Nick Milne
Imen Mzoughi
Benjamin Uchenna Anaemene
Fouzia Reza
Heather Ostmann
Colleen Cooper Harrison

Hannah Green
Elizabeth M. Hoyt
Andrea Wolfe
Abeer Fahim

SEPTEMBER 2016

the quint 8.4

the quint

volume eight issue four

an interdisciplinary quarterly from the north

contents

EDITORIAL

It is September. After our El Nino summer, this issue of *the quint* welcomes the cooler weather and blue quill geese flying South. We're taking out our warm jackets again and buying winter boots. This September, new writers have joined *the quint*. Another eclectic offering of thought provoking articles, beautiful poetry, and provocative prose—this issue is designed for readers who enjoy diversity and are interested in new ideas.

Showcasing articles from the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, China, Canada, Tunisia, and Malaysia, our thirty second *quint* begins with Hannah Green's interesting (and educational) insights into the works of novelist Thomas King. In "Finding the 'I' in Irony: Thomas King as Trickster, Narrator, and Creator," Green argues that the unnamed narrator of King's *Green Grass Running Water is* a trickster, King himself. Colleen Cooper Harrison's fascinating psychoanalytic disscussion of Otherness in Stephen King's "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" follows. In "The Façade of the Prison: The Uncanny and and "Rita Haworth and the Shawshank Redemption'" Harrison effectively argues that King demonstrates the ways in which a dystopian society fosters the emergence of the Other in order for men to survive. Next, in "Women Through The Eyes of Women: The Renaissance of 16th Century France and England," Elizabeth M. Hoyt examines the different experiences of the Renaissance that one finds in women's writings from France and England. Following, Andea Powell Wolfe's "The Subordination of Embodied Power: Sentimental Representations of the Black Maternal Body in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" considers Stowe's conflicted and fascinating presentations of black maternal figures. A challenging examination of perspective, Abeer Fahim's "The Objectification of Vision in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*" argues that the act of seeing is subjective, flawed, and always embodied. Nick Milne's "Barbers and Millionaires: The Continuity of Stephen Leacock's Early Humour, 1910-1914" puts forward the proposition that Stephen Leacock's Sunshine Sketches of a Small Town unites his early works and leads to the rest of his career. Then Imen Mzoughi's thought-provoking "Policing Postcolonialism in Maryse Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove*" asks the reader to examine Condé's treatment of theory as a mixing of symbioses and mutations. Benjamin Uchenna Anaemene's perceptive and important discussion, "Democratic Governance and Health Care Delivery in Nigeria, 1999-2007" traces the positive impact that democratic governance has had on the health and well-being of Nigerians.

Of course, no *quint* is complete without its creative complement. We are very honoured to be able to showcase the work of two young writers, one from Bangladesh, the other from the United States. We know you will enjoy Fouzia Reza's skillfully crafted poetry and Heather Ostman's provocative prose. My visual offerings invite you to consider the nature of rabbits via Finnish installation artist Kaisa Luukkonen's *Sweet Bunnies*.

Here's to good reading and viewing, a warm Hudson's Bay blanket, and quiet nights at home beside a wood stove with thought-provoking material and a cup of hot chocolate while the geese bravely fly South. *the quint* will be back in December with more offerings for reading and viewing, just in time to trim the tree for Christmas.

Sue Matheson
Editor

Finding the "I" in Irony: Thomas King as Trickster, Narrator, and Creator

by Hannah Green, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

"Only Coyotes can write about Coyotes."

—Robin Ridington

Thomas King's (Cherokee) *Green Grass, Running Water* is a complex novel in which the fabric of the real world characters is threaded with traditional Native American beliefs and practices, intertextual references, and retellings of Judeo-Christian creation narratives. In this multifaceted, multilayered novel, Coyote appears to play the role of the trickster figure, common in Native American narratives, as Coyote creates, directs, and disrupts many events in this story. However, Coyote is not the real trickster figure in *Green Grass*. Instead, the mysterious unnamed narrator is the true trickster figure, and King himself is the unnamed narrator, thus making the author Thomas King trickster, narrator, and creator. The evidence for this claim lies in an analysis of how King structures the novel based on a combination of oral and written narrative storytelling methods and a mixture of Native American and Western cultures, texts, and beliefs within the text.

For Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo), "American Indian and Western literary traditions differ greatly in the assumed purposes they serve" ("The Sacred Hoop" 4). Where Western literature seeks to portray individual emotions and experiences and to provide a representation of the real world, Native American literature uses narratives to create a world through which individuals can connect and share experiences. In telling stories, the Native American "people do not content themselves with simple preachments of this truth, but through the sacred power of utterance they seek to shape and mold, to direct and determine, the forces that surround and govern human life and the related lives of all things" (Allen 4). In *Green Grass*, King does just this. He intertwines elements of different cultures to critique the beliefs and influences of both the dominant and minority cultures while drawing attention to the possibility of their interconnectedness. This interconnectedness stems from the decolonial nature of this text in which King deliberately attempts to undo the effects of colonization (Ludlow). He achieves this through balancing sections of the novel that have the characteristics of either written or oral narratives, simultaneously contrasting both styles and showing how they can work together.

This novel is, theorists claim, "King's reading of North American literature, literary theory, Native American history, and popular culture through the images and genre conventions of American Indian oral tradition" (Ridington 343). *Green Grass* is heavily laden with a multitude of canonical, biblical, and cultural references in an intricately and intentionally crafted web. Coyote, a typical representation of the trickster figure, appears to construct this web as he directs much of the action within the novel. However, if

Coyote weaves this intricate web, it is King who makes the threads.

Trickster figures often appear in traditional Native American storytelling. These figures, such as Coyote, are also common in contemporary Native American literature, as they provide "a method of coping with the dominant cultural oppression that surrounds [trickster figures] and the Native Americans. As he survives nature and humankind, Coyote serves as a symbol of Native Americans' experience" (Pettigrew 217). The trickster character is multifaceted, as he or she becomes a means of creation and destruction, gain and loss, truth and falsity, masculinity and femininity. King's Coyote shows a number "of the features we associate with trickster figures in Native stories: he is versatile and ambiguous, a deceiver, shape-shifter and situation-invertor, and he is a sacred and lewd bricoleur" (Ibarrola-Armendariz 81). The trickster's antics often result in humor or hilarity, but this thinly veils his or her confrontation with "the tragic issues of economic underdevelopment, social dysfunction, and personal frustration with well-intentioned conniving" (Pettigrew 219). Because Coyote is, by nature, a mixture of contradictions (s)he is well suited to creating implicit and explicit meanings and thus the actions and reactions of Coyote often create layers of irony within a text, and irony is King's most notable tool as a trickster.

King plays with words, ideas, and histories in a way that portrays them in a new light and gives them a different meaning than the one originally ascribed to them. The creation of different meanings, of combining the said and the unsaid, is a form of irony but irony needs more than just the author for it to be effective. There are two participants involved in the creation of irony, the first is the ironist who creates irony, and the second is the ironist's intended audience, the reader (Hutcheon 10). In *Green Grass,* King is the ironist and the audience is the interpreter who identifies irony and then attributes meaning to these ironic utterances.

For Linda Hutcheon, irony is "the superimposition or rubbing together of these meanings (the said and the plural unsaid) with a critical edge created by a difference of context that makes irony happen" (19). But irony is not found in either what is said or not said, instead it "happens in the space *between* (and including) the said and unsaid; it needs both to happen" [emphasis original] (Hutcheon 12). This 'difference of context' occurs repeatedly in *Green Grass* when King mixes different cultures and ideas. For example, King removes thoughts and ideas from their usual context, such as the characters Adam and Eve from the Judeo-Christian creation narrative, and places them in the unfamiliar context of Native American creation stories. However, irony is more complicated than a simple figure of speech used to create a difference between implicit and explicit meanings.

According to Hutcheon, one should treat irony "not as a limited rhetorical trope or as an extended attitude to life, but as a discursive strategy operating at the level of language (verbal) or form (musical, visual, textual)" (10). Irony operates at the level of language by shifting the typically ascribed meaning of a word or phrase into a different light to encourage the reader to question that meaning and create a new one. People often equate irony with humor as changing meanings can be humorous, but humor is more an after effect of irony than a necessary component as the primary purpose of irony is to help the reader view old ideas in a new light.

By placing irony in the context of discourse, one can "ensure a consideration of the social and interactive dimensions of irony's functioning, whether the situation be a conversation or the reading of a novel" (Hutcheon 10). To better understand irony in the context of *Green Grass*, one must look towards the trickster figure as (s)he is the creator of irony—the one that places each instance of irony in the context that makes it ironic. When one understands how and why the trickster does this, one can better understand the "social and interactive dimensions of irony's functioning" (Hutcheon 10). It is important to acknowledge that King is the true trickster figure because the function of his irony is not to destroy or discredit but instead to create new meaning.

Throughout *Green Grass*, King combines traditional Judeo-Christian creation narratives with traditional Native American creation narratives, as well as uses written and oral narrative techniques to deconstruct meaning, thus forcing the reader to reassess their beliefs and opinions and ultimately create new meanings. One problem with irony is that in any instance of irony the interpreter is not guaranteed to always 'get' it (Hutcheon 10). This is because the original meaning of words and phrases is created in social and historical contexts, and thus to create a new meaning one must understand the original meaning and so an understanding of the original social or historical context is needed. While irony does not necessarily lead to humor, many instances of King's irony are humorous, and "in order to really 'get' the whole joke, one has to learn not only the facts, but also come to terms with a sense of humour that can only be described as subversive" (Fee and Flick 134). King risks offending some of his readers as the humor his irony invokes may come across as politically incorrect. According to Drew Hayden Taylor (Ojibwa),

"Native humor often crosses the tenuous and ambiguous boundary between politically correct and politically incorrect. Native humor pushes the envelope. It asks questions. It makes statements. It goes places polite and civil humor won't go" (69). For this reason, readers need to understand the functions, actions, and purpose of King as the trickster so as to avoid misinterpreting his actions as he attempts to recreate meaning.

Tricksters are like magicians in that they "are playful creatures, given to pranks and misdirection, and so their victories are often accomplished through deception and sly humor" (Watts 284). Trickster figures are common to most readers and easily identifiable by their characteristics as the "trickster-tale genre of folklore appears in some form in every culture" ("Trickster tale"). Coyote is the character most readers will assume is the trickster figure because of his or her wily and mischievous nature and because folklore tales often have only one trickster figure, but to make this assumption is to fall into the trap of reading *Green Grass* through a restricted lens. These restricted lenses are explained in Allen's claim that readers are accustomed to reading literature from their own culture, and so they have "no problem seeing the relevance, the level of complexity, or the symbolic significance of that culture's literature" ("The Sacred Hoop" 3). When exposed to symbolism and techniques they are not familiar with, readers may fail to see the purpose behind part of a text or fail to understand the depth of meaning. In other words, the reader may fail to see the gap between the said and unsaid and thus fail to create new meanings. Western readers that are unfamiliar with oral storytelling norms might find techniques such as repetition boring and redundant and may write it off as 'bad writing' instead of seeing the intentional strategy behind it. *Green Grass* should not

be read through a culturally restricted lens; instead, its readers need to remain aware of elements in this book that are different to the literatures they are accustomed to reading and be open to changing their already established opinions and points of views.

King's novel shows evidence of double-consciousness, an awareness of both his and his book's relation to the dominant culture and he "takes advantage of his knowledge from both cultures when he switches between them, thereby establishing dialogue between the two" (Stigter 77). As a result, James Ruppert claims, King locates himself "[a]s a participant in two literary and cultural traditions—Western and Native" (qtd. in Stigter 77). But more than that, "King's work [requires] a similar bicultural awareness from his literary audience—many of whom will not belong to a Native tradition" (Stigter 84). It is in this way that King tricks his readers into stepping outside of their accustomed viewpoint and requires them to change their stance on how they read and interpret his text. One way King requires this change in stance from the reader is in the way he structures his novel.

King develops a number of plot lines in *Green Grass*. The first plot is hegemonic in that it unfolds in the linear structure typical of Western written narratives and follows the characters as they battle through everyday struggles imposed on them by the dominant Western culture. This plot follows three main characters through their everyday struggles on the Blackfoot reservation. Lionel is an under motivated electronics salesman who is dating Alberta Frank, a woman struggling to reconcile her desire for two men with wanting to have a baby without being married to either man. Charlie Looking Bear is a lawyer and Alberta's other love interest. These three characters face the hardships of everyday

life coupled with the ever-present question of what it means to them as individuals to be Native American in a world where Western ideals quash their traditional beliefs and practices. The second plot is a counter narrative that uses oral storytelling techniques to work against the characteristics of the hegemonic narrative. This plot follows Coyote, GOD, and the unnamed narrator through hybrid retellings of the traditional Judeo-Christian and Native American creation narratives by four female figures from Native American cosmology.

In *Green Grass,* King portrays Coyote as the obvious trickster figure, but the overt trickster-ness of Coyote overshadows the true trickster figure. Coyote appears in both the hegemonic and counter narratives, but is seldom noticed when he enters the 'real world' of the hegemonic narrative even though he is responsible for influencing events for the main characters. The 'real world' is the world closest to the reader in that the structures and hierarchies of the characters, their jobs, and their actions take place within the bounds of the dominant Western culture. However, in the 'real world,' it is only the four "old Indians [who] recognize Coyote when he appears, making them tricksters as well; to the remainder of the characters, he is a wild yellow dog" (Heinimann 52). This could be a clue for the reader that the trickster is not as easily identifiable as they think, because it is only the four figures from Native American cosmology in their 'real world' forms that can see a trickster for what he really is. As a result, Coyote carries over a degree of resistance from the counter narrative into the hegemonic narrative. Thus in the hegemonic narrative, Coyote is a successful trickster figure, as he manipulates tradition and time "to benefit Blackfoot characters who attempt to survive life on Canadian reservations in

the modern era" (Pettigrew 219). Coyote also plays a trickster role during the creation narratives, as he leads the other characters in their retellings, sometimes keeping them on track and sometimes interrupting them, but it is the unnamed narrator who ultimately directs the creation plot.

The mysterious unnamed narrator always accompanies Coyote in the retelling of the creation narratives. (S)He appears only in the counter narrative, and refers to him or herself as "I." It is never clear who this narrator is, but (s)he guides Coyote and the other characters through the text. For example, in the start of the third section, the unnamed narrator directs Coyote's actions, ensuring that the characters stay on track:

> 'Okay,' I says. 'Let's get started.'
>
> 'Is it time to apologize?' says Coyote.
>
> 'Not yet,' I says.
>
> 'Is it time to be helpful?' says Coyote. 'I can be very helpful.'
>
> 'Forget being helpful,' I says. 'Sit down and listen.'
>
> (King, *Green Grass* 253)

However, the unnamed narrator does more than direct Coyote's actions in the creation narrative, (s)he is also responsible for creation. For Robin Ridington, "King's novel is, among many other things, a Coyote creation story" (348). The novel begins with Coyote's dream, and that dream wakes up Coyote, but King as the author creates his version of the trickster in Coyote just as Coyote creates Coyote's dream who becomes GOD. Ridington claims "creation… has to begin with dialogue. Somewhere, too, there has to be the voice of an author… For King, the first person singular will suffice" (348). Coyote, the unnamed narrator, and Coyote's dream engage in a conversation that starts the novel and King engages himself with Coyote and GOD through a representation of himself in the first person singular.

However, it is not always clear that King is the unnamed narrator. The question of the identity of the narrator comes into play when the narrator adds the dialogue tag "says" to the lines that (s)he says to the other characters. For example:

> "We're not going to Miami," I says.
>
> "Fort Lauderdale is okay too," says Coyote.
>
> "We're not going there either," I says.
>
> (King, *Green Grass* 105)

This leads one to questions his/her identity because of the subject-verb agreement error. One could read this as a first person singular pronoun where the narrator attributes those lines of dialogue to his or herself, or read the 'I' as a proper noun. If King uses 'I' as a proper noun, he is giving the narrator the name 'I' and is either tricking the reading into thinking that the narrator often struggles with subject-verb agreement errors, or he is encouraging the reader to think the narrator is the 'I' of King himself.

However, one cannot take the narrator's speech out of context by neglecting the other strategies King uses in these dialogues. Maria Truchan-Tataryn and Susan Gingell

argue that in King's use of "often fragmentary [syntax], and the sometimes non-standard grammar ('I says,' 'You got to watch,' 'real sorry,' and 'That one must have been lonely')" there is "arguably a stylistic synecdoche for a working or underclass-based ethnicized lect" (6). The subject-verb agreement error is common in spoken dialogue but less common in Western written dialogue and this reinforces the counter narrative by going against the Western norms.

Another tactic King uses from spoken dialogue is how the unnamed narrator often refers to Coyote as "that Coyote." (S)He tells the readers how "That Coyote was asleep and that Coyote was dreaming. When that Coyote dreams, anything can happen" (King, *Green Grass* 1). One could interpret the narrator's use of 'that' as mimicking oral speech patterns. In using words such as 'that,' King is reconstructing "some of his passages in a manner that is imitative of preserved, transcribed and translated texts from oral traditions… A noticeable feature from these early preserved texts is seen in the use of demonstratives such as 'that' and 'those'" (Stigter 79-80). However, one could also claim that the unnamed narrator (King) is differentiating one specific Coyote from a group of Coyotes or identifying a difference between both of their 'Coyote-ness'. While these minor elements of the text may seem unimportant, they exhibit a fundamental part of King's decolonial strategies in *Green Grass*.

Even though the interactions between the unnamed narrator and Coyote are often humorous and thus risk frivolity, these characters perform two fundamental functions. First, Coyote and the unnamed narrator "succeed in recovering a certain balance amid the apparent chaos of most situations by means of a type of humor that they believe

to be integral to all kinds of life on this earth" and second, "they incorporate into the written text some of the key features of Native oral storytelling" (Ibarrola-Armendariz 81). While the reader can find features of oral storytelling throughout the novel, they are most apparent in the counter narrative.

King uses these elements of oral storytelling in the counter narrative to cast the traditional style of the written hegemonic narrative in a new light. In order to understand how King uses elements of oral storytelling to displace the conventions of written narratives, one has to pinpoint what these differences are and how they affect the text.

In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter J. Ong outlines several characteristics of oral story telling based on research and studies of cultures based primarily in orality. By examining Ong's characteristics of oral storytelling, one can see the extent to which King harnesses these techniques in his novel. First, orally told stories are additive rather than subordinative, meaning that oral storytelling focuses more on the convenience of the speaker than on the organization of the discourse itself (Ong 36). For example, "So Old Woman is floating in the water. And she looks around. And she sees a man. A young man. A young man walking on water" (King, *Green Grass* 387). These short sentences are additive in that they help the reader add segments of information that build on one another instead of having the information laid out in a linear manner as it would be in a written narrative. Instead of focusing on grammatical rules to develop meaning, orality relies on simplicity. A written narrative "develops more elaborate and fixed grammar than oral discourse does" because written discourse depends more on linguistic structure as it lacks the real world, existential contexts that help "determine meaning in oral discourse

somewhat independently of grammar" (Ong 37). While the repeated use of 'and' seems redundant it is another characteristic of orality that goes against the Western narrative norms. As trickster and creator, King uses these oral storytelling techniques to enhance the counter narrative as it opposes the norms of the hegemonic narrative thus questioning the validity of its rigorously structured grammatical rules.

The "redundancy [and] repetition of the just said, keeps both speaker and hearer surely on the track. Since redundancy characterizes oral thought and speech, it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity" (Ong 40). This repetition ensures that both the teller and the listener remember the plot, events, and characters from the narrative, and serves as a reminder of the purpose or goals of the story. *Green Grass* beings with the lines "So. In the beginning, there was nothing. Just the water." (King, *Green Grass* 1) and ends with the lines "'But there is water everywhere,' says Coyote. 'That's true,' I says. 'And here's how it happened.'" (King, *Green Grass* 469). By drawing the reader's attention to water in the creation plot, King emphasizes its meaning throughout the novel. As a result, King helps the reader create and recreate meaning in their interpretation of other creation narratives as well the creation narrative the reader adheres to.

While Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz claims that *Green Grass* "pits two radically different narrative forms—one oral, the other written—against each other" (68), King's repetition of water imagery in the written and oral narrative styles is not merely a way of contrasting the two. Instead, King reminds the reader that, as with the hybridization of the Native American and Judeo-Christian creation narratives, he is not mocking or playing the two cultures against each other instead, he is showing a common link between different creation narratives. This repetition of water imagery and references to water in the start of each of the creation narratives has a larger implication as it draws the reader's attention to both the contradictions and similarities in different cultures as a whole.

While "oral speech employs repetition and additions for emphasis and as a mnemonic device… this oral form on the page creates a humorous visual effect as well" (Truchan-Tataryn and Gingell 12). There are a number of instances where King uses repetition as a means of creating a visual pattern, and this happens in both major plot lines. In an exchange between two major and two minor characters, the repetition has the following effect:

> 'What did the water come from?' said Alberta.
>
> 'What did the water come from?' said Patrolman Delano.
>
> 'What did the water come from?' said Sergeant Cereno.
>
> 'What did the water come from?' said Lionel.
>
> (King, *Green Grass* 104)

In this dialogue exchange, the characters are asking a question that the creation plot characters ask in reference to the start of creation. However, these four characters are referring to a puddle of water that Lionel stepped in. While the repetition of these four lines has a comic effect, the repetition and change in dialogue tags also emphasizes the continuous water theme that runs throughout the novel and thus serves as a reminder

that the novel is questioning where it all began. Through using these oral storytelling techniques, King contrasts the ways different cultures tell a story showing that the rigid written narrative can be combined with oral story telling techniques to create a closer connection between the reader and the text. And by showing how oral techniques can be transferred onto a page, King creates a visual representation of these techniques, further merging the two genres and creating a hybrid text.

Ong also claims that oral discourse must relate to the listeners' and tellers' experiences in order for the narrator to fully engage the reader because:

> in the absence of elaborate analytic categories that depend on writing to structure knowledge at a distance from lived experience, oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings. (42)

Dialogue does not follow the grammatical rules of written discourse. When people converse, they use sentence fragments, colloquialisms, and dialects. People interrupt one another as they talk and change topics and directions in their conversations, as does Coyote. By using these techniques, King adds another layer of orality to his text because "digressions and interjections combine with the elements of oral speaking mentioned above to consistently sustain an experience of orality that involves all readers in a dynamic episode of Aboriginal reality" (Truchan-Tataryn and Gingell 12). One of most effective aspects of oral storytelling King uses is repetition, not just of words or phrases but of ideas and stories. The retelling of similar stories creates different versions that the reader compares based on what is said and what is not said in each retelling. This creates a further space in which the reader synthesizes new meanings and interpretations.

This repetition is most evident in how each character in the counter narrative begins their version of a creation narrative. For example, "And here's how it happened," "Once upon a time," "A long time ago in a faraway land," "Many moons comechucka," "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," "Alright. In the beginning there is nothing. Just the water" (King, *Green Grass* 3, 9, 10, 11, 112). With each repetition of the creation story, as with the retelling of every story, the story changes a little (Truchan-Tataryn and Gingell 2). Each of these beginnings has a different feel to them as they link to a variety of genres such as biblical narratives and fairytales or have distinctly a Native American or Western feel to them. Through this method, King is able to show that each style and origin of these beginnings is a valid way to start a story despite the authority traditional Western written narratives such as the Bible claim over fairytales and folklore.

In written narratives, the story does not change because the words on the page stay the same. In oral storytelling, the stories change and adapt depending on the teller and the audience, and as each character in the counter narrative takes their turn at telling the story, they begin their story differently. By changing how a story is told, King subtly shifts that story's original meaning and with each shift, the gap between the said and unsaid grows. If Western stories were not written, they would be just as susceptible to change as oral stories are and just because the purpose and meanings of stories change it does not negate their validity and importance. If irony takes place in the space between what is said and not said, then King is using irony to widen the gap and enhance the

potential for the creation of different meanings.

It is because the oral storyteller caters to their audience on each occasion that stories evolve, and the "telling of the story becomes an event independent of the previous events of telling the story or of the original event which is presumably the subject of the story" (Bailey 50). No one oral telling of a story is the same, unlike written narratives that, once printed, remain unchanged. In an indirect way, this gives the reader a small participatory role in how the narrative is told and allows them deep immersion in the story. King as the trickster manages to accomplish this feat in the creation narratives of *Green Grass*, despite the story itself being written in the book. However, with each repeated section or anecdote, the reader reflects on and compares different versions of the story, thus synthesizing the meanings as they would after listening to different versions of orally told stories.

King's use of oral storytelling techniques can be seen on both the micro sentence level and on a macro level within the novel as a whole. The structure of the text jumps between the real and magical worlds, the different plot lines, and it changes focus on different characters and events without warning. Thus even though he "assumes a narrative, conversational style within his novel that is mimetic of oral tradition, narration, and audience interaction, he uses this style within the literary form of the novel, thus combining Native and Western traditions" (Stigter 84). King explains that the purpose "in writing such a broken and discontinuous narrative is to create a sense of movement and the effects of oral storytelling" (qtd. in Ibarrola-Armendariz 71). Not only do the characters interrupt one another, the different sections of the text do too.

Through his use of oral storytelling techniques, King has the reader become an active participant in the creation of meaning. It is up to the reader to synthesize the countless interpretations they have of both the text and intertextual references within it. This synthesis comes as a result of King's use of irony as he portrays ideas, events, and texts in a way that puts them in a different light and changes their meaning. King calls his blending of oral and written techniques "interfusional to describe that part of Native literature which is a blending of oral literature and written literature" ("Godzilla" 186). In Western narratives, the process is often linear as the author writes the text that the audience reads with no input from the reader, whereas in oral narratives the author adapts the narrative to the needs of his or her audience. It is through techniques such as repetition, involving the listener in a 'lifeworld' experience, and breaking from the grammatical conventions of written texts that oral storytellers are able to engage his or her listeners in the narrative.

It is because "the spoken word proceeds from the human interior and manifests human beings to one another as conscious interiors, as persons, [that] the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups" (Ong 72). Where written narratives give the reader no say in how the story unfolds, oral narratives give readers a degree of agency. Although King cannot fully achieve these effects because *Green Grass* is ultimately a written narrative, he makes use of oral storytelling techniques to give his readers agency in the sense that they can create, change, and manipulate the meaning of his novel and the events therein. Thus, these interfusional techniques are able to create a world in which the author, text, and reader interact as opposed to a text that merely relays information

from the world as written narratives do.

More than that, however, King has created a text that engages with other texts through his extensive use of intertextuality. Numerous references to canonical texts and films in *Green Grass* serve as an ironic portrayal of the dominant Western culture's beliefs. King uses these to explore issues such as the stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans. For example, Eli is a Native American character who reads pulp westerns even though he can predict the endings because of the formulaic plots and despite the fact that he does not fit into or agree with the perpetuation of the stereotypical representations of Native Americans (Gruber 141). This draws the readers' attention to how the media perpetuates stereotypes and the effects this has on their understanding of Native American culture. It is in this way that King shows how "the main potential of such repetitively mind-numbing texts is soporific rather than culturally representative… humor therefore meets literary/historic stereotypes on their own ground, exposes them to liberating laughter, and reworks them from within" (Gruber 141). By having Eli read pulp westerns, King draws attention to stereotypical representations of Native Americans and the fact that Eli does not fit that representation, thus forcing the reader to reevaluate their assumptions and create new definitions for what it means for an individual to be Native American.

The main texts that King extensively deconstructs are the biblical creation narratives. In the beginning of the novel, Coyote dreams, and this dream creates GOD and GOD in turn creates parts of the world such as the Garden of Eden. The connection between traditional Native American and Judeo-Christian stories is seen in the creation of GOD and the retelling of traditional biblical narratives. However, these retellings do more

than mix cosmological ideas, they also provide a commentary on more recent events as GOD's banishment of First Woman and Ahdamn from Eden becomes a commentary on the Native American's forced removal from their own lands at the hands of the dominant culture (Gruber 178). A similar commentary happens with GOD's actions in Eden when he tells First Woman and Ahdamn the rules of eating his food in the garden:

> Anybody who eats my stuff is going to be very sorry says that GOD. There
> are rules you know.
>
> I didn't eat anything, says Old Coyote.
>
> Christian rules.
>
> (King, *Green Grass* 73)

This exchange comes after Ahdamn and First Woman have already eaten food in the garden, and the establishing of rules after the facts shows how meaningless or unfair they can be. The line "Christian rules" reflects on how nonsensical the Western rules forced on the Native Americans seem. In this way, "through the presentation of creation stories from both cultures, King alludes to the oral traditions by incorporating these stories and having them interact with stories from the dominant, literate culture" (Stigter 77). As a trickster, King assimilates these different realms of knowledge and contrasts their similarities and differences in order to confront the reader's beliefs. If irony is found in the gap between the said and the unsaid, then the reader is the wedge that widens this space as they create and recreate meaning.

The trickster figure is "a metaphor for continuance, for Coyote survives and a large

part of his bag of survival tricks is his irreverence" (Allen, "The Scared Hoop" 158). Readers may view King's dismantling of Judeo-Christian creation stories as irreverence for those sacred texts, however, in *Green Grass*, King creates a Native American survivance text. By calling a text a survivance story, one is referring to stories that "are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry" (Vizenor 1). The tricksters' irreverence is seen in his breaking down of canonical texts and cosmological beliefs, as the trickster has no respect for the stories and ideas that have been held in such high regard over others. Western settlers tried to crush the Native American beliefs that they viewed as childish or primitive. As a result, the authority of the written text devalued the spoken word. Some readers may take offence at King's mixing of traditional Judeo-Christian creation narratives, even his mixing of canonical texts, with Native American cosmology. However, "King's strategy for writing for an audience primarily composed of the uninformed is not to pander to its preconceptions or to produce explanations, but to entice, even trick this audience into finding out for themselves" (Fee and Flick 132). The irreverent attitude of the trickster creates resistance against dominant cultural beliefs and in harnessing this resistance, King is able to deconstruct old beliefs, but not to destroy them, rather to disassemble them so that the reader reconstructs new meanings. King as the trickster uses irony to offer "both familiar situations or images *and* their re-presentations, [as] irony in effect changes readers' perspectives and allegiances" [emphasis original] (Gruber 58).

Sharon M Bailey argues that the in using oral storytelling techniques, King hinders the authority carried by written narratives. King uses Coyote and the unnamed narrator "on the basic assumption that oral text can serve as a metalanguage which is capable of conveying the true nature of reality which the written text is unable to represent" (Bailey 46). As each text is retold orally in the novel, it gains a different meaning, and thus by "placing a cleft between the written text and its historical meaning, the text becomes, so to speak, arbitrary" (Bailey 46). In doing this, King as the trickster is forcing the reader to question the meaning and validity of those texts, but once those texts are marked as arbitrary, so too is *Green Grass* viewed as an arbitrary text. If oral storytelling techniques are used as a metalanguage to analyze written texts, then the written narrative of *Green Grass* contradicts itself and brings its own meaning into question. Through creating a critique of his own novel, King continues to play the role of the trickster by "poking fun at his own oral narrator with the same glee with which he lampoons the non-Native icons of culture" (Bailey 46).

By using these techniques, King creates a sense of irony in that he reveals biblical and canonical texts in a way that changes the intended meaning of both Western beliefs and the Native American cosmologies. However, he does the same with *Green Grass*. The novel has an overt sense of playfulness about it, as the characters, events, and slices of reality are coated in irony that often times creates humorous situations. In *Contemporary American Indian Writing: Unsettling Literature,* Dee Horne claims "Settlers who are aware of how King plays on colonial assumptions realize that, in laughing at the text, they are really laughing at themselves. In effect, King plays the part of Coyote, the trickster" (n.p.). This playfulness draws the readers' attention to their own preconceived ideas and beliefs and makes them question where those ideas and beliefs came from, and what they

Perhaps the "most striking effect of *Green Grass* is its ability to arouse readers' desire to 'get' the in-jokes, to track the allusions, and to find answers to a whole series of posed but unanswered questions" (Fee and Flick 131). In this way, King as the trickster is leading the reader to analyze and assess what he has written and to question both the meaning of this text and meaning outside of the text. There is "no reader of this novel, except perhaps Thomas King, who is not outside some of its networks of cultural knowledge. But every reader is also inside at least one network and can therefore work by analogy to cross borders into the others" (Fee and Flick 131). It is because the purpose of the trickster figure is to breakdown set ideas and meanings that King as the trickster harnesses the effects of irony, but more than that, the trickster doesn't offer new meanings or ideas to the reader, (s)he only guides the reader towards creating their own. In oral storytelling, and to a degree, in the written forms of oral storytelling, "words articulate reality… where thought and feeling are one, where objective and subjective are one, where speaker and listener are one, where sound and sense are one" (Allen, "The Sacred Hoop" 17). It is through his use of oral storytelling techniques that King creates a space for the reader in which words articulate a reality that the reader constructs as they assimilate new meanings. This effect is different to traditional written narratives in which the writer creates a world for the reader where the meaning is set. As a result, instead of telling the reader what it means to deconstruct texts and mix realities, King is making the reader do the work in creating their world of meaning.

King's use of jokes and humor come from changing the meaning of texts, beliefs, and ideas through his use of irony. For King, humor "ensures survival and cultivates community" (Andrews 8). Jennifer Andrews claims that "humor is a way of recalling and going beyond tragedy, of working through the hurt of a personal history, of healing old wounds and hearing the truth" (11). While irony is not always humorous, in *Green Grass* it often is. "Because irony… happens in something called 'discourse,'" Hutcheon claims, "its semantic and syntactic dimensions cannot be considered separately from the social, historical and cultural aspects of its context of deployment and attribution" (17). This is why it is important to understand the role irony and humor plays in Native America culture. For Taylor, "Native humor comes from five hundred years of colonization, of oppression… often the only way left for Native people to respond to the cruelties of Fourth World existence was in humor" (69). Understanding this will help the reader avoid interpreting King's humor as politically incorrect and allow them to see that humor is the result of King's use of irony through which he tries to create new meaning. It is though irony that King plays off different cultures to such an extent that the reader is left laughing at their own ideas when they see past the differences and find the similarities in a variety of cultural beliefs. The trickster is a creator, and King constantly creates and recreates meaning in the text.

If King is the true trickster figure, one may wonder why he needs Coyote as a secondary trickster figure. King engages with Coyote because in "using his own authorial voice in counterpoint to the contrary voice of Coyote, King presents a Native American perspective on the American literary and cultural canon" (Ridington 343). In contemporary literature, the trickster represents "both the play and the politics of current fiction, the

trickster can permit a new narrative route to problems that range from legitimacy of voice to canonicity" (Heinimann 39). King does just this as he questions the authority of written texts and the structure of the literary canon which, when portrayed in a different light, seem arbitrary.

When readers realize that King is the true trickster figure, they gain a better understanding of the author and thus of the cultural context in which the novel is written. This is important because "the significance of a literature can be best understood in terms of the culture from which it springs, and the purpose of literature is clear only when the reader understands and accepts the cultural assumptions on which the literature is based" (Allen, "The Sacred Hoop" 3). Native American narratives create a world where individuals share experiences and connect with one another as opposed to traditional Western narratives that focus on the emotions and experiences of individual characters in a way that provides a representation of the real world and allows little room for the creation of new meaning. Irony plays an important role in Native American narratives as it "constitutes a powerful strategy for undermining hegemonic ideologies, authoritative Western claims to Truth and the power ensuing from them" (Gruber 58). Thus it is important to understand that King is the true trickster figure because in accepting this distinction and understanding the cultural assumptions behind King's work, the reader can understand that the purpose of King's novel is to challenge the readers' beliefs and have them assimilate new meanings in the space between the said and unsaid. Understanding King as the true trickster figure also helps readers' not take offence to his use of irony and humor as they become aware that King's purpose is not to destroy meaning but instead

to recreate it.

