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The *Shawangunk Review* is the journal of the English Graduate Program at the State University of New York, New Paltz. The *Review* publishes the proceedings of the annual English Graduate Symposium and literary articles by graduate students as well as poetry and book reviews by students and faculty. The views expressed in the *Shawangunk Review* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of English at SUNY New Paltz. Please address correspondence to *Shawangunk Review*, Department of English, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY 12561.

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From the Editors

Volume XXV of the *Shawangunk Review* features the proceedings of the 2013 English Graduate Symposium, “Biopoetics and Animal Aesthetics,” which was directed by Andrew Higgins and Vicki Tromanhauser. On behalf of the Graduate Program, we want to thank Professors Tromanhauser and Higgins for putting together an excellent program and for editing the proceedings. Seven of our MA students read papers at the Symposium, and the distinguished scholar Carrie Rohman of Lafayette College was the respondent and keynote speaker. We are grateful to Professor Rohman for her generous permission to reprint the keynote address, “A Horde of Floating Monkeys: Creativity and Inhuman Becomings in Woolf’s Nurse Lugton Story,” which first appeared in *Deleuze Studies*.

The submission deadline for Volume XXVI of the *Review* is December 15, 2014. We welcome poetry, book reviews, and critical essays concerning any area of literary studies. Please see submission guidelines on page 147. Students writing a thesis (ENG590) are encouraged to submit an abstract and to apply for the Russell S. Cleverley Memorial Fellowship (for information see page 144).

Thanks as always to Jason Taylor for typesetting and production supervision.

I | Introduction

Biopoetics and Animal Aesthetics

Andrew Higgins and Vicki Tromanhauser

We have never been merely human, and neither has our art. Several trends in recent literary scholarship have recognized the centrality of animal bodies—our own and those of other animals—to the experience of literature. The 25th Annual Graduate Symposium, “Biopoetics and Animal Aesthetics,” explored the animal in literature as subject and producer of texts. The participants in this Symposium investigated the place of animals and animality in literature, appreciating the way that the nonhuman world functions not so much at the margin of predominantly human plots, as it becomes central to the artistic process itself. At the same time, the papers of the presenters examined literature as an activity of the human animal, looking at literature through the lenses of evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, and other approaches which view literature as an embodied activity.

The inspiration for our collaboration as directors of the 2014 Symposium came from students we had in common, several of whom imported ideas from one of our seminars to the other. As is often the case, our students saw the profound connections between animal aesthetics in British modernism and evolutionary and cognitive approaches to literature before we did. Together these approaches reach out from the discipline of English studies to the evolutionary and life sciences in order to understand differently the human being as an organism that has coevolved with various forms of life, matter, and technology, forms that Cary Wolfe has argued “are radically ‘not human’ and yet have nevertheless made the human what it is” (xxv).

In their endeavor to address the way our practices of thinking and reading must change in view of such challenges, the papers presented at this Symposium join a posthumanist turn in literary studies. Rather than imagine that posthumanism signals the demise of humanism or involves a wholesale rejection of humanistic thinking, however, several of the participants instead conceive of it as the extension of humanistic ideas and methods to the nonhuman world, applying its praxis to the many forms of life beyond the human with whom we share our world. In this way, they help to envision the humanities as more than just a project of collective human betterment and restore to it a fuller sense of the whole environment with which our species is entangled.

Even at the beginning of the last century, Freud saw humanity as a traumatized being, our narcissism wounded by the successive blows of scientific

discovery: first, the Copernican blow that the earth was not the center of the cosmos; second, the Darwinian discovery of humanity's evolutionary kinship with animals; and third, the Freudian or psychoanalytic blow that man is not "master in his own house," but rather governed by the force of that animal ancestry in the human unconscious. We might, then, with Donna Haraway add a fourth blow, the cyborgian or technological.

Such a decentering of the human marks what philosopher Rosi Braidotti has called a "postanthropocentric shift" in our intellectual moment (212). This shift changes the way we think about what we do in the humanities and what the humanities can do. Literature has a powerful role to play in this at once expansive and humbling endeavor. It is the domain in which we become self-conscious and self-reflective, for it provides an immersive, vicarious experience of other patterns of consciousness and other modes of being. Literature gets intimate with us and invites us to get intimate with others. Through that willing suspension of disbelief and judgment, literary experience appeals to our senses and emotions to extend our (human) empathic structures of thinking to a more-than-human world.

If animal studies approaches to literature seek to extend humanistic thinking to the nonhuman world, biopoetics can be seen as an attempt to appreciate the human as an animal, as embedded in environments (both in the cultural and ecological sense). "Biopoetics" is a catchall term for a range of loosely connected theoretical endeavors that explore the production and consumption of literature from the perspective of the understanding of human beings as evolved and embodied. These approaches include cognitive literary studies, evolutionary literary studies (frequently called "Literary Darwinism"), and various other loosely affiliated schools which append the suffixes "bio" and "neuro" or the modifier "cognitive" to traditional terms of literary studies and theory, including cognitive poetics, biocultural studies, cognitive narrative studies, and neuroaesthetics.

Biopoetics' relationship with humanism is complex. Despite the fact that all biopoetic scholars see human beings' animality as a central fact, some areas of biopoetics are still deeply humanistic, in the hoary Victorian sense of the term, using their work to identify that which makes us (human beings) special. Scholars in evolutionary literary studies in particular—figures such as Joseph Carroll, Dennis Dutton, and Brian Boyd—are prone to tear up and wax lyrical upon discovering some human propensity (usually language or consciousness) that, they feel, sets us apart from the beasts.

The tenor of cognitive approaches to literary and cultural studies, however, is altogether different. In many ways, these scholars are much less interested in grand theoretical questions about the nature of humanity, other animals, and the cultural and natural environments. Scholars such as Lisa

Zunshine, Patrick Colm Hogan, and Alan Palmer are more typically interested in questions about the human capacity for following multiple levels of intentionality in narrative, charting the representations of mental states in texts, or identifying patterns of emotional triggers in texts. In short, their approach is at first sight very much a formalist approach to the text.

Yet that formalism takes place within the context of an understanding of human cognition as a product of our evolved bodies. These scholars are less interested in what sets us apart from other animals than they are in our own animality. They recognize those aspects of human nature that humanists would claim separates us from the beasts—language, consciousness—as evolved bodily capacities. They would resist the Freudian notion of the conscious self as perched precariously on an unconscious self more closely tied to our animal roots. Instead, they would see both conscious and non-conscious processes as adaptations that allow us better to survive. Consciousness evolves, argues cognitive neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, to enable human beings more effectively to monitor their environments. Yet cognitive literary scholars would point out that our conception of those environments is constrained and shaped by our bodies. Invoking what Katherine Hayles calls constrained constructivism, these scholars would note that we can only hear certain pitches, see certain wave lengths of light, and keep a certain period of time in working memory. To use Hayles' example, in the same way that a frog's visual cortex shapes its understanding of moving objects, so too the human body shapes our perception of the world. In these ways the very acts of perception and cognition are fully embodied. Consciousness is as animal as the leopard's spots.

Evolution has equipped all the species of the world with marvelous capacities: the gray fox mayfly lives as a flat nymph in the riffles of cold streams for nearly a year before rising through the water column and emerging from its own skin to spread speckled wings and lift up into the air; the common loon slips into the dark waters of the lake to chase down trout, builds floating nests of reeds, and fills the air with what sounds to us like mournful laughter; and human beings arouse each other with romance novels. The last of these behaviors is the concern of the biopoetic critic.

This Symposium brought together a range of papers that treat artistic production as an activity of the human animal and that attempt to think beyond the human to the productive connections among animality, intuition and creativity. By engaging with writers of the twentieth century including James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Kate Chopin, and J. G. Ballard, the presenters take us into some of the most profound ethical questions we face in the twenty-first century: What is our ethical responsibility to creatures beyond ourselves? How far can the sympathetic imagination take us in recognizing

the consciousness and agency of other forms of life? And how might these new methodological approaches to the study of literature help us to become more responsive creatures ourselves, to better adapt to our rapidly changing environment?

The papers of the presenters in our first panel consider the relationship of literary production and the human animal. In “A Portrait of the Organism: Joyce’s Novel as a Biological Being,” Bridget Corso asks what happens when we take Bahktin’s metaphorical description of the “novel as a living being operating in a larger ecosystem” literally. Using the work of biologists Paul S. Agutter and Denys N. Wheatly, Corso treats James Joyce’s novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as an organism. Doing so reveals the way that the novel itself grows along with its main character, Stephen Dedalus, thus highlighting “a closely interwoven and important connection between the works artists create, the artistic process, and the nature of being.”

In his paper “‘He’s a cultured allroundman, Bloom is’: The Animal and Vegetal Lives of Leopold Bloom,” Robert Cutrera revisits the polytropos of Joyce’s modern epic hero in *Ulysses* and reads Bloom as a fellow uniquely in touch with his animalistic and vegetal tendencies. Though Bloom may eat his breakfast kidney “with relish,” he turns feelingly to the animals and plants around him in order to attend to what they might have to say. Whether crediting his cat’s “Mgnao” with a fuller understanding than humans typically allow or witnessing the lean spearmint plants by the jakes that he could generously nourish with his own “Mulch of dung,” Bloom comes to embrace his place within a larger cycle of life. “If Bloom is an impoverished soul” at the beginning of the day’s cycle in the novel, Cutrera argues, by its end he has achieved “an enlivened sense of his own human being by assembling his animal and vegetal selves.”

Danimarie Jones, in her essay “The Maternal-Animal and the Sensual-Animal in Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* and Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*,” explores the way that two post-Darwin writers dramatized women’s encounters with their animality. Though Chopin’s Edna Pontellier is able to reject the social role of “mother-woman,” Jones argues, she does so by rejecting the body and retreating into romantic notions of the self as soul. Watching her friend Adèle give birth forces Edna to confront the fact of her body, and ultimately prompts Edna’s suicide. If Edna is driven to despair by the encounter with her animality, Woolf’s characters, created three decades later, find ways to create fulfilling identities by accepting their animality. *The Waves* features two very different female protagonists: the promiscuous Jinny and the maternal Susan. Jones shows that the success of both characters is largely due to their understanding of the physical animality of their lives. As Jones explains, “Both women have agency and are not fully bound by the Victorian view of women.”

Significantly, what Jones records here is the slow process of Western culture coming to terms with Darwin's revelation of humanity's animality.

In "Misreading the World: The Cross-Pollination of Dante's *Inferno* and Cognitive Literary Poetics," Ryan James McGuckin explores the way the cognitive concept Theory of Mind shapes our experience of Dante's *Inferno*. Drawing on the work of cognitive literary theorist Lisa Zunshine, McGuckin shows how Dante's text tasks our ability to track the sources of information, thus leading toward confusion, tempting us into misreading. This resulting disorientation—so well known to so many students of Dante—pushes readers, McGuckin argues, "to intellectually reposition themselves so as to experience clarity." Thus the journey through hell tests the reader as well as the pilgrim Dante.

The papers of the presenters in our second panel unsettle humanist species priorities and recuperate animal being as a potentially rich source of creativity, intuition, and emotional connection with others. Challenging "the arrogances of that knowing species *homo sapiens*," Steven Wagner argues, "points the way to a more sustainable future." His paper "Posthumanism, Post-Catastrophe: Redefining the Human in J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World*" understands the humbling intellectual project of posthumanism through the speculative fiction of the late twentieth-century writer J.G. Ballard. The submerged European cities in *The Drowned World* represent a "confounded zoo" for the survivors, an image that suggests our own imperial entrapment in notions of species hierarchies. This entrapment plays out in the geography of the novel, Wagner shows, as he traces the characters' adaptation to a rapidly changing ecology under the catastrophic conditions of a warming earth. His paper reads the characters' perplexing refusal to retreat to the cooler temperatures of the North—a choice contrary to their apparent biological self-interest—as a critique of verticality and the mastery such a position assumes. Instead, Ballard's novel moves us, through his characters, toward horizontal ways of being that put us in more intimate contact with other species and with our own animal bodies.

In his paper "'I have no face': Real and Metaphysical Meat in Woolf's *The Waves*," Daniel Libertz brings the emerging interdisciplinary fields of human-animal studies and food studies to bear on Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, a novel that is widely considered Woolf's modernist masterpiece. One of the most extensive treatments of human interiority, the novel is composed of the interwoven soliloquies of six characters who come together around the shared meal to reflect on those other consumptive practices: English imperialism and global commerce. Libertz represents thinking as an embodied activity akin to eating, a process that transforms outsides into insides. Thinking through the physical, psychological, and cultural connotations of meat, Libertz argues,

helps “to expand our sense of who or what has agency.” Through this reading of the dynamics of consumption in *The Waves*, Libertz cuts into the sacred interior of the self to see what the human is made of, and whether its purported substance is only meat.

Sarah Wheeler seized the opportunity to reconsider “language as the quintessential species advantage of the human.” Her paper, “Becomings-Mute: Language Loss in Conrad and Lawrence,” explores the ways in which the prospect of animal silence proves at once threatening and enticing for the characters of two modernist texts, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and D. H. Lawrence’s *St. Mawr*. Wheeler plays Marlow’s addiction to language against the text’s ambivalence about that supposedly human aptitude. And in doing so, she shows us that subjection to language is tied to the forces of colonialism and imperialism. If Conrad’s characters founder in anxieties over the loss of linguistic power, Lawrence’s characters seek to evade the “suffocating screen” that language interposes between humans and vital experience. The spirit of Wheeler’s reading asks us to wonder whether there is any true muteness to the animal, or whether we might be mute to them as they are to us.

It was our pleasure to have as our keynote speaker Dr. Carrie Rohman, a leading figure in the emergent interdisciplinary field of human-animal studies. Her courageous and intellectually expansive work reaches across disciplinary boundaries to bring the humanities and sciences into a productive dialog. Returning to the evolutionary theory of Darwin and Freud’s psychoanalytic excavation of our unconscious animality, Rohman’s scholarship identifies the prominence of animals and animality in the literature of the early twentieth century, a moment in which writers seemed increasingly anxious to shore up a notion of human uniqueness. She draws upon the thought of French theorists, including Jacques Derrida, Georges Bataille, and Gilles Deleuze, and feminist philosophers such as Donna Haraway and Elizabeth Grosz, in order to re-imagine the nature of the human and of humanistic inquiry. In doing so, she recognizes the extent to which the anxieties generated by the boundaries of race, gender, and ability gain force from the species barrier.

Dr. Rohman’s careful and conscientious response to the student presentations was itself an enlivening experience that wove together the threads of the symposium. Bringing the colors of its fabric to life, Dr. Rohman’s Keynote Address, “A Hoard of Floating Monkeys: Creativity and Inhuman Becomings in Woolf’s *Nurse Lugton Story*,” offered a reading of a critically under-examined short story by Virginia Woolf about a curtain whose stitched animals spring to life when the old woman who had sewn them falls asleep. Rohman addressed the multiple versions as well as the many illustrations of the story, including a monkey with a toupee and a landscape bearing the shape of a woman. This animated curtain, Rohman suggests, might be read as the

embodiment of the creative forces inherent in the material world around us. Roman identifies at the heart of this fantastical tale, as in much of Woolf's fiction, an affirmative biopoetics that recognizes how the sources of creativity are embedded in inhuman and biological forces. She thus celebrates Woolf not only as a writer who sounds the depths of human interiority, but as one surprisingly attuned to the vibrations of the non-human world. The work of posthumanist theorists such as Elizabeth Grosz has done much to challenge the idea that artistic production is an exclusively human activity. Drawing our attention to the active, even creative, force of living matter, Rohman via Grosz asks us to see life itself as a process of continuous invention, a dance of vibrant matter.

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II | Keynote Address

A Hoard of Floating Monkeys: Creativity and Inhuman Becomings in Woolf's Nurse Lugton Story

Carrie Rohman

[First published in *Deleuze Studies*. Special Issue: "Deleuze, Virginia Woolf, and Modernism," vol. 7, no. 4, November 2013: 515-36.]

Virginia Woolf's children's story about Nurse Lugton depicts a woman whose stitched figures come alive whenever she falls asleep. Lugton sews various animals onto a curtain; they activate after she dozes off and are then returned to their 'frozen' positions on the drapery when Lugton awakens. The tale has been most famously known for its discovery in 1963 at the British Museum by Mr Wallace Hildick, amid the manuscript notebooks of *Mrs Dalloway*. That story was titled *Nurse Lugton's Golden Thimble* by Leonard Woolf, and was published by Hogarth Press in 1966. Perhaps less well-known is the discovery of a second, revised version of the story in the 1980s at King's College Library, Cambridge.¹ Thus, as Kristin Czarnecki points out, we know that Woolf revisited her tale, re-worked it, and gave it a name, *Nurse Lugton's Curtain*. This revised version was published in 1991 by Harcourt, with accompanying illustrations by Julie Vivas. In the forward to the original, 1966 Hogarth Press book, Leonard Woolf claims that the 'story appears suddenly in the middle of the text of the novel, but has nothing to do with it' (Woolf 1966: Foreward). This assertion practically begs for a critical response, precisely because Leonard Woolf makes the counter-intuitive claim that the story appears *in the centre* of the *Mrs Dalloway* manuscript yet has 'nothing' to do with it.²

This seemingly benign story, however, is not just central to an interpretation of a single Woolf novel, but it also reveals something fundamental about Woolf's understanding of aesthetic principles. Those principles are specifically Deleuzian in that they ground the artistic in the animal and inhuman. It is, after all, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari who write, 'Not only does art not wait for human beings to begin, but we may ask if art ever appears among human beings, except under artificial and belated conditions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 320). Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari ask whether 'art begins with the animal' and suggest that 'art is continually haunted by the animal' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 181, 182). Woolf's story might be said to literalize this continual haunting of aesthetic practice by the animal or animality.

Indeed, I agree with Czarnecki, who maintains that 'Woolf confronts the creative process head-on in the story' (Czarnecki 2012: 226), as opposed

to avoiding it, as other critics have claimed. What is more, this shadow text reveals something foundational about Woolf's views regarding a writer's relationship to the inhuman. The Lugton tale catalogues an awareness of the way that a writer's aesthetic powers are profoundly linked to becomings that are animal in nature. Moreover, the specific becoming-other/becoming-animate of the prosaic curtain suggests a vital materialism in which matter cannot be cordoned off from the forces of life itself. In the wake of such recognitions, the formerly exceptional human creative genius must be recast from its 'verticality' and placed on a horizontal plateau with inhuman artistic intensities.

Despite Leonard Woolf's emphasis on a thematic distance between the children's tale and *Mrs Dalloway*, critics have worked to read the texts together and to understand how they might exemplify both a thematic and a psychological or temperamental reciprocity. Geneviève Sanchis Morgan's 1997 essay goes a long way toward linking the metaphorical work of the children's story with the themes of Woolf's novel, what Morgan calls the 'obvious interrelations between the two' that have to do with 'Woolf's development as a writer and as a modernist [being] predicated on her negotiation of domestic material' (Morgan 1997: 95). Her essay renders both texts, therefore, intellectually serious. Among a number of insightful corollaries that Morgan describes is that between sewing and writing. Convincingly, she makes the case that 'if sewing is a metaphor for writing, or art making, then the nexus of the two stories implies that the key to changing reality lies within the grasp of the artist's needle and pen' (Morgan 1997: 101). Sayaka Okumura elaborates on this theme and calls the knitting Nurse Lugton 'a version of the author herself' and Woolf's 'self-caricature' or 'self-portrait' (Okumura 2008: 175).

If sewing is a metaphor for writing in Woolf, then this modest, critically unheeded children's story might be seen as a key of sorts into Woolf's own understanding of her creative practice. This possibility may be all the more likely because Woolf wrote the tale for children. In the collection *Human, All Too Human*, Diana Fuss discusses three 'border identities' for humanism: animal, thing, child. Her introduction to the book's essays reminds us of the age-old alliance between children and animals, beings whose liminal status troubles the 'integrity of the human' (Fuss 1996: 5). Framing this narrative for children allows Woolf to be less rigid or prescriptive in her 'artistic' and high modernist expectations of herself, as a stylist and a thematic innovator. She can 'play' with the analogue between sewing and writing more easily, without censoring her own conclusions, or judging them as 'childish' or naïve. That is, she can work in a space that is generically removed from the all-too-human, internalized censor that demands respectable, elaborate themes in the serious-minded novel.

Czarnecki takes up the question of just how 'child-friendly' the story really is, a question that has provided occasion for some rather pointed critiques

of Woolf's text as being too serious for children.³ Sceptical of such critiques, Czarnecki intimates that the second version was revised by Woolf to be more accessible to the child who reads or hears it. Perhaps counter-intuitively therefore, the first version of the story often reveals the deep philosophical contours of Woolf's creative vision more clearly. In other words, Woolf's technical revisions for the child reader occasionally work to dilute the more striking or radical elements of this narrative. For that reason, I often refer to the *Thimble* version (1966) rather than the *Curtain* version (1991).

The opening page of *Nurse Lugton's Golden Thimble* usefully sets the stage for considering questions of the posthuman, animality and the vibratory:

She had given one great snore. She had dropped her head, thrust her spectacles up her forehead, and there she sat, by the fender with her thimble on her finger, and her needle full of cotton, snoring, snoring—on her knees, and covering her apron, a large piece of figured blue stuff. The animals had not moved until—one, two, three, four, five—Nurse Lugton snored for the fifth time. Ah! the old woman was asleep. The antelope nodded to the zebra; the giraffe bit off a leaf of the tree. For the pattern on the stuff was this: all the animals in the world were trooping down to the lake and the pagoda, and the boat and the bridge to drink.
(Woolf 1966: 5)

Woolf begins her tale with a snore (in the later version Lugton is asleep at the opening, and the snoring is downplayed). The nurse had given a *great* snore: Woolf commences this 'childish' story with the provocations of vibration. Deleuze and Guattari begin their chapter on the refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus* with a child and vibration: 'A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 311). Deleuze and Guattari's additional examples on this page are of a female child and a woman, but not of a grown man. Perhaps the most clichéd case of the 'universal' artistic (albeit this universal is often limited to the human) is the mother humming to her infant. The genre of the children's book, as I have already claimed, may allow Woolf to make more explicit these elementary forces of creativity. Children, women, mothers, nurses are expected to rock, sing, sew, and play circle games. They have cultural permission to make primal refrains (ring around the rosy) a mainstay of their daily play and ritual.

Elizabeth Grosz theorizes the Deleuzian role of vibration for the artistic when she discusses the movement from rhythm to refrain to music as 'nothing but *vibration*, resonance, the mutual condition both of material forces at

their most elementary levels, and of music at its most refined and complex' (Grosz 2008: 54). 'What is transmitted and transmuted throughout this vast evolution', she maintains, 'is nothing but vibration, vibrations in their specificity, vibrations as they set objects moving in their wake' (Grosz 2008: 54). The vibratory not only connects human life to the inhuman, but I would also assert that Grosz figures vibration as a kind of *invitation* to the creative. We inevitably partake in the tremor of the rhythmic and the territorial in Deleuze's terms, to be sure, but the vibratory also functions as an incitement to become *more vibratory*:

Vibration is the common thread or rhythm running through the universe from its chaotic inorganic interminability to its most intimate forces of inscription on living bodies of all kinds and back again. It is vibration that constitutes the harmony of the universe with all its living components, enabling them to find a vibratory comfort level—neither too slow or too fast—not only to survive but above all to generate excess, further vibratory forces, more effects, useless effects, qualities that can't be directly capitalized. (Grosz 2008: 54)

The story's opening with one great snore signals a provocation to creativity through vibration, and this provocation involves a necessary becoming-inhuman. We can apprehend this necessity through Grosz's broad thesis: art cannot be understood as exclusively human if it is fundamentally about excesses and displays that we share with other animals. In this story, the inhuman becoming-enlivened of art is manifested specifically through animality and, I want to suggest, places animality at the centre of Woolf's own artistic universe.

While it may seem peculiar at first to emphasize Lugton's snoring as Deleuzian vibration, Woolf dwells upon this activity in a text that occupies only six short pages: she accentuates these tremors which seem almost to penetrate and shake the animals 'awake'. By enumerating Lugton's snores, 'one, two, three, four, five' (Woolf 1966: 5), Woolf emphasizes the rhythmic and pulsating intensities that resonate from and through bodies, that incite the aesthetic and ultimately get transferred from bodies to proper works of art. Grosz describes how the forces of the universe connect the arts to one another through sensation: 'Deleuze suggests that this is because there is indeed a common force shared by all the arts and the living bodies that generate sensations out of material forms that derives from the universe itself. This is precisely vibratory force—perhaps the vibratory structure of subatomic particles themselves?—that constructs sensations as neural reactions to inhuman forces' (Grosz 2008: 83). Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari note, 'Sensation is excitation itself, not insofar as it is gradually prolonged and passes into the reaction but insofar as it is preserved or preserves its vibrations' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 211). Lug-

ton's snoring inaugurates the story with an invitation to a becoming-artistic, an initiation of aesthetic emergence through rhythm and vibration.

The opening snores are accompanied by a symbolic beheading and a disavowal of the specular that challenges the centrality of the human in terms of aesthetics, authorship, and creative 'vision.' When Nurse Lugton drops her head, she relinquishes the reign of the Enlightenment *cogito* in which human rationality—or in this case human 'genius'—is the source of artistic production. Moreover, as she pushes her spectacles up her forehead, she also specifically renounces a humanist 'vision.' This moment reminds us of Freud's claim in *Civilization and its Discontents* that the acquisition of human identity coincides with the process of 'organic repression,' whereby man replaces the olfactory with the specular in his sensorium. In that text, Freud imagines early man's transition from a quadruped to a biped stance and the various results of this rising up from an animal way of being. Walking upright brings about the rejection of formerly stimulating smells—particularly blood and faeces—and the consequent transition from an olfactory mode of sensing to a visual one. Moreover, organic repression performs a disavowal of the inhuman and thus thwarts the possibility for becomings. Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of desire as lacking a *subject* rather than an object acknowledges this operation: 'it is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression' (Deleuze and Guattari 2009: 26). Lugton's spectacles represent the dependence upon and, indeed, the sharpening of that most human visuality which helps maintain the static subject. When she removes them, she relinquishes a humanist way of perceiving and being. That, and her vibratory snoring, are answered with the activation of animality in the story. Once the animals realize Lugton has closed her eyes, which they ascertain from the five snores, they come alive.

