaux sans conséquence sur l'existence d'ici*" (113; corresponding passages underlined). The Japanese syntax externalizes a key word ("marginal") from Chamoiseau's line and hence from Yoshimasu's quoted phrase. The Japanese translation also more starkly highlights the figure of escaped slaves (逃亡奴隷) than the French colonial phrase (*nègres marrons*). My translation therefore hybridizes the French and the Japanese in two ways: first, by reinserting the "*marginaux*," and second, by maintaining the more direct reference to slaves that was likely incorporated into the Japanese text as an explanatory measure: "spirits from a past age, marginal, latter-day avatars of escaped slaves." This technique informs several other translations of quoted passages. By reading the French and letting it color my translation decisions, I sought to triangulate the translation as a dialogue (trialogue?), thus offering the translated text as another route of transport between Yoshimasu and Chamoiseau. Or perhaps this is translation as practiced in Gloria Anzaldúa's home on the borderland.

Another lode in "Mo Chuisle" is Yoshimasu's exploration of acoustic affinities transformed into new semantic discoveries across languages. We might see term this *translingual reconstructionism* (the *-ism* there to suggest it as the fraternal twin of deconstructionism). One instance is when the "m" sound is broken out of the Japanese phoneme *mi* (み) in the paragraph translated:

> **w**ater, **w**ater, ,,, the **m**ist's e**m**phasis, **w**ater, **w**ater, **m**oving along easily,
> Tsuna**m**i乃victi**m**s, so easily, those 樹-間[trees] ar,ranged, "***baji****RU* = basil,
> THAT *RU* = *RUE* = ROUTE", sounds of **m**uddy footfalls, beca**m**e visible

In the Japanese, we can find the sound in *mizu* (water), *Tsunami*, *michi* (path), *komichi* (little path), *mina* (everyone), and *mietekiteita* (becoming visible). I have extended the *m* affinities to include the visual match w, which allows us to see (if not hear) the affinity in English. It is as if the sound has broken out of a single word, alights here and there in the poetic mind and on paper, tracing out a path that moves along a route toward the devastation of the tsunami. And at the end is the tree, which looms out of *miete**ki**teita* (*ki*=樹/tree).

Similarly, Yoshimasu plays out the insistence of syllables across languages, finding semantic resonance en route. The word "Gya-ri-ri" (later in the poem, syllabically reversed as "ri-ri-gya") is a Sinicized pronunciation of *Galilee*, which according to Chamoiseau and Confiant was the name of the ship that brought Chinese immigrants to the Caribbean in the early twentieth century (*Lettres Créoles*). This syllabic reversal, based on phonemes of the Japanese *hiragana* script, also applies to "bajibaji" as "jiba." The significance of *bajibaji* is otherwise explained in the poem, and readers can enjoy tracing the significance of the allusion as well.

These syllable-splitting reversals should not be mistaken for Dadaist wordplay: they manifest and seek to transcend Yoshimasu's experience during a post-3/11 visit to Rikuzen Takata City in Iwate Prefecture, which also appears toward the end of this poem. In an interview with Akada Yasukazu in *Asahi Shimbun* on February 24, 2012, Yoshimasu articulated this connection:

> Last year, I visited Rikuzen Takata City in Iwate Prefecture. The blue sign from a convenience store, tatami mats, New Year's Cards were scattered about. Bulldozers' giant hands were raking out the rubble. At that time, they were unnamable things, things you can neither film nor express. You simply have to hang your head. I heard their voice. […] Paul Valéry called poetry a "hesitation between sound and meaning." Somewhere in the depths lurk the spirits of sounds. […] The faint voices of the spirits I make into sound, I pursue the new meanings that emerge next to the sounds, blending sound with meaning. Until I reach that point, I have to stare at that desperate, desolate landscape time and again, circling the underworld. Smashing my own words to bits, I put forth totally new voices. Poetry is that labor done even when labeled unintelligible.

Yoshimasu ends his poem with the "afterword" stating, "This poem cannot be written again, can never be read again." This is my final take on the translation, but my hope is that it will indeed be read (aloud!) many times—its orality and sonic nature, its transnationally social genesis should inform the poem's future life in English.

In a recent interview by Aki Onda, published on the blog for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Yoshimasu highlighted precisely these performative and vocal aspects of presenting his poems live: "For me, reading aloud is a terrifying thing, and so I memorize the poem beforehand. But when you memorize it and recite it, it becomes just like the lyrics to a pop song or something. You have to demolish it somehow. I know this instinctively, and the way I do this is to write the demolition into the poem itself" (Yoshimasu and Onda). May we continue to demolish this together, out loud, across borders, and right through disaster,,,

My Pulse

Mo Chuisle——dedicated to the writing hand of Patrick Chamoiseau

by Yoshimasu Gōzō

NOV 17, 2012, all you kind souls gathered here at the *Institut Français*

this rainy evening, …… This humble poem, deeply inspired by Chamoiseau's masterpiece *Biblique des derniers gestes* (translated into Japanese asカリブ海偽典 / *Caribbean Sea Pseudepigraphs*), was written in full awareness of my shortcomings and with all my heart. His masterpiece yields enormous blessings. I kept on reading a third, a fourth, a fifth time. Herein, I share my immediate surprise and gratitude. This morning, I sent a facsimile to my friend, Sekiguchi Ryōko, who will be giving the gist in French – along with my joy in getting to spend the evening with this marvelous writer.

NOV 12, 2012, 3:00 P.M., *Tokio***, …** *Patrick Chamoiseau*, his masterpiece, translated into some one-thousand pages of Japanese by Tsukamoto Masanori, after reading for ten days, I finished it, such words, their very existence seems impossible, but…

I felt like a most courteous, giant tree was 樹-間[=stand]ing in my *kokoro***,** **,,,**

6:00 P.M., NOV 12, 2012, …… Perhaps this "*kokoro*…" thing, surprised at its initial surprise, page 906, third from last line, "Orchids are intimate with eternity, frugal, slender……" while I regret losing my friend, Nakagami, I feel his narrowed 👁 next to me, giving me the feeling *I can see Chamoiseau*-san's French in the first line of this poem, …… What does it mean "to mourn" (おしむ)? (it can also mean slowly savoring one's reading to avoid the disappointment of finishing, but it's something deeper…) And, perhaps, this mourning, felt for the first time, when I finished reading the book, 樹-間ing in the heart of the book, was this

circling round and round, …… . Or Balthazar Bodule-Jules, whose body "watered, pulled weeds, cleaned up" (page 886, line 7), his movements, the sound of pen scritching on the paper of *Patrick Chamoiseau*-san's "paper house," or coming to hear the soft "soundless whistling," ……I find myself softly, cautiously returning to the depths of the book's first page, …… .

The abyss of our voices, ,,, it may have been the first time I'd known a future where my whistling could arrive, ,,,

"It's not enough"

"*Apatoudi*" = no, that was enough, ,,,

NOV 13, 2012, ……wordless symbol of a poetry anthology dedicated to *Patrick Chamoiseau*-san's masterpiece or the ",,," resembling someone's mouth, for example page 896 to page 897, "……the atmosphere saturates with moisture, becomes mist settling on walls, on life, and the orchids drink it in" の, ……that scar on the universe I made, ",,," 毛, thank you, *Chamoiseau*-san, ……

,,, 環, I was approaching a path along which I would realize the meteoric nature of that mist the orchids sip

11/13/2013 (Tues) 13:27 ORGANIC CAFE, Tokyo Station branch, off in one corner I sat, as though sheltering myself from the rain though it

had ceased to fall, from the power of that falling mist of *Chamoiseau*-san's book. Page 39, the *3, hearing for the first time the "tiny cracks in the hummingbird eggs," the path and my life aligned, there was a "sing=walking," I sang-walked / *chantai-marchai*. Touching the book's bark, the樹-間skin, touching = left,ring,distance,what,add,nudity…… (*sa*左, *wa*環, *ri*離, *na*奈, *ga*加゛, *ra*裸, …) page 47, left side, "There is no beginning of death. It exists from the moment of conception, envelops our births, dwells within all alive, remains an active principle in all our projected futures. Death composes the reverse of extreme life …It forms the reverse."

little paths on the reverse of mist meteorites緒 while drying out words, I made as though to whistle "Hey, Moon! Over here…," on the *REVERSE* of the "text route," those paths on the *REVERSE*緒, we came to walk for the first time, …

NOV 14, 2012… immersed in perusing, *Caribbean Sea*, for the second time, I found, perhaps, my favorite line in this *monumental work*, …page 85 8th-6th lines from the bottom, "Cléoste, between the huge roots of the trees, in the midst of this darkness with mist dripping like rain, moved along as easily as though brightly illuminated by the noontime sun," 加゛but

water, water, ,,, the mist's emphasis, water, water, moving along easily, Tsunami乃victims, so easily, those 樹-間[trees] ar,ranged, "***baji****RU* = basil, THAT *RU* = *RUE* = ROUTE", sounds of muddy footfalls, became visible

Chamoiseau's most courteous, giant tree—I *felt*—was 樹-間ing in my *kokoro*, ,,,

"Bajibaji (basil: [in Creole folktales, another name for death] page 90 (*What Is Creole?* [*Lettres Créoles*], Heibonsha Library Publishers, trans. Nishitani Osamu)

ruruRU……" ru = the Ainu word for little path, road)

Gya-ri-ri = [in Creole means "over there," "that world"] (*What Is Creole?* [*Lettres Créoles*] (Heibonsha Library Publishers)

NOV 15, 2012…IN A DREAM, the DREAM's樹-皮[bark], stripping sounds, the swelling of *Chamoiseau*-san's pen, to its absentmindedness my *kokoro* was returning, thinking, …… . (Mō)re than Edouard Glissant's "A tree is a country unto itself" (*What Is Creole?* [*Lettres Créoles*], Heibonsha Library Publishers, page 307), ……

An absentmindedness like the absentmindedness of old trees… (*Biblique*, page 104, eighth line from the bottom), gya-ri-ri, …..

Gya-ri-ri

"the planet's bark, ,,," "the green clay of the Congo swamplands, …… (page 45, last line)," Gya-ri-ri, pi-pi-ri (Pipiri bird, page 137, seventh from last line)

Ri-ri-gya, jiba….– reversing the syllables made a splitting sound

NOV 15, 2012, …so finally, according to the "the 樹-間' s absentmindedness," in *Chamoiseau*-san's praiseworthy masterpiece,

The dying, ,,, "a dwarf, an emerald, ……," the dying, their singing voices, we also noticed……

Ri-ri-gya, jiba – reversing the syllables made a sp.lit.ting sound

Ri-ri-gya, jiba – reversing the syllables made a sp.lit.ting sound

NOV 16, 2012, … perusing a bit (mō)re "departed spirits from a past age, marginal, latter-day avatars of escaped slaves" (page 134, first line), and "it seemed as though the door to the room had disappeared" (page 113, third line) 手, invisibly "guided by an animal sense of smell…" (ibid, line 12), 手, grow.wing deep.her….

(= "discomfort" (page 116, fourth line))

the entire universe "an absentmindedness like the absentmindedness of old trees" = "Some things are, some things are not. And between the two lie the remainders." (page 111, epigram, …)

the immortal, invisible depths of the remainders, ,,,

Ri-ri-gya-jiba, ri-ri-gya-jiba

Incredible, the ashen tamarinds (page 137, last line) of

the 樹-間 [tree]'s *URA-KAZE***, its** *DEEP-WINDS*

NOV 16, 2012, …9:00 A.M., I got a phone call from Sekiguchi Ryōko-san, in Kyoto with Chamoiseau-san … "last night we drank *kokutō shōchū***," ……**

Incredible, the ashen tamarinds of the樹-間[tree]'s *URA-KAZE*

NOV 17, 2012, finally, on the morning of the day that *URA-KAZE*'s six, seven days' journey would come to an end, listening carefully, I began to hear the voice of another poem, ……

ta *so* many

tama, …… *so*uls, ……

"The remainders, ……" the moment I spelled it out, the voice of Rikuzen Takata spoke

Yes

Incredibly

Cha<u>mo</u>iseau,

<u>Mo</u> chuisle (“my pulse,” Gaelic)

I felt like a most courteous, giant tree was 樹-間[=stand]ing in my *kokoro*,
,,,

afterword, …… . As I finished my reading, listening still to the faint voice of the French simultaneous translation, I mumbled, “This poem cannot be written again, can never be read again.” (the author).

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Vertigo

ruler of the waters
can't pay attention
you have to be in
form for the burial

I could hear the
fading ghost perfect
even though it
was muffled by
my own tired voice

"wake no more
rest before labor"

the Legend is real
I invented an island
it's just the vertigo

"sacred ease there"

it's slow and
it hurts but
it's love

—*Timothy Collins*

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess Carving #1 Moosehorn, Driftwood, Acrylic

Textual Meaning Making and Writerly Experiences:

The Practice of Becoming a Writer in Composition Classes

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Introduction

"Academic writing, like all forms of communication, is an act of identity: it not only conveys disciplinary 'content' but also carries a representation of the writer" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1092). No matter what kind of writing English composition teachers ask students to complete, identities are imbedded in it; oftentimes students resist adopting those identities and refuse to take responsibility for and authority over their writing. As a result, their writerly experiences can be formulaic and the end products vapid products they do not care about. If students were to actively negotiate amongst the multiple identities available to them, they would be much more likely to be active agents in their own writing practices, take more responsibility for and pride in their writing, and produce writing that is viewed as valuable by them and others—all goals that composition

teachers strive to achieve.

What prevents students from adopting identities as writers? Students come to college with a long history of writerly experiences situated in traditional academic writing and practices, many based on standard essayistic traditions. Academic traditions tend to emphasize clarity over critical thinking (Barnard, 2010), value "correctness" at an early stage in the writing process (Elbow, 2012), privilege consumption of other people's ideas rather than construction of new knowledge (Lunsford et al, 2013), stress dispassionate approaches to ideas (George, 2012), and reward "symmetry, order and logical thinking" (Ha, 2002, p. 135) over creative thinking. In this framework students' ideas are too often not valued. As Lunsford et al (2013) write,

> students come to understand that most college writing attains value insofar as it accepts the structures and strictures of academic literacy, a message transmitted most directly through curricular and pedagogical practices. In this context, as students gain proficiency in expert discourses, they learn also to surrender their writing and writerly identifications . . . to the workings of a largely hidden curriculum that equates literacy achievement with public conformity to its laws. (p. 471)

Students learn these rules early, do not feel called by the identities imbedded in them, and thus often resist them.

One might ask if students *must* see themselves as writers in order to be successful at writing. Much research exists that suggests there is a strong link between the adoption of a writerly identity and effective writerly practices (Lunsford et al, 2013; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Pittam et al, 2009; McKinney & Giorgis, 2009). If students are not engaged in writerly practices that they relate to and feel energized by, they are not likely to see themselves as writers (Lunsford et al, 2013; Pittam et al, 2009; Lovejoy, 2009). Alternately, if they do not see themselves as writers, they are likely to think that there is only one correct way to write, not realizing that there are many alternative approaches. When they hit roadblocks in their writing, they often think they have failed, judging their ideas as faulty. They then tend to resort to staid processes of writing that produce oversimplified thinking and empty writing that focuses on surface correctness rather than engaged interactions with complex ideas (Barnard, 2010). Or, they summarize other people's ideas, becoming consumers or editors, rather than constructors of knowledge.

When students produce writing like this, they see little value in it. Since they do not attach value to it, they do not see why anyone in their discourse community would find value in it either, going so far as to think that no one would plagiarize it because there is nothing worthwhile in it (Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 477). Because so much of their work can focus on summarizing other people's ideas, students view their primary role as being editors or consumers of other people's ideas, not as constructors of their own knowledge/ideas (Pittam et al, 2009, p. 156; Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 479). Writing about other people's ideas involves different writerly practices and has different possible identities attached to them—ones that students feel are not valuable. Since they often resist fully buying into the identity because they think the only identities available to them are editor or consumer, students' writerly practices become staid and empty. The

writerly practices thus shape the possibility of adopting an identity.

Clearly, students need to feel that their ideas are valued by their discourse community in order to engage actively in their writing practices and to take responsibility for their writing. Composition teachers need to change students' conceptions of the value of their writing in order to challenge their views of themselves as writers. Since writerly identities and practices are so closely linked, composition teachers must take a two-pronged approach to address this issue. When students can begin to see themselves as constructors of knowledge rather than as editors or consumers of other people's ideas, they begin to see themselves as writers. On the flip side, when they see themselves as writers, they are more likely to invest in their writing and take responsibility for it, which strengthens their desire to sustain the identity of writer. So, composition teachers must encourage student to adopt and sustain an identity of writer *while* teaching students to expand their writerly practices. Since identities are connected, it will not work to change one without changing both of them simultaneously.

In this paper, then, I offer suggestions about how we can nurture students' sense of themselves as writers in academic settings while expanding their understandings of and experiences with multiple writerly practices/experiences. In order to set up the argument for these suggestions, I explore what is meant by writer's identity and how this impacts writerly experiences and then analyze the problems with traditional academic writing that has been expected of students along with the identities imbedded in those expectations.

****

Definitions of Identity and Writerly Identity

Put quite simply, "identity refers to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and others" (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010, p. 11). Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) emphasize that identity is not based in only how we see ourselves but also in how *others* see us. "Authorial identity is the sense a writer has of themselves as an author and the textual identity they construct in their writing" (Pittam et al, p. 154). While authorial identity is an individual's sense of themselves, this identity is always constructed within a discourse community because, as Hyland (2011) argues, identity "involves 'identification' with some community, taking on and shaping its discourses, behaviours, values and practices to construct a self both distinct from and similar to those of its members" (p. 10). A community's discourse is a significant aspect in shaping identity because "in adopting the practice and discourses of a community we come, over time, to adopt its perspectives and interpretations, seeing the world in the same ways and taking on an identity as a member of that community" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1092). Discourse links authors to particular belief systems and affective domains. As Hyland (2002) claims, "our discoursal choices align us with certain values and beliefs that support particular identities" (p. 1092). For writers, this means that the discourse community shapes the "perspectives and interpretations" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1092) along with the "belief systems and affective domains" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1092) of the "textual identity they construct in writing," Pittam et al, 2009, p. 154) thus that writerly self is socially constructed through engagement within discourse communities.

Since identities are constructed within communities, these communities are some

constraints put upon what identities are accepted because members must establish credibility within the group:

> In one sense, then, identity means constructing credibility—as students, teachers, nurses, fishmongers, or whatever. It involves negotiating a self which is coherent and meaningful to both the individual and the group. This means, of course, that identity is not simply a matter of personal choice. We cannot just be whatever we want to be. (Hyland, 2011, p. 11)

Within any given discourse, then, writers are offered a limited number of identities that are accepted by the community for the individual to be seen as part of the community. Hyland (2002) argues,

> it is important to recognize that while identities may be socially constructed through language, writers are not free to simply adopt any identity they choose. When we employ the discourses of a community, there is a strong pressure to take on the identity of a member of that community. (Hyland, 2002, p. 1094)

In order to gain legitimacy and be accepted within a discourse community, then, writers must select from one of the socially accepted identities.

However, identities are not completely pre-determined by discourse communities. Hyland (2011) argues that

> we are not just prisoners of our social groups. In particular, while academic contexts privilege certain ways of making meanings and so restrict which language participants can bring from their past experiences, we can also see academic conventions as a catalogue of options which allow writers to actively accomplish an identity through discourse choices (p. 11)

Writers in academic contexts, then, are presented with a range of acceptable identities they can adopt within a discourse community rather than having to adopt "the" identity. As Ivanic and Camps (2001) argue, "each individual act of self-representation is unique" (p. 7) because individuals can recombine elements of identities offered to them by discourse communities in new ways—not endless ways, certainly, but in multiple, innovative ways. These innovations come from the experiences people bring with them from other communities to which they belong. Hyland (2002) argues,

> there is always room for individual negotiation and manoeuvre as a result of the values and beliefs individuals bring with them from their home cultures. Discourses are not self-contained, monolithic entities which interlock snugly without overlap. Each of us is constantly influenced by a multitude of discourses which are situated in the groups in which we participate and which mediate our involvements in any one of them. (p. 1094)

Therefore, identities are constructed within communities, but they are not completely determined by communities; previous experiences and identities based in other communities shape the way people adopt the identities within those new communities.

It is important, then, to study how authorial identity is constructed through engagement with multiple communities—to show students that identities are created

within discourse communities but are not completely pre-determined by those communities. Students, then, can learn that they have some freedom to select identities within particular academic contexts, thus making them more likely to adopt a writerly identity that combines their experiences from multiple discourse communities. In the next section, I discuss some barriers that traditional academic writing places to this process.

Traditional Academic Writing and Identity Practices

Traditional academic writing can cause a great deal of anxiety for students.

> "Mercedes narrated schooling events in a painfully descriptive voice as she recalled one teacher grading papers with 'a red marker that would constantly bleed through my paper.' Her identity as a fearful and reluctant writer within the school context was revealed through eight events as she remembered 'crying in front of a blank paper that was staring at me with a blank look. Writing on my own was so hard!'" (McKinney and Giorgis, 2009, p. 139).

Mercedes was one of the participants in McKinney and Giorgis' (2009) study of literacy specialists' literacy autobiographies. While Mercedes' was perhaps the most emotionally expressed story in the study, elements of her distress appeared in many of the participants' stories. It is clear from many studies that academic writing is not necessarily a favorite amongst students (Lunsford et al, 2013; Ha, 2009; Brodkey**,** 1996; Bartholmae**,** 1985; Bloom, 1996; Hyland,2002; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Pittam et al, 2009; Dredger et al, 2010; Lovejoy, 2009). From assignments that ask them to depersonalize their opinions and stifle creativity at most phases of the writing process to conflicting messages sent to them by teachers to assignments that ask them to be editors rather than authors, students find themselves faced with tasks that fail to inspire them. The typical features of academic writing and the common writing process taught in academic settings frequently inhibit students' desire and willingness to adopt the identity of writer and stifle their writerly experiences.

The essay is the most common form of writing taught in English classes in the university and is often the one that students think of when they think of academic writing. Elbow (2012) states: "people probably get tricked into thinking that careful essays are typical of writing because that kind of writing made such a dent on them when they are learning to write in school and are obliged to write in college" (p. 18). With the essay comes many assumptions about what counts as "good" writing, since too often "good" writing is equated with "correct" writing (Elbow, 2012). "Correct" writing includes clarity (Barnard, 2010), linear, symmetrical, logical thinking (Ha, 2009), emphasis on other people's ideas (Lunsford, et al, 2013), depersonalized use of the "I," when one's ideas *are* even used (George, 2012), and conformity to public rules rather than creative approaches to writing tasks (Lunsford et al, 2013). In this context, students often can't write what they want to and thus do not necessarily feel connected to their writing.

Further, too often the topics students must write about emphasize critique and criticism or include personal experiences or interpretations (Cameron et al, 2009, Elbow, 2012). Their topics and their style of writing are not of the students choosing and do

not relate to students' interests. Often there is little flexibility within the assignments, with the task being presented as replicating expert genres rather than exploring complex ideas or offering personal interpretations of the topic. It's not surprising, then, that in their study of 19 student writers, Pittam et al (2009) found that "none of the students identified spontaneously with the role of author in an academic context" (p. 159), and "authorial identity was especially weak for essay assignments, which were not perceived as unique pieces of work (one student suggested 'we're all writing the same essay')" (Pittam et al, 2009, p. 159). Further, Lavelle & Zuercher's (2001) study of 30 students in freshman composition revealed that only two students identified themselves and writers (p. 382). These two students were ones who felt a personal investment in the topics they selected and their writing in general (p. 382); neither of them identified with the traditional essay. When students are not allowed to write on topics of their choosing or in a language they value, they tend to see writing as an empty exercise that they must complete for a grade rather than for learning or any sort of intrinsic value (Pittam et al, 2009; Lovejoy, 2009; Lunsford et al, 2013; Elbow, 2012).

In addition to limiting the kind of writing that is allowed/encouraged, conventions of traditional academic writing also limit the writerly experience. The main problem is that a complex, multi-faceted set of practices that vary from writing task to writing task (and even within any given writing task) is too often perceived as "the" writing process. Students have learned this process in high school (and even earlier) and have brought it with them to college writing classrooms. As Cameron et al (2009) state,

> most undergraduate writing is based on a 'static writing model' (Richardson, 2000, p. 924), a linear journey of doing research, and then writing up and reporting findings. In this model, writing is the final 'mopping-up activity' (p. 923) of communicating to an audience what the author already knows. (p. 271)

Even if they do not follow that linear process in their own writing, students are required to simulate the steps because they are often must turn in outlines, first drafts and peer responses at particular times for their classes. The writing process might be presented as recursive (revision is built in and is often taught as *re-visioning*) but is recursive on the teachers'/syllabus' time schedule, not the writer's. "The" process is plagued by "the reductionist nature of the traditional cognitive perspective" (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 373) which is based in "the assumption that writing processes occur in a tidy, linear sequence" (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 373). While this oversimplified view has been critiqued and revised, seeds of it still exist in traditional assumptions about and practices of the writing process.

In addition to "the" process being presented as linear, usually students are only taken through the recursive process once (one first draft, one set of responses, then the final draft). Plus, even though first drafts are presented as drafts, many teachers still expect them to be fairly coherent versions of the final paper, thus nudging the students into "correct" writing fairly early in the process of writing. What this can lead students to do in their writing process is to "play it safe," to dumb down their writing rather than wrestle with complex ideas. Students, then, have few opportunities to be creative because the emphasis on correctness in first drafts can give rise to a critical voice early in

the writing process (Elbow, 2012; Lunsford, et al, 2013). As Cameron et al (2009) argue, "the moment an idea is half formed on the page, the critical voice can step in too early calling into doubt the legitimacy of the idea (and the legitimacy of the writer)" (p. 272). When the critical voice causes doubt for the writer, students can judge their writing as "less than" and get frustrated and discouraged, turning to focus on surface-level issues rather than deeper level thinking.

This approach to writing can produce anxiety in students. They often think that published writers "get it right" the first time—that "real" writers' first drafts are "correct" and publishable. So, when students' own first drafts aren't "correct" according to traditional standards, or they are "correct" but do not offer any kind of new insights like published authors do, students become discouraged and do not want to take ownership of what they deem to be shoddy writing. As Cameron et al (2009) write,

> so working alone, and with others' polished work as the standard, it is not surprising that many novices become filled with self-doubt. They experience their own writing in all its messiness, while the work they are reading seems to spring fully formed onto the page. They can only compare their apparent lack of writing ability (and apparent lack of knowledge) with the seeming ease with which others produce publishable (and knowledgeable) works. (Cameron et al, 2009, p. 271)

Students often try to fit into an idealized writing process that they imagine to be the one that "real" writers go through, fall short and then judge themselves and their work harshly, rather than realizing that there are multiple approaches to writing.