It is in this space between the said and the unsaid that King functions as the trickster and this enables him to "ingratiate and to intimidate, to underline and undermine; [to] bring people together and drive them apart" (Hutcheon 56). If irony is found between the said and the unsaid, then King is the mallet that drives the wedge of the reader into widening this gap where they can find a multitude of meanings.

Works Cited

Allen, Paula Gunn, ed. "Answering the Deer: Genocide and Continuance in the Poetry of American Indian Women." *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Beacon Press: Boston, 1983. 155-164. Print.

---, ed. "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective." *Studies in American Indian Literature*. The Modern Language Association of America, 1983. 3-22. Print.

Andrews, Jennifer. *In the Belly of a Laughing God: Humor and Irony in Native Women's Poetry*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. Print.

Bailey, Sharon M. "The Arbitrary Nature of the Story: Poking Fun at Oral and Written Authority in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *World Literature Today* 73.1 (1999): 43-52. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.

Fee, Margery and Jane Flick. "Coyote Pedagogy: Knowing Where the Borders Are in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Canadian Literature* 161 (1999): 131-39. Web. 15 Nov. 2013.

Gruber, Eva. *Humor in Contemporary Native North American Literature: Reimagining Nativeness*. Rochester: Camden House, 2008. Print.

Heinimann, David. "Trickster Ethics, Richler and King Fiddling." *ESC* 30.3 (2004): 39-56. Web. 26 Nov. 2013.

Horne, Dee. *Contemporary American Indian Writing: Unsettling Literature*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999. Web. 27 Nov. 2013.

Hutcheon, Linda. *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Ibarrola-Armendariz, Aitor. "Native American Humor as Resistance: Breaking Identity Moulds in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* 42 (2010): 67-90. Web. 26 Nov. 2013.

King, Thomas. "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial." *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 10-16. Web. 27 Nov. 2013.

---. *Green Grass, Running Water*. New York, Bantam: 1994. Print.

Ludlow, Jeannie. Eastern Illinois University. Coleman Hall, Charleston, IL. 18 August 2013. Lecture.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy*. London: Routledge, 2002. Web. 28 Nov. 2013.

Pettigrew, Dawn Karima. "Coyote Discovers America: The Cultural Survival of the Trickster in the Novels of Thomas King." *Wicazo Sa Review* 12.1 (1997): 217-22. Web. 26 Nov. 2013.

Ridington, Robin. "Coyote's Cannon: Sharing Stories with Thomas King." *American Indian Quarterly* 22.3 (1998): 343-36. Web. 15 Nov. 2013.

Stigter, Shelley. "Double-Voice and Double-Consciousness in Native American Literature." MA Thesis. University of Lethbridge, 2003. Web. 26 November 2013.

Taylor, Drew Hayden, ed. "Whacking the Indigenous Funny Bone." *Me Funny*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005. 67-83. Print.

"Trickster tale." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2013. Web. 10 Dec. 2013

Truchan-Tataryn, Maria and Susan Gingell. "Dances with Coyote: Narrative Voices in Thomas King's *One Good Story, That One*." *Postcolonial Text* 2.3 (2006): 1-23. Web. 15 Nov. 2013.

Watts, Linda. *Encyclopedia of American Folklore*. United States of America: Infobase Publishing, 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2013.

The Façade of the Prison: The Uncanny and "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption"

by Colleen Cooper Harrison, Access International Academy
Ningbo, China

The idea of psychoanalytic literary analysis stems from the notion that literature is a projection of the author's psyche. Freud's use of the uncanny reveals that disassociation occurs either through societal or self-imposed isolation ("The Uncanny" 86). When a circumstance does not fit the model related to the expectation, it becomes what Freud calls uncanny: an enigmatic force that resembles its shell, but that represents something unexpected ("The Uncanny" 87). Further, according to Jacques Lacan, the projection of an individual's psyche can further be interpreted as a projection of an individual's intent (70). Therefore, what is cast onto the world through the guise of a mirror is not an exact reflection of oneself, but rather, a reflection of the Otherness of an individual (Lacan 99). This creates a separation of action and intent, a separation which, at times, fosters confusion between what is and what should be occurring. The separation between what is and what should be is evident in Stephen King's novella "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," where the roles of the villains are played by the warden and his guards and the roles of the heroes are played by those serving life sentences. King writes, "there are all sorts of ways to divert yourself, even in prison; it seems like the human mind is full of an infinite number of possibilities when it comes to diversion" (111). Therefore, through a psychoanalytic lens, specifically through an interpretation of the uncanny, one may better see how "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" uses the notion of the uncanny to develop a dystopian society within the walls of a prison.

Freud explains that the human mind tries to make sense of what it experiences, thus resulting in the uncanny ("The Uncanny" 43). Yet, what is uncanny does not always have to be a person or object; rather, it can also be an idea or concept. In her article "The Plight of Ethics," Kelly Oliver explains that the "notion of duty or obligation" can also fall victim to the uncanny (120). Oliver writes that the notion of obligation has the potential to fall victim to the uncanny in the sense that "a promise or a binding oath … the very possibility of which assumes both other people and the Other of language and culture" (120). The idea that the ambiguity of language goes so far as to impact an oath or pledge is not as foreign as Oliver may suggest. Therefore, at times, literary figures take on the uncanny visage of their polar opposites, causing those who should be trusted to be kept at a distance and those who should be shunned to be held captive.

According to Freud, there is a point in all realities where the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between the internal and the external, becomes undistinguishable and thereby blurred to the point of confusion ("The Uncanny" 222). It is this point where the notion of psychoanalysis becomes intriguing, for when the psyche is unable to determine truth from fiction, the psyche is also unable to determine good from evil, right from wrong, and justice from injustice. While Freud asserts that the uncanny is a part of the human experience, Mladen Dolar explains that "there is a specific dimension of the uncanny that emerges with modernity" (7). Consequently, the

idea that political commentary arises through literature is not a new concept. During the French Revolution, for example, William Wordsworth expressed disappointment in "the sinister side of human nature" (Stelzig 416), or an evil that men could impose upon other men merely because of class separation. In his poem "The Thorn," Wordsworth writes,

> She hanged her baby on the tree,
>
> Some say she drowned it in the pond,
>
> Which is a little step beyond,
>
> But all and each agree,
>
> The little babe was buried there,
>
> Beneath that hill of moss so fair.
>
> I've heard the scarlet moss is red
>
> With drops of that poor infant's blood;
>
> But kill a new-born infant thus! (219)

The metaphor of a child's murder can be interpreted as the death of innocence and a loss of humanity in the protector, society, which is represented by the murderous mother. As such, it can be argued that after the French Revolution, writers began to see that what was *right* was not always the right choice, and that there was a blurred line between good and evil, a line blurred by choice. This concept, which allows for the emergence of the notion of the double, explores the duplicity of mankind and causes scholars to look introspectively when analyzing a piece of literature in order to determine the true intent behind a piece and the symbols existing therein. Yet, that duplicity can also cloud literary analysis, for the uncanny creates a paradox of human nature, thus leading to "an effort to represent the unrepresentable [sic]" (Dolar 18), thus making literary interpretation a fluid process of introspective and externally-driven truths, thereby making it possible for multiple interpretations to be correct.

In her article "Freud's Uncanny Narratives," Robin Lyndenberg addresses how Freud's "potential usefulness to contemporary theories of narrative" (1072) provides scholars with an opportunity to see how the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and the art of literature may bridge both thematic content and effect on readers' relationship with a piece of writing. In "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," King describes reality as being palpable, of having "satiny texture against my [Red's] skin" (129). Freedom, as King describes it, is represented by a smooth rock, a piece of material used to build a prison, used to build a wall, and used to house an envelope full of money to help him begin his new life (130). The beauty of Freud's work in the uncanny is that objects can be both familiar and unfamiliar, creating a complex system of blurred boundaries between imagination and reality. In "The Uncanny," Freud explains that "the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with material reality" (398) allows for an "illumination [of] the more general uncanniness of language" (Lyndenberg 1073). As such, the rock Red describes as being symbolic of freedom also represents the possibility of future incarceration, thus acting as its own uncanny Other. Similarly, Oliver explains:

> The pledge of psychoanalysis is to critically examine how we project our unconscious fears and desires onto others whom we call foreigners, enemies, monsters, deserving some form of death penalty. It commands us to

investigate how we distribute dignity, equality, and respect such that some profit while others pay the price. (128)

As a result, it can be argued that psychoanalysis lends itself nicely to the realm of literary analysis when an uncanny topic is being broached. However, Lyndenberg cautions against delving so far into literary analysis that one may "obscure the elements that constitute the story's literariness" (1073). As such, there must be a balance between close reading and psychoanalytic analysis in order to fully appreciate a story and its message.

Yet, the prison represents something beyond punishment: it represents fear, compliance, and punishment for a lack of compliance. According to Michele Foucault, who wrote *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, prison represents two types of fear: a social fear of disorder and violence against the masses (36), and a fear that the intensity of the punishment will eventually be misplaced (106). Indeed, prison becomes a symbolic punishment, a building that represents the power society holds over the individuals. In the case of individuals who have committed a crime, that symbolism is well-placed. However, should an instance occur where an individual has not committed a crime, incarceration becomes symbolic of something much darker. Further, according to Deborah Drake, who wrote *Prisons, Punishment and the Pursuit of Security*, prison symbolizes safety for society through the segregation of criminal offenders from the general population (30), yet it may be equally prudent to view the prison as symbolic of insecurity. If a population needs a prison to protect the majority of its people from a smaller sect of individuals, perhaps the prison itself represents fear. Indeed, the practice of protecting the citizenry from criminals stems, as Drake explains, from the belief that "moral, spiritual, or other personal reshaping or reform" (178) is necessary. Perhaps, then,

in an uncanny interpretation of the prison, security lies not outside of the walls, but within. Yet, if the reform causes an innocent man to be reshaped into a criminal, perhaps the fear embedded within the prison visage is that much more significant.

In the same vein, isolation can act as a symbolic extension of the uncanny, as well. If a prisoner misbehaves, he or she can potentially be placed in an area of the prison in which they are secluded from the general population. According to Foucault, this isolation can act as a shock to the inmate, for it is a spiraling duality reminiscent of removal from the general population through the initial incarceration (122). Foucault further explains that "through the reflection that it gives rise to and the remorse that cannot fail to follow, solitude must be a positive instrument to reform" (236). However, the uncanny Other of isolation emerges when an inmate is placed in isolation to protect him or her from potential harm by the other prisoners. In such a case, Foucault argues that such isolation has the same negative effect on an individual, regardless of the intention; indeed, "isolation provides an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him" (237). As such, the prison becomes a dark mimesis of the general population, and solitary confinement becomes the prison within the walls of the prison – incarceration by isolation. Indeed, King writes,

> Here's a second assumption I would have made, had I been Andy: that eventually I would be caught and get a lot of solitary time, not to mention a very large black mark on my record. … And his response to that second assumption must have been *To hell with it*. Maybe he even made a game out of it. (115)

In this way, Red projects that Andy may not have feared solitary confinement because it

would have been on *his* terms and thereby self-imposed.

Freud states that the uncanny is a product of delusions, a type of disassociation that occurs when a subject is isolated either by society or as a self-imposed phenomenon ("The Uncanny" 86). Such isolation occurs within the walls of a prison, where the individual is isolated from the rest of society. Further, Lacan, drawing from the teachings of Freud, uses the example of a prison in describing his views on psychoanalysis when he writes, "a freedom that is never so authentically affirmed as when it is within the walls of a prison" (8). This can be interpreted as uncanny, for the idea that freedom is found within incarceration rather than in the outside world is paradoxically different from the expectation that incarceration hinders ones freedom. Yet, a "cautious itinerary emerges in Freud's text ["The Uncanny"] as an oscillation between scientific and literary discourses" (Lyndenberg 1078). As such, it is important to remember that the text being analyzed must retain its integrity as a text while it is being used as a tool for psychoanalytic analysis and criticism.

Similarly, Lacan explains that the notion of the uncanny acts as a "manifestation of transference" (17); in other words, the projection of expectations is transferred from the reader to the character, thus creating a different reading experience for each person who is exposed to a piece of literature. Language and literature therefore do not come from the individual, but from the Other within, an uncanny double that resides within the psyche of each individual (Lacan 3). Further, in his book *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard describes the power of communication as "developing on the margin" (168), thus the idea that humans detach themselves from their memories, creating a disconnect between the conscious and subconscious, opens the door for Lacan's Other to emerge

(Bachelard 10). As such, through experiencing the dystopian society within Shawshank Prison, Lacan's Other manifests in several characters from "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption;" namely, Andy, Red, Brooks, and Warden Norton.

A psychoanalytic approach to "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" is grounded in the idea that literature represents not only art, but also the artist. Bachelard explains that psychoanalysis "can furnish us valuable information with regard to the deeper nature of a writer" (167). This is significant when considering that Stephen King's typical genre of writing is that of horror yet, according to J. Madison Davis, "he [King] thinks of himself more as a suspense writer than a horror writer, but that whatever people choose to call him makes no difference. He has never rejected an idea because it didn't fit the definition of a genre" (18). Similarly, Docherty argues that when an author switches genres from his or her typical vein, readers become uneasy (2), thus setting the stage for an uncanny experience. In his biography, *Haunted Heart: The Life and Times of Stephen King,* King has stated on numerous occasions that while horror is his passion, he desires to branch out in order to capture several aspects of human nature in his writing, yet horror is often at the core of all that he pens (Rogak 82). As such, "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," a novella not associated with the genre of horror, is atypical of King's writing; therefore, the piece stands out as an exemplar of something within King that may not be as overtly present in his other writings. Through the lens of the uncanny, readers and scholars may be privy to the darker side of humanity in literature other than that of the horror genre, the side where what should not be emerges as the core of a character whose shell does not match its interior. Therefore, the projection of Otherness onto an uncanny character or location becomes a focal point for analysis.

The emergence of the Other in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" is the result of choices made by the characters in the text. From the literal emergence from solitary confinement where inmates would "come out fishbelly [sic] white, cringing from the wide-open spaces" (King 77) to the emergence from the sewer system into the free world (King 107), several instances arise in King's text which offer themselves for analysis of the impact of dystopian literature on the uncanniness of literary characters. Lacan explains that when the Other emerges, the repressed desires of the individual become apparent (582). Indeed, if the disconnect between the individual and the Other surfaces beyond the mirror, it can be assumed that the repressed version of the psyche is given the opportunity to exhibit its desires. Yet, Lacan cautions that the Other is not always a violent repression (526); rather, sometimes the repressed side of oneself is the weaker aspect of a personality, whether it be meek or aggressive. Therefore, the emergence of the Other does not necessarily reflect the emergence of the dark side of an individual, but rather the side of an individual that awaits the appropriate time to come forward. This is important to note, for while some characters in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" will prove to reveal their more aggressive Other, others may prove to reveal a much more complex, much less violent side of themselves.

In his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* Tzvetan Todorov explains that fear is central to not only the horror genre, but to all literary approaches, where the reader is placed "in the presence of unsuspected worlds and powers" (35). While Shawshank Prison does not represent a supernatural force, it does become an uncanny double representing an alternate society. As such, it can be argued that "the other series of elements that provoke the sense of the uncanny is not linked to the fantastic but to what we might call 'an experience of limits'" (Todorov 48) is addressed in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." Todorov explains that literature acts as a tool for social commentary by acting as an allegory for reflection (72). It can therefore be argued that the experiences of the characters in a text represent a cross-section of society in the guise of personified fears and hopes. Graham argues that "the uncanny signals a return to primal experience in which clear antithetical boundaries are torn down and the dialectical structure of reason displaced" (41). As such, where Red represents the voice of reason and the fear of Andy being caught when he says, "I told you how nervous he seemed … nervous and filled with suppressed excitement" (King 110), Andy represents the hope that his crime of jailbreaking will clear him of the sins cast upon him by his wrongful conviction.

When the novel opens, the main protagonist, Andy, is presented by Red, the narrator of the tale. Andy, a former vice president of a bank, has been wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife and her lover (King 7). Yet, almost immediately in the text, Red establishes that he feels a connection with Andy that exceeds friendship; Andy is described as "the most self-possessed man" (King 11) that Red had ever known, yet something about him drew the two together in the tight bond of friendship. It is the self-possession that Red believes solidified Andy's conviction, and it is that same self-possession that would transform Andy from an innocent man to a criminal throughout the text of "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." Yet, in that transformation, even the criminal behavior adds the propensity for audience-imposed sympathy to Andy's situation, thus adding to the sense of the uncanny in the text. Further, Red's statement of Andy's self-possessiveness also establishes him as a suitable foil for Warden Norton as the characters in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" begin to emerge as the Other of one-another.

Interestingly, Lyndenberg explains that "a reluctance to acknowledge that the writing and reading of any narrative is potentially an uncanny experience and that uncanniness stems from a reader's encounter with a story's linguistic structures and rhetorical effects, not just from its contents and context" (1081). These points are further strengthened when one considers that

> When we add the psychoanalytic postulation of unconscious fears and desires, our ethical and political responsibilities become even more complicated and more acute. For we become responsible not only for our actions, or our intentions à la Kant, our beliefs and emotions à la Sartre, and those of the other à la Levinas, but also for our own unconscious fears and desires, which remain hidden even from us. (Oliver 128)

The prison narrative therefore becomes a backdrop for utopian studies because the prison serves as the uncanny double of utopia: dystopia. That, when coupled with a sympathetic character who transforms not only because of his psyche, but because of his societal-imposed stigma, lends itself nicely to a psychoanalytic reading of "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption."

In his book, *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism,* M. Keith Booker argues that the literary prison may reflect a societal need to idealize a sect of the population through an escapist mentality (15). Indeed, Booker explains that "the carceral [sic] system reaches far beyond the walls of actual prisons, extending into the society-at-large" (153). This is evident in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" where Red overtly discusses the difference between prison and mainstream societies. King writes, "I've described prison society as a scaled-down model of your

outside world" (124). The use of the word *your* in Red's description clearly delineates how the two societies, albeit similar, follow a clear line of separation between the ideal and utilitarian. Further, "postmodernist dystopian fiction is informed by skepticism, but also by an additional doubt that this skepticism can be truly effective" (Booker 141). Additionally, Foucault describes incarceration as "not much more than a bizarre little utopia, a perverse dream" (224). Foucault expands upon the utopian prison principle by stating, "with the disciplinary functioning of the prison – the element of utopian duplication … combines in a single figure" (270). As such, a literary prison such as Shawshank can reflect a utopian/dystopian dichotomy, and it can therefore be argued that the line between utopia and dystopia can be blurred, thereby acting as foils of one-another in the development of society's Other.

Yet, it is important to note that dystopian characters can act as foils to utopia through their permeability and alienation (Romero 284). In his book *Utopia*, Sir Thomas More explains that prison itself does not cause a man to submit; rather, prison does little more than physically restrain men, causing them to become beasts, not people (135). This is important to note, for if prison causes men to become images of their former selves, they become uncanny representations of men rather than actual human beings through their experience in a dystopian environment. This phenomenon ties in nicely with Foucault's theory of social control, where he states that control of others can sometimes be exploitive in nature, thereby focusing on the corruption not of the man, but of society (167). Therefore, the corruption of man is not always the fault of the individual; rather, "their manners [can] be corrupted from their infancy" (More 28). As such, the family unit can be uncanny, as well. This occurs when the family unit, which is expected to nurture a child and rear it to become a productive member of society, actually rears a criminal

whose deviance goes against the societal norms. The idea of fear stemming from the family unit can therefore be considered a hidden fear among members of society, and as such, one of the most effective implementations of horror literature is capturing the horror that goes on behind the closed doors of the seemingly normal or mundane.

Hidden fears and desires can range across many topics, but the fear of incarceration and the evils of society are relevant to an analysis of the uncanny in literature. As David Wilson and Sean O'Sullivan explain in their book *Images of Incarceration: Representations of Prison in Film and Television Drama*, the notion of a hero having a happy ending in a story is not foreign to people, and neither is the idea of a prison story ending on a happy note (67). Because people are not necessarily opposed to a prison story ending with those who have been wronged finding vengeance or freedom, the use of Freud's uncanny becomes a feasible means by which to analyze a prison story. In Stephen King's novella "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," the narrator, Red, explains that he is one of the only incarcerated men in Shawshank Prison willing to admit that he was a criminal guilty of his accused crime (King 1). As such, he can be considered a reliable narrator with regard to the uncanny instances that arise in King's novella.

Wilson and O'Sullivan further argue that although "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" is set within a prison, it is inaccurate to read it as a prison story (107). Rather, the motif of the prison becomes merely a backdrop for an uncanny analysis, for within the walls of Shawshank Prison lies relationships that test what many may believe to be appropriate roles within society. This is evident in the character of Warden Norton. When Norton arrived at Shawshank Prison, he issued Bibles to the inmates and offered Biblical quotations, yet is described by Red as being "the foulest hypocrite that I ever saw in a high position" (King 61). Norton would outsource the prisoners for kickbacks, thereby exploiting the incarcerated for his own financial gain (King 62). Yet, the Warden, whose role was to rehabilitate the prisoners of Shawshank Prison, became a projection of the crimes committed by his wards. According to Bachelard, "psychoanalysis has made numerous observations on the subject of projective behavior, on the willingness of extroverted persons to exteriorize their intimate impressions" (12). As such, the emergence of Warden Norton's Other becomes a projection of the evils he shuns in other people through Biblical verses and an authoritative position over the men in Shawshank. Warden Norton therefore assimilates himself with the very characteristics he appears to loathe in others.

Sir Thomas More further explains that madness stems from material belongings, and the more items an individual possesses, the less like his or her fellow members of society he or she becomes (115). This is an important distinction in a discussion of Warden Norton when considering that he is a member of the free society, not the incarcerated sect of individuals in Shawshank Prison. As a free man and one in a position of authority, Warden Norton is expected to be just and law abiding. Yet, "in 1950, Andy became something more than a model prisoner. In 1950, he became a valuable commodity, a murderer who did tax-returns better than H & R Block" (King 115). Once Warden Norton realizes the value of Andy's skills in the banking industry, he devolves into a man whose mind is no longer led by the Bible, but by the Dollar. This is evident in his interactions with Tommy Williams, the only inmate at Shawshank Prison who could clear Andy's name. Rather than allow him to talk, Warden Norton placed Andy in solitary confinement while he made a deal with Tommy to transfer him to a minimum security prison in exchange for his silence (King 79). This also follows Foucault's theory

that the man who punishes those in prison risks becoming so burdened by power that he or she is transformed into someone who is defined by his or her role as punisher (127). If that is the case, then Warden Norton represents power through corrupt oppression, and thus embodies the uncanny Other of the criminal.

At this point in the text, Warden Norton's corruption reaches a climax, for it is revealed to the reader that he is willing to compromise his religious background to protect Andy, the man laundering his cash flow, as an asset rather than as an individual. King writes, "Norton must have subscribed to the old Puritan notion that the best way to figure out which folks God favors is by checking their bank accounts" (62), trusting that he can use Andy as not only the brains behind his money laundering exploits, but also as a scapegoat if necessary. For Warden Norton, Andy is both expendable and indispensable. As such, Warden Norton becomes less like the external society and more like the societal expectations of an incarcerated man. Yet, if Warden Norton had the propensity for criminal behavior, his dichotomous nature serves the model of the uncanny well. Through Red, King describes Warden Norton as a man who "had a Bible quote for every occasion" (61), yet he also states that Warden Norton cannot be trusted because of his propensity for laundering money (62). Perhaps Warden Norton uses the Bible as a reflective tool, casting onto society the version of him he wants the rest of the world to see, thereby embodying Lacan's theory of the "manifestation of transference" (17) not in the projection of expectations from the reader to the character, but from the role of the Warden to the role of the criminal. Therefore, it can be argued that Warden Norton's Other is that of a man who belongs in a prison, not as its warden, but as its ward.

The idea of prison as a means of disciplining behavior is broken into three control procedures: "hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination" (Romero 283). This is noteworthy when addressing the idea of training individuals' behaviors from those of criminal tendencies to become a contributing member of society. Yet, Romero warns that the prison system tends to be one of revenge, not reform (284), which is also evident in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." The character of Brooks Hatlin, for example, murdered his wife and daughter after losing at poker; he was an educated man, so he was given the job of prison librarian (King 50). Yet, Brooks was paroled at the age of 68, "long after any chance he might have had to become a useful part of society was gone … in prison, Brooksie had been a person of some importance … they trained him to like it inside the shithouse and then they threw him out" (King 50). This regression from a man of importance through his incarcerated role to a man who felt useless on the outside certainly addresses the uncanny in that the prison librarian, an educated man, was paroled for a brutal murder when he was useless not to the outside society, but to the prison hierarchy.

According to Todorov, "the very existence of literature implies that it cannot be replaced by non-literature" (23). As such, it acts as a tool of self-reflection, not of the characters, but of the author and audience of a text. Indeed, if the individual projects his or her expectations onto an uncanny character, he or she employs the "ultimate condition of our being with others" (Oliver 129). Such a phenomenon opens a dialogue between the reader and the literature, thus creating an opportunity for suspense to occur. Bachelard writes, "the writer's life, even though it may be psychologically correct, has little chance of recapturing an influence over any one. And yet I receive the message of this extraordinary image, and for a brief instant, by detaching me from my life, it transforms me into an imagining being" (168). Given this statement, it can be argued

that literary characters are uncanny projections of the writers who penned them.

Tony Magistrate, who wrote a biography of King titled *Stephen King: America's Storyteller*, explains that King used literature in order to work through his own personal experiences. Magistrate writes,

> He [King] has detailed the personal tragedies associated with divorce, alcoholism, and drug and child abuse. He has held a mirror up to our various prisons – those constructed with tax dollars and cement as well as the invisible ones that exist behind closed bedroom and kitchen doors that we ourselves create. (viii – ix)

The idea that fears lie in the mundane facilitates the notion that the uncanny can emerge as a projection of fear on something that would otherwise not represent something horrific. Therefore, it can be argued that King plays with the fears of incarceration in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" on multiple levels. Magistrate argues that King imbues the uncanny in all of his stories, regardless of genre, in order to face the demons of his own life in a way that his readers can experience them with him.

Todorov explains that the uncanny often plays upon the emotion of fear through the fantastic, where "the fantastic produces a particular effect on the reader – fear, or horror, or simply curiosity – which the other genres or literary forms cannot provoke" (92). Similarly, Magistrate explains that King uses the theme of exclusion in most of his writing, thereby arguing that King may feel personally outcast from society through his own demons (103). Given the long association prisons have with exclusion from class structure and society as a whole, Drake describes the phenomenon of incarceration as a fear of exclusion (21). This is further evident when considering that in a prison environment, inmates tend to transform "from human beings in custody to manipulative, game players out for psychological domination" (Drake 66). Drake therefore describes this transformation as reconstructive. However, in an uncanny embodiment of the prison society, inmates transform from criminals to sympathetic heroes.

As a result, the idea that a man incarcerated for murder can become a sympathetic hero becomes understandable. In describing how Andy devolved from an innocent man who became a criminal in order to become free, Red explains that Andy is:

> A man who graduated from the University of Maine's school of business, but he's also a man who took two or three geology courses along the way. Geology had, in fact, become his chief hobby. I imagine it appealed to his patient, meticulous nature. A ten-thousand-year ice age here. A million years of mountain-building there. Plates of bedrock grinding against each other deep under the earth's skin over the millennia. *Pressure*. Andy told me once that all of geology is the study of pressure. And time, of course. (King 111)

In his explanation of Andy's meticulous personality, Red describes a man who changed from an educated individual with a good job to an uncanny visage of his former self, a transformation that occurred as a result of the pressure placed on him in his incarcerated state. Therefore, the emergence of Andy's Other occurs not when he is convicted, but when he bears witness to the offenses of the authoritative figures within Shawshank Prison, figures who use their status in order to commit crimes worthy of their own incarceration. When Warden Norton regresses from a warden to a man worthy of being a prison ward, Andy regresses from a man of good standing to a man plotting the crime of

jailbreaking. This is an interesting exchange of roles, for if the criminal becomes the hero and the hero is portrayed by a criminal, then the system begins to house fear through an inability for the reader to discern who is good and who is evil.

In arguing that the uncanny imbues feelings of uneasiness, the notion that the fear that an Other can replace an individual is not an unreasonable assumption. In his book *Ethics and Desire in the Wake of Postmodernism: Contemporary Satire*, Graham Matthews argues that "the uncanny can (and is most likely to) erupt in the most sanitized environment" (49), and a prison does represent an environment separated from the influence of the outside. Indeed, through incarceration, Andy the banker is replaced by Andy the convicted murderer, even though he is innocent of the crime. However, the uncanny Other in Andy emerges through his dystopian experience in Shawshank Prison. Red describes that Andy's transformation from innocent to criminal was unquestionably the result of his incarceration. King writes,

> I've told you as well as I can how it is to be an institutional man. At first you can't stand those four walls, then you get so you can abide them, then you get so you accept then … and then, as your body and your mind and your spirit adjust to lie on an HO scale, you get to love them. You are told when to eat, when you can write letters, when you can smoke … I think Andy may have been wrestling with that tiger – that institutional syndrome – and also with the bulking fears that all of it might have been for nothing. (119)

Andy does not describe the feelings that drove him to plot his escape from Shawshank Prison. However, Red's summation of institutionalization may reveal how Andy's shift from the law-abiding and wrongfully-accused banker to the criminal Other may mirror Red's own desire to break away from the routine that the micro-society of Shawshank Prison has created for the inmates. This may be for fear that the prisoners will no longer be able to function in the mainstreamed population outside the walls of Shawshank.

As such, it is also possible that the characters within a piece of literature serve as uncanny versions of one-another. Red, for example, explains that the narrative of his time at Shawshank Prison may have been a story about Andy Dufresne, but it was more a story about his own personal journey of self-discovery. Red explains,

> It's *all* about me, every damned word of it. Andy was the part of me they could never lock up, the part of me that will rejoice when the gates finally open for me and I walk out in my cheap suit with my twenty dollars of mad-money in my pocket. That part of me will rejoice no matter how old and broken and scared the rest of me is. I guess it's just that Andy had more of that part than me, and used it better. (King 123)

In the aforementioned scene, Red uses Andy's characterization as a means of reflection, a means of bettering his own view of himself. In that, Red may be exhibiting a moment of narcissism. According to Freud, the manifestation of narcissism, and in turn of the uncanny, arises when "the ego was not yet sharply differentiated from the external world and from other persons" ("The Uncanny" 87). If Red begins to see Andy as a mirror of himself rather than a separate man, the uncanniness of their relationship may reflect Red's "wishful fears" ("The Uncanny" xlii) of venturing on without his counterpart in Andy, a tenant of the uncanny that Freud describes as deflection (3).

In speaking with Red for the first tine about Zihuatanejo, the land of his dreams if he is granted parole, Andy describes two kinds of men: those who think nothing bad will

happen to them, and those who think only bad things will occur. Andy says,

> Suppose there was a house full of rare paintings and sculptures and fine old antiques, Red? And suppose the guy who owned the house heard that there was a monster of a hurricane headed right at it? One of those two kinds of men just hopes for the best. The hurricane will change course, he says to himself. No right-thinking hurricane would ever dare wipe out all these Rembrandts, my two Degas horses, my Grant Woods, and my Bentons. Furthermore, God wouldn't allow it. And if worse comes to worst, they're insured. That's one sort of man. The other sort just assumes that hurricane is going to tear right through the middle of his house … This second type of guy knows there's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst. (King 86)

This scene overtly addresses the duality of man's nature, and in Andy's description, he helps embody Freud's notion of deflection. Andy expects that everything will work out in the end, while planning meticulously in order for that to occur. Yet, in that meticulous planning, he also reflects the notion that everything may be for naught, that his wishful thinking is nothing but a mere fantasy. In that regard, Andy reveals that his friend created the pseudonym of Peter Stevens, a man with a Social Security number and a thorough background, while he was awaiting appeal of his conviction. Therefore, if Andy deflects his innocence toward the guise of Peter Stevens, Red deflects his innocence onto Andy when he agrees that if he is paroled, he will travel to Buxton to retrieve the key to the safety deposit box that holds Andy's new identity (King 92). In that simple act of agreement, the two men become one entity in a scheme to wipe Andy's slate clean after

he leaves Shawshank Prison. What is not discussed, however, is that Andy planned to leave the prison long before an opportunity for parole would arise.

When Andy conceived of his scheme to escape Shawshank Prison, he conceived of committing a crime; no longer could he claim that he was wrongfully convicted of breaking the law. In the moment that he made that decision, Andy's uncanny double emerged, the double capable of breaking the law in order to find justice. This is an example of Lacan's theory that the Other represents repressed desires, not necessarily violent tendencies (582). Further, as Garber explains, when boundaries that should never be crossed are willfully approached and defied, something uncanny occurs (121). Andy desires his freedom and longs for the life robbed of him when he was wrongfully convicted; it is only when his Other emerges does his psyche allow him to pursue such a plan. At this point, Red again serves as a deflection of Andy's judgment, for he states,

> The most ghastly irony I can think of would have been if he had been offered a parole. Can you imagine it? Three days before the parolee is actually released, he is transferred into the light security wing to undergo a complete physical and a battery of vocational tests. While he's there, his old cell is completely cleaned out. Instead of getting his parole, Andy would have gotten a long turn downstairs in solitary, followed by some more time upstairs … but in a different cell. (King 117)

Red realizes, in retrospect, that in order for Andy's plan to work, no one could be aware that he was calculating a way to escape the dystopian society of Shawshank Prison. No longer is Andy a meek banker; he is a man who, with the emergence of his Other, develops an alternate persona. Through that alternate mindset, Andy's ego and, arguably

narcissism, begin to establish itself firmly behind the walls of his mind.

Freud explains that the notion of the uncanny is rooted in narcissism. He writes, "the idea of the 'double' does not necessarily disappear with the passing of the primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of development in the ego" ("The Uncanny" 86). Narcissism has roots in the development of the imagination. According to Freud, the imagination of a child strives "to withstand the inexorable laws of reality" ("The Uncanny" 90). As such, humans develop an ability to reflect or deflect, depending upon the circumstance, in order to make unbearable circumstances more bearable (Garber 157). This is interesting, considering Foucault's argument that "the reflections that are present to the minds of all guilty persons" (124) potentially reveal, albeit covertly, the existence of an Other in criminals who show remorse for their actions.

As Brian Docherty writes in "Horror the Soul of the Plot," individuals read horror literature in order to experience real fears in a safe environment (7); therefore, it can be argued that literature provides a false sense of security to those who wish to experience the uncanny. Further, Garber explains that writers often play upon the idea of reflection and deflection in order to "lull his reader into a false sense of security which he then deliberately transgresses or violates" (123). Through Andy, Red begins to hope again, and he overtly states this in the final lines of the novella when he intends to meet up with the newly-manifested Peter Stevens in Zihuatanejo. King writes,

> I hope Andy is down there.
>
> I hope I can make it across the border.
>
> I hope to see my friend and shake his hand.