Aesthetic Animals

A significant difference between the original and revised texts is that in the first, Woolf discusses the pattern on the curtain in extraordinarily universal terms. This moment appears on the very first page of the Hogarth Press story. After the initial animation of antelope nodding to zebra and giraffe biting a leaf off the tree, Woolf writes: 'For the pattern on the stuff was this: *all the animals in the world* were trooping down to the lake and the pagoda, and the boat and the bridge to drink' (Woolf 1966: 5; my emph.). In the later version, Woolf economizes to 'all the animals began to toss and prance' (Woolf 1991: [3]). The obvious difference here is that in the second version 'all' refers only to the animals on the drapery, while in the first version Woolf marshals animality as such by using the phrase 'in the world.' This revision marks an understandable

whittling down of what Woolf may have considered 'excess' in her original text. But having all the animals in the world galvanised in an image of creativity clarifies my claim that Woolf reveals in this text how her artistic practice, *pace* Deleuze and Grosz, has its roots in the inhuman. That is, if the curtain serves as a placeholder for creativity, and Woolf figures it as harbouring the activation of animality itself, then we can make more extensive claims about Woolf's own relation to inhuman aesthetic forces.

Grosz has refined her understanding of art as having its roots in animality and specifically in the workings of sexual selection in her most recent book *Becoming Undone*.⁴ She emphasizes the bodily and affective nature of artistic experience via Deleuze and insists, via Darwin, that animals have the power of discrimination or taste that is central to aesthetic appeal and choice. 'Music, painting, dance, and the other arts,' she explains, 'are only possible because the power to appeal and enhance seems to reside in regular ways in [animals'] use of colors, sounds, and shapes for the purposes of resonance and intensification. Art is the formal structuring or framing of these intensified bodily organs and processes which stimulate the receptive organs of observers and coparticipants' (Grosz 2011: 135). Grosz goes even further to speculate that sexual selection as Darwin outlined it is the 'most elementary form of discernment or taste,' and may be understood as 'the evolutionary origin not only of all art, but of language use and intelligence more generally' (Grosz 2011: 136). The idea here is that the protocols of sexual selection may produce and fine-tune 'processes of perception and reception . . . intelligence, communication, and collective living' (Grosz 2011: 136). Whether or not one agrees with these more catholic claims, Grosz's discussion of enhancement, bodily intensification, and taste locates aesthetic behaviours and discernments well outside a limited human purview. In the broadest terms, then, Woolf's story reveals to us the evolutionary underpinnings of artistic experience, emphasizing the human's deep ontological coincidence with animality. At its most basic, her writing and creating are linked, stitched we might insist, to animal forces, to the rhythms and affects that are shared not just by humans but by the living in general. The images in both versions command our attention, especially because they represent other artists' rendering of a text that, in my view, is primarily about creativity. The 1966 Hogarth Press book includes illustrations by Duncan Grant, who was known for his rich use of colour. It is unfortunate that the black and white renderings of his pictures eliminate that element of his work. In contrast, the contemporary version of the story (1991, Harcourt) is illustrated in bright watercolours by Julie Vivas, and it includes more than double the number of images that we find in the 1966 text. One striking fact about Grant's comparatively spare set of images is that the curtain is only represented in two of his six illustrations, while animals are

represented in five. Indeed, after the initial image of Nurse Lugton dozing in her chair, every Grant illustration includes animals.

Grant's second and third illustrations are composed only of animals that seem to hover in their own space, which suggests a dreamlike quality that critics have discussed as a space 'free of constraints' (Czarnecki 2012: 224) and in which cross-species interactions occur 'peaceably' (Levy 2004: 148). As I will discuss further, the liminal state between waking and sleeping is a prime condition in which becomings can occur. In these Grant images, we see giraffes, zebras, rams, leopards, elephants, birds, bears, and monkeys. In the third image, an elephant seems to merge with an ostrich, perhaps suggesting a dynamism and instability of the block of animality itself that also reflects the border-crossing between human and inhuman creativity. The dreamlike image of an elephant-ostrich hybrid suggests the constant mutation, improvisation, and ultimately species instability that are hallmarks of Darwin's theory of evolution, though these qualities are rarely associated with his concept of species even today. Grosz reads Darwin's account of the unfurling of life itself through a Bergsonian/Deleuzian durational force. She emphasizes that Darwin 'develops an account of a real that is an open and generative force of self-organization and growing complexity, a dynamic real that has features of its own which, rather than simply exhibit stasis, a fixed essence or unchanging characteristics, are more readily understood in terms of active vectors of change' (Grosz 2004: 19). Grosz goes on to detail Darwin's 'quite peculiar, and thoroughly postmodern, account of origin' as it impinges on the idea of species (Grosz 2004: 23):

Origin is a consequence of human, or rather, scientific taxonomy, a function of language. Origin is a nominal question. What constitutes an origin depends on what we call a species, where we (arbitrarily or with particular purposes in mind) decide to draw the line between one group and another that resembles it, preexists it, or abides in close proximity with it A species is an arbitrarily chosen set of similarities that render other differences either marginal or insignificant. Species are a measure, an incalculable, nonnumerical measure of significant differences. (Grosz 2004: 23)

For these reasons, Grosz claims that, in the 'durational unfolding' of evolution, 'what evolves are not individuals or even species, which are forms of relative fixity or stability, but oscillations of difference' (Grosz 2004: 24). If the image of an elephant-ostrich dismantles our conventional sense of species distinctions in this story, that dismantling only confirms the way in which creativity or the aesthetic sensibilities deterritorialise the human via animality.

That specific deterritorialising of the human as Creator is perhaps most

keenly registered in the images of monkeys that Duncan Grant contributes to the original, Hogarth Press edition of the story. The first of these appears on the second page of the text, in the initial animal conglomeration in which the creatures seem to float about unanchored. The monkey in this illustration is almost distressingly hybrid in its oscillation between human and animal features. It appears ‘monstrous’ or uncanny, with the legs and feet of a monkey, and the head and arms of a human. Particularly strange and even difficult to articulate is the way in which the monkey seems to have a human hair-style, as if this animal woke up and groomed itself with a comb and hair oil. If hair is a residual reminder in humans of their ‘bestly’ pre-history,⁵ then the taming of the monkey’s hair through styling proves especially captivating in our discussion of aesthetic framing. In a fascinating, perhaps unconscious, visual translation, Vivas renders a similarly coiffed monkey in the 1991 *Nurse Lugton’s Curtain*. On the third page of text, as the animals begin to climb off and away from the ‘blue stuff’—the material of the curtain—one of six enlivened and descending monkeys is drawn in profile and seems to have a cap of human hair. That particular monkey also has unusually human-like hands compared to the other monkeys in the text, whose hands and feet are more web-like.

Like other monkeys envisioned in Woolf’s broader fictional universe, the coiffed one in the original edition seems to hold a nut at which it gazes.⁶ Its thoughtful contemplation of the object in its possession renders the monkey all the more ‘human’ and all the less ‘animal’, as the creature almost appears to be reading a text. If, as Georges Bataille suggests, our development of tool-use as a kind of transcendence of the object subtends the ‘human’ participation in symbolic systems, then this monkey’s consideration of its nut places it at least in a liminal space between animals, who are erroneously considered tool-less, and humans, at the zenith of technological manipulation.⁷ Grant’s portrayal of this hybrid creature reminds the reader with an almost shocking force that she too is a primate with an object in hand to contemplate, the very children’s book she is reading at that moment. This implicit analogy figures taste and discernment within a dizzying *mise en abyme* produced by the interchangeability between nut and book, between ‘animal’ and ‘human’.

Monkeys figure prominently in the fifth and penultimate illustration of the Hogarth Press edition, as well. Probably the most surreal of Grant’s images in the text, this one depicts the imaginary Queen of the fictive town ‘Milla-marchmontopolis’, where the animals roam for their pleasure and to secure food and drink while Nurse is sleeping. The Queen in Woolf’s story has come to town in her palanquin and sits reposed, in her regalia. Hovering bizarrely just in front and above her in Grant’s image is a cluster of seven monkeys. While some of the monkeys’ faces and heads are obscured, there are nonetheless a few that suggest pensive examination. Moreover, the monkey most in

the picture's foreground holds a proverbial nut. If Woolf as conventional artist can be understood as residing in the 'trappings' of the Queen's highly symbolic and humanist personage—one with a crown that circumscribes and ornamentalises the 'rational' or conceptual lodged in the head—then we must also reckon with her attendant hoard of floating monkeys. Indeed, the Queen of modernism (and of high modernism) is nearly surrounded by monkeys, and their hovering suggests that her own imaginative sources are animal rather than royal. This image, perhaps more than any other in the 1966 text, elucidates a replete, Woolfian becoming-animal/artistic.

At this juncture in the story, Woolf has emphasized how the awakened animals freely range over Nurse Lugton's apron, despite the fact that in her waking life Lugton is terrified of even 'a little beetle' (Woolf 1966: 11). That Woolf chooses to depict the animals crossing freely from the curtain right onto Lugton's apron powerfully accentuates an intimacy or familiarity with nonhuman creativity that comes only when the strictly conscious or rational mind is relaxed. Some critics have asserted that the story's reliance on a sleeping state suggests Woolf's dread of the unconscious creative forces at work in her own psyche. For instance, Hodgkins discusses Lugton as Woolf's double and as an 'image of the creative female unconscious,' but also argues that the association connotes 'a fear of its author, that of the artist who wants to avoid confronting the creative process lest its products die in their amber' (Hodgkins 2007: 361). Similarly, Michelle Levy suggests that Woolf's description of Lugton as not seeing the awakened animals amounts to an 'alienation from the animal world' and a kind of 'anthropocentricity' (Levy 2004: 148). Perhaps a more useful way to read the question of conscious and unconscious here is to see the drifting into an unconscious state in the story as the submerging or relinquishing of the humanist self, the 'ego' that attempts to cordon itself off from the natural and affective. That is, when Lugton enters an unconscious or semi-conscious state, the edicts of organic repression diminish and the affective forces of becoming are triggered. Thus, when the head drops and the glasses are pushed away, Lugton opens herself to the inhuman creative forces that are less accessible to the 'waking' self. The snore signals Lugton's letting go of the impossibly reified and carefully maintained 'human,' and the ushering in of a world in which the human has a participatory relationship with the animal, natural and material worlds. It is important to put this process in a Deleuzian context. In his late discussions on immanence, Deleuze refers to the dying figure whose individual life 'gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens,' and he discusses small children who 'are infused with an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss' (Deleuze 2005: 28, 30). And it such a liminal subject,

fading between waking and sleeping awareness in Woolf's story, that is best equipped to demonstrate the human's interlacing with the other-than-human.

Another monkey that requires attention in these stories is the mandrill. In both versions, Woolf includes a litany of animals just after she declares officially that they had begun to move. Grant does not represent the mandrill; he uses only chimp-like monkeys throughout the Hogarth version. Vivas, on the other hand, depicts an almost Biblical parade of animals (reminiscent of the Ark story) at this point in the narrative, illustrating each of the creatures that Woolf mentions in the passage: 'First went the elephant and the zebra; next the giraffe and the tiger; the ostrich, the mandrill, twelve marmots and a pack of mongeese followed; the penguins and the pelicans waddled and waded, often pecking at each other, alongside' (Woolf 1991: [9]).

The mandrill is an especially interesting case for my argument not because mandrills are the world's largest species of monkey, but rather because they are the most vibrantly coloured. Notably, Charles Darwin wrote in *The Descent of Man* that 'no other member in the whole class of mammals is coloured in so extraordinary a manner as the adult male mandrill (*Cynocephalus mormon*)' (Darwin 1871: 292). Most descriptions of mandrills emphasize the male's brilliant colouration, with a red stripe down the middle of the face and ridged blue muzzle. The 'rump' is strikingly saturated with bright pinks, blues, reds and purples. Indeed, the mandrill seems almost alien in its pigmentation. In Grosz's terms, such extreme colouration would be understood as a particularly incisive example of the way that sexuality itself requires creativity: 'sexuality needs to harness excessiveness and invention to function at all' (Grosz 2008: 64). Additionally, the mandrill exhibits one of the most pronounced cases of sexual dimorphism in the primate world where males and females are radically asymmetrical in their physical appearances. For Grosz, such divergence specifically links, in a rather surprising philosophical lineage, the work of Darwin and Luce Irigaray around the crucial Deleuzian question of difference:

Darwin insists that sexual bifurcation, the division of species into (at least) two sexes, is an evolutionary invention of remarkable tenacity and value, for it multiplies difference *ad infinitum*. Irigaray's conception of nature as the differentiating and differentiated condition of subjectivity . . . remains consistent with Darwin's conception of sexual selection—the division of species into two sexes, two different morphologies, and with it the advent of sexuality and sexual reproduction, and the generation of ever-new (genetic and morphological) characteristics and qualities, ever more morphological or bodily differences. (Grosz 2011: 104)

Thus the mandrill is an especially significant animal in Lugton's creative uni-

verse because it is a primate whose bodily apparatus testifies to the intensely evolutionary, yet non-adaptive, investment of living beings in the 'spectacular performance' of creative sexuality (Grosz 2011: 125).

Grosz's broad discussion of difference *as such* is too complex for me to rehearse here, but it partly elaborates Deleuze's notion that difference is 'something that distinguishes itself', and that 'is made, or makes itself' (Deleuze 1994: 28). Grosz's assertion that 'difference is the generative force of the universe itself, the impersonal, inhuman destiny and milieu of the human, that from which life, including the human, comes and that to which life in all its becomings directs itself' becomes a useful way to read the animality in and of Nurse Lugton's story and Woolf's writerly process (Grosz 2011: 94). The mandrill in this text functions as an exemplar of creative difference that is specifically aimed to reveal the human's species liminality.⁸ That is, the excessively bright, almost painterly monkey seems to insist with a shameless intellectual effrontery that—clearly—the creative can never be a strictly human affair. Moreover, in Vivas's illustration, the mandrill, who marches along in the Ark-like procession, is the only creature who stares directly out at the reader. As I have noted elsewhere,⁹ recent work in animal theory has often coalesced around a kind of 'primal scene' in which subjectivities that we call human and animal confront one another, retreat, respond, or otherwise intermingle. Perhaps the most well-known of these is Derrida's naked-in-front-of-cat scene and, subsequently, Donna Haraway's insightful reading of its limitations. Testifying to the centrality of the interspecies look or gaze, Kari Weil begins her recent book about the 'animal turn' in critical and cultural theory with Derrida's now well-known proclamation, 'An animal looks at us and we are naked before it. Thinking, perhaps, begins there' (Derrida 2008: 29). Weil rightly emphasizes the link between an animal's look and the concept of human nakedness or nudity. 'Does a confrontation with and acknowledgment of another animal,' she asks, 'expose us as humans by stripping us of those clothes and thinking caps with which we have claimed to stake our differences from animals?' (Weil 2012: xv; my emphasis). In this case, the mandrill's gaze can be read as a direct challenge to our humanist notions about the artistic. The monkey's look strips away aesthetic human exceptionalism by emphasizing the magnificent becoming-artistic of one of man's more proximate primate relatives.

Similarly, in a subtle but nonetheless striking visual staging of human animality that again seems less than conscious on the part of Vivas, the back cover image for Woolf's short story cleverly shows Nurse Lugton viewed from the back, as she sits in her sewing chair hard at work. We see the back of her kerchiefed head, the chair rungs and pillow she leans upon. The way that Vivas draws the backs of Lugton's shoes, especially the seam down the centre of each heel, makes Lugton's shoes appear entirely hoof-like. Lugton seems to enact a

becoming-bovine, which takes on a certain fascinating quality if we consider Nietzsche's claim about reading, art, and the ruminative that Weil cites at the outset of her book: 'One thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an art. Something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case not a man: rumination' (Weil 2012: qtd. in epigraph, Nietzsche's emph.). The point here is that if Lugton is Woolf's alter-ego, then this would seem to be the only visual image of a Woolf-as-writer figure becoming-animal in all of Woolf's oeuvre. Combined with the mandrill's confrontational gaze, the becoming-ruminant of Vivas's final Lugton illustration may be prodding us to ask if the becoming-animal/artistic of the writer does not also invite or compel the reader into a similar trans-species engagement.

This Fold

Okumura makes the important suggestion that Lugton's curtain ought to be understood in terms of textuality. She writes, 'Nurse Lugton is sewing a curtain, the description of whose pattern occupies the story's text. Her textile is equated to the author's text' (Okumura 2008: 175). Reading the curtain as creative materiality itself, in a new-materialist or neo-vitalist register that is indebted to Bergson and Deleuze, pushes these concepts about textuality even further. To start, consider the curtain's most basic, 'architectural' qualities. It is a large piece of fabric that is draped and folded over Lugton's lap. As she works, portions of the fabric are revealed and manipulated, while other portions are inevitably hidden. There are the active vectors being stitched, and in the many folds and creases that remain unworked or latent, there is the virtual, waiting to be actualized. The undulating folds of Nurse Lugton's curtain, coupled with its becoming-animal that serves as engine of the entire story, suggest an almost uncanny enactment of the active and creative force of enlivened matter. Thus for Bergson, the incalculable creativity of organic life exists, which 'we cannot in any way subject to a mathematical treatment' and which exhibits 'continuity of change, preservation of the past in the present, real duration—the living being seems, then, to share these attributes with consciousness. . . . [And] life, like conscious activity, is invention, is unceasing creation' (Bergson 1998: 20, 23). Moreover, Deleuze outlines the virtual as a self-differentiating source for life's actualizations:

The three requirements of a philosophy of life are as follows: (1) the vital difference can only be experienced and thought of as internal difference; it is only in this sense that the 'tendency to change' is not accidental, and that the variations themselves find an internal cause in that tendency; (2) these variations do not enter into relationships of association and

addition, but on the contrary, they enter into relationships of dissociation or division; (3) they therefore involve a virtuality that is actualized according to the lines of divergence; so that evolution does not move from one actual term to another actual term in a homogeneous unilinear series, but from a virtual term to the heterogeneous terms that actualize it along a ramified series. (Deleuze 1991: 99-100)

Grosz remarks upon these concepts: 'Each [Bergson and Deleuze] distinguishes life as a kind of *contained dynamism*, a dynamism within a porous boundary, that feeds from and returns to the chaos which surrounds it something immanent within the chaotic whole: life as a complex fold of the chemical and the physical that reveals something not given within them, something new, an emergence, the ordered force of invention' (Grosz 2011: 27, Grosz's emph.). The folds of Lugton's curtain are more than suggestive of such revelations.

Deleuze insists upon the inseparability of life and matter in his discussions of the fold: 'Organic matter is not, however, different from inorganic matter (here the distinction of a first and a second matter is irrelevant). Whether organic or inorganic, matter is all one' (Deleuze 1993: 7). Grosz also reminds us that, in Bergson's terms, materiality is characterized by repetitions or 'near repetitions,' (Grosz 2011: 29): 'The material world is that which is capable of unrolling or unfolding what has been already rolled or folded, that is caused: it is the inevitable unwinding or unfurling, the relaxation, of what has already been cocked and set, dilated, in a pre-given trajectory' (Grosz 2011: 29). Thus the folding and unfolding of Lugton's curtain not only conjures the latency of the unknown that marks the possibility for the new and unexpected, the creative, but it also gestures toward the regularity with which the material world maintains itself.

If we remain within a Bergsonian framework for a moment more, we can consider how the animals' coming alive from the folds of the curtain might be read as the functioning of *élan vital*. Jane Bennett suggests that the 'task of *élan vital* is to shake awake that lazy bones of matter and insert into it a measure of surprise' (Bennett 2010: 78). What is more, Bennett recalls that the task of this vital spark is to 'increase the *instability* of material formations' (Bennett 2010: 78, Bennett's emph.). This indetermination associated with the creative, what Bergson calls 'a perpetual efflorescence of novelty,' may also explain Lugton's trepidation at confronting the animals while she is fully conscious (Bergson 1992: 95). In other words, the creative does involve the incalculable, to use Derrida's terminology, and so Lugton or Woolf's disquiet about this unfolding can be appreciated rather than characterized as retrogressive.

In broader terms, Woolf's particular framing of a becoming-animal through the material or textual in this children's story supports a new mate-

rialist (or vital materialist, in Bennett's terms) understanding of the relation between life and matter. The curtain—which would have traditionally been understood as inert or frozen matter—self-generates activity or force. The fluctuation between a 'living' state characterized through nonhuman animation and a kind of dormancy—in which the waking Lugton 'caught the animals, and froze them' (Woolf 1966: 15)—might best be understood as modelling the dynamics of material life itself: as Grosz asserts,

Life is always on the verge of returning to the inorganic from which its elements, its very body and energies, are drawn. Life and matter cannot, in this tradition, be understood as binary opposites; rather they are divergent tendencies, two different directions or trajectories inherent in a single whole, matter as undivided, matter as it includes its "others"—life, ideality, connectivity, temporality. (Grosz 2011: 32-33)

The becoming-life or animation of the curtain cannot be separated from the curtain itself, although Lugton's sleeping state does suggest that humans are perhaps not ordinarily attuned to this coincidence of life and matter. Grosz carefully explains that in Bergson's view 'life' cannot be understood as a separate or special force that is distinct from matter: 'The common impetus life carries within it is that of *materiality itself*, the capacity to make materiality extend itself into the new and the unforeseeable' (Grosz 2011: 33, Grosz's emph.). More pointedly, Grosz reiterates this idea when she insists, 'Life is that tendency, *in matter* itself, to prolong, delay, detour, which means that matter, "an undivided flux," is as alive, as dynamic, as invested in becoming as life itself' (Grosz 2011: 35). Woolf's text provides a perfectly double-edged example of this in that Nurse Lugton is stitching, writing, creating, thus participating in the activation or the becoming, but also the material or corporeal 'body' or vessel of that activity—the curtain—becomes more than itself semi-spontaneously, activates *itself* through a vibratory animation to take on a 'vitality'. Moreover, it is crucial to read this seemingly paradoxical, double activation as a recognition that human creativity is linked to inhuman creativity. That is, the intricacies of weaving, writing, painting, and so forth, are not without a space of profound overlap with the becoming artistic of the animal and plant, and even more primitive forms of life. Grosz puts this in fundamental terms when she clarifies how we ought to understand the 'unity of life'. It is not that life can be connected through some genetic web or ecosystem, but rather that

all life is equally pushed—in its originary emergence from the "prebiotic soup" of chemical elements through to the vastly variable forms of life that have existed and exist today—by a temporal, or evolutionary, impetus to vary itself, to capitalize on its material conditions, to differ.

The unity of life is not an end, a final harmony or cohesion, but the beginning, the impetus all of life shares with the chemical order from which it differentiates itself, and which it carries within it as its inherited resource. (Grosz 2011: 33).

In a traditional reading, the curtain itself might be understood as a proverbial 'blank slate' in materialist terms. In Woolf's story, however, that interpretation must be recalibrated, for the curtain is anything but blank in Deleuze's terms. In other words, one might initially want to read the fabric as one would read the 'canvas' of a painting—an inert substrate upon which art or creativity will be superimposed. But the becoming-animal of the 'blue stuff' suggests that such a reading would be erroneous. I am tempted to speculate about how Deleuze himself would have framed the curtain had he been familiar with Woolf's story in the way he was familiar with *The Waves*, for instance. If, according to Cliff Stagoll, a Deleuzian plane of immanence can be understood as 'a surface upon which all events occur, where events are understood as chance, productive interactions between forces of all kinds' (Stagoll 2005: 204), might Deleuze have recognized Woolf's curtain as such a plane? Might he have interpreted Woolf's curtain as, in his and Guattari's words, 'a section of chaos' that gives '*consistency without losing anything of the infinite*' and that harbours 'variable *curves* that retain the infinite movements that turn back on themselves in incessant exchange, but which also continually free other movements which are retained' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 42, Deleuze and Guattari's emph.).¹⁰ While Deleuze and Guattari refer to concepts here in the realm of philosophy, Woolf's plane in the Lugton story might be understood as referring to her own, or any artist's, creative concepts and the movements and variations, indeed the enlivened manifestations that they undergo. The suggestion in the story of an on-going repetition of varying becomings-animal during Lugton's waking and sleeping intervals invites this comparison. That is, the reader understands that this 'cycle' of waking craft and sleeping enlivenment, this rotation of animal becoming and dormancy, will continue *ad infinitum*. As Stagoll explains further, a Deleuzian plane 'represents the field of becoming, a "space" containing all of the possibilities inherent in forces. On this plane, all possible events are brought together, and new connections between them made and continuously dissolved' (Stagoll 2005: 205). Again, the fluctuation between creative activity and creative dormancy in Woolf's story has a distinctly Deleuzian resonance.

The operative dynamism of the curtain on a systematic level also invites us to read Woolf's text through what Rosi Braidotti calls an 'affirmative' ethics of biopower. Rather than focus unduly on *thanatos* or the questions of mortality and suffering in contemporary philosophy, Braidotti notes that we ought

to consider the ‘generative powers of *zoē* and to turn to the Spinozist political ontology defended by Deleuze and Guattari’:

Death is overrated. The ultimate subtraction is after all only another phase in a generative process For the narcissistic human subject, as psychoanalysis teaches us, it is unthinkable that Life should go on without my being there. The process of confronting the thinkability of a Life that may not have “me” or any “human” at the center is actually a sobering and instructive process. I see this postanthropocentric shift as the start for an ethics of sustainability that aims at shifting the focus toward the positivity of *zoē*. (Braidotti 2010: 212)

What other than the *generative* power of *zoē* is portrayed in Woolf’s story, in which it is the Life of nonhuman animality that subtends ‘narcissistic’ human creativity? Indeed, the illustration Vivas created to span pages 13 and 14 of the *Curtain* text (if it were enumerated) is a bio-poetic image par excellence. Viewed from above, as if from an aerial perspective, animals dip their heads to drink from a lagoon. We see only their backs, demarcated half-ways each, like cells preparing to divide. The landscape is represented almost as if sliced on a molecular level, with trees spreading out like microbial pili or flagella. The half-circular image, with cellular and microscopic overtones, seems to reference the power or creative potential of *zoē* itself. It is an extraordinary image at the centre of a book about a woman’s creative sources in that it embeds her aesthetic powers in inhuman, biological forces.