These conventions of traditional academic writing—in particular, the essay—are highly problematic in terms of students constructing a writerly identity. These conventions present a limited definition of writer. Students see writers as only those whose works are published (while students are written for a class only), those who use their own ideas in their work (while students are supposed to rely on others' ideas) and those whose work gets "real" world responses (while students' work is written for the teacher only). They do not feel that their work, ideas or experiences are important. As McKinney and Giorgis (2009) write,

> if writers feel they have nothing important to say—if, for example, in writing to meet the expectation of discourses of assignments/academic writing—they don't view themselves as authors. They don't believe it is their place to have a position to argue or an experience or idea worth communicating. Thus, viewing oneself as a writer is related to the sense of power and status writers bring with them as part of their life-history. (p. 17)

Much academic writing, with its emphasis on correctness over ideas and consumption over knowledge construction suggests that students do not have the power over their writing; instead, teachers have the power over students writing. For example, Mercedes, one of the participants in McKinney and Gorgios' (2009) study, tells the story of a teacher who would first correct Mercedes' writing and then physically rewrite her work, thus taking control of Mercedes' work. Mercedes described it as "the death chamber line where the teacher would edit your paper and then would heal your story by putting it on another sheet of paper. It was more like her story" (p. 139). It is clear from this story and

others like it that students are supposed to give up their authority over their writing in order to sound like an expert and adhere to academic conventions (Lunsford et al, 2013; Ha, 2009; Pittam et al, 2009); doing so makes it hard for them to imagine adopting a writer identity since they learn very early that all too often their ideas don't count and that their task is to write what the teacher wants, not what they themselves want to say (Lunsford et al, 2013).

When events like the one that occurred to Mercedes happen (and variations of it), is it any wonder students do not feel a sense of ownership of their ideas and are not drawn to adopting the identities imbedded in the discourse communities of academia? If, to be successful in academic environments, they must surrender their writerly identifications (Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 471) and adopt limiting writerly practices (Ha, 2009; Elbow, 2012; Pittam et al, 2009; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001), it makes sense that students would not readily adopt the new identity/identities offered to them by the institution that devalues their personal experiences and ideas. In the next section, I discuss strategies teachers can use to challenge these limiting approaches.

Strategies to Employ

As we have seen, conventions of traditional academic writing limit students' willingness and desire to adopt an identity of writer. We have also seen the way writerly identities and practices are intricately linked. In order for student to imagine themselves as "authors and new kinds of authorities" (Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 490), traditional academic conventions must be expanded and changed. In educational systems today, there is a

> crucial need for formal and informal educational spaces where students can work actively to rehearse and create writerly identities: academic and nonacademic roles that enable them to participate with self-confidence and self-awareness in consuming and producing knowledge through publication and performance. (Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 490)

Students must be offered opportunities to explore alternative identities and writing practices. If, as I discussed earlier, discourse communities offer a catalogue of possible identities and practices (Hyland, 2011, p. 11), then students can be taught to critically analyze discourse communities in order to determine which identity from that community best fits with their other identities which are based in other discourse communities; they can learn how to engage in "individual negotiation and manoeuvre as a result of the beliefs individuals bring with them from their home cultures" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1094), along with the multiple other discourse communities they belong. In a creative classroom environment, students can try out multiple writerly identities to see the impact of them on their writerly practices and writing products.

So how do teachers go about positioning students as writers and encouraging them to adopt writerly identities? How can they help students expand their writerly experiences so that they take more responsibilities for their writing, feel more willing to put their own ideas into their writing, and take pride in what they write? In this section, I lay out several strategies composition teachers can use to expand student's writerly practices and encourage them to adopt identities as writers; doing so will encourage them to construct knowledge rather than being passive consumers or editors and take more responsibility

for their work. Further, some of the strategies ask students to make their work public, thus answering Lunsford et al's (2013) call to help students gain self-confidence through publication and performance (p. 490).

Read about Others' Writerly Practices and Identities

A significant way to engage students in studying and trying out multiple writerly identities is to have students read about other authors' practices. Students can read writers *talking about how* they write, and they can read writers' work to see *how* they write—both practices are useful in helping students expand their understanding of how others approach writing practices and build writing identities. (Cameron et al, 2009). Doing so can help students try out practices and identities they might not have considered if they were only relying on the identity and practice offered to them by traditional academic discourse. Ha (2009) gives an example of how this practice benefited her Master's student when she had him read other students' theses. Her student felt that his writing was stifled by traditional academic writing conventions. He wanted to write with passion and intensity but was afraid to break traditional norms--until he read other students' theses. Then, he saw that writers approached the thesis genre through multiple writerly practices, and his repertoire of approaches was expanded. Seeing other authors write the way he really wanted to authorized him, helping him deal with his fear (Ha, 2009, p. 140). He adopted new writerly practices, thus, constructing/negotiating a new writerly identity that accompanied them, with much success. Having students read about, analyze, and try out other writers' strategies, then, is a good way to help them position themselves as writers because it helps them think outside the box of traditional

narratives about what writing and, consequently, what writerly identities can be.

Reading about and trying out others' writerly practices has several benefits. First, students learn there is not one correct way to write; instead, there are multiple writing processes. Understanding this can help students have not only different writerly experiences but also explore the different writerly identities attached to those experiences. When they hit roadblocks, students realize there are different ways to approach the situation and thus some of their anxiety about feeling like a fraud or not feeling like a "real" writer is relieved. Second, they may recognize their own practices in the processes they read about and realize that the practices they already engage in are ones that professionals use. Cameron et al (2009) argue that an important way to position "novices as academic writers is to show them that they are already doing the things that academic writers do" (p. 280). Doing so can help them overcome some of the anxiety they may feel about their writing practices, the writing they produce, and ultimately the identity associated with those practices. They can, then, value their own ideas and practices more.

Write about Topics of Interest

As was highlighted in an earlier section, Traditional Academic Writing and Identity Practices, students often do not feel committed to their writing and resist adopting the identity of writer required by traditional academic writing because they do not feel their ideas matter in academic writing. They feel that they are supposed to reiterate others' points, not put forth their own ideas. As Pittam et al (2013) found, students feel more connected to their writing if they are allowed to write on "individualized" topics (p. 159). Lovejoy's students echoed those findings, suggesting that students enjoyed writing more

and felt more like writers when they were allowed to select topics of interest and write in a language they value: "I have enjoyed the self-directed aspect of it, in that we can write what comes to mind using our own language. It also gives us a chance to be creative. I think it gives you a good sense of who we are as writers and people" (Lovejoy, 2009, p. 85). Both Pittam et al (2009) and Lovejoy (2009) found that students were more likely to adopt the identity of author and feel more investment in their writing if they wrote about topics they felt passionate about and were able to write in their own language. There is, then, an important connection between the commitment they feel toward the topic and students' writerly identities.

Therefore, it makes sense to ask students to write about topics in which they are invested. Generally, in writing courses, composition teachers emphasize rhetorical principles that can be learned by engaging with a variety of topics/issues; many times, for teachers' pedagogical goals, it matters less *what* students write about and more *how* students write and approach writing. The learning that teachers want students to do will most likely not be undermined if students are allowed to select their topics; in fact, if students are more engaged in the project because they are invested in their topics, their learning will actually *benefit* from allowing them to select their topics. If they already feel an investment in the topic, they will be more likely to feel committed to the writerly practices and thus be more likely to consider adopting a writerly identity, achieving all the benefits that come with it.

Writing about topics in which students feel committed helps them realize that their ideas have value. They begin to see themselves as producers of knowledge, rather than consumers of others' ideas. They can build creative and interesting connections between their ideas and others' ideas because they do not have to begin with the assumption that the only important work is others' ideas and that they have nothing important to say. By building these connections, students can actively locate themselves within a discourse community through presenting their ideas rather than merely summarizing what others have said. Through presenting their interpretations of the topic, they can construct an authoritative position. Writing about topics they are invested in, then, is not just a way to make assignments "fun" for the students; it is a way to encourage students to adopt writerly identities and take authoritative stances for themselves in their texts, thus taking responsibility for their writing. They become active, contributing members to the conversation around the topic, communicating something of value and worth—both in their eyes and in the eyes of the community—rather than just being editors.

Write Using Creative Approaches

As we have seen, too often students see it as a singular, painful, unrewarding process that produces work that is not valuable. Elbow (2012) argues that there is a crucial need " to change how people in our culture see writing and engage in it" (p. 40). Elbow (2012) argues that the view that "writing is hard" is a culturally produced view that "is largely a cultural artifact. It's not inherent in the *task itself of writing*" (p. 27), Teachers must challenge this and other limiting perceptions of writerly experiences and practices in order for students to produce the kind of engaged, active work that they will take responsibility for and will take pride in. In his recent work, Elbow (2012) argues that bringing the principles of speech to the process of writing can help challenge the limits

too often imposed on writing. Among the many different strategies he offers, one seems particularly fitting to my argument because it help writers practice a creative approach toward writing: speaking on the page.

Speaking on the page is exactly what it sounds like—writing as if one is talking. Elbow (2012) argues that this writerly practice can free one from the critical voice that too often jumps in too early and circumvents creative, exploratory thinking. Instead of seeing writing as transcribing already-figured-out ideas, writing becomes thinking in action. (Elbow, 2012, p. 99). Elbow (2012) explains how speaking on the page is different from the traditional writing process:

> When we write we are told to figure out ahead of time what we want to say (Start by making an outline) and let the writing represent the fruits of completed thinking. When we talk, on the other hand, we are often still working out our thinking: our words represent thinking in process . . .language is more lively and energetic when it represents thinking going on. This kind of language helps readers experience our meanings. (p. 99)

He emphasizes many benefits of speaking on the page, most importantly that writing is more energetic and represents complex thinking, aspects that are all too often missing when students feel they must follow a lock-step process that pushes them to conclusions too early in the process of writing. Speaking on the page allows writers to more succinctly and directly get to the point than when writers try to write "correctly." He does acknowledge that coherent writing will need to be produced at times and that speaking on the page will not always be coherent at first, but he suggests that this method will encourage the creativity that is all too often lacking in academic writing—that it stands as a corrective to the overemphasis on criticism and critique.

Writerly practices like speaking on the page can provide students with more confidence in their writing since it allows them to explore their ideas rather than force themselves to come to conclusions too early in the process. Instead of an emphasize on "correct" writing overtaking an emphasis on "good" ideas, practices like speaking on the page encourage writers to sort out what their thoughts are on any given issue and wrestle with complex ideas, as is the hallmark of good writers. Instead of approaching the writing process as a dumbed down version of the one that "real" writers go through, students can begin to see themselves as "real" writers as they learn "there is value in working with interesting language as a means of coming to language and coming to ideas" (Barnard, 2010, p. 446). Writing is no longer seen as a "mopping up" activity but as a discovery process, one in which ideas are explored (Cameron et al, 2009, p. 271). Half-formed ideas throughout the process of writing are productive and do not suggest that the idea or the author is not legitimate. They can still be a "writer" even if their writerly practices do not produce a perfect draft the first time around. In fact, practices like speaking on the page show students that writing "a messy and iterative process of bringing ideas into being" (Cameron et al, 2009, p. 270). Speaking on the page is only one strategy of multiple ones that can be pursued, but it is a good example of one students can try to challenge traditional conceptions about writerly practices and encourage them to think differently about the work that writers do.

Write Different Genres in Different Media

The world is radically changing and communication is changing with it. "The Digital Age is synonymous with rapid change. If the way in which we communicate is changing, then educators need to adapt to the new literacy context" (Sweeney, 2010 p. 122). Composition teachers have acknowledged that significant changes in communication are occurring, but the essay (or some form of it) is still the dominant form of writing taught in courses across the country. Composition teachers need to incorporate writing that responds to the rapidly changing communication practices, not necessarily to replace the essay but to perhaps to complement the it. An important strategy teachers can adopt is to start where students are and integrate their practices into pedagogical goals and assignments. "By tapping into the writing behaviors students already possess, teachers can engage students in more meaningful and thus more productive writing lessons" (Dredger et al, 2010, p. 87). By doing so, teachers are more likely to encourage them to adopt a productive writerly identity, one that can successfully write in academic and non-academic settings.

Blogs are one example of a type of writing that some students are already engaged in that could be adapted well for the classroom. Blogs, "which might provide students with alternative sites for academic identity creation that are less problematic than traditional ones" (Kirkup,2010, p. 2), can serve multiple purposes and be written for multiple audiences, thus allowing students to try out different writerly practices. One important purpose a blog can serve is to encourage students to reflect on their writerly practices and identities on an ongoing basis. Throughout the course, students can explore some of the following topics:

- reflect on how they approach writing tasks, what struggles they have with them, what role their past experiences play in writing the project, and whether they feel called by the task or isolated from it;
- determine whether or not the tasks allow them to incorporate their own ideas into projects or if they rely more on other people's work and how those different tasks make them feel as writers;
- analyze the purpose for the various choices they must make as writers in a given piece of writing (for example, using logos here, pathos here, ethos there) and determine what impact those choices have on the authority of their own voice and their presence in the text.

Their peers can write comments to them about these reflections, commenting on how their own processes intersect and/or differ from the ones shared. They can offer suggestions, share commiserations, and generally give feedback to show that the writer's ideas about writing are valuable.

Another way to use blogs is for students to keep a running log of their thoughts and interpretations of the topics they are pursuing. Lovejoy (2009) argued that a motivating factors for writers was when they could continuously write (both inside and outside of class) on a given topic rather than having to jump from topic to topic quickly, as many writing classes expect them to. One of the frustrating features of traditional academic practices in writing classrooms is that students are expected to develop expertise on topics too quickly (Pittam et al, 2009, p. 158). Students know they are not experts on the topic because they have not had enough time to develop expertise, yet they are expected to

present themselves as experts. They try to mimic experts, but fall short because of the lack of time. Thus, they are not willing to and/or do not have the experience to adopt the role of expert in their writing. Encouraging students to explore their ongoing engagement with an issue in a blog allows students to develop expertise over time. Making the blogs public will allow them to receive engage with not only their peers but others who have interest in their topic, helping them to develop their ideas and locate themselves more firmly in the discourse community of those who are interested in the topic. The purpose of this type of blog, then, is for them to develop their ideas and to engage in conversations about their ideas with others who are either experts on the ideas or are developing expertise on them. But since they do not have to position themselves as experts, it gives them space to build the identity of expert in a safe environment where an audience other than the teacher/peers can encourage them and provide them with conversation and feedback.

These are but two ways teachers can use blogs; of course there are many others that can be explored (Halic, 2010; Frye, 2010; Richardson, 2010; Kirkup, 2010; Sweeny, 2010; Dredger et al, 2010; Hu, 2012; Nichols, 2012; Edwards-Groves, 2012; Seo, 2012). By writing blogs for different purposes and different audiences, students can try out different writerly practices and identities and receive direct, sometimes immediate feedback on their ideas and their *presentation* of their ideas. If composition teachers incorporate blogs into writing classrooms, they are publicly positioning students as writers within a discourse community and encouraging them to see themselves as "real" writers. Their peers begin to acknowledge them as "real" writers as well, legitimizing their ideas and writing as valuable. This legitimization encourages students to identify themselves as writers.

Further, as a result of the public nature of the blog and the "comment" box, the concept of audience changes "When students post their writing online the audience transforms from one person (i.e., the teacher) to a larger social community. This changes the dynamic of writing from something that is done to receive a grade to place it in a social context where form, style, and understanding of audience take on increased importance" (Sweeney, 2010, p. 127). Students often feel a greater sense of responsibility for their posts because a much broader audience is reading their writing. Writerly experience/practices change as does writerly identity and how writer positions self to audience.

Conclusion

As is clear from the research, writerly identities and writerly practices are intricately connected. If composition teachers are to "assist students in making them aware of possibilities in having a voice and writer identity" (Cameron et al, 2009, p. 143), they must expand students' conceptions of writerly practices at the same time as they encourage students to adopt writerly identities. As we have seen, there are benefits to having students see themselves as writers: they are more likely to become active agents in their writing processes—i.e. they construct knowledge rather than simply consume others' knowledge; they include their ideas and interpretations in their writing, thus feeling more invested in it; and they produce writing that is valued by themselves and others.

It is important to teach students to negotiate among the identities offered to them by discourse communities, rather than having them think there is only one identity available to them. It is crucial, however, that composition teachers not insist that students adopt one identity over another. As Ha (2009) insists,

> it is possible to assist students in making them aware of possibilities in having a voice and writer identity. However, it is also necessary to respect students' own choice, as any act of writing involves *becoming,* which directions it could take (Prior 2001) and thus it is important for students to at least take control of their *becoming* path. (Ha, 2009, p. 143)

Teachers should introduce students to the process of identity negotiation, not suggest that one identity is better than another or else they replicate the same strategies of traditional academic writing, limiting students to one interpretation of writerly identity. Further, as Ha (2009) points out, it is also important for teachers to emphasize to students that writing is not just about getting ideas down on the page; it is about identity construction, hence the "becoming" that Ha (2009) stresses. Lillis (2001) furthers this argument: "meaning making is not just about making texts, but is also about the making of ourselves in a process of becoming" (p. 48). Both authors emphasize that a teacher's task is to provide students with the skills and then allow students the freedom to decide what kind of writerly experience they want to have and what time of writerly identity they want to adopt—within the flexible boundaries of their discourse communities.

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Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess **Carving #2** **Agate**

Embattlements

brainwash brainstorm
fault line flat line

schizo gnawing on bones

you're not bored
when you're crazy

mortified embattlements

cupid and the corsair

the comedy
the comedy
the drama

to squeeze the pearl
                of creation
out of sensory experience

—Timothy Collins

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess Fox Fur Moccasins 1

J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*: Storytelling and the Power of the Body

by Safia Sahli Rejeb, La Manouba University, Tunisia,

Michael Hanne defines storytelling in his book *The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change* as

> associated with the exercise, in one sense or another, of power, of control. This is true of even the commonest and apparently most innocent form of storytelling in which we engage: that almost continuous internal narrative monologue which everyone maintains, sliding from memory, to imaginative reworking of past events... Such internal storytelling is the radar-like mechanism we use to constantly scan the world around us, [the mechanism] by which we give order to, and claim to find order in, the data of experience. If we cannot narrate the world in this everyday manner, we are unable to exercise even the slightest degree of control, or power, in relation to the world." (48)

And J.M. Coetzee, the South African writer, views his/story as "nothing but a certain kind of story that people agree to tell each other."(4) Viewed from this angle, the story is nothing less than the framework that provides order to consciousness, the necessary condition for any type of control and power in the world. To "narrate the world" is to gain power and authority. If one takes into consideration that the story teller always writes from a position of authority, the "other" who is reduced to silence has to construct a language of his own. However, stories when written from a marginalised position often seem to push in the opposite direction, to undercut rather than solidify that sense of order. In Coetzee's *Foe,* Both Susan Barton and Friday, struggle to tell their own stories and deconstruct the Robinson myth of imperial masculinity held by both Mr Foe and Cruso, the agents of patriarchal control.

Susan Barton and Friday as margins use the power of their own bodies rather than language in an attempt to narrate their own stories. Susan, the narrator, is an English woman on a quest for her lost daughter. She is shipwrecked on a desert island, saved by a tongue-less black man (Friday) and a European male dressed in monkey skins (Cruso) whom she becomes his subject. Her narrative is considered as defiance to the hegemony of male consciousness in the Robinson myth, yet she feels constantly baffled by her impotence to make sense of her own story. When she returns to England, she decides to narrate her own story and get it published, and for this she asks the famous writer, Mr Foe, to help her. Yet she has to cope with three narratives: Cruso's, Friday's and her own. The idea of writing her own adventures comes from the captain who rescued them: "There has never before, to my knowledge, been a female castaway of our nation. It will

cause a great stir" he adds "the booksellers will hire a man to set your story to rights, and put in a dash of color too, here and there," (40) and this is exactly what happens in *Foe.*

Mr Foe takes the initiative to write her story and manipulates it. This corruption and "embellishment" of truth has come to be known to the reader as the historical *Robinson Crusoe*. The process of putting the story into print and the addition of a "dash of color" leads to the central conflict and theme of the novel that of authority and authorship, as she refuses any intrusion in her own narrative. She decides to give it the title of "*The Female Castaway. Being a True Account of a Year Spent on a Desert Island. With Many Strange Circumstances Never Hitherto Related*"(67) The choice of the title reminds the reader of what has actually become known as Daniel Defoe's novel "*The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner"*

The corruption of the story and "embellishment" of truth is at the origin of their struggle. Indeed, Foe's name is very telling of the conflict between these two author-characters: a foe is an opponent or in fact a number of opposing forces. Foe succeeds in retelling Defoe's novel through Susan's, never revealed before, version that revises the Western male hegemonic discourse. This leads me to question the real circumstances of the story of a female castaway, transformed into a male narrative that does not allow any female adventuress to put into print her own version of truth.

Though given the power of speech to tell her story, Susan lacks the "art" of writing therefore she is silenced and obliged to give way to Foe and his own version of her tale. In spite of Susan's desperate resistance to any untrue addition in her own version of story, such as the cannibals and pirates episodes that the reader recognizes as true in Defoe's

published work, she has to surrender:

> The story I desire to be known by is the story of the island. You call it an episode, but I call it a story in its own right. It commences with my being cast away there and concludes with the death of Cruso and the return of Friday and myself to England, full of new hope... Once you proposed to supply a middle by inventing cannibals and pirates. These I would not accept because they were not the truth. Now you propose to reduce the island to an episode in the history of a woman in search in search of a lost daughter. This too I reject. (165)

This struggle for mastery on Susan's part should not be seen a *defacto/ fait accompli.* Susan plans to play the Muse to Foe's pen and use her body to beget her own story. She even tells Friday to "pay no attention" to her and Foe in bed as "it is all for the good"(137). The "good" seems to be her attempt to control the act of creation and beget her own story. In a very telling episode, , that could be compared to a thriller movie of a vampire who survives by sucking its preys' blood, Susan and Foe have a give-and take sexual encounter that displays a wrestle over the act of creation. It establishes Foe's parasitical nature as well as confirms Susan's struggle to maintain authority over her tale.

> Foe kissed me again, and in kissing gave such a sharp bite to my lip that I cried out and drew away. But he held me close and I felt him suck the wound. 'This is my manner of preying on the living,' he murmured.

Then he was upon me, and I might have thought myself in Cruso's arms again; for they were the same of life, and heavy in the lower body, though neither was stout; and their way with a woman too was much the same. I closed my eyes, trying to find my way back to the island, to the wind and wave-roar; but no, the island was lost, cut off from me by a thousand leagues of watery waste.

I calmed Foe; 'permit me,' I whispered_ 'there is a privilege that comes with the first night, that I claim as mine.' So I coaxed him till he lay beneath me. Then I drew off my shirt and straddled him (which he may not seem easy, with a woman). 'This is the manner of the Muse when she visits her poets,' I whispered and felt some of the listlessness go out of my limbs. 'A bracing ride,' said Foe afterwards_ 'My very bones are jolted; I must catch my breath before we resume.' 'It is always a hard ride when the Muse pays her visits,' I replied_ 'She must do whatever lies in her power to father her offspring.' (140)

This instance of sexual description is remarkable due to the power relationship played within it. Although itself it appears as a biological and physical activity, it is set so deeply within the larger context of human relations that it serves as a charged microcosm of the values to which culture subscribes. Indeed, it does "serve as a model of sexual politics on an individual or personal plane" as Kate Millet affirms in *Sexual Politics*.

The transition from such a scene of intimacy to a wider context of political reference is the core of the conflict. In introducing the term "sexual politics," Millet believes that one must first answer the inevitable question "can the relationship between the sexes be viewed in a political light at all?" The answer is in the way one understands patriarchy as an institution that perpetuates techniques of control and domination. Therefore, one has a working definition of how "politics" are conceived in the sexual encounter between Susan Barton and Foe as well as with Cruso. According to Millet the term "politics" refers to

> power-structured relationships, arrangements, whereby one group of people is controlled by another. Our system of sexual relationship must point out that the situation between the sexes now, and throughout history, is a case of that phenomenon Max Weber defined as *herrschaft*, a relationship of dominance and subordinance. chap 2

The strong image conveyed from the lengthy and violent struggle is the feminine's subjugation to the masculine hegemonic domination. Furthermore, the link that is drawn between Cruso and Foe represents the patriarchal domination of often marginalised women, and, their limited access to narration because of their woman-ess. In her response to hegemonic masculinity, Susan straddles Foe and finally takes on the phallic role which is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man. Susan is a pawn in a patriarchal game as she observes herself that "Some people are born storytellers; I, it would seem, am not" (81)

Begetting stories is a hard as well as energy-consuming labour. After Foe's vampire like frenzy is over, Susan is able to take the role of the Muse. She imagines herself "mother

and begetter" (126) novel thus providing, him with the necessary material to translate her thoughts into a piece of fiction, what later Foe himself confesses as "a bracing ride." (140) The role of the Muse that she assumes, in begetting her story leads her to the fallacy that she has won the struggle for power and reach a godlike position.

Susan's ability to temporarily gain control of her story from Foe, when she mounts him as the muse, has led to the flow of his pen for the first time in months, because when she awakens the following morning, she finds him busy at his desk with his back to her, spinning her story, and putting into print the historical version that we, readers, have come to know. The assumed role of "mother and begetter" leads Susan to temporarily hope that she has finally achieved her goal of getting Foe write her own story, but Foe can only write his own story and the violent image of Foe's sucking her blood reminds the reader that he ultimately appropriated her own story for his own interests, instead of allowing her to speak through him as Susan had wished.

In order to detach herself from the domination of Foe, Susan tries to summon her memories of the island but "the island was lost, cut off from me by a thousand leagues of watery waste" (139) Though Susan is in control of the writing process, yet she has to surrender to the Foe and his own version of her true accounts-story.

In the final section of the novel, which consists of two endings, the narrator enters the lodgings of foe and finds Susan and Foe, who are dead, lying in bed side by side, in the second part of the short final section the narrator reenters the house and depicts Susan's head in the "crook" of Foe's arm" (155) instead of pointing out that they are "not touching". It is not by chance that Coetzee introduces this altered detail. David Attwell gives an

explanation to it, by considering as a "casual embrace" which symbolises "the defacto, unspoken collusion of the male tradition with its unauthorised female counterpart, as seen from this, the colonial-postcolonial perspective" (115) One would not consider that embrace so casual if one keeps in mind the power struggle and antagonism between Susan, the female castaway, and Mr Foe, the colonial writer over mastery. In the end Susan's story has been lost to her, with the image of her head lying in the "crook" of his arm, implying the thieving of her own version of truth.

In *Foe,* the novel, Daniel Foe seems not to care of Susan and Friday's stories at all, this is considered as one of the various displays of power relations in colonialism and the historical imposition to who will write, and who will be silenced. Yet throughout the whole narrative, Friday's silence is a recurrent problem. As Susan mentions from the onset, "To tell my story and be silent on Friday's tongue is so better than offering a book for sale with pages in it quietly left empty. Yet the only tongue that can tell Friday's story is the tongue that he has lost." (67) Later in the novel, She reminds Foe that "if the story seems stupid, that is only because it so doggedly holds its silence. The shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday's tongue." (117) There is no doubt that Susan is aware of the power of words to either liberate or oppress so she rejects the representational colonization of Foe.