> I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams.
>
> I *hope*. (131)

The border, while clearly representative of the national border between the United States and Mexico, may also represent the border that separates Andy and Red as individuals. This is important to note, for the notion of the uncanny as a delay in the progression of the development of the ego as a side-effect of narcissism makes Red's desire to amalgamate with Andy that much more complex. Such complexity lies not only in character development, but in the idea of the prison as the Other to the general society. Red's hope to see Andy may therefore represent his hope that the part of his psyche that aligns with Andy as his uncanny Other will be omnipresent now that he has gained his freedom from Shawshank Prison.

Similarly, Graham argues that Freud's Other is merely a manifestation of the ego, the part of the mind that exists in order to support its own agenda (58). As a manifestation of the ego, the projection of narcissism unfolds not only onto other individuals, but potentially onto the Other of an individual. Foucault further argues that acts of aggression are deeply rooted in passion, instinct, and societal maladjustment (17) which, arguably, could stem from a belief that the aggressor is superior to the member of society upon which he or she is enacting his or her aggression. As such, "the concept of narcissism provides the key to understanding the rituals of male aggression as well as the appropriative powers of patriarchal discourse" (Mudge 202). Similarly, narcissism acts as an internal awareness of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, both overtly and subconsciously (Mudge 206). The notion of such relationships is evident where King writes,

There are others here like me, others who remember Andy. We're glad he's gone, but a little sad, too. Some birds are not meant to be caged, that's all. Their feathers are too bright, their songs too sweet and wild. So you let them go, or when you open the cage to feed them they somehow fly out past you. And the part of you that knows it was wrong to imprison them in the first place rejoices, but still, the place where you live is that much more drab and empty for their departure. (123)

It therefore can be argued that in "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," Andy represents Red's desires, and in his escape, represents Red's ego striving to be released from its own captivity in his mind. While this may appear to be an innocuous manifestation of ego at first glance, it represents Andy's willingness to forego procedure and protocol in order to meet his own selfish needs.

Interestingly, if Andy represents Red's desire for freedom through his ego, it can be argued that he also represents Warden Norton's superego, or the internalization of his need to follow the rules. According to Lacan, "the superego is not, of course, the source of reality … but it lays down the pathways, before redefining in the unconscious the first ideal marks in which the tendencies are constituted as repressed in the substitution of the signifier for needs" (619). Lacan is therefore establishing the superego as inseparable from the individual; this contrasts with the ego as the emergence of the uncanny Other. The idea that Any represents Warden Norton's superego is further addressed where Red states, "But if he *had* seen how different Andy had become, I think Norton would have been well-satisfied" (King 83). Therefore, it can be argued that if Andy represents both Red's ego and Warden Norton's superego, perhaps had he never arrived at Shawshank

Prison, Warden Norton would never have committed fraud and Red never would have reclaimed his hope for freedom.

Where Andy and Red may serve as reflections of one-another in a complex Otherness, Andy and Warden Norton may serve as deflections of one-another. Lacan explains that some individuals refuse to acknowledge their own criminal perversions, thus deflecting their evils onto someone innocent (121). In the case of Warden Norton, his narcissism and ego act not as reflections of Andy as the emergence of an Other, but as deflections onto Andy's emerging ego. This is evident where Andy begins to walk with an air about him that demonstrated acceptance of his status. King writes, "Andy walked with his shoulders squared, and his step was always light, as if he were headed home to a good home-cooked meal and a good woman instead of to a tasteless mess of soggy vegetables, lumpy mashed potato, and a slice or two of that fatty, gristly stuff most of the cons called mystery meat" (84), with the gait of a man who had silently decided that he would change his fate by breaking out of Shawshank Prison. At this point, Red describes Andy as having never become like the rest of the inmates, men who walked with shoulders hunched and despair on their faces (King 83). However, Red also describes Warden Norton's pleasure with Andy's "silent, introspective, and brooding" nature (King 84). This can be interpreted not as representative of knowledge of Andy's plan, but rather as Warden Norton's projection of his own crime of embezzlement, a crime he committed silently and with introspection so as not to draw attention to himself.

The story itself culminates with Andy's escape from Shawshank Prison, an escape which took decades to implement (King 107). Yet, Andy's jailbreak is minimal in the uncanniness of "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." Just as it can be argued

that Andy's existence in the prison brought out both the best in Red and the worst in Warden Norton, his escape highlighted Red's reform from criminal to rehabilitated man and Warden Norton's descent into embezzlement. King explains that without Andy, Warden Norton was broken and Red found his freedom (108); this idea further supports how the dystopian landscape of Shawshank Prison hinged on the uncanny doubles served through the character of Andy.

Considering the argument that "the difference between life inside a prison and outside is not so great as might first appear" (Booker 79), Andy's escape from Shawshank Prison reflects not only the transition from innocent to criminal, but also the Otherness of incarceration and freedom. This idea culminates when Red states, "maybe because half of me was with Andy Dufresne, Andy Dufresne who had waded in shit and came out clean on the other side, Andy Dufresne, headed for the Pacific" (King 107). A psychoanalytic reading of "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" therefore addresses not the negatives of a dystopian society, but how a dystopian society fosters the emergence of the Other in order for men to survive. By shedding the part of his persona that belonged in prison, it can be argued that Andy represents Red's willingness to leave his crimes behind him in pursuit of a just life, thereby relinquishing the waste and emerging as a redeemed man. Perhaps, then, the notion of redemption represents the Otherness of guilt not merely in serving as an opposite, but in being inseparable parts of the human spirit. Therefore, the fear generated by the uncanniness of the literary Other should be addressed not with hesitation, but with acceptance.

Works Cited

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. Print.

Booker, M. Keith. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994. Print.

Davis, J. Madison. "Thoughts on a New Grandmaster." *World Literature Today* 81.3. (May-June 2007): 16-19. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 March 2016.

Docherty, Brian. "The Horror the Soul of the Plot." *American Horror Fiction: From Brockden Brown to Stephen King*. Ed. Brian Docherty. New York: Springer, 1990. 1-13. eBook.

Dolar, Mladen. "'I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night:' Lacan and the Uncanny." *October* 58. (Autumn 1991): 5-23. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 February 2016.

Drake, Deborah. *Prisons, Punishment and the Pursuit of Security*. London: Springer, 2012. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. eBook.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. Ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1955. Print.

Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

King, Stephen. "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." *Different Seasons*. New York: Scribner, 1982. 1-132. Print.

Lacan, Jacques. *Ecrits: A Selection*. London: Taylor & Francis, 1990. Print.

Lyndenberg, Robin. "Freud's Uncanny Narratives." *PMLA* 112.5. (October 1997): 1072-1086. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 March 2016.

Magistrate, Tony. *Stephen King: America's Storyteller*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. eBook.

Matthews, Graham. *Ethics and Desire in the Wake of Postmodernism: Contemporary Satire*. London: Continuum Books, 2012. eBook.

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Ed. George M. Logan & Robert Adams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.

Mudge, Bradford K. "Echo's Words, Echo's Body: Apostasy, Narcissism, and the Practice of History." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 10.2. (Autumn 1991): 195-213. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 August 2015.

Oliver, Kelly. "The Plight of Ethics." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26.2. (2012): 118-133. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 March 2016.

Rogak, Lisa. *Haunted Heart: The Life and Times of Stephen King*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008. eBook.

Romero, Luis Gomez. "Countess Almaviva and the Carceral Redemption: Introducing a Musical Utopia into the Prison Walls." *Utopian Studies* 21.2. (2010): 274-292. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 March 2016.

Stelzig, Eugene. "'The Shield of Human Nature': Wordsworth's Reflections on the Revolution in France." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 45.4. (March 1991): 415-431. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 January 2016.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973. Print.

Wilson, David & Sean O'Sullivan. *Images of Incarceration: Representations of Prison in Film and Television Drama*. Winchester: Waterside Press, 2004. eBook.

Wordsworth, William. "The Thorn." *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: The Age of Romanticism, Volume* 4. 2nd ed. Eds. Joseph Black, Leonard Conolly, Kate Flint, Isobel Grundy, Don LePan, et al. Ontario: Broadview Press, 2010. 212-259. eBook.

Women Through the Eyes of Women:

The Renaissance of 16ᵗʰ Century France and England

by Elizabeth M. Hoyt, Durham University, United Kingdom

Introduction

In "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" Joan Kelly-Gadol argues that "there was no Renaissance for women—at least, not during the Renaissance" (176). She believes that "the state, early capitalism, and the social relations formed by them impinged on the lives of Renaissance women in different ways according to their positions in society" (176). The chief place in which Kelly-Gadol recognizes the inequality between men and women is within societal expectations of sexuality. She describes the "norm of female chastity" as arising from a shift in politics that created a "hereditary, dependent class" (193). The need to ensure legitimate heirs is one element that helped to reduce female independence and encourage the cultivation of domestic qualities. In response to Kelly-Godal, Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, Christiane Klapisch, and Sylvie Steinberg published the piece "Sur Les Traces de Joan Kelly: Pouvoir, Amour et Courtoisie" in which they claim that women were not as unequal as Kelly-Godal had maintained. On the contrary,

these authors contend that many wellborn women during the Renaissance period held positions of power and influence, and that although "largement domestique, ce pouvoir s'est fondé sur des relations mimétiques des relations de sang" (50). In other words, although women exercised power over a different sphere, the way in which they exercised it was similar to the male practice. When we compare these seemingly contradictory positions, it is interesting to note that the authors of both pieces make a distinction between the expectations and restraints placed on women of different classes. A look at the writings of several female authors during this period will show that there is truth to both arguments and that the focus on class in not unwarranted: there was definitely an expectation of female chastity that was not equally applied to 16th century men; however, women lucky enough to be a part of the upper class were not altogether helpless when it came to wielding political power, particularly in the form of patronage. By concentrating on the nuances to be found within their prose and poetry, I believe that we can come to an understanding of how women of various backgrounds viewed both their own situations and those of the other women around them.

Women of France

One of the great female authors of the age was Marguerite de Navarre, the sister of the king of France. Marguerite was known as a champion of the arts, who held Protestant sympathies during a period when Europe, and France specifically, was rent in two by religious wars. As a prominent and influential figure, Marguerite wrote prolifically on the subject of male/female relations in a variety of genres. In her *Heptaméron*, Marguerite uses a party of travelers to tell stories of deception, passion, and oppression. Throughout these tales, there is a consistent focus on the chastity of women and the requirement they have to protect their chastity. However, the way in which chastity is to be protected varies depending on the class of the woman involved.

In the second tale of the *Heptaméron*, for example, we have the account of a muleteer's wife who refuses to succumb to the threats of her husband's servant, and so he kills her. At the end of the story all the women of the party are in tears; they admire the courage of the women and internally resolve to imitate her should they be placed in a similar situation. Tale five also recounts the adventures of a common woman, a boatwoman who is responsible for ferrying passengers across a river. One day, as she is ferrying two monks across said river, they determine to rape her. Being clever, the boatwoman tricks the wicked monks, and they are caught and punished. The most interesting part of this story, however, resides in the commentary at its end, when the narrator remarks that "en la sorte que la vertu des femmes bien nourryes seroit autant appelée coustume que vertu […] mais de celles qui ne sçavent rien…c'est là où on congnoist la vertu qui est naïfvement dedans le cueur" (Navarre 37). Here the speaker offers readers an explanation of the difference between noblewomen and common women: the virtue of a noble lady is the result of habit, but that of a commoner is natural to the heart. Although, at first, this may seem to be a compliment, within it there is a double standard. If the virtue of the lowborn is natural, then any succumbing to the temptations of the flesh would be an act against nature. If, on the other hand, virtue is a habit, one may fall out of a habit without the same ramifications—it might still be seen as detestable, but breaking a habit does not carry the same force as "she went against her nature." Either way, the

narrator concludes that women must guard their virtue, and stories such as these would seem to bear out Kelly-Gadol's argument that there were unequal gender expectations. A woman's reputation could be ruined if her chastity was tarnished, thus, she had to be prepared to defend it in whatever way she could. Men, on the other hand, could "play" all they wanted without severe repercussions.

However, within this same *Heptaméron*, we also have a tale that seems to imply it is okay for noblewomen to be unfaithful, so long as no one else knows about it. Tale three, for example, details how the Queen of Naples gets back at her husband for his infidelity by being unfaithful herself. Although the queen does initially resist the logic and advances of her suitor (because she is afraid that losing her chastity will blot her honor) she eventually consents to being his secret mistress. When we consider this tale, we notice the implication of the speaker that female infidelity is okay as long as no one knows about it. At the same time, the double standard that exists for noblewomen and common women becomes even more apparent. Whereas the common woman is required to defend her chastity no matter what it costs her, the highborn lady may take a lover so long as it remains a secret. Thus, it would seem that wealth and power affect the standard to which individual women are held. The more powerful one is, the lower the standard of chastity would seem to be, and vice versa.

Within the *Heptaméron*, then, we have tales and characters that put forward a variety of opinions on female sexuality. It would seem, therefore, that the question of female sexuality during the 16th century was not as cut and dry as Kelly-Gadol suggested. For, even though there is a definite focus on the necessity of female chastity in the *Heptaméron*,

there are also tales that imply that "chastity" is not the same for all. Moreover, the very fact that Marguerite de Navarre interrogates the notion that society should have different standards for men and women appears to align with the opinion of Cassagnes-Brouquet, Klapisch, and Steinberg that there were powerful women during the Renaissance who were capable of holding their own in a male dominated world.

In addition to Marguerite de Navarre, there were also several popular sonnet sequences written by women during this time; one of the most interesting is that of Louise Labé. Labé, perhaps better known as La Belle Cordière, wrote twenty-four sonnets on the theme of passionate love. Labé's work is somewhat unique for the period, as it was not considered appropriate for women to express their passionate feelings for men in verse (although men frequently communicated theirs). Of particular interest to our conversation are sonnets XVIII and XXIV. Sonnet XVIII opens with the plea, "Baise m'encore, rebaise moy et baise" (XVIII, 1). As might be imagined, begging for kisses from a lover was not the "normal" conduct of a women bred to die in defense of her chastity. Nevertheless, Louise Labé seems compelled to express her yearning. This is important, as it contradicts the prevalent notions that women had no feelings and that passion was only for men. Labé was well aware, however, that her sonnets would cause a stir, and so she asks for understanding in her final sonnet: "Ne reprenez, Dames, si j'ai aymé, / Si j'ai senti mile torches ardentes" (XXIV, 1-2). Labé's need to be understood is as intriguing as her articulated desire for tender embraces. Why should she have to ask her fellow women not to blame her? Why does she need to apologize for the thousand torches burning within her? The answer can only be had in the prevailing notions of

sexuality, which dictated the way in which it was appropriate for women to express their love.

When we consider the works of Louise Labé and Marguerite de Navarre, we can begin to understand how women saw themselves during the French Renaissance of the 16th century. Louise Labé's poetry is demonstrative of the depth of passion and capacity for love that some Renaissance women possessed; she reminds us that women were their own worst critics, and that it was other women, not men, who judged the actions of passionate lovers. That Louise Labé thinks it necessary to address female critics at the end of her sequence, instead of male ones, would seem to indicate that prescriptions of female chastity might have come largely from their own sex, rather than from the patriarchy. Marguerite's *Heptaméron* further explicates the pressure that was put on women to *appear* chaste, and, once again, these pressures seem to derive from other women. When it came to women of low birth, there was an expectation (among the nobility) that they would protect their chastity even unto the shedding of their blood, because their virtue was natural to them. Noblewomen, however, were in a more fluid situation, especially if they possessed power and influence. Although being known as unchaste was still the dread of highborn ladies, the key word there is "known." If no one knew that they were being unfaithful, then no harm was done. Virtue, after all, was but a habit to them, and habits can be broken. These viewpoints were written by one of the most powerful women of the time, one who had much of the leeway of which she writes because of her own class. It is not surprising, therefore, that Marguerite's opinions on women in the Renaissance seem to align more closely with those of Cassagnes-Brouquet, Klapisch, and Steinberg than with those of Kelly-Godal.

Women of England

If we turn our attention to Englishwomen, their writing does not stand out as being particularly provocative. There were very few comparisons to men in any of the poetry that I read. Consequently, the topics of the poems we will look at do not focus on maintaining chastity; they do not sing the praises of passion or love; they do not question the place of women within society. Rather, they deal with questions of religion, ponder the nature of grief, and offer advice for women to live by. The following poets will be our focus: Anne Askew, one of the earliest female poets to compose in English; Mary Sidney Herbert, the Duchess of Pembroke and sister of Sir Philip Sidney (author of *Astrophil and Stella*); Isabella Whitney, who is believed to be the first Englishwoman to write original secular poetry for publication.

Anne Askew is, perhaps, one of the most intriguing of our English poets. She was a devote Protestant, who was executed during the final years of Henry VIII's reign for "heretical" beliefs (Gairdner). Anne's poetry reflects her understanding of the determined female role, while at the same time demonstrating her staunch Protestantism and defiance of those who would have her convert back to Catholicism. In "I Am a Woman Poor and Blind," these qualities are especially apparent. She begins the poem by acknowledging her own weakness: "I am a woman poor and blind / and little knowledge remains in me" (1-2). This ownership of weakness and lack of knowledge seems to correspond with the prevalent notion that women were the weaker sex. A couple of stanzas later, we have a similar ownership of accepted beliefs regarding women. This time the focus is on religion

and the role that she believes it should play in her life:

> I, with myself being thus at strife,
>
> would fain have been at rest,
>
> Musing and studying in mortal life,
>
> what things I must do to please God best. (13-16)

Up until this point in the poem, Anne seems to be following gender prescriptions perfectly; by her own admission she is poor, blind, has little knowledge, and desires to concentrate her energy on achieving holiness. After this point of the poem, however, Anne goes into attack mode. She starts to interrogate (and even insult) Catholic practices: she refers to the Catholic communion as "stinking meat" (29); she refers to Catholic ceremonies as "Popish ceremonies" and "juggling deeds" (34, 35); she implies that Catholics are "worse than either Jews or Turks" (47). In the end, she gives her life (literally) to God and asks forgiveness for being lead astray from the path of holiness. Anne's poem is interesting in that it presents such contrasting images of women. On the one hand, we have the weak, unintelligent Anne. On the other hand, we have Anne the denouncer of Catholicism. If Anne is any indication of how Englishwomen saw themselves, then we must conclude that they largely conformed to gendered expectations, except when their religious beliefs were at stake.

Our second English poet is Mary Sidney Herbert, the sister of the famous Sir Philip Sidney. Although not as rich or powerful as Marguerite de Navarre, Mary was a great patron of the arts, and she was herself considered to be one of the best poets in England. She was the first Englishwoman to achieve a significant literary reputation (Hannay). What initially struck me about her work was the philosophical quality of it. In the poem we will consider, Mary does not talk about love, as our French poets did, nor is she defiant, as was Anne Askew. Rather, Mary's poetry exudes a certain calm and contemplation. Written as an elegy for her brother who died of a war wound in 1556, "The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda" is an exposé of Christian grief. The poem opens almost despairingly:

> Ay me, to whom shall I my case complaine?
>
> That may compassion my impatient grief?
>
> Or where shall I unfold my inward paine,
>
> That my enriven heart may find reliefe? (1-4)

This opening sets up the tone of the entire poem as one of deep melancholy brought on by grief. The author is looking for some relief, but she does not find it in the heavens, nor in men. The heavens, she says, were the authors of her woe, because "they foresaw, yet suffered this be so" (10). Men, on the other hand, are equally "subject to the heavens ordinance: / Bound to abide whatever they decree" (14-15). Thus, Mary concludes that her best recourse is herself, especially since "none alive like sorrowfull remaines" (20). This conclusion helps us to understand two things about the way in which Mary views herself as a woman: firstly, it illustrates that the grief of a woman is so great that none can comfort her, and, secondly, it proves that the strength of women must be great, indeed, if they can shoulder the burden of grief alone. As the poem continues, Mary gives full vent

to her grief as she interrogates and tries to understand the philosophical and theological realities of death. In lines 56-60 Mary plays with the Platonic idea of shadows, asking, "…Is but the shadow of his likenesse gone. / Scarse like the shadow of that which he was" (57-58).[1] Not many lines later, she turns to dogma for comfort, reassuring herself that "it [the soul] is not dead, ne can it die, / but lives for aie, in blisfull Paradisse" (67-68). As deep as her grief is upon the death of her brother, Mary is still able to express her struggles and find comfort in her own intellectual inquiry. Within this poem, Mary Sidney Herbert demonstrates that women are not only as capable of true grief as men, but they are also as able to express that grief in poetry. The fact that some believe this elegy was written by Edmund Spenser is a testament to Mary's ability as a poet. She shows that women can be just as eloquent as their male counterparts.

Our final English poet, Isabella Whitney, is by far the most practical of the three. Although little is known about her life, she is believed to be the first Englishwoman to write original secular poetry for publication. Her poem, "An Order Prescribed, by Is. W., to two of her Younger Sisters Serving in London," offers advice on how to survive London life. It could be argued that the poem represents a list of rules for women to live by. Isabella begins by reminding her sisters to pray every morning, that they might ask God to defend them from danger and protect those they love. That completed, she launches into a list that seems to conform quite well to the domestic prescriptions we noticed in France. She tells her sisters to "justly do such deeds / as are to [them] assigned" (21-22) and warns them to avoid "wanton toys" and those who would "infect" their minds (23, 28). Next she tells them to "listen to no lies, / Nor credit every fained tale, /

that many would devise" or, in other words, do not listen to gossip (34-36). The rest of the poem warns them that they must pay attention to how they carry themselves, refrain from anger, and serve their monarch well. After this, they must pray and go straight to bed. What is, perhaps, most surprising about Isabella's poem is that her advice conforms so closely to the domestic prescriptions that Kelly-Godal spoke of in her piece. Nowhere do we see these women being told to do anything other than what would have been expected of them. The domestic is represented as their sphere, and they are told to take great care lest *their* actions cause others to have a bad opinion of them. Nevertheless, we must not overlook that this advice is coming from a woman who is not doing these things herself. If we can trust what Isabella says in "To her Sister Mistress A.B.," she is not married, and she insists that "till some household cares me tie, / My books and pen I will apply" (41-42). Isabella does not discuss the consequences of her own choices, but, if we are to believe her advice to her sisters, we can only imagine that they, and the society in which they lived, did not approve of her unfeminine occupation.

When we bring together the works of Anne Askew, Mary Sidney Herbert, and Isabella Whitney, we notice that there is a glaring difference between their writings and those of Marguerite de Navarre and Louise Labé. Whereas the Frenchwomen's writing explicitly expresses that men and women were not held to the same standard that of the Englishwomen does not. Yes, Isabella offers advice for female behavior, but it is given in the context of self-betterment, not oppressive prescriptions. Also missing from the English writing is the dichotomy between classes. Within Marguerite's writing, especially, there was an obvious difference between the way in which noblewomen and commoners

---

[1] The reference to "shadows" here seems to be connected to the story of the cave from Plato's *Dialogues*.

were expected to act in situations involving chastity. This distinction is not apparent in any of our English authors. On the other hand, the English authors seemed to be more deeply influenced by their religious convictions. Anne Askew deals with the Protestant/ Catholic debate explicitly, and comes down strongly in favor of the Protestant doctrines. Mary Sidney Herbert uses religion, specifically the theology of salvation, in order to help herself cope with grief. Isabella Whitney is sure to begin and end her advice to her sisters with the directive that they not forget to commend themselves daily to God. Although religion does make an appearance in Marguerite de Navarre it is as an extreme. We either see women dying as "martyrs" of chastity, or we see women having to defend themselves from a malicious Church hierarchy. Despite these differences, however, the accomplishment these women hold in common must be celebrated—they were all women who succeeded in publishing their works during a time when men dominated the literary world.

Conclusion

In closing, let us return to the arguments of Joan Kelly-Godal and Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, Christiane Klapisch, and Sylvie Steinberg. It must be noted that the very fact that women were writing in such an openly reactionary manner suggests that Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, Christiane Klapisch, and Sylvie Steinberg were right to assume that women were not completely without power during the Renaissance. However, at the same time, the writings of our French authors do seem to express much of the inequality that Kelly-Gadol discusses. Within the tales and poems of Marguerite de Navarre and

Louise Labé we do encounter a notion of sexuality in which women are clearly expected and required to act according to certain predetermined norms: those who conform to the expectation of virtue placed upon them are praised, while those who succumb to sexual temptation have to hide their behavior or risk condemnation (or apologize for their feelings). It might be concluded, then, that the "Renaissance" for women varied depending on where they lived. If Frenchwomen did have a Renaissance, it was not a sexually freeing one. Englishwomen, on the other hand, seemed to be a bit luckier.

Works Cited

Askew, Anne. "I Am a Woman Poor and Blind." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.*

W.W. Norton & Company, 2015. Web. 13 May 2015.

Cassagnes-Brouquet, Sophie, Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane, and Steinberg, Sylvie. "Sur Les

Traces De Joan Kelly: Pouvoir, Amour Et Courtoisie (XIIe-XVIe Siècles)." *CLIO:*

Histoire, Femmes Et Sociétés 32 (2010): 17-52. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.

Gairdner, James. "Anne Askew (1521-1546)." Ed. Leslie Stephen. *The Dictionary of*

National Biography. Vol. II. London: Smith, Elder, 1885. 190-92. *Luminarium.org.*

W.W. Norton & Company, 16 July 2010. Web. 13 May 2015.

Hannay, Margaret. "Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561 - 1621)."

International Sidney Society. International Sidney Society, 06 Apr. 2014. Web. 13

May 2015.

Herbert, Mary Sidney. "The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda." *Luminarium.org*. W.W. Norton

& Company, 19 Jan. 2007. Web. 11 May 2015.

"Isabella Whitney." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, 2015. Web. 11 May 2015.

Kelly-Gadol, Joan. "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" *Becoming Visible: Women in*

European History. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. 137-64. Web. 28 Jan. 2015.

Labé, Louise. "Sonnets." *Poésie Française*. Poésie Française, 2009. Web. 13 May 2015.

"Louise Labe." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015. Web. 13

May 2015.

"Marguerite De Navarre." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, 2015. Web. 11 May

2015.

Navarre, Marguerite de. *L'Heptaméron*. Ed. Michel François. Paris: Garnier, 1960. Print.

Whitney, Isabella. "An Order Prescribed, by Is. W., to Two of Her Younger Sisters Serving

in London." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, 2015. Web. 11 May 2015.

---. "To Her Sister Mistress A. B." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, 2015. Web. 11

May 2015.

Sue Matheson

The Subordination of Embodied Power: Sentimental Representations of the Black Maternal Body in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

by Andrea Powell Wolfe, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

As many scholars have pointed out, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe portrays slavery as an affront to the values of her readers, mostly white, middle-class women in the Northern United States, understanding theirs as a system of morality which, according to the dictates of the popular Cult of True Womanhood, stresses the important charge of the mother to care for and guide her children until they reach adulthood.[1] I would add that Stowe's portrayal of the black mother as ultimately subsumed within a Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice and obedience, embodied in Stowe's imagined white, female readers, ultimately serves to disallow her black female characters access to their physicality, to deny them of bodily agency, and to carefully cover over their erotic power. In this article, I discuss the sentimental techniques and tropes that Stowe utilizes in order to further the cause of abolitionism among white women of the Northern United States through the depiction of a victimized, yet always potentially subversive, black maternal body. I also examine the ways in which Stowe uses the black mother figure to begin to challenge the visual system of discipline inherent to American slavery as

---

1   See Elizabeth Ammons, Jennifer L. Jenkins, Marianne Noble, and Jane Tompkins for classic readings of Stowe's use of sentimental appeals.

well as how she reinforces this system by allowing her readers to continue to gaze upon her black female characters. Finally, I explore Stowe's conservative positioning of black maternal bodies within and outside of the United States (particularly in Canada and an imagined new nation in Africa)—reassuring for a readership consciously or unconsciously invested in the maintenance of the status quo—as well as her depiction of these bodies as paradoxically able to haunt the national body politic from which they are systematically abjected. In the end, I argue that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at times resists but ultimately reinscribes the cultural forces that serve to disempower the black mother through appeals to sentimentalism and conflicted engagement with the racial politics of the United States.

In the novel, Stowe presents a host of black mothers who, not unimportantly, vary as widely in skin tone as they do in personality, intelligence, and life experience. A brief review of the novel's trajectory reveals a dozen such women. The story begins at Uncle Tom's first place of residence, the Shelby plantation in Kentucky, as Mr. Shelby makes the decision to sell Uncle Tom and a child named Harry to a passing trader in order pay off some gambling debts. Eliza Harris, Harry's mother and a beautiful quadroon who serves the mistress of the estate as a personal attendant, learns of Mr. Shelby's plan and decides to flee with her young son before the slave trader has the opportunity to seize his human property. Eliza escapes to the Northern United States, joins her husband, also a fugitive, and continues to make her way to Canada as Tom is shipped down the river. After Tom departs the Shelby plantation, his dark-skinned wife, Aunt Chloe, who serves as cook of the estate, hires herself out in a bakery to earn money to buy her husband back for the Shelbys. Later, when Tom arrives at his new home on the St. Clare Louisiana estate, he meets several more black female figures including Prue, a slave from a neighboring

plantation who drinks in order to tune out the crying of her dead infant, starved to death by her cruel mistress. Next, Tom is sold, along with Emmeline, a young quadroon woman, to Simon Legree. On Legree's plantation, which is located in the Southernmost swamps of Louisiana, Tom meets Cassy, Legree's tormented mulatta concubine, who is ultimately able to perform a ghostly version of white womanhood in order to secure her freedom while simultaneously driving Legree to his death. Although Tom dies at the hands of Legree's abuse and Chloe ends up turning her savings over to the Shelbys in a gesture of grief and hopelessness, Cassy is eventually reunited in Canada with her lost daughter, who turns out to be Eliza, originally from the Shelby plantation. In addition to these major roles, Stowe introduces several bit-parts for black women along the way, including one for an elderly woman who is torn from her teenage son at auction and one for a young mother who pitches herself overboard after her infant is secretly sold from a trader's boat in transfer to market. In fact, the success of Stowe's sentimentality depends, in large part, on her portrayal of the black female, and particularly the black mother, as victim of a system that fails to recognize the sanctity of motherhood.

Eliza's story, for example, demonstrates the tendency of slavery to disrupt that which Stowe represents as the most sacred of bonds, the one that exists between mother and child. Interestingly, Eliza experiences moments of bodily power in her quest to claim her right to mother her child but is finally stripped of agency by a narrative that positions her as a self-sacrificial Christian wife and mother, a reassuring narrative indeed for a reading public who finds Eliza's brief demonstrations of bodily strength entertaining but who ultimately prefer her potentially sexually excessive and socially subversive body safely contained. At the same time that Stowe relies on the popular conception of the ideal

white woman as the center of moral authority in her home, a powerful agent of the fate of her family members and the nation as a whole, she represents the ideal black woman, embodied in Eliza, as completely ensconced in the private sphere and subservient to the intellectual and social pursuits of her husband and, therefore, politically powerless and sexually nonthreatening. From the beginning, Eliza possesses the celebrated feminine characteristic of purity: she was brought up as a Christian by Mrs. Shelby, a white woman who typifies, in many ways, the Cult of True Womanhood, and married, in Mr. and Mrs. Shelby's own home, to a neighboring mulatto slave. Although beautiful, she was thus protected from "those temptations which make beauty so fatal an inheritance to a slave" (11). Eliza is also passive; she never dreams to leave the Shelby home, in fact, until she learns of their planning to take her son from her. Before she overhears that Mr. Shelby has sold her son to a trader, she is content with her lot in life, telling her husband when he speaks of running away from his own cruel master, "'O George, we must have faith. Mistress says that when all things go wrong to us, we must believe that God is doing the very best'" (17). When Eliza determines that she must leave Kentucky, however, she is forced to act quickly and decisively as a physical being in order to save her child. Pursued by the slave trader right up to the edge of the semi-frozen Ohio River, Eliza leaps from one block of ice to the next until she reaches the Ohio bank (58). Susan Palwick asserts: "Although she is one of the purest and most pious characters in the novel, . . . Eliza's virtue gives her no power to save her son from being sold: instead, she must rely on bodily strength. Each nerve taut, each muscle straining, Eliza exerts herself to her physical limits" (80). I would suggest, however, that Eliza's physical prowess in this scene is covered over by Stowe's assigning to God the responsibility for Eliza's athletic success:

Eliza is "nerved with strength such as God only gives the desperate" (58). Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Eliza is fully restored to her previous submissive and pious self. Paradoxically, Eliza's disembodiment serves to confirm her initiation into the Cult of True Womanhood, founded on the assumption that the ideal woman is more spiritual than bodily, at the same time that it precludes the possibility of her exercising social or political power. Through Eliza, Stowe demonstrates that a black woman can attain the level of virtue and spirituality that her readers may assign to white women alone but, simultaneously, that a morally upright black woman will pose no social or sexual threat to these readers who are assumed to act, unlike Eliza, as powerful agents in the public lives of their sons and husbands.

Eliza begins to lose ground as a corporeally powerful subject when she joins up with her husband and the two begin their journey to Canada together. Her ownership, at this point, seems to simply transfer from her slave master and mistress in Kentucky to her husband: before engaging in a shoot-out with the posse that pursues him in the Northern United States, George states, "'I'm a free man, standing on God's free soil; and my wife and my child I claim as mine'" (195). In this way, Stowe denies the right of Mr. and Mrs. Shelby to own Eliza and assigns her rightful ownership to George. Indeed, as we find when Eliza and George eventually do set up housekeeping in Canada, the role of Christian wife effectively silences Eliza. The narrative, from this point on, denies us access to Eliza's thoughts and conversations nearly altogether. We only know that Eliza follows George in his travels and, according to "a letter to one of his friends" (429), guides her son in Christian love and fortifies George with her strong Christian beliefs (432). In this way, as Palwick points out, Eliza is not "permitted to initiate movement, as she did

when she crossed the Ohio River" (121). Eliza is ultimately rendered nearly as powerless as she is during the years of her servitude to the Shelbys. Outside of the bonds of slavery, she is constrained not by the slave system itself but by the convergence of forces used to contain her sexually and physically and also to deny her the ultimate moral authority of the white mother.

Stowe's characterization of Cassy, the woman who turns out to be Eliza's biological mother, is even more complex, and, ultimately, disappointing, than that of Eliza. On one hand, Cassy seems to be the female character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* who exercises the most agency throughout the course of the story; she is allowed the indulgence to express anger at her oppressors, in her own voice, no less, by relating her life story to Tom in much detail, and, what's more, to act on her anger to effect devastating results for her final master, Legree. In fact, as Eve Allegra Raimon points out, Stowe's portrayal of Cassy is, in some ways, quite remarkable—very few nineteenth-century sentimental novels present victims of sexual degradation who do not die or commit suicide, let alone who successfully seek revenge on their oppressors and then experience reinstatement as good and holy mothers to their children born outside the bounds of matrimony (109). On the other hand, I would argue that Cassy's restoration at the end of the novel comes at a price. Like Eliza, her individual agency and bodily power are ultimately contained in the shroud of good Christian motherhood. Originally, Cassy is introduced as wielding quite a bit of power over both master and fellow slaves on Legree's plantation. The day after Tom arrives on the estate, for example, Cassy demonstrates her authority by performing an incredible physical feat and using her words to contest the violent control of both Legree's overseer and Legree himself. On this day, Cassy is forced to work with the other slaves in the fields, presumably as a punishment for speaking disrespectfully to Legree upon his return from market with Tom and a young slave woman named Emmeline, whom he intends to make his newest concubine. Cassy's punishment backfires on Legree, however, as she outperforms his field slaves, thus publicly demonstrating her physical, and possibly supernatural, prowess. After warning the blood-hungry black overseer to leave her alone, stating, "'I've power enough, yet, to have you torn by the dogs, burnt alive, cut to inches,'" Cassy proceeds to pick cotton with remarkable efficiency, as if "by magic," even covertly helping others to fill their baskets before weighing in with Legree (352). When Legree inquires into Cassy's performance in the fields, the overseer reports, "'She picks like de debil and all his angels,'" alluding to that which, as he and the others present perceive, may be her connection with Satan himself (353). Furthermore, as Legree weighs her cotton basket, Cassy whispers something in French that appears to enrage him (354). Legree raises his hand to strike her but does not, and Cassy proudly walks away (354). In these initial scenes, then, Cassy's power is directly connected to her madness, both emotionally and psychologically, as even Legree seems to fear her unpredictability and potential for ruthlessness; to her willingness and ability to speak, as her words often enact violent resistance to her oppression; and to her sexuality, as her position of concubine clearly affords her some amount of control over his overseer as well as over the slave master himself.