What Braidotti calls the postanthropocentric shift is indeed what Deleuze often theorized as the impersonal. Grosz describes this decentering of the traditional conceptualization of human life:

Deleuze seeks to understand life without recourse to a self, subject, or personal identity, or in opposition to matter and objects. He seeks something impersonal, singular, that links a living being, internally, through differentiation or repetition, to elements and forces that are nonliving. This is what links the concept of life, for him, to becoming-animal, to the Body without Organs, and to immanence rather than to transcendence, the human, or the organism. He is interested in the nonliving tentacles that extend themselves into the living, the provisional linkages the non-living and the living form to enable the living to draw out the virtualities of the nonliving; that is, to enable the nonliving to have a life of their own. (Grosz 2011: 35-36)

The tentacles of the inhuman are not only evident in the cellular image above, but the impersonal link to ‘nonliving’ forces is powerfully evident in the Vivas illustration that represents Lugton’s face as a mountain. Near the end of the

story, Lugton is conflated with the landscape: ‘They could see her, from their windows, towering over them. She had a face like the side of a mountain with great precipices and avalanches, and chasms for her eyes and hair and nose and teeth’ (Woolf 1991: [23]). Vivas draws Lugton’s enormous head as partially submerged in the earth, with the sinews of her neck bleeding and blending right into the foothills of the landscape. It is as though her body itself *is* the earth, and her head, putatively the most ‘human’ and ‘rational’ portion of her body, can only be partially separated from the forces of the earth. This image recalls Annie Leibowitz’s photograph of Rachel Rosenthal, buried neck deep in the desert. But Vivas can take the concept of merging even further because she blurs the distinction between Lugton’s neck and the descending ripples of the mountain terrain in her watercolour depiction.

What we find in this story, then, is aesthetic enlivenment as that which takes place beyond the personal, beyond the egotistical, and beyond the human. Art is understood as the becoming-other of life itself, as the perpetual and recurrent emergence of difference, and as something having its foundation more in a latent animality than in a waking humanity. If Nurse Lugton’s sewing is figuratively linked to Virginia Woolf’s writing, then this ‘minor’ children’s story persuades us to place the becoming-artistic of animality at the heart of Woolf’s aesthetic practice. Moreover, the seemingly unremarkable ‘blue stuff’ of the curtain emerges as the generative, affirmative life-force of matter itself. Woolf’s tale of ‘magical’ animals and curtains is actually a vital materialist narrative in which humans borrow their creative capacities from the becomings-other, from the differentialising and ‘excessive’ tendencies, of the inhuman.

Notes

1. See Czarnecki’s discussion of both the original and revised texts.
2. It is important to note that Hildick, when writing of his discovery in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1965, seemed to have a more nuanced, or at least more speculative, set of notions about the relationship between the novel and the story. As Czarnecki mentions, he wondered if the children’s story gave Woolf a sort of relief from the violent themes in *Mrs. Dalloway*. See Czarnecki, p. 222.
3. See for instance Hope Howell Hodgkins (2007) ‘High Modernism for the Lowest: Children’s Books by Woolf, Joyce, and Greene’.
4. It is important to note that conditions of the artistic, according to Grosz, can also be found in plant and insect life. However, she focuses significant attention on animal activities through her re-reading of Darwin and sexual selection in relation to aesthetic questions.

5. See my discussion of human ‘fur’ in T. S. Eliot’s ‘Sweeney’ poems in *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal*, (Rohman 2009: 35).
6. For instance, the character Jinny in Woolf’s novel *The Waves* discusses a monkey that ‘drops nuts from its naked paws’ (Woolf 1931: 176). Moreover, Louis in the same novel discusses his own social preening in similar terms: ‘it is for them that I do these antics, smoothing my hair, concealing my accent. I am the little ape who chatters over a nut’ (Woolf 1931: 128).
7. Bataille, like many twentieth-century thinkers and scientists, mistakenly understood tool-use as an exclusively human capacity. See Chapter Two in *Theory of Religion* (1989).
8. It is crucial to note here that Grosz’s emphasis on sexual difference, *pace* Irigaray, does not cancel out queer or transgendered identities and thus should not be glossed as such. When discussing Irigaray’s claims about sexual difference, Grosz notes that Irigaray ‘questions, not homosexuality, nor ethnic identification, but only the disavowal of one’s own morphological specificity. However queer, transgendered, and ethnically identified one might be, one comes from a man and a woman, and one remains a man and a woman, even in the case of gender-reassignment or the chemical and surgical transformation of one sex into the appearance of another’ (Grosz 2011: 109-110). As fluid and flexible, as historically contingent and malleable as sexuality may be, Grosz insists ‘there is no overcoming of sexual difference’ (Grosz 2011: 111).
9. See Rohman (2012), *Disciplinary Becomings: Horizons of Knowledge in Animal Studies*.
10. See also Chapter Six in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* in which Deleuze claims that events ‘are produced in a chaos, in a chaotic multiplicity, but only under the condition that a sort of screen intervenes’ (Deleuze 1993: 76). Laci Mattison discusses the relationship between chaos and art (and the event) in this register, as well, in her 2012 essay ‘Woolf’s Un/Folding(s): The Artist and the Event of the Neo-Baroque’.

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III | Symposium Essays

A Portrait of the Organism: Joyce's Novel as a Biological Being

Bridget Corso

Think briefly about the last time you read a work of literature. Surely, you were engaged; you were breathing, processing language, allowing the information into your mind in order to help it grow. You were living. We notice the life in ourselves and in the animate organisms around us on a daily basis. Rarely, though, do we notice the characteristics of literary works that afford them this same classification: that of organism. In his novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce not only creates a text which tells the story of Stephen Dedalus' discovery of self, but he produces a work that acts as an independent being functioning in and interacting with its larger ecosystem in order to develop, grow, and survive. In this essay, I will examine the novel's use of structure, allusion, and language in order to probe deeper into its organismic function and to truly bring Joyce's prolific work to 'life.'

In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Mikhail Bahktin speaks of the genre of novel as a living being operating in a larger ecosystem. He notes the "birth and development" of the novel, and refers to the possibilities of its "skeleton," while, later, the novel is said to be "nourished" in its environment (Bahktin 3-4). Further along, Bahktin describes the novel's literary circumstances much like an exercise in biological evolution: "The novel appears to be a creature from an alien species. It gets on poorly with other genres. It fights for its own hegemony in literature; wherever it triumphs, the other older genres go into decline" (4). James Ramey reflects on Bahktin's unique comparison, explaining that "[s]uch biological thinking no doubt draws on nineteenth-century discourses of organicism, which held that everything from societies to works of art were analogous in their functioning to organisms" (Ramey 37). If we are to consider these works in a truly holistic and ecological manner, then, it is imperative that we investigate the ways in which they relate directly to the larger environments in which they exist, as well as the ways in which they exhibit biological characteristics which allow them to act on their own and sustain their organismic existence.

But what is an organism? What characteristics, scientifically, classify something as an organism? Biologists Paul Agutter and Denys Wheatly explain this three-part classification: "'livingness' is characterized by a three-way

dialogue among the internal state, the set of all responses to external stimuli, and the pattern of gene expression” (Agutter, Wheatly 91). They define these components further, explaining the “internal state” as “cell structure and internal transport, locked together by reciprocal dependence at any moment;” explaining “responses to external stimuli” as the cell’s ability to respond to stimuli from the outside environment; and explaining “pattern of gene expression” as the organism’s ability to express different genes in a specific and identifiable pattern (91). In other words, an organism’s “internal state” corresponds to the specific way it is structured, communication between different parts of that structure, as well as its ability to transport things (like nutrients) through that structure; its “response to external stimuli” corresponds to its ability to interact with the environment around it in order to help it grow and survive; and its “pattern of gene expression” corresponds to its ability to express different traits given the proper environmental conditions. I want to focus on these three basic characteristics of life in my analysis of Joyce’s work, particularly how the organism’s “internal state” corresponds with the novel’s structure, the “response to external stimuli” corresponds with the novel’s use of allusion, and the “pattern of gene expression” corresponds to the evolution of language in the novel.

The structure of *Portrait* is quite intricate and life-like. The novel is broken into five different parts which can (and do) act on their own as independent cycles of Stephen’s maturation, but also work together in succession to develop and sustain Stephen’s life as well as the ‘life’ of the novel. This complex cyclical organization works to create an intricate structure that corresponds to the novel’s organismic “internal state” as outlined by Agutter and Wheatly.

The transition from the second part of the novel to the third offers an example of this cyclical progression. In the second part of the novel, Stephen struggles with his new and unwelcomed environment in Dublin, as well as his own blossoming sexual tension. The struggle between his desire to fulfill his sexual urges and his shame comes to a climax when he finds himself wandering the streets in search of release, like a “baffled prowling beast” (83). When Stephen finally meets with a prostitute and gives in to his urges, he is at peace: “[t]ears of joy and relief shone in his delighted eyes” and “he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself” (84, 85). Stephen’s previous tensions between are diffused here in his union with the prostitute, which brings him solace and reconciliation.

However, in part three, Stephen’s internal struggle mounts from the very thing that gave him release at the end of part two: his “sin” with the prostitute. Stephen is ridden with guilt and shame at his act, and this anxiety mounts in Stephen’s mind when he is made to hear several aggressive sermons while on

a religious retreat. This tension culminates in Stephen's decision to confess his sins and ask for forgiveness. He uncovers his acts to the priest, and is absolved of his transgressions. When he resumes his place among the other students at mass, Stephen is free of his debilitating guilt from earlier in the chapter: "Another life! A life of grace and virtue and happiness! It was true. It was not a dream from which he would wake. The past was past" (123). Stephen's chance at a new and redeemed life rejuvenates him and offers him salvation. This new life, though, generates an unreasonable desire for religious and moral perfection, which serves as the basis for the problems of the subsequent parts of the novel, continuing the spiraling relationship between the novel's conflicts and accomplishing the reciprocal dependence between the individual "cells" in the novel's specific "cell" structure.

Now that we have established the organismic qualities of *Portrait's* structure, we can investigate its ability to transport different "nutrients" throughout that structure, the second component of "internal state" as outlined by Agutter and Wheatly. Although the novel's parts certainly function as individual cycles building upon one another, they are also connected in many non-cyclical ways. There are countless repeated motifs present in the novel which account for this "nutrient transportation." One example I wish to illuminate, for specific reasons, is the water motif that courses through the five parts of the work. Joyce uses representations of water in various ways to mirror Stephen's maturation and growth from episode to episode, allowing it to "flow" through the novel.

For example, in part II, water is manifested as a struggle within Stephen's psyche: "He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam...the powerful recurrence of the tides within him" (82). Here, Stephen remarks upon the power and flow of water in an attempt to reflect his own desire to stifle his inner sexual yearnings. Water represents the strength of these urges within him and their ability to course through his being, uninhibited. Later, in the final part, Stephen revisits this image of water as he reflects on a vision of his love: "Her nakedness...enfolded him like water with a liquid life: and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the element of mystery, flowed forth over his brain" (187-88). Here, Stephen equates both the desire and creative force simultaneously moving through him to water flowing, strong and powerful. It is a positive force that allows him to create, carrying the ideas he has to meet the language required to express them. These images of water do not stand alone, nor do they cause one another in a linear fashion. Instead, they act together, feeding into each other at once throughout the novel, emphasizing its ability to transport throughout its intricate structure.

This specific motif is pertinent to my analysis in two ways. First, the fact that the motif can be clearly and fruitfully traced throughout the novel's parts is interesting to note while considering the novel as an organism. All living, breathing beings require water (in some form) to survive. The novel, too, requires the image and representation of water flowing through it in order to sustain its interdependence and its "life." Second, Sydney Bolt appropriately describes the novel's specific, cyclical structure as "wave-like" and "pulsating" (63). Stephen's individual struggles in each chapter rise and fall like pulsations or waves in the ocean, and they spill over into each successive part to create a new set of undulations. In crafting the novel this way, Joyce mirrors the "wave-like" and "pulsating" components of an organism's "internal structure," which, as previously defined, requires it to express a clear arrangement of cells, reciprocal dependence between these cells, and internal transport among cells. The novel expresses a clearly developed structure of its five individual parts, mimicking "cell structure"; a clear flow of motifs, acting as the internal transport among cells; and a tendency of each part to rise and fall in a cyclical pattern while building into the next part, reflecting the reciprocal dependence of the organism's structure.

Moving on, we can begin to investigate the novel's ability to engage with its outside environment, or respond to external stimuli. An extremely pertinent organismic aspect of Joyce's novel resides in its most pervasive and copiously used device: allusion. Joyce is continuously criticized and marveled at for his use of allusion in his works, causing scholarly editions of his texts to double or even triple in size. *Portrait* is rife with references to other literary and historical texts, allowing it to interact with the larger ecosystem in which it exists. James Ramey refers to Joyce's abundant use of allusion as "parasitic." He defends Joyce, though, and explains, "...Joyce represents parasitism in key passages of his novels because he sees it as a sometimes distasteful but always necessary aspect of art, civilization, and biological life itself" (Ramey 47). The use of allusion in Joyce's work, then, does not merely exist for the sake of existing, but functions as a necessary and integral part of the organism-text's survival.

How, we might ask, does such inundating use of allusion actually help the novel's purpose? The novel's references to and inclusion of other works represent the natural processes that involve organisms interacting with and responding to one another (as a parasite feeding off of a host, to follow Ramey's example). Engaging with and employing such a rampant use of allusion helps Joyce to ensure that his organism-text is, in fact, feeding its "appetite," helping it to develop and survive through interactions with its larger ecosystem, even insofar as ingesting the weight and energy that is associated with the texts to which he alludes. *Portrait's* references to Shelley, Tennyson, Byron,

the Bible, philosophical works, poetry, dramas, historical events and figures all help the novel to accomplish this necessary interaction with the literary world in which it is living. Just as organisms must recognize, interpret, and interact with their surrounding environments if they wish to survive, the novel must acknowledge and utilize its own environment if it wishes to sustain itself. Thus, the novel performs the second important characteristic of living organisms: responding to and interacting with external stimuli.

A third and final aspect of the novel that affords it organismic characteristics is Joyce's unique use and development of language. There are many ways in which language progresses throughout the novel, but for the purposes of this analysis, I want to focus mainly on the evolution of sentence structure in order to illuminate the ways in which this language might act as a reflection of the novel's ability to develop a specific "pattern of gene expression."

In Part I, Stephen's linguistic expression is incredibly simplistic. In a stream-of-consciousness narration, he contemplates the concept of spirituality for the first time: "It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that. He tried to think what a big thought that must be but he could think only of God. God was God's name just as his name was Stephen" (Joyce 13). Here, Stephen's thoughts are expressed in clear, direct, declarative sentences that do not complicate themselves at all, and are often un-related in topic. By the novel's conclusion, the language reaches a new level of complexity surrounding Stephen's new concept of spirituality: "Beauty expressed by the artist cannot awaken in us an emotion which is kinetic or a sensation which is purely physical. It awakens, or ought to awaken, or induces, or ought to induce, an esthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror, a stasis called forth, prolonged and at last dissolved by what I call the rhythm of beauty" (173). Here, Stephen's language is certainly complex, but, more importantly, it is *rhythmic*. He uses parallel constructions that work together to spiral toward his final words which subsume the essence of his language here: "rhythm of beauty."

Agutter and Wheatly outline "pattern of gene expression" as an organism's ability to express its genes in a particular pattern given the correct environmental conditions. Throughout the course of the novel, as Stephen meets and mounts different experiences in different environments, we can see the language of the novel becoming increasingly more complex. This complexity seems to adhere to a "pattern" of growth, just as Agutter and Wheatly note is needed for organismic gene expression. As Stephen encounters different environments that help *him* to grow, the correct conditions are met for the novel to "express" its increasingly complex "genes."

Examining works of literature as living, breathing organisms interacting with the ecosystem in which they are written, read, and shelved can be

an extremely fruitful pursuit. *Portrait's* organismic qualities help to illuminate the development of Stephen as a human and as an artist; the novel's tendency to follow the pattern of a living being growing and developing highlights Stephen's own existence in the world. The brilliance of *Portrait*, specifically, is in Joyce's awareness of the connection between Stephen's development and how that development is physically represented in the narrative. By representing the nature of the organism through his novel, Joyce calls the reader's attention to a closely interwoven and important connection between the works artists create, the artistic process, and the nature of being.

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“He’s a cultured allroundman, Bloom is”: The Animal and Vegetal Lives of Leopold Bloom

Robert Cutrera

James Joyce had an amusing description for Frank Budgen when asked how he viewed his character Leopold Bloom: “I see him from all sides, and therefore he is all-round in the sense of [a] sculptor’s figure. But he is a complete man as well-- a good man. At any rate, that is what I intend that he shall be” (Budgen 17). This is a rather nice way to sum up the protagonist of *Ulysses*. As Joyce says, Bloom is “all-round” in every sense. Bloom is a modern day human animal, one whose passions and fears lead him throughout his day, and Dublin itself might be viewed as a complex concrete jungle, a city whose streets and buildings hold both predators and opportunities for the advertising agent. But being in a jungle, Bloom can also be considered a type of plant, one who has lost its nutrient and has been displaced from its soil. We see the beginnings of his existence come together in the first three episodes in which he appears: “Calypso,” “Lotus Eaters,” and “Hades.” Bloom is epitomized here as a man in ruins: his marriage is falling apart as his wife carries on an extramarital affair; he feels empty and demoralized by the loss of his son; and most of the people he comes into contact with regard him with open hostility. What is so unique about Bloom is his ability to transform in a single day, as by the time he arrives back at 7 Eccles Street he is redeemed of his past failures. If Bloom is an impoverished soul at the beginning of the novel, he ultimately nourishes his humanity by realizing his animalistic and vegetal tendencies.

Richard Ellman has identified the triadic scheme of the novel’s chapters and his dialectal logic of their grouping in threes. What I hope to show through the example of Bloom’s progress through the first three episodes in which he appears, is the way in which he achieves an enlivened sense of his own human being by assembling his animal and vegetal selves.

The kidney is Joyce’s assigned bodily organ for “Calypso,” the chapter in which Bloom is introduced. As the kidney breaks down food and minerals that pass through it, so readers see how Bloom interacts with his world, digesting the rudimentary facts of his life and how it has begun to collapse.

Bloom is a bodily fellow from the first. There is clearly one predominant thing on his mind and it is a common feeling that the majority of carnivorous creatures share upon waking: “Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls” (45). Bloom enjoys his breakfast with a carnivorous, even predatory, “relish,” but he makes for a strangely passive predator; and as his day unfolds, we see this as a quality that works for and against him. It is

highly likely that he is lost within the act of eating here, as the opening three sentences that describe the man are only concerned with the type of food he likes to eat. Even the first explanation of what he is thinking does not stray far from this: “Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting [Molly’s] breakfast things on the humpy tray” (45). The way he moves is notable: he is nimble and alert, qualities that he shares with his cat.

These opening details are revealing and cast Bloom in a primal light. Carrie Rohman presents an intriguing view of the act of eating in her book *Stalking the Subject*: “Consumption ... is the highest form of power over the other: when you eat something ... you not only eradicate the other’s autonomous being, but you do so by literally subsuming it into your own corporeality” (49). Does this allow us to associate the inner organs that constitute the body of Leopold Bloom with those that he ingests? The inner organs of the fowls and beasts are Bloom’s main concern at the onset of the day, even at the expense of another primal act, that of having sex with his wife.

Taking into account the similarities readers find between Bloom and wild carnivorous beings in the opening lines, it is not surprising that the first being he speaks to is his aforementioned cat. As the feline creeps around the leg of the table, Bloom wonders at its existence: “They call them stupid. They understand what we say better than we understand them. She understands all she wants to” (45). He is absolutely right in his observations; he can only perceive that she is hungry or wants his attention from her mewing, but she follows his every action with her eyes, waiting for his next move. Besides his interchange with the butcher in the episode, ironically another incident dealing with food, this seems to be the most productive exchange Bloom has with another being in “Calypso,” as the cat is happy to be able to communicate what she wants to Bloom, whereas Molly cannot say the same.

Even after Bloom buys a kidney from the butcher, he is still preoccupied by meat visibly before his eyes; yet in his mind, the meat takes the form of a woman’s behind. He cannot exchange money quick enough for the kidney before exiting the shop in pursuit of the woman who was in line before him, and he follows her for some time thinking about “her moving hams,” playing a cautious predator at a safe distance (49).

In staying true to the assignment of the kidney as the organ for this episode, Bloom’s digestive system works quickly enough to land him in the outhouse. His act of defecating does hold some promise for someone other than himself, even if he fails to capitalize on it. As he passes to the jakes, he realizes that the hardened soil outside wants dung: “He bent down to regard a lean file of spearmint growing by the wall ... Scarlet runners. Virginia creepers. Want to manure the whole place over, scabby soil ... All soil like that without dung ... The hens in the next garden: their droppings are very good

top dressing ... Mulch of dung" (55-56).

His moment of defecation speaks to an essential cycle of life: that of giving back to the soil. This is a prime function of animals, as manure is often used as a main nutrient for growing new food; which, in its turn, will be turned back into dung once eaten. Bloom contemplates his animalistic part in this cycle, even as he flushes his own feces down the toilet once he finishes up. We might see him here as a modern animal out of place in Dublin, hiding in the small man-made cubicle to perform one of the basic functions that humans share with animals. To show just how highly he thinks of Irish journalism and society, Bloom rips off a sheet of the newspaper and uses it to clean himself after he is finished, this representing his disassociation from the citizens of Dublin.

"Lotus Eaters" finds Bloom strolling about aimlessly among these citizens, as he still has an hour to wait until he must join some acquaintances in attending Paddy Dignam's funeral. The episode showcases Bloom as a wanderer. His associations with plant life in this episode take the place of his animality seen throughout "Calypso," and this speaks to his lack of action in "Lotus Eaters," or his vegetality: though plants may not make distinct movements for survival as animals do, they have innumerable functions that cannot be seen by the naked eye. If Bloom is apparently dormant in a state of self-seclusion and lethargy, he begins to plant his roots here.

Bloom's ostensible immobility or seeming lack of motivation is the driving force in "Lotus Eaters." He adopts the persona of "Henry Flower" in order to strike up an epistolary correspondence with a certain "Martha" whom he has never met in person (63). His alias of "Flower" connects him to the vegetal state of his sexual life; it is not until the end of the episode, where he visits a public bath house, that Bloom actually exercises any physical exaltation of his body, when he imagines his penis to be "a languid floating flower" hanging limp (71).

Bloom's penis as a "languid floating flower" is the first direct example of his genitals in the episode, and we also find the first direct reference to a womb here: "He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved" (71). This is Bloom's search for water. It is one of the major components that give life to plants, humans, and animals alike; but what is missing here is the sun, the phosphorescence needed in order to fully nourish the "plant" so that it may achieve its full state of maturity. Bloom searches for this nutrition immediately after "Lotus Eaters," though he must travel to a graveyard in order to find it.

Glasnevin graveyard is a fitting setting to showcase the decay of Bloom's life; it is here that we see the revitalizing energies of Bloom's animal and vegetal consciousness combine to become Joyce's "allroundman". As Bloom hears

Simon Dedalus complain about Stephen Dedalus in the carriage on the way to the funeral, his mind wanders to thoughts of his departed son: "If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes. Strange feeling it would be. From me" (73). If we consider Bloom's vegetal qualities, then we might envision Rudy as the seed to Bloom's plant. This is the first time we see the plant that is Bloom contemplate another human being like this, though. He sees his own reflection in that of his late son and this reflection nourishes the human being in him.

In fact, Rudy was conceived when Bloom was acting on his animal impulses: "Must have been that morning in Raymond terrace [Molly] was at the window watching the two dogs at it by the wall of the cease to do evil ... Give us a touch, Poldy. God, I'm dying for it. How life begins" (73-74). Bloom is by no means ignoring his animalistic tendencies here; but he is haunted by his animality and is afraid of any possibility to repeat the tragedies of his past.

This is one of the many reasons why Joyce assigned the heart as the organ for this episode (Ellman 190). It is here that Bloom stares down the basic truth of life: death. We can finally register Bloom as an emotionally charged human being. No longer solely the animal hunting for meat, nor merely the plant who drowsily eyes the town in search of diversion, Bloom gathers his disparate selves in this episode and assembles his animal and vegetal tendencies to realize a fuller human being.

It is very hard to place Bloom in relation to the other people in his carriage, though. Bloom is constantly awoken from his thoughtful slumbers by the interactions he must have with the others while on the way to the graveyard, but they clearly view him as a type of outsider among their group. The reason Bloom is even traveling to the graveyard this morning is because Paddy Dignam's heart broke down, yet another connection to the organ assigned for this episode; but there is not much genuine emotion streaming out from anybody towards Bloom here. It is impossible for him to escape their unpleasant company, as he is rooted to the spot for the duration of the carriage ride.

Once they arrive at the graveyard the service for Dignam begins. Father Coffey is the priest who is presiding over the funeral, and Bloom cannot help his mind from wandering as prayers are being said. He oddly begins to think of food again, yet this time about what the corpse eats: "want to feed well, sitting in there all the morning in the gloom kicking his heels waiting for the next please" (85). He then begins to deliberate the "bad gas" that must be welling up inside of the body, and wonders at what it would be like to cut them open: "Butchers, for instance: they get like raw beefstakes" (85). This association with eating and meat in a graveyard, while morose, does connect Bloom to the essence of vitality, as his own body may become a nutrient for other lives.

Right before leaving the graveyard to go back out into Dublin, Bloom is startled by a rat. Life finds life here, as Bloom recognizes the small creature scurrying about the place: “One of those chaps would make short work of a fellow. Pick the bones clean no matter who it was. Ordinary meat for them” (94). The rat is doing what Bloom is thinking about: eating meat and transforming detritus into a living body.

We may see the first three episodes of Bloom’s day as chronicling the birth of his body and ending with the recognition of his soul, which leads him forth to confront the harrowing day ahead. Bloom is a composite hero: he combines the animality of “Calypso” with the vegetality of “Lotus Eaters” to form the “allroundman” in “Hades.” Joyce’s creation epitomizes the fact that our lives are combined of many elements, which at times may seem unbounded and vast; yet, as Bloom shows us, if we begin to ignore our basic qualities, we may begin to unravel.

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The Maternal-Animal and the Sensual-Animal in
Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and Kate Chopin's *The
Awakening*

Danimarie Jones

Charles Darwin influenced many authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who, whether knowingly or unknowingly, utilized Darwin's theories in their works; this includes such authors as Thomas Hardy, Lord Alfred Tennyson, Jack London, and Edith Wharton. While we can argue that incorporating natural and sexual selection into fiction occurs subconsciously, as they are explicitly a part of the human-animal experience, writers who responded to Darwin in their writing seem to purposefully emphasize the human as an animal within nature rather than without. Bonnie Kime Scott asserts that Darwin's theories possess an "adaptability to literature" due to his accessibility and ability to write in a way that coheres with works of fiction (Scott 58). Specifically, the nineteenth century featured a moving away from Romanticism and the Wordsworthian ideal of nature to a view more focused on "chance" (Woodring 198) and the "congregated laws of process and change" as proposed by Darwin (Woodring 195), which "set nature back far enough to leave a great opening for art" (Woodring 198).