Friday has no tongue and therefore is prevented from ever telling his story. Friday's story is literally cut off. Cruso claims Friday was maimed by the slave traders who captured him, but Susan speculates after Cruso's death that he might have done it himself to keep Friday under his control. Susan thinks that Fridays "lost tongue might stand not only

for itself but for more atrocious mutilation." (119) Friday's muteness and lack of language has been often regarded by critics as a sign of Coetzee's refusal to speak for the blacks' traumatic experience. Dereck Attridge shares this view and quotes a revealing interview with Coetzee in which he asked about the reasons behind Friday's cut tongue. The answer came as follows: "Nobody seems to have sufficient authority to say for sure how it is that Friday has no tongue." (89) Richard Begam explains Friday's silence from "a cultural standpoint, even if black speech were possible, we would not be able to "hear" it because white writing-despite its claims to objectivity- is racially motivated." (117-118) For David Attwell, the end of the novel *Foe* acknowledges the history of Friday but withholds it.(115) When the narrator "I" pries open Friday's mouth and gets "a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through his body… passes through the cabin, through the wreck… runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth." (157)

Friday's "withholding" – the power not to have his story told- is strongly echoed in Spivak's article "Can the subaltern Speak?" where she explains that in order to hear the subaltern voice, one should try to find a "subaltern subject-effect". And this is what the end of the narrative refers to by what the text refuses to say. She considers this refusal to speak, a silence that empowers the "other". Actually this idea is made explicit in her article "Theory in the Margin" when she focuses on Friday's withholding power, by implying that he could tell his story but not through language since it has been proven as the most potent instrument of control. "He is the guardian at the margin who will not inform" (190)

One can argue that in the course of the novel, Friday achieves a sort of freedom and

articulation, despite the fact the novel itself refutes a closure in which the reader knows Friday's story. Free from language as an instrument of cultural control, Friday chooses to tell his story not in the traditional way, through words. He rather creates a physical experience, a language of the body. On the island, he sprinkles petals and flower buds onto a particular part of the reef. He dances, "holding out his arms and spinning in a circle, his eyes shut" in foe's robe. The meanings of his gestures are beyond textual representation/implications. They seem to be saying that words are useless as they carry the weight of their own cultures. He is the sole possessor of understanding which gives him some control.

The complexity of this mysterious character is outstanding despite the efforts to penetrate his sphere, and know his story. Friday whose body "is its own sign" is a good example of the marginalised resistance to the Western attempts of mis/representation. Coetzee's use of the mut(e)ilated and suffering body is meant to give power to "the body". He acknowledges this in an interview with Attwell

> If I look back over my own fiction I see a simple standard erected. That standard is the body. Whatever else, the body is the not "that which is not", and the proof that it is the pain that it feels. The body with its pain becomes a counter to the endless trials of doubt... Let me put it baldly: in South Africa it is not possible to deny the authority of suffering and therefore of the body... And let me again be unambiguous: it is not that one grants the authority of the suffering body: the suffering body takes this authority: that is its power. To use other words, its power is undeniable. (248)

Foe's "embellishment" of Susan's story as well as his lack of concern with Friday's is a testimony of the necessity of creating a space which represents nothing and could very well not say anything the white reader, raised on the Western canon, could understand or decipher. Coetzee should have left blank pages at the end of the novel, which would narrate the true story of black people. However, it seems that the question raised by the postcolonial writer is the following: in the attempts of representation, whose story is told if one takes into account that the story teller always writes from a position of some authority. And it is this authority that Coetzee challenges even if it his own.

Friday's description in the first closure Friday is not dead unlike Susan and Foe. Yet he is barely alive and his body is tortured, "a scar like a necklace, left by a rope or chain." (155) The narrator has to lay on the floor side by side to Friday, in order to be able to hear what comes out of his mouth, "the faintest faraway roar... of waves in a seashell... the chirp of sparrows, the thud of a mattock, the call of a voice. From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island." (154), yet he is not given any meaningful significance. It reminds the reader of Susan and Foe's position, and consequently a tight connection is established between the unknown narrator's effort to tell Friday's story on the one hand and Foe's effort to tell Susan's on the other hand. However no one in the novel is capable to represent Friday's history although one has to acknowledge that he has one.

The reader discovers the hole in Friday's story in the first closure of the narrative, while he is invited to pay a visit to the realm of literary history to discover the eighteenth century novel, *Robinson Crusoe,* and it becomes easy to detect the violence of the colonial experience. In this episode, Friday is depicted as a black man bearing the scar of slavery,

"I tug his woolly hair, and finger the chain about his throat." With three hundred years distance from Defoe's narrative, the Manichean binary divisions of male/female, black/white relationships are still omnipresent.

When the "I" narrator starts reading the manuscript of De/foe, the opening paragraph is reiterated, then it shifts to Friday's "black space", from a trip into Crusoe's island into the "waters" where Friday cast the flower petals. Friday's realm is slightly different from the previous, this time Susan and the dead captain are found dead, "fat as pigs", and in the corner, Friday lies half buried, barely alive with a chain still wrapped around his throat. The reader notices the battered, tortured body. The narrator tries to ask him about the reason of his being there, urging him to speak:" But this is not a place of words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday". (157) The home of Friday is a place where words cannot be produced and all that is left is pure body. So if Friday cannot be spoken for neither can be kept silent, Coetzee must find some middle ground. The solution to this dilemma is to imply speech, imply a story that Friday could tell.

Two conclusions could be drawn from the quotations: first, Coetzee affirms the suffering of the South African body as a counter memory to the official enlightened Western narrative, a body that encloses the struggle against oppression. Furthermore, he asserts that in Friday's home, this latter does neither need to speak nor to be spoken for

> His mouth opens. From inside comes a slow stream, without breath, without

interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin,

through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and

southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my

eyelids, against the skin of my face. (157)

The "slow stream" that comes out of his mouth disrupts any signification and resists any interpretation, so that a different type of "truth" comes out to the forefront, the meaning of tortured bodies. Friday whose body "is its own sign" is a good example of the marginalised resistance to the Western attempts of mis/representations. At this point, Coetzee's use of the mut(e)ilated and suffering body is meant to give power to the body and therefore language as a means of communication collapses. Coetzee himself offers one of the strongest interpellations in an interview with David Attwell

> Friday is mute, but Friday does not disappear, because Friday is body… whatever else, the body is not "that which is not," and the proof that it *is* the pain that it feels… Let me put it baldly: In South Africa it is not possible to deny the authority of suffering and therefore of the body. It is not possible, not for logical reasons, not for the ethical reasons …but for political reasons, for reasons of power. (248)

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Magnetic Forces

couldn't forget the flood
in the shadow of the sun
the streets of fever
behind a two-way mirror
stolen and dumb

kept trying desperately
to get to the place
magnetic forces like
tornadoes on the
wrong side of Mars
where life heaves in
a dry pool a
headache of bridges
and war ruins

—Timothy Collins

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess **Carving #3 : Detail** **Moose Horn**

Distilling Genocide Into Drama: Adaptation of Holocaust and Slave Narratives to the Stage

by Ruby C. Berryman, White Mountains, New Hampshire

The atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust at the hands of the German Nazis, is a story well documented in every form of literature and film. This is also true of the Holocaust of African Blacks during the Middle Passage and their subsequent Slavery in America. Over six million Jews were exterminated during the Holocaust and over one hundred million Blacks died during Middle Passage. Diamond's Slavery drama, *Harriet Jacobs, A Play* and Miller's Holocaust play, *Playing for Time* are unique to their respective canons. Both plays are adaptations from the narratives of two women who themselves were anomalies. Miller's play dramatizes the life of Fania Fenelon, who played with the war's only women's orchestra in Auschwitz. There were no other women's orchestras in the many Nazi death camps and she lived to write a first-hand account of her unusual story in her book, *Playing for Time*, Fania's book "traces [her] degradation and dehumanization in Auschwitz through her resurrection like a phoenix from the ashes by way of the salvific power of art" (Plunka 58).

Diamond's play is based on the life of Harriet Jacobs, who lived through and escaped the atrocity of American Slavery. She survived to write her memoir, *Harriet Jacobs: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. While there are several first-hand accounts of American Slavery by men, this is the only known female first person account of Slavery written by the slave herself. Unlike other slave narratives, Harriet Jacobs also, "introduced a new dimension to the slave narrative when she combined into its tradition formal elements from the so called sentimental novel in order to dramatize her theme of virtue under siege" (Jacobs vi). This book became a powerful testament during her lifetime as it, "enlisted the sympathies of the reader by making it impossible to ignore the dual nature of the brutality and injustice inflicted on female slaves that trampled on their humanity and their gender at once" (Jacobs vii). Both these women had the courage to be the first to write their stories in their own voices.

The two women begin their stories as the property of men. Harriet's black skin automatically made her property and as soon as Fania's numbered tattoo was branded on her, she became chattel also. Like Anne Frank, Fania endured the inhumanity of the Holocaust. However, Anne Frank did not live to bear personal witness to it. She died just a few yards from Fania at Bergen-Belsen. In her play, Diamond insists that Harriet, who lived to tell her tale like Fania, be acknowledged as these other heroic women for her endurance of the American Holocaust of Slavery. She calls on us to consider this in her introduction to *Harriet Jacobs, A Play*, "I want Harriet Jacobs to exist, theatrically, alongside Anne Frank and Joan of Arc because she eserves to" (Diamond xv). These stories are written to bear witness to the atrocity and to dramatize them onstage gives them an opportunity to impact viewers in the present in a way that other forms of presentation cannot. As Elinor Fuchs notes, "In the very act of re-presenting the annihilation of the human community, then the theatre itself offers a certain fragile potentiality for re-

creation." (Plunka 16).

In adapting these stories, Miller and Diamond strive to overcome the challenges of writing for the theatre of atrocity which dramatizes incidents of torture, cruelty, degradation and/or death of the human person on the stage. There are three considerable challenges to this type of theatre. The first challenge is avoiding sentimentality and victimization. Both are employed often when the Holocaust or Slavery is presented on stage. This trivializes the atrocity and alienates the audience. The result is to eliminate rather than encourage a new discussion about genocide. Plunka offers Magid Hoagland's review of the 1997 Broadway production of Anne Frank as testimony to the problem: "Despite the changes, this is still the same sentimental play about a luminous, flirtatious, idealistic Anne Frank that made the critics swoon 40 years ago" (Plunka 105). Many people now consider discussing the Holocaust or Slavery as irrelevant since the two historical events have passed. The second challenge then is how to make a historical event resonate in the present. And, the third problem is that these topics are not naturally engaging on or off the stage. Therefore, when adapting these genocides for the theatre of atrocity, playwrights must find a way to do the following: 1) distill atrocity in a way that overcomes the natural resistance audiences have to engaging in these two painful and sometimes volatile subjects; 2) write originally about the historical event in a way that engages current audiences and 3) make drama out of subjects that are distinctly non-entertaining.

This essay examines how Miller and Diamond take up these challenges by employing very different ways of manipulating the dramatic elements of character, dialogue, structure, and action. Using these elements, they generate complex characterization, achieved through juxtaposition and doubling and create stylistic approaches to time and setting through spectacle. To dramatize ethical issues inherent in the Holocaust and Slavery, the playwrights use individual characters to personify moral opposites and then place them in ethical conflicts with the other characters. Through these methods, Miller and Diamond have crafted dramas that bear witness to the genocides of the Holocaust and Slavery which engage current audiences in remembrance of these past atrocities.

The most compelling reason for staging these atrocities is to bear witness to them. To bear witness to these tragedies cleanses the heart and mind of the survivors and offers a chance for spectators to be living witnesses and empathizers to an event that they did not and cannot participate in. Death camp survivor, Fania Fenelon and former slave, Harriet Jacobs both wanted to bear witness to the world for their comrades and ancestors who did not survive the evils of the Holocaust and Slavery. By dramatizing these stories for the stage, Miller and Diamond provide a way for new audiences to witness this inhumanity. As Gene Plunka notes in his book, *Holocaust Drama: The Theatre of Atrocity:* "The immediacy of theatre affects us emotionally, subliminally, and intellectually in a direct way that few other art forms can duplicate. This type of theatre can pay homage to the victims, educate audiences, induce an empathetic response from the audience, raise moral and ethical questions for discussion/debate, and draw lessons from history" (Plunka i).

In essence, the ongoing justice of the stage is far more gratifying than the one time guilty verdict of any courtroom for Holocaust criminals or the one time lofty speech of the Emancipation Proclamation. These decrees instantly become the history of the past while "[T]he theatre exists in real time with the audience as witnesses who experience

stories that touch on something recognizably human" (Rovit 2). While the playwrights employ decidedly different methods, Miller—a linear, traditional style –and Diamond—a non-linear, theatrical one, both try to design dramas that will continue to bear witness to the stories of dehumanization for future audiences.

A dramatic technique used frequently by both playwrights to bear witness is direct address which immediately breaks down barriers between the characters and the audience. Direct address demands the audience's attention as participants not just spectators. Miller, in *Playing for Time*, uses direct address by his heroine, Fania, to bear witness to the audience. When she addresses the audience, she behaves like a one woman Greek chorus commenting on the action. At the opening of Miller's drama he writes: "FANIA from her position on the floor, speaking to the audience" (Miller 5). Through Miller's short stage direction, Fania invites the audience to join her on the floor of the boxcar and become living witnesses to what they see and hear and, ultimately, to judge the perpetrators. But soon after our heroine invites us on the journey with her, "Four KAPOS rush onstage. They wear striped pajama-like uniforms and carry runcheons with which they strike out at ALL around them" (Miller 11). By hiding the KAPOS in the audience, Miller involuntarily takes away its solidarity with the boxcar passengers and makes the silent spectators complicit in the violence the Nazis' wardens have just inflicted upon the helpless victims. While most of the Holocaust violence is alluded to offstage, this onstage violence at the top of the play signals a rapid decline to inhumanity. A similar moment occurs when the heads of Fania and Marianne are shorn onstage. Instantly, the females are divested of their status as women and humiliated right in front of the audience. The audience bears witness to the first step in the process of their degradation.

Fania address the audience again later in Act I after she has endured one year at Auschwitz. She tells the audience, "It was getting harder and harder to look out the window. I was having to force myself…" (Miller 33). This suggests that Fania is struggling in her effort to maintain her Holocaust memories so that she can bear witness if she lives. In this moment, Miller uses her monologue to expose her internal feelings which cannot be seen onstage. He uses direct address to underline pivotal moments which gives each monologue added importance. Such a moment comes at the end of Act II. When Fania addresses the audience this time it is on the occasion of the hanging of the two escaped lovers, Mala and Edek. Though at first it might seem like exposition, in this audience address Miller actually uses the moment to reclaim the dignity of the whole camp. Fania says, "And suddenly, as the two of them were dropped and swung from the ropes, someone in the crowd removed his cap. Then another did, and slowly a sea of shaven heads was bared" Miller 76-77). This is an act of collective humanity and resistance. By the hearing of it, the audience participates in the solidarity of the moment as witnesses to the crime and can pass present day judgment on the perpetrators.

Fania's final audience address is given after Alma, their orchestra conductor, is killed. The play is almost over as evidenced by the sounds of the Allied bombs heard over the camp. Fania describes the orchestra's final concert at Auschwitz where they played as part of Doctor Mendel's experiments on the insane, "As we played, they were one by one being carefully wheeled out to the gas chamber, some of them still waving their arms to the music" (Miller 82). This is a moment of complicity for the orchestra as they were aware of the impending gassing. Under the incongruity of it all, Paulette, an orchestra member, "finally fainted on top of her cello" (Miller 82). Through Miller's use

of direct address, the audience bears witness to the atrocity with Fania and shares in her powerlessness and that of the orchestra, unable to save the helpless individuals.

In *Harriet Jacobs, A Play,* Diamond has Harriet directly address the audience often, particularly when she is imparting exposition. As in Miller's Holocaust play, this technique allows the audience to be present day witnesses to the past atrocity of Slavery. But Diamond expands the level of audience's participation. Her heroine pleads with the onlookers to consider, not just the atrocity itself, but the continuing effect of the inhumanity. By focusing on the aftermath of the incident, she illuminates the additional and ongoing abuse to those who were forced to experience the cruelty first hand and then later heal or bury the victims. Harriet explains:

> But you see, this is not what I want tell you. None of this is new to your sensitive ears. It is how you must put your feet in the shoes of the person who has cut the burnt man down, or in the shoes of the wife who must tend his burns or bury him, or the children who bring him water and smell the burning flesh, so he stay alive through his torture. (Diamond 43)

Harriet urges the audience to bear witness not just as bystanders but as empathetic community member of the slave community to the victims of the ongoing cruelty.

While the play is built around the slave life of the female slave, Harriet, Diamond successfully uses direct address through various ensemble slave characters to flesh out the whole of plantation life. In this way, Diamond explores the complexity of a slave life without cluttering the main story with peripheral characters. Through these momentary break outs, she meters out the inhumanity and injustices born by the slaves without badgering the audience or belaboring the slave issue itself. In this way, Diamond keeps

from alienating the audience allowing them to digest the whole of Slavery in the small pieces of the monologues such as this one from the slave Isaac:

> Had nebber seen dis kind a place 'fore I come here. Work for the Montgomerys two counties over. They like most White folks: a small house, a shed, an' two or three of us in a bac room offa de kitchen. We's all hungry all de time, not jes' us what work there, but the White folks whats owns us too. Three years past, a drought kills off the Montgomerys' wheat crop. First they sell my four-year ol' girl, then three o' the five chickens, then my woman, then the mule what pulled de plow. I can pull good as the mule an' use my hands. I don't get solt here, 'til affer de Montgomerys' baby dies when de missus' milk dry up. It better here…don't know hunger no more, an' always hab shoes on my feet. (Diamond 53)

This monologue offers a multi-layered insight into the dehumanization of slaves and the oppressive uncertainty of their lives without resorting to melodrama. The concise, matter of fact structure of the monologue desentimentalizes the moment and allows the focus to be on the content of what the slave imparts. Though his English is poor, Isaac paints a vivid picture of his plantation experience. He first illuminates the rarely mentioned fact that not all slave holders were rich with large plantations. Smaller and/or struggling plantations would have fewer resources to spare for slaves yet need them the most to be competitive. And when hard times hit, all property is subject to sale including your daughter and her mother. As a black man Isaac is the last to go because he can do the work of a man and mule—how convenient. Using the format of a litany, Diamond succinctly equates the value of Isaac and his family to that of the farm animals.

The technique serves to depersonalize the incident which captures the essence of slaves as chattel and bears witness to the economics of the inhumanity.

As in the Holocaust, women of Slavery were also particularly vulnerable to inhumane treatment. Harriet, herself explains, "Women are considered of no value unless they continually increase their owner's stock. They are put on par with animals. One master shot a woman through the head who had run away and been brought back to him. No one called him to account for it" (Jacobs 44). Diamond dramatizes the inhumane treatment of slaves as presented in Mary's monologue to the audience when she describes being given as a present to a family member of the Master:

> Massa's brother came up to visit wit' his nephew. His nephew jes' turn thirteen. I fifteen. Massa an' his brother decide I what dey gone give de nephew fo his birfday. Not to have, jes' to use. I gone spare you de res. (Diamond 36)

Here, a fifteen year old girl is being loaned and used like a horse. Through Diamond's clever use of monologue, Diamond exposes the matter of fact way that cruelty was applied and the little regard for the life, dignity and womanhood of the female slave. By doing so, it encourages the audience to consider the status of women in current genocides and how easily the atrocities perpetuated on them are being dismissed today. Both playwrights use direct address to invite the audience's participation and to generate a current response from present day witnesses. It is this communion between past victims and present witnesses give the women's stories the power to bear perpetual witness outside the time and space of the original event.

Miller and Diamond also employ direct address to create complexity in Fania and Harriet's characters. In both plays, the heroines are the first to speak and this signifies

ownership of the story and each woman stakes immediate claim for it on the stage. In the Miller play, none of the other boxcar passengers address the audience, only Fania. The complexity of her character begins to develop when she speaks for the group and shares their collective anxiety with the audience: "We still weren't sure what was happening" (Miller 5). Then, without hesitation, she shares her food and water to the other passengers, "She offers the old MAN a drink and he gratefully takes his pill with it" (Miller 6). This is one of her many acts of kindness in the boxcar that foreshadows Fania's leadership and humanistic tendencies. Kimberly Cook acknowledges that Fania's motivations are essentially humanitarian, not self-serving: "Fania spends most of her time on the train and in the camp forming attachments to other prisoners; her consistent goal is not physical survival, it is connection" (Plunka 61). Through her charity and connection to others, Miller sets Fania up as a sympathetic character. Her emerging complexity as a character is evidenced by her easy interaction with the passengers from a wide variety of backgrounds and social classes, age and gender. Her leadership in engaging the audience for this diverse group in their tentative circumstances suggests a character that will be able to navigate the Nazi world and survive the chaos to bear witness to their collective struggle through the Holocaust.

In *Harriet Jacobs*, Harriet offers the audience the benefit of her knowledge and warns the spectators not to rest too comfortably on what they think they know: "I promise that you may believe you have heard it, you may believe that you know this, and I suggest that it is slightly beyond knowing because still, I hear the stories, I live the stories, and I do not yet understand" (Diamond 6). In this first direct address to the audience, Diamond reveals Harriet as a thoughtful, self-reflective and observant character. She has already

analyzed her story from the spectators' point of view and suspects that they will make certain standard assumptions about Slavery and dismiss her. Therefore, Harriet urges her audience to set aside any presumptions and pay attention her story as she conveys it onstage.

Like Miller, Diamond sets Harriet up as a sympathetic character. She first endows Harriet with literacy, intelligence and insight—traits rarely associated with slaves. Then, Diamond reminds the audience of her subhuman status and physically confirms it by confining her in: "a crude wooden shed, about eight feet high" (Diamond 5), a physical prison within the societal prison of Slavery. By expanding Harriet's character in one way and constricting it in others, Diamond develops a complex and sympathetic character and, through direct address, invites the audience to receive and engage her. Both Miller and Diamond create complexity through the use of direct address by endowing Fania and Harriet with the language and actions of heroines rather than victims. As such, the audience is willing to endure the harshness of their stories and root for their triumph.

In Diamond's play, characters take on additional complexity through doubling. As a major stylistic choice, Diamond insists that performers in Harriet Jacobs are all Black, and will play a range of characters both Black and White. Diamond notes: "It is imperative that all cast members are Black. All "White" characters are represented by Black ensemble members, donning skeletal white hoopskirts, bonnets, top hats, and the like" (Diamond 2). Through this doubling, a kind of reverse blackface is created. White characters are more like presentations of characters rather than developing characters in the play. On stage, their development is halted in a way that reflects the halted development of Blacks in Slavery. Visually, more drama is created as these changes between Black and White characters occur.

Diamond's characters are constructed not just as doubles but with a duality of purpose. For example, Black men become White men, Black women become White women and this physically constructs the idea of equality onstage. To accomplish this elegantly, Diamond condenses the Whites down to a few stock characters: the Massa, the Missus, Samuel Treadwell, a neighboring plantation owner, and a couple of White ladies. The Black players ultimately appropriate the entire White race and, therefore, the main narrative which is then told from an entirely Black perspective. Diamond's choice essentially reflects the narrative of American Slavery—condensing all Blacks into a single subhuman category, designating a few key groups, appropriating all of their value and explaining the world from an all White perspective. These stereotypes of caricatures of plantation life function to distance the audience's spectatorship because they are not real people. Through the use of doubling, there is no actual white face that the audience recognizes and, therefore, they are not complicit in the atrocity. The audience is now in a position to collectively empathize with the ongoing atrocities of Slavery as each is revealed through this dual presentation and purpose of Diamond's characters.

Diamond also uses the dual vernacular of code-switching to develop complexity within Harriet's character. This double speak of Slavery authenticates Harriet's character and underscores the dual nature of the two worlds of Slavery—the Black and the White, the literate and illiterate. By juxtaposing the two styles—proper English versus improper—Diamond illustrates Harriet's ability to navigate between "the more casual slave vernacular of the time and the formal language used in her writing and when addressing the audience" (Diamond 2). To the audience she speaks properly: "The only

real escape is the time that I spend in the loving cocoon of Grandmother's kitchen…it is the warm embrace of unconditional love. The comfort of my steady Tom and Grandma's incomparable sass…" (Diamond 16). Then, with Mary she slips into the slave vernacular: "You a mess. See, this what I mean. These girls, what I seen in the field, was playin' like they do before they get like us, an' let a man make them jealous" (Diamond 23). In this way, Diamond highlights Harriet's literacy which creates for her an identity outside of the confines of Slavery. Whenever Harriet switches to the vernacular of the audience, it is an opportunity for them to witness the complexity of her character and a call for them to take her story beyond the confines of the theatre.

Both playwrights reveal complexity through the interaction of the other characters with Fania and Harriet. Miller constructs Fania's character within her humanist perspective, creating a generous and kind character that shares her hope, her music and, most practically, her food:

> FANIA. Anything I have, you're all welcome to and I hope you'll do the same for me if I'm desperate.
>
> ETALINA. But Fania, we can't very well share everything.
>
> PAULETTE. You don't mean share with the Poles, too, though.
>
> ELZVIETA. Well, they just want to feel superior… They're more stupid than evil.
>
> FANIA. Then we should try to teach them. (Miller 29-30)

The Poles are spared by the Nazis as Gentiles which makes them enemies to the other orchestra girls but, Fania, nonetheless, continues to treat them as human beings without regard to their race or religion.

To illustrate the complexity of Harriet's character, Diamond juxtaposes Harriet's behavior with those of the stock White characters. Harriet's ability to navigate the disparity between what her character wants (i.e.: life, freedom, personhood) and the base motivations of the stock White characters (i.e.: submission, sex, control) demonstrates her complexity as a character. Harriet, a slave girl of "fourteen to nineteen" years old, is the victim of two White plantation owners who pursue her sexually. Her master, Mr. Norcom, is "fifty to sixty-five" and Sawyer, a neighboring plantation owner is, "in his thirties" (Diamond 2-3). The age of Mr. Norcom and his relentless pursuit of young Harriet easily indicts him as a perverse, selfish and unsympathetic character. Harriet tells Mary of her repulsion to him: "He older than Grandma and smell like death" (Diamond 39). Although he owns her, he wants to be: "received with open arms" (Diamond 40) by Harriet. Harriet responds to Mr. Norcom's request with, "…I should die first" (Diamond 40). By her response, Harriet proves her character to be one with integrity and virtue in contrast to the base example of Mr. Norcom's character actions.

Sawyer is also old enough to be Harriet's father and intentions are purely selfish as well. In view of his exploitation of Harriet's compromised gender, racial, social status, he, too, is a villain. His actions are more subtle but just as coercive: "Got a new filly, a little chocolate and blond palomino. Maybe I can show you sometime. She's real gentle" (Diamond 42). Sawyer uses his status as White plantation owner strictly to fulfill his own sexual desires and his attention toward Harriet is illicit—taking of the young girl's virtue and illegal—tampering with another White plantation owner's property.

Despite her treatment from both White men, Harriet does not respond as a victim but with ingenuity and courage. Her character, in fact, elevates herself to the status of

heroine in a way that even the law cannot. She barters with Sawyer based upon their previous sexual relationship to facilitate her freedom. She asks him to send letters from the North to fool Master Norcom into thinking she has made it North. "I beg that you help me—perhaps in remembrance of pleasant times we have spent together…" (Diamond 59). The unscrupulous Sawyer readily agrees to dupe his neighbor. "I have always admired your cleverness…" (Diamond 59). Her character's moxie, cunning and perseverance frees her of Norcom's attentions and the bondage of Slavery. Through her calculated loss of virtue to Sawyer, she regains her dignity and takes charge of own life. Her manipulations of these men illustrate the complex nature of her character who finds power within a structure where she has none by law.

Mrs. Norcom's character demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between Black female slaves and the White women they serve. Diamond juxtaposes the autonomy that Harriet enjoys as a slave while Mrs. Norcom's life is unfulfilled and unempowered as the plantation owner's wife. This results in her feeling powerless around Harriet even though her social and legal status is greater. Thus, Mrs. Norcom hates Harriet and tries to hold her responsible for Mr. Norcom's unnatural attention toward her: "I will not have you skulking about with my husband. Understood?" (Diamond 29). The warning bears no weight since it is evident that Mrs. Norcom does not have the power to physically abuse Harriet the way other plantation wives do when she chides Harriet: "Maybe he'll [Mr. Norcom] finally give you the flogging you deserve" (Diamond 26) and yet Mr. Norcom himself tells Harriet, "She's nothing for you to worry about" (Diamond 39).