In that she is presented as mad, verbally aggressive, and sexualized, Cassy's power is also linked to evil. She is portrayed not only as a victimized mulatta sex slave of several men before and including Legree but also as an equally violent and active force against these men and the power structure that they represent, and, therefore, a potentially

dangerous influence, even on the saintly Tom. When Tom arrives to Legree's estate, he sees Cassy's "dark, wild face" in the window of the dilapidated plantation house (345). Later, Tom sees in Cassy "an embodiment of the temptation with which he had been wrestling" (357). She seems to have internalized the malevolent forces that control her life, matching Legree's evil with her own cunning, in a way that Tom, who prays for Legree's soul even as the other man shreds his skin with the whip and kicks him violently, resists with every fiber of his virtuous being. Furthermore, in that she was forced into concubinage and infanticide, as she explains to Tom, Cassy embodies not only evil, but the anti-mother herself. In short, Cassy is presented as opposite to Eliza Harris, who seems to represent a form of True Womanhood suited to the ideological constraints placed Stowe's black female characters. Logically, then, to cleanse herself from the taint of sexual slavery and to eventually reclaim her position as mother, Cassy must rid herself of her own sexualized, and, thus, deviant, body.

Cassy begins the process of disembodiment as she stages her own disappearance from the Legree plantation and then proceeds to haunt Legree to his death. Importantly, it is Cassy's developing relationship with the young Emmeline that prompts her to act to save not only herself but Emmeline as well. In fact, Cassy seems to set her plan in motion primarily in order to keep Emmeline from the sexual debauchery that she has experienced: after Cassy has tricked Legree into thinking that she and Emmeline have run away and then safely bunkered down in his own garret with the girl, she tells Emmeline, "'If it weren't for you, child . . . I'd go out to them; and I'd thank any one of them that would shoot me down; for what use will freedom be to me? Can it give me back my children, or make me what used to be?'" (408). Emmeline responds by vowing to love Cassy as a

mother, which leads the older woman to hold the younger in her arms and stroke her hair (408). With Emmeline, then, Cassy again enacts the maternal love that came so easily to her when she was afforded the security to mother her two young children years before, during the brief period of years before she and the children were sold by their father, who owned the three of them, to pay debts. In this way, Cassy reclaims her position as mother. She becomes a maternal presence, able to nurture and connect physically with Emmeline, a surrogate daughter, but separated from her previously potent eroticism and bodily strength.

She goes on to play an idealized maternal role, as the ghost of Legree's holy mother, a woman so virtuous that the mere memory of her seems to strike fear into Legree's wicked heart. Cassy dresses in white and haunts Legree's bedchamber, calling to him as his very own mother (421). Interestingly, her spiritual performance as Legree's dead mother allows Cassy to do work in the physical world, to kill the evil Legree and lead Emmeline to freedom; ironically, she must physically escape Legree's control in order to return to her proper role as spiritual mother figure to Emmeline, and, later, to her daughter and grandchildren. In the end, Cassy's haunting induces Legree to drink "imprudently and recklessly" until he causes his own death (421). Cassy and Emmeline then escape the house and travel to the North, impersonating a Spanish Creole lady and her servant (422). In the ghost episode, Cassy is able to successfully manipulate the performance of spiritual and pure womanhood in such a way as it benefits her material position and that of Emmeline. At the same time, Cassy transitions from powerful bodily presence to spiritual mother figure.

After she takes on the position of mother figure to Emmeline and then "tries on"

the spiritual womanhood of Legree's saintly white mother, Cassy is quarantined within a similar role in her reunited family in Canada, where she learns, largely from Eliza's example, to submit to the will of God by serving the patriarchal structure of the family: "She seemed to sink, at once, into the bosom of the family, and take the little ones into her heart, as something for which it had long waited . . . . Eliza's steady, consistent piety, regulated by the constant reading of the sacred word, made her a proper guide for the shattered and wearied mind of her mother" (428-29). In this way, Cassy is ultimately contained, like her daughter, as a domestic, Christian mother. Furthermore, like Eliza, Cassy is presented as a potential daughter figure to the reader, who is encouraged to view the former concubine, and other enslaved women who have committed the same "sins" as she, maternally, to hasten to teach these women to redeem their lives by learning the virtues of the True Woman.

Even though Eliza and Cassy are subsumed by the narrator's, and, by extension, the readers', attitudes of maternal responsibility to their "daughters" in slavery, they are at least afforded some of the respect culturally due to the True Woman figure. As Jennifer Fleischner points out, "the slave woman of mixed racial heritage was a symbol enabling negotiation between sameness and difference, and intermediary area of potential intersubjectivity between self and other" (127). Eliza and Cassy, both very light-skinned, are allowed the privilege of approximating a white woman's position within her family. Indeed, Stowe suggests a hierarchy of "black" women: the lighter-skinned women are allowed to migrate to the Northern United States and experience some semblance of conventional white, middle-class family life, however contained by Stowe's maternal discourse, while characters like Aunt Chloe are left in the South, still entirely subservient to white families.

Like Eliza and Cassy, however, Chloe initially experiences moments of empowerment; she exercises some amount of control over her own body and her role in the Shelby household. During a scene toward the beginning of the story, before Tom is sold, Chloe relates an incident that occurred between Mrs. Shelby and herself to the Shelbys' small son, George. Chloe claims that Mrs. Shelby previously aspired to bake as well as Chloe, but that after many unsuccessful attempts to teach the white woman her pie-making technique, Chloe urged Mrs. Shelby to leave the cooking to her: "'I got kinder sarcy, and says I, "Now, Missis, do jist look at them beautiful white hands o' yourn, with long fingers, and all a-sparkling with rings, like my white lilies when the dew's on 'em; and look at my great black stumpin' hands. Now, don't ye think dat de Lord must have meant me to make de pie-crust, and you to stay in the parlor?"'" (24). According to Chloe, Mrs. Shelby could not argue with Chloe's logic and finally did remove herself from Chloe's kitchen. In this way, Chloe uses an allusion to her physicality, specifically to the power of her ""great black stumpin' hands,"" to secure space for her own body within the Shelby home and also to teach Mrs. Shelby her place, which is out of Chloe's kitchen. Of course, this episode demonstrates the limitations of Chloe's position—hers is a body that even she understands as designed for work in a white household. But it also points to the particular confines of Mrs. Shelby's position as a white Southern woman of the slaveholding class— hers is a body designated as mere ornament to the white planter and his home, much like a lily decorating the parlor. Within Stowe's rendering of the sentimental, a woman who cannot care for her children and her home herself does not embody womanhood fully. Thus, Chloe keeps Mrs. Shelby in her limited sphere of experience and power by

refusing her the opportunity to learn to cook and keeping her from true fulfillment as a mother: significantly, it is Chloe to whom young George Shelby comes, and not his own mother, when he needs physical, and, by extension, emotional, nourishment. In fact, at the same time that Chloe relates her victory, if it can be labeled as such, over Mrs. Shelby to the young master George, she feeds him a hearty supper of sausage and pancakes and then panders selflessly to his desire for acclaim, chuckling enthusiastically at his mildly funny jokes and insinuating that he could "'make a hornbug laugh'" (22). In this way, of course, the scene demonstrates Chloe's both raced and gendered subjugation—she is positioned as subordinate to a small white boy. However, Chloe is ultimately portrayed as mothering George more than Mrs. Shelby herself does, presumably because the latter woman is kept, by the slave system, from physically caring for her own household.

At the end of the novel, however, Chloe's physical propensity for mothering is covered over by Mrs. Shelby's own Christian suffering and by the pity that the latter woman offers to the heartbroken Chloe. When George, an adult now, returns home from his trip through the deep South and tells Chloe and Mrs. Shelby that he has failed to bring Tom back to them, that Tom is now "'gone to a better country,'" Chloe hands her money to Mrs. Shelby, saying, "'Thar . . . don't never want to see nor hear on't again'" (435). Chloe turns to leave and begins to walk away "proudly" when Mrs. Shelby stops her: "Mrs. Shelby followed her softly, and took one of her hands, drew her down into a chair, and sat down by her" (435). At this point, the two women weep together over the death of Uncle Tom. What could possibly be a genuine connection, born of grief, between the two women is disrupted by Mrs. Shelby's patronizing extension to Chloe of Christian healing, however: "'*I* cannot heal it, but Jesus can. He healeth the broken-hearted, and

bindeth up their wounds'" (435). As David Leverenz points out, Mrs. Shelby's diminutive of "'poor, good Chloe'" takes on a couple of meanings here; not only is Chloe entirely pathetic, which encourages the audience to pity her, as Mrs. Shelby does, but she is also once again penniless, having turned over her hard-earned savings to her mistress (127). I would add that Chloe is allowed neither self-respect nor a private space to grieve, as Mrs. Shelby forces Chloe to sit with her instead of to walk away with her pride intact; Chloe's attempt, thus, to literalize her distance from the white family who sold her husband to his death and grieve apart from penetrating gaze of her captors is forcibly aborted by the woman who still owns her. This scene also demonstrates a reassuring repositioning of the two women, black and white. Mrs. Shelby is restored as the good mother, who is able to feel for her inferiors and to teach them the doctrine of Christianity, at the same time that she is once again aligned with her own son in a position of power over Chloe, her figurative daughter. George bears the bad news to Chloe, and Mrs. Shelby takes over from there, seconding George's regret of the situation and restoring an order of submissive Christianity, in which Chloe is encouraged to simply trust in God.

At this point, Chloe is disempowered not only by her position of helplessness in the face of her husband's horrific death and by Mrs. Shelby's eager demonstration of Christian love, but also by the easy consumption of readers who are conditioned to associate Chloe with food, comedy, and unqualified maternal love. As Kyla Tompkins points out, Chloe, as the prototypical mammy figure, is an object of pleasant consumption for Stowe's white female readers (211). Indeed, as Chloe says herself, she is "'sarcy'" (Stowe 24) and, therefore, embodies a sort of comfort food prepared for the pleasure of readers. Not only is Chloe repeatedly associated with literal food in the novel, as she is most frequently

portrayed in the acts of cooking and/or serving food, but she is also consumable as a laughable character. In fact, Chloe is funny precisely because her position allows her to demonstrate a limited amount of power over Mrs. Shelby: "The comedy of the mammy lies in what seems to be her empowered place in the household: speaking from the kitchen, she seems to speak from power, a power that is undercut by the broad vernacular of her speech and her embrace of manual labor" (K. Tompkins 210). Besides reassuring white readers that Chloe does, in fact, *want* to serve her white mistress, that she embraces her role as servant (a train of reasoning that not only allows Northern white readers to continue to perceive blacks as inherently inferior to whites but also, paradoxically, endorses the slave system itself rather than working toward its destruction as Stowe hoped to do), Chloe's insistence that Mrs. Shelby stay in the parlor is humorous for a nineteenth-century audience because it allows an otherwise disempowered character, a slave, in fact, a brief moment of victory, but also because it demonstrates the slave's complete lack of power, despite her outwardly boisterous attitude, to fight oppression on a larger scale, her inability to topple the hierarchical structure of privilege on which readers, consciously or otherwise, depend. Finally, Chloe's adoration of George reassures readers of the unconditional love of the mammy figure. Chloe never loses affection for George, who seems to represent the future of the white patriarchy; therefore, she assures readers of the allegiance of black women to the prevailing social order. In all, Chloe's true sense of loss at the end of the text is easily pitied and, ultimately, forgotten by readers who enjoy her simple nurturance of the young master George and her often humorous antics in the Shelby kitchen.

Just as Mrs. Shelby insists on Chloe's physical presence by her side as the latter woman comes to terms with her (potentially unruly) anger and grief, Stowe persists on keeping an eye, so to speak, on her black female characters, even as they disperse around the globe. In this way, not only are Stowe's black mother figures ultimately denied access to the erotic and maternal power of their bodies, they are also confined, at the end of the novel, within a visual system of discipline similar to that of the slave system itself. Stowe's narrative flirts with the potential of the black maternal body to subvert the white hierarchical power structure but falls short of realizing this potential and, thus, winds up reinforcing the visual economy of discipline inherent to the slave system. According to Robyn Wiegman, who investigates the complicated role of the visual in maintaining the hegemonic power structure in the United States throughout the past several centuries, the system of control over the black bodies of American slaves depended on both specular and panoptic economies of discipline. Drawing on Michel Foucault's conceptions of specular and panoptic cultures, Wiegman notes,

> While we might attribute to the slave system many of the features of the society of spectacle, for instance, from the dynamic of the auction block to brandings, whippings, and other rituals of public torture, the panoptic can be located in such phenomenon as the organizing layout of the plantation, the ideological elision between slavery and dark skin, and the legalization of miscegenation as an abstracted property relation. (39)

Specular discipline is thus characterized by public scenes of torture, which function to discourage acts of opposition to the dominant power structure, while panoptic discipline uses constant surveillance, both real and imagined, to cause subjects to internalize the order of the discipline itself. All of the black bodies in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, including the

maternal ones, are implicated within a visual economy of slave discipline that utilizes both spectacle and surveillance. Unfortunately, none of these bodies ever entirely escape the white gaze, although some of them certainly challenge it at discrete moments throughout the narrative.

Perhaps the plotline that best exemplifies the interdependent nature of spectacular and panoptic control in slavery, and the total subjugation of black bodies that result from these methods, is that of Prue's story. Prue is a slave from a plantation neighboring the St. Clare estate who is haunted by the sobs of her dying infant. The baby died because Prue's captors refused to buy milk for it when Prue's milk dried up as a result of her providing round-the-clock care for her sick mistress. Now, Prue takes money from her master to buy alcohol; she drinks to forget the sound of her child crying and the pain of losing all of her previous children to the auction block (215). Her master has devised a plan to keep track of Prue's offenses, however—presumably in order to duly punish them as they occur, since even his carefully contrived arrangement does not stop Prue from habitually re-offending. Prue sells bread to neighbors in exchange for tickets that her neighbors have already bought from her master; when she returns home, he counts her tickets and her remaining bread, and if she hasn't the proper quantity of each, then he knows that she has taken money for the bread and used it to purchase alcohol (212). In this way, Prue's actions are constantly watched; she is unable to take any steps that her master could not retrace in order to confront her savagely with the consequences to her "sins" of stealing and drinking. These consequences include violent floggings and locking Prue up without food or water for days at a time. Dinah, the St. Clare's cook, bears witness to Prue's cruel treatment, stating that Prue's back is a "'far sight'" and that "'she can't never

get a dress together over it'" (213). Thus, Prue's mistreatment becomes a spectacle not only for the other slaves at the plantation where she resides, who probably witness it first hand, but also for the St. Clare slaves, who see Prue in her entirely degraded state and imagine the sight of her back. Her dispirited body and horrific scars testify to that which happens to disobedient slaves. More disturbingly, perhaps, is that both Prue and the St. Clare slaves seem to have internalized the disciplinary order that allows for Prue's abuse. When Prue complains that she will be "'half kill[ed]'" when she returns home, Jane, the St. Clare's chambermaid, says, "'Serves you right'" (212). Adolph, another of the St. Clare household, labels Prue a "'[d]isgusting old beast'" and comments, "'If I was her master, I'd cut her up worse than she is'" (213). Even Prue believes in her own depravity, and its manifestation in her scarred and tormented body, saying, "'I's ugly, —I's wicked, —I's gwine straight to torment'" (215). The system that tracks Prue's movements and punishes them by visually marking her as deviant, then, comes full circle by convincing her and her onlookers that it is fully justified.

Of course, the visual disciplinary economy of slavery that keeps Prue and other slaves compliant with the dictates of the master class depends on several factors in order to successfully maintain control over its enslaved bodies. First of all, those who implement surveillance, the slave masters and mistresses, overseers and traders, must be able to distinguish between the subservient bodies and the bodies that are served—those that need discipline and those that discipline others. In other words, there must be no question as to which bodies are "black" and which are "white." Mulattos, then, introduce difficulties for a visual system of discipline—it is a problem indeed when a "black" body is as light-skinned as a "white" body. In fact, the similarities between "black" bodies and

"white" bodies beg the subversive question of why humans are kept in captivity at all. Thus, Stowe's representation of both Eliza and Cassy as light-skinned undermines the disciplinary system of slavery and, because readers are presumably able to relate more easily to characters who look similar to themselves, goes far in proving to them the cruelty of owning human property. In that Eliza is nearly as the same shade as her master and mistress and, further, that she possesses all of the qualities of True Womanhood, even as she is kept in bondage, she demonstrates, ostensibly, the humanity of black women. Stowe's depiction of Eliza and Cassy as light enough to pass challenges the economy of discipline that insists on the existence of firm distinctions between black and white bodies.

Another important aspect of a successful visual economy of discipline is that the objects of the gaze, which are, in the case of American slavery, black bodies, must not gaze back upon the gazers, the white men and women who oppress them. For black subjects to return the white gaze is for them to claim a subjectivity that the gaze seeks to prevent them from developing and to assume a posture of judgment over those who are, according to the disciplinary system, supposed to preside in judgment over their bodies. In this way, watching and interpreting the movements of white bodies are bold acts of subversion for black subjects. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, however, Stowe presents several black characters who do gaze upon, and judge, white bodies in order to attain specific ends. Eliza, for instance, hides herself in Mr. and Mrs. Shelby's closet in order to spy on them as they discuss the impending sale of Tom and Harry (34). It is by watching her captors that Eliza makes the informed decision to run away with her child to prevent him from being claimed by the slave trader. Also, Cassy observes the behavior of Legree

so as to discover his weaknesses in preparation for her escape. First, she witnesses Legree's display of terror when his overseer turns over to him a strand of hair that he has found in Tom's possession: "'Where did this come from? Take it off!—burn it up!—burn it up!' he screamed, tearing it off, and throwing it into the charcoal" (369).[2] As Legree reacts to the hair, Cassy "look[s] at him in perfect amazement" (369). It is her visual assessment of Legree's fear that leads her to believe, in fact, that she can "make use of the superstitious excitability, which was so great in Legree, for the purpose of her liberation, and that of her fellow sufferer" (397). She even goes so far as to lodge a bottle into a knot-hole in Legree's garret so that, when the wind blows, it produces shrieking sounds that terrify the white man (398). In this way, Cassy turns the tables on Legree and actually causes the slave holder to feel caught within a panopticon, much like the one that typically employs ocular control over the movements of slaves—furthermore, Legree internalizes the order of the panopticon that Cassy constructs and begins to believe that he is being watched and haunted by the, ironically, pure and good supernatural forces of his dead mother, which are out to avenge his evil. Cassy, thus, boldly returns the white gaze and, what's more, uses Legree's vulnerabilities, visible in his bodily actions, against him.

Although Stowe does subvert the visual economy of discipline that structures the slave system through her characterization of Eliza and Cassy as extremely light-skinned slaves and in that these characters are able to reverse the white gaze at opportune moments, the narrative ultimately reinforces white ocular control over black bodies. Both Eliza and Cassy are carefully watched, by white characters and by the narrator herself, throughout

2 The hair is a gift from the deathbed of the angelic child Eva St. Clare, who passed out strands of her golden-blond hair to all of the St. Clare household in order that they remember her and honor her wish that they seek salvation from God and meet her later in heaven (287). In this way, of course, the lock that Legree throws into the fire is related to his fear of his own good mother, who also sent him a strand of her hair before she died (370)..

and during the years following their escapes from bondage. Even Eliza's brave travail across the Ohio River is flanked by white onlookers who judge her bodily appearance (not to mention by scores of readers throughout the ages who continue to cite this scene as one of Stowe's most striking). The slave trader who pursues Eliza watches her movements from the Kentucky side, exclaiming in wonderment and, ultimately, disappointment at her daring escape, and another white man, a former neighbor to the Shelbys, in fact, who has recently relocated to Ohio and who recognizes Eliza when he sees her face, helps her as she reaches the Ohio bank. As he pulls her up, he states with amazement, "'Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye ar!'" (58). Eliza pleads with him to aid in her escape, and the man agrees, with the comment, "'I like grit, whenever I see it'" (58). In this way, Eliza's first would-be captor in Ohio uses a visual assessment of Eliza in order to make the decision to help her despite her identity, as a fugitive slave of a family familiar to him, on the merit of her desperate physical feat and perhaps the appeal of this feat's juxtaposition with her generally unassuming and passive, careful and patient demeanor. The man seems surprised by Eliza's "'grit,'" a characteristic that perhaps he does not typically associate with women or slaves, and he is willing to put aside his sympathy for slaveholding on the basis of Eliza's extraordinary possession of this quality. In any case, although the benevolent man does not name Eliza, instead calling her "'whoever ye ar,'" the fact is that he knows her and her former household intimately, as Eliza reveals when she calls him by name (58). In this way, Eliza's first steps upon free soil are overseen by a white gaze in close alignment to that of her very own master in Kentucky. Once she arrives in Canada and later, as she and the others of the family travel to Europe and then Africa, Stowe continues to keep track of Eliza, and Cassy as well. In fact, although the narrative

almost entirely silences both of these women, not allowing the reader access to their thoughts or much of their conversation, it details the changes in their bodies as Eliza and Cassy become accustomed to freedom. Both are described, according to the conventions of ideal motherhood, as attaining appearances that testify to their development of the traits of passivity and maternal love; the narrator says of Eliza, for example, "A little older she looks; her form a little fuller; her air more matronly than of yore; but evidently contented and happy as women need be" (427) and then of Cassy, "The despairing, haggard expression of her face had given way to one of gentle trust" (428). In this way, Stowe's novel joins the ranks of the many sentimental novels of her time that, as Nancy Bentley claims, gaze upon the mulatta's body "unmercifully" (504), even after the mulatta attains free life, and, in doing so, continues to discipline this body into compliance with the societal expectations that it approximate the ideal appearance of white motherhood but remain asexual, meek, and passive in the socio-political sphere.

The ending of Chloe's storyline keeps her contained within the confines of the white gaze as well. A few months after the young master George tells Chloe of her husband's death, he frees the remaining slaves on the Shelby estate, claiming, "'It was on [Uncle Tom's] grave, my friends, that I resolved, before God, that I would never own another slave" (436). George goes on to designate Tom's former home, his cabin, as a memorial "'to put you all in mind to follow [Uncle Tom's] steps, and be as honest and faithful and Christian as he was'" (437). Of course, Chloe still resides in the cabin that George sets apart as spiritually significant; in this way, he positions Chloe as presiding over the physical structure that will serve as testament to Tom's ideally humble, obedient, and pious nature. Chloe is thus implicated as a spiritual symbol herself, of sorts, and,

therefore, precluded from taking any material action against the system that allowed for the murder of her husband but now seems inclined to hold him up as an ideal black subject—a Christ-figure, in fact, sacrificed for the good of slaveholders and slaves alike. Chloe is set up to be looked upon by former slaves, but also by white readers, as the wife of a model Christian, living proof of the spiritual potential of the slave, and, therefore, she is allowed only the traits of submissiveness and piety. The gaze further denies Chloe, just as Mrs. Shelby's demonstration of Christian charity after Tom's death denies her, access to her own subversive bodily power.

Although George frees Chloe and the other slaves on the Shelby plantation, they continue to work for him and remain dependent on his generosity and faithfulness, as he promises to keep using them as a labor force on the plantation as usual and, furthermore, "'to teach [them] what, perhaps, it will take [them] some time to learn, —how to use the rights [he gives them] as free men and women'" (436). Clearly, George perceives his group of formerly enslaved people as incapable of full political and social participation within the United States, and Stowe celebrates his guidance of them into a purgatorial state, keeping them not as slaves, but not as not-slaves. Thus, one of the most troubling aspects of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for critics throughout the ages is its inability to imagine the black subject as full citizen of the nation.[3] The narrative leaves Chloe, along with

3   Although Stowe was certainly not alone in failing to imagine the black subject's possible incorporation into the citizenry of the United States, as even some of the most prominent abolitionists advocated for the "Back to Africa" movement throughout the nineteenth century, Stowe's account of the black subject as unfit for citizenship or simply undesirous of it carries a perhaps disproportional weight because of the extreme popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its influence upon typical, middle-class perceptions of blackness. As Michael Bennett points out, Stowe revised her position on colonization of Africa in later works and in correspondence and conversations that ensued after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Bennett claims, however, that by this point, "the damage had been done; Stowe's retrograde stance had real-world effects" (121). Although the "Back to Africa" movement had died down by the time of Stowe's publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the novel seems to have prompted a "resurgence of interest in colonization" (Bennett 121).

dozens of others, subservient to their beloved young master George, not citizens of the United States in their own right but still subsumed under George Shelby's citizenship. Furthermore, the characters who do attain full freedom, unlike Chloe, all leave the country. The George Harris family party leaves, first to Canada and, then, in search of a new nation in Africa, one comprised, according to George at least, of "'a people that shall have a tangible, separate existence of its own'" (430). Topsy, a previously abused slave girl who is freed and then raised in the Northern United States by Augustine St. Claire's cousin Ophelia, also chooses to leave the United States, desiring to serve "as a missionary to one of the stations in Africa" (433). In this way, rather than incorporate her free blacks into the national body politic, Stowe sends them to other lands, preferably in Africa. In that these characters are depicted as desiring to go to Africa of their own volition, Stowe nullifies any threat that they may pose to her readers, who might fear that if slaves are freed they will demand equal citizenship and, thus, overturn socially sanctioned economic and political power structures.

In terms of the potential citizenship of the black subject, the black female body itself posed a particular threat to white contemporaries of Stowe's, those who comprised her reading public, because this body, already perceived as unruly and excessive, was capable of reproducing itself and, thus, multiplying the existing black population. A large black population within the United States might, at any time, begin to agitate for full citizenship and, thus, overturn the white male hierarchy of power. In this way, the black female body was doubly threatening to the national body politic—not only as a single subject itself but as a representation of the possible future blackening of the national body. In order to assuage the fears of her readers, to nullify the threat of the

black female body capable of muddying the "whiteness" of the nation, then, it makes sense that Stowe would need to confine Chloe to continued servitude within the borders of the South and to expel Cassy and Eliza from national grounds altogether.

In fact, Stowe's concluding vision involves a complete purging of black bodies from the United States and, therefore, the absolute preservation of the white national body politic. Stowe dreams that even Chloe and the other servants who remain for the time being on the Shelby estate will eventually remove to Africa, even setting out a plan for reforming former slaves and then removing them from American soil. She advocates first righting national wrongs by educating freed black subjects and then sending them to Africa in order to create their own nation:

> That the providence of God has provided a refuge in Africa, is, indeed, a great and noticeable fact; but that is no reason why the church of Christ should throw off that responsibility to this outcast race . . . . Let the church of the north receive these poor sufferers in the spirit of Christ; receive them to the educating advantages of Christian republican society and schools, until they have attained to somewhat of a moral and intellectual maturity, and then assist them in their passage to those shores, where they may put in practice the lessons they have learned in America. (443)

Thus, as Gillian Brown points out, Stowe figures the nation as an extension of the white, middle-class home. Black bodies in the home, and particularly black female bodies, disrupt the natural affinity between women and their caretaking duties, stunting the spiritual effectiveness and personal fulfillment of white women. Similarly, black bodies within the United States disrupt the relationship between the morality of the private

sphere and social and political action in the public sphere, keeping men from acting in the workplace and the market in accordance with their consciences, or, more precisely, the consciences of their wives at home. In this way, the novel again becomes more about containing anxieties surrounding the sexualized and excessive black female body than about seeking freedom for this body. Indeed, Stowe "cleans house" on a national level by advocating a plan that will eventually relieve the country of blackness entirely. The national "home," then, must protect its borders by sending away the threatening figures that people it internally—those who, like the Harris family, comprise its black population.

Although the narrative banishes Eliza and Cassy to faraway shores, the bodies of these women continue to float ambiguously, and indeed ominously, above the nation throughout the last part of the novel. Eliza hovers just North of the United States border for five years until Cassy and Emmeline join the Harris party (426). After they all meet up in Canada, the members of the reunited family decide to travel to France, but when "political troubles" force them to leave, they return briefly to the border area of the Northern United States (429). Eventually, the Harris family members agree to settle in Africa and once again depart from the country (432). Instead of finding their places in the United States, then, Eliza and Cassy finally drift bodiless outside of the space of the nation, but, importantly, they never really find their way into citizenship elsewhere. In detailing its migrations to and from the Northern part of the North American continent, Stowe highlights the family's extreme displacement—although they do not belong in the United States, they can't seem to settle comfortably in Canada or in Europe. Even in Africa, their future remains uncertain. In this way, the narrative gives way to ambiguity regarding the ideal placement of the freed black subject; indeed, Stowe seems to insinuate

that white Americans must feel a continued responsibility for former slaves, a group of people who represent the centuries' worth of Africans and their descendents whom the United States has mistreated. On the other hand, Stowe also presents the freed black subjects, and especially the maternal figures of Eliza and Cassy, as themselves potential threats to the United States; although they leave the United States, the nation cannot ever be certain of their good riddance. Even when the Harris family arrives in Africa, Stowe assures readers that they should expect to hear from them yet (432).

Certainly, this statement serves as both a celebration of the possible future social and political success of George and his family, who may achieve notable feats in Africa that will travel in news to the United States, but also as a caution to readers that these people should not simply be forgotten, that they remain potentially dangerous to national morality and cohesion. Especially because the black mother figures of the Harris family, Eliza and Cassy, have previously proven their capacity for physical action and, in the case of Cassy, at least, erotic power, they continue to warrant white surveillance, Stowe suggests. In fact, if the territory of the United States is the national "home," then these women who flit around the Northern parameters of the country for years following the conclusion of the main narrative continue to pose threats, although they might be significantly subdued in their roles as Christian mothers, as the potential mad women of the national attic. Certainly, Eliza and Cassy are disembodied by the spiritual discourse surrounding the ideal black mother figure and, thus, disempowered versions of the physically effective women who they once were. But even in their disembodied states, or perhaps precisely because of their disembodiment, these two women continue to haunt Stowe's nation just as Cassy haunted the Legree estate from the garret.

In Stowe's text, then, the black maternal body, although at times powerful, as in Eliza's daring venture across the Ohio to save her small son, is ultimately subdued as the prominent black mother figures approximate the spirituality and disembodied roles of the good white mother of the Cult of True Womanhood but relinquish any right to the moral authority conferred upon Stowe's white, female readers. The black maternal body is portrayed as also implicated within a visual economy of discipline that subjects it to continual white surveillance, treated by the white gaze as a potential threat to the existing social and political power structure. Although Eliza and Cassy each gaze back upon their captors during opportune moments, they are ultimately fixed within clear sight of the reader, and marked as potential threats to the national body. Finally, the black maternal body in Stowe's novel is either carefully contained within or abjected from the nation. Eliza and Cassy are forced to the distant lands of Africa while Chloe is subsumed within the household of a true white mother. Certainly, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* uses sentimental appeals to resist national cultural forces that disembody and disempower the black mother, but it ultimately reinscribes national narratives of the deviant black maternal body, the need for the continued surveillance of this body, and the inability of this body to contribute in any significant way to the functioning of the United States.

Works Cited

Ammons, Elizabeth. "Heroines in *Uncle Tom's Cabin***.**" *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 49.2 (1977): 161-79. Print.

Ammons, Elizabeth and Susan Belasco, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.* New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2000. Print.

Bentley, Nancy. "White Slaves: The Mulatto Hero in Antebellum Fiction." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 65.3 (1993): 501-22. Print.

Bennett, Michael. "Aesthetic Democracy: Harriet Beecher Stowe and Harriet Jacobs Represent the End(s) of Slavery." *Democratic Discourses: The Radical Abolition Movement and Antebellum American Literature.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2005. 118-48. Print.

Brown, Gillian. "The Problem of Sentimental Possession." *Ammons* 111-19. Print.

Fleischner, Jennifer. "Mothers and Sisters: The Family Romance of Antislavery Women Writers." *Feminist Nightmares: Women at Odds: Feminism and the Problem of Sisterhood*. Ed. Susan Ostrov Weisser and Jennifer Fleischner. New York: New York UP; 1994. 125-41. Print.

Jenkins, Jennifer L. "Failed Mothers and Fallen Houses: The Crisis of Domesticity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin***.** *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 38.2 (1992): 161-87. Print.

Leverenz, David. "Alive with Contradictions: Close Reading, Liberal Pluralism, and Nonnarratable Plots in *Uncle Tom's Cabin***.**" *Ammons* 120-31. Print.

Noble, Marianne. "Sentimental Epistemologies in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* **and** *The House of the Seven Gables***.**" *Separate Spheres No More: Gender Convergence in American Literature, 1830-1930*. Ed. Monika M. Elbert. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2000. 261-81. Print.

Palwick, Susan. "Delivered from Confinement: Women Writers, Maternal Journeys and the Rhetoric of Reform, 1848-1861" Diss. Yale U, 1996. Print.

Raimon, Eve Allegra. *The 'Tragic Mulatta' Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2004. Print.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. New York: Bantam Books, 1981. Print.

Tompkins, Jane. "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History." *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860***.** New York: Oxford UP, 1985. 122-46. Print.

Tompkins, Kyla. "'Everything 'Cept Eat Us': The Antebellum Black Body Portrayed as Edible Body." *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters* 30.1 (2001): 201-24. Print.

The Objectification of Vision in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*

by Abeer Fahim, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

INTRODUCTION

Don DeLillo's fiction is replete with references to various forms of visual representations. In his first novel, *Americana* (1971), the main character David Bell, a former television executive, decides to pursue a project of making an avante-garde film. *White Noise* (1985) contains an iconic scene that takes place at "The Most Photographed Barn in America". Eric Packer, the main character of *Cosmopolis* (2003), spends his day traveling in a futuristic limousine equipped with screens and a spy-cam. In *Point Omega* (2010), DeLillo enhances his perspective on vision and visual representations by framing the novel in a film experience; the prelude and coda are set in a 2006 video gallery in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The gallery shows Douglas Gordon's experimental film *24-hour Psycho* (1960). Gordon removes the soundtrack from Hitchcock's *Psycho* and creates a 24-hour film from the original 109-minute film. Gordon's film, while boring some of the audience, invites others to question the act of 'watching.' It is precisely this transformation from a shorter film to a significantly longer one that allows a prolonged

and close viewing of the film. For instance, the famous shower scene, originally 45 seconds, takes a whole hour in Gordon's version. Commenting on his own experience at the museum gallery, DeLillo said he "went back four times, and by the third time [he] knew this was something [he] had to write about."[1] DeLillo also noted that he was alone most of the time with the exception of a guard and a few people who came and left quickly.[2] He found the film particularly interesting when considering "the idea of time and motion and the question of what we see, what we miss when we look at things in a conventional manner."[3]

In *Point Omega*, Richard Elster, the main character, retires in the desert. Before retiring, he worked as a consultant for the Pentagon on the war in Iraq. The desert theme pervades the novel literally, as a mysterious and silent expanse that differs from the hustle of New York City life, and metaphorically, as a reflection of the characters' feelings of alienation. What is particularly striking about this desert is its almost surreal existence; it is described in the novel as "somewhere south of nowhere."[4] This elusive description becomes increasingly telling as the characters' encounters in the desert, particularly Elster's daughter's disappearance, become characterized with absence as opposed to presence.