Female writers of the Victorian era, both English and American, utilized the writings of Darwin in order to craftily express human animality pertaining to sexuality. Narrative theorist H. Porter Abbott discusses typecasting and reminds us that "All cultures and subcultures include numerous types that circulate through all the various narrative modes" (Abbott 136), and our understanding of character is based on our ability to "draw upon pre-existing types that we have absorbed from our culture" (Abbott 116). The use of Darwin's theories, which already posed a threat to Victorian patriarchal values, complements female writers' responses to their societal standing in terms of their expected passive and domestic role, which is expressed through the employment of certain character types in their fiction; here we will address the "maternal-woman" and the "sensual-woman," two types that Victorian society strove to divide. Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931), an English novel, and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), an American novel, demonstrate persistent evolutionary themes, emphasizing reproduction and sexuality. Woolf herself was not restricted by heteronormative cultural types due to her bisexuality and the fact that she and her contemporaries in the Bloomsbury circle resisted the limitations of sexual typecasting. As a result, in Woolf's novel we can see that these types exist alongside Darwinian assertions of animality in a

way which rejects the status quo and revolutionizes female sexuality. Chopin also addresses these societal constructions and the Victorian divide between motherhood and sexuality, however, while depicting these types as positive and unified, she also provides an example of the negative impact culturally enforced types can have on a woman's identity.

The Waves features two female protagonists who can be viewed through the previously mentioned cultural lenses, while also going beyond these cultural boundaries and into the realm of the animal, where their "roles" are embraced rather than criticized. Jinny, the sensual-animal, acts based on sexual instinct; using her body as a canvas in order to attract the mates she desires, we see her close attention paid to bodily aesthetics: "I glance, I peep, I powder. All is exact, prepared. My hair is swept in one curve. My lips are precisely red" (Woolf 73). According to Geoffrey Miller, humans have "artistic instincts for producing and appreciating aesthetic ornamentation" (Miller 156); Jinny stands as an example of this instinct in her "aesthetic-evolutionary...fantasy" (Rohman 19). It is Jinny's sexual core, her sexual success and precise beauty, which leads her into her "becoming-flower" (Rohman 20), for like a flower she is "masterful at evolutionary excess" (Rohman 16): "I begin to feel the wish to be singled out; to be summoned, to be called away by one person who comes to find me, who is attracted towards me, who cannot keep himself from me, but comes to where I sit on my gilt chair, with my frock billowing round me like a flower" (Woolf 32). Jinny draws potential mates to her like a flower draws insects. Her "billowing" dress imitates the petals of a flower, she appears singular and enticing. In doing this, Jinny not only connects to a nonhuman entity, but also embodies her stance as an animal within nature who understands her sexual needs. In an atypical fashion, Jinny focuses on courtship, an interest usually associated with men (*Mating* 88). While this sort of behavior would have proven appalling to Victorian society, Woolf treats Jinny's sexuality as a positive and empowering force. By emphasizing Jinny's cultural stance as a sexually liberated woman, Woolf anticipates future cultural changes that allow for "Women's ongoing liberation from the nightmare of patriarchy" (*Mating* 83).

While Jinny stands out as the overtly sexualized and promiscuous figure of Woolf's novel, Susan, the only female character to have children, falls under the category of earth-mother, of maternity, of sexually successful. Susan notably prefers nature over the domestic sphere, maintaining a motherly role undefined by the household (Woolf 95). Her relationship to maternity and nature coincides with her understanding of the mechanisms of mate choice from an early age. When the characters are children, Susan and Bernard, the only male character to have children, note the need to pair with a mate. Bernard states, "We must...stand upright...We must form, two by two," which is

directly followed by Susan's stating that "We must form into pairs...and walk in order" (Woolf 15). As a reproducing adult, Susan states that she is "glutted with natural happiness" due to the fact that "life fills [her] veins" and "pours through [her] limbs" (Woolf 125); essentially, she understands that through her children her genes will be passed on after her death: "My children will carry me on; their teething, their crying, their going to school and coming back will be like the waves of the sea under me...I shall be debased and hide-bound by the bestial and beautiful passion of maternity" (Woolf 95). The actions of Susan's children operate as daily "movement[s]," described using the image of waves. This is complemented by the image of her being "lifted higher" than any of the other characters, "possess[ing]" more than Jinny or Rhoda, because she has reproductive success. She is then directly related to the "bestial," claiming that she will be "debased." Susan's having children stands as such a positive force throughout the novel that considering herself bestial is not necessarily negative, for she connects this to the "beautiful passion of maternity." Overall, Woolf presents Susan and Jinny as types in a revolutionizing way. Both women have agency and are not fully bound by the Victorian view of women, as we see with Susan taking her maternity out of the domestic sphere and into nature, into gardens and fields (Woolf 138), and with Jinny's un-frowned upon promiscuity.

In *The Awakening*, Chopin, like Woolf, shows how maternity and sensuality can stand as positive forces, but she also highlights the negative role that Victorian culture plays in treating the two types as completely separate. The cultural contrast creates a dilemma for the story's protagonist, Edna Pontellier, who suffers from an ongoing identity crisis as she struggles with her maternity and sexuality. The novel takes place within a Creole society at Grand Isle, which maintains a certain attitude towards maternity. Adèle, Edna's purely motherly counterpart, stands as an example of the "mother-women" of Grand Isle, as we see in a passage where we are told everything that Edna is not:

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings...They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels. (Chopin 540)

Adèle is an Angel of the House (a stock figure of 19th century culture) who protects her children, adores her husband, and "effaces" herself for the sake of her children, just as Woolf's Susan, who, though unrestricted by the domestic sphere like Adèle is, also protects, nurtures, and sacrifices. The first sentence, that Edna is "not a mother-woman," tells us that this passage is also a descrip-

tion of her: Edna does not coddle and idolize her sons; she does not worship her husband, who causes her to feel an “indescribable oppression” (Chopin 540); and Edna refuses to “efface” herself for the sake of her family.

Though types are cultural constructions, we can see from Woolf’s novel and Abbott’s study of narrative that they also “accommodate a great deal of human complexity” (Abbott 137), and are a mode through which we characterize ourselves (Abbott 136). Edna seems to reject characterization; though she fantasizes about possible identities she could grasp, she fails to establish an identity for herself and in doing so abandons her motherhood (Ramos 149). Adèle, the “faultless Madonna” (Chopin 542), the “sensuous Madonna” (Chopin 543), fully accepts her cultural identity and, in fact, takes advantage of her domestic power: “Madame Ratignolle is not the model of a modern free woman. . . Still, she does not seem unaware of herself. She seems both to know the limitations of her role and to embrace that role, nonetheless. . . Adèle is able to extend the very boundaries of her social identity” (Ramos 155). Along with being defined by her motherhood, she is also described sensually, accounting for Edna’s assertion that Adèle is both *faultless* and *sensuous*. We are told that Adèle’s “beauty was all there, flaming and apparent,” such as with her “two lips that pouted, that were so red one could only think of cherries or some other delicious crimson fruit in looking at them” (Chopin 540). The close attention paid to Adèle’s attractiveness is reminiscent of Woolf’s Jinny with her “precisely red” lips, and since it is juxtaposed with her maternal nature, signifies that Adèle is not only a mother, but a sexual woman. We see Adèle’s sensuousness in contrast to Edna’s initial prudishness when Adèle openly talks about pregnancy and the experience of labor, which causes Edna to blush (Chopin 541), and when we learn about the risqué novel circulating amongst the women at Grand Isle; Adèle and the other Creole women read it openly, while Edna feels the inclination to “read the book in secret and solitude” (Chopin 542).

Edna initially shies away from sexuality in any form, but as the novel continues, seems to desire a sexual identity; this desire never comes to fruition because she maintains the Victorian division of sensuality and motherhood. She rejects her patriarch, Léonce, develops a romantic relationship with Robert, a younger man from Grand Isle, and upon returning to her home in New Orleans acquires a lover, Alcée, all the while forgetting her children. Essentially, Edna does not dedicate herself to “available social roles”; she instead searches for “an unrestricted, undefined and, ultimately, impossible state—a freedom from identity” (Ramos 147).

We see the accumulation of Edna’s struggle with her maternal and sensual identities in the closely related scenes of Adele’s labor and Edna’s suicide. While observing Adele’s labor, “She was seized with a vague dread. . . She recalled faintly an *ecstasy* of pain. . . and an *awakening* to find a little new life to

which she had given being” (Chopin 620, my emphasis). Though Edna seems frightened with the thought of labor, Chopin notably chooses to incorporate “ecstasy” and an “awakening” in Edna’s memory. This language reflects the sexual diction and constant mentioning of “awakenings” in relation to Robert and Alcée, yet, here, it causes Edna distress because she is watching a woman give birth, the outcome of sex, and still tries to ignore that labor and motherhood are natural and sexual: “With an inward agony, with a flaming, outspoken *revolt against the ways of Nature*, she witnessed the scene of torture” (Chopin 621, my emphasis). The final sentence of this chapter is Adèle instructing Edna to “think of the children” (Chopin 623), which is exactly what Edna does in the final moments of her life. Edna returns to Grand Isle and “mechanically” moves towards the beach (Chopin 624). She not only thinks of her sons, but also her husband, Robert, and Alcée, the men in her life who stand to shape her into types enforced by her patriarchal culture. She then strips naked and enters the ocean. This scene mirrors the previous instance when Edna swims by herself for the first time, where the ocean acts as a dividing agent; she refers to the water as a “barrier” that separates her from her fellow human beings, which frightens her (Chopin 556), and we can argue that this is her first act of moving away from society and the identities she believes are forced upon her. This barrier does not perturb her in the final scene of the novel, and she officially separates herself from other human beings, dying in the “sensuous,” “seductive” “whispering” sea without identity. (Chopin 624).

Jinny, Susan and Adèle are three female characters who, though defined by their cultural types, do not suffer from such crises and are able to accept their identities. This is not to say that they are fully free from struggle: Adèle will always be restricted to the domestic sphere; Susan mentions that she is jealous of Jinny and is at times “sick of [her] own craft” (Woolf 95-96, 138); and Jinny chooses a non-lasting identity due to aging. Yet, despite these dilemmas, they do not allow their types to restrict or consume them: rather than dwell on her inability to branch out of the domestic sphere, Adèle embraces her role; Susan is able to expand beyond the domestic and into nature, and gains “natural happiness” due to her reproductive success; and Jinny does not give up on her sexuality, inspiring herself to continue living as a sensual master of evolutionary excess (Woolf 141).

Woolf and Chopin depict these women as sexual beings with agency who, in light of Darwin, understand their animal nature, that sexuality and maternity are natural and unified. Edna fails where Jinny, Susan and Adèle succeed; she views the types attached to her identity—mother, wife, lover—as literal and limited constructions, and in order to escape those constructions that consume her, turns to suicide. Peter Ramos questions whether Edna’s suicide is an “achievement of independence and agency” or a “defeat” (Ramos

146); based on her seeming lack of ability to establish an identity, we can assume that Edna's suicide is a defeat rather than a finishing touch to her casting off of her children, husband, and society for the sake of autonomous individuality. Edna's identity struggle stands at the forefront of Chopin's text. To recall Abbott's claim that we define ourselves based on types, we see how Edna fails to do so, and in turn rejects not only Victorian cultural constructions of women, but also her identity all together, while Woolf's novel, in contrast, depicts two animalistic women who, though represented as these types, unanimously embrace their roles and move beyond the cultural boundaries of maternal and sensual, moving towards liberation, and away from the restrictions of Victorian patriarchy.

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Misreading the World: The Cross-Pollination of Dante's *Inferno* and Cognitive Literary Poetics

Ryan James McGuckin

Robert Hollander says that “Reading Dante is like listening to Bach” (xxviii). This is a keen observation. However, I think there is an important difference. Where Bach arranges a complex sound structure into clarity, Dante organizes complexity into obscurity, leading (or tempting) the reader into error. I want to suggest that the *Inferno* achieves this level of obscurity by deliberately modeling and invoking the act of misreading. Counterintuitively, this misreading enhances the poem's didacticism, both for the characters within it and for the readers. By promoting disorientation, the text pushes readers to intellectually reposition themselves so as to experience clarity. By overloading the text with multiple voices and viewpoints, Dante causes the characters—and readers—to misread the text by losing their ability to keep track of their sources of information and so find themselves disoriented. In the following, using insights found in cognitive literary studies, I want to explore how the text successfully models and invokes the act of misreading.

Maybe the most famous example of misreading surfaces is in the *Inferno's* fifth canto. This canto depicts souls punished for the sin of lust, where they eternally suffer because in life they abandoned their higher gifts of reason for their lower drives, which favors worldly pleasures and ignores the divine. Here, Paolo and Francesca da Rimini are the canto's exemplars of sin. In life, Paolo and Francesca were having an affair, until Francesca's husband, Paolo's brother, found them together and murdered them. In canto 5, Francesca tells Dante of the love that developed between Paolo and her, provoked through the act of reading a medieval romance. Francesca's reading of this romance, which ignited love by way of lust, suggests she both is misreading the text and herself, leaving her to forever lament her fate as nothing more than a ruthless turn of events. Consequently, Dante the pilgrim engages in his own act of misreading, abandoning his reason, siding with Francesca's narrative, and lamenting alongside her. In addition, it is likely readers of the poem will risk mirroring Francesca and Dante, as this narrative becomes populated with layers of contradicting views, likely to cause readers to forget about the importance of reason residing over passions. Instead, with the text invoking their pity, readers join Francesca and Dante and misread along with them.

Right from the start of canto 5, Dante the pilgrim, receives the warning to read carefully: “beware how you come in and whom you trust. Don't let the easy entrance fool you” (Musa 5.19-20). Yet, instead of following this warning

and using reason to gauge whom to trust, Dante misreads by giving way to his passions as he tells readers, “No sooner had I heard [the names of] . . . / the ancient [and infernal] ladies and . . . knights, than pity / seized me, and I was like a man astray” (Mandelbaum 5.70-72). With this in mind, it is no surprise that the text directly address readers and reminds them how it certainly is a “...veil of the strange verses” (Durling 9.62-63). Strange indeed, as this passage mixes guidance with obscurity, confuses its characters, and for readers, acts more like a puzzle rather than a clear sequence of narrative poetry.

To make things more complicated, Dante is both the pilgrim of the poem as well as the person who narrates the poem from a distance and point in time after the journey. As Dante recalls these events, reviews his assumptions regarding the many infernal souls he encountered, and even selects moments to directly warn readers of what he remembers as crucial to his ordeal, he is not just relying on his present perspective, but is also recalling his past perspective when he was a pilgrim of the poem, in the fresh unknown of the journey.

While many literary scholars have noted and explicated the fact of these layers in the *Inferno*, some concepts from cognitive literary studies can help us understand how this confusion works. This ability of Dante’s—to consider his previous experiences and viewpoints, to recall what he thought were the intentions of the infernal souls he encountered, and to compare all this to his current recollections—are examples of what cognitive literary scholar Lisa Zunshine calls metarepresentation, which she states is the ability to make representations of representations, and so mentally manipulate and consider the events and ideas that we represent in our mind. Metarepresentation underlies our ability to make, and revise, near-instant judgments about people’s states of mind. According to Zunshine, as we receive information about the world, we cognitively tag it, assimilating information we are sure of into long-term memory and placing information that is not yet confirmed into episodic memory. As an example, a colleague of mine might mention that a student, who doesn’t usually participate in class, had recently raised his hand, appearing eager to answer a question. As I receive this information, I also tag it. Into my long-term memory, I place the information I am sure of, as in hand raising is the accepted signal people use to indicate they wish to speak. Nevertheless, in my episodic memory, I place the information that I am unsure of and will reconsider, as in the hand raising of this particular student could have entailed the desire to participate or, instead, it could have entailed a request to leave the room. Thus, metarepresentation enables us to consider possibilities, to entertain various scenarios, and to consider the sources of information without wholly rejecting or accepting the version of events presented to us.

In Canto 5 of the *Inferno* are several examples of source tags in the form

of thoughts, speeches, or behaviors, all which provide evidence that the text is embedded with metarepresentational activity. For example, Dante the pilgrim hears Francesca da Rimini's own reports of how her lustful and adulterous living lead to her murder and to her infernal punishment for making "reason subject to desire," Dante reports, "I bent my head and held it low" (Hollander 5.39; Mandelbaum 5.110). It is here where Virgil, Dante's guide through the *Inferno*, observes this and asks, "What are you thinking?" (5.111). As Zunshine would probably remark, it is not that Virgil thinks something is physically wrong with Dante in that he is, at this moment, bowing his head because his neck suddenly became too weak. For Virgil, Dante's response is not biological or environmental but, instead, emotional. Here it is clear Virgil takes Dante's physical response as something linked to Francesca's comment about her lowly fate and infers that his state of mind, or emotional state, is directly related.

Actually, this above example of metarepresentation is a little more complicated in that readers use their own metarepresentational abilities to guess at Virgil's state of mind as well as Dante's state of mind, since Virgil does not directly report his thoughts and motives to readers. Instead, while readers engage in the metarepresentational activity in reading Francesca's reports of woe as the source of Dante bowing his head, the text actually requires them to combine both Francesca's report and Dante's behavior as a compound source tag to Virgil's question of "what are you thinking?" (Mandelbaum 5.111). In short, readers infer Virgil as concerned or curious about Dante's state of mind based on knowing that Virgil's mind reading of Dante is linked to Francesca's self narrative. This notion of characters engaging in metarepresentational acts as well as it requiring readers to exercise their own metarepresentational abilities is one reason Dante's texts appears so Bach-like and exhibits the illusion of multiple voices simultaneously in motion. In other words, the text's suggestion and imitation of metarepresentational activity makes this fictional world of Dante's, and the characters within it, seem so convincingly real and dynamic.

Yet there is another layer to metarepresentation embedded in Dante's text. Although I believe this additional layer drives the story, increases its richness, and engages characters, as well as readers, in a more multifaceted experience, this all comes through the obscuring of the text rather than its clarification. At the source of this confusion is metarepresentation itself. Zunshine points out that being able to keep track of the sources of our information involves our ability to place information "under advisement," enabling us to revise our notions of other people's states of mind because we can remember and recall the sources of these bits of information (50). This is certainly necessary both to how characters navigate through the shifting events in the worlds they interact with and also how readers not just enjoyably interrogate stories but also survive the worlds they actually inhabit. This notion of readers

having “certain doubts” about their sources of information and others’ states of mind is necessary as this allows readers to entertain their own value judgments about others while at once being able to remember what those original sources and the contents of those sources actually are. This metarepresentational dance is readers’ ability to balance two perspectives in one moment and play with the counterpoint of life. This concept also helps explain how Dante the pilgrim can both succumb, in “painful tears of pity,” to Francesca’s suffering while soon after in the journey he can celebrate this same design of punishment as “God’s avenging justice” (Musa 5.117; 6.19).

Even so, the idea of balancing and interrogating multiple perspectives all while remembering the sources of these perspectives is not the additional complication that metarepresentation bares. The additional complication comes when source tags become misplaced, misremembered, or even, forgotten all together. In these cases, the source of information is lost leaving the content to randomly circulate within one’s cognitive system, much like a balloon, dislodged from its owner, circulates among the bustle of the crowd (Zunshine 50).

This complication of metarepresentation thus presents itself as the dislodging of sources and it is likely present in the *Inferno*’s fifth canto among its series of multiple voices. In this canto there is the voice of Minos, the judge and enforcer of infernal law on the newly arrived souls’ proper places of eternal inhabitation in the underworld. He warns Dante, “beware / how you enter and where you place your confidence” (Palma 5.18-19). There is Virgil’s questionable advice to attract the attentions of the infernal souls by instigating their vice of lust, as he tells Dante to “entreat them by the love / that lead[s] them” (Hollander 5.77-78). Also, there is the voice of Dante the pilgrim, such as his lament, “Francesca, your torments / make me weep for grief and pity.” In addition, there is also the voice of Dante the narrator looking back on his experience and either seconding his original comments and thoughts or, instead, refuting and revising them (Hollander 5.116-117). Last, not considering the implied author’s or readers’ voices—is the voice of Francesca. She narrates her own tale to Dante as a life where love “seized me so strongly” but also brought her and her lover to “one death” and down into the inferno (Hollander 5.104, 106).

At this point, with such a hefty balancing act for readers to properly manage, it is likely they will become disoriented. Zunshine explains this result of the metarepresentational awareness of a text decreasing rather increasing readers’ vigilant efforts in careful reading (103). The likely result of this desensitized-overstimulation is misreading the text, one which authors of fiction willingly, and purposely, employ as a way to direct readers into particular ways of reading. Of such narrative complexities, Umberto Eco’s notion of the text’s

hold over readers, and characters, apply. He writes, “You cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it” (9). Dante’s *Inferno* is a text that does this very thing.

As a final point, in the *Inferno*’s fifth canto, all of the above is clearly at play for both characters and readers. It is likely readers are at risk of losing place of their source tags, becoming over-stimulated among an array of varying possibilities, and, essentially, misreading the world of the text. Of course it is clear that Dante the pilgrim engages in this act of misreading, which becomes evident in his conflicting views of the punishments toward Francesca, weeping over her trials and yet, in the following canto, claiming this punishment as the right and divine design of infernal law. Although it is possible Francesca is doing her best to give an honest account, being a resident in a part of the inferno, where souls make “reason subject to desire,” is a source tag likely to cause suspicion in readers (Hollander 5.39). For the reader still up to placing source tags and seeing the aesthetics of meta-reading unfold, it might be no surprise that, within a canto filled with the sin of lust, Dante the pilgrim abandons his own reason and misreads Francesca as the patron saint of love rather than the infernal emblem of desire. Therefore, not only does the *Inferno* create a structure of complexity that delivers obscurity, in the way it engages readers’ and depicts characters’ metarepresentational abilities, by doing this the text champions misreading as its essential virtue. But by fully giving its protagonist, and readers, over to this path of misreading, the text replaces telling with showing, which enables the dangers of appetite to unfold in the powerful and didactic form of experience itself. Thus, by way of misreading, does the *Inferno* fulfill what it promises to readers in its initial lines: not to tell but to “show the good that came of” the journey (Musa 1.8).

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Posthumanism, Post-Catastrophe: Redefining the Human
in J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World*

Steve Wagner

Posthumanism is a critical perspective that seeks to interrogate the supposed boundary that exists between human and animal life as well as the ideological foundations of Western humanism. Following from critical precedents set by Marx, Freud, Darwin, and Nietzsche, posthumanism makes the integrity of the human subject its target. Despite this ongoing critique of traditional notions of human value, progress, and supremacy, our current political and cultural climates are clearly still motivated by the idea that the human race can and should seek greater control over its environment, and that the supposedly unique characteristics of the human (intellect, control, language, reason) place us in a privileged position within a hierarchy of animals ranging from least to most human. As a field of inquiry, posthumanism unhinges such assumptions and works to expand our understanding of what it is to be human, challenging the “great divides” of Cartesian humanism like mind and body, reason and affect, and even human and animal. Theorists of our posthuman condition have argued that this ideological reimagining of human identity is a necessary step toward a viable future in which the reality of human supremacy, and even the stability of the species itself, give way to what Cary Wolfe calls “a new reality,” one that requires no less than imagining ourselves in a “new place in the universe” (C. Wolfe 128).

What better way is there to imagine that new place in the universe than through science fiction? So inveterately anthropocentric are our cultural institutions that it would take something monumental to disrupt the trajectory of the world's values, politics, and economies. The fictional work of J.G. Ballard offers us many such monumental events, often focusing on the psychological aftermath of extreme changes to the human environment. In Ballard's second novel, *The Drowned World* (1962), just such a monumental event is offered, and it's one that resonates with our current environmental crisis. At this moment in history, it is particularly apt to reimagine our identity in relation to the rest of Earth's life, as we begin to recognize the very real and growing anxiety brought on by the possibility that industrial and technological advancement will lead to a fundamental change in the human environment, whether that change comes through the application of technology to our own bodies, or through one of the increasingly plausible apocalyptic scenarios made possible by our technological hubris. The need to interrogate our own arrogance has never been more urgent, as we see our mission to construct bigger and “bet-

ter” societies having unexpected and undesirable consequences on the Earth and its life, and as we look into an uncertain future that could provide us with an environment in which the modern human is not particularly fit to operate. Moving outside the narrow confines of humanism may be a necessary move if we are to successfully navigate the world after climate change, virtual technology, overpopulation, increased military power, etc.

In *The Drowned World*, such a catalyst for change is provided by nature through catastrophe. We are presented with a scenario in which the environment has changed and is changing to favor different life-forms, and the urban human of the 20th century is not one of them. The temperature in London oscillates around 110 degrees Fahrenheit, and a large band of rainstorms centering at the equator plagues most of the world, forcing the last remnants of human civilization toward the poles. Centering around a few characters on an increasingly futile mission to map the contours of the now-flooded lagoon that floats high above London, the novel shows us certain characters resisting the change of environment, while others are subconsciously drawn to it. In the protagonist, Robert Kerans, we see how the environment has neurological and biological effects on its inhabitants; Kerans has frequent nightmares about massive predatory reptiles, he feels and hears an ominous drumming deep within his psyche, and he starts to act on impulses that seem, at first, unintuitive. He shares these sensations with a few other members of the crew, and they find themselves irresistibly drawn to the lagoon, the dense foliage, and the collection of former anxieties and fears summed up by the direction “South.”

Ballard’s novel broadens the scope of the human animal through leaving behind the remnants of industrial and scientific progress in favor of something unknown, which is what makes the novel so appropriate for this kind of reading. The novel presents a struggle between humanist values that fly in the face of their apparent futility and inapplicability, and those characters that resist these values in order to follow their biological intuitions. Ballard teases out the tension between the anxiety of evolutionary regression to a less-human state and progress toward a viable species for the future environment. This sci-fi setting is particularly well-equipped to deal with questions of human identity and our relationship to our environment, as it constructs a new reality wherein our prevailing anthropocentric assumptions don’t apply.