Harriet represents a double insult to Mrs. Norcom. First, the fact that a slave girl can decline her husband's sexual advances and she can't reduces her character's status

to that of victim. As Grandma explains, "That's why she so mean, can't lay down for rest 'fore he tryin to climb on top of her…" (Diamond 8). Secondly, Harriet's status as an untouchable slave, having a value beyond that of just property, is evidenced in Mr. Norcom's reaction to the request to buy Harriet from her beau and fellow slave, Tom. Mr. Norcom simply: "walks into the kitchen and throws the money into the fire…" (Diamond 28), fueling Mrs. Norcom's insecurity and hatred. And finally, when speaking, Mrs. Norcom uses incorrect grammar throughout the play: "You seein' that Black field nigga from the Stewart plantation?" (Diamond 26) and "That dirty little wench, act like she thinks she's better than I" (Diamond 39). This lack of literacy in a White woman further reduces her status in relation to Harriet whose English is impeccable when she wants it to be. The relationship between the two women expands the complexity of Harriet's character. It demonstrates her ability, as an enslaved black female, to navigate the dangerous interpersonal conflict between White women and Black female slaves that stem from the conflicting desires of White men and White women inherent in the institution of Slavery.

Diamond develops the complex nature of Harriet's character by building conflicting ethical behaviors between Harriet and the other characters. By contrasting the base motivations and actions of the stunted White stereotypes to the survival techniques of Harriet's character, Diamond offers a complex characterization of slave life that challenges the audience to bear witness to the lives of American slaves and to empathize with the complicated daily survival within the atrocity.

Miller and Diamond have very little in common in how they structure their respective adaptations. The Fenelon book, *Playing for Time*, starts with the liberation

of the camps as its prologue. However, Miller reverts to a strictly chronological, linear, realistic storyline as the basis for structure in his adaptation of her book both for television and for stage. This approach to the original text lends itself to emphasizing the harsh realities of the Holocaust and Miller has no compulsions about presenting them onstage. From the outset of his play, he has prisoners being stripped of their personal belongings, "the earrings, you Jew-shit!" (Miller 13) and their womanhood in the haircutting upon their arrival to Auschwitz in Act I: "The waiting line of women, as though all were being shorn, inhale with sorrow, fear and anger" (Miller 14).

Alone, the severity of the visuals and violence would alienate the audience. However, Miller builds structure through the music. From sounds to instruments to songs, the music is integral to the play. It lifts the linear structure and the musical cues move the plot forward. Miller begins the play with the music of the train like a sorrowful dirge of death. "In the darkness, there is the sound of a moving train over tracks, not very fast. This sound underlies the whole scene" (Miller 5). This simple sound effect functions as a musical score under the scene which dramatically elevates the scene. The first dramatic turning point generated by the music is when a BLOCKAWA, a female warden, appears yelling, "Attention! Does anyone know how to sing Madame Butterfly?" and Marianne points to Fania and shouts out, "She can" (Miller 18). It is this request for music that starts Fania and Marianne on their journey as two of the orchestra girls of Auschwitz.

The play is structured around the all female orchestra and their music is central to the drama of the play and to their characters' survival. Each instance of triumph or terror is associated with music or some element of it. Their music is a tangible sign in which they can hope. As long as the Nazis are willing to listen to their music, they survive. The

value of their privileged position in the orchestra and the centrality of the music to their survival become strikingly evident when the piano is rather unceremoniously removed at the start of Act II: "The orchestra looks on in silent terror as the piano is simply rolled out. ALL wonder if this is the end" (Miller 55). The orchestra is literally playing for time and this idea moves the plot forward with a palpable urgency. At any point, the music could literally stop and they would all be gassed. Alma, their conductor, warns Fania: "We will have to constantly raise our level of playing or I…I really don't know how long they will tolerate us" (Miller 48). The music supports Miller's linear structure like the notes between the lines on the sheet music so necessary for the orchestra's survival.

Music is central to both the joy and the degradation of the women. Structurally, it mirrors their plight since it, too, is held hostage by the Nazis. It is the unspoken dialogue of their solidarity. On the one hand, music is the women's triumph. Lotte exclaims upon hearing of the escape of two prisoners who are lovers, "The Wedding March! For Mala and Edek!" (Miller 68).Yet, the music is simultaneously degraded in significant ways. First, there is never any applause. Applause would honor the performance and, therefore, honor them as females and as Jews. The orchestra would play to and for their comrades who were on their way to degrading work and finally, for those on their way to die. As Shmuel, the repair man, confirms: "That's commandant's new idea…to play them into the gas" (Miller 39). Their music then heralds both hope and despair and Miller structures their survival of Holocaust through it.

While Miller's structure is decidedly realistic, he gives artistic license to the director to challenge the boundaries of realism through spectacle. Miller stresses that, although the play's setting is realistic, "there is no need to naturalize changes of costume or scene

[as] the play, in one sense is a demonstration, a quality that need in no way be disguised" (Miller 91). This approach brings the voice of the memoir writer fully alive onstage without the clutter of props and the business of set changes. "The crowded boxcar is indicated by the pressure of the actors upon each other" (Miller 90). Also, the sound of the moving train indicates motion and the dialogue reflects the setting so that the audience feels the movement of the trains. This is evidenced in Fania's exchange with the Boy Scout:

> FANIA. Can you tell our direction? Excuse me; I've forgotten your name.
>
> BOY SCOUT. Michael. We're going south. (The BOY SCOUT alerts to some change in the compass...)
>
> FANIA. Has it changed?
>
> BOY SCOUT. We've turned to the east. (Miller 8-9)

The mood of the car changes to apprehension upon the boy scout's announcement that they're now headed east: "The crowd gradually loses its normality, transforming its present postures. Some are standing to avoid the floor. Others seem alert and have energy. Some become unconscious one on top of the other" (Miller 10) and some die.

With a simple and realistic setting, Miller structures music and sound cues that create action and imply motion. He generates a sense of real people—people the audience could know—riding on the train. This technique heightens the audience's concern for the travelers so they join them on their journey. In this way, Miller gains the audience's commitment to the present and future of the riders passing through a historical event.

In *Harriet Jacobs, A Play,* Diamond discards the linear approach for Harriet's story and the result is a play with great theatricality. She builds structure physically through spectacle for a visual feast. She structures the play through integrated rhythmic movement, music and actor transformation. By using these elements, she creates a more fluid structure unencumbered by the confines of realistic presentation. Diamond notes, "It is important that some theatrical gesture (for example, putting on gloves or white skirts onstage) accompany the transforming of ensemble members into White characters" (Diamond 2). Once transformed, action necessarily moves to the newly created physical world. Diamond relies on the physicality of the performer, who embodies the narrative through a combination of rhythmic movement, music and onstage costume changes. The movement and physicality of the play emphasize the physical nature of slave labor and the work songs are organic to slave life. It is through these mechanisms that Diamond moves her play forward. When the players visually embody their White masters, it appears to the audience that the master has been appropriated by the slave. It is a slave uprising but without the violence. Through this integration, Diamond creates a high theatrical value within a minimalistic set. She constructs within the playing space living metaphors and the philosophical arguments are articulated by the characters through more than just their voices.

While Miller uses music to ground his play, Diamond uses music to expand the theatricality in her play. Even her basic use of music, such as in transitions, are much more theatrical. The work song transition that opens Act I, Scene 2 for example morphs into a "synchronized, highly choreographed, rhythmic movement" (Diamond 12). This style engages the audience and this combination compresses time and allows them to experience an entire work day in the life of a slave in a short period of time and then deliver the spectators into the present moment with Harriet. A realistic structure could

not accomplish this with the same economy and theatricality. In fact, it could be alienating to the audience in its harshness. Or, it might engender sentimentality from the audience rather than true empathy and they might, to Harriet's dismay, "incline their heads to the left and the right and say, Yes, I understand…and think no more of it" (Diamond 6). With highly dramatized scenes such as this one, the play avoids such sentimentality. The heightened theatricality engages the audience in the spectacle and, while doing so, bears witness to even the most degrading elements within the holocaust of Slavery.

The undercurrent of work and song imbedded throughout the play gives a voice to the oppressed. Diamond's use of voice to create musicality expands the theatricality of the piece. She uses the text that Harriet is reading to create a song through the, "ensemble voices layered in, turning the passage into a round robin…" (Diamond 25). In this way, Diamond presents the power of the slave to create something of value—music where there is nothing. This familiar form of song, ancient and modern at once, connects the audience to the distant holocaust of Slavery in our present time. Diamond structures her storytelling in a theatrical way that defeats the sentimentality common in dramas about victimization. This allows the audience access to the gruesome realities of Slavery without alienating them or resorting to melodrama for empathy. By doing so, Diamond deftly engages them as living witnesses to a past atrocity.

Physical violence and death are unavoidable when writing about the Holocaust and Slavery. In both plays the playwrights adopt the style of Greek drama in handling these issues. All of the atrocities take place off stage and the news is delivered by messenger. Shmuel, the handyman in *Playing for Time*, delivers a lot of the bad news about gassing and death. At Alma's funeral he bears the news about what happened to their orchestra leader, Alma and the fate of the hated KAPO Schmidt:

FANIA: What happened?

SHMUEL: Schmidt poisoned her at dinner.

FANIA. How do you know?

SHMUEL: They shot her this morning.

FANIA: Schmidt?...I heard those shots!

SHMUEL: Nobody was getting out if she couldn't. 'Specially a Jew. (Miller 75)

The exchange accomplishes, with brevity, the complete story of Alma's dinner with Schmidt, Schmidt's poisoning of Alma and the motivation for it and Schmidt's demise. These events, though important, do not move the action forward and would have taken up precious dramatic time as well as drawn the audience away from other important events, such as the allies landing nearby, which require a response from the characters.

Diamond often uses this method to relay instances of inhumane treatment of slaves to the audience. Through direct address, various plantation slaves recount the atrocities that are morally accepted and legally inflicted upon slaves. Using the Greek formula, Diamond can dramatize the inhumane beatings, the sexual exploitation of young black girls and murders that abound in Jacobs's autobiography without alienating the audience with the visceral nature of reenactment. While still offensive, these short summaries do not fatigue the audience as the long stories of torture might. Diamond captures the slave vernacular and makes use of its abbreviated cadence which offers a unique way of packing multiple periods of time and place in a short narrative. In this manner, Charlotte, a slave, chronicles the random and ongoing atrocities inflicted upon slaves and their children:

I born here. Dat mass, de doctor's daddy, was always after me, had me

too, 'cause I was der and dat's what dey could do. Missus din' like it. Affer my third baby come out lookin' mo like de massa din de mass hisself, she come to my cabin night affer de birf, an' takes im. Don' know if she kilt de baby or solt him. I think prob'ly kilt him 'cause none de house servants never could look me in de eyes affer dat. One day she jes' start ta beatin' me wiff a iron kettle rod. She sho woulda beat me to my deaf, loss my leff eye dat day, but de rod broke an' she had to stop…Later I get a whippin' 'cause some blood dripped on the mistress's silk skirts. Dey long dead now. (Diamond 15)

There can be no witness to others if they close their ears and eyes because a victim's life, such as Charlotte's, is too unbearable. Fortunately, Diamond mediates the atrocities of Slavery by structuring them through spectacle and Miller leavens the harshness of the Holocaust through music. By mastering the techniques of direct address, complex characterization, dialogue and character action, both playwrights keep the spectators watching, witnessing and remembering.

Both Miller and Diamond attempt to avoid sentimentality and victimization by making their heroines unsentimental people. Miller reveals Fania's lack of regard for religion early in his drama through her exchange with Marianne about being Jewish: "It never meant anything to me" says Marianne to which Fania replies, "Nor me" (Miller 7). Still, Miller uses Fania as the moral compass of the play. He rightly focuses on her morality as a humanist and not as a person of religious faith. Elzvieta observes of Fania: "… you have no ideology. You're satisfied just to be a person" (Miller 64). In this way, Miller avoids the sentimentality associated with religion and rightly constructs her ethical behavior on humanist not religious beliefs. However, Fania's humanistic values create division and threaten the solidarity of the entire orchestra and, thus, their survival. There is heated discourse between Fania and her comrades debating the humanity of the Nazi, Mandel. Fania insists: "She is human, Esther. Like you. And me" (Miller 42). Esther, in particular, remains dissatisfied and angry with Fania's humanistic tendencies throughout the play: "How can you still call them human?" (Miller 78).

Despite this, the girls look to Fania for leadership—all but Marianne. Miller creates tension with his ethical argument by showing its opposite. He personifies non-ethical behavior through Marianne, a young woman befriended by Fania on the train to Auschwitz. Her rapid decline into stealing and prostitution labels Marianne as an outsider to the other orchestra girls. Marianne's ethical behavior contrasts sharply with Fania's high personal integrity as evidenced by her refusal to prostitute herself for food: "I will not turn into an animal for a gram of margarine or a potato peel!" (Miller 29). This ethical conflict is why, "Fenelon's story was attractive to Miller—because it demonstrated how free will could prevail even in a concentration camp, where typically all moral judgments had to be suspended" (Plunka 58).

Fania chooses solidarity with the other women as her mechanism for survival and urges Marianne to take up this mantle as well: "We must have an aim" (Miller 17). Marianne, however, adopts the opposite position of self preservation, "I'm trying to survive!" (Miller 37). Miller began the juxtaposition of the behavior of Fania and Marianne with her uncontrollable need for food in the boxcar and Fania's restraint. He continues the divergence at the death camp to illustrate their opposing ethics which contrasts Fania's discipline and Marianne's sloth. In fact, Marianne's character comes to

symbolize the weakness of human flesh and lack of will power. Still, Fania tries to help Marianne regain her dignity and solidarity within the group of women, "Maybe you could control your hunger if you share with some other woman. Anyone. Sometime a person needs the strength that comes from giving something away" (Miller 43). However, as the play progresses conflict grows between the two characters and their ethical evolutions continue toward opposite poles.

Miller chronicles Fania's ideological evolution through her interaction with the other women in the orchestra as well. At first, Miller presents Fania as decidedly against any ideology, even that of the Jewish faith:

> I am sick of the Zionists-and-the-Marxists, the Jews-and-the-Gentiles, the Easterners-and-the-Westerners, the Germans-and-the-non-Germans, the French-and-the-non-French. I am sick of it, sick of it, sick of it! I am a woman, not a tribe! (Miller 53)

Later, through her interaction with the other women in the orchestra, she changes this view. At one point she and Marianne are not gassed because they are only half Jew. They are each given one half of the Star of David. When Fania sews her star back into a whole one, Miller completes her character development with this act of solidarity to the Jewish race and faith. Fania now has a new ethical identity that she did not have at the onset of her journey. She is now a member of the Jewish tribe and this makes her a person worthy to bear witness to the Holocaust of her newly claimed people.

Diamond chooses an opposite approach in her presentation of Harriet's faith and morals and makes very few references to either. While it is well documented through Harriet's own words how she relied on her faith to survive seven years in a space "only slightly larger than the space under a conference room table" (Diamond 5), Diamond divests Harriet from strong religious beliefs to desentimentalize her choices. In doing so, Diamond removes Harriet's personal virtue as the moral focus of the play. Slavery has taken away the moral choices available to free persons. This is why she pleads with the audience upon bearing a child out of wedlock, that "…you must forgive my choice" (Diamond 45). Reminiscent of Fania's humanism, Harriet, as a character, also "calls for human rights and humanity on multiple levels. She indicts everyone including her "kind" White lover, Sawyer (who is willing to treat his own children as property)" (Diamond xi). When Sawyer purchases his and Harriet's children from the auction block, he informs Harriet: "I bought your children" (Diamond 58). By not referring to the children as ours, Sawyer makes it clear that he still considers them property and they will remain so. He could have easily freed them and sent them North. However, when given the choice, Sawyer is comfortable in his role of White plantation owner. Ethically, he has no qualms about keeping the children—his own children—as property rather than human beings. Still, Diamond astutely forgoes the use of Harriet's lost virtue to gain the audience's sympathy. Instead, she anticipates that spectators will be moved by the horror of the many ethical violations inherent in Slavery and then, as fellow human beings, be compelled to empathy.

Miller retains Fania's true religious leanings in his play and works through Fania's non-ideological/humanist stance to becoming a whole Jew and, thus, evolves Fania's ethical position. Diamond accomplishes Harriet's ethical evolution by divesting Harriet of her faith and sexual virtue to bring to the forefront the more important virtues of courage and perseverance which deliver her from bondage. The ethics of bartering her

virtue is inconsequential in light of the unnatural choices presented by the holocaust of Slavery and she reminds the audience: "Some choices not choices" (Diamond 42). These are the tough ethical choices that make Fania and Harriet heroines instead of victims, worthy to bear witness to others and encourage them to be the ethical gatekeepers that eliminate current genocides and avoid new ones.

Although both plays only reference children briefly they become a way to signify the future of humanity or lack of it for the audience. Humanity is heralded by the children "singing" (Diamond 61) in *Harriet Jacobs* and when Mandel presents the little boy she has saved to the orchestra in *Playing for Time***.** While the children of Holocaust survivors are not born into Slavery, they are born into death. Miller presents an actual physical loss of humanity when Mandel reveals that she returned the child to his mother which implies that he has been sent to be gassed. Mandel's act was a terrible blow to the orchestra girls as many, like in Slavery, had already lost their children to arbitrary acts of the institutionalized inhumanity of the Holocaust.

Harriet Jacobs, A Play captures a fact unique to American Slavery: that Harriet's children may well have to live as slaves the rest of their lives even if she obtains her own freedom. As a slave, as long as she was a fugitive, any children were also legally slaves, "The condition of the child follows the mother…" (Jacobs 38). Diamond presents both a philosophical and potential physical loss of humanity when Harriet laments her children being chattel, "I won' see my babies again" and informs us that they will never be free "Not long as Mass Sam got papers on them. He marry the wrong kind or get thrown from a horse, an' they be on the block tomorrow…" (Diamond 68). In this way, Diamond suggests that by leaving her children, freedom has not been truly obtained: "I hold the

voices, the stories, the atrocities, and indignities next to my heart, close to my soul, and climb out of my hiding place into a future only slightly more secure" (Diamond 69). Indeed, this is not an uplifting story in the usual utopian sense. However, Diamond makes clear that the utopia that is sought is all about the process—journey through moments of utopia. For Harriet to climb out of her hiding place headed away from oppression is a momentary utopia. Even without her children, she is on her way to bear witness and possibly save others.

In the final scene of his play, Miller places his extraordinary heroine in an ordinary place—a restaurant. Here Fania connects with two camp survivors. Yet, Miller restrains himself from sentimentalism and keeps the scene short. He highlights the reclamation of womanhood through Charlotte's giving birth to two children and doesn't let the moment linger on Holocaust stories. This would be redundant and anticlimactic. Instead, he ends triumphantly with Fania's fitting request of "something extraordinary" (Miller 89), a metaphor for their survival. Structurally, Miller manages to disengage the final moments from the horrors of the Holocaust so that they stand on their own and both the characters and audience breathe the sweet air of freedom. They have triumphed over the past and now their witness is complete.

Diamond condenses her ending with a monologue by Harriet who is affirmed but "not triumphant" (Diamond 70). Unlike Miller she chooses to be "romantic about the future—not the past" (Diamond xi). In Jill Dolan's book, *Utopia in Performance*, Angelika Bammer notes: "It is often the partial vision, rather than the supposedly comprehensive one that one is most able to see clearly. In the sense that the gaze that encompasses less is able to see more. The partial vision is the more utopian" (Dolan 21). Diamond

restrains herself from fully realizing Harriet's freedom to avoid sentimentalizing Harriet's oppression and to engage the audience in utopia as a process not a particular place. Diamond's vision for Harriet looks, "toward a utopia that is not stabilized by its own finished perfection, not coercive in its contained, self-reliant, self-determined system, but a utopia always in process, always only partially grasped, as it disappears around the corners of narrative and social experience" (Dolan 20).

Diamond illustrates through the juxtaposition of singing a freedom song: "a rousing, hopeful spiritual" (Diamond 70) for a still captive Harriet this idea of the ongoing utopian process. Harriet is not headed to a utopia but journeying through and toward one, creating it moment by moment. By her witness to us, Harriet now has the strength for her journey and, "the conviction of one who will survive, the satisfaction of one who will tell her story, the need to know that she has been heard" (Diamond 70). In constructing this partial journey to freedom, Diamond creates a space for the audience in the theatre where they can empathize with Harriet and be living witnesses to her oppressive present situation and, yet, anticipate her future happiness. While they cannot participate in it at present, the audience can carry this hope for the future to a space that extends beyond the theatre. "Theatre and performance offer a place to embody and, even if through fantasy, enact the effective possibilities of "doings" that gesture toward a much better world" (Dolan 21). Through the audience, Harriet's story will now bear witness outside the theatre in the world itself.

Fania's vindication is her memoir, which subsequently resulted in Miller's play, "demonstrating the humanistic power of art to release the imaginative ability to bear witness and thus codify the chaos of the Holocaust" (Plunka 65). The same is true for Slavery in the memoir, *Harriet Jacobs: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Miller and Diamond honor two rare women who survived to write firsthand accounts of the Holocaust and Slavery. Now, their stories of the loss and reclamation of their humanity and freedom can be heard with new voices given to them through the theatre. By findingcreative ways to manipulate the dramatic elements of character, structure, dialogue and action, the playwrights are able to adapt events of the Holocaust and Slavery and engage audiences today that might otherwise be alienated by these still dark themes. The plays reopen for discussion the age old ethical dilemmas about personhood that are still relevant today—those of human dignity, worth and freedom. Each performance articulates to a new audience the life and death struggles of these dismal periods of human history and urges us not to repeat them. Each time the lights go down for a performance of these plays, the voices of Fania and Harriet rise up to bear witness.

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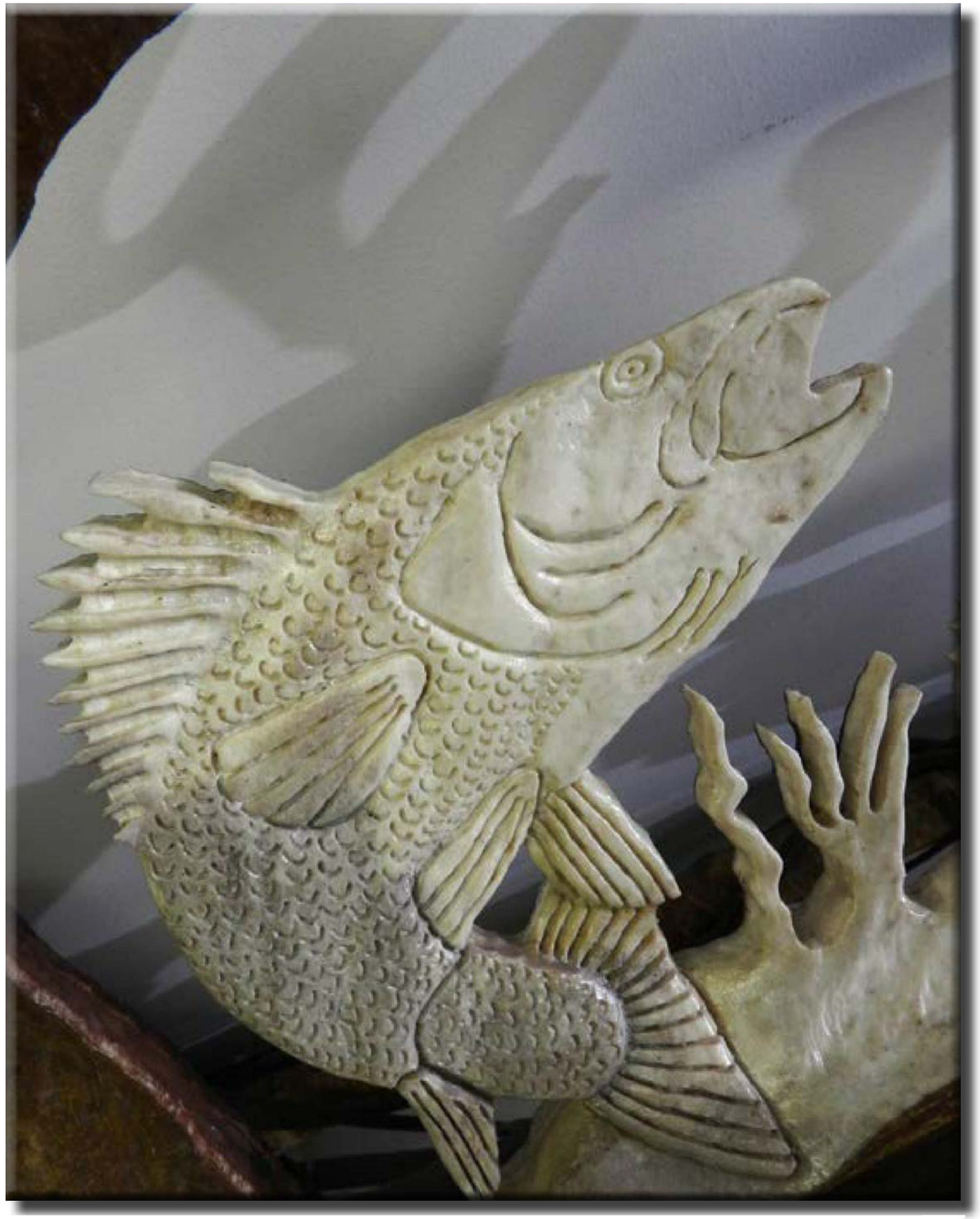
Photo: Sue Matheson



Robert Nabess **Carving #4** **Moose Horn, Driftwood, Acrylic**

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess Carving #5 Moose Horn, Driftwood, Acrylic

Damaged Reel

stretched out on clouds
awkward and bothered

he went back
for another round
of numb misfortune

air raid over

reality coming back
like a damaged
reel of film

post-apocalyptic
blank warhead
eraser

the feeling
of that feeling
coming back

sad and pure

bombed villa

bleached quagmire

happy to be alive

—Timothy Collins

Photo: Sue Matheson

Robert Nabess **Carving #6** **Agate**

"The Body Can Be Made to Pay": Wartime and Postwar Corporeal Responsibility in Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*

by Jill Goad, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia

Bodies abound in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*: good bodies, bad bodies, extraterrestrial bodies, human bodies, male and female bodies, young and old bodies, damaged bodies, and utilitarian bodies. The bodies in Vonnegut's work are objectified, almost abstract figures made to serve the collective good for the institutions they are part of – government and family. Vonnegut's depiction of characters as machines "fragment[s] and expand[s] our notions of bodies in and at war" (Jarvis "The Vietnamization" 96) both on the battlefield and at the home front. A postmodern work set in modern times, *Slaughterhouse-Five,* with Vietnam-tainted eyes, examines bodies inscribed by their culture and unable to achieve complete subjectivity. According to Josh Simpson, "Vonnegut forces his readers to consider what it means to be human in a chaotic, often absurd, and irrational universe" (262), a universe that tested its inhabitants' mettle well before it was represented in literature as hopeless and meaningless. With the narrative distance that time affords, Vonnegut, through his omniscient and intrusive narrator, subverts popular notions of World War II, showing that "'All the real soldiers are dead'" (203), the images of heroic, glorified combatants having dissipated to make room for the archetypal disillusioned soldier expected to serve his country at the expense of his body and of his stability.