Unlike Michiko Kakutani who argues that DeLillo's inventive style in *Point Omega* cannot compensate for the "author's uncharacteristically simplistic portrait of its hero,"[5] I find that DeLillo's simple use of language adds to the immediacy and intensity of the text.

---

1 Charles McGrath, "Don DeLillo, a Writer by Accident Whose Course is Deliberate," *New York Times Online*, 3 February 2010, Web, 10 April 2010.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Michiko Kakutani, rev. of *Point Omega* by Don DeLillo, 2 March 2010, *New York Times Online,* Web, 10 April 2010.

Kakutani is critical of DeLillo's choice of "spare, etiolated, almost Beckettian prose".[6] The connection is often made between the minimalistic style of Samuel Beckett's language and Don DeLillo's fiction. While not all critics agree about the extent to which the two authors are comparable, their similarities figure prominently in DeLillo scholarship. What is surprising, however, is that critics often view this connection between DeLillo and Beckett as a limitation that negatively impacts the quality of DeLillo's fiction. For example, Frank Rich, the American award-winning *New York Times* columnist, argued that Don DeLillo's Day Room (1987) seemed to be " 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' as it might be rewritten by a pretentious undergraduate who has just completed the midterm, if not all the required reading, for a survey course in the works of Pirandello, Beckett and Stoppard."[7] While I disagree with Rich and Kakutani's negative criticism of DeLillo's shorter fiction, *Point Omega* is certainly far less complex than DeLillo's longer fiction. However, this simplicity, that one may describe as Beckettian, does not in any way diminish the novel's central thematic concerns. To the contrary, DeLillo's use of sparse language and prolonged slow-motion like scenes draw attention, not only to the act of seeing, but to the act of being conscious of seeing. In this paper, I argue that focusing on the consciousness of seeing in the text is central to understanding the inextricable connection between film as a perceived object and the viewer as a perceiving subject.

FILM IN *POINT OMEGA*

In order to focus on the idea of the vision and the objectification of vision, it is important to establish the centrality of film in the text. In *Point Omega*, filmmaker

---

6 Ibid.
7 Frank Rich, "Theater: Don DeLillo's 'Day Room,'" 21 Dec 1987, *The New York Times,* Web, 15 April 2010.

Jim Finley finds Elster in the desert and attempts to convince him to take part in a documentary on his experience as an intellectual on the war. Thus, not only is the novel framed in a prelude and coda that revolve around a film experience, the very main plot of the novel is about the encounter between a documentary filmmaker and a potential subject for the film. To understand the importance of this attempt to film Elster and how it relates to perception, it is useful to briefly consider theories on the construction of film. This section will highlight how the act of creating a documentary in the film is a subjective act as opposed to a seemingly objective one. In the 1930s and the 1940s, the French poetic realists argued that the "space of film is the space of reality, and that film's ambition and triumph is to 'reproduce life.'"[8] However, filmmaking quickly became far less about simply reproducing life and more about the aesthetic experience . According to the contemporary realist viewpoint, mundane films were lacking in ingenuity and cinematic techniques leading to the conclusion that "if film attempted to reproduce real life mechanically, then it did not constitute an art form."[9] The contemporary 'realist' perspective, which is most relevant to *Point Omega*, places the viewer of films as "more than a spectator in that he or she misses the real and is attracted to film because it gives the illusion of vicariously partaking of life in all its fullness."[10] Thus, according to the contemporary realist, a good filmmaker allows film to disguise the *absent* real with a simulated reality.[11] These ideas reflect the 'crisis of representation,' an issue that is central to many disciplines, and highlights the perspective that "nothing in this world is

fixed and immutable."[12] Films are viewed as constructs that reflect the subjectivity of the filmmaker more than the reality of the place or people in the film:

> Put simply, it has become clear that every version (images, representations, films) of an *other* is also, and perhaps more so, the construction of a self and the making of a text. American films about 'exotic' locations usually say more about capitalism and Hollywood than they do about the cultural poetics within which they are filmed.[13]

This thinking also applies to documentaries, even though documentaries may seem to be more objective. Critics argue that any camera representation of a person or a place reflects the subjectivity of the film-maker. According to Sharon R.Sherman, film is always a construction.[14] The film category that Sherman refers to includes observational or documentary cinema. This claim is based on the idea that the camera always reflects the filmmaker's perspective. Paul Wagner distinguishes between the experience of watching a dramatic film and a documentary film, the essential difference being that while watching a dramatic film, we know that the film is a lie, whereas with the documentary film we are "made to believe that it's the truth when, in fact, it's as much a lie in that you're made to believe that it's the truth."[15]

Point Omega portrays film in a similar manner, as the filmmaker's construct; Finley insists that he can present Elster objectively simply as a 'man against the wall,' although his past documentary project clearly lacks objectivity. Finley's first documentary is an individual on-screen documentary of the comedian Jerry Lewis. He refers to this project

8 Ibid.
9 Stuart C. Atkin and Leo E. Zonn, "Re-Presenting the Place Pastiche," *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle: A Geography of Film* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994) 13.
10 *Geography of Film* 14.
11 *Geography of Film* 14.

12 *Geography of Film* 14.
13 *Geography of Film* 14.
14 Sharon R. Sherman, *Documenting Ourselves: Film, Video, and Culture* (KT: UP of Kentucky, 1998) 207.
15 Paul Wagner in *Documenting Ourselves* 208.

as "all Jerry, pure performance, Jerry talking, singing, weeping, Jerry with his ruffled shirt open at the collar, bow tie undone, a raccoon flung over his shoulders, Jerry Inviting the nation's love and wonder at four in the morning."[16] Though Finley's description seems to depict the 'real' Jerry, or the truth that viewers often associate with a documentary, we soon learn that this truth is edited and manipulated; Finely seems keen on portraying the film as objective, however his own description of how he edits the film, including the use of music, undermines his claim. He describes the music as adding an element of austere drama that places "Jerry outside the moment, in some larger surround, ahistorical, a man on a mission from God."[17] Finley edits the film to present his own vision of Jerry, a vision that is an example of how filmmakers address the audience by incorporating themselves with the subject of the film.

Though Elster does not agree to taking part in the documentary, the novel can be read as a kind of documentary, considering that it is based on Finley's first-person narrative of Elster's life in the desert. As the characters drive through the desert, Finley describes Elster's appearance and movements, adding his own perspective on Elster's state, describing him as a "man beyond memory and its skein of regret, a man drawn down to sparest outline, weightless."[18] Finley often adds his own interpretation of Elster's weary appearance, and we as readers do not always know exactly what Elster is thinking since the dialogue is sparse. However, Finley is often aware of his attempt to provide his own scenario and at times consciously stops himself.

An example of this conflict is when Finley asks Elster about Jessie's boyfriend and the possibility that the boyfriend may be linked to Jessie's disappearance; Elster gestures, a gesture that Elster thinks could mean anything, "what's the use or what's the connection or leave me alone."[19] However, although the gesture is ambiguous, Finley does not refrain from giving his own vision of what Elster means. He thinks that Elster wants pure mystery, since "mystery had its truth, all the deeper for being shapeless, an elusive meaning that might spare him whatever explicit details would otherwise come to mind."[20] Finley realizes that by interpreting Elster's silence and gesture, that he is "trying to think [Elster's] thoughts."[21] Once Finley realizes that he is trying to do so, he stops himself from believing that he can truly comprehend Elster's thoughts: "But these weren't his thoughts. I didn't know what his thoughts were. I barely knew my own."[22]

Toward the end of the novel, Finley reflects on his experience with Elster and feels that the absence of a camera does not mean that Finley was not 'filmed':

> It was the film. I remembered the film. Here it is again, man and wall, face and eyes, but not another talking head. On film the face is the soul. The story was here, not in Iraq or Washington, and we were leaving it behind and taking it with us, both.[23]

Given that Finley is the first-person narrator of the novel, it is especially telling that he leaves the reader with the assertion that he believes the entire experience with Elster is cinematic. We as readers are reminded, again, that the narrative is as subjective as the construction of film itself. However, the text takes us a step further. We find ourselves

---

16   *Point Omega* 26.
17   Ibid.
18   Ibid.

19   *Point Omega* 83.
20   Ibid.
21   Ibid.
22   Ibid.
23   *Point Omega* 99.

not only immersed in the cinematic nature of the narrative, but also in the characters' embodied experience of seeing.

OBJECTIFYING THE ACT OF SEEING

DeLillo's fiction often seems to question the claimed excellence of the sense of sight, an idea that is deeply rooted in history; Ancient Greek philosophers, including Aristotle, considered sight to be the most excellent and noble of the senses. However, it did not take long for scientists to note the limitations of sight and opt for technologies that could enhance the eye's capacity. Foregrounding visual and medical technologies, DeLillo has explored, not only the limitations of sight, but also the human desire to see beyond the surface. In *Point Omega*, a similar mode of seeing is present.

While DeLillo criticism has certainly examined the relationship between Gordon's slowed-down version of Hitchcock's *Pyscho* and the narrative structure of *Point Omega*, an area that requires further scrutiny is the connection between consciousness and vision. In this section, I will examine this connection between consciousness and sight, drawing upon recent theories on the pathologisation of vision. The aim of this analysis is to draw attention not only to the extent to which characters are aware of the act of seeing, but to the central role that the corporeal body plays in this awareness. To begin this analysis, I will briefly consider Vivian Sobchack's essay "The Act of Being with One's Own Eyes," where Sobchack attempts to define the constitution and location of the viewing subject in the act of viewing.[24] For Sobchack, the act of viewing a 'film' is not possible if the subject is not aware of their situation in relation to the film:

Without an act of viewing and a subject who knows itself reflexively as the locus and origin of viewing as an act, there could be no film and no 'film experience.' Thus, a description of the film experience as an experience of signification and communication calls for a reflexive turn away from the film as 'object' and toward the act of viewing and its existential implication of a body-subject: the viewer. [25]

Sobchack defines the film experience as one that necessitates a viewer that is aware of the act of viewing. The ability to recognize the subjectivity of this experience, both at a perceptual and physical level, is essential to seeing a film. The key to Sobchack's interpretation of film viewing lies in the term "body-subject". For Sobchack, the body is essential to all forms of perception; thus, a person experiences vision in an embodied state. This embodied state is essential to understanding vision in *Point Omega*. **In** *Point Omega*, the characters exemplify this subjectivity; they are subjects who are aware of their act of viewing and thus objectify perception itself. As the previous section of this paper shows, Finley constantly conceptualizes the act of seeing Elster; he ponders the question of whether or not his perception of Elster is film-like even though he never actually makes the documentary he had hoped for.

Another significant example of this awareness of visual perception takes place in the opening pages of the novel. In the prelude, "Anonymity", we are introduced to an anonymous character that can be defined as a competent visual performer who objectifies his act of vision. Sobchack describes humans as competent visual performers because they are "capable of seeing not only as *subjects* of consciousness but also of making our

---

24 Vivian Sobchack, "The Act of Being with One's Own Eyes," *The Address of the Eye*: *A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992) 51.

25 Ibid.

own acts of vision objects of consciousness."[26] The character who is watching is also being watched and is conscious of both acts simultaneously. As this anonymous man watches *24-hour Psycho*, he finds that the slightest camera motion creates a significant change in the image; he realizes that it is only the "closest watching that yielded this perception."[27] The viewer is aware that the nature of the film requires absolute attention, due to the film's "merciless pacing."[28] As he watches, he finds that "the less there was to see, the harder he looked, the more he saw."[29] He then thinks that this is the point of watching, "to see what's here, finally, to look and to know you're looking, to feel time passing, to be alive in what is happening in the smallest registers of motion."[30]

The importance of looking closely is foregrounded in the man's perception of the shower scene; the viewer knows that the shower scene is a brief one in the original movie but the prolonged scene in Gordon's version lacks "the suspense or dread or the urgent pulsing screech owl sound."[31] However, the slow-motion intensifies the impact of the shower curtain rings spinning on the rod, "a moment lost at normal speed."[32] The four curtain rings spin slowly over the fallen figure of Janet Leigh, "a stray poem above the hellish death, and then the bloody water curling and cresting at the shower drain, minute by minute, and eventually swirling down."[33] The slow-motion reveals the limitations of everyday seeing; the man realizes that "it takes close attention, work, and pious effort,

---

26 *Address of the Eye* 52.
27 *Point Omega* 5.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 *Point Omega* 4.
32 *Point Omega* 5.
33 Ibid.

to see what you are looking at."[34] This realization is mesmerizing, particularly when he ponders "the depths that were possible in the slowing of motion, the things to see, the depths of things so easy to miss in the shallow habit of seeing."[35] As the man engages with the film's slow-motion, he experiences the world through the 'I' of the viewing subject, a subject with a consciousness that is aware of its own act of seeing. This is especially evident when the man is highly conscious of his situation as a viewer:

> The film made him feel like someone watching a film. The meaning of this escaped him. He kept feeling things whose meaning escaped him. Bu this wasn't truly film, was it, in the strict sense. It was videotape. But it was also film. In the broader meaning he was watching a film, a movie, a more or less moving picture.[36]

Throughout the novel, the repeated references to the experience of watching resonates Sobchack's concept of the objectification of vision.[37] One can read this as a significant development in the characters across DeLillo's oeuvre. The sceptical and often confused Jack Gladney and the more analytical Eric Packer are proceeded by characters who become increasingly conscious of their phenomenological experiences and more capable of evaluating these experiences.

In addition to being conscious of the objectification of vision, DeLillo portrays consciousness and vision as embodied. In the prelude, the character's awareness of the act of seeing accompanies his actual movement in the viewing gallery. Though the prelude is only fifteen pages, and takes place in the space of a gallery, this space and action suffices

---

34 *Point Omega* 13.
35 *Point Omega* 11.
36 *Point Omega* 11.
37 Sobchack 59.

to reflect the characters' bodily engagement with the world. Sobchack argues that "the condition of being conscious of the world is being a consciousness in it and sharing the materiality that gives consciousness its objects and its subjective being."[38] Thus, the body's finitude and situation and power of movement transforms the abstractions of time and space, "informing them with the weight of choice and the thickness of movement, with *value* and *dimension***.**"[39] As noted previously, when man watches Perkins turning his head, he could "count the gradation in the movement of the head."[40] Perkin's body movement reflects the thickness of movement, movement that is so concrete that it is countable. Moreover, as the man watches *24 Hour Psycho*, he moves around the screen, experiencing the film from different angles. First, he approaches the screen and stands "about a foot away, seeing snatches and staticky fragments, flurries of trembling light."[41] He then walks around the screen several times and walks backwards looking at the screen. Since the gallery was empty, "he was able to stand at various angles and points of separation."[42] Movement is necessary because, according to Sobchack, consciousness is not a transcendental structure.

Moreover, the significance of the body is enhanced by the slow motion. Though the pace is unrealistically slow, the man feels that the film is paradoxically real:

> It felt real, the pace was paradoxically real, bodies moving musically, barely moving, twelve-tone, things barely happening, cause and effect so drastically drawn apart that it seemed real to him, the way all the things in the physical world that we don't

understand are said to be real.[43]

Perhaps what makes the film feel real to him is the thickness of movement; the movie seems real to the extent that he that he believes he could see himself with the actor's eyes, "or did the actor's eyes seem to be searching him out?"[44] Clearly the emphasis on 'seeing' in the novel is of great importance; however, it is not merely the 'seeing' that is important, but that the characters are conscious of the act of seeing. DeLillo uses the objectification of vision to reflect another theme that is prominent across his fiction, namely the interplay of the senses. According to Benjamin Bigelow, the film experience is tactile, "it hit[s] the spectator like a bullet, it happen[s] to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality."[45] In *The Cinematic Body*, Steven Shaviro argues that the relationship between vision and gunfire is "more than just a metaphor."[46] Shaviro, similar to Sobchack, finds that critics have reduced the cinematic experience to the sense of sight, neglecting the basic tactility and viscerality of the experience.[47] Cinema creates effects within the viewer as opposed to simply showing phantasmic reflections. Thus, the viewer is "drawn into the fragmented materiality and 'depth without depth' of the image.[48] Merleau-Ponty also addresses the interplay of the senses, describing the tactility of vision as follows:

> One sees the hardness and brittleness of glass, and when, with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed by the visible glass. One sees the springiness of the steel, the ductility of red-hot steel, the hardness of a plane blade, the softness of shavings. The form of objects is not their geometrical shape: it stands in a certain

---

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 *Point Omega* 5.
41 *Point Omega* 6.
42 Ibid.

43 *Point Omega* 15.
44 Ibid.
45 Bigelow 14.
46 Ibid.
47 Shaviro 14.
48 Ibid.

relation to their specific nature, and appeals to our other senses as well as sight.[49]

In *Point Omega, DeLillo's* choice of words also depicts an interplay of the senses which highlights the tactile quality of the man's visual experience. As the man enters the dark gallery to view the film, he "wants to bathe in the tempo, in the near static rhythm of the image."[50] The word "bathe,"[51] used to imply immersion, also reflects an embodied experience, one where the man's whole body reacts to the viewing. The man wonders if the woman next to him could sense the drama of the sense through his body. He tries to "believe that the tension in his body alerted her to the drama of the scene."[52] He believes that she would "sense it, next to him."[53] The connection between vision and immersion becomes even clearer as the man ponders the definition of "complete immersion."[54] He realizes that it means that he "wants the film to move even more slowly, requiring deeper involvement of eye and mind, always that, the thing he sees tunnelling into the blood, the dense sensation, sharing consciousness with him."[55] The man equates slow-motion with deep, corporeal involvement with the moving image. Again, we see him as a 'competent visual performer', highly aware of the act of seeing; this awareness is compounded by the intensely tactile experience. For DeLillo, being a competent visual performer means that the intensity of viewing and being conscious of viewing is always intertwined with one's embodied state of being.

In this paper, I have examined visual perception in *Point Omega* in a manner that I believe required further analysis. While 'seeing' is a central aspect of all of DeLillo's fiction, Point Omega presents vision from a different angle; this angle is easy to overlook especially if one dismisses DeLillo's writing style as too sparse or minimalistic. However, what is important is to go beyond this and to relate vision in *Point Omega* to more recent theoretical perspectives on embodied vision such as those found in Vivian Sobchack's work. Rereading *Point Omega* along those lines reveals a telling perspective on visual experience; seeing, in itself, is not a superior or transcendent act. It is an act that is subjective, flawed, and above all, always embodied.

49 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013. 228-9. Print.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.

Works Cited

Don DeLillo in Charles McGrath, "Don DeLillo, a Writer by Accident Whose Course
Is Deliberate." *The New York Times Online*. 3 Feb.2010.

Kakutani, Michiko. Rev. of Point Omega by Don DeLillo. 2 March 2010. *New York
Times*. Web. 1 April 2010.

Maurice, Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Reprint. London: Forgotten
Books, 2013. 228-9. Print.

Rich, Frank, "Theater: Don DeLillo's Day Room," 21 Dec. 1987, The New York
Times, web.

Shaviro, Steven. *The Cinematic Body*. MN: U of Minnesota P, 1993.

Sherman, Sharon R. *Documenting Ourselves*: *Film, Video, and Culture*. KT: UP
of Kentucky, 1998.

Sobchack, Vivian. *The Address of The Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. NJ:
Princeton UP. 1992.

Stuart C. Atkin and Leo E. Zonn. "Re-Presenting the Place Pastiche." *Place, Power,
Situation and Spectacle: A Geography of Film*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994. 13.

Sweet Bunny #12

Sue Matheson

Barbers and Millionaires: The Continuity of Stephen Leacock's Early Humour, 1910-1914

by Nick Milne, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario

It is . . . reasonable to suppose that most beginners underestimate the difficulty of story-telling. What they write at first is not apt to be really worth a selling price. It is a pity to stake their literary future on their first efforts. Few people begin at their best, or even at their average level.

(*HTW* 23)

As apt as that final observation is, Stephen Leacock could himself easily be included among those "few people." The first five years of his career as a producer of book-length collections of humour—1910 through 1914—saw the creation of some of his most enduring and beloved works, at least one of which is his acknowledged masterpiece and all of which, arguably, stand rather ahead of his later humourous works in terms of overall quality—"Canada's greatest comic writer at his most accomplished and complex" (Bentley ix). In *Literary Lapses* (1910), *Nonsense Novels* (1911), *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912), *Behind the Beyond* (1913) **and** *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914), there may be found a continuum of both form and content; the books

complement one another in everything from structure to content, and there is a clear lineage from first to last. The lineage continues onwards from there, albeit imperfectly[1], but there is in these first five books something of an essential unity that begins to drop off somewhat as volume piles upon volume thereafter. *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* is the key; in this, the greatest of Leacock's works, we find the clearest synthesis of the forms, contents, and humourous approaches of the four books that surround it. It serves as a sort of bridge—and though there is a forward-going lineage, we shall see that bridges can be crossed both ways.

The collation and publication of *Literary Lapses* in 1910 laid the foundations for the career of humourous writing that was to follow for Leacock, and perhaps the most crucial manner in which it did so was in establishing the general form he would use in all of his books thereafter. The book's provenance is a curious one, being a collection of mostly previously-published material as selected by Leacock and his younger brother George; it had at first been rejected in 1906 by Houghton Mifflin, which company had previously published Leacock's political and economic texts, and so the brothers engaged the Montreal News Company to print a run of the collection privately, out of the Leacocks' own pocket. The gambit paid off, however, and the entire run of 3000 sold out in two months' time, leaving Leacock both profitable and famous (Letters 57). Most of the pieces had already appeared in magazines like Grip and Saturday Evening, and there was nothing especially to unify them in their inclusion apart from their brief length and humourous character. Nevertheless, a chance encounter with a copy of Literary

---

1 *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*, for example, published immediately after *Arcadian Adventures* in 1915, contains a substantial recapitulation of *Arcadian Adventures'* dinner club theme, a series of sketches along the lines of those collected in *Literary Lapses*, and even the return (though possibly in name only) of *Arcadian Adventures'* Mr. Ram Spudd.

Lapses in Montreal later that year moved the industrious English publisher John Lane (co-founder, with Elkin Mathews, of the Bodley Head) to write to Leacock offering the services of his company (Letters 58). The result was overwhelmingly positive, and a highly profitable publishing relationship began.

As the format of Literary Lapses proved quite popular, Leacock maintained it, in part, when constructing his next book of humour, Nonsense Novels (1911). I say "in part" because, while he constructed the book again as a series of more-or-less unconnected short narratives, the ten stories contained therein are united in all being similarly-titled parodies of distinctly different novelistic styles: "Gertrude the Governess: or Simple Seventeen;" "Hannah of the Highlands: or The Laird of Loch Aucherlocherty" and so on. This "collection of short works" format would serve him will for the rest of his career, but it must not be assumed that he was simply incapable of sustained output in the book-length form. Many of his non-fiction books from both before and after he began his career as a humourist are of a quite lengthy and focused nature, though if the grandiose preface to Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912) is to be believed, the production of such things pales in comparison to the writing of even a handful of short tales (SS xvii).[2]

His chosen format would see its greatest realization the following year with the publication of Sunshine Sketches, and it must be admitted that there is in that work

many of the qualities of a sustained, book-length narrative, though the history of the text's construction does not bear this out entirely. The book was written in less than six months, created to meet a series of deadlines determined by the publication schedule of the Montreal Star. This suited Leacock just fine, however; he had by this point become quite adept when it came to the short work, and the unity of time and place within Sunshine Sketches allowed for a broader narrative to reveal itself even though many of the sketches seem, at first, to be unrelated.

In reading B.K. Sandwell's account of the genesis of Sunshine Sketches, "How the 'Sketches' Started," one is struck by a number of things. First, the Sketches began as a commission. Sandwell, a former student of Leacock's and a long-time friend, negotiated an agreement with Edward Beck, the managing editor of the Montreal Star, to publish "a series of skits for the Saturday issue" (Sandwell 7). These skits were to be roughly 4000 words in length apiece, and as early as January of 1912 it became Leacock's determination to center them on "a little country town & the people in it" (Bentley ix). Sandwell makes it clear that the Sketches were not simply manufactured out of whole cloth, but were rather a distillation of ideas Leacock had been considering for some time, many of them based on dinner-time anecdotes about his adopted home of Orillia. The approach is something of a combination of those taken in Literary Lapses and Nonsense Novels. Both of those texts also combine the old with the new; Literary Lapses by collating old material into a new format, and Nonsense Novels by making fresh fun of long-standing novelistic traditions. With Sunshine Sketches, this marriage of newspaper serial and table talk created a curious breed of story. They are not folk tales, precisely, but tales meant for

2 Peter McArthur records this later complaint by Leacock against his own work: "I wrote [Sunshine Sketches] with considerable difficulty. I can invent characters quite easily, but I have no notion as to how to make things happen to them. Indeed I see no reason why anything should. I could write awfully good short stories if it were only permissible merely to introduce some extremely original character, and at the end of two pages announce that at this point a brick fell on his head and killed him. . . . Such feeble plots as there are in [Sunshine Sketches] were invented by brute force, after the characters had been introduced. Hence the atrocious clumsiness of the construction all through" (136). As farcical as this "awfully good short story" sounds, Leacock is likely referring back to "Borrowing a Match," from Literary Lapses, in which the narrator brings the story to its conclusion by pushing another character under the wheels of a passing trolley-car for no apparent reason (LL 94).

folk.

Their initial run in the *Montreal Star* proved successful and a re-release in book form was soon arranged. The initial English printing in August of 1912 was followed by American and Canadian issues in September, and sales were brisk.[3] For purely economic reasons, of course, it would perhaps be naïve to suggest that Leacock was hoping for anything *but* brisk sales, but there were other motives at work as well. In a letter to John Lane in June of 1912, Leacock sets forth his hopes for the book-to-be:

> I am glad the price [of *Sunshine Sketches*] is to be fairly low as I think that humorous stuff ought to be cheap; those who are most willing to buy it are young people with lots of life and fun in them and, as a rule, not too much money. Rich people buy stuff with a gorgeous cover and fine paper, and never read it. (*Letters* 77)

This same format and general publishing philosophy would be repeated in 1914 with the publication of *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*, which book almost seems in retrospect to be a dramatization of the sentiments in the letter above. In the intervening time, in addition to a number of historical works—such as *Adventurers of the Far North* **and** *The Dawn of Canadian History*—Leacock put out *Behind the Beyond*, which might itself possibly have been viewed as the emblem of his early humour in terms of structure were it not for the manner in which it was brought together. The book is comprised of a number of short works, though the one from which the book takes its title, a parody of a modern problem play called "Behind the Beyond," is, at forty pages, by far the longest.

3 By the end of 1912, the English edition had sold 3,209 copies, the American issue 1,226 copies, and the Canadian issue 4,095 copies (Spadoni 116-17).

Apart from that, there is one series of short sketches under the heading of "Familiar Incidents" that is substantially along the lines of those found in *Literary Lapses*; and then another series of sketches, under "Parisian Pastimes," that, like those in *Sunshine Sketches* and the later *Arcadian Adventures*, is unified in time and place, and has certain recurring characters. Some of the book's contents had been published previously in other venues, such as *Saturday Night* or *Century Magazine* (Spadoni 131-32), and Leacock had originally conceived of both the "Familiar Incidents" and "Parisian Pastimes" sections as being fit for entire books in their own right (135), which would, had it come to pass, have made the similarities to *Literary Lapses*, *Sunshine Sketches* and *Arcadian Adventures* even more pronounced.

With *Arcadian Adventures*, the culminating work of this early period, the rhythm of Leacock's humourous output begins to become more apparent. A volume of light-hearted sketches is followed by a volume of dedicated parody, and immediately thereafter comes *Sunshine Sketches*, an extended narrative laced with social commentary. This is followed by a volume of *both* light-hearted sketches and dedicated parody, and then finally *Arcadian Adventures*, which runs along much the same social-commentary lines. The text, often viewed as a "somewhat more acerbic companion" to *Sunshine Sketches* (Bentley ix), mimics that work in both form and focus. Each of its eight chapters is concerned with some event or series of events in the daily life of the City, and the narratives, as in Sunshine Sketches, are unified in time, place, and the characters involved. There is much else that unites the works, as we will see shortly, but for the moment it is worth noting that, in terms at least of the history of its construction, *Arcadian Adventures* does

differ from Sunshine Sketches in one important respect. Whereas the earlier work was serialized in full, from February to June of 1912, before being published in book form, only the first five chapters of *Arcadian Adventures* appeared in serial form (in the pages of *American Magazine* from July to November) before the book was published October 31st of 1914 (Spadoni 143). In the abstract, there is something quite fitting about *Sunshine Sketches* being serialized from spring to summer, and *Arcadian Adventures* being serialized from summer to late fall: The books' respective temperaments are well-suited to the schedule. But they complement each other in many ways apart from this as well, and it is to such content-based continuities in the early work that we now turn.

Considering the close similarities that exist between these first five humourous works in terms of their format, it should come as no surprise to learn that there is much that unites them in terms of their content as well. It was Leacock's belief that literature "begins with imitation" (*HTW* 25), and it is certainly the case that his own did, in a sense. D.M.R. Bentley has described *Literary Lapses* and *Nonsense Novels* as being "intensely pertinent to [Leacock's] first sustained venture into fiction" (Bentley x), and this is more true than his reading of *Sunshine Sketches* at first suggests. It is not just that the characters of Drone, Pupkin and the other Mariposans are sketched "with [the] pencil sharpened by 'burlesque' and parody" (Bentley x) that Leacock had honed so effectively in the earlier works, but rather that, in addition to this, *Sunshine Sketches* serves in numerous instances as a fond return, of sorts, to successful ideas and subjects from both collections. From *Literary Lapses* through to *Arcadian Adventures* there runs a strain of recurring concepts and even particular jokes, and these recurrences serve to bring these diverse works even

more closely together.

Material from *Literary Lapses* tends to crop up again in some of the other works, most substantially in *Sunshine Sketches* and *Behind the Beyond*. Two notable examples may be found in the brief sketches "How to Make a Million Dollars" and "Men Who Have Shaved Me." In the former, one of Leacock's earliest stories, his ubiquitous narrator listens in on some tycoons discussing matters of high finance in extremely casual terms. The humour of the thing comes from the narrator's repeated and naïve interjections concerning the disposition of large sums of money:

> The other day I heard one lean forward and say, "Well, I offered him a million and a half and said I wouldn't give a cent more, he could either take it or leave it—" I just longed to break in and say, "What! What! A million and a half! Oh, say that again! Offer it to me, to either take it or leave it. Do try me once; I know I can: or here, make it a plain million and let's call it done." (*LL* 18)

The response of the narrator is identical to that later employed in "My Lost Opportunities," from *Behind the Beyond*. Told that a certain patch of land had recently been sold for three million dollars, and that only three years ago it could have been had "for a song," the narrator responds in the typical manner: "'For a song!' I repeated. Just think of it! And I had missed it! With a voice like mine" (*BB* 71). Between the two iterations of this humourous conceit lies the example of *Sunshine Sketches*, in which the "whirlwind campaign" conducted so ineffectually by Mullins the banker for Mariposa's

Anglican church serves a similar purpose. So dazzled is he by the enormous amounts of money being thrown around in the city, and seemingly with such ease, that he misses entirely the essence of how the thing actually works. By the time the campaign has run its course, the Mariposa Newspacket's boast of "A QUARTER OF A MILLION" (SS 73) must be read as a dark mockery—as it no doubt is by the church's Dean Drone—rather than as a light-hearted jest, for the Dean and his struggling flock benefit not at all. Thus, what was in *Literary Lapses* and *Behind the Beyond* merely a source of fun becomes, in the *Sunshine Sketches*, something more akin to a warning about the dangers of the layman becoming involved in the technically difficult and morally dubious world of high finance. It can also be said that the tycoons overheard in the two light sketches become themselves the focus of *Arcadian Adventures*, and as such the reader is tacitly put into the position of Leacock's narrator. Unlike in his case, however, what we hear is not necessarily so cheering.

The second recurring feature to run through *Literary Lapses*, *Sunshine Sketches* and *Behind the Beyond* is that of the barber story. *Literary Lapses*' "Men Who Have Shaved Me" establishes that the key role of the barber within his own shop and his own community is that of the font of information. The information imparted is rarely about anything other than sports or poorly-understood current events, naturally, but Leacock's narrator speaks of it in adulatory terms nevertheless. The information provided is the focus of the whole barbershop experience, and also the true source of the barber's livelihood: "The performance of shaving is only incidental to it. Their real vocation in life is imparting information" (LL 44). This same dynamic is in effect in "Under the Barber's Knife," from

Behind the Beyond, in which a disagreement over the relative merits of certain hockey players threatens to devolve into something of a fracas (*BB* 85-86).

Jefferson Thorpe of Mariposa is very much a barber in the same mold. His breadth of knowledge on all topics—from the outcome of the latest game between St. Louis and Chicago to the relations of the "Keesar" to the "German Rich Dog" (SS 23-24)—is the wonder of Mariposa, and his shop is a location of central importance rivaled only by Smith's hotel, which is directly across the street (22). The intriguing feature of "The Speculations of Jefferson Thorpe" is not so much the manner in which it is another iteration of the "barber story" motif, but rather in how it combines that motif with that of the millionaire story noted above. Jeff Thorpe really does find himself in the position yearned after by Leacock's narrator in the shorter sketches, and the problems he encounters are much the same. An identical warning is sounded: the financial powers and public recognition accorded by a sudden windfall are one thing, but to be able to hold onto them in a sea of Carnegies and Rockefellers and people with "post-office box[es] in New York" (30) is quite another. In the end, as with Mullins' resigned donation of his hundred dollars (73) and Jeff's chastened return to the simple and honest business of shaving (34), it is suggested that it is better by far to stick to money that one can hold in one's hand, and that has unquestionably been earned.

The weight carried by such an idea when applied to *Arcadian Adventures* beggars the imagination, for the book is one mad escapade of unearned power and largesse, from the "little toddling princess in a rabbit suit who owns fifty distilleries in her own right" (*AA* 1) to the two centuries of franchise granted to the Citizens' Light by the newly-elected

government (189). In Plutoria, after all, the barbershop is not central and important as it is in Mariposa, standing "across the street from [the] hotel, [staring] at it face to face" (*SS* 22), but is rather buried beneath the hotel, in the "depths… below the level of the street" (*AA* 26). In Plutoria, the barber is no leisurely font of news and wisdom, but rather one who can only pause in his labours to hear the faint traces of an announcement from the world far above him, as "might a miner in the sunken galleries of a coastal mine cease in his toil a moment to hear the distant murmur of the sea" (26-27).

But all of this is rather specific. To speak somewhat more broadly, the chief recurring feature when it comes to *Literary Lapses* and the later works is the tendency to bring together the big and small, the grandiose and the mundane, in some surprising and instructive ways. Thus, in *Literary Lapses*, we see stories such as "Life of John Smith" and "Society Chit-Chat as it Should be Written," in which the small vicissitudes of the average person's life are expanded into the full scope and scandal-making importance typically accorded to the very rich. The same principle can be found everywhere throughout *Sunshine Sketches*, from the mock epic of "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias" to the enchanted love that binds Peter Pupkin and Zena Pepperleigh. In *Arcadian Adventures* the process is still present, but reversed; as the book's title suggests, it recasts the plutocratic elite in terms of a pastoral, and so the very captains of industry—"the shepherds and shepherdesses of that beautiful Arcadia (AA 188)—caper for our amusement. *Behind the Beyond*'s place in this scheme is somewhat more difficult to determine, but the key may lie in the "Familiar Incidents" section. It is there that a number of such incidents—having a photograph taken, meeting a stranger on the train—are examined, though in fairly light-hearted terms, but the romanticization of the mundane may be found in certain unusual

elements that crop up in each story: the photographer is a meddling artiste (*BB* 58-60); the stranger is a cunning con-artist (83-84).