The characters’ mission in *The Drowned World* is a synecdoche for our scientific rigor and drive to understand the environment. As the narrator explains, “The biological mapping had become a pointless game, the new flora following exactly the emergent lines anticipated twenty years earlier, and he was sure that no-one at Camp Byrd in Northern Greenland bothered to file his reports, let alone read them” (Ballard 6). The results of this “biological

mapping” without any definable *telos* have been predicted, and the current state of humanity shows no practical need for this service. Many are even quite aware of its futility, with the workers becoming less and less concerned with the quality of their work, and with leaders such as Colonel Riggs observing, “Apparently the water level is still rising, all the work we’ve done has been a total waste” (Ballard 12). But the scientific will to knowledge presses on, against the sustainability of civilized culture, and against the increasing lethargy of the workers.

Colonel Riggs expresses the strange tension that exists at this civilizational outpost as people begin to realize all of this. In response to a radio message reporting that their mission will be over in a few days, he says, “Thank God for that signal from [Camp] Byrd... this detailed mapping of harbours for use in some hypothetical future is absurd. Even if the solar flares subside it will be ten years before there’s any serious attempt to re-occupy these cities... The whole place is nothing but a confounded zoo” (Ballard 14). Even Colonel Riggs, whose minimal and empirical habits of speech reflect his discomfort with abstraction, recognizes the futility of the mission. Even still, the work moves on, and many crew members, including Riggs, fail to perceive the eventual absurdity of the civilization in Northern Greenland to which they long to return.

Though Ballard’s climate-catastrophe is not man-made, the effect it has closely resembles that of current predictions of climate change. In this sense, the synecdoche of mapping the counters and observing the flora represents technology’s exponential growth in the face of the environment’s exponential deterioration. Ballard reminds us that the move toward a more dynamic concept of humanity might not come about as a conscious, reasoned choice, but as a necessary struggle out of a more responsive relationship to the environment¹. The motives of Ballard’s Southward-driven renegades do not derive from well-reasoned arguments that lead to willed choices so much as they are necessary and intuitive feelings of intensity that drive them to do what they do. Their transformation happens in concert with their environment, and the inevitability of this environment’s change is evoked in the novel’s opening sentence, “Soon it would be too hot” (Ballard 5). This feeling of biological and neurological impulsion is key to Kerans’ development.

Kerans’ unconscious decision making begins as he investigates the supplies of the outpost and, for reasons unspoken and not understood by Kerans himself, steals nothing but a “4-inch diameter brass compass that had been left for repair” due to its annulus being loose and “rotated a full 180 degrees” (Ballard 30). The compass’s disorienting rotation clearly speaks to the reversal of desirable direction that Kerans and his fellow rebels experience. Most seek civilization back up north, but this compass, to which Kerans becomes

curiously attached, reverses the directions, showing north as south, and south as north. North, the “logical” destination, is now for Kerans characterized by the same fear and anxiety that formerly belonged to the South. As his biology begins to speak to him and suggest motives that oppose the northward odyssey, “north” becomes an ironic symbol of failure, submersion, and regression, a frightening image of not-moving-on and stubbornly anchoring one’s self to an inevitable end.

Ballard’s refusal to articulate the rebels’ motives (reflected in Kerans’ inability to do so²) is central to the novel’s departure from Cartesian humanism’s privileging of reason, speech, and intellection as the defining attributes of the human subject. Theorists of science fiction like Carl Freedman and Darko Suvin have argued that the genre estranges readers while also providing them a necessary narrative “operation of cognition” in order to explain the foreignness of its world and allow readers to connect it meaningfully to their own realities. Ballard, however, deliberately leaves out such a rational account, and the “critical interrogation” that would follow (Freedman 16-17).³ His characters’ motives are elusive, ineffable, thoroughly felt and implied by their biology and psychology, but never properly articulated. For Ballard, for the rebels, and for anyone but the traditional human subject, this isn’t necessary.

This is also why the novel ends before we see the inevitable demise of the rebels. Instead, it ends at the point where they no longer appear fit to be subjects of a typical novel. If, as Paul Sheehan has argued, the novel is a genre that “takes the measure of the human,” encoding certain values of humanist orthodoxy, then in Ballard’s hands, the novel can also disrupt this orthodoxy by challenging the form’s expectations (Sheehan, Cf. Introduction). Nearing the end of the novel, when Kerans and Hardman rendezvous one-hundred fifty miles South of the base, Hardman is in horrible condition, unable to open his eyes and barely able to press on. Yet the last image we get of him is delivered in an optimistic tone. The narrator describes, “As long as his eyes were strong enough to sense the distant signals transmitted by the sun, and as long as the iguanas failed to scent him, Hardman would move forwards... head raised to the sunlight breaking among the branches” (Ballard 160). Ballard has prepared the reader to see this seemingly naïve and hopeless ending as a victory by insisting that the rebels were ironically “committed to the future” by plunging boldly into the Triassic environment, confusing the orientation of “past” and “future” just as Kerans’ compass did (Ballard 136). In doing so, Ballard’s novel dismantles the humanistic model of the *Bildungsroman*, demonstrating the absurd inadequacy of its expectations, wherein the protagonists arrive at a point of intellectual and moral maturity.

What is driving these characters southward is a series of biological and psychological signs that demand that they face the Earth’s forces head on. At

the beginning, Kerans is not yet overcome by what many crew members call “beach syndrome,” which comprises an attachment to and fascination with the lagoon, an audible drumming in one’s head in sync with one’s heart rate, and dreams of “the powerful mesmeric pull of... baying reptiles” (Ballard 65). In its early stages, Kerans unconsciously tries to “sever his links with the base” and civilization by turning off his radio and preferring solitude (Ballard 64). As his “syndrome” progresses, we see Kerans’ environment start to encroach upon his own identity, as he “[feels] the barriers which [divide] his own cells from the surrounding medium [dissolve]” (Ballard 64)

In these passages we see relationships between his biology, environment, and repressed, biological memories of the evolution of the species brought to the forefront of his consciousness by his dreams. He doesn’t willfully change his body or mind to fit the environment; the incursion of the primeval environment awakens in him a biological memory of it. Manifesting what Freud calls the Darwinian wound to humanity’s narcissism, Kerans’ consciousness is no longer “master in its own house.” Instead, the animal body asserts itself through its evolutionary memories and structures of thought that seem completely alien to Kerans.

The bodily nature of these thoughts are further expressed by the station’s doctor, Dr. Bodkin, who, in studying the “beach syndrome,” concludes that “The further down the [central nervous system] you move, from the hind-brain through the medulla into the spinal cord, the further you descend back into the neuronics past” (Ballard 39). As the crew observes and catalogues the “backward journey of... plants and animals” caused by the increased temperature and flooding, Dr. Bodkin feels that they’ve “ignored the most important creature,” the human, which is also undergoing an evolutionary transformation to accommodate itself to an environment that once existed on Earth (Ballard 37). Bodkin says,

Is it only the external landscape which is altering? How often recently most of us have had the feeling of *deja vu*, of having seen all this before, in fact of remembering these swamps and lagoons all too well. However selective the conscious mind may be, most biological memories are unpleasant ones, echoes of danger and terror... Everywhere in nature one sees evidence of innate releasing mechanisms literally millions of years old, which have lain dormant through thousands of generations but retained their power undiminished. (Ballard 38)

Nature informs the identity of these characters through these “innate releasing mechanisms,” and alters the way they think, behave, and make decisions as they are “plunged back into the archaeopsychic past, uncovering the ancient taboos and drives that have been dormant for epochs” (Ballard 39).

This image of human behavior and identity as being intrinsically tied to the environment speaks to the human animal's categorical malleability. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a band or pack being formed out of environmental pressure and threat is useful here.⁴ They establish a binary between how we like to think of reproduction and proliferation, and how it actually occurs, offering a multiplicitous conception of agency and identity formation. Reality shows us that propagation happens not only within a species, but that the struggles of existence unite bands of life that defy species-specific boundaries, and that the cooperation that goes on among species plays a major part in shaping individual organisms.⁵ The terminology they use, by describing organisms existing in a state of "becoming" rather than "being," invites us to think of the human as an ever-changing organism that responds to local environmental changes, and the various life-forms that share an environment.

What makes *The Drowned World* so appropriate for a posthumanist reading is its recognition of the relationships among environment, body, and mind, as well as Ballard's vision of a future in which our inability to recognize the necessity of nurturing these relationships leads to delusion and destruction that we can only postpone for so long. The characters of *The Drowned World* who are most committed to avoiding the pitfalls of a doomed civilization are those who seem to be self-destructive, considering their desire to escape South despite any responsible plan of action. But Ballard never destroys these characters, and he exalts rather than criticizes their motivation as a "commitment to the future" (Ballard 136). When Kerans' penthouse in the eroding Ritz hotel is torn apart, its cooled and conditioned air irreversibly released, he becomes even more emboldened, described as a "reluctant embryo" bursting from "its yoke sac." This moment was the "... necessary spur to action, to his emergence into the brighter day of the interior, archeopsychic sun. Now he would have to go forward. Both the past... and the present... no longer offered a viable existence. His *commitment to the future...* was absolute" (Ballard 136, my emphasis).

The idea that a dystopian setting can have utopian effects⁶ is what allies Ballard's apocalyptic future with the positive aspirations of posthumanism's critical trajectory. In short, a new reality may be needed to fundamentally change our conception of the human. *The Drowned World* shows us that the likelihood of drastic changes to our environment may do violence to the form of our species as we have known it. Yet such violence might also point the way to a more sustainable future by helping us to escape too narrow a concept of the masterful subject, and the arrogances of that knowing species *homo sapiens*.

Notes

1. Donna Haraway, a pre-eminent theorist of the posthuman condition, writes of this kind of change in her piece “When Man™ Is On the Menu,” saying that, “Most important obligations and passions in the world are unchosen; ‘choice’ has always been a desperately inadequate political metaphor for resisting domination and for inhabiting a liveable world” (Haraway 43).
2. Later, when Strangman seeks to comprehend the motives of Kerans and the two other renegades after misdiagnosing their rebellion as knowledge of some treasure, Kerans can’t come up with anything: “Kerans tried to explain why they were still there. However, Strangman seemed unable to take the explanation seriously, swinging abruptly from amusement at their naivety to sharp suspicion” (Ballard 84). Kerans’ unsuccessful explanation isn’t even offered to the reader, and if it were, it would likely sound naïve and suspicious.
3. The idea comes from Darko Suvin’s *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, in which Suvin describes science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal framework is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Suvin 14)
4. “We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production. Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes” (Deleuze 5).
5. Elizabeth Grosz is also a major inspiration for this way of imagining the dynamic interaction among species and the environment. In *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, she writes, “... an animal is not immersed wholesale in a given milieu, but at best engages with certain features that are of significance to it, that counterpoint, in some sense, with its own organs. Each organism in every species is surrounded by its *Umwelt*, an ‘island of the sense’ that is always a considerable simplification of the information and energy provided by any milieu. The *Umwelt* of the organism is precisely as complex as the organs of that organism... Organisms are sense bubbles, monads composed of coextensive overlapping beings and fragments of milieus, enclosing and carrying with them elements, one might even understand them as musician counterpoints, that are only given outside, to which the organism itself is a brilliant and inventive response” (Grosz 41).
6. Warren Wagar: “... the pilgrim cannot pick and choose among his delights. Everything becomes delightful, without exception. Pain is pleasure, and

pleasure pain. Escaping to a higher consciousness demands immersion in all being. Hence, in Ballard's transvaluation of the traditional Western wisdom, even dystopias are utopian" (Wagar 54)

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“I have no face”: Real and Metaphysical Meat in *The Waves*

Dan Libertz

Leonard Woolf called *The Waves* a “masterpiece,” but he felt that the first one hundred pages were very difficult to follow, which led him to doubt that the common reader could keep up. Leonard was largely right because many readers, even scholars, have shied away from this “masterpiece” (qtd. in Hite xxxv). In a visually descriptive, poetic fashion, *The Waves* follows the intertwining lives of seven individuals—Bernard, Louis, Jinny, Neville, Percival, Rhoda, and Susan—six of whom collectively narrate the novel in the form of a series of soliloquies. In a novel that features little in the way of plot, the shared meal provides the principal occasion for characters to interact. Beyond the symbolic value of these meals, I’d like to explore how the characters of Percival and Rhoda are figured and consumed as the meat of such meals. It is my hope that my reading of meat in the novel will help to expand our sense of who or what has agency, so that we see Rhoda’s affinity with meat and appreciate the way that her very status *as* meat enables her to escape the oppressive institutions of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and British imperialism that Percival stands for throughout the text. Thinking about *The Waves* in this way, a novel justly celebrated for its rich depiction of human interiority, might additionally challenge the carnivorous and sacrificial logic of the human subject in the Western tradition.

Recent theoretical engagements with meat and subjectivity over the last few years can help to illuminate a story of meat in Woolf’s writing and, conversely, Woolf’s writing interpreted in this way might shed some light upon this emergent field of inquiry in human-animal studies, broadening its scope. French sociologist Georges Bataille argues in *Theory of Religion* that the “definition of the animal as a thing has become a human given,” and this objectification of the nonhuman animal is mainly accomplished through the act of eating (39). As Carrie Rohman explains, “Eating cooked meat defines the animal as always-having-been a thing, and conversely, it defines man as never-having-been a thing” (123). By contrast, the raw carcasses in the paintings of Francis Bacon suggestively undo such a logic, representing the importance of meat as a substance in which both humans and nonhuman animals have their share.

In his extended study of Bacon’s art, Gilles Deleuze identifies, “Meat [as] the common zone of man and the beast, their zone of indiscernibility” (23). We are all “potential carcasses,” Bacon famously said, whether we are human

or nonhuman animals, and Bacon displays this notion in his portraits of meat that depict human and animal bodies alike as vulnerable to suffering: “every man who suffers is a piece of meat” (24, 23). Several modernist writers before Bacon shared a fascination with the metaphorical possibilities of meat. The consumption of meat in modernist literature, as Michael Parrish Lee has argued, is tied to social interest and the desire for knowledge, while also serving as a “marker of the sameness—the troubling interconnectedness—of all species” (250, 262). As I will demonstrate, Woolf, too, takes advantage of the physical, psychological, and social connotations of meat, employing them to complicate subjectivity in ways that resist perceived social ills such as patriarchy, imperialism, and heteronormative sexuality.

In *The Waves*, in particular, Woolf uses meat as a liberating as well as an oppressive metaphor with respect to what I will refer to as both real or substantive meat (exemplified in Rhoda) and metaphysical meat (exemplified in Percival). Through Rhoda, meat can be an expression of suffering as well as a unique artistic tool to be deployed against a society that creates meaning only through the dominance of a cultural system predicated upon the authority of the masculine, the rational, and the speaking being. In “Eating Well,” Jacques Derrida identifies a “sacrificial structure” that underlies canonical philosophical discourse on subjectivity, which leaves open the possibility for “a noncriminal putting to death” of the edible animal (112). For Derrida, the prototypical subject possesses a phallus, wields reason and words, and also eats flesh—a conceptual structure for which Derrida coins the term “carnophallogocentrism” (113). This “carno-phallogocentric” logic is precisely what Percival upholds and Rhoda attempts to resist.

The “meat” of Woolf’s story, so to speak, is Percival, and the three central moments of the novel all involve meals: the farewell dinner, the memorial dinner where the characters reunite at Hampton Court, and Bernard’s dinner at the end. Suzette Henke points out that during the farewell dinner, the characters “cannibalistically feed on Percival’s strength” as if he were a god,” and during the memorial dinner Henke writes that, “Bereavement transubstantiates their meal into a Eucharistic feast predicated on mythic memory, ‘a ceremonial acknowledgement of the value and durability of the past’” (140). The meals become critical sites of consumption in which the other characters symbolically feast upon his vitality. In the farewell dinner, both meat and Percival are entities that bind the group together in community through a scene that is reminiscent of ritualistic sacrifice. Animalistic language, in particular, fills this moment of communality and sacrifice. When the binding circle breaks, Louis laments that “too soon the moment of *ravenous* identity is over, and the *appetite* for happiness, and happiness, and still more happiness is *glutted*” (Woolf 104; emphasis mine). The group of friends seems to nour-

ish themselves upon Percival's plenitude, glutting their happiness upon the substance of his being.

This scene is eerily reminiscent of Freud's view of the murder and consumption of the primal father by a collective band of sons in a struggle for power in *Totem and Taboo* (141). The similarity here is no coincidence. Familiar with the outlines of Freud's anthropological narrative through the writing of her friend, the classicist Jane Ellen Harrison, Woolf reworks or revises the totem meal in order to set up, in perhaps a mocking fashion, the patriarchal and oppressive force that Percival takes up throughout the novel¹. Freud speculates that by eating their father, the brothers "accomplished their identification with him, and each of them appropriated a piece of his strength" (Freud 141).

Despite the general sense of good will after the figurative eating of human flesh, in Woolf's novel as in Freud's anthropological myth, a sense of uneasiness prevails. Freud posits that while the brothers hated the primal father, they "also loved and admired him," and as a result, a "sense of guilt came into being, here coinciding with the general remorse" (Freud 142). In *The Waves*, this manifests itself in Neville's anxious questioning after the farewell dinner: "What can we do to keep him? How bridge the distance between us? How fan the fire so that it blazes forever?" (Woolf 106). Freud argues that to try to satisfy their guilt, the brothers forbid the killing of the father-substitute (the totem animal), but the totem animal is still periodically sacrificed and eaten during an excessive feast (Freud 144). The second dinner in *The Waves* generally serves the same function as the totem meal described by Freud as a ritualistic rehashing of the past (140). Freud makes it clear that the "dead man now became stronger than the living man had been" (142). In *Percival*, through his presence in the surviving characters, we see a similar strength in death. After Percival dies, Bernard mourns him, observing that this world at present "is the world that Percival sees no longer" (Woolf 110). At this moment, Bernard looks into this world, and the first observation he makes is the butcher delivering meat next door (Woolf 110). The sacrifice of Percival haunts Bernard, as it does the others. Percival is outside the text; he has no voice, as if he is at once a god hovering above the physical world as well as meat upon the plate. He is not fit for human skin, and to Bernard he appears "a God," while Neville says that Percival "is remote from us all in a pagan universe" (Woolf 98, 24). For these reasons, there is still little "substance" to Percival-as-meat. He thus constitutes a kind of metaphysical meat, making for a rather empty, or potentially poisonous meal.

Percival is the keeper of order and judgment, his presence shaping each character and forming who they should be as human subjects. When Percival arrives at the first dinner, for instance, Neville says that the "reign of chaos is

over,” he “has imposed order,” and knives “cut again” (Woolf 88). Percival’s very presence hails the young subjects in the carnivorous feast of their early adulthood. This presence embodies several institutions that Rhoda would find abhorrent. We see imperial England when considering Percival’s role in India and the “justice” he would have accomplished there if he lived (Woolf 110). In addition, Susan identifies Percival with the “globe,” and she sees this globe as composed of Percival’s being, linking the far reach of Percival’s influence with the farthest reaches of the British Empire (Woolf 105). Furthermore, Percival is a hyper-masculine figure; his music is “wild hunting music,” he excels at cricket, he will leave Bernard’s letters “among guns,” he is “surly,” and he is a “hero” (Woolf 185, 33, 42, 60, 88). Finally, we see Percival’s attempted marriage to the maternal, Gaea figure of Susan as his attempt to realize an exemplary heterosexual relationship (Woolf 199).

Compared to the imposing presence of Percival, Rhoda is a fairly ambivalent character. In one sense, she is very visceral and real in her almost primordial will of survival against the perceived violence of her world. On the other hand, though, she is quite outside the real world, constantly retreating to a fantasized space of images of “marble columns and pools on the other side of the world where the swallow dips her wings” (Woolf 76). Rhoda’s retreat to this idealized space represents her “indigestion,” so to speak, of Percival’s carnivorous order, and his presence weakens as Rhoda realizes her own meatiness (Woolf 150).

Rhoda finds the world to be a cruel place, and particularly its socially coercive forces. This is perhaps best seen when she attends a ball with Jinny. Rhoda describes the others as having eyes that “burn like the eyes of animals brushing through leaves on the scent of the prey” (Woolf 104). Thus, she feels that she is being stalked as prey for a meal. For instance, when asked to dance, terrible sensory images arise in Rhoda: “An immense pressure is on me A million arrows pierce me. Scorn and ridicule pierce me. The tiger leaps” (Woolf 76). She is someone to be hunted, like a “thing,” a piece of meat for this “tiger” of the symbolic world. This never lets up for Rhoda, with words playing a pivotal role in her suffering. In the same scene, Rhoda comments that tongues “with their whips are upon” her and she concludes that she “must prevaricate and fence them off with lies” (Woolf 76). Following the accepted behavior of the moment is a constant challenge and a traumatically violent one for Rhoda. The symbolic order, here the heteronormative environment of a ball, is for Rhoda a hunting ground that she is constantly on guard against, probably to a fault. She is always on the defensive, as when she is gripping her fork like a weapon in isolation against the others at the farewell dinner (Woolf 96). Rhoda inhabits not only the position of prey in a ravenous and predatory culture, but also that of Francis Bacon’s “potential carcass.”

In this survival mode, Rhoda epitomizes Bataille's view of the non-human animal. Woolf may have been thinking along similar lines when she has Rhoda envision herself "hung with other people like a joint of meat among other joints of meat" as she is contemplating her loneliness (117). Meat becomes a place to suffer, a common space both humans and nonhuman animals can occupy, as Deleuze theorized. Rhoda, as substantive meat that could be hung on a hook like the carcass of a cow, disrupts traditional humanist conceptions of the animal, and her vision of human joints of meat unsettles distinctions between human and nonhuman animal, disturbing the carno-phallogocentric structure of society.

Rhoda understands that the only way to be liberated, to become meat, is to give up the face. As Gerald Bruns explains, the face is "something laid on from the outside" that allows one to pass through society, comprising a "regime of socialization" (712, 713). As Bruns argues, the highest degree of "human-ness" of a face is the white European male, and all else slowly declines to the lowest form of organism from that human pinnacle (712). Rhoda repeatedly asserts that she "has no face" throughout the novel, finding "the human face hideous" for its evocation of socially normative expectations—that one marry, have children, serve the British Empire, and so on (Woolf 115). As Gerald Bruns describes, "without the face, the body . . . becomes *flesh* or meat—something that loses definition as it is removed from its bones" (711). By refusing such normative values and giving up the face, Rhoda embraces her meatiness as a way of liberating herself from the social order prescribed to her by the likes of Percival, that great defender of masculine, imperial power.

A character who contrasts and crosses paths with Rhoda's efforts in attaining transcendence is the wordy humanist Bernard who attempts to shore up his subjectivity to the last line of the novel. Flinging himself "unvanquished and unyielding" upon the waves, he dies, suggestively sacrificing himself upon the altar of Percival (220). Rhoda, on the other hand, performs the most rebellious act: unlike Bernard, she refuses such a participation in sacrifice through her own suicide. Rhoda certainly commits a literal suicide, but it is also a "symbolic suicide," which underscores her rebellious efforts within the symbolic order. Exploring the symbolic value of suicide, Alenka Zupančič suggests that it can express a "radical *no!* to the universe," while Slavoj Žižek suggests that "losing all" might "enable us to begin anew...from [a] point of absolute freedom" (Zupančič 92; Žižek 43). Rhoda is the only character to take her own life. She is completely independent of Percival's and Bernard's notions of reason or purpose, and she ends her life without motive, without language, offstage, and outside the narrative.

Embracing her status as substantive meat, Rhoda opposes what Derrida calls the carno-phallogocentric logic of human selfhood. If characters

imaginatively support their subjectivity by eating meat in the novel, becoming meat helps to dispel aspects of society that Woolf saw as oppressive. Reading meat in Woolf's fiction can help to expand our conceptions of agency—that is, who or what we encounter in the meat on our plates. By examining the role of meat in literature, we might also appreciate how flesh—of nonhuman and human animals alike—makes the subject as much as the brain that thinks and the mouth that speaks.

Notes

1. Elizabeth Abel notes that it is likely that Woolf picked up the anthropological writings of Freud in *Totem and Taboo* from Harrison's *Epilegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, and according to Patricia Cramer, Woolf borrowed heavily from Harrison when she wrote *The Waves* (Abel 27-28; Cramer 444).

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Becomings-Mute: Language Loss in Conrad and Lawrence

Sarah Wheeler

Is it time for humanity to look to its laurels and consider taking off the crown for a moment? The “counterlinguistic or affective turn” in animal studies, described recently by Kari Weil in *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?*, leads current scholarship to a productive reconsideration of language as the quintessential species advantage of the human. Pointing to Jacques Derrida’s disabling experience of shared “embodied finitude,” as he stood naked before the gaze of his cat, Cary Wolfe has marked what he sees as the pivotal moment in the development of a posthuman approach. Coming to terms with our convoluted construction of animal otherness requires accepting what is often the compromised role of the speaking self. Although it represents no small affront to cherished ideals of reason and order, by branding language a source of false distinction and groundless hierarchy we might realize the potential for an unencumbered acknowledgment of otherness, a moral re-configuration of alterity.

The recognition of our troubled relationship with language will continue to fuel future studies of animality and certainly enriches critical readings of attitudes towards the speaking self in literature. Modernist responses to the revolutionary theories of Darwin and Freud in the early twentieth century create an animal aesthetic that reveals some of the tensions in our struggle to define humanity and the role we play in our environment. Couched in a strange *mélange* of escapism and disavowal, silent animality at once threatens and entices the characters in two modernist texts in particular, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and D.H. Lawrence’s novella *St. Mawr* (1925).

Both writers juxtapose characters operating in a surplus of language with characters who are deprived of language or who are actively seeking quiet. Depictions of silence—whether belonging to the human, animal, or natural world—offer insight into modernist views of the value of verbal communication. For those wedded to the word, becoming-silent risks becoming-*meat*, as Gilles Deleuze might warn us, since human language transcends the body and grants the subject a kind of immortality wordless beasts lack. Loss of *logos* is a slip into formlessness and instability, the trauma of which a character such as Conrad’s Marlow cannot bear. Throughout his journey through a continent he cannot hear much less understand, Marlow expresses this humanist anxiety over muteness, clinging to Kurtz’s language even as it dwindles to little more than a breath. The heroines of Lawrence’s *St. Mawr*, on the other hand,

are drawn to the possibilities of an existence without the entanglements of language.