In short, the war, as seen through the eyes of Vonnegut's cynical narrator, reduced bodies to their most utilitarian form, damaging already damaged men and bringing its legacy to the domestic sphere. Both women and men are defined arbitrarily as having "good" or "bad" bodies in a culture that consumed many of its young men and demanded frenetic procreation of its men and women to restore the population; as Elizabeth Grosz notes, "the body is more or less marked, constituted as an appropriate, or, as the case may be, an inappropriate body, for its cultural requirements" (142). Since the culture requires that its men and women use their bodies as the site of production until those bodies can no longer perform, it ensures its citizens' alienation from those bodies.

Thus, Vonnegut's narrator "depicts a situation in which, as Peter J. Reed suggests, 'people [are] doubting their own worth because of a denigration of the worth of people generally'" (Simmons 122). Cultural demands on the body render everyone powerless. Most primary and secondary characters in the novel, men and women, are defined by what purpose their bodies can be put to – men in perpetuating warfare and women in providing new lives to feed the war machine. Time, which pushes forward aging and renders the body more useless, is perceived as the enemy, hence Billy Pilgrim's Tralfamadorian fantasies which suspend time so that he can be virile and beautiful.

Billy's wartime experiences, his civilian life, and his fantasy world are not immune from obsession with bodies. By showing that one cannot escape from being valued in a purely physical and superficial sense and that one will always internalize his or her corporeal objectification, the novel reinforces Judith Butler's notion that "'the body' appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself" (8). The human body is always subject to inscription by the culture of which it is a part.

The view *Slaughterhouse-Five* espouses and deconstructs of male bodies, that they are tools for warfare, is consistent with World War II-era American views. Christina Jarvis contends that this representation of bodies is part of Vonnegut's agenda: "By offering cool, detached analyses of bodies in terms of their use-value or social worth, the novel enacts the militaristic vision it hopes to critique" ("The Vietnamization" 102). By committing itself so fully to the impression of humans as cogs in a machine, the novel satirizes the institutional tendency to require conformity and physical sacrifice of its participants.

Masculine body ideals promulgated by American culture mimicked those of Nazi Germany's, though American men, like Billy Pilgrim, often fell short of cultural expectations. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the British men are the ideal specimens: "Their bellies were like washboards. The muscles of their calves and upper arms were like cannonballs" (119). They, with their muscles compared to utilitarian objects, supersede the too fat, too skinny, pockmarked and sickly motley crew that comprise the American POWs and are the ideal propagandist image for the glamour of war. The British soldiers, idealized by their German captors and portrayed as representative of what military men should be, indicate that the world was caught up in inscribing male bodies to make them fit to represent their countries. This inscription, unfortunately, guaranteed subsequent warfare, since these men were signs that "Everything was beautiful, and nothing hurt" (156).

The ideal and most useful Nazi male body was a machine that displayed no weakness, fear or emotion and adhered to the highest standards of hygiene; these bodies did not belong to the men but rather to the government, and they were not seen as individualized (Jarvis *Male Bodies at War* 47). Nazi propaganda instructed that "individual men would need to overcome their personal tendencies toward weakness, comfort and cowardice by eradicating the 'softness' within" (Forth 197). Similarly, the American soldier was programmed by both the government and the media to eschew weakness and resist showing emotion at even the most extreme trauma. If the American soldier was whole and healthy, America would thus be perceived as a formidable opponent; in this way, "the draft-age American male body [was] the literal and symbolic index of the nation's health" (Jarvis *Male Bodies at War* 186).

To maintain this show of strength, pictures of bleeding soldiers were censored from the American media until 1945, and the Office of War Information prohibited dissemination of pictures of crying soldiers (Jarvis *Male Body at War* 89). So conditioned by the responsibility to appear almost invincible, many American soldiers even refused medical attention or strove to deny their basic human needs and bodily functions. For example, a soldier trapped in a tree by his parachute and suffering from a broken leg refused to let his fellow soldiers assist him, so ashamed was he of having defecated on himself (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 90). American popular culture celebrated the

masculine ideal; the I-A man, the man classified by the government as fit for service, was celebrated in Betty Bonney's song "He's 1-A in the Army and He's A-1 in My Heart" (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 60). In contrast, the IV-F man, the man classified as unable to serve, was denigrated in Ted Courtney's song, "Four-F Charlie," as unhealthy, unfit, and impotent (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 60).

The I-A man, serving as a sign of America's fortitude, was to be rewarded with his country's love; the IV-F man was a second class citizen who served no purpose but to make his country look bad. Ironically, the I-A man, like Edgar Derby, was subject to destruction by the war machine that relied on him, while the IV-F man, like the passive Billy Pilgrim, was likely to stay alive and represent the American postwar man as physically powerless and softened by easy access to modern conveniences (Allen 89-90).

Upon returning from war, men were expected to display the same proficiency in intimate matters that they had in warfare: "the modern husband was transformed into a technician of love, sensitive to the intricacies of the female machine and capable of coaxing from it ever greater quantities of pleasure. Women's bodies became sites for… male technical competence" (Forth 192). The soldier had to be able to return to a sense of normalcy after his time served and had to represent America further with his virility, thus restoring a reduced population and providing more bodies for later wars. Billy is able to achieve this responsibility, his sexual ministrations eliciting a "Thank you" from his wife and his performance resulting in a son, who perpetuates the cycle of war begetting war by becoming a Green Beret, and a daughter.

World War II era women were likewise responsible for promoting an image of

health that reflected positively on their country and on their men; to foster men's sense of potency, they needed to be fertile and to further men's sense of self-worth, they needed to be sexual machines able to be manipulated and turned on. Compelled to be defined by the degree to which they could positively reflect their men coming home from war, women were responsible for helping heal the alienated and traumatized soldier: "women's loving devotion and marriage had tremendous curative effects on injured veterans renegotiating their masculinity and place in postwar America" (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 102). Since affirming and protecting their mates' masculinity was top priority, women had few avenues to express their femininity except as a tool to boost masculine self-confidence. Women could be mothers or whores, with classification in either category dependent on the way men saw them.

Vonnegut's narrator alludes to women's role as protectors, shielding society from negativity, in the scene where Billy Pilgrim experiences a war movie in reverse. Women in the film assist in ridding the world of destruction; their contribution is overshadowed by the fighting soldiers who created the need to undo destruction in the first place. In effect, World War II era women could best serve their country by trying to repair what problems patriarchal society created – men's fragmented sense of self and unstable masculinity as a result of their war experiences.

For postwar men and women, sex became a way of fulfilling their responsibility to their country. Sex helped the government bind citizens further to its agenda with its promise of pleasure and return to a life of bodily fulfillment; according to Foucault, "The deployment of sexuality…is not the promise of liberation but a way of tying individuals

and groups ever more firmly to the biopolitical control of bodies" (Grosz 155). Instead of freeing men from the trauma of war, sex and its ultimate goal was simply a continuation of the body control that the war personified. In this case, the body is repurposed to give life instead of end life.

The female body in *Slaughterhouse-Five* is defined by its ability to perform its main function, reproduction, which is physically damaging and emotionally altering, much like warfare is for men. Women's integral role in providing life is valuable to society, but their contribution, steeped in the abjection of bodily fluids, is generally unnoticed. Pregnancy is essential to the continuation of life, but it destabilizes the female body and marks it as "other," an object to be feared. Moira Gatens argues, "The modern body politic has 'lived off' its consumption of women's bodies. Women have serviced the internal organs and needs of this artificial body, preserving its viability, its unity and integrity, without ever being seen to do so" ("Corporeal Representation" 82). Postwar American society was heavily reliant on women's bodies, but to acknowledge this meant aligning America with what was "soft." Much like war devours male minds and bodies, a postwar baby boom culture uses up its women until they can no longer contribute.

The primary female subjects who are not truly subjects, Valencia Merble Pilgrim and Montana Wildhack, are inscribed by their procreative role and thus are under-developed characters. All readers know about Valencia is that she is fat, is wealthy by virtue of her father, eats candy nonstop, is wildly in love with Billy, and dies in a freak accident. Montana is a pornographic starlet who is delivered to Billy via the Tralfamadorians for sexual gratification, a little conversation, and reproduction. To the real world in which Billy is a part of, she is dead, since she does not serve the culture at large by having sex for recreational, not reproductive purposes. Both women in their passivity are consistent with Gatens' principle that "The female body, in our culture, is seen and no doubt often 'lived' as an *envelope*, *vessel*, or *receptacle*" (*Imaginary Bodies* 41). Valencia and Montana are the receptacles for Billy's semen and for his children. Montana is further objectified and rendered a passive vessel by her function as object of the desirous male gaze.

The American sense of the ideal woman in the World War II era was so ensconced in reproduction because the ideal woman not only produced ideal citizens, but her monogamy and stability made her a safe harbor for a returning soldier. In contrast, the sexually promiscuous woman was perceived as the enemy of the American soldier due to the disease she likely carried (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 80). The maternal woman, however, was to be embraced and preserved, as seen in the novel when the bedraggled and starving American POWs have to work in a factory making syrup that provides pregnant women appropriate nourishment and when Billy must cater to the pregnant Montana. Preservation of the maternal body was akin to maintaining a prized machine, care of the female couched in selfish motives.

Critics have addressed *Slaughterhouse-Five's* female figures, Valencia in particular, as simplified, flat characters. According to William Allen, Valencia's lack of characterization is not problematic since she "is a parody of consumerism…constantly consum[ing] candy bars while making empty promises to lose weight in order to please Billy sexually" (91-92). He further describes Valencia as a "material comfort" (91) whose death is comical. Thomas Marvin sees an agenda at the heart of Vonnegut's treatment of women: women

are only tools, plot devices to parody a "superficial, sex-obsessed society" (127). Other critical analyses that mention female characters in Vonnegut's work express similar sentiments.

Valencia is ill-defined, but to define her role as a "tool" or "device" equals embracing the view of humans as part of a cultural mechanism that seems so cruel and inhuman when applied to soldiers. Just as Vonnegut's characterization of men as machines is intended to critique the culture that sees them as such, his inclusion of uncomplicated women is intended to address stereotypical notions of women's corporeal responsibilities. As critics note, Valencia signifies wealth and consumption, associated with excessive snacking and accessorized with ostentatiously large jewelry, and, therefore, can elicit critique, but she also plays a key role in explaining expectations placed on women's bodies and the American desire to dismiss those same bodies once they have served their purpose.

In terms of corporeality, Valencia is defined by what her body looks like and what her body does, her personality a distant consideration: "She was as big as a house because she couldn't stop eating" (136). As far as cultural classifications are concerned, Valencia has a "bad" body, her immense size a testament to the drain on consumer goods she perpetuates. Valencia offers a stark contrast to the malnourished American male POW bodies in the novel. Since those with "bad" bodies, like IV-F men, are subject to punishment, Valencia faces the possibility of being denied the only roles available to her, wife and mother, her physical appearance making her sexually unappealing and far from the prospect of being a "loose" woman. In order to attain wifehood, Valencia must settle for and be grateful for the attentions of a man with a "bad" body, Billy Pilgrim. In keeping with woman's

status as commodity, Valencia is given away by her father along with an offer to Billy of tremendous future financial stability, thus sealing the fate of "a girl nobody in his right mind would have married" (151). However, Billy's affair with another woman and his time travel fantasies of spending time with the attractive Montana Wildhack show that Billy can, at best, offer only partial devotion. Valencia is not enough for him.

As a wife, Valencia abides by the cultural expectations lent to this role, particularly in her treatment of Billy. According to Joseph Pleck in a critical essay on male and female power relations, "women are used as *symbols of success* in men's competition with each other" (425). Valencia's large body, draped in expensive jewels, is a testament to Billy's ability to provide for his family every material comfort and to achieve success upon his return from a traumatic war experience. However, this is a false reflection of Billy's success, since his business comes from the benevolence of a wealthy father-in-law and Valencia's huge engagement ring is a spoil of war, retrieved from the coat of a dead civilian.

Pleck adds that "relationships with women provide men a *refuge* from the dangers and stresses of relating to other males" (426). At home, Valencia's body offers Billy physical comfort; they nestle like spoons, creating an intimate connection that Billy cannot seem to attain with anyone else, outside of his fantasy world. She asks little of him, even letting him hold secrets of his past close. For a man who was perceived in warfare as weak and ineffectual and who seems to have cultivated few same sex postwar friendships, Valencia provides a reinforced sense of his masculinity; during the couple's honeymoon, after they have sex, her "rapt expression did not change when he departed" (151). Billy is not a physically appealing man, so Valencia's pleasure in his sexual efforts could empower him.

Valencia's body serves America by supporting and reflecting well on her husband and by producing children. Her reproductive capabilities are depicted as a mechanical function occurring in the midst of honeymoon romance: "In a tiny cavity in her great body she was assembling the materials for a Green Beret" (155). Though Valencia has an unappealing body, it is a fertile body and therefore able to perform according to cultural expectations. When Billy tells her, "'I like you just the way you are'" (153), he could be speaking for American culture, who could forgive obesity if coupled with fertility. After attempting to restore her husband postwar, Valencia further aids her country with the production of another human to fight its battles. Readers never see, beyond Valencia's grateful statement to Billy for marrying her, how she feels about her life. That lack of interiority is in keeping with cultural institutions' feelings about human subjectivity; as long as the bodies are performing, the minds are of no consequence.

Once Valencia's body has served its reproductive purpose and cannot any longer perform, she is an object of sympathy combined with scorn: "The poor woman didn't have ovaries or a uterus any more" (91). So defined by their procreative potential, women must be further objectified when the tools for procreation no longer exist; Valencia is labeled as a "poor woman" as though those missing organs represent an immense lack. Once the societal appropriation of Valencia's body is complete, she suffers a comic and undignified death. The timing of Valencia's death, right after Billy's plane crash, shows that she has no purpose since, well after her childbearing years, she cannot even offer Billy protection. That her dead face is a heavenly color indicates Valencia's status as a martyr to the destructive forces that consume and discard female bodies.

Montana Wildhack, at first glance, seems to be everything that Valencia is not. Sexual and attractive, her body "baroque" (170) as though constructed elaborately by a gifted sculptor, she is juxtaposed with Billy's constantly eating wife, a house. If Valencia is the supportive mother figure, Montana is the loose woman the American military so feared. However, Montana is quickly domesticated in Billy's fantasy world and is made into a utilitarian reproductive woman, hardly an improvement over her role as object of the leering male gaze.

The comparison between Montana and great architecture is telling, since the architecture in question is in Dresden before its bombing. Ultimately, anything deemed aesthetically pleasing, even a body, can quickly be decimated. Perhaps this comparison alludes to Montana's destruction in being forced to live alongside Billy and adapt to her new role or her destruction in the real world, where she is killed for selling sex, her death inconsequential, even a joke, like Valencia's.

Unlike Valencia, who, despite following what her culture has required of her until her body can no longer cooperate, dies a relatively young woman, Montana is destined to live, at least in the Tralfamadorian world. However, she must submit to the gaze of the Tralfamadorians and thus represent Earthling females as sexual in the confines of a monogamous relationship and as maternal in order to survive. Of course, in Billy's fantasy, Montana is perpetually young, not doomed to a future where her body is deemed useless. Arnold Edelstein argues that Montana's continued existence is due to her consistency with prescribed female roles:

> Montana has apparently always lived her life in accordance with

> the prayer on Billy's wall. She accepts what she cannot change and adapts to her condition whether she is making pornographic movies, living high in Hollywood as a starlet, or being held prisoner in a zoo on Tralfamadore. She can be seen, then, as something of a contrast to Billy and we may take the contrast on its own terms or see it as a terrible irony: only mindless movie starlets can be happy in this world (135).

That Montana, culturally inscribed with passivity and adaptability, "could have been anybody" (262) in the pornographic photos Billy sees in *Midnight Pussycats* speaks to her ability to become what anyone wants her to be.

Billy and Montana's replication of Eden in their Tralfamadorian habitat creates a framework for which to analyze their adherence to traditionally prescribed gender roles and the significance of their bodies in these roles. Montana as Eve is posited as the original woman; that Eve is held responsible for perpetrating the fall of humans into sin connects to the blame "loose" women like Montana garner for using their bodies in socially irresponsible ways. In this Eden scenario, Montana and Billy are both naked; where Billy seems unselfconscious of this exposure since there are no finer specimens of men to be compared to, Montana is initially panicked at being put on display, there being no objectifying camera lens to give her distance from viewers.

In the Eden fantasy, Montana has no agency because she is just a part of a scenario concocted and controlled by Billy in a show of power he never possessed in his real life: "Billy Pilgrim tries to construct for himself an Edenic experience out of materials he garners over the course of some twenty years" (Mustazza 102). Montana's lack of agency begins when she is transported to Tralfamadore against her will after a life of performing sexually for others, likely against her will. In The Adam and Eve scenario, Eve must be led to Adam and taught to love him (Mustazza 111). As Valencia seemed to love Billy because she had no other option, Montana literally has no other choice in men, since to venture outside Tralfamadore would mean death.

Her body is a sight to behold for the Tralfamadorians and for Billy: "Montana the big-breasted, yielding, ideal woman of adolescent masturbation fantasies supplements the Tralfamadorians' theories as a defense against Billy's feelings of impotence and his fear of death" (Edelstein 135). Billy's utopia is one where his body is required to do little but find sexual release with a former porn star. Just as Valencia's presence validated her husband's masculinity, Montana too is used to make Billy feel like a man and to "enjo[y] sexual bliss for the first time" (Allen 93). However, readers never know if Montana feels, as Billy does, that their sexual activity is "heavenly" (170). Her pleasure, according to Luce Irigaray, is immaterial: women may find pleasure being props for male fantasies, but "such pleasure is above all a masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own, and it leaves her in a familiar state of dependency upon man" (250).

Since Billy is able to convince Montana to sleep with him within a week's time, she serves as a symbol of his vigor, combating his reality, that of an unstable, aging man who cries inexplicably and falls asleep at work. Billy's body has so long been appropriated by his culture and deemed a failure that he has no problem projecting this same corporeal objectification onto another human being. Montana's status as an object is sealed by

the cartoonish drawing of her breasts and the locket she wears, the childish, lewd image showing what part of her body really matters. Since "Billy's childlike perspective simply records what he sees without imposing a hierarchy of significance" (Rigney 17), it is up to the reader to see the parallel between the crudely drawn breasts and the proclamation resting between them; Montana cannot change the way she is seen in a patriarchal society, so she must accept her body's designation.

Despite Billy's appreciation of Montana's physical assets, he seems to view her as more worthy of his attention than he does Valencia. Able to talk to Montana about his war experiences, beginning with Dresden, Billy confides in her in a way that he cannot with his wife, who associates war with sex and glamour and tries to pry his secrets from him instead of waiting until he is ready. Perhaps Billy's war stories, though, have nothing to do with Montana and more to do with their place in his constructed world. There, it is safe to divulge secrets to a sole listener who cannot tell anyone else.

In Billy's fantasy world, his and Montana's extraterrestrial captors are not immune to interest in the body's capabilities; the Tralfamadorians are seemingly as obsessed with reproduction as postwar American society is. They thrill at the prospect of seeing Billy and Montana mate and set up the habitat on an Earth timeline, thus making Montana and Billy the stars of a film who perform the corporeal actions of their gender, based on Judith Butler's precepts, and reflect what humans are supposed to do with their bodies. In one breastfeeding "scene," Montana "move[s] the baby from one breast to the other, because the moment [is] so structured that she *ha[s]* to do so" (266). The Tralfamadorians' view of the body as object inscribed by one's culture is reinforced by their image of the human body "as great millipedes – 'with babies' legs at one end and old people's legs at the other'" (110).

Though Valencia and Montana are the most prominent female figures in the novel, several other female figures are described in militaristic terms according to their bodies. Billy's daughter, referred to disparagingly as "Big Barbara," is denigrated as "ha[ving] legs like an Edwardian grand piano" (37). She, like Valencia, has a "bad" body, but she is portrayed as a worse woman for violating the prescribed female role; instead of empowering her father, she strips him of his masculinity by threatening to put him in a nursing home and by treating him like a child. Though readers hear little of the daughter, she is summed up succinctly: "All this responsibility at such an early age made her a bitchy flibbertigibbet" (36).

Billy's mother, who is never named but only identified relative to her role to the male protagonist, is described by her use-value: "She was a perfectly nice, standard-issue, brown-haired, white woman with a high-school education" (130). Her only actions in the novel – diapering Billy, comforting him at the hospital – are nurturing behaviors performed for her son to no avail. Billy's mother tried to serve her purpose by giving life and feeding the war, but her son's status as a man unfit to represent America in the war characterizes her as a woman who is not a true asset to her country. A "dumb, praying lady" (132), she is closely allied with maimed or killed men – her dead husband, war-damaged son, and the graphically crucified image of Jesus that is one of her prized possessions. If postwar women were tasked with reflecting men in the most positive fashion, the mother has failed miserably. The novel's narrator makes Billy aware of what he is, an utter failure

according to societal expectations, but his mother never realizes that Billy rejects life and the woman who gave it to him, which marks her existence as purposeless (Marvin 119).

Billy's mother, like Valencia, is symbolic of American views on the indignity of aging, since the passage of time, especially for women, reduces the contributions their bodies can make. As a patient in the hospital, the mother is depicted as a shell: "Then she gathered energy from all over her ruined body, even from her toes and fingertips" (56).

Younger women, too, are the target of inscription by cultural values. Lily Rumfoord, a trophy wife Billy meets while he is in the hospital, is an uneducated woman, afraid of her husband, her only asset her youth and young body. Selected by her husband to reflect him positively, "she was one more public demonstration that he was a superman" (237).

Another minor character, whom Billy encounters at a party, is also summed up by the purpose her body can serve. Gullible and less than engaging, Maggie is "a dull person, but a sensational invitation to make babies. Men looked at her and wanted to fill her up with babies right away" (218). The narrator notes that Maggie abandoned her career for life as a housewife, leaving the reader to assume that she will soon embrace the maternal role she is so ideally suited for.

The novel displays equal treatment according to gender when addressing a militaristic view of the body. Each male character is analyzed according to its corporeality, and the troops in the narrative are viewed, especially by the Germans, as a collective. Christina Jarvis argues that "[Vonnegut] rejects metaphors that envision the body as a machine or as a cog in a larger social or military system" (*The Male Body at War* 105), but he rejects

them by repeating them. According to Wayne McGinnis, "Vonnegut…stresses that 'our awareness is all that is alive and maybe sacred in any of us. Everything else about us is dead machinery'" (66). This is consistent with Foucault's assertion that "the body is an intricate yet pliable instrument, capable of being trained, tuned to better, more efficient performance, a fine machinery of parts to be regulated, segmented, put to work, reordered, and replaced where necessary" (Grosz 151).

The German view of American POWs is dehumanizing, the men referred to as an indistinguishable "it," only given a semblance of life when their names are recorded. The Germans perceive the Americans as machinery that can be manipulated, a far cry from the men who comprise their well-built military: "They knew that it was essentially a liquid which could be induced to flow slowly toward cooing and light" (102). Additional description of the POWs leaves them indistinguishable from the machinery that transports them: "each car became a single organism which ate and drank and excreted through its ventilators. In went water and loaves of blackbread and sausage and cheese, and out came shit and piss and language" (90). During wartime, when the body, its abilities and failures, is prioritized over the mind, language is paralleled with fecal matter. The expulsion of fluids is deemed feminine and infantile (Jarvis *The Male Body at War* 90), as seen when British soldiers draw back in disgust from the sickness the Americans suffer from eating too much rich food. Language in wartime, correlated with this expulsion, is best kept inhibited. For the POWs, however, language is minimal, since their physical needs for food and rest are more pressing.

The retention of prisoners, common practice in warfare, is consistent with Nietzsche's

philosophy of the body as a target for revenge: "The social order is not…founded on exchange, but on credit, on the rule that, at bottom, the body can be made to pay, to guarantee" (133). Suffering from cold, hunger, and fatigue, the POWs are punished bodily for their participation in the war. The American POWs are powerless because, though America tried to adhere to Nazi body standards, its men were more accustomed to the comforts of everyday life: "Because they were civilians first and soldiers only temporarily, these men seemed to lack the killer instinct that would have rendered them more active combatants" (Forth 203). A hot shower makes the men docile; a full meal makes them friendly toward the providers.

Since war has little room for mental or emotional expression, the narrator of *Slaughterhouse-Five* focuses on the men's bodies as sites of conflict. If the body is a machine, the stress of wartime can deprive it of what it needs to run. Campbell's attempted recruitment of the men is the more influential because he tries to lure them with food, a powerful physical need that could cause a starving man to relinquish his ideology. Even the perpetually angry Paul Lazzaro cannot think of revenge when "his stomach had shrunk to the size of a walnut" and is "sore as a boil" (117). The male body also betrays with its visible physical responses. When the American POWs are stripped and herded into the showers, "their penises were shriveled and their balls were retracted" (107), exhibiting cold, fear, and impotency. Their bodies communicate the shame of capture and public exposure, aware that "reproduction was not the main business of the evening" (107). The body can also let a soldier down with its susceptibility to sickness; an infection in Roland Weary's feet finishes him, while Wild Bob's dreams of combat glory are extinguished with double pneumonia.

So conditioned to seeing themselves as machines, the POWs later treat the horses taking them through Dresden in a similar fashion, with no regard for their need to rest, eat, and drink. Only German civilians, not soldiers, can call the Americans' attention to their callousness, and only Billy has the presence of mind to be at least temporarily abashed by this neglect. The horses' abuse makes clear that war breeds desensitization and that treating living things as machinery will eventually destroy them.

Billy Pilgrim, the main character in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, is the focus of the narrator's corporeal exploration, since "the war has reterritorialized Billy's body, leaving lasting physical and mental legacies" (Jarvis "The Vietnamization" 102). Billy is the ideal protagonist for an anti-war novel, resisting categorization as a hero who makes war look glamorous. Vonnegut avoids stream of consciousness so the novel is not an in-depth exploration of Billy Pilgrim's psyche (McGinnis 62) but rather characterizes him based on the failings of his body and the way others judge his body.

He is first portrayed as having a "bad" body, one that is "shaped like a bottle of Coca-Cola" (30), a walking representation of his "soft" consumer culture. The image Billy possesses is that of an effeminate man, generous in the hips, an asset for a childbearing woman but not for the ideal American man. A chaplain's assistant who has no place in warfare, he is physically weak and unintimidating: "Billy was preposterous – six feet and three inches tall, with a chest and shoulders like a box of kitchen matches" (41). The Germans deem Billy a weakling based on his poor stature; thus, he perpetrates the United States' worst fears of being represented by ineffectual men. Since Billy is a machine

against his will, even his illness is depicted as a mechanism, his cough connected to the Third Law of Motion.

Billy's corporeal portrayal is used as a means of addressing what signifies life and whose life is most valuable; most of the characters who encounter Billy when he is physically impaired in the hospital or during his time as a POW argue that Billy's broken body does not equal a viable or valuable human. "'This isn't a man. It's a broken kite'" (124) is said in reference to Billy by a British soldier; a broken kite is typically discarded for one that can perform. Another British soldier, upon seeing Billy in the hospital after his breakdown, remarks, "'How nice – to feel nothing, and still get full credit for being alive'" (134). Rumfoord, "thinking in a military manner" (246) makes the most cutting remarks about Billy's weak body making him undeserving of life, noting, "'I could carve a better man out of a banana'" (236). Rumfoord's insistence that men like Billy should be put to sleep overlooks any non-body contribution that Billy or other men could make to society; he simply wants to believe that any weakling must have a dread disease and thus will be disposed of through natural selection. The militaristic view of the body as machine that so many in the novel espouse includes seeing any breakdown in that body as a precursor to uselessness.