This easy congress between the mundane and the fantastic is similar to that between the convention and the exaggeration in *Nonsense Novels*, and elements of these stories, too, find new life in later works. Their reuse is not so extensive, though, owing to the fairly inflexible manner of their construction; while the stories in Nonsense Novels are themselves generally delightful, it could not easily be said that they are especially diverse. The manner in which they are incorporated into the other works varies from text to text. In *Sunshine Sketches* there are two distinct ways. The first is the degree to which the romance of Peter Pupkin and Zena Pepperleigh can be taken to be a romantic parody in its own right, but the second way is much more concrete, and it comes, as with certain instances from *Literary Lapses*, in the form of repeated jokes and reused content.

The instances are too varied to be named in their entirety, but three distinct examples should suffice. In "A Hero in Homespun, or The Life-Struggle of Hezekiah Hayloft," Leacock describes a fire at a philanthropist's mansion in New York and the reaction of the crowd around it (NN 72-73). There are certain similarities between this response and that described in "The Beacon on the Hill" in *Sunshine Sketches*, though it is true that the citizens of New York are more content to watch the fire excitedly than to fly into a frenzy trying to put it out. But then, as Leacock blithely notes, "in the city it is all different" (*SS* 77-78). The next reusage comes in "Soaked in Seaweed, or Upset in the Ocean," in which the *Saucy Sue* begins rather dangerlessly to sink, occasioning the same sort of fright and desperate actions seen during the "Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias" and the

sinking of the Mariposa Belle. Both episodes are drenched in the mock heroic, though in *Nonsense Novels* it is the mockery that triumphs and in Sunshine Sketches the heroism. A third example can be found in "Caroline's Christmas, or The Inexplicable Infant," which has many elements to it which may be found once more in *Sunshine Sketches*. Its opening lines seem almost to be a slightly sarcastic combination of the first and last chapters of Sunshine Sketches, with the narrator rhapsodizing about the countryside even as he condemns the wretchedness of the modern city and laments that the city's inhabitants never truly come home again (*NN* 122-23). Unlike in "The Train to Mariposa," however, it is suggested that the subject's lack of return to the sunlit hills of his childhood is an act of the will rather than a necessity, or at least this is what his reaction to that refusal suggests: "Do you not turn, I say, sometimes, reader, from the roar and hustle of the city with its ill-gotten wealth and its godless creed of Mammon, to think of the quiet homestead under the brow of the hill? You don't! Well, you skunk!" (123). There is also a heavy dose in "Caroline's Christmas" of the pseudo-salvific mathematical vision—as in the reading of Euclid's *Elements*, which is called "the good book" (125-26)—that can be found in Dean Drone's despair at having never been properly taught about mathematics while he was at the seminary—clear evidence "that the colleges are not truly filling their divine mission" (*SS* 56).

The importance of *Nonsense Novels* to the works after *Sunshine Sketches* is somewhat less well-defined unless one speaks of the mock-romantic approach that continues to pervade Leacock's works forever after. The chief reoccurrence apart from this comes in *Behind the Beyond*, in the short story "Making a Magazine," which does not fall within either the "Familiar Incidents" or "Paris Pastimes" groups. In it, an author—likely modeled after Leacock himself—attempts to submit a short story to a magazine run by the narrator. The narrator, who is in fact actually dreaming about being a magazine manager, accepts the work only on the condition that a number of changes be made. The work in its unaltered state is a short story of some 9000 words under the title of "Dorothy Dacres, or, Only a Clergyman's Daughter," which is in its very title enough to provoke recognition, but after the manager is done with it the story has dropped down to 6000 words, has had its setting transposed from a Spanish summer to a Swiss winter, and now runs under the title of "Dorothea Dashaway, or, The Quicksands of Society." "Making a Magazine" shares some of the same conventions with the *Nonsense Novels* stories itself, apart from simply being about the publication of one; its alliterative title and contrived incidents place it within the context of the exaggerated pilloryings that were *Nonsense Novels'* stock in trade. This is small enough, but there is less still of *Nonsense Novels* **to be found in** *Arcadian Adventures*. It could tentatively be said that *Arcadian Adventures* may itself be read as an extended "nonsense novel" parody of the then-modern upper crust fiction of the type most favoured by the likes of Henry James, Edith Wharton or Saki, but it does not do to push these things too far.

In any event, for all that these small echoes and reusages are intriguing, the most notable complementarity in the early works is that which exists between *Sunshine Sketches* **and** *Arcadian Adventures*. While it is true that there are some differences—they are set in different places and have different characters, *Sunshine Sketches* has twelve chapters (if one includes the Envoi) to *Arcadian Adventures'* eight, and so on—it is not for nothing

that the works have come to be viewed as companion pieces. The first and most notable feature uniting the two works is their near-identical interior structure. Each book can be described in more or less the same way: each begins with a scene of confusion in a hotel, as with the foundation and eventual dissolution of Smith's "Caff" in "The Hostelry of Mr. Smith" and the general waiters' strike in "A Little Dinner with Mr. Lucullus Fyshe." From there, in each text, we pass to the account of a rural bumpkin—the barber, Jeff Thorpe, from "The Speculations of Jefferson Thorpe," and the farmer, Tomlinson, from "The Wizard of Finance"—blessed with an illusory fortune based on mining speculation only to eventually lose it by fraud. Each loss sends the unfortunate figure back to his humble beginnings. It is at this point that some small divergence begins to appear; both of the sequences that follow deal with the spiritual vacuity of the community in which they are set, with Mariposa's lackluster pastor on the one hand and the thoughtless socialites flocking to the doctrines of Yahi-Bahi on the other, but they are treated of at different lengths. *Sunshine Sketches* spends three chapters detailing the many trials of Dean Drone, while *Arcadian Adventures*, having instead spent two chapters charting the rise and fall of the Wizard of Finance, only spends one on the orientalist meeting. *Arcadian Adventures* returns to the subject later in "The Rival Churches of St. Asaph and St. Osoph" and "The Ministrations of the Reverend Uttermust Dumfarthing," and while many of the problems addressed are the same—the harmful intermixing of religion and finance, difficulties with insufficient pastoral seriousness, and so on—it constitutes the one major departure from the otherwise tightly-corresponding structure shared by both books.

From there we pass into a love story of unusual character. In *Sunshine Sketches* it is the "fore-ordained attachment" (*SS* 93) of Peter Pupkin and Zena Pepperleigh, while in *Arcadian Adventures* it is simply "the love story of Mr. Peter Spillikins" (*AA* 93). Both stories are concerned with the sort of romantic parody previously brought about with such effect in some of the chapters of *Nonsense Novels*, but they are more socially-conscious where those in *Nonsense Novels* were silly. We again see a difference in emphasis; *Sunshine Sketches* affords Peter Pupkin three full chapters in which to work out his0 "extraordinary entanglement" (SS 83), while the Peter of *Arcadian Adventures* must find his love in only one.

Both books at last conclude with elections, and the nature of these great political contests could only be described as appalling. The two chapters in Sunshine Sketches detailing the rival candidacies of John Henry Bagshaw and Josh Smith make it very clear that there is something rotten in Mariposa, with the one candidate running on a platform of feigned graft to impress the voters (SS 125) and the other exploiting the Mariposan tendency to want to be on the right side of any issue by pretending he has already won before the polls have even closed (138-39). Meanwhile, Edward Drone and his platform of "simple honesty and public morality" are, like his campaign banner, simply blown away (129). The election described in *Arcadian Adventures* is no better, sweeping the unfathomably corrupt plutocrats into positions of municipal power under the banner of "clean government" and reform. "Bands of Dr. Boomer's students armed with baseball bats," it is recorded, "surrounded the polls to guarantee fair play. Any man wishing to cast an unclean vote was driven from the booth; all those attempting to introduce any element of brute force or rowdyism into the election were cracked over the head" (*AA*

187-88). The thing is a complete triumph, if only at the cost of democracy.

That *Sunshine Sketches* and *Arcadian Adventures* end in the same way is somewhat curious given their difference in perspective. Leacock's Mariposa is viewed through lenses ever so slightly less than rose-coloured, while his Plutoria is described in terms that, however satiric, leave it impossible to look upon the city with any of the warmth or kindness that is the mark of his humour. The key may perhaps be found in the fact that *Sunshine Sketches* does not simply end with the election after all, but rather continues, in a cruelly brief fashion, into the short Envoi. The Envoi is worthy of lengthy consideration in its own right,[4] but it will suffice for the moment to say that it is in this slightly melancholy conclusion that the direct link between Mariposa and Plutoria is formed. For the "train to Mariposa" alluded to in the Envoi's formal title runs between the town and the city, and the journey, it is implied, can only ever be one-way. Those who leave Mariposa can only look back upon it in idle moments, their thoughts suffused with the faint sunshine of distant memory and some small amount of regret, before returning to themselves at last in the bowels of Plutoria's Mausoleum Club (*SS* 141). Their faces have changed, and like the narrator and the stranger on the train in *Behind the Beyond*'s "My Unknown Friend," they cannot recognize one another. They may never go back "to the old place" (*BB* 76), which, though imperfect, may at least be viewed with kindly eyes.

In considering the various continuities that exist between these earliest humorous works of Leacock's literary career, one is struck, at the last, by how atypical those continuities are when his whole career is considered. Apart from the obvious retention of the "collection of shorter works format" throughout his career, after 1914 there is little in his works that could be seen as complementary in a multitude of ways across a number of separate volumes. His trademark humour of genial kindness remained, as did his habit of drawing upon the mixed joy and pathos of real life in creating the laughter he shared, but only rarely did he return to the collection of rigidly formatted parodies or the series of short narratives unified in time and place.

It is fitting, then, that in *Happy Stories, Just to Laugh At* (1943), one of the last works of his career—and his life—Leacock returned to Mariposa one last time with an octet of very short sketches concerning the town's efforts to raise money for a Victory Loan during the Second World War.[5] There is much in this sequence that calls out to that larger and older excursion to Mariposa, like the ever-present and still humbly poor Jeff Thorpe and his barbershop (seemingly triumphant over Smith's Hotel for control over the town, for the Hotel does not feature in the octet at all), or the doddering and retired Colonel Trelawney (*HS* 238-39). Leacock's narrator—now fairly unambiguously Leacock himself—lives just outside of Mariposa in a cottage by the bay. He enjoys the company of the Mariposans, but he does not like to stay there too long. The sunshine is fading, and the evening is coming down (240). All concluded now are the gentle schemings of the Mariposans to make themselves more like the City, for they have discovered that it really is possible to raise a million dollars in a place as small as their town after all, and something essential about the town has died with that discovery. With it comes "all sorts of what they called town planning" (237). Far from the majestic challenger to Wall Street

---

4   For extended readings of the *Sketches*'s celebrated Envoi, see also Mantz, 1977; Ferris, 1978; MacLulich, 1979; Zichy, 1987; or Lynch, 2011.

5   For rather more on Leacock's late-career return to Mariposa as it relates to the Victory Loan, see Milne, 2014.

and Picadilly, "so wide that if you were to roll Jeff Thorpe's barber shop over on its face it wouldn't reach half way across" (*SS* 1), the Main Street is now decided by everyone to be "too cramped and narrow," with the result being that "they want to knock down one side of it and throw it into the lake" (237). Whether it will be the side of Smith's Hotel or Thorpe's Barbershop is left unspoken. Whatever else "Mariposa Moves On" may be—a reminiscence, a resurrection, a Ragnarok—it is, in a final analysis, the much delayed conclusion to the greatest endeavour of Leacock's early career. In offering such closure to a work that defined his earliest successes, Leacock only underscores the painful ambiguities touched upon in the Sketches' Envoi. If *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* is the figurative bridge uniting his first five works and leading outward to the rest of his career, "Mariposa Moves On" is the long-delayed proof that if bridges may be crossed, they may also, ultimately, be burned.

Works Cited

Bentley, D.M.R. "Introduction." *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* by Stephen Leacock. Ed. D.M.R. Bentley. New York: Norton, 2006. ix-xiii. Print.

Ferris, Ina. "The Face in the Window: *Sunshine Sketches* Reconsidered." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 3.2 (Summer 1978): 78-85. Print.

Leacock, Stephen. *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*. Ed. D.M.R. Bentley. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 2002. Print.

---. *Behind the Beyond*. New York: John Lane, 1913. Print.

---. *Happy Stories, Just to Laugh At*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1943. Print.

---. *How to Write*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1943. Print.

---. *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*. Ed. David Staines. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.

---. *Literary Lapses*. 1910. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971. Print.

---. *Nonsense Novels*. 1911. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969. Print.

---. *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. 1912. Ed. Gerald Lynch. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1996. Print.

Lynch, Gerald. "From Serial to Book: Leacock's Revisions to *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 36.2 (2011): 96-111. Print.

MacLulich, T.D. "Mariposa Revisited." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 4.1 (1979): 167-

76. Print.

Mantz, Douglas. "The Preposterous and the Profound: A New Look at the Envoi of *Sunshine Sketches*." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 19 (1977): 95-105. Print.

McArthur, Peter. *Stephen Leacock*. Toronto: Ryerson P, 1923. Print.

Milne, Nicholas. "Mariposa Moves On: Leacock's Darkening 'Sequel' to *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*." *Canadian Literature* 222 (Autumn 2014): 70-83. Print.

Sandwell, B.K. "How the 'Sketches' Started." *Saturday Night* (August 1951): 7. Print.

Spadoni, Carl. *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1998. Print.

Zichy, Francis. "The Narrator, the Reader, and Mariposa: The Cost of Preserving the Status Quo in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town***.**" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 22.1 (1987): 51-65. Print.

Sweet Bunny #5

Sue Matheson

Policing Postcolonialism in Maryse Condé's
Crossing the Mangrove

by Imen Mzoughi, Manouba University, Manouba, Tunisia, and the University of Jendouba, Jendouba, Tunisia

This article studies Caribbean literature as an expression of thought in relation to the development of a postcolonial discourse on creole identity in the Caribbean Archipelago, a string of islands of blurred boundaries. Caribbean writers, indeed, have always investigated and explored different (post)colonial approaches to literary texts. They made it clear that postcolonial discourse must cease to treat creole Caribbeans as an 'otherness machine' (Suleri). In *Crossing the Mangrove*, the French-Caribbean Maryse Condé deconstructs the binary thinking of postcolonial theoreticians by depicting a community of creoles brought together by Francis Sanchez, a homeless character. Within the scope of this paper, I intend to provide both a perspective on the relation between Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove* and postcolonial studies, and an instance of how Condé can engage in debates about policing literary theory by questioning postcolonialism's status and by policing postcolonialism, more precisely, by proposing a more constructive theory.

I do this by examining some of the ways in which her novel *Crossing the Mangrove* writes back to post-colonialism's essentialism. Indeed, a postcolonial reading will deal with creole Caribbean subjects as either whites or blacks while they are both whites and blacks. This implies that postcolonial discourses are provisional. Subsequently, in *Crossing the Mangrove*, Condé creolizes post-colonialism. By policing postcolonialism, this paper requestions the status of literary theory and clears space for other variants of postcolonialism to emerge, namely, paracolonialism.

Any attempt at policing theory involves providing a plausible definition of theory. In his book entitled *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, J. Culler (2011) asserts that theory seems to be an account of anything than an activity (1). He further explains: "You can be involved with theory; you can teach or study theory; you can hate theory or be afraid of it. None of this, though, helps much to understand what theory is" (Culler 2011, 1). Besides, theory is believed to radically change the nature of literary studies. This does not imply that theory puts forward a systematic account of the nature of literature and of the methods for analyzing it (Culler 2011, 1). This paper thus aims at finding plausible answers to the following questions: what is the status of theory in relation to literature? Does theory have any importance in the world of academia? Shall theory be policed? If yes, how can theory be policed? How can the gap between theory and critical practice be forged? These are some of the questions that need to be answered to contextualize the issues at stake in relation to literary theory, in particular.

The term theory is debatable. Culler avers that part of the problem lies in the term theory itself, which gestures in two directions. Culler differentiates between the use of theory, on the one hand, as an established set of proposition, and, on the other hand, as a speculation or a guess (2011, 2). Culler's resolution is that a theory "must be more than a hypothesis: it can't be obvious; it involves complex relations of a systematic kind among a number of factors; and it is not easily confirmed or disproved" (2011, 3).

1. Theory Must Become a Practical Genre

Theory is a miscellaneous genre. As a genre, theory must have the ability to change conventional ways of thinking about literature, philosophy and other fields. In this sense, "theory must not be seen as a set of methods for literary study, but an unbounded group of writings (…) from the most technical problems of academic philosophy to the changing ways in which people have talked and thought about the body" (Culler 2011, 3-4). In other words, the genre of theory compounds anthropological, artistic, historical, cinematic, linguistic, philosophical, psychological and social works.

Theory can affect the directions of these different disciplines. It does so by destabilizing the effect of 'common sense' rhetoric. For instance, theory "questions the conception that the meaning of an utterance or text is what the speaker 'had in mind.' Or, the idea that writing is an expression whose truth lies elsewhere in an experience or a state of affairs which it expresses. Or, the notion that reality is what is present at a given moment" (Culler 2011, 4). Currently, theoreticians wonder whether these questionings are efficient or not. In this context, this paper delves into the pugnacious

characteristic of theory to assess its efficiency, its nature and its way of interrogating and re-interrogating truths. Theory remains theory unless it implements changes. One must police theory so that it grows to be constructive.

This section is meant to explore the complex layers of the notion of theory by highlighting the various levels on which the notion of theory operates in Maryse Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove*: a text where the characters struggle to reconcile divergent affiliations inside them thanks to a homeless protagonist Francis Sanchez. It aligns itself with the theoretical approach of Edouard Glissant in criticizing the Creolists, namely, Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, who do not acknowledge Condé's novels. Here a fundamental question arises: what kind of policing is needed so that theory becomes constructive? At this stage of analysis, a synopsis of the novel is compulsory.

The protagonist of Condé's novel *Crossing the Mangrove* (1995) is Francisco Alvarez-Sanchez nicknamed Francis Sancher (*Sans Chez*, emphasis added). He is a true catalyst. His multiple identities help him dissolving the racial boundaries separating him from other characters. Dissolving racial boundaries is Francis' way towards becoming a subject *en commun*. He retains his distinctiveness, but in a new constellation of a co-subject immersed in a web of connections and conflicts. Indeed, his search for his identity is structured around intertwined quests transforming his life and the lives of those around him.

Condé's novel, originally published in 1989 as *Traversée de la Mangrove*, explores the impact of the main character's mysterious arrival, life and death on the inhabitants of Riviére au Sel, a small village in Guadeloupe (Keizer 1997, 1). Sanchez

is also a writer, and, toward the end of the novel, the reader finds out that the book he is working on is also called *Crossing the Mangrove*. By inducing such a reflexive irony together with jokes about writers throughout the narrative of *Crossing the Mangrove*, Condé explores the status of theory in delineating the main characteristics of Caribbean literature. Theorizing knowledge about theoretical frameworks used by Caribbean writers is assuredly a complex task. Condé's treatment of the relationship between theory and practice is novel.

2. Condé versus. the Creolists: Crossing the Mangrove of Theory

Both Condé and Glissant challenge theories that have turned *antillanite* into essentialism, more precisely, *negritude* and *Creoleness/Créolit*é. Like Glissant, Condé does not recognize the transition from *antillanite* to *Creoleness/Créolit*é. She once declares that she could not reconcile herself with the theory of *Créolité* ("The Stealers of Fire," 158). Smyth best summarizes Condé's stand: "despite their claims to the openness of *creoleness*, the creolists [Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant] lose the self-consciously non-reductionist ethic that Glissant brought to *antillanite*" (2002, 14). Similarly, "Condé holds that *créolité* reproduces essentialist notions within an ostensibly anti-colonial and anti-racial counter- discourse" (Andrea Hilkovitz 147). In tandem with her oppositional stance, Condé finds the minimization of African influences on Caribbean culture in *créolité* troubling:

> With its accent on the fusion of multiple cultural elements, Africa becomes
> just another constitutive culture. But this does not do it justice in terms
> of the role Africa has played in Antillean history. It effaces the history of

slavery (…) and makes the cultural laboratory more important than the memory of a sugar- based economy. (Apter 2001, 94)

Although Condé refuses to advocate the return of her protagonists to mother Africa, she acknowledges its role in shaping the Antillean history. This is considered as one of her major claims as a critic. If one trades "memory" for "laboratory," one loses in the bargain.

The refusal of the myth of origins by Condé helps us to understand the transition between *negritude/antillanite* (whose main preoccupation is the acceptance of Africa) and *creoleness*, which has no identitarian preference. Besides, in spite of their differences, notably in their poetics, versions of essentialism and emancipatory politics, *negritude*, *antillanite* and *creoleness* share, to a certain extent, a belief in literary commitment, that is, in literature's ability-and duty- to act as an agent of social change (Simek 2008, 14). More importantly, Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove* is located in-between these theories. She insists on the freedom of the creative writer to explore and imagine the objects of his or her own choice. Her objections center on the masculinist dimensions of *negritude/antillanite* and *creoleness*, their tendency to reproduce cultural stereotypes and their advocacy of a politics rooted in identity. Condé acknowledges the power of cultural creoleness since it exposes the myth of pure opposites (Simon 2000, 426). Condé problematizes the celebration of literary theory as an exemplary model. Her work situates theory within power relations exposing, hence, its limitations. Her characters promote paracolonialism, which is a choice to be promoted critically and conditionally.

From this vantage point, contamination lies at the heart of the notion of theory.

Theory about the Caribbean must be perceived as 'a web' or network. It must be "rearticulated and spread out, with its extension for an essence and its spacing for a structure" (Condé, qtd. in Britton 2011, 139-140). What is new and striking about *Crossing the Mangrove* is that it introduces the readers to eighteen characters who are not organized into family structures, or according to any other principle like, place, ethnicity or professional milieu. Thus, Condé undermines established theories of characterization since she allows every character to narrate his/her own version of the story. Emphasis is placed on the heterogeneity of characterization. Differences between characters are shown to be *uncategorizable*—far more random than the theoretical determined differences that serve to constitute and consolidate more traditional visions of theories of characterization.

Thus, when Condé states that "what is of interest to me is the meeting between theories, and the resulting conflicts and modifications" (Pfaff 1996, 47), her statement cannot be interpreted according to the standard conventions of the established discourse on theory. Condé's statement is "an appreciation of the existence of a large number of people across the world, who do not have a 'cultural background' in the normal sense, and of the consequences of this state of affairs" (Britton 2011, 140-141). Creole people cannot be approached from the lenses of monological theories. That is why, Condé decenters theory by means of intertextuality. *Crossing the Mangrove* is invested with a vast thematic and discursive form. This can be heightened through an elaborate, if subliminal, intertextual dialogue with Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*.

Crossing the Mangrove's "Naipaulian method of relaying narrators and its subversive

incorporation of Creole into an English text generate a praise of its polyphonic or mosaic poetics, its nomadic and relational politics and its evocations of intertextual echoes between Condé and Naipaul" (Bongie 2008, 296) can testify to Condé's endeavour to challenge, and why not police, literary theory. In the two narratives particular emphasis is placed on the transformative potential of constructive theory. Both Condé and Naipaul defy the documentary stasis of theories mapping the specificity of the Caribbean archipelago, more precisely, postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theories about the Caribbean must be cast as dynamic processes of constant renewal.

V.S.Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* is the story of Ranjit Kripalsingh who changes his name to Ralph Singh. In this regard, he says: "Ranjit is my secret name (…) It is a custom among Hindus of certain castes. This secret name is my real name, but it ought not to be used in public" (*The Mimic Men* 94). In another occasion, he asserts that "I was a man apart, disentangled from the camouflage of people' (*The Mimic Men* 116). The novel is divided into three parts. Naipaul begins "in *medias res*, flashes back in the second part to an earlier period in the history of the island of Isabella and takes up in the third part at the point where the first part stopped" (Boxill 12). The story is told in the first person by "a self-searching and self- accusing individual, who is keenly aware of the shortcomings of the society he is describing and of his own complicity in helping create or perpetuate these shortcomings" (Boxill 12). In *The Mimic Men* Naipaul is primarily interested in the development of Singh's personality as he wrestles with the ills of his society to choose at last mimicry (Christopher 8). In her turn, Condé chooses to focus on the developments in postcolonial Guadeloupe.

A comparative analysis shows that Naipaul's and Condé's fictional representations of creolized Trinidadian and Guadeloupean societies highlight specific cultural and linguistic specificities that cannot be grasped through the lenses of postcolonial theory. Caribbean theory must surpass the universal nature to cast light on the specificity of the local. With their emphases on distinct local islands, the texts in *Crossing the Mangrove* and *The Mimic Men* partially overcome an artificially imposed divide between Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean literary theories. Although the two narratives call for a distinct local contextualization, they simultaneously illustrate cross-linguistic and cross-theoretical connections within the Caribbean.

Besides, the similarities between the protagonist in *The Mimic Men*, that is, Singh and the protagonist in *Crossing the Mangrove*, that is, Sanchez, can be noticeable. Both Singh and Sanchez strive to come to terms with their hybrid identities. Both characters undertake a leavetaking to find later that their islands of births have been re-created and transformed. Francis is a mediator used by Condé to describe a society where different theories, namely, *negritude*, *antillanite* and *creolization* clash. Yet, they must be perceived as being variants of the same model.

This duality between embracing a new era in the history of literary theory and retaining old traditions indicates, in theoretical terms, the interrelation between the notions of *negritude*, *antillanite* and *creolization*. It is clear that by policing theory, one can reclaim back its usefulness. Theory about the Caribbean must be hybrid and creolized. Simultaneously, it must be able to interrogate multi-cultural mixing. As such, theory must be formulated in the light of specific cultural contexts. Theory is a context-bound concept. In other words, there is a need to reconsider the historical implications of the concept.

Convinced that the history of the Caribbean is a chequered one, Condé refuses to glamorize, and thus to ascribe virtue to postcolonial theory. Harris (1981) contrasts Condé's and Naipaul's notions of transformation with 'the documentary stasis of imperialism" (28). For Walcott (1974), the transformation of different histories in the Caribbean is "a dynamic process of constant renewal" (3). Walcott perceives Caribbean history as a process (6). Likewise, Harris considers the development of Caribbean cultures and societies to be creative (28). In Naipaul's narrative, Ralph Singh claims that his "first instinct was towards the writing of history (*The Mimic Men* 81) and adds that "it was the shock of the first historian's vision (…), a vision of disorder that was beyond any one man to control yet which, I felt, if I could pin it down, it might bring me calm" (*The Mimic Men* 81). In *Crossing the Mangrove*, history is Sancher's nightmare (196) and for Emile Etienne, who is a historian in Condé's narrative:

> the history of Rivière au Sel would be based solely on the memories kept in the hollow of our minds and the hollow of our hearts. What fathers told their sons and mothers told their daughters. I'd like to travel north and south, east and west, collecting all those words that have never been listened to. (*Crossing the Mangrove* 198) As one can easily infer, both sets of ideas constitute imaginative responses to history in the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean, respectively (Bruning 120).

This will bridge the rift between Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean interpretations

and representations of the different facets of the Caribbean archipelago. My comparative analysis shows that Naipaul's and Condé's fictional representations of creolized Trinidadian and Guadeloupean societies highlight specific cultural and linguistic aspects. These have surpassed the universal nature to cast light on the specificity of the local. This suggests that both writers represent local Caribbean histories from the perspective of ordinary individuals.

Set in different islands of the Caribbean archipelago and representing different ethnic groups, Condé's and Naipaul's novels highlight the cultural diversity characterizing the Caribbean archipelago. With their emphases on distinct local islands, the texts in *Crossing the Mangrove* and *The Mimic Men* partially overcome an artificially imposed divide between Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean literatures. Although the two narratives call for a distinct local contextualization, they simultaneously illustrate cross-linguistic and cross- cultural connections within the Caribbean archipelago. Besides, the similarities between the protagonist in *The Mimic Men*, that is, Singh and the protagonist in *Crossing the Mangrove*, that is, Sancher, can be noticeable. Both Singh and Sancher strive to come to terms with their hybrid identities. Both characters undertake a leavetaking to find later that their islands of births have been re-created and transformed.

Sancher is a mediator used by Condé to describe a society where different people clash, but can at last live at harmony with each other. Besides, Condé uses vegetation to convey positive and admirable directions in Sancher's life. Similarly, Naipaul has recourse to such symbols to better accentuate his vision. However, he does not want to attach his aspirations to vegetation. Unlike Singh who is overwhelmed by his environment, Sancher succeeds to live rather than survive. Singh builds a house which is, like his identity, profoundly mimic (Boxill 13):

> I was looking through a picture book about Pompeii and Herculaneum. I was struck by the simplicity of the Roman house, its outward austerity, its inner private magnificence; I was struck by its suitability to our climate; I yielded to impulse. (*The Mimic Men* 71)

As one can easily infer, the building of a Roman house in a Caribbean setting is intentional. It is meant to evoke the mimicry of the protagonist. This is further emphasized by "Singh's fashionable American alterations" (Boxill 13). "The Roman *impluvium* is turned into an illuminated swimming-pool" (Boxill 13).

Both Sancher and Singh strive to escape the horrors of their post-modern worlds. Singh yearns for "the final emptiness" (*The Mimic Men* 10). Escape, however, brings only momentary release. Nomadism in Naipaul's novel and death in Condé's novel do introduce drama into the lives of the islanders. In so doing, they help sharpen their "perceptions of the world" (*The Mimic Men* 214). Singh, for instance, drives furiously away from the destructive party at the Roman house to the ruins of an old slave plantation to connect with his West Indian past. "Naipaul's probing of West Indian history and the inability of his character to connect with the West Indian landscape make it necessary for him to evoke vegetation and the island's surroundings as a necessary motif" (Boxill 14). Singh believes that the colorful tropical world around him is natural. But, it has been used by foreigners "for their amusement" (Boxill

He told me about the coconut, which fringed our beaches, about the sugarcane, the bamboo and mango. He told me about our flowers, whose colours we saw afresh in the postcards which were beginning to appear in our shops. The war was bringing us visitors, who saw more clearly than we did; we learned to see with them, and we were seeing only like visitors. In the heart of the city he showed me a clump of old fruit trees: the site of a slave provision ground. From this point look above the roofs of the city, and imagine! Our landscape was as manufactured as that of any great French or English park. But we walked in a garden of hell, among trees, some still without popular names, whose seeds had sometimes been brought to our island in the intestines of slaves. (*The Mimic Men* 146-7)

Subsequently, Singh does not look at his birthplace with the eyes of a local. Naipaul's preference for blurring his characters' perceptions is thus noticeable.

This duality between embracing a new era in the history of the islands and retaining old traditions indicates, in theoretical terms, the interrelation between the notions of creoleness and exoticism (Bruning 135). This will facilitate my investigation of the interrelation between creoleness and exoticism. Although Bhabha dismisses the concept of exoticism as an 'instrumentalization of otherness' and as an essentialization of ethnic and cultural difference (*The Location of Culture* 31-34), in Caribbean theory, it is used positively. "It has been viewed as a process whereby radical otherness is either experienced by a traveler or translated, transported, represented for consumption at home" (Forsdick 17). Moreover, exoticism has also been associated with an evaluation of cultural diversity as opposed to hybridity or universality (Forsdick 20).

Interpreted in this light, exoticism then problematizes the assumption that the concept of hybridity is an uneven 'synthesis' of different cultures. Critic Forsdick proposes that exoticism is a celebration of diversity. "There is a mutual exoticism between the Western traveler and the indigenous travellee" (Forsdick 18). The former experiences and represents the elsewhere as a radical 'other.' The Western traveler is also exoticized in the eyes of the indigenous travellee. It is clear that new post/colonial interpretations of exoticism have reclaimed back the usefulness of the idea. Exoticism is related to hybridity and creoleness. Simultaneously, it interrogates multi-cultural mixing. As such, the concept of exoticism must be interpreted in the light of specific cultural contexts. Exoticism is a context-bound concept. In other words, there is a need to reconsider the versatility of the concept. The old interpretation of exoticism may not be suitable in the Caribbean context. Yet, it accounts for its "(un)translatability as this term travels between contexts" (Forsdick 22).

Beyond the similarity between the thematic polarities of the two novels, "there are the similitudes of their *incipit*,[1] not just in the narrow sense of the opening sentence but the first few lines, even the first three paragraphs" (Stoval, et al 152). From the onset, and paraphrasing Stoval et al, Condé tries to trace back lineages, to sketch out family portraits and to set up a genesis (155). But, she fails because Léocadie Timothée, "the spinster with a worn-out body on the edge of death, is not a proper

---

1   Claude Duchet, "Pour une socio-critique, ou variation sur un incipit," *Littérature* 1 (1971): 5-14.

subject, nor is she a main character, nor is she the stuff of a main character, and her lineage is rather sterile" (Stoval, et al 155). In comparison with Condé's other novels, the incipit in *Crossing the Mangrove* is singular. Now, I will move to explore the incipit's similarity with the opening passage in Naipaul's.

The initial sentences of both novels are long and complex. The repetitive exclamations in Condé's text allow us to augur that death is in the corner: "My heart did not tell me! My heart did not tell me!" (*Crossing the Mangrove* 1). Similarly, Singh is perplexed of "the secrecy and swiftness of a London death" (*The Mimic Men* 5). Both sentences can be read as exemplifying states of self-denial. We know that Léocadie's heart not only skipped at seeing Sancher's corpus, but that it has almost leapt since she subsequently vomited. The words of Singh are a hopeless cry of hope. By means of such words, one can infer that both Léocadie Timothée and Singh embrace life and reject death. Both Léocadie's and Singh's sentences must be read and interpreted beyond their literal meaning. Undoubtedly, the two incipits are pregnant with meaning. For instance, *Crossing the Mangrove* "draws on a particular religious discourse that is prevalent in the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean mainly through the words "Eternal life" invoked by Léocadie" (Stoval et al, 157). The compelling similarities between the two incipits would lead one to argue that one incipit rewrites the other.

As far as the issue of identity is concerned, both characters have migrant identities. Both Singh and Sancher do not seem to have strong bonds to any identitarian politics or any geo-political considerations. "They live amidst, or, more accurately, in-between the often antagonistic cultural discourses that are present in the reality surrounding them"

(Huttunen 269). Although they occupy liminal spaces, critic Huttunen makes it clear that, "they have succeeded to create new identities for themselves and their respective marginal communities by means of reconstructing the past and thus narrating a new order" (269). Singh "fantasizes that he is an Aryan chieftain sought by horsemen all over the Central Asian Plains" (Boxill 54). Also, the pictures of Haile Selassie which hang in the homes of the Browne family seem to represent Singh's "longing for another world" (*The Mimic Men* 167-8).