In discussing Derrida's use of Jeremy Bentham's attention to animal suffering to theorize the notion of passivity, Cary Wolfe suggests that "not being able" might serve as a productive strategy for undoing humanist hierarchies. Wolfe insists we expose the misattribution of our species' superiority, pointing to our own inherent subjugation to language, our "constitution in the materiality and technicity of a language that is always on the scene before we are" (571). The "materiality" of language is hardly diaphanous; instead, picture a wooly screen mediating our experience in an inevitably reductive and distorted way. As the heavy layers of Conrad's narrative unfold, the apparatus of language figures as a constant preoccupation for Marlow. Kurtz is his god of speech, a disembodied voice representing the ideals of transcendent language itself. Like Wolfe's description of language, Kurtz is "on the scene" in Africa before Marlow steps off the boat.

The problems intrinsic to language are two sides of a coin for Marlow: First, he can't live without it, meaning he cannot experience his world outside of that "technicity" of language. Second, when he turns to it in order to make sense of his world or share his experience with another, he is made aware of its limitations as a tool of communication. Marlow complains constantly of the challenges facing the storyteller: "No, it is impossible [...] to convey the life sensation of any given epoch of one's existence [...]. We live, as we dream—alone..." (33). Instead of dealing with this ontological isolation, Marlow decides that his flawed story is better than no story at all. He insists that his is "the speech that cannot be silenced" (44).

Marlow stockpiles his own phrases, while depriving Africa of a single word. But he is curious to know what his human presence means to that "matted vegetation" on the riverbank. Sadly, his own "deafness" triggers a reflex objectification: "...I felt how big [...] was that thing that couldn't talk, and perhaps was deaf as well. What was in there? I could see a little ivory coming out from there, and I had heard Mr. Kurtz was in there" (32). Silent beings get reduced to storehouses of goods, subject to all manner of exploitation.

Although Marlow's words are his antidote to the unease of quietude, his tale traces the breakdown of human language as it encounters Conrad's racialized representations of animality. Upon closer examination, the collapse is actually initiated and finalized through the use of language, the abuse of rhetoric. Kurtz's seventeen-page pamphlet, written for the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs," shows an admiring Marlow "the unbounded power of eloquence[...]—of burning noble words" (61). The shocking postscript, "Exterminate all the brutes," prefigures the disintegration of advanced composition into that final repetition of guttural sound, "the hor-

ror, the horror.”

In Carrie Rohman’s reading of *Heart of Darkness* in her book *Stalking the Subject*, she suggests that “Language’s ability to transcend the body is called into question because of Kurtz’s participation in animality” (48). Indeed, Marlow is nervous about the proper custody of Kurtz’s legacy, although he wants desperately to believe “[Kurtz’s] words will remain” (95). Soon, Kurtz stops “discoursing” and simply repeats the phrase “My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my—” (60). Even in these tiny utterances, Kurtz’s language asserts its god-like power to transform a woman into a bride, an elephant into a commodity—all in one fell swoop of egotism. Kurtz finally resorts to a type of nonverbal language, as evidenced in the row of heads on stakes in front of his compound. Marlow first mistakes them as decorations but soon realizes they “were not ornamental, but symbolic; they were expressive and puzzling, striking and disturbing” (71). The final sounds that Kurtz breathes have no precise signification. In the end, Marlow decides they must be stricken from the record and substituted with the name of Kurtz’s Intended. If language transcends Kurtz’s mortal coil, it does so in a lie (87).

The scene directly following Marlow’s ode to Kurtz’s fading eloquence catches the narrator in a noteworthy moment of the kind of language incapacity and shared vulnerability that fosters the deconstruction of alterity. The death of the African helmsman is so difficult to explain to Marlow’s audience that he has to disclaim his emotional response to the event. Why should he feel any regret at witnessing this death if the man was just “a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara”? (62). The look on the man’s face when struck by the spear is something Marlow claims to remember still, more lasting in its significance to him than any of Kurtz’s verbal flourishes.

The scene entwines the two men’s bodies: Marlow pulls the spear from the helmsman’s side; he hugs the helmsman, pressing his shoulders to his own chest and feeling the heavy weight of the man’s body. The recognition of “a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment” is what makes Marlow throw the body of the helmsman into the river to avoid its becoming lunch for the cannibals (62). A being whose humanity up to this point Marlow has denied becomes worthy of a fate better than meat. The “partnership” Marlow forms with the helmsman has allowed him to register “the hurt” this man feels, pushing the divisions and demands of language aside temporarily for a concentrated bodily sensation and nonverbal communion.

We find similar dichotomies between body and mind, sensory experience and rational thought, in D. H. Lawrence’s novella *St. Mawr*. Whereas Conrad’s text explores the anxiety characters feel at the loss of linguistic power, Lawrence’s characters struggle to evade the suffocating screen language

puts between them and experience. Like Kurtz, the character of Rachel Witt embodies the ideals of human speech and reason. As her name suggests, Mrs. Witt is cleverness and verbal prowess personified. Revealing her own lack of experience outside of language, Mrs. Witt deprives herself of a physical body when considering her own mortality: “I seem to have been a daily sequence of newspaper remarks, myself...Bury everything I ever said or that was said about me, and you’ve buried *me*” (113).

Lawrence’s romanticized animal aesthetic imbues nature and nonhuman animals with a vitality and nobility that humans have lost somewhere along the evolutionary path. St. Mawr the horse is what a real man should be. His groomsmen Lewis and Phoenix function as a mini-pack, one “horse-man” for each female character to admire. Lawrence constructs their otherness crudely at times, and these two mixed-race characters become caricatures not unlike those of the African “savages” in Conrad’s text. If not degrading them, Lawrence’s narrator and upper-class characters drown them in a sentimental nostalgia for a time when wild passions ruled and primitive man lived a pure and free life. The horsemen often communicate nonverbally and read others—especially women—with a piercing accuracy. Not unlike Derrida naked before the gaze of his cat, Lou feels herself “found out” by Lewis. He possesses the “eyes of a wild cat peering intent from under the darkness of some bush where it lies unseen” (53). Phoenix makes the servants nervous without saying a word: The maid complains, “[H]e makes you feel what he’d do to you if he could” (66). Although fluent in a language of their own, Lawrence’s horsemen most often enjoy living in silence.

At times, the author reflects on his own tendency towards the mystical, turning to free indirect discourse to add an extra layer of irony to his characters’ glorification of animal quiet. Lawrence does allow Rachel Witt a cryptic musing on the “silent communion” she sees between the horse-men and other animals. Lewis helps an injured bird, experiencing something akin to shared, embodied finitude that, of course, excludes Mrs. Witt. Her observation of this scene, however, results in an unexpected revelation: “...she had realized another world, silent, where each creature is alone in its own aura of silence, the mystery of power[...].” (124). Animality is linked to another sphere, as usual, but one in which the lack of language is suddenly something other than a weakness. In his Cerisy lectures, Derrida asks how we might imagine Bentham’s “not being able” as a kind of power (cf. Derrida 27-8), one similar perhaps to Keats’ negative capability, the idea that one might withdraw from personality with all its garrulous insistences and dwell in uncertainty, in quiet mystery.

Beckoning Rachel and Lou Witt as an escape from European logocentrism, Lawrence’s “Wild America” offers the hush of animality. The change in

setting silences Mrs. Witt's voice temporarily; in fact, as she claims to have come home to die, wordlessness and death find themselves in a familiar equation (153). Indeed, the last lines of the narrative reveal the disparate effects of the new setting on the two women. Lou buys a ranch where she says "the stillness simply speaks" (171). Her mother retorts, "I had rather it held its tongue... I feel as if the sky was a big cracked bell and a million clappers were hammering human speech out of it" (171). Still overloaded with language, she cannot find silence. Her character can only see the natural landscape as a reflection of the human, of her speaking self. In the battle of "Witt" vs. Body, Mrs. Witt stands only slightly shaken, but Lawrence's finale does afford her daughter with a kind of nutritive self-sacrifice that coincides with an understanding of the natural landscape and her place in it.

According to Kari Weil, the turn to animal studies stems from a "desire to know that there are beings or objects with ways of knowing and being that resist our flawed systems of language and who may know us and themselves in ways we can never discern" (12). Unfortunately, the cult of the speaking self frequently appears unable or unwilling to recuperate its losses in any type of appreciation of those unknowable ways. Just like Mrs. Witt, who yearns for someone to defeat her, the almighty shrine to language begs to be razed and relocated. Affects and Deleuzian "intensities" tempt us to name them. But taking on that challenge would mean privileging the animal body, not to mention relying less on projections of human feeling on to the nonhuman for convenient constructions of otherness.

Whether to view becoming-mute as a tragedy or newfound freedom becomes the essential question for figures like Marlow and Mrs. Witt. Through these negative personifications of language, modernist authors test the longstanding faith in the power of words to overcome our own inherent "animal" otherness. Some of the characters in these texts do, at least, achieve what Derrida hopes will carry us away from anthropomorphism, speciesism, and massacre. That is, "acceding to a thinking, however fabulous and chimerical it might be, that thinks the absence of the name and of the word otherwise, and as something other than a privation" (48). We may not have access to unmediated experience, but silence certainly has a value worthy of our attention. As we try to locate language in places outside the human realm and discover other-than-linguistic connections through shared spaces, distinctions between two orders of being so often placed in opposition—human and animal—appear more and more arbitrary, less and less legitimate.

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IV | Poetry

The Door Closing

night our fist mirror —Li-Young Lee

Jeanne Stauffer-Merle

You wake to a loud knocking
but the message you have been waiting for
all your life *todo tu vida*
the language *lengua* that will let you fall away from yourself
is in Spanish it won't help to panic
so you repeat *la lengua* the words *las palabras*
those secret hands that split open
and thicken into arcs
behind the exit of your mouth

at first you think you're disappearing
like a Spanish clapper or black lace whisperer
like the time your mother whimpered
las palabras in her sleep
las palabras del dormir
but the next day she was still your mother
except for the waxy beads in the crooks
of her eyes *los ojos*
los ojos del tigre you almost said

“the night *la noche*
will fill you up like a blood sausage—
sangre only *sangre*,” your mother spits
“until you are *nada* but a worm *gusano*
de sangre”
but you remember that something must die
for something else to live
just as *el toro's* blind eyes charge their own last chance:

your eyes are not your eyes
no tus ojos

la lengua washing from your pores
el lavarse de tus poros
your body *tu cuerpo* glistening with it
la noche washing out your mouth

the ocean is a street thick with dream *el sueño*
you take that *estrada*
and dive into the long caves that twist into fingers
flushing out the glue of rodents—your last warning
a drowned rat reminds you *tú* you *tú*
you pick off a gray paw stuck like a thorn
in your hand *tu mano*
in the distance there's a silent tree *el árbol mudo*
as if you weren't there

in that sinking *horizonte*
the old *monasterio's* lantern eyes
wind up the tower a dull tolling
like soap through heavy oil
the brothers buried themselves a long time ago—
their untouched bodies spiral around you
el árbol mudo
in these skins you won't care that you're forgetting yourself
as you notice *tus manos* are not *tus manos*
tu respiración no tu respiración
tus palabras no tus palabras tus palabras tus palabras tus palabras—
el lengua de la noche

There Is No Word for the Truth

Jeanne Stauffer-Merle

but there is spider, iguana, crab.

Iguana is the part that fades you to ghost
until you are left watching
the rest of what you are not—
waiting for the final act
to see who pops out at the end
like a book of hours losing themselves
even as they confess:
the moment that keeps turning into something else
like a crab's sideways scuttle
(circling back and back—the corners without front or back)
until you are no longer where you are.
The eerie light that fools us into day and night.
When the curtain rises there is always a curtain.

(and there is no word for the truth but there is scrim
a word once as large as eternity
now hiding like an invisible city
and there is no wind without spiral-spin—
tarantula's beautiful terrible hymn)

How long must we wait for the end.

*

If this were a friendly garden
you could read the sentences line by line
breathe the periods and drain the miracles
out of this day
as you smile into the sky
like a blind woman grinning into a sun
that she imagines is a prayer
and not the scorched whisper
blistering the world
one grim syllable at a time.

All the Same at Journey's End

Musan Cho Oh-hyun (*translated by* Heinz Insu Fenkl)

age: twelve

identity: monk

work till noon stomping the foot mill,
split firewood till the sun goes down...;

once a generation, hear the cry
of a bird hiding out in the woods

then ten years, twenty years
forty years pass, and today

living on the mountain
not seeing the mountain

and the sound of the bird's cry?
i can't even hear my own

일색과후—色過後

나이는 열두 살

이름은 행자

한나절은 디딜방아 찼고

반나절은 장작 패고……

때때로 숲에 숨었을

새 울음소리 듣는 일이었다

그로부터 10년 20년

40년이 지난 오늘

산에 살면서

산도 못 보고

새 울음소리는커녕

내 울음도 못 듣는다

Three Views of Spring

Musan Cho Oh-hyun (*translated by* Heinz Insu Fenkl)

1. Spring Purge

the fiery rashes in my crotch
have caused my festering molars, all, to fall out—
my ignorance, wide as the sky, that magical purge

2. A History of Spring

I cut my words with my tongue—a blade for beheading horses,
and even hallucinogenic mushrooms, which claimed my soul,
are all budding like flowers on this damned spring night

3. Spring Riot

thirsty—I am thirsty—even the rain that disorders the blossoms
each passing spring withers my ever-diminishing lifespan,
and this year it looks like the flowers will come—one big riot

見春三題

조오현

1. 봄의 불식

이 몸 사타구니에 내똥친 붉은 발진
그로 인하여 짓물러 다 빠진 어금니
내 불식 하늘 가장자리 아, 황홀한 肉脫이여.

2. 봄의 역사

내 말을 잘라버린 그 舌刀, 斬馬劍도
내 뉘를 다 앗아간 그 요염한 독머섯도
젠장할 봄날 밤에는 꽃망울을 맺더라

3. 봄의 소요

목마르다, 목마르다. 꽃의 내분비에도
해마다 봄이 오면 갖아지는 내 목숨의 凋枯
올해도 한바탕 소요로 꽃은 울 모양이다

Song for Maria Down from the Mountains

*From Song and Letter to be Delivered to Brunnenburg Castle;
for Mary de Rachewiltz (Poet, scholar, daughter of Ezra Pound)*

H. R. Stoneback

Down from the mountains all down to the sea,
ride rivers of ribbons and rosaries
into the shadows of the hidden nest.
Comes the pig-tailed golden-haired shepherdess:
gondola-leaning, canal-splashing tunes
sung to unholy waters of the lagoon.
Homesick for spring-water fountains of Tirol,
earth-daughter weaned slow from the soil.
Rocks and fields—the sheep, the cows, the horses,
the chanting of ancient songs and stories
when the peasants sit by the vaulted stoves
through winters longer than strong missals, old loves.
Homesickness, yes, but there was the Bible,
read in English, on his lap, and magic fables;
city walks, clacking of cooped-hen printing press
at Santo Stefano, where the ice cream was the best.

Cantos in the evening.

And always the leaving.

Oh let the villagers bring flowers and song, with torches and drums—
For all things in every place, all things human have their homecoming.
And we only know where we are when we are home
in the country of the heart and spring-glimmering stone.

(This poem has been printed in several publications in Italy and the
U.S. This is the first journal publication with facing-page translation.)

Canto per Maria scesa dalle montagne

*From Canto e lettera da consegnare al Castello di Brunnenburg;
for Mary de Rachewiltz (Poet, scholar, daughter of Ezra Pound)*

translated by Rosella Mamoli Zorzi

Scende dalle montagne, arriva al mare,
per fiumi di nastri e di rosari
fino nell'ombra del nido nascosto.
Giunge la pastorella dai codini d'oro:
melodie di gondola cline, di canali
cantate alle acque non sacre della laguna.
Le manca l'acqua di fonte del Tirolo,
figlia della terra, lenta a svezzarsi dal suolo.

Rocce e campi—pecore, mucche, cavalli,
cantilene di antichi canti e racconti
quando siedono i contadini sotto le volte delle stufe
per inverni più lunghi di messali spessi, antichi amori.
Le mancano, sì, ma c'era la Bibbia,
letta in inglese, seduta in grembo a lui, e magiche fiabe;
passeggiate in città, strepito di torchi di stampa
a Santo Stefano, dove il gelato era il migliore.

Cantos alla sera.

E sempre partire.

Oh che i contadini portino fiori e canti, con torce e tamburi—
Perchè ogni cosa in ogni luogo, ogni cosa umana ha il suo ritorno a casa.
E noi sappiamo dove siamo solo a casa
nel paese del cuore e della pietra che brilla in primavera.

(Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, writer, translator and author of numerous books, is one of Italy's leading American literature scholars and she is Professor of Anglo-American Literature at the Università Ca' Foscari in Venice.)

Woodsmoke in Aigues-Mortes: Late November

H. R. Stoneback

We like the way the woodsmoke lingers
In late November in Aigues-Mortes
As the village draws in on itself,
Folds inward for winter: tourists gone, fires stoked.
Behind the medieval walls, smoke lingers, stays.
In Les Saintes-Maries, wall-less by the sea,
The smoke of kitchenfires and *cheminées*
Is more diffused, is blown quickly away
Toward Africa, out there across the Mediterranean.

We drive over to Aigues-Mortes once
Or twice a week for the best tobacco,
For wine and cheese, for the *Herald Tribune*,
For fine filets of Loup de Mer. Sometimes
We stop in Notre-Dame-des-Sablons,
Wet our fingertips in the font, salute
Saint-Louis, all golden in his chapel,
His candles singing in the dark, there in the church
From which he embarked on Crusades, aboard *Montjoie*,

His warship echoing the old French war-cry.
It is still my town, his statue whispers
On the quiet *Place*, as we cross the square
To the *Tabac*. I buy the last pack
Of my favorite tobacco, the kind
With the aroma that lingers. My friend
Tells me he will order more, maybe next week
It will be in. We drive out the south gate,
Watch the last golden light on the ramparts,

Across the salt-marshes of the Salins du Midi.
We circle the walls, consider every tower
In its particularity—the Tour de Constance
With its message: *Resister*. The Tour
Des Bourguignons, where they stacked the corpses,
And salted them well, to keep the rot and smell

Down. After we stop at INTERMARCHÉ,
She reads the headlines threatening war from Baghdad.
Driving toward Les Saintes, crossing at Sylvéreal:

The full moon summons Le Petit Rhone
To glory, to bedazzled joy. This moonlight
Makes it easy to see the white horses
In the passing pastures. The black bulls
Are hard to see. We are almost home.
Li Santi glows across the Marais.
Smoke from the last burning field of Fall drifts:
We like the way the smoke lingers, from afar,
In late November in the dark Camargue.

Quartier Pont de Gau
Les Saintes-Maries-de-la Mer 1997

(This poem was first published as a tri-lingual—English, French and Provençal—chapbook in France by Gregau Press in 1998; the English version—slightly revised—was reprinted in the Yeats Newsletter when the poem won second prize in the Yeats Poetry Contest in 1999; it was included in Stoneback's 2000 volume from Portals Press, Cafe Millennium & Other Poems.)

Fumées de feux de bois en Aigues-Mortes: Fin Novembre

French translation by Catherine Aldington

Nous aimons la façon dont s'attarde la fumée des feux de bois
Fin Novembre en Aigues-Mortes
Tandis que le village se replie sur lui-même,
Se tourne en dedans pour l'hiver les touristes partis, les âtres garnis.
Derrière la muraille médiévale, la fumée s'attarde, s'installe.
Aux Saintes-Maries, sans muraille, sur la mer,
La fumée des cuisinières à bois et des *cheminées**
Est plus diffuse, est dispersée plus vite par le vent
Vers l'Afrique là-bas, de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée.

Nous prenons la voiture pour aller à Aigues-Mortes une
Ou deux fois par semaine pour le meilleur tabac,
Pour le vin et le fromage, pour le *Herald Tribune*,
Pour de beaux filets de Loup de Mer. Parfois
Nous nous arrêtons à Notre-Dame-des-Sablons,
Tremper le bout des doigts dans le bénitier, saluer
Saint-Louis, tout doré dans sa chapelle,
Ses cierges chantant dans la pénombre, là, dans cette église
D'où il s'embarqua pour les Croisades, à bord du Montjoie,

Son navire de guerre résonnant de l'ancien cri de guerre français.
C'est toujours ma ville, chuchote la statue,
Sur la *Place** tranquille, tandis que nous traversons
Jusqu'au *Tabac**. J'achète le dernier paquet
De mon tabac préféré, celui
Dont l'arôme s'attarde. Mon ami
Me dit qu'il en commandera d'autres, peut-être la semaine prochaine
Ce sera là. Nous sortons par la Porte Sud,
Regardons les derniers rayons dorer les remparts,

Par-delà les marais salants, des Salins du Midi.
Nous faisons le tour des murs, scrutant chaque tour
Dans le détail – la Tous de Constance
Avec son message : *Resister**. La Tour
Des Bourguignons, où ils entassèrent les cadavres,
En les salant bien pour empêcher la pourriture et l'odeur

D'être trop forts. Ensuite nous nous arrêtons à INTERMARCHÉ,
Elle lit les grands titres qui menacent d'une guerre à Baghdad.
En roulant vers les Saintes, nous traversons à Sylveréal :

La pleine lune convoque le Petit Rhône
A participer à l'éclat glorieux, à l'éblouissante joie. Ce clair de lune
Permet aisément de voir les chevaux blancs
Dans les prés en passant. Le taureaux noirs
Sont difficiles à voir. Nous sommes presque arrivés.
Li Santi illumine le Marais.
La fumée du dernier près brûlé pour l'Automne, dérive :
Nous aimons la façon dont la fumée s'attarde, au loin,
Fin Novembre dans la pénombre en Camarque.

*En Français dans le texte. Note du traducteur

(The late Catherine Aldington {1938-2010}, whose work appeared in earlier issues of The Shawangunk Review, was a French poet and translator, daughter of the English novelist and poet Richard Aldington, one of the original Imagists.)

Fum de Ramihado en Aigo-Morto: Fin de Novèmbre

Provençal translation by Michèu Courty

Nous agrado lou biais estadis dóu fum di ramihado
Quand s'acabo Novèmbre en Aigo-Morto
Dóu tèms que lou vilage sus éu-meme se Replego,
Se viro en-dedins pèr l'ivèr: li touristo enana, li fougau prouvesi,
Darriè lou bàrri de l'Age mejan, lour fum s'aplanto, s'istalo.
Li Santo, sènso muraio, sus la mar,
Lour fum di fournèu 'mé di *cheminées**
Es mai esparpaia, es empourta mai lèu pèr lou vènt
Vers l'Africo, eila, de l'autro man de la Mar Nostro.

Prenèn la veituro pèr ana en Aigo-Morto, un cop
O dous dins la semano pèr lou meior taba,
Pèr lou vin e lou froumage, pèr *l'Herald Tribune*,
Pèr de bèu fielat de loup. De fes que i'a,
Nous aplantan à Nosto-Damo-di-Sabloun
Fin de saussa lou bout di det dins lou benechié, de saluda
Sant Louis, tant daura dins sa capello,
Si cire cantant dins lou sourne, eici, dins aquelo glèiso
D'ounte s'embarquè pèr li Crousado, sus lou Mount-joio,

Soun batèu de guerro bruisissènt de l'ancian crid de guerro francès.
Es sèmpe ma vilo, chuchoutejo l'estatuo,
Sus la *Place** tranquilasso, dóu tèms que travessan
Enjusco lou *Tabac** Croumpe lou darrié paquetoun
De moun taba escari, aquéu
Que sa fleirour s'atardivo. Moun ami
Me dis que n'èn coumandara d'autre, belèu la semano venènto
Sara 'qui. Sourtèn pèr la Porto dóu Miejour,
Regarden li darrié pai que dauron li bàrri,

Pèr dela li palun di Salin dóu Miejour.
Fasèn lou tour di muraio, espinchant chasco tourre
Dins lou detai—la Tourre de Coustanco
Emè soun message: *Résister** La Tourre
Di Bourguignoun, ounté a moulounéron li cadabre,
En li salant proun pèr empacha lou pourridlé e l'oudour

D'estre trop fort. Plèl nous aplantan à INTERMARCHÉ,
Elo legis li gros titre que fan cregne 'no guerro à Bagdad.
En roulant vers li Santo, travessan Séuvo-Riau:

La luno dins soun plen counvido lou Pichot Rose
A participa au trelus glourious, à l'esbléugissèto gau. Aquelo lugano
Permet de vèire eisa li chivau blanc
Dins li prat en passant. Li biau negre
Es mau-eisa de li destria. Sian quàsi arriba.
Li Santo atubon la palun.
Lou fum dóu darrié prat crema pèr l'Autouno escato:
Nous agrado lou biais estadis dóu fum, au liuen,
Quand s'acabo Nouvèmbre dins lour sourne en Camargo.

*En francés dins lou tèste.

Dualities (Lust and Woe)

Dennis Doherty

For instance, take a memory, a day
at the beach, Jones Beach, the strip of purple
sand suggesting flames licking your laughing
little bare feet, chasing you to the sweet
green sweep of hiss and foam, all you children
skittering tide-ward like wind and sun burnt
sandpipers, where you will do the seal dance,
the shark-ankle-grab, the sputtering whale,
the god-gathered elate bodysurf lift.

Then back seat drowse and sleep in crust cocoon
of salt and fever cured skin, after-heal
of motion dreams on the road with joint curled
family – elbow crook, neck, and inner knee,
exhausted shore-buffed chaff the proof of plums,
homeward, where this ride began, zestful rise.
You'd gone with Dad for a party of drinks –
beer and mixed soda, glaciers of ice –
while the town basked in incipient joy,
and familiar suns exposed hope for more
in the near sparkling dust the road wore with pomp.
Mom packed the basket, finger coddled, stuffed:
her box of eggs, layered wedges sweet and sour,
fruit and refinement of insidious
stick – grit to preserves as feathers to tar.

Picture too, the night he stayed up drinking,
drunk, in wait for your sister's date, pacing:
explosive words, the hulking threat, her screams
and tears while Mother held your head above
the toilet, your stomach heaving with nerves.
And she at your bedside, sagging figure
of lust and woe, stroking you with worry;
slave to alcohol, debtors, romantic
love – the lights, heat, water, her admired man.

A father now, you know the curdling cares
kept from perfection. Safe programs. A plan.
You explore your simultaneous lives,
guilty in your double agency, lies;
you feed the late night jokes on *their* foibles.
They died, left debts, cuts, their secret hoard.

Two stories from your magic youth. Did they
really adore so wrongfully and well?
And then wonder, of the two, which formed you?