Billy's lackluster performance in war and his ownership of a "bad" body are redeemed by his bodily performance after returning from the war. As Valencia compensates for her "bad" body by reproducing and thus providing more fuel for war, Billy does the same, also in a mechanized fashion. Seeming to take no pleasure in sexual activity with his wife, Billy nevertheless achieves the American cultural goal of adding to the population: "He had just emptied his seminal vesicles into Valencia, had contributed his share of the Green Beret" (151). If Billy cannot prove a hardy soldier, he can at least contribute to making one, his semen a commodity according to Mary Douglas: "The 'precious stuff' circulating in sexual relations is not the movement of desire, the exchange of pleasures, but the transmission of seminal fluids, oozing through the male body into its resting place, the female body" (Grosz 196). Elizabeth Grosz adds, "Seminal fluid is understood primarily as what it makes, what it achieves, a causal agent and thus a thing, a solid" (199), so Billy at least has some agency when it comes to body matters, if only in the fluid he naturally expels.

Billy's Tralfamadorian fantasy is a way of escaping his traumatized body, inscribed by his war experiences; as Judith Butler notes, "The mind not only subjugates the body, but occasionally entertains the fantasy of fleeing its embodiment altogether" (12). However, this fantasy world still objectifies his body. Since Billy has survived an extremely traumatic experience, the bombing of an entire city, his mind needs to flee his trauma for more pleasant pursuits, of which any other scenario would be: "Billy's imagining underscores the sense that the human mind can only tolerate so much pain" (Reed 33). Since Billy has nothing to look forward to but old age and death (Edelstein 131), a fantasy world that objectifies him in a different way than warfare did is preferable to his present life.

Billy's objectification at the hands of the Tralfamadorians is pleasing to him because, with this fantasy, "Billy has found a way to make himself like the prime of men" (Mustazza 109), in contrast to his war experiences, where he had practically the worst body, and to his personal life, where he had to settle for an ugly wife. Leonard Mustazza quotes

Frederick Karl as saying, "even though Billy is exhibited in a zoo, as an animal to their human, Tralfamadore represents paradise" (107). Since there is no other man with which to compare himself physically, the Tralfamadorians find him beautiful, and "This had a pleasant effect on Billy, who began to enjoy his body for the first time" (144). Constantly on display in a manner that would make others feel self-conscious (Mustazza 108), Billy thrives, his pleasure compounded by the fact that he cannot stay long on Tralfamadore. Perhaps Billy is not offended by the attention paid to his body on Tralfamadore because most of it in his real life, excepting that from Valencia, was negative.

On Tralfamadore, everything that Billy does with his body is captivating – walking to the refrigerator, exercising. He is objectified and evaluated by his parts, sometimes, to a crude degree: "He had a tremendous wang, incidentally. You never know who'll get one" (169). Leonard Mustazza argues that in being a sexual object and recipient of a collective gaze, Billy replaces free will with passivity on Tralfamadore (113), but his life in America, driven by cultural expectations of the body, did not leave room for free will either. On Tralfamadore as in America, Billy is expected to use his body for procreation. This shows that Billy has internalized his culture's values so deeply even his fantasy world is not exempt from them.

Other men in *Slaughterhouse-Five* are inscribed by their culture's expectations and defined by their bodies. Edgar Derby has a "good" body, but he is considerably older than the other men serving, a fact the narrator makes frequent mention of, making his usefulness possibly more short-lived. His death marks an end to the perseverance of the strong, principled soldier and ushers in an era of the man more easily manipulated as a

machine, a man like Billy. Paul Lazzaro, a man whose entry into the military is a sign of their desperation for enlistees, is pockmarked and chickenlike, and his obsession with revenge and generally volatile personality make him an unfit soldier. He, like Billy, is left alive, part of the war's corporeal legacy of sickly, damaged men.

As with the female characters, *Slaughterhouse-Five* explores how the aging male body is perceived. A scene where Billy encounters an old man afflicted with gas equates the elderly male body with a lack of dignity and appeal. The man's statement, "'I knew it was going to be bad getting this old…I didn't know it was going to be *this* bad'" (242) reinforces the notion that the body's exertions through life cause it to eventually betray its possessor. The man's constant pain hinders his strength, rendering his body a purposeless mass of loud bodily functions he has no control over.

In contrast, the seventy year old Rumfoord, capable of skiing and apparently satisfying a wife almost fifty years younger, has a healthy body for an older man. A self-appointed expert on "sex and strenuous athletics for men over sixty-five" (236), Rumfoord takes pride in his body. A symbol of American success, he is intelligent, retired military, and wealthy. Rumfoord is symbolic of complete devotion to American corporeal ideology and therefore espouses the view that the weak are useless and that doctors should allow nature to take its course with disposing of them. In a disturbing contrast to the novel's portrayal of the older woman who is unable to procreate or protect her mate as purposeless, Rumfoord shows that the cultural perception of the aging male body depends on its vigor.

When viewed through a corporeal lens, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a commentary on

the way wartime and postwar culture appropriates and decimates both male and female bodies in order to uphold its most powerful institutions. Vonnegut satirizes a militaristic view of bodies, people's most intimate possessions, as having to serve a purpose by maintaining narrative distance from his characters through an unemotional examination of their bodies' uses. Since "Vonnegut recognizes the failures of language to truly capture the horrors of war or to convey a shared 'reality' in a postmodern age" (Jarvis "The Vietnamization" 101), he explores bodies as representative of their cultural values, as sites of conflict and production, and as vulnerable to time, violence, and illness. Ultimately, the novel concludes that war exacts its vengeance on the body, and not even an escape to a timeless fantasy world can heal those wounds.

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Robert Nabess **Carving #7: Detail** **Moose Horn**

Photo: Sue Matheson

Lucifer

I could feel the
Eye of God
watching him
trudging thru the
blood in the
freezing summer
"we must live out
this sick drama
of shipwrecks
so the Movie
doesn't grow dull"
I said
(Lucifer had given
me plenty of
music & drink)

—*Timothy Collins*

A Study of the Setting of the English Narratives Based on Vico's Stage Theory

by Mojgan Eyvazi, Vahid Agha Tabatabaian, and Mohammad Ali Alaeddini

Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Introduction

Narratives have the strong potentiality of mirroring the features of time and society in which they have been produced. Subjects, themes, characters, either historical or fictional, can show the different aspects of the cultural, social and political situations of that period. It seems that some sorts of general alteration can be observed historically in the extension of the settings and this alteration follows a special pattern. One can observe a kind of shrinkage in the setting of place during the passage of time. By more carefully scrutinizing, we can see that, deep in the past, in the narratives of any kinds, religious, mythical or historical, the settings of places are vast in scope and with little kind of limitations and borderlines. The audience feels to stand high on the clouds and

see the events of the narration with a wide sight. Everything is seen in general and from a high-level point of view. There are macro-settings and expanded landscapes. There are vast grasslands and panoramic plains. There are large seas and extended oceans, wide rivers and high waterfalls.

By passing the time and changing human societies, readers observe that the setting of narratives has taken some alterations. The stories take place in the courts of kings, in the cities or abbeys. The wars happen in geographical places. Characters, fictional or historical, take their trip in cities and villages.

As time comes closer and closer, man goes to think more deeply about his own nature and environment. Science is in progress. Then setting of place seems to become, somehow, internal and we can see a kind of "psychological landscapes" and "sub-settings". Narratives are broken down to different pieces and the setting, also, seems to follow the rule. Most of the point of views are in first person and subjective. The story may happen in the mind of the characters as they are recalling the events. The readers may associate the setting through the characters' mind and remembrance. There are not any definite signs for the readers to know exactly where they are standing in the setting of the story. Some pieces of literary narrative works go to become closer to poetry.

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Discussion

Some relational lines can be drawn between the above mentioned changes and the different stages of Vico's stage theory. Vico argues in his book *Scienza Nuova* that civilization develops in recurring cycle of three stages: the divine, the heroic, and the human. Then he explains the distinct social and political features of each era. He adds that after a period of anarchy and barbarism, civilization descends back to the first age. (Lemon 136-146)

The central question raised in this essay is whether the settings of the place of narrations have had any special features in any stage and whether they have burdened any alterations during the time. In order to get the answer, the writer has scrutinized the settings of four well-known narrations, belonging to different ages of English literature. The piloting models are *Beowulf, Guliver's Travels, Ulysses* and *The Lord of the Rings.* The works are from different ages of English literatures. The method is describing and analyzing most of the settings to infer the answer inductively.

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Beowulf- The First Stage

Beowulf is "the most famous and the longest surviving poem in old English, written c.1000 in the West Saxon dialect" (Ousby 34). It is an epic recounts the heroic deeds and fights of the Gaetish warrior Beowulf. According to Ousby, "the poem makes no reference to Britain, but it is set in southern Scandinavia during the migrations of the 5th and 6th centuries." (34)

In order to check out the expansion of the settings, one way is to study the direct descriptions about the places. At the first of the story and before the demon falls there; readers see a blessed kingdom somewhere on earth, after God has created heaven, sun,

moon and earth. Here is a look at the image: "The Almighty framed the world, the plain bright in beauty which the waters encircle, and glorying in his handiwork, set the sun and moon to lighten the earth-dwellers, and decked the corners of the earth with boughs and leaves and gave life to every kind of creature that walks alive" (Child 3-4). The expansion of the atmosphere which readers can see is from heaven to earth, from sun and moon to the lands and waters. It is a picture of a plain, decorated with the trees and beautiful rivers, enlightened by either sunlight or moonlight.

Beowulf may be seen as divided into two sections both of which are directly concerned with the sea. Beowulf must cross the sea to meet and kill the monster. Here, the readers face to the accounts of a difficult voyage. The words create a seascape, an image of a vast, wide and deep sea, full of waves and eddies on and among which the ship sways by the wind and sea currents like a little bird in a storm. The readers feel standing high, in a cloudy, stormy and connotatively, rainy weather and sees the wide scope, panoramic, roaring and raging sea, engulfing the "boat". The far-flung scenes of the lands and cliffs, which little by little come to eyesight (of the hero and his men), create the image of a far-fetched area.

As an epic most of the heroic scenes contain magnitude deeds and demand vast setting to be imagined. After the awful monster Grendel slaughtered the warriors, he flees from there, wounded and mortally sick by the hero's strikes. Then Beowulf attacks wounded Grendel and his mother in their under-water lair. The action takes place under the sea and the writer has allocated full descriptions to this combat, which demands a vast location under water.The hero Beowulf emerges from the water, carrying many helmets. His blade is already melted with the hot blood of the monster. Swimming hard, he comes to the shore. The action is great and epic, the emergence of a victorious hero out of the sea bringing peace, victory and property for his people.

At the end of the story, providing specially-made armor and weapons for the battle against the flames of the dragon, Beowulf goes to attack the dragon. While reading the description of the dragon's hoard "beneath the stone-cliff", where the final fighting happens, readers can feel the great, perhaps underground, awful lair of the dragon. There, under the cliffs (underground) are rising wells of fire to the surface and hot currents of fire. The hero shouts and his roaring voice gets echoing through the hoard. The deep resonant voice brings in mind the image of an extent location. The words "gliding on", "hastening"(64-65) describing the actions of the dragon can just happen in a spacious panoramic location. The surging and advancing waves of fire in the final combat between the good and the evil of the epic can nevertheless happen in a small place. Beowulf blows the last strong strokes and kills the dragon but he is killed by the wounds he has gotten in the fighting, too. At the end of the narration, there the readers can find Beowulf's funeral, which in turn happens in a vast setting.

The elevated style and tone of the narrator in describing the story, the subject of the classic epic, which is mostly war and combats, and the natural locations where the actions happen there, certainly demand wide scopes settings in most of the scenes which are in harmony with the characteristics of Vico's first stage, the Age of Gods.

Gulliver's Travels- The Second Stage

In this masterpiece of satire by Jonathan Swift, Lemuel Gulliver, a ship surgeon, travels "into several remote nations of the world". The story happens in four parts. In the book I, Gulliver is shipwrecked on the island of Lilliput. In the book II, Gulliver finds himself stranded in Brobdingnag, a kingdom with gigantic inhabitants. In book III, he visits Laputa, a flying island where the nobles quite literally have their heads in the clouds. Book IV describes the country of the Houyhnhnms, coldly rational horse-like creatures.

I have decided to use the first book of Gulliver's travels as the pilot model of the second stage's works. In part one, *A Voyage to Lilliput,* The narrator gives some account of himself and his family: "My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire"(Swift 8). The word "estate", according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, is "a large area of land usually in the country that is owned by one person or family" or "an area of land with a lot of houses and factories of the same type on it". In either case, it connotes the land ownership, aristocratic and feudal life, which as Vico says, is the features of the age of heroes; the second age (Lemon 140). The name of the state, *Nottinghamshire,* in itself has the meaning of forming urbanity in a society. And, as he says: "He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge at fourteen years old" (8)… the name, *college,* connotes the existence of social institutions. The whole atmosphere of the story is getting shaped in an urban one.

He then becomes a surgeon aboard a ship called the *Swallow* for three years. Settling in London, he works as a doctor, and marries a woman named Mary Burton. As his business begins to fail when his patron dies, he decides to go to sea again and travels for six years. He accepts one job on a ship called the *Antelope*.

The geographical names and navigational terms, like *the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south*, in the text, show the scientific improvements of the era, so that readers can guess, locate and confine the place in their mind.

In the East Indies, the *Antelope* encounters a violent storm in which twelve crewmembers die. Gulliver swims safely to shore. He lies down on the grass near the shore to rest, and soon he falls asleep. When he wakes up, he finds his arms, legs, and long hair tied to the ground with pieces of thread. Here the setting is a vast cast away shore, maybe far behind the civilization but the story goes on different way. There live some tiny people, nearby, about six inches tall. They carry arrows and bows. This shows that they are soldiers, and that, in turn, is the sign of the existence of a kind of hierarchy, and perhaps a civilization; a sign of Vico's second stage. All the facilities and tools which Gulliver sees around him and describes for us are the signs of the presence of a rather improved society. The Lilliputians are mathematicians and make machinery. The temple Gulliver describes reminds the readers the Church of England where Thomas Becket was killed there in 1170. All these make a setting of urbanity.

The image of a king having a meeting with his most important men needs an internal royal place in a palace as the setting. The words "council" and debate intensify this atmosphere. The settings sometimes get internal and suggest a kind of micro-setting, like when the king gave orders to certain proper officers to search Gulliver, who then put the

soldiers in his pockets. Here, readers feel that they are standing in the giant pockets of an ogre, looking at two men taking notes and making inventory of the things there. Having in mind this image, the readers can see a garden in front of a palace where in hundreds f people scattering and screaming quickly in different directions. One can perceive both aristocratic and urban features of the setting. The micro-setting of this scene becomes clearer when Gulliver shows the contents of his pockets, specially his watch, to the king (26). The meaning of the key term, micro-setting, becomes more meaningful here, with the image of two strong men carrying a watch to their king or a king who stands beside a huge watch and looking at its face. When the king wants to see the hand, he can easily perceive the motion of the minute hand because of the proportion of the king to the watch.

Most of the scenes show a kind of urbanity and civilization and demand limited urban settings. The narrator has made the society of Lilliput so similar to the current society of Europe, especially England in order to satirize its practices, issues and discussions. The events often happen in settings with urban features. They are mostly micro settings- some settings like real ones but with smaller size, the setting which the readers can deduce the size by the presence of a real criterion, a touchstone like Gulliver's hand.

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Ulysses- The Third Stage

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is an account of one day in the lives of some citizens of Dublin in 1904. Along with Stephen Dedalus, who appeared in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* this novel introduces two new main characters, Leopold and Molly Bloom. It is, therefore, the description of some limited events of some limited characters in a limited location.

The setting of time here, has been narrowed down to a whole day; day in- day out activities of some characters; and the setting of place, although apparently is the internal or external parts of Dublin, which, in turn, is going to be shattered down to different pieces by some elements and techniques. The existence of these elements in *Ulysses* adds several deeper layers of meaning to the work; thus association with some other concepts, then other settings, in somewhere else.

Here are some factors the author has used that make the settings broken down to pieces. The name itself foreshadows a kind of re-cycling the history, a concept, which Joyce has borrowed from Vico (Stocker 12-13), a concept, which he uses again in his *Finnegans Wake*, later. The names of the episodes refer the readers to some parts of the *Odyssey* by Homer. Therefore, it makes some other sub-settings, visionary in readers' mind. The presence of Stephen Dedalus, a character in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, makes some association with some other locations. In addition, the existence of several symbols in the work, cast the readers perpetually to some other areas of meaning which needs some different visionary internal settings. Moreover, in *Ulysses*, Joyce uses interior monologue and stream of conscious technique extensively, and instead of employing one narrative voice, Joyce radically shifts narrative style with each new episode of the novel.

As far as the chapters not exactly divide the work, the writer of the essay has based his scrutiny on some of the episodes that contains the most influential techniques, stream

of conscious or interior monologue, which cast the characters' minds, along with the readers', to some other settings. In episode two, for example, as Stephen is walking along the sea front he reflects upon the things he sees — midwives, cockle-pickers, boulders, a dog, the body of a dog, "seaspawn and seawrack". He wonders if he should visit his aunt and remember his father's scorn for his mother's relatives: "His pace slackened. Here. Am I going to aunt (sic) Sara's or not? My consubstantial father's voice. Did you see anything of your artist brother Stephen lately? No? Sure he's not down in Strasburg terrace with his aunt Sally?" (31). The setting here is at a beach along Sandy mount Strand, but as Stephen closes his eyes for some time to hear the sounds around, he begins to brood on his past. He sees himself going to his aunt's home (31). One sentence is about the events of the present time (e.g. "His pace slackened") while the next sentence(s) is about the events which have happened somewhere else in the past. The settings are so mingled that the readers cannot recognize whose description of the setting it is, the character's one or the writer's: "In his broad bed uncle Richie, pillowed and blanketed, extends over the hillock of his knees a sturdy forearm. Clean chested. He has washed the upper moiety" (31). After some dialogue between characters there, the internal setting is going to change into somewhere else in Stephen's mind as he orders himself to come out of there.

One of the mental settings, the story shifts to is a church, may by Stephen has been there in his childhood. He reminds the details (32-33). All these happen in Stephen's mind while he is walking along the beach: "Cousin Stephen, you will never be a saint. Isle of saints. You were awfully holy, weren't you? You prayed to the Blessed Virgin that you might not have a red nose ..." (33). However, without any sign of the shifting the time of the setting changes into present time at the beach. The shifting of the setting happens repeatedly and continuously in this chapter. Another one takes place where he reminds some other scenes. He remembers another event, which has happened there, before. The setting is beside the water where some people are pulling a dead body out of the water.

In episode four, the events are set at Leopold Bloom's house. The setting is an internal one. He is preparing breakfast for himself and his wife (and his cat) before departing for Paddy Dignam's funeral. The jingling springs of the bed upstairs show that his wife Molly is awake. He muses upon the source of the bed, but the story takes the readers to another setting, maybe in Gibraltar(40). It seems that the scene turns into an external one somewhere in Gibraltar and Bloom, standing there, is looking at the officers swimming. Again, without any sign of time the setting is back again at the present time: "On the doorstep he felt in his hip pocket for the latchkey. Not there. In the trousers I left off. Must get it ..." (41).

As he reads the newspaper, the daydreaming takes Mr Bloom and the readers to Mediterranean lands full of eucalyptus trees, melon fields and olive or orange gardens. Readers can perceive the setting through the filter of Bloom's mind, while in reality, he is walking in the streets of Dublin. And it goes on; then "a cloud begins to cover the sun slowly, wholly. Grey. Far." (43) This makes the internal setting the readers see through Bloom's mind shift to another one. The full fruit trees and large gardens turn into a setting of barren, bare, wastelands alongside a volcanic lake with poisonous waters (43). Then the Dead Sea reminds him of the ancient people of Sodom, Gomorrah and Edom. The

last words make him feeling desolated and remembering his unfaithful wife. Therefore, he hurries homeward. He comes back to the real setting.

The last chapter, which Joyce has called "Penelope," while Molly is at home, her pondering, (which the researcher has called Monologism) gives a ride to readers to many other places. The settings are so tiny shattered and broken down that in any long sentence readers see many different sub-settings. All punctuation marks are eliminated in the last chapter, so it involves eight extra ordinary long, "giant sentences" linked just with conjunctions. They comprise Molly's interior monologue. By remembering the infidelity of her husband, her thought turns and turns and goes to the first time she has met and shaken hand with Boylan. The setting turns into some places where she has tried to seduce different men, and reminds her of the sexual intercourse she has had with several persons, one of which is at the Jews' temple's gardens (467). While the setting is Molly's bedroom, the sub-setting here is in and beside the confessing cabinet in a church. Molly fantasizes her relationship with the priest there. The changing of sub-setting is too rapid and immediate that the readers can hardly follow the line of Molly's imagination. The sub-setting is once at a church, then immediately in a drinking table scene, then in Gibraltar, then an evening in White friars' street chapel and so on. The alteration happening in sub-setting is so frequentative. This work, especially the last chapter, alone, contains so many sub-settings that it is enough to be a suitable piloting model as one of the literary modern works the writer can supply for Vico's third stage, where the setting shrinkage is happening.

The Lord of the Rings- The Fourth (The Re-cycling) Stage

It is an epic high fantasy novel written by English scholar, philologist, writer of fantasy and University of Oxford professor, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. It had been written in stages between 1937 and 1949 before, but published in three volumes in 1954-5. It is a [long and ambitious work which seeks to create a history and mythology for an unspecified period of the past which Tolkien calls "Middle Earth"] (Ousby 392). The compound noun "Middle-Earth", as the main place of the story, containing lots of wide settings and landscapes, bring to mind the concept of universality and no-where about; a feature of the settings of the narratives in the first stage of Vico. In addition, the presence of the legendary and imaginary creatures reminds the readers the old manners of narratology which appropriately suggests Stage Four of Vico's theory i.e. *The Re-cycling Stage*

The title of the novel refers to the story's main antagonist, the Dark Lord Sauron, who had in an earlier age created the One Ring to rule the other Rings of Power as the ultimate weapon in his campaign to conquer and rule all of Middle-earth. The paper will focus on book one of the collection which contains the first twelve chapters.

The story begins in the Shire, where the Hobbit Frodo Baggins inherits the Ring from Bilbo, his cousin and guardian. Bilbo Baggins is preparing to hold a party, a variety of entertainments. Practically everybody living near is invited. Reading the descriptions which the narrator gives, the readers feel standing in a vast place full of trees, flowers, fountains and.... (Tolkien 20). Before the party, Gandalf the Grey, a wizard and old friend of Bilbo, suspects the Ring's identity. The night when two friends meet and speak

about the ring, Bilbo sings a song at the door and while departing (26). This song can be a foreshadowing for the long and extended ways which the protagonist of the story must go through. It points to a road which goes over and over and he must follow.

The setting is a house, among a garden, beside the fields. There is a sloping path, meadows and grass. It is like one is looking at the countryside around the cities of England. When Gandalf becomes certain, he comes back and tells Frodo the strange history of the rings. The accounts of the history of the ring cover a span of some thousands years. There have been a lot of people who have come into being and accidently owned the ring and got killed. Gandalf strongly advises Frodo to take the ring away from the Shire. Frodo leaves there, accompanied by his gardener and friend, Sam, two of his cousins, Merry and Pippin. The long way begins. The story is full of vast settings containing extended plains, lots of hills beside rivers, thick forests and high mountains with deep, broad valleys. When they start the trip, they pass along the fields, trees and bushes. The word "hedgerows" (48) reminds readers of the countryside of England.

Their way is long. They cross the Water, west of Hobbiton, by a narrow plank-bridge (48). When they traverse for some time, they look back at the way they have passed. The area one can imagine while reading is clearly an expanded place, while they stand up a hill and look at the village as the lamps are twinkling. The picture of the place where they are resting (48) is easy to be imagined. All the way they pass or places they get to rest, at the same time observing glorious and magnificent scenery. It seems that the eyes of the viewers see the landscape as far as they can. The scene can be perceived from the foreground to the depth of the background. It is beautiful open countryside where

one can see most of the elements of nature; hills, rivers, jungle and perhaps the high mountains far behind. The scene is wide and extended.

Suddenly the sameness of the environment around changes. It is another foreshadowing of what that will happen. However, the setting is still visible from the foreground to the depth of the background, where small clumps of trees "melt away in the distance to a brown woodland haze". They hear a horse coming along the road behind. They get out of sight. On the horse, is sitting a large man, who seems to crouch in the saddle, is wrapped in a great black cloak and hood, so that only his boots in the high stirrups are showed below; his face is shadowed and invisible. The re-emerging of the fairy tale creatures, here, reminds the readers of the ancient myths and legends. As the horse-rider moves away, Frodo crawls to the edge of the road and watches him, until he dwindled into the distance. It seems to him that suddenly, before "it passes out of sight, the horse turns aside and went into the trees on the right." (50) It shows the long way the rider goes until he gets out of sight. So it shows the distance existed in mental picture one can make in his mind.

Most of the struggling of the characters happens in the treading long and wearisome roads and untrodden ways through the mountains, hills, jungles and beside the rivers to the end of the story. They pass almost by several kinds of nature with wide views of the landscape. "They pass along the edge of a huge turnip-field, and come to a stout gate. Beyond it a rutted lane runs between low well-laid hedges towards a distant clump of trees…" (61). These settings, of course, naturally demands vast landscapes. Most of the settings are so wide and extended which one feels to see every details of the nature

around from the point he/she is standing to the depth of the background. It seems that most of the scenes are extremely long shots if one decides to film them.

Conclusion:

The results, which one can get from the scrutinizing the scene settings of these four piloting models show that they follow a specific pattern which is expressed in Vico's *Stage Theory* as follows. In the first stage (age of god), the narrations are action-centred, which demand a vast and expanded area as setting. Most of the scenes happen in natural large places like plains, groves, seas, oceans, jungles and they may even take place somewhere between heaven and earth. As the information has demonstrated, the descriptions are general and sometimes do not pay much attention to most of the details, which results in vast setting with no exact borderlines. Most of the points of views are omniscient, which make readers feel as if they are standing high on the clouds and look down at the narration events and the setting as a whole.

In the second stage (age of heroes), the settings are more limited and confined in urban and rural places. The events mostly happen in cities, palaces, abbeys, streets, houses and other similar locations. There are more detailed descriptions about these locations.

Then there comes the third stage (the age of men) in which the story may happen in the mind of the characters as they are recalling the events. The readers may associate the setting through the characters' mind and remembrance. There are not any definite signs for them to know exactly where they are standing in the setting of the story. The setting is shattered down to pieces. There are different sub-settings at the same time.

The readers then may feel a kind of re-turn (the fourth stage) to the narratology manners of the first stage. There re-emerge some narrations with vast and stretched settings. The stories again happen in oceans, forests and mountains. They may even happen in the sky or space. There have entered legendary, mythic or alien creatures, again. Many of the re-productions of old religious or non-religious stories in cinema or new ones (space movies) with vast scopes, extended sceneries and alien creatures give the concept of a re-cycling.