Subsequently, in both *The Mimic Men* and *Crossing the Mangrove*, authors attempt to offer real solutions to deal with what Boxill chooses to call 'bastard worlds' (17). Singh and Sancher yearn for order. In *The Mimic Men*, the readers are first introduced to Singh "as a foreign student in London living in a household of displaced persons on the brink of London's city" (Boxill 17). Then, he gets back to Isabella to impose order on his life. Singh also performs other roles, namely, "the Aryan Chieftain of his schoolboy fantasy, the husband who relies too heavily on the strength of his wife, the successful businessman, the politician who revels in the game and glamor of politics and the recluse" (Boxill 17). Singh adopts and adapts these roles in various attempts at controlling and ordering the chaos in his life (Boxill 17). Subsequently, he learns to distinguish between "the lead of reality" and "the gold of the imagination" (*The Mimic Men* 10).

Both Singh and Sancher experience a moment of epiphany. Writing heals their anxieties. Singh's *memoirs* teach him about himself. Consequently, he gradually changes and becomes more confident, more humble and more tolerant (Boxill 18). His isolation

is redeeming. He is now ready to act. Isolation puts into order the chaos in Singh's life: "So it frequently happens- what many have discovered- that in conditions of chaos, which would appear hostile to any human development, the human personality is in fact more varied and extended (*The Mimic Men* 214). As such, Singh shows how modern man can transcend time and space.

These striking similarities leave no room for doubt that Condé did use Naipaul's novel as a model for her own. Condé, I think, deliberately uses Naipaul's novel to make an ironic point. A close reading of *Crossing the Mangrove* can also detect her craft in adopting and adapting sources. Voices of different writers coalesce within Condé's narrative. Policing postcolonial theory is primordial to offer real solutions to deal with 'bastard worlds' (Naipaul 1969, 17). One possible route is through prohibiting the use of non-constructive theories, like, postcolonialism. Paracolonialism can voice the creolization of the Caribbean archipelago and its people.

3. Redeeming Constructive Theory: Paracolonialism as a Liberatory Force

This third and last part aims to explore Condé's tactics of policing the discourse of postcolonialism. Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove* is meant to function as an efficient act of policing the postcolonial discourse, hence, recuperating and revaluing the history of the ex- colonized. In *La Parole des Femmes*, Condé voices the changing concerns of African and Caribbean thinkers, artists and writers. The latter are no longer in search of singularity, or of an absolute and irredeemable theory. They are rather preoccupied with introducing "aesthetic topologies and theoretical schemas that appeal to 'an ethical universal'" (Appiah 1991, 353). This return to an ethical principle is mediated by "an expanded notion of humanism, one that is as opposed to the narrow nationalism of identity claims as it is to the colonizing and totalizing pseudo-universalism that allowed colonial empires to engage in the profound dehumanization of their subjects" (Lionnet 1995, 69-70). From this vantage point, Condé recalls the ethical mission of theory. Condé believes that Caribbean literature can become the site in which a reconciliation between theory and practice is possible.

In *Crossing the Mangrove*, Condé offers a brilliant demonstration of her transposition of theoretical questions into narrative practice. Accordingly, she adopts a new point of view about the role of theory in Caribbean society. This reflects "Condé's desire to come to a better understanding of the lived experience of [theory], to return to the oral traditions of a once disparaged popular tradition" (Lionnet 1995, 72). Paracolonialism seems to be able to reflect adequately the invisible plurality for which it speaks. "The self that [paracolonialism] attempts to re-join, to be fused (with)" amounts to more than a voice (Murdoch 2001, 29). The paracolonial writer thus must (re)cover the lost 'other' he or she claims to be in the process of uncovering (Bongie 2008, 44).

Condé's alteration of thought about theory, in general, and about the Caribbean archipelago, in particular, turns to be possible by overthrowing postcolonialism and theorizing paracolonialism as an alternative. Condé's vision of literary theory as the sum of symbioses, mutations, vibrations and mixings is praiseworthy. The transcultural exchanges between different theories in Condé's novel, herein examined, reinforce the consolidation not of one singular theoretical framework, but what might be termed the

fusion of the 'Many,' hence, the emergence of a new model of theory in the Caribbean characterized by multiplicity. Clearly, a thorough reading of *Crossing the Mangrove* reveals a clever formulation of the unceasing process of transformation. By policing theory, the latter gets transformed. In the island of Riviére au Sel, the pre-colonial, the colonial and the paracolonial are connected. These projects, according to Bongie, are "the products of a fully global *modernity*--a "community world," using Glissant's words (1996, 305)--in which the confusing energies of creolization are an inescapable fact of life" (2008, 58).

George Lamming's following quote seems to be relevant to conclude this section: "The likenesses will meet and make merry, but they won't know you. They won't know the you, that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin" (1991, 50). This self-revelatory quote is relevant to best illustrate Condé's creolized paracolonial vision in *Crossing the Mangrove*. Condé makes a case for paracolonial literature. For Bongie, "this becomes the site, not of a radical break with old and discredited [theories], but of an incessant *reflecting back* on colonialism, in both a temporal and spatial sense" *(*2008, 26). According to Bongie, Condé reflects back *upon* colonial and pre-colonial pasts, and paracolonial futures. Her characters cannot detach themselves from these phases (2008, 26). Condé revises and decisively overturns already-told stories. She does so through paracolonialism. Paracolonialism counters the idea of adequacy--of a simple one-to-one identity and subverts it from within.

Conclusion

In light of the preceding analysis, one last point can be raised here: Condé, a diverse other and a paracolonial author, questions the effectiveness of theory. Initiated into the realm of writing, she is now in a position to reflect back upon literary theory and to police it. The readers find out that her characters are all different, yet the same. Guided by this light, the light of what Bongie calls, the "'glow of after-memory'— *Crossing the Mangrove*'s characters return to their true selves, in an impossible and necessary gesture of recuperation that marks the infinitely rehearsed beginnings of [paracolonial] poetics and politics, that will be skeptical, engaged and strangely familiar" (1998, 42).

Works Cited

Andrea Katherine Hilkovitz, "Telling Otherwise: Rewriting History, Gender, and Genre in Africa and the African Diaspora" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2011).

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (1991): 353.

Apter, Emily. "Crossover Texts/Creole Tongues: A Conversation with Maryse Condé," *Public Culture* 13, no. 1 (2001).

Bongie, Chris. *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Postcolonial Literature*. Liverpool University Press, 2008.

---. *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post-Colonial Literature*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.

Boxill, Anthony. "The Little Bastard Worlds of V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and *A Flag on the Island*," *The International Fiction Review* 3, no. 1 (1976): 12-19.

Britton, Celia. *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction*. Liverpool University Press, 2011.

Condé, Maryse. *La parole des femmes : Essai sur des romanciéres des Antilles de langue française*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1976.

---. *Crossing the Mangrove*. Trans. by Richard Philcox. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

---. "The Stealers of Fire: The French-Speaking Writers of the Caribbean and their Strategies of Liberation." *Black Studies* 35, no. 2 (2004): 154-164. Print.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP Oxford, 2011.

Glissant, Edouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. by Bestsy Wing. Ann Arbor: UP of Michigan, 1997.

---. *Faulkner Mississippi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Keizer, Arlene. "Crossing the Mangrove." *African American Review* (1997).

Lamming, George. *In the Castle of my Skin*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Lionnet, Françoise. "Toward a New Antillean Humanism: Maryse Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove*," *Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Murdoch, Adlai. *Creole identity in the French Caribbean novel*. University Press of Florida, 2001.

Naipaul, V.S. *The Mimic Men*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

Pfaff, Françoise. *Conversations with Maryse Conde*. University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Simek, Nicole. *Eating well, Reading Well: Maryse Condé and the Ethics of Interpretation*. New York, 2008.

Simon, Bruce. "Hybridity in the Americas: Reading Condé, Mukherjee, and Hawthorne," *Postcolonial Theory and the United States*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000.

Smyth, Heather. "Roots beyond Roots: Heteroglossia and Feminist Creolization in *Myal* and *Crossing the Mangrove*," *Small Axe*: *A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12 (2002): 1- 24.

Sweet Bunny #9

Sue Matheson

Democratic Governance and Health Care Delivery in Nigeria 1999 – 2007

by Benjamin Uchenna Anaemene,

United Nations University International Institute for Global Health, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Introduction

It is axiomatic to assert that a country's political structure affects almost every aspect of society including health. Although the relationship between democracy and health outcomes is generally acknowledged by scholars, little has been done to examine the impact of the connection on Nigeria's populace. Hitherto, healthcare in Nigeria was conceived in official policy documents as apolitical and autonomous without links to the wider society. However, since the 1983 *coup d'état* masterminded by General Mohammadu Buhari, the political nature of health care became manifest. It should be noted that one of the reasons for the military intervention was the fact that "health services are in shambles as our hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water and equipment" (Iroha, 1984). Subsequent, military regimes also declared health services a major priority. For instance, General Ibrahim Babangida also observed in 1985 that:

> the last twenty months have not witnessed any significant changes... contrary to expectations, we have so far been subjected to a steady deterioration in the general standard of living ; and intolerable suffering of the ordinary Nigerians have risen higher...hospitals still remain mere consulting clinics. While educational institutions are on the brick of decay. Unemployment has stretched to critical dimensions (Newswatch, 1985)

Thus, rather than being a solution, the various health reforms initiated by the military, which are integral of the overall economic austerity programmes worsened the crisis situation in health care. There is no doubt that the country's authoritarian and undemocratic political system was a leading reason why the military government failed to respond effectively to public need.

However, since 1999 when the military handed over the reins of power to a civilian government, the country has enjoyed relative peace and democratic governance. This has been described as the longest period of civilian rule in its post-independence history. The period witnessed several structural reforms in the financial, telecommunications, power and health sectors. In the health sector, remarkable progress was made through the comprehensive health sector reform programme. This is not to suggest that there were no challenges; many challenges remain, such as weak health systems, inadequate resources, and uneven distribution of health facilities among others. Nevertheless, the point being emphasized is that the progress made so far is attributable to the existence of free uncensored media, which draws attention to social needs and allows government policies to be evaluated openly. Similarly, democratic elections force the party in power to justify its policies or reform them in accordance with people's needs to deliver the dividends of democracy. Against this background, this paper examines the extent to which democratic governance has linked the empowerment of Nigerian people to critical development outcomes, especially health care.

Democracy, Governance and Health: The Linkages

It is difficult to argue for a specific conceptualization of democracy. The definitional chaos is attributable to the proliferation of prefix to the construct. They include guided democracy, tutelary democracy, popular democracy, people's democracy, consensus democracy among others. The varied prefix in the name of democracy has apparently contributed to the difficulties encountered in defining the construct. One of America's founding fathers, Abraham Lincoln, defined democracy as 'government of the people by the people and for the people'. This presupposes that democracy is government in which the supreme power is vested in the people. In some forms, democracy can be exercised directly by the people; in large societies, it is by the people through their elected agents or representatives.

However, there is a modicum of consensus on the building blocks of democratic rule. These are free and fair elections; the rule of law; separation of powers between the three arms of government, namely the executive, the legislature and the judiciary; majority rule, which protects the right of minorities; entrenchment of democratic political culture, which is critical to the long-term consolidation of democratic rule and institutionalization of democracy, as a sustainable system of governance, and discussion and compromise as a means of conflict resolution.

In addition, the outcome of the research by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance listed the following indicators as prerequisites for having a consolidated democracy: a successful and transparent fight against corruption, poverty reduction for economic performance, security, provision of physical infrastructure, gender equality, ethnic, religious and religious harmony, strategy to facilitate citizen's participation in governance processes and to encourage strategic thinking, a national outlook, patience and tolerance among the elites, innovative management of civil-military relations to foster military subordination to civil rule (IDEA, 2000).

Democracy is directly linked to the concept of governance. Governance can be defined as 'the management of the lives of the people in a systematic, organised way for the best possible results, using the consensus of the people's will, vision and wisdom' (Muo, 2006). According to Bello Imam, governance entails:

> the mechanism whereby an institution or organisation (be it family, the nation state or elements of it) incorporates the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work – including the capacity to mediate among these interests when they enter into conflict – and the means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it (Bello-Imam, 1997, p. 13).

Governance has also been referred to as the art of governing a people within a given territory or a state. It consists of two essential elements of the state, namely the structure of the state and the procedures of the legislative, judicial and those of the executive and administrative bodies at all the tiers of government. In tandem with Harold Lasswell traditional definition of politics as who gets what, when and how, governance has a lot to do with the allocation of values in the society, which to a large extent, is political in nature. In this regard, the World Bank view governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank, 1992).

By governance, therefore, we mean the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the management and distribution of a country's social and economic resources. The nature and manner of this distribution makes governance a bad or a good one. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has identified eight basic characteristics of good governance. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making (UNESCO., 2005).

Conversely, bad governance includes failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain, failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of rule and laws, excessive rules, regulations licencing requirements among others, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent seeking, priorities that are inconsistent with development, thus resulting in a miscalculation of resources and narrow base for or non-transparencies, decision making (World Bank, 1992).

Good governance is, therefore, a subset of governance wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. The fundamental question now is what are the principles of democratic governance? The principle of elections is a cornerstone of democratic governance. However, elections are not enough, democratic governance also requires a legislature, which represents the

people. It requires an independent judiciary that is able to uphold the rule of law in a non-discriminatory way for all citizens. It requires professional and politically neutral security forces that act in the interests of the common good. It requires accessible media, which are free independent and unbiased and it relies on an active and civil society that is able to question the public authorities and suggests different methods of political participation. It should be noted that good governance is not restricted to more efficient public institutions. The prerequisites for democratic or good governance are also respect for human rights and freedoms, the rejection of all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity or gender and gender equality in both the public and private spheres. As a rule, effective democratic governance ideally should rely on public participation, accountability and transparency.

There is no generally acceptable definition of health. Many scholars have defined health in different ways. Awofeso, for instance, defined health as "a dynamic state of wellbeing characterized by a physical and mental potential, which satisfies the demand of life commensurate with age, culture and personal responsibility" (Awofeso, 2005). Saracchi, for his part, views health as "a condition of wellbeing, free of disease or infirmity and a basic and universal human right" (Sarracci, 1997). For the Australian Aboriginal people, "… health does not just mean the physical wellbeing of the individual but refers to the social, emotional and spiritual and cultural wellbeing of the whole community" (NHMRC, 1996). However, for the purpose of this study, we shall adopt the most commonly quoted definition of health precisely as given by the World Health Organisation, which defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948). The WHO constitution states that the

enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being.

Since health is a state of complete, physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual, it is quite important in the development of every society. The importance of health, as a developmental issue, is better understood in terms of the components of good health, which include freedom from pain, discomfort, boredom and stress; absence of illness, infirmity and diseases; balanced nutrition; qualitative and quantitative housing; water supply; good working and living conditions; education that is concerned with environmental issues and the aim of elongating a healthy or good life expectancy (ROAPE, 1986).

It is pertinent at this point to offer some insights into the linkages between democracy and health in order to provide a useful background for our discussion on the impact of democratic governance on health in Nigeria. Democratic institutions can affect human development in diverse ways including population health and wellbeing. One theory that relates political institutions to human development focuses primarily on democratic principles, such as regular elections, universal suffrage, representation, one-person one vote, multiparty competition and civil liberties. In this wise, representative democracy is said to produce competition for popular support among elites who are trying to win elected office. It goes, therefore, without saying that democratic institutions might relate with health through alleviation of social disparities and income inequalities that results from greater political voice and participation. For instance, in a democratic system the poor, marginalized as they are, will at least vote and work to correct the imbalance.

Another way through which political institutions can affect health is through their general impact on universal health issues, such as universal access to high quality services. In such cases, the political institutions can help create a universal health insurance and access programmes, such as the Social Health Insurance Scheme in Nigeria. Conversely, the absence of representative democracy provides few incentives for political elites to contest for votes resulting in less responsiveness to spread benefits universally (Mckee & Nolte, 2004). As Ruger aptly pointed out, "authoritarian regimes suppress political competition and tend to have an interest in preventing human development because improved health, education, and economic security mobilizes citizens to advocate for greater participation and more resources" (Ruger, 2005).' It could then be seen that democracy enables the protection of people through safeguards, equality before the law and the advancement of human rights. Democratic governance links the empowerment of people to critical developmental outcomes including healthcare, which further guarantees human security. Before discussing the impact of democratic governance on health in some detail, it is worth taking a critical look at the role of the military in the area of health in Nigeria.

Health Reforms under the Military: A Success Story?

Since attaining independence on 1 October 1960, Nigeria experienced incessant political turbulence manifested through regular military interventions. From their first incursion into national politics and governance on 15 January 1966 until May 1999 when they handed over power to a democratically elected civilian, a period that spanned 33 years, officers of the Nigerian armed forces ruled the country for a total of 29 years allowing only four-year interregnum called the second republic. It is on record that military regimes

provide pragmatic and beneficial leadership. This is particularly true in Nigeria's health sector. In the period the military held sway, Nigerian health services were declared a major priority.

Health priority, among other professed commitments, constitutes the declared reason for intervention. The military addressed the health crisis through various reforms. First is rationalisation and commercialization. Under this rubric, the hitherto free and subsidised services were either withdrawn or user fees levied. Free meals for patients on admission were discontinued and the charges for various services were reintroduced. Apart from these general levies, the Drug Revolving Fund Scheme was instituted. As part of this scheme, a large sum of money was charged in pharmacy units of public hospitals to purchase drugs. The drugs were sold to patients and the proceeds ploughed back into further purchases of drugs. Essentially, the Drug Revolving Fund involved running public pharmacies as businesses. However, the revenue generated from the Scheme did not guarantee a greater availability of funds as it has to compete with other commodities for foreign exchange allocation. This commercialization also meant outright exclusion for those without the economic ability to pay.

In the mid-1980s, Nigeria under military regime joined the international push for Primary Health Care after the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration of Health for All. Between 1986 and 1992, remarkable and innovative progress was made. The General Babangida administration launched a health policy titled "The National Policy and Strategy to Achieve Health for All Nigerians" in I986 in pursuit of the Alma Ata Declaration of Health for All by the Year 2000 (Nigeria, 1986). This was the second attempt to implement health for all.

The first attempt, Basic Health Services Scheme, was inaugurated during the Third National Development Plan 1975 – 1980. The implementation was haphazard and inefficient. The new Policy adopted the primary health care strategy. The former Health Minister justified the establishment of the Primary Health Care Scheme, when he wrote that:

> The primary health care has been established as a health care system that will touch the lives of every citizens and tackle the conditions that cause the highest mortality and morbidity. And, it has been organised from the grassroots and worked into the very essence of the community through the process of community participation. It recognises preventive, promotive and curative services, using the type of technology the community will accept, at the level it can afford, and with an efficient and effective system of supervision and referral (Ransome-Kuti, 1991)

Sequel to this, emphasis was shifted from the expensive health projects to cost effective, easily accessible and community oriented public health projects. With the introduction of the Primary Health Scheme in 1986, 52 local government areas in the country established Primary Health Scheme with the assistance of University Teaching Hospitals, States' Ministries of Health and School of Health Technologies (Ransome-Kuti, 1991). In 1987, 30 more local governments benefitted from the scheme while 20 in riverine areas of the country benefitted in 1988. The programme continued until all the local government areas in the country were covered.

There were basically three levels of operation of PHC in the local government area. These include Village level, District level and Local government level. The components of the Primary Health Scheme include the National Immunisation known as the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), the government population control programme and the recognition of the role of traditional medicine. It cannot be denied that some progress

was made with the health services between 1978 and 1992. For the first time, the needs of the larger rural population were being met and after a while, people began to see the results particularly in immunisation programmes, diarrhoea in children, malaria treatment and acute respiratory infection. A glance at the Nigerian PHC system status with respect to PHC targets for year 2000 and what was actually achieved as at December 1992 as shown in table 1 indicate that some progress was achieved up to that time. However, the figures declined dramatically since then.

Table 1: The Nigerian PHC System Status with respect to PHC Targets for 2000AD

PHC Component	% target Achieved as at December 1992
E.P.I Coverage	54.5%
Antenatal Care	48.4%
Nutritional Status Pregnant Women	34.4%
Attendance at Delivery	52.3%
Contraceptive Prevalence	38.0%
Access to Health Services	43.3%

Source: James Wunsch *et al.* (1994). *USAID Governance Initiative in Nigeria: A Strategic Assessment of PHC and Local Government.* Lagos: USAID, 18.

However, these early successes were gradually eroded by the economic crisis of the 1980s. Despite the messianic posture of the military, in 1986 the military regime introduced a Structural Adjustment Programme, which had deleterious health implications. It should be noted that in the last two years of Shagari's administration negotiation for a 2.5 billion IMF support loan was initiated. The negotiations were stalled because of the anticipated political cost of the conditionalities. Rather than succumb to these pressures, the government chose fiscal measures to ensure foreign exchange. In spite of the popular rejection of the IMF loan in national debate, the military regime of General Babangida surreptitiously took the loan and subsequently began implementing an IMF/World Bank prescribed austerity programme.

SAP affected healthcare delivery through budget cuts and privatisation. It reduced the number of subsidised health services and health centres compelling the individuals to purchase health services from the private sector. The quality of health services deteriorated as foreign exchange to purchase drugs and other imported medical supplies became increasingly scarce. The consequences of the decline in foreign exchange for health care services were severe. It brought about shortages of imported drugs, migration of skilled health workers and development of private medical practice (Ekwenpu, Maine, Olorunkoba, Essien, & kisseka, 1990). Furthermore, budgetary allocations of health that had been below 10 percent in most states in the country since 1982 was further reduced as a result of SAP (Emeagwali, 1995). This resulted in the increase in suspended health projects and abandoned constructed sites for health centres and hospital. In the first five years of the structural adjustment programme, 1986 – 1990, government allocation to the health sector ranged from just US 42 cents to US 62 cents per capita, an amount, which was grossly inadequate to treat an attack of malaria (Popoola, 1993).

The introduction of SAP and the pressure to reduce government expenditure on health and to reorganise the health sector to bring in private provisions and payments for services was seen as a major threat to equity. For instance, the development of private medical practice created a two-tier system (Turshen, 1999). Patients, who could pay more, could see private practitioners, get better services and attend special clinics and hospitals.

In the upper tier of this system, income determined access to services. On the other hand, in the lower tier, patients were dependent on national health services where charges put the service out of their reach. Private practice also affected the nation's health status because practitioners did not undertake the preventive and community health measures needed.

While SAP affected the delivery of health care directly through budget cuts and privatisation, it also made an impact indirectly by contributing to poverty. Poverty is multidimensional and, thus, has the potential to decrease health care delivery in many ways. First, macroeconomic changes from SAP resulted in reduced incomes and unemployment. It marked the genesis of a considerable decrease in real income and unparalleled increase in food prices. The economic crisis stimulated reduced food consumption, particularly that of nutritious foods and an increase in malnutrition. For example, in Bornu and Yobe States in 1987, SAP contributed to an average decrease in energy and protein intake of 27% and 33% respectively (Igbedioh, 1993). Different surveys of nutritional assessment in Nigeria reveal low intakes of protein, energy, iron, calcium, zinc, thiamine and riboflavin in almost all age groups and in both sexes (Igbedioh, 1993). It is a truism that lack of proper nutrition reduces resistance to disease. For instance, malnutrition is the most common complication of measles, an important cause of death in children (Turshen, 1999). Tuberculosis and cholera are additional diseases that are complicated through lack of food (Bello, 1994).

Available studies also attributed the prevalence of HIV/AIDs to poverty. The prolonged economic crisis in Nigeria occasioned by SAP left the productive age group between 15 – 50 years unemployed; some were either retrenched or retired to meet the conditions of SAP (Mangvwat & Mangvwat, 2010). Here, poverty led women in particular into engaging in high-risk sexual behaviour in hopes of bettering financial situation. Finally, the lack of infrastructure also impacted on health outcomes. As earlier mentioned, countries managing debt must comply with SAP demand of decreased government spending.

The government was unable to make the needed reforms, such as land distribution, sanitation projects, health care and educational funding, as such reforms might affect their ability to service their debts and attract foreign capital (Keifer, 1992). Spending on social goods, such as water and sanitation projects, roads and communication were reduced despite the fact that water and sanitation services are associated with decreasing diarrheal diseases and infrastructure development with improving access to health services (Peabody, 1996).

These economic policies of the General Ibrahim Babangida regime led to major confrontations with the populace including two popular uprisings. Opposition to military policies was suppressed through arrests, detention without trial, proscription of Associations thought to oppose government and the general suppression of dissent. Besides this overt state violence and suppression, the government instituted special tribunals headed by army Generals that tried economic and political offences. The verdicts of these tribunals could not be contested in conventional courts. The Structural Adjustment Programme was pursued in spite of the harsh intolerable sufferings associated with it. There is no doubt, therefore, that the country's authoritarian and undemocratic political system was considered the reason the military government failed to respond quickly and effectively to public needs.

Amartya Sen has argued that political freedoms can help prevent major social disasters,

such as widespread poverty caused by SAP because the existence of free, uncensored media draws attention to social needs and government policies to be evaluated openly (Sen, 1999). The failure of military health reforms resulted in part from its lack of a free, uncensored press and the absence of opposition parties that would have poked holes in the government policies. We would recall that under military rule political institutions and processes were vandalized or neutralized into oblivion. For example, political parties, active trade unions and associations were banned. The constitutional framework was undermined through the suspension of significant sections of the constitution; the legal system was rendered impotent, as court jurisdictions were restricted by military decrees. Generally, the rule of law was subordinated to the rule of the sword. The press was also suppressed. All these happened because they were not elected by the people and, therefore, not politically accountable to them. Consequently, as political development in Nigeria was stunted, it was bound to have serious implications for the management of socio-economic affairs by a group that could not be held accountable for their policies and actions in government.

Health Care under Obasanjo Administration 1999 – 2007: A Snapshot of Realities and Challenges

On 29 May 1999, the military handed over power to a democratically elected government. Since then, successive civilian administrations have embarked on health sector reform programmes in line with the aspirations of the Nigerian people. In 2003, the government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo launched a comprehensive health sector reform with the implementation of its first phase covering 2004 – 2007 (FMOH, 2004). The major objective of the reform was to improve the health status of Nigerians and reverse the vicious cycle of poverty, ill health, and underdevelopment. The health sector reform was located within the country's overall macroeconomic framework called National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). Thus, the period 2004 – 2007, saw a reform agenda articulated for the health sector, which aimed at:

1. improving the stewardship role of government;
2. strengthening the national health system and its management;
3. reducing the burden of disease;
4. improving health resources and their management;
5. improving access to quality health services;
6. improving consumer awareness and community involvement, and
7. promoting effective partnership collaboration and coordination (FMOH, 2004).

One of the major issues in health sector reform is governance. The main criticism against health system governance in Nigeria has been the lack of coordinated response to critical health sector needs. A number of constraints and challenges have created serious obstacles to the role of government and these include the poor definition of roles and responsibilities of key actors. The constitution did not specify the roles the local government, state and federal government must play in the national health care delivery system (FMOH, 2004). For the health sector, this was a serious omission since Nigeria's health system is built on a three-tier system with the local government being the main implementing agents of primary health care. In addition, there was also the absence of the definite roles and responsibilities of the private sector. This state of affairs resulted in the duplication of efforts, redundancy and waste of resources that could have yielded greater dividend had they been employed elsewhere. As a response to the criticism, the Federal Government developed a system to guide and coordinate investments and actions by the three tiers of

government, the private sector, donors and other stakeholders.

The most striking reform in the Nigeria health sectors was in the area of securing sustainable financing for health care. Health sector financing in Nigeria is based on a mixture of government budget, health insurance (social and private), external funding and private out-of-pocket spending to finance health care. Despite the variety of financing sources, the level of health spending was relatively low in the 1990s. Although the federal government recurrent health budget showed an upward trend from 1996 to 1998 and 1999 to 2000, available evidence indicates that the bulk of this expenditure went to personnel (WHO, 2002). Recurrent health expenditure as a percentage of total federal recurrent expenditure was 2.55% in 1996, 2.96% in 1997, 2.99% in 1998, 1.95% in 1999 and 2.5% in 2000 (CBN, 2000). According to UNDP, government expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP was 1.3% in 2003 (UNDP, 2006), a decline from 2.2% in 2000 (WHO, 2003).

In per capita terms, the government expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure on health, the Nigeria government share declined from 29.1% in 1999 to 25.5% in 2003 lagging behind many other African countries even those similarly classified by the World Bank as low income economies (WHO, 2006). In per capita terms, public spending on health stood at less than $5 and, in some parts of the country, it was as low as $2 far short of $34 recommended by WHO for low income countries (WHO, 2002). Private Health expenditure was 3.7% (UNDP, 2006). Household out-of-pocket expenditure averaged 64.5% between 1998 – 2002 (WHO, 2008). This is an indication that the burden of health expenditure on household was very high. On average, about 4% of households were estimated to have spent more than half of their total household expenditure on health care and 12% of them are estimated to spend more than a quarter (WHO, 2008).

In an effort of mitigate low per capita funding to health, the government embarked on a series of initiative. Following its commitment to improve the health system, the federal government substantially increased its allocations to health care since 2003. Some state governments also increased their resource allocation to the sector. In addition, at the federal level, there were efforts to increase the resource allocation of primary health care. For instance, the National Health Bill made provision for a primary health care development fund that would increase earmarked funds to PHC (WHO, 2008).

As part of government effort to address the problems of health financing, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was established. NHIS was conceptualized in Nigeria in 1960, but was stalled by legislation and political instability until 1984, when the National Council on Health (NCH) set up a committee to advice government on the need for its implementation. A positive response by this committee led to the setting up of National Health Insurance Review Committee in 1985 (FMOH, 2001). NHIS collected premium and purchased health services for formal sector employees. This represented less than 40% of the population leaving out over 60% employed in the informal sector, especially over 52% in the rural areas. In effect, despite the introduction of the NHIS over 90% of health services in Nigeria remained paid for through direct user fee.

The problem of the exclusion of the informal sector led to the emergence of some Community Based Health Financing Schemes CBHFs (Omoruan, Bamidele, & Philips, 2009). Some CBHF targeted members of local trade associations, such as taxi drivers

association, market association like Lawanson Health Plan (LHP) in Lagos and Ariaria Trader's Health Scheme of Aba. Others focussed on members of a particular community like the Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN), and Ndo Nwanne Health Scheme of Enugu.

At the 42nd meeting of NCH in 1997, approval was given for the repackaging of the NHIS to ensure full private sector participation by providing reinsurance coverage to the CBHF and Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs) to form Social Health Insurance (SHI). SHI was launched in October 1997 while the enabling law establishing the scheme Decree 35 of 1999 was signed in May 1999. The implementation was delayed until 6 June 2005.

While universal coverage was intended by NHIS, beneficiaries have been limited to employees of the formal sector. Given this limitation, most people continued to pay for health care directly out-of-pocket and this has had significant access implications. As a result, there was the concern that continued growth in the number of people without coverage would further add to the downward spiral of key health indicators and, in addition to the scourge of HIV-AIDS, contribute to exacerbating an already appalling life expectancy rate. However, the launching of the $131 million Insurance Health Fund (IHF) by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs would expand coverage to a significant portion of the population (Irin, 2008). The appeal of the fund lies on its impact on the major factor militating against utilisation of health insurance cost. The scheme would subsidise the cost of premium by as much as 95% in some cases (Irin, 2008), thereby making it possible for more people to purchase coverage. Nevertheless, health insurance schemes hold the promise of ensuring guaranteed funds for health, improving the efficiency of management of health resources and protecting people against the catastrophic expenditure for health.

Donor assistance to the health sector also experienced a decline during the 1990s. A major reason for the drop in health financing in Nigeria was the decline in international contributions to the development of the health sector, which began in mid-1980s and continued until the 1990s. Following the refusal of the military government to acquiesce to demands for restoration of democracy, and its subsequent ostracisation by the international community, most donor countries, especially the United States and the United Kingdom and international agencies ceased funding projects in Nigeria including those that were health related. However, with the re-establishment of democracy in 1999, the situation improved with many of the foreign partners resuming cooperation with the government and significantly contributing to addressing priority areas of concern. The percentage of total foreign aid to the health sector, which was 3.0% in 1998, increased to 19.8% in 1999 the year civilians regained control of government (WHO, 2002).

Another issue is that of provision of health services. The organisation of health services in Nigeria is pluralistic and complex. It includes several providers in both public and private sectors, private for-profit providers, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, religious and traditional care providers. The overall availability, accessibility, quality and utilisation of health services decreased significantly in the 1990s. Available data from the Federal Ministry of Health indicate that in 1999, there were 18,258 registered PHC facilities, 3275 secondary facilities, and 29 tertiary across the country (WHO, 2002). The public sector accounted for 67% of PHC facilities, 25% secondary facilities and all

but one of the tertiary facilities (UNICEF, 2001).

The major weakness of health services was inadequate decentralisation of services. PHC facilities offered a limited package of services. Most health services could only be accessed at secondary and the tertiary levels that are concentrated in the urban areas, limiting access by increased service delivering cost to the rural based beneficiary. The proportion of households residing within 10 kilometres of a health centre, clinic or hospital was 88% in the South West, 87% in the South East, 82% in the North Central, 73% in the North East and 67% in the North West regions (WHO, 2002). However, the fact that health facilities physically existed in these areas does not mean that they were functional. Most of them were poorly equipped and lacked essential supplies and qualified staff. In particular, the coverage of PHC interventions, such as immunisation and access to safe water and sanitation declined. In addition, marked inequalities existed between the regions, the rich and the poor, and rural and urban areas.

Furthermore, the existing health care delivery system was characterised by weak referral linkages between the different levels of health care limiting the provision of health services across a continuum of care. There was also the absence of health services, particularly in the private sectors. However, in an attempt to redress the situation, the National Health Bill legislates that "all Nigerians shall be entitled to a guaranteed minimum package of services." In 2007, the Ward Minimum Health Care Package (WMHCP) 2007 – 2012 was ratified and adopted by the Nigerian National Council on Health as a minimum standard for the delivery of primary health care services in Nigeria (WHO, 2008).

In the area of infectious disease control, the new civilian administrations have made significant progress. In 1999, the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo set up a National Action Committee on AIDS charged with the responsibility of coordinating various activities related to the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in the country. The Committee was later transformed through a legislative act into a statutory agency. In 2005, the Nigerian government committed to universal provision of antiretroviral therapy, the implementation of which has been largely funded by the Global Fund and United States Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the World Bank. The prevalence rate based on sentinel surveys rose from 1.8 percent in 1991 to 5.8% in 2001 but in 2006 it was estimated at 3.9 percent. Before 1999, there was no broad technical agency with the capacity for the surveillance and response to infectious diseases. However, a move was initiated to create a National Disease and Control Prevention Centre out of the existing Central Public Health Laboratory in Lagos. Routine immunization campaigns against polio and other preventable diseases have also reinvigorated.

Dilemmas of Healthcare in Nigeria

Despite greater freedom of speech and improved respect for the rule of law, the government efforts towards health development is still far from being achieved. This is clearly demonstrated in the health indicators, which have continued to lag behind country targets, internationally set benchmarks and millennium development goals. Of greater concern is the fact that most health indicators have worsened over the years. The World Health Report ranked Nigeria 187 out of 191 countries for health service performance (WHO, 2000), a situation that has not changed much since 2000. Infant mortality rates

have been deteriorating from 85 per 1000 live births in 1982, 87 in 1990, 93 in 1991 to 100 in 2003 (NPC, 2003). In 2007, the Federal Ministry of Health reported 110 deaths per 1000 live births. Maternal mortality ratios are estimated at 1100 per 100,000 live births (WHO, 2008). Life expectancy at birth was 47 years as at 2007.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Rating, Nigeria ranked 154th out of 179 countries with data (UNDP, 2008). The statistics are pathetic and scary which has raised serious doubts regarding the gains and benefits of democracy.