Grief

Dennis Doherty

Doesn't appear on pivot of lost ones.
That's pain, fear, even disbelief because
shock. Sadly, you're sane, can see what it means.
Still, the visions remain on the road you
walk, your back straight, your eyes forward but
beyond the way which blurs to backdrop, losing
all study of delineated world –
cicada crust, deliberate beetle,
careening spores and genus of trees, the
orphic eyes of otherness blinking mum.

Something awaits over the hill, some would,
some will. The woods seduce the need to see;
mirage of green stretches from sun to set
across the down-dipped and southering bend.
Losing all path, you straight enter; then, brown
turnstile of spanking branch ushers unseen
screech of livid birds, yips of anxious dogs.
Welcome to land of no light, no way, save
laser pins through leaf on needle and rock,
the random pitfalls of raw geography,
acoustics of slow absorbing sudden.
Tread the mould of squawking sobs, squish of lived.
Hear the gaze of the hunkered in makeshifts
of habitat – scavenged nests, hidden lairs –
lured to your new future, alone, by was.
The flies sing of bear and dung, carrion,
the past present, the present vaguely doomed.

Commence cold sweat and sicken to no end;
find that your guts are starved. Carve what you can
with knife and nails from the air if you must.
Forage and feed off the slough of this place,
bark, bug, or root; stoke survival's furnace.
Even mud pies will sustain you until

the next...what? Cramps; flux of digested life
dribbles down-ravine, wakes the drowsy-wound taunt.

Here now, it rears, realized, great thwarting Won't.

Mystery Blob Found Near Dawn of Time

—AP Headline

Dennis Doherty

One forgets that looking into stars
is looking into time, that if one
were this blob looking as far
into space he'd see the end
of the universe before its start.

Mystery blob of tabloid headline
straddling some copy editor's dawn,
I miss Steve Mcqueen's teen years,
50's horror, fear in a prop box
before CG pirated big bangs.
Your proximity tickles the hair
on the back of my anxiety.

Jeffers assures me the sun shall die,
art a brief cry of creation's will.
I'll blink my eyes – ship's flashing lights –
in moontide, tap these keys and sing
their syllables into sky, transmit
to some future unknown other blob
concerns for distant dawns from the dead.

Threnody for William Carlos Williams

Laurence Carr

in Pittsburgh
where streetlights glowed like ashy stars
and chickens romped in sooty suits
where Iron City rainwater was the Kool-Aid acid test
and wheelbarrows rusted from sleep deprived shiftwork—
so much depended on the open hearths and rolling mills
that we had no time for poetry
although I wonder if Dr. Bodkin
wrote imagistic verse about us, his fledgling patients,
after he shot us up with polio seeds?

Madame Curie's Notebooks

Laurence Carr

are still too radioactive
to touch
to read
to see

they lie in lead lined coffins
waiting for their halflives to end
while poor Marie has moved on
her full life gone

Marie, glowing in the darkness
Marie, the lamppost at the crossroads
to whom all things are known
and to whom no secrets are hidden

our incendiary lover
Marie our starry night

Lost and Found

Joann Dejudicibus

A dead letter box of lonely earrings,
stuffed animals, keys with attachment issues.

Silent telephone wires that spark
occasional, one-way conversations.

A daily psalm—groceries, bills, call mom—
crumpled in the pocket of laundered jeans.

The turn-around, look-everywhere prayer
to St. Anthony, an elegy to memory.

The face no one holds until death—
that long-gone ride home.

Things That Have Nothing to Do With Grief

Joann Deiudicibus

I.

I pull her red corduroy jacket
around me like the blanket my mother
crocheted for our first apartment.

II.

Fingernails split like
petals of dried orchids.

I Hear You, Virginia

Malorie Seeley-Sherwood

Not Narcissus, but interested in an image you couldn't directly access,
One you couldn't see in a mirror—
the force of your gaze too much,
too intense when other people were around.
A river reflects, but ripples,
softens the edges that life has hardened;
it provides a vague generality, but is enough to recognize one's own features.

Perhaps you often sat by the riverbank,
looking in with desire, and
seeing a shadowy reflection of a woman
who wanted to discover her true nature
but finding it only acceptable to see herself surrounded by water—
womb-like,
a watered down version of self.

An awakening
A quickening

River-like glass . . .
when you stepped out, it cracked—
broke.

But in another life, you could walk on that river,
supported by the icy hands of thousands
who have drowned before you.

Poem of the Road

transcribed from journal entry dated 11/5/2012

Marc Cioffi

Rush Creek runs hard for home
from northern California. New York burns
in the zenith of night beside the neon bar
I'm parked behind, too drunk to stay, too drunk to drive.

Instinct orders me to leave. Eight weeks on the road
and I know I'm always an alien in an alien land.
Good to watch for where the local birds depart as storms approach.
Better now to know where the girls have run since bars went dark.

But do not forget what is America. The bars
that stretch across this country have old but painted names.
I've acted the regular patron, seemed to sit
unwatching, but drank it all it, deep, where it will bloom:

the patriot with folded arms sitting in a shaft of light;
the laborer caressing polished wood with calloused thumb;
the husband who buys your drinks if you really listen;
the young man who listens to the news and leaves his beer untouched.

Do not forget what is America. The roads
that stretch across this country were built on stakes
between a neighbor and his hand: a needed path
between their farms and the nearest city sprawl.

But grids of tar have split the land without regard
for water lines or the straightest way to town:
the planners should have watched the local birds.
I've brought the Delta sands to Oklahoma homes

beneath my fingernails, invited there for dinner,
unwashed for states, past miles of darkened doors
and suspicious refusals. A ghost of the road,
I loathe the dormant saint of hospitality;

a stain on the road, I warmly thank my backwoods host
with shells from the shore and unmarked postcards

I stole at a counter and never sent home.
The sun is setting west, but the day endures.

Remember what is America. West
is where we've always gone. The car
that travels there prolongs the height of noon.
West is where you flee

when the INBOX declares 'all has been discovered.'
By first light I'm sober enough to leave. The truckers
drive this road and cruise intrepid. Behind
my westering wheels, the rising leaves

conceive a helix in the height of dawn.
I release my morning breath as they descend,
committing my words to the scattering leaves
and the wind that blows hard for home.

Genius

Evan Hulick

Great scientists ponder life,
Microscopes and telescopes,
They seek from the bottomless depths,
And the topmost ethers,
The meaning of life,
Meaningless they conclude,
Twitching and itching,
Twitch... twitch... twitch...
Mitosis at dawn,
Meiosis at sunset,
No hardly but yet then,
“God is dead!” the lunatic proclaims,
“God is dead,” he runs throughout the streets,
A horse falls,
Whipped by its master,
He runs, running, fleeing!
He caresses his noble steed,
And cannot fathom why,
Can something come from nothing?
The madness reeketh in the breeze,
Can something come from nothing?
Old geniuses sit upon their heights,
And thus proclaim,
The madness of the logic:
All must have come from something,
This something art immortal,
This Something art eternal,
Omniscient, omnipotent,
Infinitely incarnate:
God.
Old geniuses sit upon their heights,
Amidst their mental splendor,
Their towers ring of bells,
Bells, bells, bells,
And ask not for whom the bell tolls:
Ah, Genius, it tolls for thee!

The Teacher

Frank Lemke

I could have never told you
That you could live without me

I could have let you crawl home
Back into my hands

I wish I picked you up
To hold you even tighter

Instead I put you down
And taught you how to walk away

Trick Knee

Frank Lemke

I can gather all the news I need
From my trick knee

A little swelling and pain
Tells me it will rain

Throbbing and bleeding
Mean just the same

Violent spasms that bend it forward
Also foretell rain

The Fawn

Daniel J. Pizappi

It's dark and
the headlights stopped
ahead on the road.
Why don't they move?

The headlights stopped
and pulled to the shoulder.
Why don't they move?
It's making me nervous.

And pulled to the shoulder
the driver gets out.
It's making me nervous.
He looks at the bumper.

The driver gets out,
backlit, in shadow,
he looks at the bumper
and shakes his head.

Backlit, in shadow,
he walks to the door
and shakes his head—
begins to drive.

He walks to the door
deliberately,
begins to drive.
We watch as he passes.

Deliberately
trying to hide
we watch as he passes.
Then we walk.

Joking to hide
from fear itself

we walk
to where he'd stopped.

From fear itself
comes a crying
where he'd stopped
near the field.

Comes a crying
wounded fawn
in the field.
It tries to stand.

A wounded fawn,
a broken leg.
It tries to stand,
the fracture grates.

Its broken leg
folds like paper,
the fracture grates.
It falls again.

Like folded paper
our bravado
all falls away.
Like children, we run.

Our bravado
behind on the road,
like children we run.
And it's dark.

A Day's Work

Daniel J. Pizappi

“The light is sickly today,”
she told me. “Look at the way
it filters through the leaves.
It’s a sign of bad luck
this xanthochrome day.”
“Don’t worry,” I said, “It’s just
a trick of the glass. The windows
need cleaning, you see?” And she:
“Maybe so, but still,
I see the day’s pallor—
and quake.”

Wedding Song

Damien Tavis Toman

When once I wore a silver wedding ring,
I wore it as a vulgar mockery
Of true marriage, which now I understand
Begins on earth, and eventually ends
On earth also: a compact of the flesh,
And made only to service fleshly ends.

I wonder, then, by what tragic impulse
My wife and I were married in a church,
Impugning God by implicating Him
In our bond, which was beastly as any
Crude union performed in a fenced yard,
Attended by some dull-eyed farmer's lad.

Performing Nature's errands, why do we
Insist upon invoking God's blessing—
When God was never in the least concerned
With how or why we brought forth progeny,
Or, least of all, with whom we conceived,
Since soul-for-soul, one's as good as the next.

I'll tell you something about Father God:
His ways are not our ways, nor is his mind—
He knows no anger, knows no jealousy,
Knows only Himself—a very Narcissus,
Whose self-love resulted in Creation,
And by whose endless ego all's sustained.

I'll tell you something, also, of marriage:
It has nothing to do with one's "soul-mate,"
For there is but one mate for every soul
And that is God Himself, in which every
Soul has its beginning, and returns
When flesh and its false bonds are forgotten.

Forgive me, wife, for ever caring that
Your flesh and mine were never exclusive:

You had been cultivated previously,
And I, a human, was a jealous fool,
And so were you, my beauty, my savior!
Our love was nothing but idolatry.

Here is my resolution, on the brink
Of the new age—the true apocalypse:
I'll not marry again for any cause
But lust and loneliness and (maybe) love.
Never will I the Deity invoke,
Expecting that He cares with whom I merge.

That being said, I cordially invite
Any woman who, being smart and fair,
And wond'ring when her “Prince Charming” will come,
Has haplessly tripped past her thirtieth year
To make my kind acquaintance, and perhaps
To marry me and be my body-mate

For as long as our bodies are alive,
And there is grass to tread and air to breathe.
Whoever you are, my beloved one,
I have only this slight requirement:
That as my wife, you recognize me as
The twin of God, as you are—thus *my* twin.

Thus shall we be bod'ly inseparable—
Lovers for whom love comes effortlessly,
Flourishing on the knowledge that our kin
Are one with both our fleshly and sublime
Aspects: and thus the Lord and Satan both,
As are we all, we vassals of Decay.

The Brutal Beauty

Sean Winchell

I sit down quietly on a bench, alone in this massive gym.
I slowly wrap my hands and put on my gloves as
The sound of a boxer striking a bag catches the corner of my attention.
The constant *piff* *piff* *piff* of short right jabs is hard to ignore.

There is something beautiful in those short, harsh sounds.
Something that distracts me from my goal and engrosses me,
It steals mind from body, blocking out all meaningless noise.
Right now, all that exists are this boxer and his punches.

He moves around the bag unaware of my existence
And as he slides around slowly, methodically, I wonder
What controls his movements here today. Is it his head?
Is it his heart? Do his feet mesmerize me on their own?

Suddenly he changes his pace; he's become sick of simple jabs
And he begins to concentrate on throwing more powerful hooks.

Fwop....*Fwop*...*Fwop*...

He hits the bag with terrifying force.
But there is still something elegant in the delivery, a dance
Of fury being sung unto the souls of any who will listen.

And I am certainly listening, and taking note
Of the sweat beading off his face, and the bag
Swinging back and forth, like it too wants to dance.
Even through all the pain.

The rhythm of life is hidden in boxing.
Jabs imitate the constant pounding of the heart,
And hooks the monotonous ambling of the feet.
But beware being blinded by the beautiful brutality of the beatings...

Controlled Chaos: The Fractal Structure of *Paradise Lost**Brian Garritano*

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is as divisive a text among critics as it is a central text to western literature and the epic tradition. While many scholars discuss how fraught Milton criticism is with divisive arguments and readings that claim to be the definitive reading of the poem and Milton's beliefs, *Paradise Lost* contains a number of ambiguities that make a centralized reading difficult. In spite of this, the poem contains a multitude of complex structural elements that enhance the poem and alter potential interpretations between multiple scenes due to the way they interact. Milton reinforces the "Epic" composition by paralleling scenes structurally, linguistically, and intertextually, and in following this structure, assimilates a geometrical pattern within the poem. *Paradise Lost* follows a self-similar pattern that falls under fractal geometry, which is integral to chaos theory. Using chaos theory in literary analysis—especially as pertains to *Paradise Lost*—allows analyses from new perspectives, opens new interpretations, and embraces the presence of ambiguities that are at its core. The fractal structure of the text makes additional details of the poem clear, influences meaning and interpretation in the poem, and the incorporation of chaos theory into an analysis of *Paradise Lost* can additionally help bridge the gaps in the many arguments that take place in Milton criticism.

Chaos Theory and Fractals are a form of math in which the general idea is easily understood, while the specifics are complicated and difficult to master. To begin with, the "Chaos" in "Chaos Theory" refers to "complex systems that operate according to deterministic laws, and yet that behave unpredictably" (Hayes 306). The "deterministic laws" referred to by Hayes come from iterated algorithms or functions. In short, a number is plugged into a function that produces a new number, which is both graphed and plugged into the function again to create another new number, and this is repeated ad infinitum, graphing every number along the way. Katherine Hayes uses the metaphor or dance to describe it. In her own words:

It is analogous to beginning at a certain place and doing a dance step; then starting from the new location each time, doing the dance step again and again. Iterating strongly nonlinear functions produces paths that have folds in them.... (Hayes 308)

The steps of this “dance” then create a pattern in a graph. These patterns are chaotic; they are complex and formed from a deterministic function and behave in unpredictable ways. Despite being totally unpredictable, the chaos is itself predictable to an extent; the graph forms a discernible pattern. While most graphed equations are linear—composed of a single line that is manipulated in some way or follows an unusual path—chaotic equations are non-linear, and thus are not a part of traditional Euclidian geometry, rather, they are encompassed within Fractal geometry.

Fractal Geometry is an important subset of geometry as it encompasses all graphed equations that are not linear. While complex and chaotic, “...fractals have an important characteristic: they tend to be self-similar. Thus one can scale fractals. Closer inspection reveals more structural detail...” (Cambel 176). Each component of a fractal is formed of complexities that mirror the larger image as a whole. Thus, fractals can be scaled and examined on multiple levels, each level displaying the same pattern. In essence, while the geometry cannot be initially predicted, after the pattern is observed, the pattern can be predicted to recur endlessly in different formulations.

Through manipulating the algorithm or function of a fractal, an entirely new fractal image can be created. Chaotic functions exhibit “sensitivity to initial conditions,” in which a minor change in an initial condition—in this case, the algorithm—can spawn untraceably large alterations on a grand scale; a phenomenon more colloquially known as “the butterfly effect” (Cambel 195). This phenomenon does not exist in isolation, rather “now that science is looking, chaos seems to be everywhere...” (Gleick 5). Of most concern to *Paradise Lost* is that fractal geometry and Chaos theory can be used in analyzing literature. Hayes states that “the more productive ways to think about the relation of these paradigms to literary theory and literature start with the premise that they are social constructs and ask how their assumptions reinforce other assumptions in the culture” (311). Any massive set of data can be examined under chaos theory if it is sensitive to initial conditions or has a fractal structure, and Epics like *Paradise Lost* are ideal for this kind of analysis.

While Milton may not have written with an adherence to Chaos Theory in mind, his dedication to his literary form and tradition allowed a fractal structure to flourish within his text. In *The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad*, Seth Schein discusses some of the complex structural tenets and conventions common to Epics. “Through parallels, contrasts, and juxtapositions of characters and actions, a dramatic structure is created that forces us to consider critically the traditional heroic world depicted in the poem and the contradictions inherent in this kind of heroism” (1). These rhetorical tools ultimately help an orator who is reciting an Epic:

The numerous repeated words and phrases tend to recur at the same metrical positions in the line, that is, in the same cola, because in this way they were functionally useful to a performing singer composing a heroic song. [...] repeated words and phrases made it possible for him to continue the flow of metrically correct verse without hesitation and to express any idea whatsoever that the subject matter of the traditional epic might make it necessary or desirable for him to express. (4)

Therefore, any epic had a complex system of linguistic and metrical repetition where scenes would echo one another due to the vocabulary and metrical lines used. Yet, this recurring self-similarity spans the entire epic: “Arrange your story in a long straight row of incidents: you will find it very difficult to remember. Break it up into a number of distinctly articulated groups or episodes: let each episode have a pattern of its own akin to the main scheme, but also individual: you will find you can remember the composition” (Sheppard 12). In *Pattern of the Iliad*, J.T. Sheppard takes Schein’s linguistic formula and expands it to the episodic form of an Epic as a whole; the method of using metrical words and phrases to aid the recitation also applies on a broader level to multiple scenes which are arranged in such a fashion that they mirror each other structurally so that the tale is easier to memorize and recite. This structure that each scene follows also mirrors the arrangement of the entire epic. Sheppard and Schein provide an excellent example of the fractal nature of Epics; the text has a linguistic self-similarity that can be viewed simultaneously to the self-similarity between larger scenes, and the same pattern exists in the composition of the entire text. No matter what level you look at, you can see the same self-repeating structure pervasively throughout all layers of the epic.

* * *

Paradise Lost does indeed have its own Epic structure formed both by Milton’s adherence to the epic tradition and his innovative creativity that bound his structural choices thematically to his content. The narrative falls in the opening or “Satanic” books, rising in Book III with an invocation to a Holy Muse, only for Book IV to open with Satan’s recrimination against the sun, followed by the presence of angelic light in the next few books as shown by Raphael, only to ultimately end in the fall of mankind (Cope 117-118). The poem while ultimately being about “the fall” is filled with multiple rising and falling actions that all prefigure the final ultimate fall, and “light, as both cause and effect” has been made the scenic center...” so that everything comes back to the same point (Cope 118). Galbraith Crump fleshed this idea more by discussing the concentric pattern of the poem’s framework:

Throughout *Paradise Lost* Milton creates a structural frame [...] in which passage after passage finds its narrative or thematic counterpart reflected across the surface of the poem. The entire design moves toward the central image of Christ's victory over Satan during the rebellion in Heaven, an event symbolic of the eternal victory of good over evil. Thus, in effect, the design reinforces or compliments both the concentric structure of the Miltonic universe and the traditional image of God himself.... (68-69)

Crump offers an analysis of the concentric structure of the poem in which it has its center in Book VI and scenes match each other in a pattern; Book VI is split in half so that each half mirrors the other structurally. Books V and VII match up similarly, as do Books IV and VIII, so that each book ultimately has a match radiating from the center of the poem like a mirror. According to Crump, this structural mirror ultimately reinforces the circularity of God and how all things radiate outward from him. With this schematic in mind, it could not be more fitting that the exact center of the poem is the line "Ascended, at his right hand Victory" while describing the Son's entry into the battle for heaven, a line that literally emphasizes the victory of God over evil (Milton VI. 762). The plot is also chronologically nonlinear, it exists atemporally, much like Milton's omniscient God. Thus, not only do all facets of the structure of the epic point towards God, but the layout of the narrative mimics God's viewpoint from outside the limitations of time. Therefore, in structuring *Paradise Lost* Milton was able to not only conform to the formulaic conventions of the Epic tradition, but was able to effectively adapt them thematically to his own story. These conventions are themselves as geometrically fractalic as they are pervasive throughout the text. This self similar structure constantly reoccurs and is present on every level of the text.

On a large scale, this structure is present through the additional repetition of scenes that constantly recurs throughout the poem. One prime example is the parallel between Satan's conclave of fallen angels in Book II and God's conversation with the Son in Book III. Whereas Satan feigns democracy by allowing the fallen angels to vote on their next course of action, Satan has Beëlzebub suggest his own plan after the vote has been taken, nullifying the vote and replacing it with what was secretly the plan all along. The other fallen angels are deceived into feeling like they voted while they really had no input on the predetermined plan. In the next Book, God the Father has a conversation with the Son about mankind's impending fall at the hands of Satan. God's foreknowledge reveals that man's fall is already going to happen (or, since He is atemporal, has simultaneously already happened and is currently happening) and when the two discuss what must be done about

it, the Son of God offers himself up as a sacrifice to redeem mankind. While this scene is portrayed positively in juxtaposition to Satan's conclave, it has the same structure; God, possessing foreknowledge, has known all along that the Son—who is also a part of his own being and possibly his own consciousness—will volunteer as tribute. Ergo, God has posed a problem and forged a “democratic” solution with the Son knowing full well that the answer was predetermined before the Son volunteered; much like Satan posed a problem and allowed the democratic process to play out while ultimately manipulating the scene. The design of these scenes forces them to echo one another, making a reading of Book III corrupted by the satanic elements of Book II and a reading of Book II complicated by the divine elements of Book III. The paralleling of these scenes has a recursive influence on both, augmenting and complicating meaning in both.

A parallel of a different kind also occurs in the ending of the poem, as discussed by Regina Schwartz in “From Shadowy Types to Shadowy Types: The Unendings of *Paradise Lost*.”

The narrative in the last two books is continually punctuated by concluding markers: ‘the angel ceased,’ ‘he ended,’ ‘he paused as at the world’s great period,’ [...] Each signals a plausible ending, alluding, as it does, to the final bliss at the end of time, and each sounds conclusive enough, but there are too many signals; the poem ends too many times and it describes the end too many times, so that finally—and that is precisely the wrong word here—these repetitions of an ending obtrude the very end they invoke. (130)

Not only does Adam constantly misread Michael's prophecy of biblical history, Michael's prophecy is in fact part of the circular structure of the plot discussed by Cope and Crump. The sudden narration of biblical prophecy is fairly linear but is constantly interrupted by Adam and has its ending—which will lead to the ending of the poem—endlessly deferred. Further, “Milton has effected an immense structural change in the biblical plot: he concludes, not with Revelation, but with Genesis, with the expulsion. Milton's poem ends where the Bible begins” (133). The ending of the poem simultaneously defies a linear construct of time and echoes the omniscient view of God while reformulating the structure of biblical history—which is ultimately folded inside of his own narrative—and finally aiding the construction of a fractal framework in which to tell the story; as the ending of *Paradise Lost* is approached, it is filled with dozens of smaller endings that simultaneously defer, predict, and contribute toward its end.

Similar parallels occur throughout the text in new ways as various other stories are related between the characters multiple times. In Book II, when

Satan and his fallen angels discuss the war against heaven during their conclave they offer some details of the action. Satan describes standing “against the Thunderer’s aim” and Moloch mentions how “...the fierce foe hung on our broken rear / insulting, and pursu’d us through the deep” (II. 28, 78-79). These scant references give brief portraits of the battle, God’s use of thunder and the pursuit of the fallen angels through the abyss towards Hell. These portraits are greatly expanded by Raphael’s account of the war in Heaven in Book VI, in which we see the three day battle ended by the Son of God: “...in his right hand / Grasping ten thousand thunders ...” (VI. 835-836). The Son’s visage was so terrifying that Moloch’s lines about being pursued through the abyss make sense:

...the monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heav’n; eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit. (VI. 862-86)

Raphael’s account in Book VI adds further detail that parallels the scenes of Book II, tying the two Books together. Raphael is in fact the source of many paralleled scenes, thanks to his copious relation of stories to Adam throughout the middle books of the poem.

At the start of Book I, the narrator gives a brief account of creation when he describes the Holy Spirit “with mighty wings outspread / Dove-like stat’st brooding on the vast abyss / And mad’st it pregnant...” (I. 20-22). When prompted by Adam, Raphael gives a description of the creation in Book VII that offers more detail, similar to Raphael’s account of the war. Raphael describes God the Father sending the Son as the agent of creation “to circumscribe / This universe and all created things” (VII. 226-227). Raphael’s account goes on to contain almost identical language to Book I,

His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
hroughout the fluid mass.... (VII. 235-237)

Raphael again uses the same sexual imagery to describe the impregnation of the abyss (VII. 235). The same image occurs almost identically across the poem, and the retelling of this scene reinforces the pattern within the epic’s structure. Throughout these images of the creation, the same fractal-geometric pattern repeats itself across *Paradise Lost*.

In this same recurrence of the creation account, there is another self-similar pattern, that of births. In describing the creation of everything, Raphael also gives a second-hand account of Adam’s creation:

This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee O man
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express, and thou becam'st a living soul
Male he created thee, but thy consort
Female for race.... (VII. 519 – 530)

This is one of three accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve. Raphael notably attributes Eve's creation to the propagation of the human race; his view is primarily. Adam on the other hand, focuses on companionship in his narrative in Book VIII. Adam's account of his own birth is much longer than Raphael's scant eleven lines, encompassing over three hundred lines. In his account, Adam asks God to create Eve for the sake of companionship because he is lonely, surrounded only by inferior animals. Furthermore, when Adam meets Eve, he says that "...To the nuptial bow'r / I led her blushing like the morn" (VIII. 510-511). Adam's version of Eve's birth not only offers an alternate reason for her existence, but implies gentleness and consent in their meeting and first nuptial union.

Eve however, offers yet another version of her birth, and her narrative occurs as early as Book IV. Eve initially flees from Adam's presence, running from his exhortations:

...With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair. (IV. 488-491)

While Eve still refers to Adam's hand as gentle, he seizes her and imposes his will on her own to convince her, a forceful aspect noted by Peter Herman. Additionally, Herman points out that "In Raphael's version, Eve's creation seems to follow immediately upon Adam's, but according to Adam, an indeterminate yet fairly lengthy amount of time separates the two" (194). This scene occurs first both textually and chronologically; Eve narrates this event in Book IV, which takes place the night before Books V through VIII in which Raphael and Adam converse. Thus, Eve's description of her own birth underlies the narrations of both Raphael and Adam and highlights inconsistencies in each re-telling. The three books are all self-similar, they all exhibit the same pattern and describe the same scene from a different point of view, leaving the reader to parse out the orderly principles in the apparent chaotic disunity of details. As Peter Herman points out, "We have, therefore, an implied Miltonic "Or" over when and why God creates Eve" (195).