So, diachronically looking at the settings, one can feel a shrinkage and a re-course in the narratology considering setting, a process which reminds readers of Vico's stage theory.

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i

Desertion

it's the regret of not
living the life that was
stolen which is the
regret of not having regrets.

in the waking world
the beautiful scene
s the blue wine
poets will do
for the child

and close encounters
with desertion between

—*Timothy Collins*

Robert Nabess Carving #8 Moose Horn, Acrylic

A Parodic Parable and its Pedagogics

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Religion when all believed. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. May the wife's womb never cease from bearing. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man. Let the woman learn in silence and in all subjection. Contrary to biological birth fact: Adam's rib. The Jewish male morning prayer: thank God I was not born a woman.

(Tillie Olsen, *Silences*, 26)

The Parable of the Sower

Guru began with another parable. The sower set out to sow. Some seeds fell by the road. The birds ate them up. Some fell by a rocky place. As they sprouted, they withered in dry heat. The thorns choked the seeds that fell among the bramble. Those that fell on fertile soil sprouted and bore fruit.

A group of pupils sat on the beach munching LSD. They crawled toward Guru, falling at his feet. *Guro, you are great! But do tell us what this parable is all about.*

Guru took a deep drag at the smoking cannabis. He patted his pupils gently. Know ye not, little lambs, this parable? *We* are the sowers. We set out with a potful of seeds. Sterility devours the seeds we sow in barren

> women. In virgins they are aborted before they sprout. Contraceptive pills choke those we sow within prostitutes. Those we scatter in another's wife, alas, sprout, flourish, and yield fruit.
>
> And they boarded a bark toward the other shore. (Gracy 177)[1]

Gracy (b. 1951) is a well-known contemporary writer in Malayalam. Her stories challenge the usual socio-cultural assumptions about the unusual "Kerala model of development" and the picture-perfect ethos it evokes.[2] She has fought male arrogance and dominance among writers and intellectuals and has pioneered a distinct microfictional genre that relentlessly unmasks Malayali hypocrisies, and feelings of inferiority and chauvinism among men. Understated but remorseless, Gracy's humour borders on the supreme fiction of nonsense, the fiction that first knows itself to be nonsense before it begins to affect its readers' reception. Her allusive and anecdotal writing often assumes a fairly decent awareness of the classical and contemporary cultural texts as well as those details of folk- and pop-lore of which political Kerala has always remained rich and vibrant. We shall see below the peculiar metaphor Gracy makes of this renowned parable, an exercise she undertakes in order to widen the scope of what might otherwise pass for as a mere retelling-in-translation of a metaparable in Matthew 13: 3–8 and further explicated in the same chapter: 18–21.

It will never cease to amaze lovers of stories that a parable never finishes; its inexhaustibility is very telling indeed. This is because a parable *tosses* or *projects* itself beside another, etymologically speaking.[3] What this means for us is that while listening to one story, we cannot afford to put the other on a "disattend track" as it were.[4] The parable's multiple thrusts poke desires that often exceed our normal receptive grasp. For we cannot help feeling that the story we are told has always been gesturing towards another story, tangentially. In the immediate example of the sower and his seeds, although we see the different and uneven terrains over which the seeds fall with what different and uneven results, we sense nevertheless that the experiences of the sower and ours are different and uneven in ways to which we are called upon to make appropriate and approximate adjustments on an interpretive scale. A parable tempts its listeners to respond with *their* desires, even project them on to it. The life they see in a parable only equals the lives they see in themselves. Put in other words, they *live* the parable whose meaning, whose truth, their own lives exemplify. They sow, they reap. How dismal a thought, then, that Gracy's men set out with "a potful of seeds" and all the rest of it follows a weird logic of kinky sexuality. How awful, further, to be treated to such male fantasies of sovereign mastery! Gracy's enviable success as a parabolist is hardly derivative. She believes, like Christ, that there are ears and eyes in Kerala that work overtime but to no ethical point. If the parable has a pedagogic edge to it, and she knows it surely has, she also wants us to understand *why* it has this edge, and for whom is this most pertinent.

Leaving aside the obvious pointers like Guru and his pupils and the mock-scene of a class-room on the beach etc., this retold parable carries the shrewd subtext of pedagogy whose success we seem to take for granted. Given the texts whose ethical values are indisputable, only their interpretation by minds perverted by communitarian or other politics is likely to harm young minds. This would perhaps sound a reminiscent bell for those who recall reports on the controversial readings of passages in school text-books in Kerala over the last few decades. The point that brings this parable closer home to us is Jesus, the first Teacher of us all to enunciate a pedagogy that emphasizes seeing and hearing

as essential to learning. Matthew 13: 24–30 narrates the parable of the Wheat and the Tares and promises the Kingdom of God as the reward for discriminating between good and evil. Closely thereafter Christ identifies "He who sows the good seed [as] the Son of Man" (Matthew 13: 37). Teaching couldn't be better described — giving that knowledge with which learners are able to distinguish between good and evil. Remember that Christ specially mentions in these verses that the *scandalous*, those things and persons that offend, "will be cast into a furnace of fire" (Matthew 13: 42).

If we are able to recall at least this much from Matthew 13, we shall see why Gracy plays so thoughtfully upon the Parable *of* the Sower, a parable that tells us *about* a sower, and a parable that the sower appropriates as *his*. The teacher, above all, is a sower, one who disseminates knowledge. *Dissemination*, a theoretically loaded concept since Derrida's book of that name, gathers within its capacious ambit such related ideas of *semen*, *seed*, *seme*, *semantics*, etc. Don't we call the parables of the *Bible* "Christ's parables"? Does he not call himself the Son of Man, a sower of good seeds? Gracy's Guru who retells this parable 'faithfully' but interprets it viciously (on his terms) is nevertheless entitled to both 'mastery' and ownership of this parable. He is both good and evil in one person, a purveyor of evil pedagogy but in all fairness, let's say, he offers the interpretation of the parable only when his pupils beg him for its *gutens* (goodness?). In another, unignorable sense, Gracy has made the parable his (and *hers* as well!) in that the parable we are reading here is a translation. Not quite a translation either, strictly speaking, because Gracy's is a deliberately (perverse) parodic adaptation, a textual refraction of sorts. Faith, implicitly, is at issue in all this— how faithful one ought to be when one repeats the parable, and how faithful one has been to its Biblical source, etc. Gracy's arguably is *not* a translation into Malayalam of this famous parable but it operates very much within the precincts of a translational felicity when it problematizes faithfulness in both religious and secular senses. For Gracy might well be invoking her translator's licence, Judas-like, to betray a source to which she remains so close. (Let's recall that Judas, according to John 18.5, is *one who hands Him* over, a translator, someone who 'betrays' his source to those who do not know who/what must be pursued.)

Certainly this new Guru (perhaps an anti-Christ?) is the smart nominee of a dubious educational regime that presses a parabolic pedagogy on an unsuspecting public in order to subserve oppressive ideologies. Does all this sound scandalous? It ought to, if we are able to see that a translation is apt to go far beyond its customary call. It takes us way beyond the Kingdom of God originally promised by the parable of the sower. Perhaps one might consider analogically the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣadv.2* where the disciples of Prajapati (another archetypal teacher and creator of the world) approach him for advice upon their graduation. Prajapati just answers *da* to each of the three groups of students: gods, human beings, and demons. They variously but according to their *swabhāva* (innate character, roughly) interpret the *da*. As the Indian parable exemplifies, and as teachers we have often felt subliminally, students of a class always receive the same text differently. The *Upaniṣadic* injunction however has this unique power to appropriately evoke responses from its heterogeneous listeners, but those responses answer perfectly to their *swabhāva* they begin to recognize as peculiarly their own. Is it surprising then that in Gracy's version the parable shrinks to the narrowly monologic and phallocentric? It cannot but betray anything other than an all-male group's libidinal compulsions. A parable retold, as Gracy's shows, is a prism. It refracts Biblical light in colours that betray

Malayali culture's abjection and abomination.

If "The Parable of the Sower" is presented to an all-male audience by Guru, Gracy's parodic parable is now re-presented to a much larger 'class,' an interpretive community of men *and* women, to a world whose differences are at least theoretically as infinite as the beings that populate that world. By not making any representational claim however, particularly on behalf of herself as a parbolist or as a woman, Gracy appears to believe, as Judith Butler proposes, that "The culturally enmired subject" ought to boldly confront "its constructions, even when those constructions are the very predicate of its own identity" (143). In the feminist political theorizing of Butler's persuasion, it serves little purpose anymore to inveigh against constructions of substantive male-female identities. Gracy might agree here that her parodic repetition of the Parable of the Sower is a far more productive way of re-engaging the gender mystique, of exposing the male fantasies and vanities of false pride and proprietorial hubris. The following passage from Butler's "From Parody to Politics" reads almost like a gloss on Gracy's parable that breaks past the discipline of irony:

> Practices of parody can serve to reengage and reconsolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalized gender configuration and one that appears as derived, phantasmatic, and mimetic— a failed copy, as it were. And surely parody has been used to further a politics of despair, one which affirms a seemingly inevitable exclusion of marginal genders from the territory of the natural and the real. […] [T]here is a subversive laughter in the pastiche-effect of parodic practices in which the original, the authentic, and the real are themselves constituted as effects (146).

Gracy's parable now urges us to set aside historically stable, biodeterministic categories of "man" and "woman," and with them, all the conventionally stabilized identities and effects, and the naturalizing narratives that underpin them. In Gracy's parodically engendered parable, we are able to see clearly how "gender is an 'act,' as it were, that is open to splittings, self-parody, self-criticism, and those hyperbolic exhibitions of the 'natural'…" (Butler 146–47). While pitying the male fantasies of seeing woman differently and (in turn) among themselves as "barren," "virgin," "adulterous," "sluttish" etc., the loud laughter cannot but grudgingly approve of Guru's refusal to see woman as a stable, single, universal category. This is slightly better than the sheer hypocrisy of worshipping Mother Goddesses and Virgin Mothers on the one hand and treating women and girl children badly and exploiting them in every possible manner in our society on the other. At least this perverse "labour of love," albeit unintentionally, produces significations of reproductive labour that range from the libidinal and the pragmatic to the arrantly business economies. It is important to realize this because we feel grateful that parables after all are open to interpretation, and it is preëminently a genre that openly approves of human desires that do not always point toward only one direction.

We are not quite done with this extraordinarily dynamic metaphor of the story-as-parable; not just yet when we realize that in one unignorable sense, the sower must be, by his deed (and word), both a custodian and scatterer of seeds. Christ cannot keep the Word to himself; while spreading it far and wide, he must give it meaning, *his* meaning, an inevitability dissemination enjoins on all sowers of words *as* deeds. The parable thus becomes the ultimate metaphor of stories, and *for* teaching stories (a professionally hazardous ambiguity all the same) in rewardingly multiple ways. Teachers of fiction (literature generally) always confront this peculiar situation when their class seems to ask a question so large and momentous as to have no immediate urgency or specificity, a

question the class does not always verbalize or articulate pointedly, but one that always seems to persist: *Why this story? Why now? So, what do we make of all this?* The point is that a parable inevitably poses a dilemma for the one who cites it: whether to interpret it in the most appropriate language for the benefit of an audience to which it is addressed, or to leave it as such to the resources of those unused to official and sophisticated interpretations. It is not without significance that Matthew 13: 10–13 recognizes an unequal world the teller faces, his audience comprising differently-abled persons in terms of their intellectual and interpretive skills. There are those 'insiders,' so to speak, who already know the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, and those 'outsiders' who don't. That a *secret* is inherent makes the parable all the more challenging for the interpreter: once its secret is given away, where is the parable? But how does one interpret it without giving its secret away? Such questions hardly trouble untutored minds however. Their subconscious is already a fallow ground, ready for taking the seed of the parable. For those others whose subconscious remains dry and hard as ever, the interpretive drill must work long and hard. The crucial verb here is *give* (of which, more below) and what is given is *knowledge*, which the unlettered gain on their own with no respect to the canons and classics.[5]No wonder our seminars often ring hollow in halls where the converted preach to the inconvertible. It is truly liberating, therefore, to discover that a parable (as a metaphor for a story) changes its terms and conditions of reference appropriate to its audience; that metaphors generally are productive of meanings to which all of us (the interpreters who learn together as a class, regardless of our natural and socio-cultural differences) can relate and gain new insights.

The giver, the giving, the gift, and the one(s) so gifted are commonplaces in most scenarios involving the scriptures. The religious lore throughout the world capitalizes on these commonplaces that largely influence the machinery of pedagogy. The practice continues to this day when students are "admitted" to schools by selection and the faculty "recruited" competitively for teaching. Simply put, academic learning is highly selective and preferential: admissions and jobs are *given.* Only the terms and conditions of selection and preferment are somewhat different in parts of the world. J. Hillis Miller's essay entitled "Parable and Performative" opens by alerting us to some paradoxes that beset our discussion of the literary parable but the one most fundamental to all interpretive engagement is the following. "The paradox of parable," says Miller, "is that it is a likeness that rests on a manifest unlikeness between what is given and what cannot by any means be given directly. A parabolic 'likeness' is so 'unlike' that without interpretation or commentary the meaning may slip by the reader or listener altogether" (58). No matter what else is considered lost in translations of the *Bible* into the many languages of the world, it is truly amazing that the Word of God, the Gospel, retains its mystery in the parables, gifts that simply cannot change hands but must bind the giver and the taker in a reciprocal relationship. Considering that the *Bible* in Kerala, like the scriptures of all proselytizing religions throughout the world, has had a history fraught both with resistance and reception, and the indigenous cultures in Kerala have known and mastered the *Bible* through the interpretive ministrations of western missionaries (again, as in most Afro-Asian countries), the parable *as* gift complicates the metaphor in interesting ways. The Bible stories as texts in moral instruction and literary education go far beyond the discipline of the paradox Miller finds endemic to parables in general. In contradistinction to the ordinary function of a metaphor, the parable's metaphor defamiliarizes

its crucial terms (*seeds, sower*) for those who claim superior and privileged knowledge in order to refamiliarize them with meanings of which they have so far been unaware. For those insiders, therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven will appear in a new light, especially when they imagine what it means to live in a world (like the outsiders) without any access to privileged knowledge they have. A parable teaches this by giving, but not by *giving away*— at least, no one feels unduly privileged and preferentially afforded knowledge. The 'truth' of the parable, they so realize, is inexhaustible.

This, in a way, explains the success of the *Bible* with every new translation, with every new generation, and how the *Bible* has grown among the indigenous traditions of Kerala, its use and application harnessed to secular and political ends by Christian and other denominations and creeds— and spawned new interpretive communities of local residents and the Malayali diaspora across India and the world— not always devoted to the Gospels and noble Christian lives within a largely left-oriented, if *areligious* democratic political culture.[6] It is also useful to remember that the *Bible* in Kerala (and elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent)was entering into an epistemologically fruitful dialogue with some form or the other of ancient Hindu thought which conceives of learning as gift. *Vidyādhanam* (learning as wealth) and *Vidyādānam* (learning as giving/donation)are kindred thoughts. The acquisition of learning as wealth is distinguished from the acquisition of other forms of wealth because the learning cannot be hoarded like material forms of wealth. The enabling paradox here is that the more you give away learning, the more it grows. Thus *Vidyādānam* is still considered supreme among people who understand this 'paradoxical logic.' Students and teachers knowingly pursue a profession that brings them very little material benefits. Learning is that peculiar gift one human being can afford to share with another and yet feel absolutely free from the customary obligation of either the donor or donee. For the Indians do not think that to give learning is to take anything away either from oneself or by another. This is particularly true of Vedic learning, a shared inheritance by those who have invested in it, and those who feel called upon to make further investments in it. Furthermore, as Maria Heim observes in her *Theories of the Gift in South Asia*, Vedic learning is that unique property Guru gives away without having to relinquish his/her personal right over it. "That is," explains Heim, "unlike other gifts which are fully alienable from their donor, the gift of learning does not require the donor to give up ownership of the gift, and in that sense its status as a gift is somewhat qualified" (124).Gracy's barb at Guru's proprietorial pretensions to the seeds men sow (but not reap) makes some awkward sense in this light. While patriarchal hubris makes Guru forget the significance of *dāna* (that which is given) in the religio-cultural traditions of learning and living in India, it emboldens him to exercise interpretive rights over the parable in a vein reminiscent of the Tillie Olsen passage I have cited as my epigraph.

As far as I am aware, the Christian believers of any denomination in Kerala or elsewhere have not bristled at Gracy's parable. This is merciful but somewhat surprising because a section of the Malayali society (Hindu, Christian, or Muslim) has always, especially in the last decade or so, resorted to public, even violent, protests against allegedly gross or blasphemous representation of its iconic saints, martyrs, or gods. Indian writers dealing with mythical or historical figures and themes, especially those writers and artists who position themselves radically outside the institutions of official interpretive protocols, are often faulted for not walking the cautious tightrope over vast terrains of inhospitable and fundamentalist protests and reprisal. Malayalees often joke that there are only

Christ's people but no people's Christ.[7] Now Gracy certainly enjoys an interpretive edge, the one Miller's paradox grants anyone citing a parable. We just can't have a parable given to us, one left uninterpreted. A parable is *not* a gift unless an apt interpretation completes it. Let us also remember that Gracy's Guru is cast in the guise of a service-provider, a hoary figure in the history of Christianity in Kerala where missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and preachers from the podium or the streets had taken the Gospels to the public, "interpreted" them for the uninitiated and less educated. As a matter of fact, the impetus given by the Christian churches, and the schools abutting them, to Kerala's proud cent-per cent literacy is well-documented. Given that the *Bible* itself is a "gift," a Malayali reader might indeed, as a matter of right, look for a short pull-out of a "user's manual," an interpretation that honours, albeit mockingly, this tradition. The pupils who beg for "the *gutens*" of this parable represent this craven readership. In any case, we must assume that the days of official interpretations and authorized commentaries of biblical texts are over. The Malayalees know by now that the Word, its history and meaning, are largely constituted by the histories and meanings of its ecumenical interpretants and interpreters. Gracy's parable in some ways acknowledges this reality.

While anthropological and kinship studies of the west have pointed to the role of material gifts in fostering and sustaining relationships within a community, non-material gifts such as proverbs and parables that are repositories of collective wisdom help bring the peoples of the world together and seek to promote healthy international relations. It is perhaps to the failure of this ideal that Gracy's parable points. If, within the colonial paradigm, the Biblical parables might be seen as politically motivated,[8] Gracy's retold parable today raises interesting questions about the 'gift' itself, now mistaken by our young students as "freebies," or "give back material goods" etc. in a largely market-oriented economy of exchange. Lost in the illegal global trafficking and use of banned drugs and dope, this generation, as Gracy's new parable seems to suggest, cannot relate to a story on their terms. Unless mediated and guided, or *mis*guided as here, by a Guru who brokers relationships, the pupils are absolutely clueless in recognizing legitimate gifts. (For instance, we are astounded by the indifference of these young minds to the symbolic potential of the seeds as *hope* or *future*, but, to be so aware, we may ask, do they necessarily have to sit at Guru's feet?) In this bizarre academy of shared guilt and shame, of promiscuity and profanity, Guru and his pupils are seen to neither appreciate the parable nor understand the larger ethics of being in this world. Do they know *what* they might be sowing when Guru so triumphantly declares, "*We* are the sowers"? They have given nothing to the world, nor are they entitled to receive anything, let alone Christ's parable, as gift. For, as Rauna Kuokkanen who has written so brilliantly on the kinds of epistemic ignorance rampant in the modern academy observes, "The gift… implies *response-ability*; an ability to respond, to remain attuned to the world beyond self and be willing to recognize its existence through gift giving. Such a sense of responsibility is a result of living within an ecosystem and being dependent on it" (66).

Allowing for certain minor variations in emphasis and sketching, Gracy's Guru is pretty much familiar to the readers of retold Indian legends and tales. He is a classic stereotype in at least two important respects. First, he is easily identified in the west as preëminently a scholar-teacher of South Asian provenance but in the popular media representations he is, by turns, a male crank who professes arcane or mystical knowledge; a mountebank; a fake; even a trickster or conman. His profiles in fiction and film through

the last century alone make for an interesting study of cultural decadence and orientalist mystique purveyed by the mass media. Gracy' Guru answers, however, more to his highly respected pedagogic lineage in the classic Indian tradition. "The Sanskrit etymology of *guru,*" notes Srinivas Aravamudan in his "Introduction" to *Guru English* most helpfully, "presents this figure as 'a dispeller of darkness.' The guru's power is perceived to be spiritual even as …the disciple in search of wisdom or enlightenment… can choose to pursue and is sometimes encouraged to perform an absolute surrender of his or her will to the will of the master. Etymologically, the male śiṣ*ya* might perform the funeral rites of a son for the guru…" (7). Secondly, this figure's *gurutva* (a guru's distinctive status as well as the considerable heft his influence brings to bear upon his pupils) perhaps accounts in large measure for his stereotypically pronounced sexist bias and contempt for female sexuality. If this stereotypical dimension overworks in the minds of students, Gracy's retold parable is unlikely to reach, or make any remarkable impact on, today's classroom. For students are apt to wonder, as they did in my class for example, whether this parodic text is yet another (and familiar) critique of warped and ethically unsustainable male fantasy, or a backhanded vindication of some distraught androcentric imaginary. An intertext to hand was the class recalling Agrippa of *Antony and Cleopatra* invoking much the same metaphor of agricultural labour for male lust and aggression.[9] Either way its point might be lost before it is made at all, unless it is seen as radically putting this laughably unscientific division of gendered labour in a historical perspective. Gracy's barb now is directed at pedagogics that have largely neglected the reasons of male ignorance, of their circumstances of *not* knowing, or not wanting to be responsibly informed, about women and reproductive health. There are just as many reasons for *not* knowing what we ought to as there are reasons for our knowing only the socio-culturally desired and mandated literature on human sexuality. Nancy Tuana, for instance, has proposed that political, psychological and ideological constraints have occluded male studies of the female, and that a far more useful feminist project would involve studying such "epistemologies of ignorance," by which she means studying not what we know and how we know (say, about women) but why we do *not* know crucial details about certain domains of knowledge. If we understand Tuana's project as "an epistemological resistance… geared at undermining the production of ignorance about women's health and women's bodies in order to critique and extricate women from oppressive systems often based on this ignorance, as well as creating liberatory knowledges [sic]" (2), we have begun perhaps to see why Gracy has taken the trouble to parodically remind us of the old Parable of the Sower. It is one thing to listen to the parable and, by force of habit, ask for its "*gutens*," seek a predictable meaning, and be satisfied like the pupils who literally follow their Guru. It is another, however, to view all explanations and interpretations as suspect, as emanating, that is, from paranoid thinking, a questionable mode of producing knowledge that establishes "truth" once and for all (much like Guru's neat functions and categories of women) and thereby pre-empt all attempts to seek alternative and reparative forms of knowledge. Power structures are broken down not so much by interpretations that explain away a parable as by those that explain it. Pupils ought in fact to rejoice when interpretations *do not* explain but challenge what they have easily known and been assured of knowing. Gracy's pedagogic parable begins to work when we are open to this possibility.

No sooner had we concluded our discussion of Tuana's proposal in the light of Gracy's parable than the sessions were abuzz with some urgent news and views. What

struck me most, apart from the slightly weird coincidence of two "stories" breaking on parallel tracks, was the confirmation of my belief that stories *are* lives no matter how differently we persuade ourselves to see them from a classroom. (As one student kept insisting, stories are the closest things to lives but not lives themselves.) The media reports on an Indian woman who died in Ireland were coming thick and fast during those days. Ireland is a Catholic country where the law does not permit abortion even when a woman's life is at grave risk. These reports were followed by heated debates on the Indian TV, magazines and newspapers, on the rights of women to medically terminate unviable pregnancy. Among the debaters in our mixed class were those who spoke up for a *woman's* right, a *mother's* right, and *anyone's* right to abort a foetus. Among reasons debated for abortion were medical, non-medical, professional, ethical, and even whimsical. Students however wondered: Does "conception" begin life? Is, or is not, a six-month-old foetus *human*? Does life begin *outside* the womb? Someone, I guess half-mockingly, called the anti-abortion lobby "antibiotic," and went on to call life a "divine gift," etc. The question of "choice" in this matter returned us to Guru and his male pupils: societies still seem to allow only men to initiate the choice-debate, or allow men to legislate or exercise this choice. The irony of ironies, as we all agreed, is an inflexible pro-life stance which, as in the sad case of the Indian who lost her life in Ireland, eventually turns out to be pro-death. If Gracy has not said this in so many words, she has allowed us to read the "story" of one of us who died afar in a light only her parable seemed to shed on such dark alleys of life and death. Man does not, in that case, reap what he sows. Or does he? Tillie Olsen of my epigraph here believes that the silences of women across the world and ages provoke more discussion and awareness. The pity, however, is that we hardly realize that their silences rest on such *mortal stakes*.

NOTES

1 My translation. Addressing their Guru, the pupils break into English ("You are great, but…") in the original. They ask for the *gutens* of this parable, a word I have avoided using in my translation. *Gutens* is an interesting neologism because it is *not* a Malayalam word and is not known to have descended from either a Dravidian or Sanskrit word-stock. It is a strange word used by Malayalees in order to highlight the mystery of a case in question. A rough equivalent of *gutens* would be what most native speakers of English generally understand by *gist*, *secret,* or even *puzzle*, the knowledge of which helps one interpret an obscure idea or enigmatic phenomenon. It is further interesting that the pupils instinctively seek *gutens* here because in the hoary western tradition of story-telling, a parable is a *dark* saying; only in the light of interpretation is its *gutens* clear or accessible.

2 This phrase is generally understood in studies of social development to mean very high socio-cultural indices that offset very low economic indices that characterize Kerala society. The 'backwardness' of Kerala is unique in that, for all its economic stagnation and slow industrial growth, it has achieved very high levels of health and education, comparable with some small European countries that boast of higher per capita income. Women's literacy here, the highest in India, is often cited as a model by other Indian states. That, however, has not helped this society move towards greater parity and equity in terms of gender relations and zero-tolerance of crimes against women.

3 "The original Greek word [for *parable*]," according to Mark Turner, "had a much wider, schematic meaning: the tossing or projecting of one thing alongside another. The Greek word could be used of placing one thing against another, staking one thing to another, even tossing fodder beside a horse…. *Parable is the projection of a story*…. Literary works known as parables may reside within fiction, but the mental instrument I call parable has the widest utility in the everyday mind" (7).

4 This is Erving Goffman's phrase for the capacity of human beings involved in an activity to carry on with a topic/action/address while withdrawing attention from another topic/ action/ address that compete for their attention. On the disattend track,

says Goffman, might be consigned "a range of potentially distracting events, some a threat to appropriate involvement because they are immediately present, others a threat in spite of having their prime location elsewhere" (202).

5 I believe that the *mythic* character of parables is not to be discounted. Denis Donoghue advances this view quite persuasively in his "Yeats, Eliot, and the Mythic Method." "Christ's parables are myths…; rather, they become myths when the people to whom they are addressed receive them in an explanatory, edifying, or admonitory spirit" (231). To the untutored audience therefore Christ need not belabour the obvious or spell out the significance of the parable because they intuitively grasp it.

6 The literature on this topic is polemically diverse and contentious, and much of it is available only in Malayalam. For a decent sample, I would cite only one, Paul Zachariah's "*malayali krsitianiyute jeevitaminnu*" (The Life of Malayali Christians Today").