Table 2: Health Indicators in Nigeria and Selected Countries in 2007

Indicators				
Under Five Mortality (per 1000 live births)				
Infant Mortality(0-1year per 1000 live births)				
Life Expectancy at birth (years)		68		72
Healthy Life Expectancy at birth		60		64

Source: WHO: World Health Statistics, 2009

Available record also indicates that Nigeria still suffers from a significant low level of health development and fall far below the standard of health care delivery when compared with countries at a similar level of development. Attempt is made to compare health indicators in Nigeria with other comparable economies in table 2. The table shows that under five mortality, infant mortality and child stunting are 189, 97, and 42 respectively, figures that are higher than the figures for Egypt, South Africa and Malaysia. The life expectancy for Nigeria is 49 years, which is lower than 68 and 72 years for Egypt and Malaysia respectively.

Several factors accounted for this parlous situation. First, is the weak health care system in the country. It should be noted that it takes states health care systems and, at least, passable local infrastructure to improve public health. However, decades of neglect have rendered local hospitals, clinics, laboratories, medical schools and health talent dangerously deficient. What this means is that in spite of all public sector expenditure and the increased support from international health agencies since 1999, the health sector could not produce the desired result. Another factor that reduced the impact of allocated resources was poor management practices that resulted in wastage of resources.

One major problem is the lack of access to health facilities. The national accessibility to health facilities in Nigeria is about 54.1 percent while the percentage of those who attended public health institutions in Nigeria was 59 percent as at 2007 (Alabi, 2007). The 54.1 percent accessibility to health facilities in Nigeria is below the 65 percent accessibility to health services estimated by UNICEF for African countries (UNICEF, 2000). Lastly, is the non-involvement of beneficiary communities in decision making on programmes and services. Poor leadership and political instability have also been the basis for unsuccessful implementation of health care programmes in the country.

Another problem that has impacted on Nigeria's health sector is corruption. Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain.[47] It occurs when public officials who have been given the authority to carry out goals which further the public

good, instead use their position and power to benefit themselves and those close to them. Corruption is a pervasive problem affecting the Nigerian health sector. Evidence abounds on the negative impact of corruption on health and welfare of Nigerians. There is no doubt that corruption remains an enormous drain on resources needed for developmental programmes including health. The Nigerian health sector is, particularly, vulnerable due to several factors. These include the uncertainty surrounding the demand for services; many dispersed actors including regulators, payers, providers, suppliers interacting in complex ways and asymmetric information among the different actors making it difficult to identify and control for diverging interest. In addition, expensive hospital construction, high tech equipment and the increasing arsenal of drugs needed for treatment, combined with powerful vendors and pharmaceutical companies present risks of bribery and conflict of interest in the health sector. Government officials use discretion to license and accredit health facilities, providers and services, and products, opening the risk of abuse of power and use of resources. The resulting corruption problems include, among others, inappropriate ordering of tests and procedures to increase financial gain, absenteeism and use of government resources for private practice.

The implication of corruption problems for Nigeria is that not all the money appropriated for health programmes in the country end up being spent effectively. About half of the funds and materials provided for health efforts in the country never reached the lowest levels where they are needed most. For instance, the mosquito treated nets, which are meant to be given out free, are sold to the patients in some health institutions in the country. More worrisome is the situation where the vehicles, motor cycles and bicycles provided by international donors to facilitate polio vaccination are converted to personal use by the political leaders and some consultants. This has brought to the fore the issue of accountability and transparency.

Conclusion: Towards a Way Forward

We have demonstrated in this paper that democratic governance can impact positively on human development in various ways including population health and wellbeing. Conversely, the absence of democracy, in particular can have deleterious consequences on health as the introduction of structural adjustment programme by the military demonstrate. Since the end of the military rule, the questions about the relationship between democracy and development and the extent to which the two coexist to re-launch the nation on a course of socio economic transformation occupied the minds of Nigerians. Thus, to surmount the health challenges and to achieve sustainable health development in the new democratic dispensation, there is the need to securitize health. To securitize an issue is to frame and present it as susceptible to threat. When something is securitized, exceptional measures are taken to secure the issue that faces existential threat. The government should ensure the World Health Organisation allocation benchmark of 5% of the total budget is directly related to the health sector. Efforts should be made to implement the budget allocation to the health sector effectively. There should be efforts to establish complementary infrastructure to health services delivery, such as access roads, electricity, among others. This is imperative, as available health centres are too far away from vulnerable people and those who actually need medicare. Nigeria should also ensure proper coordination of the

activities of all health actors operating in the country. The government should insist that their activities and programmes must key into the country's priority areas.

References

Alabi, R. (2007). Estimating the Cost in Rural and Urban Area of Edo State. *Journal of Human Ecology* .

Awofeso, N. (2005). Redefining Health. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* , 82; 802.

Bello, W. (1994). *The United States: Structural Adjustment and Global Poverty.* London: Pluto Press.

Bello-Imam, I. (1997). *In Governance in Nigeria: Politics, Economy and Society in the Adjustment Years 1985-1995.* Ibadan: Stirling-Horden.

CBN. (2000). *Annual Reports and Statements, 1972-2000.* Abuja: Central Bank of Nigeria.

Ekwenpu, C., Maine, D., Olorunkoba, M., Essien, E., & kisseka, M. (1990). Structural Adjustment and Health in Africa. *The Lancet* , 336; 56-57.

Emeagwali, G. (1995). *Women Pay the Price: Structural Adjustment in Africa and the Caribbean.* New Jersey: Africa World Press.

FMOH. (2004). *Health Sector Reform Programme: Thrusts with a Logical Framework and Plans of Action, 2004-2007.* Abuja: Federal Ministry of Health.

FMOH. (2001). *Nigerian National Health Insurance Scheme and Improvement of the Health*

Status of Nigerians. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Health.

IDEA. (2000). *Democracy, Conflict and Human Security.* Sweden: International Institute

    for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Igbedioh, H. (1993). Under Nutrition in Nigeria: Dimensions, Causes and Remedies for

    Alleviation in a Changing Socio-Economic Environment. *Nutrition Health* , 9; 1-14.

Irin. (2008). *Nigeria: New Insurance Scheme for the Poor*. Retrieved November 2008, 2008,

    from http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?Report/d=62764

Iroha, E. (1984). *Return of the Military* . Lagos: Daily Times.

Keifer, C. (1992). Militarism and World Health. *Social Science Medicine* , 34; 719-724.

Mangvwat, A., & Mangvwat, B. (2010). Food, Health and the Economic Depression in

    Contemporary Nigeria, 1979-2009. *The Social Science* , 5; 717-730.

Mckee, M., & Nolte, E. (2004). Lessons from Health During the Transition from

    Communism. *British Medical Journal* , 329; 1428-1429.

Muo, I. (2006, April 25-28). Leadership, Values and Development. *Paper Presented at*

    First College Conference on Values, Virtues and Development Crisis in Nigeria,

    University of Education . Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Newswatch. (1985, September 7).

NHMRC. (1996). *Promoting the Health of Indigenous Australians: A Review of*

Infrastructure Support for Aboriginal and Torresstrait Islander Health Advancement.

    Canberra: NHMRC.

Nigeria, F. G. (1986). *The National Policy and Strategy to Achieve Health for Nigerians.*

    Lagos: Federal Ministry of Health.

NPC. (2003). *Nigeria Demographic Health Survey, 2003.* Abuja: National Population

    Commission.

Omoruan, A., Bamidele, A., & Philips, O. (2009). Social Health Insurance and

    Sustainable Health Care Reform in Nigeria. *Ethno-Med, 3, 2.* , 105-110.

Peabody, J. (1996). Economic Reform and Health Sector Policy: Lessons from Structural

    Adjustment Programmes. *Social Science Medicine* , 43; 823-835.

Popoola, D. (1993). Nigeria: Consequences for Health. In A. Adepoju, *The Impact of*

    Structural Adjustment on the Population of Africa: Implications for Education, Health

    and Employment. London: Heinemann.

Ransome-Kuti, O. (1991). Introduction. In O. Ransome-Kuti, O. Sorungbe, O.

    Oyegbite, & Bamisaiye, *Strengthening Primary Health Care at the Local Government*

    Level: The Nigerian Experience (p. xiii). Lagos: Academy Press Ltd.

ROAPE. (1986). Review of African Political Economy. 66-67.

Ruger, J. (2005). Democracy and Health. *Q J Med* , 98; 299-304.

Sarracci, R. (1997). The World Health Organisation Needs to Reconsider its Definition

of Health. *BMJ* , 134; 1409-1410.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom.* New York: Knopf.

Turshen, M. (1999). *Privatizing Health Service in Africa.* New Jersey: Rutgers Press.

UNDP. (2006). *Human Development Report, 2006.* Geneva: UNDP.

UNDP. (2008). *Human Development Report, 2008.* New York: UNDP.

UNESCO. (2005). *Good Governance*. Retrieved December 15, 2013, from http://portal.

unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php

UNICEF. (2000). *Annual Report.* Lagos: UNICEF Country Office.

UNICEF. (2001). *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria: A Wake Up Call Situation

Assessment and Analysis.* New York: UNICEF.

WHO. (1948). Constitution of the World Health Organisation. Geneva, Switzerland:

World Health Organisation.

WHO. (2003). *Nigeria: Malaria Country Profiles*. Retrieved January 27, 2009, from

http://www.afro.who.int/malaria/country-profile/nigeria.pdf

WHO. (2006). *The World Health Report: Working Together for Health.* Geneva: WHO.

WHO. (2002). *WHO Cooperation Strategy: Federal Republic of Nigeria 2002-2007.*

Brazaville: WHO Regional Office for Africa.

WHO. (2008). *WHO Country Cooperation Strategy: Federal Republic of Nigeria,

2008-2014.* Brazaville: WHO Regional Office for Africa.

WHO. (2000). *World Health Report, 2000.* Geneva: WHO.

WHO. (2008). *World Health Statistics, 2008.* Geneva: WHO.

World Bank. (1992). *Governance and Development.* Washington: International Bank for

Reconstruction and Development.

Sue Matheson

The Maroon Pillowcases

Let's change our names. I said.
To what. She said. "I mean what's the function any way.
We have been spotted".
No, we could do it. You know.
There are still hopes.
"Hopes?"
One hope actually.
"Could you manage the transport?"
No…
"So no streetcars".
No.
"So what you say"?
I say, let's change our names.
"Then, what we do with our passports"?
I saw in a movie she burns it on the stove. After the revenge.
"Now, revenge is a strong word". Pause.
"Where is he now"?
I don't know.
"What about the case?"
They're being washed. The 5 maroon pillow cases.
"Huh, maroon!-I was looking for the word, you know,
we have been marooned".
No, don't say that yet. There must be something, some straw that we are missing.
"You never thought of swapping bodies? Only names, yeh?"
I told you, I wish we were our souls only.
"Meaning Attwa?- that's creepy, don't make this more haunted. Finish it."
We are not there yet.
"Why, what do you need? I'm tired. And I hate being quoted, feels….feels….caged."
Do you know why the caged bird sings?
"Can't tell. I only hum at times. And I'm not a bird."
I know, right? Birds don't have names.
Let's change our names, now, shall we? I'm dying. I'll burn.
"You think you're bird, huh? I'm sure they will make your ashes suffer before they rise.
I saw a bad dream the other day. Can't tell you the details, but it was bad. Like
ominous."

Omnia. There is this girl in my class.

"So you like girls?"

I kan't helpp it.

"They have child protection policy? Did you sign?"

I think I did.

"By whose name?"

My name.

"Your name? Or your changed name?"

I haven't decided the new name yet! Don't push.

"We are born to suffer".

Yay.

"What's your name?"

What's in a name?

"Where are your certificates? Can you find work without those?"

I lost one already. Seems those doesn't change anything.

"So what's wrong with your name?"

It sounds too female.

We have been spotted. I say, let's change the role, we've been like this for enough.

All acts experienced.

We could, we could. Be.

"So what do you want to be?"

A teacher.

"You already teach. Are you done with verb 'to be'?"

I'm not sure yet.

"Hugs. Oh!- we've been spotted again, there's the camera recording…Run."

No, let's change the names.

"To what?"

To *Orlando*.

To Gaga.

—*Fouzia Reza*

Sweet Bunny #44

Sue Matheson
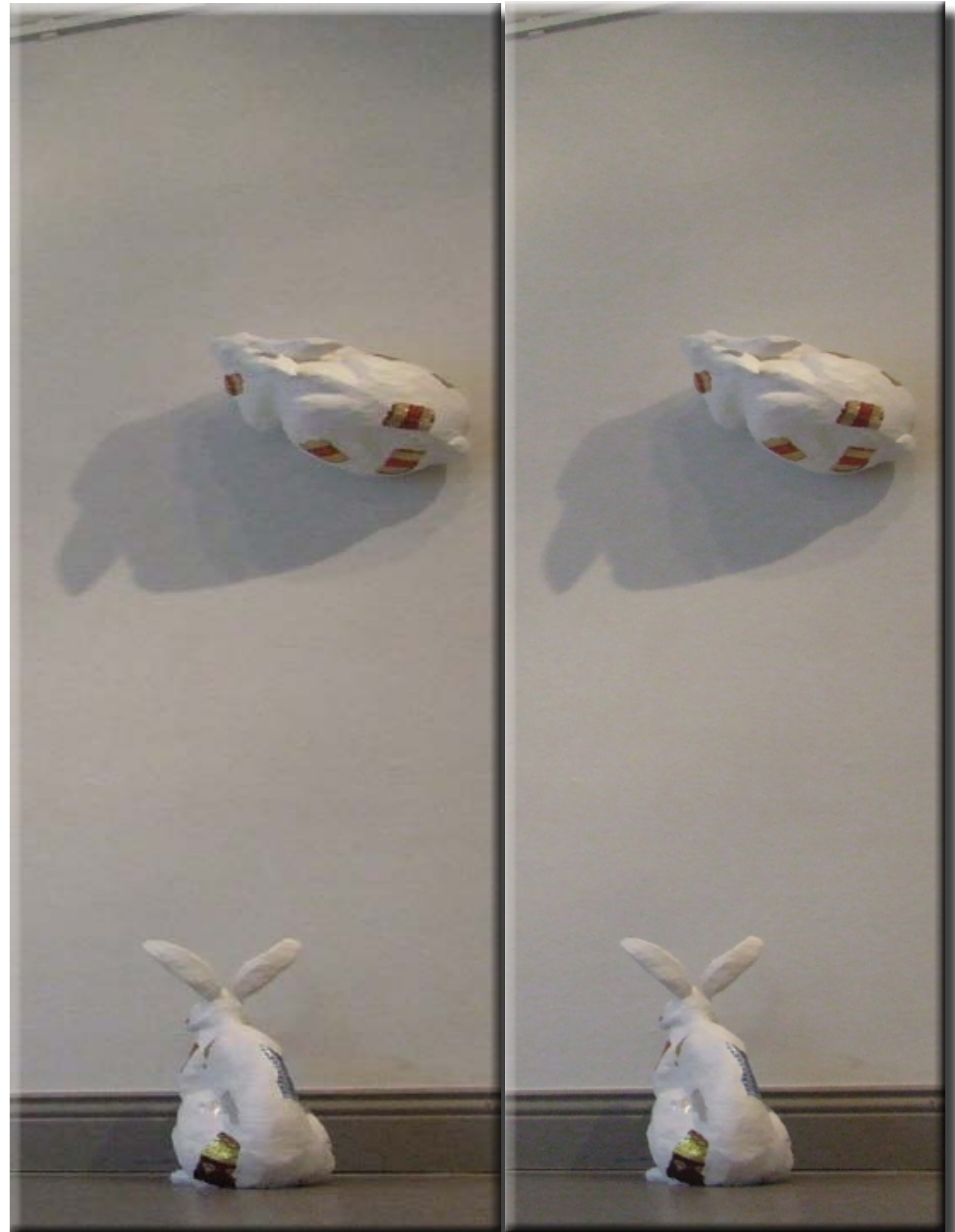
Big Red

by Heather Ostman, SUNY Westchester Community College, Valhalla, New York

As soon as Lorilee walked in, I saw them girls eyeballing her, sniffing her over like dogs. I knew they was up to something. You know how girls are. Always plotting and sneaking. These girls were no different, even though Sallyanne believed that every one of them could be reformed. They all nodded their heads in Group, chanted their affirmations at vespers, and swore up and down that they'd seen the Light and they'd never ever, ever, want another drop of booze or snort or shoot nothing into their precious young bodies.

But you know how girls are. Bunch of liars. And these were a bunch of hoodlums when it came right down to it. Didn't matter that some had things and some didn't. So it was up to me to keep an eye on them. See what kind of mischief they was drumming up. Their boredom that summer was getting the best of them, out-riding their homesickness, 'specially since they'd all detoxed early last spring or even some of them, last winter. These girls sweated it out in their rehabs, but they was just too fucked up to go home yet. They run the risk, Sallyanne always said, of relapse. Of returning to the old ways. People, places, things, she said, called them back and they were weak. Sometimes Sallyanne could just only see the bright side. They were weak, but the Lord

was good. I knew better. I could see what was in these girls. They was restless, empty, and just plain old mean. Sometimes I thought just a good, swift kick in the ass would set them straight.

Then in comes Salvation, wearing a navy jacket-and-shorts suit, with little white socks turned over at the ankle, like she was going to private school and not just out of a rehab and here, with the rest of them little bitches, at the Second Chance for Girls Halfway House. They were like the cats and Lorilee was their ball of yarn. Some Salvation.

Here at Second Chance, we kept a tight ship. Up early, chores, prayer, Group, and AA meetings. Girls had to go to them. Help 'em step to recovery, all 12 of them. But we never kept the girls that long to hit numero twelve-o. The money usually ran out by the seventh or eighth month and we shipped them home. Then there was school. They had to do that. State of Texas mandated. But they never left the premises for their lessons. We drug a trailer out back and set up schooltime. Two hours a week of learning with Miss AnnaMae, who drove allaway here from Euless. Not sure where Sallyanne found her, not sure she was a real teacher, with her big hairdo and housedresses, but the girls loved her. I ain't even sure what she taught them every week. Some of them seemed nearly retarded or hadn't been in a school in years. And shit, I knew at least two of them girls could barely read.

But they wasn't here for the reading and what-have-you. These girls needed to straighten their shit out.

Nobody comes here by accident, Sallyanne used to say.

I should know. One day I'm heading to jail for dealing crank, next thing I know I am living here in one of the backrooms, cooking and cleaning and watching. Sometimes a few girls got homesickness something fierce or them wounds from the past just broke open and the memories wouldn't stop bleeding out. That's when Sallyanne sent them to me in the kitchen and I put them to work, which is probably the cure they all needed—not group therapy. But they always slowed me down. Not one of them has known a day of work in her life.

But for the Grace of God, there go I. That's what I say now.

Lorilee comes in that first day like it's some kind of cake walk. The girls were scrubbing window sills with toothbrushes that morning. The blond one who looked like a cheerleader wiped the sweat from her eyes. She was the queen, even though she had a wrinkly old lady face from all that crystal meth. She done wiped the sweat from her forehead, and I swear if I didn't see them eyes narrow at Lorilee. Her eyes did all the talking. Girls across the room in their nasty sweatpants and too-small tank tops communicating like with no sound. Moving around Lorilee without moving. Not a hello or a howdy, nothing, and those girls got back to scrubbing.

That was the first sign. Them little bitches didn't never just work. A simple job like sweeping the Group room took like two hours longer than it would take a normal human being. Just so lazy. So that's how I knew something was up. Something just wasn't right.

Nobody did the usual bullying stuff. Like no pushing Lorilee when they thought nobody's looking. Nobody stole her stuff. The days went by and Sallyanne gave me one of her Christian looks, nodding and saying, See? The Lord *is* Good. Her eyes rolling around the Group room, while some stray was sharing, dropping a brick, we used to call it, like when someone tells a deep dark secret that never was told before. This one was talking about her teacher molesting her, and the tears was just pouring down her face and I like couldn't hear everything she was saying, but it don't really matter: it's always the same story. They all wind up here, round the circle on them folding chairs from Lord knows where, telling their stories, crying, and then the meanness closin' them up as soon as they out the room.

Lorilee didn't fool me neither. She comes into the kitchen and puts on an apron. Sallyanne put her on kitchen duty. I don't say nothing, so she sits and starts to talk. I hand her some carrots, and when she reaches for the peeler, I seen the track marks on the insides of her arms. She ain't wearing that picture suit no more. She looks like one of the other girls, more or less, except her hair's all done up different, like her head's ready to go to the prom.

She wants to know if I got any kids and so I tell her I have a girl. I do not tell her about my boy.

"She's thirteen now and lives with her Grammy and Pop-pop."

"Yeah?" she says. "How come?"

"Sugar," I say. "Ain't you figured out where you are?"

Lorilee looks at me all blank. Her big pan face shining like the moon.

"They got custody after I got arrested. Me and my ex used to cook up crank in the kitchen, in like big garbage cans."

Empty moon face. Shit, sometimes they seem so young. But I knew better. I seen the tracks.

"Life in the fast lane," I say to her. "You know, like the song says. Too tired to make and too drunk to fight about it." Again blank. "Rushing down that freeway? OK. So anyway. My ex, he was screwing my cousin and using all my stuff and one day I just hit like rock bottom. Couldn't take it anymore. Gimme that spatula over there, sugar."

Lorilee reaches and hands it to me, never leaving her stool. She don't say nothing, so I keep going. "I was living the junkie's life, like Sallyanne says, living fast and getting nowhere. And my little girl, she woke me up one day wanting breakfast and she came like real close to my face and said, 'Momma, why you got so many scabs on your mouth?' and I was like, she's fucking right. I need to turn my life around."

"That's what you said?"

"What?"

"You're going to burn those." Miss Smartypants Heroin Tracks points to the pancakes I'm cooking. "Is that what you said?"

"No. I probably said something like, Shut up, you little shit. Because that's the kind of person I had become. But for the Grace of God, there go I."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I got lucky and turned my life around. And so can you, Sug."

"When did all that happen?"

"Last year." I hold up my blue AA chip around my neck. "I've done a 360."

"180, you mean."

"Don't make a damn bit a difference how many," I say.

Miss Heroin Moonface gives me a funny look. And I could see why them girls didn't like her.

It took weeks until the other girls started including Lorilee in their stupid games, bored calves that they were. One day they were all drinking Big Red and no sooner than the girls started to laugh—who the fuck knows what they were laughing about, I couldn't hear shit from the kitchen—then Lorilee, who was trying not to, started pouring out red fizzy pop from her mouth. Well, the other girls took to laughing even harder and soon just about every one of them had Big Red dripping down on their t-shirts, which they would have to wash themselves and good luck getting that dye out. They all looked like they was bleeding from the gums.

Animals, I thought. Not young calves but vipers. Because I knew that they were only leading Lorilee on. Leading her on to the inevitable end. Building the trust. Making her come to them like a lonely bird. The end closer than it seemed.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Lorilee wore her navy blue shorts, like she was going to prep school, and a tidy blouse, tidier than anything I'd ever had. Her finger on my forearm.

"That's my Paul Booth." I touched the tattoo with my other hand and got flour over the ventricle of the devil's heart.

"That supposed to mean something?"

"That, my girl. That is art."

"You mean it is *illustration*."

"The devil ain't no illusion."

Lorilee snorted. I shoved her pokey hand away from me so I could finish making the bread for the devils who lived right under that roof.

"I ain't afraid of the devil. Now *that* is an illusion." She rubbed flour from the pile on the counter into her palms and picked up a ball of dough. Puffs of white made blooms on her sleeves. But she didn't seem to see them or care if she did. She just kneaded that dough as if she were folding Time itself.

Next day in Group them girls got something going on. I could see it. Nobody's talking at first. As usual, they're waiting until someone gets called on to talk about their lives, their hurts, their ain't-nobody-loved me stories. Their bullshit, is what I say. I sit on the steps that lead up to the dining room. I sit like I'm ready to jump, but I'm not. This is better than afternoon TV. I'm perched on the stairs and no one cares that I'm watching them spill their guts. Then the Cheerleader straightens up and calls on Lorilee. She says it in this like mean-girl voice, as if she's outin' Lorilee or something.

Lorilee looks around and then looks at me, and I know she don't want to but the Truth will set you free, so I'm nodding go ahead, even though I know these girls are up to no good. And I don't know. Maybe I feel some meanness coming on too. I just feel like I want to see it, like seeing an animal get hurt, like getting drug and hit by cars on a highway. I want to see her bleed out, spill the hurt out onto the road, where she can't act like she don't feel nothing.

Sallyanne, who, bless her heart, is so fucking oblivious, says, "Go on, child. Tell us your Big Secret. Share your burden."

"Well, there ain't much to tell. I have a four-year-old son. I had him when I was 13. Unmarried, yes, I know. But that's how it was." She ends as if there is nothing more to say, but of course them girls can't let it go—not like any of them are so pure or don't have some kids of they own or even had abortions, more than one.

Some ratty faced girl from Colorado then breaks in, "Who was the father? You still with him?" This little bitch looks at the Cheerleader and when she gets her approval, she slips back against her folding chair.

"Ah, nobody. Just some guy." Lorilee was together—I'll give you that. She didn't give an inch, but all these girls, they're just junkies in a weigh station, waiting to roll

out and hit the road again. They could smell bullshit a mile away and they're tenacious as she comes.

"Tell the truth now, Sugar," I say from my perch. I make sure my voice is all sweet and drippy, and I get my own nod from Sallyanne, who looks like she was fixing to say it herself. And for like one second, I mean it. This girl needs to tell her story, as we say in the Program. Lighten that load. Share the burden of your godforsaken existence.

Lorilee gives me a look. That look that makes me think I know why them girls stay away from her. Then she sighs heavy-like and says, "He is my brother's son." She don't slouch or say it low. She says it like she was saying the sun is settin' in the western sky.

Don't nobody speak up now—this one is hard to top. Carrying your brother's son is definitely up there in the Mighty Fucked Up range. But the girls are calculating. A small girl with a beak for a face and with a few side teeth missing looks over at the Cheerleader, who, for second looks confused before her eyes flatten into slits. But her face decides it for the girls: there's blood in the water. They'd been waiting for this day.

I'm sitting straight up now. This is even better than all the afternoon soaps together.

Lorilee goes on. "He's a good boy. Minds himself. Loves playing cars."

And then I can see him. Like my own son, lining up his cars on the floor. My boy who ain't never coming back. I see him, mine, his small head with all the hairs gone, on the hospital pillow. I cain't even hold him that long because they bring me back to jail.

My boy. I start clapping my hands when Lorilee is finished talking. The girls look at me, traitor that I am, but then they start clapping too. Lorilee has dropped her brick and I don't even realize it at first but I am so proud of her.

"We love you, Lorilee," Sallyanne says, because she really thinks the girls do too.

"Thanks, y'all. Mighty good of you to say." Lorilee nods her head and then stands up and walks away. That's right. She done up and walks out. Nobody ever done that. We all sit and wait for Sallyanne to say something like Jesus loves you and died for your sins, including this one, and all that other shit she says about the Truth and righteousness. And then usually some other girl would get up her courage and start talking about uncle molesting her or her mother burning her with hot oil, but Lorilee just sidestepped the whole freak show. She squeezed my shoulder and stepped past me on the stairs and says, "I'll see you at supper."

She was already chopping radishes when I got to the kitchen. The apron over her pressed shorts and her sleeves rolled up.

"That was mighty brave of you today," I say. And when she says nothing, I go on, "God bless you." I pull the hairnet over my head. And I mean it. I am proud of her. I didn't know she was that fucked up, and like here she's been talking to me like I'm her mother. And then it like hits me. Lord. God *does* work in mysterious ways.

"It's all right now," I say. "I'm here." I put my hand over her hand. Then she starts to shake a little and I hold her. I hold her real tight. She is my sheep, my lamb. Lamb

of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. "Mama's here," I say real quite-like, because I know how good God is.

"You wanna tell me about your boy?" I want to hear more. "Tell me what he's like."

She don't say nothing at first, but then, "He's like real sweet."

I will tell you: I listened for every word, ready to swallow each one like speed, dying for the next hit.

Lorilee's shoulders start shaking harder and I'm holding her tighter, but they move violent-like and now I'm holding on as if she's a young colt trying to break free. "I've got you Sugar. Come on, tell me."

But she don't say nothing. She roars and her head comes back and I ain't sure if she's crying or laughing.

Now I watch her, different, like. I see the other girls still stay away from her mostly, but I keep a close eye on them.

In Group, I'm on my perch and some new girl is talking. Telling about how she used to lick carpet fibers to get the last of the coke out. Now that's a junkie for you. All them girls are listening—half of them feeling sorry and shit, the other half licking their chops, tasting the fibers, tongues already going numb.

Lorilee, she ain't doing neither. I see her and she's watching me. That's all right. I

nod and she winks at me across the room.

Later on, Sallyanne is making up the new schedule in the office, and she assigns me the new girl. "Break her in," she says.

"Can I have Lorilee in the kitchen?" I ask.

Sallyanne looks at me queer-like but finally she says aw-right.

"Come here, let me show you how." In the kitchen, I am teaching Lorilee how to make a pie crust.

Her fingers pinch at the dough, following what mine do around the edge of the pan. Her hands move easy-like, so I'm not sure I'm teaching her something new.

"What's your boy doing now?" I keep my voice steady. I ain't wanting to scare her off or nothing.

"Oh, my son? You know." Her eyes on the dough.

"He's with family?" I know she don't want to talk, but I can't stop asking. The more she speaks, the closer it comes.

"Yeah. Something like that." She closes the circle around the pan. "Here. That good?"

"That looks real good, Sug."

Finally she lifts her eyes from the pan and looks at me, and I swear if I don't see light, like a glow. I look around the kitchen for something else to make her do, to make her stay with me for just a little longer, but then she is gone again.

Next day I put the little cars on the counter so Lorilee can see them when she comes in the kitchen. I kept them after my son done passed. They was in a box next to my bed in the back room. I lined them up like he used to do.

At first she don't see them. But then she does. "What are those for?" she asks me.

"For your boy. I want him to have them. He'll get good use out of them."

She walks past me and pulls an apron over her head. She grabs a knife and starts chopping celery.

"Don't be shy. Take 'em."

"I'm not being shy."

"What?"

"I was lying." She don't miss a chop. "It's not true."

"What ain't true?"

"I don't have no boy." The knife flat on the counter now. "Come on. That is fucking crazy: my brother's child. I don't even have a brother."

For a few seconds it felt like the air got too thin to breathe. And I don't know why—I mean, how could this happen—but it felt like I lost my boy again, like I was in that jail cell and the miles just stretched and stretched all over again and I couldn't hold him. I stared at her. No'm, she was not like the other girls—they were animals, vipers. But Lorilee. She was something Else.

And that is when I knew it is up to me to stop the Devil. He is a wily one— taking the form of a teenage junkie. I nod my head so she don't know I know her Real Secret. "I'm going to help you with the salad," I say and I take out my own chopping knife. I move slow, like a big cat, the kind you see on *Animal Kingdom*.

That night I wait until them girls were all asleep. I should of known that Lorilee don't sleep normal. She don't do nothing like these heifers do. I creep into her room, her with three other girls who wheeze and breathe heavy in their sleep, their lungs already a holy disaster from all the shit they've smoked. And she's awake, looking out the window.

She is standing in the dark, with her hands down, like she's holding hands with night in one and day in the other. She smiles at me, straight and tall, as if she was waiting for me all along, and then turns back. I come to the window next to her and I can feel the chopping knife press against my leg with each step. The stars speckle the night and we both can see for miles. I see the beginning and the end to the pasture in the back. I see the past and future all up in the field, mixing up what is now, and I can't think right. It's night—dark, like—but I swear the room feels too bright. I close

my eyes, and she says, you know who I am. And I say, I sure do. And she says I have known you for eternity and I say I know I know I know. But it is all too much. The ratty faced girl coughs some nasty thing up in her sleep and I blink. The spell is broken and my eyes adjust to the light. And I cain't do it.

Lorilee turns to me, one last smile, and she sees me and I am no longer here.

Sue Matheson

CONTRIBUTORS

Benjamin Uchenna Anaemene is a post-doctoral research fellow for Governance for Global Health at the United Nations University-International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abeer Fahim is an Assistant Professor at the American University of Sharjahin the United Arab Emirates. He earned his PhD on technology and embodiment in Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo's fiction at Durham University, England.

Colleen Cooper Harrison is a native of Virginia Beach, Virginia. She has served as an English teacher and school administrator for the past ten years, with varied experience at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. She earned her doctorate in educational leadership in 2010, where her phenomenological research centered on the use of Victorian vampire literature in the alternative classroom setting. Additionally, she has presented at the VASCD state-level conference on innovative school leadership. Currently, Dr. Harrison serves as the Curriculum Coordinator at Access International Academy Ningbo, the only WASC accredited international school in the Ningbo, China, area.

Hannah Green is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her work has been published in *The Rumpus*, *HelloHorror*, *[PANK]*, *The Vehicle*, *69 Falvors of Paranoia*, *The Dark Eclipse*, and *Ear's Ground--The Contemporary Verse of Southern Africa.*

Elizabeth M. Hoyt is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of English Studies at Durham University. Her current research focuses on the influence of Calvin and Seneca on Shakespeare's presentation of forgiveness.

Kaisa Luukkonen is an art teacher and award-winning designer who lives and works in Finland.

Sue Matheson is an Associate Professor who teaches literature and film studies at the University College of the North. Her interests in cultural failure underpin her research: currently, she specializes in popular American thought and culture, Children's Literature, Indigenous Literature, and the Western.

Nick Milne is a doctoral candidate in the University of Ottawa's Department of English. His research focuses on the Anglophone literature of the First World War, and his work has appeared in *Canadian Literature, Studies in the Humanities*, *The Bull Calf*, *Tin House* and *Slate*.

Imen Mzoughi is a doctoral candidate at the University of Manouba and a permanent assistant at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Science of Beja, University of Jendouba. Mrs. Mzoughi has presented thirteen main papers in different international conferences in Tunisia on diverse thematic polarities, among them, diversity in America, re-writing, identity, the Tunisian revolution, the usefulness of context in literary works, minorities, history, standards and norms, translation, systemic functional linguistics, emerging genres, adaptation of technology to the English classroom and new beginnings. Her scholarly work has appeared in *TAYR electronic Journal*, *Cross-cultural Journal* (Taiwan), *Serial Languages, Literatures and Communication* (Gabes University) and the *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*.

Fouzia Reza is a Lecturer of Department of English at Southeast University in Banani, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She has a B.A in English and an M.A. in English Literature from Dhaka University. Her areas of interests are Creative Writing, Gender and Body Politics, Memory, Migration and Space studies, Stereotypes and Performance Art. She is a member of Brine Pickles, a performance literature group writing in English. She can be reached at fouzia.reza10@gmail.com.

Heather Ostman is a Professor of English at SUNY Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York. She is the editor of *Kate Chopin in Context: New Approaches* (Palgrave 2015), *Kate Chopin in the Twenty First Century* (Cambridge Scholars Press 2008), and the author of *Writing Program Administration and the Community College* (Parlor Press 2013).

Andrea Powell Wolfe is an Assistant Professor of English at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She specializes in American literature and teaches courses in literature, composition, and humanities. Her articles have appeared in *Journal of Modern Literature, American Transcendental Quarterly*, *Journal of American Culture*, and other scholarly journals.

call for papers

The *quint's* thirty third 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 2016—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

quint guidelines

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 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 thequint@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.

Copyright is retained by the individual authors of manuscripts and artists of works accepted for publication in *the quint*.