7 The Catholic Church raised a hue and cry against the representation of Jesus as a prodigal and wastrel, one who peers into a barber's mirror and preens himself. The writer who bore the brunt of this attack was Paul Zachariah (Sakkaria, for the Malayalees) who still holds very liberal and progressive view of the Christianity.At a recent art-cum-documentary exhibition in Kerala called "Marx is Correct," sponsored by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a painting depicting Jesus Christ among the victims of capitalist/class-inimical oppression created public furore. Christ, ran the legend below the painting, "was a social reformer who emancipated the Jews from slavery." Many church-leaders and political spokespeople of Kerala condemned the appropriation of Jesus Christ by a Communist party ideologically opposed to all forms of religious belief and worship. The Catholic priesthood in Kerala saw in this art-work a political strategy to win over the Christians to the Leftist fold during the forthcoming public elections.

8 The literature on this subject is voluminous but a decent survey of its polemics and appropriate bibliographical leads are available in Parna Sengupta's *Pedagogy for Religion*, esp. Chapter 2.

9 Agrippa's metaphor of procreation, a propos of Cleopatra-Julius Caesar relationship, is commonly recalled in literary studies and often cited as the most insensitive if downright sexist reification of woman's body in all Shakespeare. The passage in question goes like this: "Royal wench! / She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed:/ He ploughed her, and she cropp'd" (*Anthony & Cleopatra*, II. ii).

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Robert Nabess Carving #9: Detail Moose Horn, Driftwood, Arylic

Photo: Sue Matheson

BOOK REVIEWS...

Edward Marx, *Léonie Gilmour: When East Weds West.* **Botchan Books, 2013.**

John Butler

A Stranger in a Strange Land

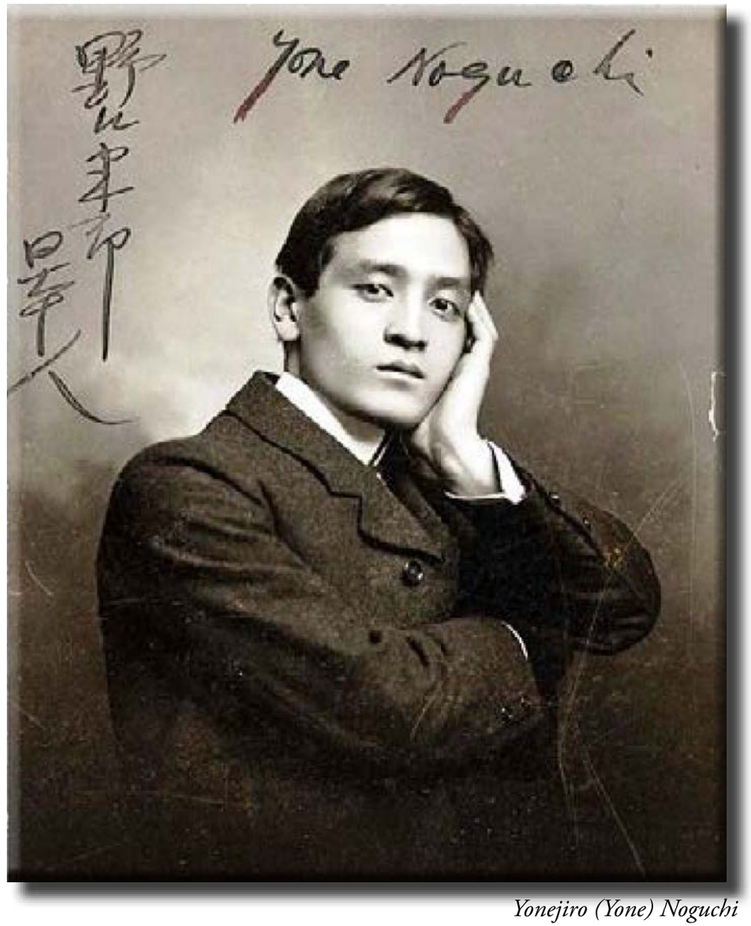
Léonie Gilmour

Edward Marx is to be highly commended for writing this book, which is the first biography of an American woman whose only claim to attention so far has been her connection to the Japanese poet and essayist Yonejiro (Yone) Noguchi. Noguchi was an anomaly in early twentieth-century literature, a young Japanese who had learned enough English to write poetry and to achieve a fair amount of fame, or notoriety (as some would have it) in the world of letters on both sides of the Atlantic. He played the part of the "exotic" writer with consummate skill, and was admired by, amongst others, Yeats and Ezra Pound. At one point he enjoyed an extensive stay in California with the eccentric poet Joaquin Miller, and by 1901 had published two books of poetry in English. In the same year he decided to go to New York and try his luck there, but ended up washing dishes in a large house instead of becoming a famous poet. He then decided, it seems, that he wanted to find someone who could help him with English composition, and he put an advertisement in the newspaper to that effect. It was answered by a young lady named Léonie Gilmour, a Bryn Mawr drop-out who had been teaching at the Workingman's School in New York.

It was at this point that Léonie Gilmour's life began to change, and even she could not have imagined how much. We see her first as an ordinary and rather uninteresting middle-class American girl with a very modest talent for writing and with little knowledge of or experience with "exotic" foreigners, although she did meet one or two Japanese students at Bryn Mawr. However, through Edward Marx's skilful navigation, we follow her journey as a lover, a spurned wife and finally a single mother raising two children in Japan (one of which was not Noguchi's), and always a stranger in a strange land; her choice to go to Japan was based on the rise of racism in California and the difficulties that would be faced by mixed-race children. Gilmour was no Lafcadio Hearn, it seems, but somehow she coped, battling poverty and the problems of raising children in a foreign land (the sculptor Isamu Noguchi and the dancer Ailes Gilmour), all the time displaying a strength of character not immediately apparent from her earlier life-experiences. As she wrote in an unpublished essay, "It is a story of poverty and heroism, those grim fairies who presided at my birth, to whom I owe whatsoever fibre of strength is in my being." Thanks to Edward Marx's technique of letting Gilmour speak for herself as much as possible, the reader eventually comes to a liking for and a sympathy with her, even though she is not intially, as we have noted before, a particularly interesting person. It is, often, as if things mostly happened *to* her rather (that mysterious second child, for example) than through her own agency, which is a pity, but perhaps that impression is gained from the fact that she was not eccentric, ostentatious or noisy, and certainly not much given either to self-pity or staying down and out for long. After her return to America in 1920 after fifteen years in Japan, for example, she immediately set up a modest import-export business and wrote to her son Isamu (it was her first letter to him after her return) to help publicise it in Japan.

Of course, for western readers it is at first Yone Noguchi rather than Gilmour who attracts our attention; after all, he is the published poet and essayist, the man who tried to interpret Japan's culture to western readers in the first half of the twentieth century, and of course he may be seen as the consummate "cad," the Pinkerton to Gilmour's Butterfly, although Leonie did not kill herself over Noguchi's neglect and cavalier treatment. In fact, perhaps to the dismay of some feminist readers, Leonie bluntly stated in a

letter to the *Japan Advertiser* (October 1917), which had published a feature article on their failed marriage, that "though I was not happy as Mr. Noguchi's wife, I did not consider myself to be ill-used." East did indeed wed West, but in so many ways the twain never did meet, and as soon as the relationship became more than a friendship, the disconnection began. Noguchi began to distance himself from Gilmour and eventually began to regard her as a nuisance. A fragment from a letter dated September 7, 1919, for example, states simply "Since then I have lost my interest in you and even in Isamu." Gilmour certainly never came to completely understand the Japanese, and Noguchi, whose English writing never quite achieved perfection, profoundly miscalculated if he believed that merely playing the exotic oriental could sustain him through a successful career as a writer in the western world. Noguchi, in the end, wanted a traditional Japanese wife,



Yonejiro (Yone) Noguchi

accept in a woman to whom he was not particularly attached he would not or could not countenance as a wife and the potential mother to his children.

For her part, Gilmour seems to have been somewhat torn; she was not a good enough writer (and Marx's inclusion of pieces by her confirms this) to have made much of an impression and what he was prepared toon the literary world, yet she wanted to maintain her independence and integrity both as a person and a writer. She could not or would not countenance the role which Noguchi expected her to play in his culture, and struck out on her own in Japan, at which point she becomes more interesting, and by the end of the book she has both our sympathy and admiration. She did not lack for humour, either; the letter to her friend and confidante Catherine Bunnell (May, 1914) on the subject of a Japanese burglar in her house is hilarious. Of course, Léonie does have something to say about "East Weds West," in an essay including that phrase. She sees the differences between Japanese and Americans as "rather superficial and extraneous," and that "the ethical code is the same in Japan as here. . .based on human nature and the needs of community life." As for marriages, she seems to feel that Japanese ones are no more solid that American ones, although Americans divorce far more; this phenomenon, by the way, has only started changing recently in Japan. It's unfortunate that the rest of the essay is lost. The impression one gets here is that Gilmour was being a little disingenuous, and that she is perhaps playing down the cultural differences, many of which may not be immediately apparent even to the people involved in the relationship. A reading of contemporary Lafcadio Hearn's *Kokoro: the Soul of Japan* would have disabused Gilmour of her feelings on this subject. Certainly the Japanese are not "inscrutable," but they are, as they should be, not "just like us," and there is little point in denying it. That the differences are sometimes *exaggerated* on both sides, however, cannot be disputed.

This is an eminently readable book, and Edward Marx has judiciously filled an important literary gap. Léonie Gilmour deserved to be presented as she was, not as people might have imagined her, and she comes through triumphant. Her children, particularly Isamu, did well and earned international reputations for their art; tragically, Gilmour did not live to see them at their most successful, succumbing to a heart attack in New York at the age of only sixty (1933). Her story did not die with her, however; the Japanese director Hisako Matsui made a fictionalised film of her life in 2013, "a work of fiction based on a foundation of fact," as Marx tells us. But Edward Marx's book is the place to go and find out about the real Léonie Gilmour, because he allows her to tell her own story through her essays, stories and letters; ibn the end what was most striking for this reviewer was the way Gilmour developed as the book progressed, from a dull lower middle-class woman to someone making a real mark on the reader through her courage, tenacity and complete lack of self-victimisation, the latter being such a welcome change from so many contemporary writers. Botchan Books, a small house which also publishes works by Yone Noguchi, has produced an attractive large-format paperback, illustrated with good quality photographs and set in print that one can actually read without going into a large-print format.

Yi T'aejun, *Eastern Sentiments*. Translated with an Introduction by Janet Poole. New York: Columbia University Press (2009), 2013. 189pp.

John Butler

An engaging writer....a splendid and sympathetic translation....a Korean intellectual.....

Yi T'aejun

France has Montaigne, England has Bacon and Charles Lamb, Japan has Sei Shonagon and Kenko. Now, thanks to a fine translation by Janet Poole of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto, we can add the name of Korean Yi T'aejun to the list of distinguished essayists in world literature. Yi T'aejun's writings are easily compared to those of Montaigne and Kenko; they cover a wide range of topics and vary in length from a few lines to several full pages. Like Montaigne's, Yi's essays tell us a great deal about the man himself, but they also convey a sense of what it was like to be a Korean intellectual in the late period of the Japanese colonization of Korea, a process which had begun informally at the end of the nineteenth century. This period of Korean history is little-known to most people in the West, but the Weatherhead series of Asian publications, to which this book belongs, is helping to remedy the situation.

Yi T'aejun was born in 1904; he wrote the essays collected in this book during the 1930's, but they did not appear in print until 1941. Originally from the northern part of Korea, Yi, who would be known primarily as a novelist, studied in Japan for a number of years and then returned to live in Seoul, but in 1946 he returned to his homeland and lived under the communist regime there until 1956, when he went into exile, disaffected with life in what was by now North Korea. No-one knows where or when Yi died—the date given by Professor Poole in between 1960 and 1980. Because of censorship in South Korea, Yi's books did not appear in print until 1988; as he had been sympathetic with North Korea and had lived relatively comfortably under the Japanese, he was for years a literary *persona non grata.*

Yi T'aejun's essays will allow readers into the mind of a man who operated under adverse circumstances in an occupied country, but who at the same time, somehow managed to survive with his beliefs intact, thus confirming the claim on the back of the book that Yi is "celebrating human perseverance in the face of loss and change." He does this by reconstituting the past, which means that he admires the past, but does not "live in" it, rather using it in the present to remind himself of what is permanent. Yi has a great attachment to the past, when the Choson dynasty ruled Korea, a period in which the scholar was, more or less, a gentleman of leisure, exempted from any kind of manual labour and able to pass his time writing about such subjects as orchids, calligraphy, Chinese poetry and other pursuits. Indeed, Yi does a good deal of this kind of writing, but he does something else as well; these essays, which the translator calls "anecdotal essays", had always been a popular form of writing, and the old-time scholars (whom Yi does, in one place, describe as "musty") used them as a way of expressing their own values and thoughts on various subjects, much as Montaigne, who might well be described as a gentleman-scholar, was doing in sixteenth-century France.

Yi, unlike Montaigne, was a professional, a journalist and a novelist who needed to make a living, unlike the Confucian scholars of former times. This called for a modification in the subject-matter and the mode of presentation of these essays so that they became more immediately relevant. For example, there are references to Western writers such as Tolstoy and artists such as Cezanne and Matisse as well as to contemporary Korean literary figures. However, because of his love and respect for the past, Yi still wrote some of his essays in classical Chinese, although after about 1930 he switched to Korean, which suggests that he was seeking a wider audience. The titles of the essays reflect Yi's ambiguities; there are essays entitled "Autumn Flowers," "Brush and Ink" and "The Old Writings of Two Qing Poets," but we also have "The Fiction Writer,, "Readers' Letters" and "Record of a Journey to Manchuria,",a mini-travelogue which is the longest essay in the collection dealing with Koreans living in another occupied part of Asia, the Japanese-imposed Empire of Manchukuo.

For Yi, the past can be brought into the present, and indeed it should be, because it represents something that was there before the Japanese came to Korea, which they annexed and soon began to impose their values on that country. As Janet Poole points out, "colonial societies tend to produce spaces of interiority that become associated with the native culture against a 'public' sphere controlled by the colonizer." To accomplish this, Yi built a house in traditional Korean style and filled it with antiques, thus creating a space for himself which was set apart from the outside world, but because of his profession he was not, like the old Confucian scholar, uninvolved in that world. Poole suggests that Yi's love of the past was part of his way of protesting against the colonial oppressors, and that the essays, with their own links to the past, fitted in as part of the protest, subtly enough so that the Japanese censors could not see what he was doing. Some of the arguments which Poole uses to reinforce these points seem a little forced and perhaps rather too self-consciously literary-critical as she seeks diligently, with the aid of critics such as Walter Benjamin and allusions to Frantz Fanon, for subversion on the part of Yi. The relationship of Yi towards the Japanese was not as clear-cut as that of Fanon's towards the French; as a journalist Yi published many avant-garde Korean writers, but he never wrote directly against the Japanese and the "subversion" in these essays is extremely subtle, relating more to the recovery of the past than it does to directly altering the present by revolution or uprising against the Japanese oppressors.

Yi was never fully convinced that what he was doing really worked; in "Orchid", for example, Yi tells us that he built "a small grass hut, arranged some books for study and hung some paintings and calligraphy," calling it "The Pavilion of the Appreciative Heart". Here we have a recreation of the old scholar's study, "and yet," Yi goes on, "there has hardly been a day when I have been able to enjoy things with an appreciative heart free from all concerns." It is almost as if the creation of that alternative, inner space is an illusion, and Yi knows it, but that it is nonetheless something he cannot live without. At the same time, though, the scholar's hut is there; he built it and uses it, and it symbolises perseverance in a changing world.

Janet Poole's translation is splendid, if it can be judged by a non-Korean speaker, because it exactly conveys Yi's literary personality and makes the reader feel at ease with him, in sympathy with his position and wishing to know his opinions. Yi is an engaging writer, and he is fortunate to have found such an empathetic translator.

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Hunt, Dena. *Treason: A Catholic Novel of Elizabethan England*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Press Institute, 2013. 184pp.

Sue Matheson

Cruelty and compassion

Treason: A Catholic Novel of Elizabethan England by Dena Hunt is a thought-provoking novel that is one of the most arresting books I've read in a long, long time. I read it in one sitting and then was sufficiently intrigued to read it again later the same day. Joseph Pearce, the author of *The Quest for Shakespeare*, is absolutely correct in his endorsement of this text. *Treason* is a powerful historical novel that does bring "to vivid and shocking life the age in which Shakespeare lived and in which the English martyrs died." In particular, the Machivellian *realpolitik* which Hunt depicts holds the reader's attention, being at once disturbingly familiar and sadly distant.

A work of fiction, *Treason* depicts a culture caught in the throes of its own passing: in 1581, England, experiencing the soul-shattering trauma of its Reformation, was in the midst of the very unpleasant fall-out created by the clash of faith and political will after Henry VIII separated the Church of England from Rome. At the outset of this novel, Stephen Long returns home to be part of the extensive and firmly established Catholic underground in the English countryside. Every time he hears confession or celebrates Mass, he commits an act of high treason against the Crown. Terrified of his inevitable martyrdom, Stephen cannot renounce his faith and ends the novel in excruciating pain, dying for his beliefs. Here it must be noted that *Treason* is successful because it is a story about ideas, not people. At base, its action is

THE FORTY MARTYR-SAINTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES
from the painting commissioned by the General Postulation and executed by Mrs. Daphne Pollen

that found in morality plays and is cast into narrative.

A beautiful, young Englishwoman, Caroline Wingate, married "safely" to a Protestant man who is above any suspicion of disloyalty, finds herself drawn to Stephen. Unable to disappoint her father by entering religous life in France, Caroline's experiences with Stephen give her the strength to confess her Catholicism to her husband and ask for the divorce that she wants so badly.. Fascinated, she helps the young priest elude his pursuers, and is present at Tyburn Tree in London when he is executed.

Dying for love (of the English faithful), Stephen looks into Caroline's eyes and leaves the world a Christ figure.Transformed and inspired by Stephen's death, Caroline keaves England the following day for a small, cloistered convent in Frace where she stays until her own passing thirty years later. Following his daughter's example, William Nelson also

The English martyrs

undergoes a transformation: "seven years later, he [is] also martyred for having provided sanctuary for the Jesuit priests" (184).

As Pearce so ably points out, *Treason* is an important book to read because in it Hunt considers the unsettling paradox that the past is repeated in the present and that the present in turn foreshadows the future. Because *Treason* explores the bigger questions about what makes life meaningful, it truly is "a work of cautionary potency and is as frightening as Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, or [Robert Hugh Benson's] *Lord of the World*." No one it seems can escape life unscathed. In this text, ordinary, unimportant events have extrordinary consequences. Chance meetings change the courses of lives and fortunes far into the future. Characters sacrifice themselves and those whom they love (or ought to love) for insubstantial principles and abstract ideals.Tellingly, Hunt's characters become compelling because they are unable to abandon what they believe.

Whether or not these characters' lives and actions are meaningful in the end to the modern reader, what I like most about *Treason* is Hunt's sensible and sensitive approach to her subject. Throughout, her point that living a morally effective life is a dangerous activity is well illustrated. Littered with the bodies, *Treason's* most chiling moment,however, lies not in its descriptions of the martyrdoms of the faithful, but in its depiction of an egomaniacal Elizabeth I. A revolting sociopath, Elizabeth's cold, hard, small eyes, thin red lips and uneven yellow teeth reveal her to be an ogress frounded in the material world. In *Treason*, the spirit is (by far) more appealing than the corporeal.

Divided into a Prologue, nine chapters, and an Epilogue, *Treason* devotes a good deal of time to the thought processes of both types of English recusants—those who end their lives drawn and quartered by Elizabeth I and her counsellors and those who live duplicitously. Like Pearce's *The Quest for Shakespeare*, this text examines the powerful anti-Catholic party at Elizabeth's court and its "sordid spy network" in the English countryside. Given the reign of terror in which the average Englishman and Englishwoman lived during this period, it is not surprising that one would want to live as far away as possible from court life and its intrigues. To do so, however, proves to be as impossible for Hunt's protagonists as it was for the Englishman of the 1580s. As Hunt points out in her book's dedication, there was no place in England that could be considered a sanctuary: Nicholas Postgate, "a Catholic priest who faithfully served his "parish" in the wilds of the Yorkshire moors, always traveling by foot," discovered this when "he was arrested, hanged, drawn, and quartered at York, at the age of eighty."

Published by the Sophia Institute Press and selling for only $16.58 (for a paperback copy with a handsome cover) and $5.13 (for a Kindle edition) on Amazon, *Treason* is a well-made and well-written book worth buying for those interested in the mysteries of life, the universe and everything. For those not intrigued when considering the nature of love, the existence of God, and the unfolding of meaning, this book would still be an interesting read if only as as a reminder of the small mindedness and petty machinations of human beings and of the cruelty and compassion which we all experience in our day-to-day dealings with one another.

Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone.* Edited by Michael Caesar and Franco D'Intino; Translated from the Italian by Kathleen Baldwin, Richard Dixon, David Gibbons, Ann Goldstein, Gerard Slowey, Martin Thom, and Pamela Williams. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2013.

John Butler

A wonderful translation of Leopardi

Any reviewer who claims to have actually read this 2500-page behemoth from cover to cover is probably lying, but the wonderful thing about Leopardi's Hodge-Podge, as the title might be translated, is that no-one needs to read it that way. It is actually the poet's notebooks, his observations on all kinds of subjects, what we would call a "commonplace-book," full of philosophy, science, natural history, morality, literature, psychology and an overwhelming amount of philology. As Leopardi says, "for [people of genius and sensibility]. . .there is nothing that does not speak to the imagination or the heart, and find everywhere material that inspires them to rise above themselves and feel and live." He writes bits of it in Latin, English, German, French and other languages in addition to Italian, and it is really in no order whatsoever, although Leopardi does make frequent references back to previous sections and never loses control of his material. As the introduction states, "it is continuous and linear, but is not directed in any teleological sense." He compiled the work over a fifteen-year period (1817-32); thousands of pages had been written in the earlier years, and after 1823 it gradually petered out. This is the first complete English translation of the *Zibaldone*, seven years in the making, and those who achieved it should be highly commended. The translation is eminently readable, and the editors provide a full introduction, notes and list of sources, as well as Leopardi's own 1827 index.

Count Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) is considered the greatest Italian poet after Dante and Petrarch in the Middle Ages, but is little-known to English readers. He is seen by Italian critics as the father of modern Italian poetry, and if he is to be compared with any contemporary in English literature it is probably with Shelley, whose work he did not know, although as an aristocratic poet Leopardi may also be close to Byron, who is several times mentioned in the *Zibaldone.* As a young man Leopardi spent many years working in his father's vast library, always a source of pleasure for him, as he states in the *Zibaldone*, "not only does study satisfy more than any other pleasure," but "the taste for it and the appetite etc. last longer." The highest form of study, for Leopardi, was the study of poetry. Later Leopardi was employed as a philologist in Rome; he was fascinated by languages, word-origins and linguistic theories, many of which appear in the *Zibaldone* and are actually more interesting than the reader might at first suppose.

Leopardi led a lonely and often solitary life; his

Count Giacomo Leopardi

hunch-back made him sexually unattractive to women (Leopardi probably died a virgin, his biographer the Marchesa Iris Origo noted), and anyway, as he himself wryly states in the *Zibaldone*, "wicked men have more success with women than the good, provided that their wickedness is clear-cut, open, frank, courageous." He was in poor health, and did not enjoy parties and drinking, unlike his brother Carlo, to whom he was nonetheless close, as he was to his sister Paolina. His father, Count Monaldo, was a political reactionary who gambled away a great

deal of the family money, but was himself a poet and scholar; his mother, bigoted and narrow-mined, measured the size of eggs when she went to the market (she was cheap, too), founded religious charities and took the finances out of the hands of her husband. However, Leopardi was, by all accounts, a fascinating conversationalist, an erudite scholar who wore his learning quite lightly with wit and a somewhat cutting sense of humour; "Men approach life," he says in one place, "in the same way as Italian husbands do their wives: they need to believe they are faithful even though they know otherwise." It seems we do need our illusions. Leopardi was also an atheist, as Shelley claimed to be; on the subject of religion and belief he has much to say, but his position is quite simple. "Once you do away with innate ideas," he states, "God is done away with, every truth, every absolute good or evil is done away with." Like the English and German romantics, he loved nature, with landscapes featuring prominently in his poetry. Indeed, Leopardi opens the *Zibaldone* with a simple picture of what he could see outside as he wrote: "Palazzo Bello. Dog in the night from the farmhouse, as the wayfarer goes by. . ."

Some of the characteristics described above spill over into this book, which was, after all, never intended to be seen by the public, and it's like having one very long, interesting and extended conversation with a fascinating person. In spite of his physical difficulties, and contrary to what one would expect from reading his poetry, which is often melancholy; after all, he states "Man (and likewise the other animals) is not born to enjoy life, but only to perpetuate life, to communicate it to others who come after him in order to preserve it." The man who emerges from the *Zibaldone* is, however, someone with a sense of humour and a hopeful, if not overly optimistic, view of life. "Now, more than ever before," he observes, "society contains seeds of destruction and has characteristics which are incompatible with its preservation and existence." As we shall see below, that doesn't mean that we should all give up and commit suicide; in fact Leopardi has quite a lot to say about that particular subject, and is not in favour of it.

Leopardi is certainly no dry scholar or arid philologist, although the reader will find passages on such subjects as Latin supradiminutives; he is never self-pitying or self-promoting. "A man without hope," Leopardi states, "is absolutely incapable of living, as is one without self-love," but what he means by "self-love" isn't self-promotion or trumpeting one's meagre talents (as so many celebrities did then and do even more today), but more along the lines of self-respect and a modest confidence in one's abilities, such as they are. One of Leopardi's last observations in the *Zibaldone* perhaps sums up the man and his beliefs; "Two truths that men will generally never believe: one, that we know nothing, the other, that we are nothing. Add the third, which depends a lot on the second: that there is nothing to hope for after death." If we acknowledge that, he suggests, we can get on with living; as Spinoza once famously wrote, "a free man meditates upon life, not death."

The editors and translators have done a wonderful job with this huge project, and the reviewer could not recommend the book too highly. It comes fully-indexed with appended source-material and scholarly notes, but readers should not be daunted by its size or subject-matter; if they are, they are missing out meeting a charming man whose friendship would be prized by anyone, whose intelligence, courage in the face of adversity and insight made him one of his country's greatest poets and intellectuals. This translation, together with Jonathan Galasso's wonderful translation of Leopardi's *Canti* (2011) as its companion, will make Leopardi's name much better-known and admired outside Italy, and perhaps put him in the company of Goethe, Shakespeare and Dante, where he most certainly belongs, if not with his beloved Homer and Virgil too.

Robert Nabess Fox Fur Moccasins 2

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The *quint's* twenty fifth issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books. The deadline for this call is 15th November 2014—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

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All contributions accompanied by a short biography will be forwarded to a member of the editorial board. Manuscripts must not be previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere while being reviewed by *the quint's* editors or outside readers.

Hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to Dr. John Butler or Dr. Sue Matheson at *the quint*, University College of the North, P.O. Box 3000, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada, R9A 1M7. We are happy to receive your artwork in digital format, PDF preferred. Email copies of manuscripts, Word or RTF preferred, should be sent to either jbutler@ucn.ca or smatheson@ucn.ca.

Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text, including all images and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered. Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.

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