Herman discusses the Miltonic “Or,” at length both literally and figuratively. According to Herman, Milton structures *Paradise Lost* “according to a series of suspended choices, and this structure determines the smallest details of the poem as well as the larger narrative” (183). Herman shows in his essay that “Milton structures these passages so that they present an unresolved choice, and the sheer number of such formulations points toward what Labriola calls a “deep structure” within *Paradise Lost*: that is, Milton structures *Paradise Lost* according to the presentation of choices between differing items while leaving the outcome unclear” (185). Milton not only uses the word “or” linguistically to present unresolved choices throughout the poem, but he presents ambiguous paradoxes within the epic that imply an “or” between two potential interpretations of a scene. Eve’s birth is one such implied “or;” the details of her creation are ambiguous at best. Of course, Eve’s creation is not the only Miltonic “or” within the text, it is one of many. The main focus of Herman’s analysis is the elevation of the Son, which is referred to in passing often throughout the text. There is no consensus within the text or “in the critical literature about when this event happens, or even how many times the Son is elevated,” or for that matter, why the Son is actually elevated, and this is arguable the central issue of *Paradise Lost* that sets all the action in motion (Herman 198). The implied Miltonic “or” that Herman talks about is a major part of the fractal structure of the epic; it is a self-similar pattern that occurs in almost every scene—often aided by the repetition of scenes discussed above, which are themselves part of the fractal pattern—and exists not only in the larger framework of the narrative, but is symmetrically recursive across multiple levels.

Herman shows that “or” is the eighth most common word in *Paradise Lost*, occurring seven hundred and fourteen times (184). The word “or” has the same function on a grammatical level as it does when implied on the larger scale; it presents an unresolved choice between two different interpretations of an issue, deferring a solution between those choices and leaving that issue suspended and ambiguous. This occurs both in minor circumstances, such as “...consider first, that great / **or** bright infers not excellence...” [emphasis added] where the word “or” offers a choice between two similar but positive features in passing (VIII. 90-91). The Miltonic “or” applies in larger scenes as well, for example, after Adam and Eve “fall” in Book IX and the Son of God clothes them before exiling them, the narrator states:

As father of his family he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid; (X. 215-218).

Milton situates instances of the word “or” at moments that uncover complex paradoxical issues; in this case, where did the clothes that the Son clothes

Adam and Eve with come from? Two options are given; the beasts were slain—and no mention is made of how, though the most logical guess is the Son—or the beasts shed their skins peacefully for Adam and Eve like a snake. Just as the implied Miltonic “or” such as those surrounding the elevation of the Son or the birth of Eve, the literal Miltonic “or” is in itself the presentation and consideration and analysis of a question that could have otherwise been avoided. This dialogue with critical issues of theological importance are essential to Herman’s claim, that *Paradise Lost* is structured around a series of suspended choices, but are also intrinsically part of a fractal structure within the text. The Miltonic “Or” is a self-similar pattern that recurs in the same way across every book of *Paradise Lost* and also recurs on multiple scales; similar to the repetition of scenes across the entirety of the epic, the implied Miltonic “or” shows up in multiple locations, each having vast repercussions. The literal Miltonic “or” also correspondingly occurs in almost every scene in the book, creating the same types of ambiguities on a localized scale.

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Up until this point, I’ve been discussing self-similar patterns that primarily occur throughout the entirety of the text. When discussing the Miltonic “or,” I pointed out how this self-similar pattern occurs on multiple levels and scales: it functions in the grand organization of scenes and in the smaller details in individual lines. The next portion of this paper primarily deals with that smaller scale; elements of *Paradise Lost* that can be close-read and reveal an analogous pattern to the larger-scale patterns discussed above. The Miltonic “or” is one such geometrically fractal pattern that occurs throughout the text, but it does not exist in isolation.

There are several key phrases that litter the text of *Paradise Lost* that are repeated, creating linguistic echoes between scenes that tie them together. One instance is the term “by merit raised,” which occurs in a few sections throughout the poem. One of its earliest incarnations is used ironically in Book II, referring to Satan who is “...by merit raised / To that bad eminence” (II. 5-6). While not the first occurrence of the word “merit,” this is the first time in any context associated with the exaltation of a character, and applies to Satan. Paralleling the structural match already discussed between Books II and III, the phrase next occurs in reference to the Son in Book III, who “...has been found / By merit more than birthright Son of God” (III. 308-309). Just as the subversion of democracy unites these scenes and influences interpretations of either, the repetition of the word merit ties these scenes closer together; when referring to Satan, the “merit” is meant to be negative, yet when referring to the Son it is the reason for his exaltation. The reappearance of “merit” in these

scenes matches the parallel structure of the two scenes, reinforcing the fractal pattern laced throughout the poem. The word “merit” appears again in relation to the Son in Book VI when he is described as “Messiah, who by right of merit reigns” (VI. 43). “Merit raised” is also used in a different sense, when Raphael tells Adam the plan of human angelification:

...till by degrees of merit raised
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried,
And Earth be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth,
One kingdom, joy and union without end. (VII. 157-161)

The recursion of merit connects the potential fate for humans that was aborted by the fall to the Son of God and Satan. By no coincidence, the phrases next usage refers again to Satan, Sin, and Death as they build a bridge through Chaos shortly after the fall, “a monument / of merit high to all th'infernal host” (X. 258-259). The Son's merit also makes a return in Book XI, when he discusses his plan to offer himself as tribute for humanity and states “my merit those / shall perfect, and for these my Death shall pay (XI. 35-36). The repetition of the word “merit” itself acts as a structurally unifying force in the poem, much like the Miltonic “or;” scenes are paralleled and brought together, and the repetitions of the merit and ascension thematically unite several books of the poem and form a “mini-narrative” of rising and falling that mirrors the structure of the poem discussed by Crump and Cope. Thus, the self-similar pattern of recursive scenes is also reflected in a self-similar pattern of recursive vocabulary.

Other repeated phrases create similar effects; when Eve is first introduced in Book IV, her hair is “in wanton ringlets wav'd (IV. 306). A few hundred lines later, Adam discusses with Eve the need to tame the garden's “wanton growth” (IV. 629). The word later makes an appearance shortly before the fall, when Eve, wanting to tame the garden, describes it as:

Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides (IX. 209-211)

In most repetitions of wanton, it is used in a negative context to imply overgrowth; by being wanton, nature is in need of subjugation by mankind. This parallel at the level of specific words echoes Eve's own subjugation by Adam, implying a need to be contained or dominated. It next reoccurs immediately after the Fall, where Adam gazes lustfully on Eve and “she him / As wantonly repaid” (IX. 1014-1015). Each of these repetitions of these words serves to highlight a negative characterization of the mother of mankind, or at least seems

to hold her culpable for her actions. Just as is the case with “merit,” the word “wanton” occurs across multiple scenes in the poem and adds a framework that surrounds them and mirrors the structural frame of the entire epic.

Milton utilizes other methods of creating patterns aside from the repetition of key words. Rhetorical schemes and tropes such as anaphora, epistrophe, symploce, and many others all serve a similar purpose. George Smith samples over eight hundred twenty seven schemes in over 57 speeches, comprising about a fifth of *Paradise Lost* to determine the frequency and deliberateness of the occurrence of schemes. Smith states that Milton used iterative rhetoric to stress certain points; “the speeches in which the frequency of iteration is highest should be devoted entirely or in large part to Milton’s core argument. This is the case” (7). While Smith relies on this form of analysis due to its utilitarian nature that does not require interpretation, Smith’s data can be readily used for interpretation. Iterative schemes form the core of Milton’s argument according to Smith, yet the use of iterative schemes in Milton’s writing matches the iteration of algorithms that create fractals. In this instance, Milton’s “core argument,” which is shown through iteration, is the algorithm that creates the fractal, *Paradise Lost*. Thus, *Paradise Lost*—which sets out to justify the way of God to man—is created in the same way that a fractal image is, an algorithm is iterated on. Throughout the text this justification is elaborated on, complicated and obscured all at once, and as Galbraith Crump shows in his work, “the design reinforces or complements both the concentric structure of the Miltonic universe and the traditional image of God himself...” (Crump 68-69). All things in *Paradise Lost* point towards its deep structure and Milton’s core arguments and beliefs, and its fractal nature not only heavily reinforces this quality, it is intrinsic to this quality.

* * *

What does it mean that *Paradise Lost* has a fractal structure, and what impact does the integration of chaos theory have on the text? Mary Norton has written about Chaos theory as it relates to *Paradise Lost* explicitly in connection to the treatment of Chaos in Book II. In spite of this limited treatment, Norton illustrates that “The poem shows how order evolves out of chaos, and simultaneously how order generates its own chaos [...] Milton’s Chaos is not only the universe’s material origin, but also creation’s ontological prototype” (140). Discussion of chaos theory can open up new debate; for instance, Eden was in such a fragile state before the fall it is as if it were a ticking time bomb, in this sense, it was sensitive to initial conditions. Cambel illustrates that chaos occurs in systems that are sensitive to initial conditions and therefore, the human history beginning with Genesis is an instance of the chaos discussed

in terms of chaos theory. Norton states that “Milton was no post-Heisenberg physicist, but the Chaos he created in the seventeenth century is not merely an amalgamation of antecedent sources, for its originality both incorporates and anticipates features just now explicable using contemporary scientific chaos theory” (158). In configuring his epic so that it adhered to the epic tradition, Milton adhered to a chaotic formula in putting forth his “argument” and in doing so illustrated the actual nature of chaotic systems.

Furthermore, Milton’s heavy intertextuality and constant allusions to other texts situate his epic in a web of other texts. Milton’s constant allusion to scenes told in other texts is constant within the poem and is integral to the construction of the epic. When Sin springs from Satan’s head fully formed in Book II, she mimics the birth of Athena; in this case, the effect of this allegorical scene is that Sin comes from the same place and looks just like the personification of wisdom and is all the more deceptive for it. Satan’s fall is similarly allegorical near the end of Book I where the narrator tells the story of the fall of Mulciber—also referred to as Mammon within the poem, and commonly known as Hephaestus—where he is “thrown by angry Jove / Sheer o’er the crystal battlements” (I. 741-742). This passage is about one of the fallen angels, but the scene almost directly draws from *The Iliad*, and further allegorically describes Satan’s own fall. These three concurrent falls are thus brought together, and Milton creates the same fractal structure we see within the text but adopts it at an intertextual level as well. Chaos theory enriches *Paradise Lost* by making multiple—often contradictory—readings of the poem possible and even encouraged. Mary Norton shows that “Most critical theories up to now impose order upon texts in part by disregarding textual incongruities and contradictions. As a result, critics have oversimplified and also widely disagreed about the role and moral status of Chaos in *Paradise Lost*” (140). This argument can be expanded to every critical argument in the poem; the embracing of ambiguity—negative capability—should be integral to any reading of a poem as filled with as many confounding ambiguities as *Paradise Lost* addresses and pushes to the forefront. Additionally, chaos theory “can be used to examine the many systems, paradigms, and patterns of morality and being to be found in *Paradise Lost*, and it can explain why these do not remain stable or static, but rather are created, revised, reviewed, and dynamic” (Norton 142). The integration of chaos theory not only opens up new interpretations of the poem, but it also preserves and legitimizes both sides of many common debates in Milton studies. Chaos is so thoroughly entrenched within *Paradise Lost* that it is necessary to adopt a fractal structure when discussing and analyzing it; as such my own writing here is slightly geometrically-fractal in the constant recurrence of phrases like “self-similar” and the structural unity in consistently relating each point to the fractal structure of the epic.

There is a demonstrable amount of evidence to illustrate the fractal nature of *Paradise Lost*: the text was created using iterations that mirror those of iterated algorithms and the poem was created in a complex tradition that has a geometrical-fractal formula to aid in the recitation of epics. It parallels scenes together to ground each moment in additional layers of meaning, words and phrases constantly recur in the poem linking different moments together, and the poem situates itself using the same parallels intertextually. The same self-similar pattern occurs constantly throughout the poem and can be observed on several levels simultaneously, and this structure serves to highlight Milton's essential themes and tie the poem together with a structure that in its chaotic nature, thematically encourages ambiguity. *Paradise Lost* is not only masterfully crafted, but due to its chaotic-fractal nature, it contains a wealth of ambiguity that can be discussed for generations. An analysis utilizing chaos theory shows that the poem has a dynamic and complicated structure that can resolve most of the arguments in Milton criticism through the embracement of ambiguity and further shows that there is always further depth to be explored in Milton's epic.

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House, Tree, and Human: Reasserting the Vital Materialism of Forster's *Howards End*

J. Dewey

It's time to take *Howards End* off the market—the capitalist market, that is. Critical analysis of E.M. Forster's 1910 novel has been obsessed with class warfare ever since Lionel Trilling's seminal appraisal, and critics seem to enjoy playing up Forster's titular pun. As the characters wrangle over the title to the house, the author offers up the house and its plot of land as an end to the question posed by Trilling: "Who shall inherit England?" Perhaps Forster has done his job too well, or perhaps the novel is too heavy-handed. "England herself appears in the novel in palpable form," Trilling argues, "for the story moves by symbols and not only all of its characters but also an elm, a marriage, a symphony, and a scholar's library stand for things beyond themselves" (118). While *Howards End* carries immense symbolic weight as Forster tackles class, one of the most pressing issues of his day, critical emphasis on symbols (particularly through elaborated Marxist readings) ignores a parallel significance of these objects. Recent critics, like Daniel Born and Henry S. Turner, have resurrected a materialist examination of Forster's objects to assert his modernity using the lenses of consumerism, accumulation and liberal guilt, yet, while insightful, their continued focus on economic factors curtails discussion of other possible motivators or agencies.

I assert that in *Howards End* Forster uses techniques such as actant inanimate objects, anthropomorphism and assemblage (which we might now call vital materialism) to address the rise of spiritual apathy and placelessness in turn-of-the-century English society. As acknowledged above, the titular house is impossible to ignore—a fact that calls to mind political scientist Jane Bennet's view: "vital materialists will thus try to linger in those moments during which they find themselves fascinated by objects" (17). Our and Forster's attention returns again and again to the house. Perhaps our focus on the house stems from Forster's admission that he based *Howards End* on his childhood home in Hertfordshire (Turner 342); the novel echoes the centrality of this house in his life. Forster's houses do not merely stand for economic transactions or national character, however. They have a much more concrete role in stabilizing or destabilizing their environments and inhabitants. I aim to look at *Howards End* itself, not through it or around it, for while it is representational—in that it embodies what it symbolizes—it is also meant to be a *body*. Using Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of assemblage revisited in Bennet's work, I will attempt to show that key objects form networks with human

characters sharing a common goal or trajectory that guides the Schlegels through the transition from one England to the next. Following Born's sense that "the time is ripe to take new stock of Forster's novel" where "the intellectual currents of the moment stand to gain by reconsidering Forster's voice" (145), I aim to highlight the more-than-human aspects of Forster's novel.

I. Materialism in Earlier Forster Criticism

Born and Turner give us the beginnings of a vital materialist reading of the novel in that both assert the importance of physical objects in the novel, with varying degrees of agency ascribed to those objects. Born makes the case that Forster is concerned with representing a liberal "social, collective guilt" (embodied in the Schlegels) assaulted by "imperial power abroad and growing urban poverty at home" (141). Turner focuses on the output of commercialism and the burden of consumerism: he tracks Leonard Bast's umbrella as if it leaps into Helen's hand of its own volition, but ascribes its movement to "a *superabundance* of objects, people, property and spaces" brought on by surplus and its ensuing chaos (330). Paradoxically, too much stuff results in a sense of loss: "Forster chooses to represent loss as nothing less than a further form of accumulation: an inventive and peculiarly 'modern' representation of loss as the accumulation of entropy" represented by London (339). Each critic identifies at least one cause of this problem as economic (i.e., rooted in the capitalist forces of the rapidly industrializing England of the early twentieth century) but that does not help us (or Forster, or his characters) escape that very system. Forster offers a potential, if temporary, solution to these problems of modern life that lies outside the economy. The critics above, however insightful, minimize the ameliorating influence of two other actants—Bennet's word for things with agency (3)—namely, nature and Ruth Wilcox.¹

A concurrent trend in Forster criticism is to read his treatment of houses as a measure of a different kind of value (moral rather than monetary). Thus we see close readings of the Basts' living quarters and how they mirror Leonard's doomed attempts at self-education (Born 149), and expositions of the Wilcoxes' possessions in the Ducie Street house as imperialist spoils (Turner 332). While this view does acknowledge Forster's insight into the interaction between humans, buildings and furnishings, this critical method reads through architecture as a literary convention of metaphor to aid the discussion of class values. My aim is to lift *Howards End* from this limited view and show that Forster's alternate system of values centers on humans in concert with their environment. The novel provides a solution that not only addresses capitalist or liberal worries, but also a blueprint for how we should interact with the modern world around us, no matter our immediate social

and historical situation.

II. Defining the Assemblage

Howards End (the house) can be seen as the central element of an assemblage that also contains the surrounding property, the protective wych-elm tree, caretaker Miss Avery, and the house's inhabitants. I use the definition of assemblage as provided by Jane Bennet in *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, which she borrows from Deleuze and Guattari: "assemblages are ad-hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. . . . Each member and proto-member of the assemblage has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency of the assemblage" (Bennet 24). A key element for grafting this concept onto *Howards End* is that this coalition of diverse members (architecture, nature, humans) has a function: within the novel's world itself, its effective power is to preserve and heal itself. For Forster, recognizing one's place within a larger assemblage is the solution to the problem of modern placelessness. The house-tree-human grouping achieves a collective agency and becomes an actant within the story: that is, "a source of action," either "human or not, or, more likely, a combination of both" (Bennet 9, my emphasis). Thus, as Diana Coole explains, "There is no essential difference between organic and inorganic nature in this account; they are merely potencies with different powers of organization" (99). An exciting consequence of the vital materialist conceptual model is its recognition that agency can be released from its traditional moorings in the singular human. Such a concept can help to explain the magnetic pull that *Howards End* exerts on the other characters. We could, then, read *Howards End* as a literary confirmation of Merleau-Ponty's sense that corporeality—simply having a physical presence—grants meaning to matter, so that "meaning and matter are irreducibly interwoven" (Coole 101).

Throughout the novel Forster gives us examples of unruly objects with agency, like Leonard's umbrella, and Margaret's ongoing struggle with her furniture.² Such nonhuman objects may collaborate with us to provide shelter, succor and continuity—because these are shared goals. Objects possess their own vitality, a capacity "not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own" (Bennet viii). I shall argue that the house-tree-human assemblage exerts a trajectory of its own to heal wounds afflicted upon it by those with Wilcox blood and to find its future inhabitants. Its goal is to become a perfect Umwelt, or milieu—Jacob von Uexküll's concept of an "intermediary reality" (Coole 103)—between England's idealized rural past and the encroaching urban chaos of London.

III. Vital Materialism in *Howards End*

Earlier critics have at least picked up on what I see as Forster's inherent vibrant materialism and romanticism of nature. "Forster was always certain that clues to a hidden or other-world narrative must be available in the course of the story" (Kermode 167). The "hidden narrative" of *Howards End* is the process that the house undergoes to find ideal tenants—as opposed to the apparent narrative in which Margaret Schlegel searches for a new home. To begin, it is important to acknowledge Forster's investment in materiality: "Bodies are the instruments through which we register and enjoy the world," he writes in his essay "What I Believe" (*Two Cheers* 71). He accepts the physical world as a place to enjoy, but we might note that he reserves primacy for the sensory experience. We experience the world as an environment, but we are not the center of experience: "Man...has only been in power for a few thousand years" (72). The entire essay articulates his personal brand of faith—with a small "f," he points out. By the counter-narrative I see within *Howards End*, this version of faith makes room for the agency of nature and the pull of material objects within our lives.

Forster ascribes anthropomorphic qualities to houses, furniture and even London itself so often in this novel that it seems egregious to explain them in purely Marxist terms. Forster gives voice to non-human objects and develops their "indwelling spirits." This chorus of voices progresses throughout the novel as the reader's focus turns, along with Margaret's, towards the 'solution' offered by the house. Forster engages in the process of creating the house as a character first by ascribing gender: yes, houses can have character, and they can be feminine or masculine. "I suppose that ours is a female house," Margaret says. "No, Aunt Juley, I don't mean that this house is full of women. I am trying to say something much more clever. I mean that it was irrevocably feminine, even in father's time" (35). She differentiates for the more literal-minded Aunt Juley that the house itself has character, separate from the identity of its tenants, and she guesses that *Howards End* is masculine: "Just as another house that I can mention, but I won't, sounded irrevocably masculine, and all its inmates can do is to see that it isn't brutal" (Forster 35). Though a house may possess character, it has a relationship with its inhabitants, who can mitigate the effects of gender—a proto-assemblage.

If Forster meant only that houses have 'character,' just as a real estate agent might describe a property as having 'charm,' he would not likely continue the construction of character by giving them life. As the conclusion of Margaret's failed lunch party, Ruth Wilcox remarks:

"We never discuss things at *Howards End*."

“Then you ought to!” said Margaret. “Discussion keeps a house alive. It cannot stand by bricks and mortar alone.”

“It cannot stand without them,” said Mrs. Wilcox. (62)

These scant lines of dialogue echo Forster’s “What I Believe” essay and the essentials of life: a body to receive the world and a spirit to inhabit it. Note that it is Margaret who first espouses the idea of a living house, assisted by the livelihood of its inhabitants, but Ruth does not say that she thinks Margaret’s notion is silly; in fact she seems to take it as a foregone conclusion. The house is *already* alive to her. What Ruth puzzles over is the assertion of the need for discussion, i.e., inhabitants animated by the vitality of the house. Margaret repeats her belief later, in the midst of her hunt for a new house: “Gentlemen seem to mesmerize houses—cow them with an eye, and up they come, trembling. Ladies can’t. It’s the houses that are mesmerizing me. I’ve no control over the saucy things. Houses are alive, no?” (123). Houses are not only alive and gendered, but develop personality traits that overwhelm her, much like her collection of furniture.

The central problem of the novel—modernity, represented by London’s sprawl—causes Margaret to search for a new home. Throughout, Forster embodies the rabid cycle of destruction and devolution of old London and industry’s spread into the surrounding countryside as the city itself, working under its own powers. He does not fix the problem on human activity, but continues to describe it as if the architecture operates by an internal agency of its own, independent of human hands.

It was the kind of scene that may be observed all over London, whatever the locality—bricks and mortar rising and falling with the restlessness of the water in a fountain, as the city receives more and more men upon her soil . . . And again a few years, and all the flats in either road might be pulled down, and new buildings, of a vastness at present unimaginable, might arise where they had fallen. (38)

Bricks and mortar—the bones and muscle without which a house cannot stand—construct and demolish. The only connection to humanity is Forster’s jab at the new inhabitants of these monstrous new buildings, given as Aunt Juley watches the construction: “In theory she despised them—they took away that old-world look—they cut off the sun—flats house a flashy type of person. But if the truth had been known, she found her visits to Wickham Place twice as amusing since Wickham Mansions had arisen” (47). The Wilcoxes, while not quite as flashy as Aunt Juley imagines, are the perfect tenants in that she already despises them and they are undoubtedly ‘new world’ in their way of life, obsessing over motorcars.³

Wickham Place shifts from being the Schlegel home to a mere place, then to a casualty as London cannibalizes itself. Though Margaret has begun to voice her feeling that houses have life, she hasn't yet extended her reasoning to its end, which is that houses must therefore be susceptible to death as well. Ruth Wilcox articulates this fear for her and ties the life of the house to the life of its inhabitants: "To be parted from your house, your father's house—it oughtn't to be allowed. It is worse than death. I would rather die than—Oh, poor girls!" Ruth serves as a spiritual guide for Margaret, who thinks, "Howards End must be a very different house to ours. We are fond of ours, but there is nothing distinctive about it. As you saw, it is an ordinary London house." She says that it is replaceable, but Ruth says, "So you think" (67). Margaret revisits such thoughts upon her initial visit to Howards End, and she feels as if recent events and other characters have taken place in another world: "Charles dead, all people dead, nothing alive but houses and gardens. The obvious dead, the intangible alive, and—no connection at all between them!" (158). Her metaphor slips between worlds, too, for houses and gardens are perfectly tangible but she likely means that their life-forces are less obvious. What is even more interesting is her sense that people and these living houses are unconnected even while she herself has begun to feel this connection to Wickham Place only through the process of its unraveling. "For all her talk about connection, Margaret seems rather ill equipped, and not at all predisposed, to connect with people," Born writes (152). Not long before her trip to Howards End, she laments that "the more people one knows, the easier it becomes to replace them. It's one of the curses of London. I quite expect to end my life caring most for a place" (103). This is exactly her trajectory.

After Ruth's death, the Wilcoxes read her will at Howards End, and Forster describes a room bustling with non-human activity:

The clock ticked, the coals blazed higher, and contended with the white radiance that poured in through the windows. Unnoticed, the sun occupied the sky, and the shadows of the tree stems, extraordinarily solid, fell like trenches of purple across the frosted lawn. It was a glorious winter morning...the blackbirds that [Evie's fox terrier] was chasing glowed with Arabian darkness, for all the conventional coloring of life had been altered. Inside, the clock struck ten with a rich and confident note. Other clocks confirmed it, and the discussion moved towards its close. (78)

The profusion of life is so cacophonous that we cannot tell whose discussion wraps up by the end of the paragraph: do the clocks fall silent, or the Wilcoxes? Natural elements, heat sources, animals and machines run rampant, even upsetting the normal color spectrum. Despite the loss of their spiritual mistress, the system that is the house runs onward and life continues.

Ruth Wilcox is central to the house-tree-human assemblage; Forster immediately ties her to the property not only by lineage but also by grounding her, literally, in its garden. While Trilling maintains that Ruth's "strength comes exactly from her lack of force, her distinction from her lack of distinguishing traits" (121), I argue that she is an agent for change within the novel. Her actant powers blend perfectly into the subtler agency of the house-tree-human assemblage. After all, it is Ruth's will that provides the initial problem of the novel while offering the solution to the larger societal problem. Kermode credits her with her own brand of influence: "Only Mrs. Wilcox, now dead, had the naïve imaginative power or 'the more inward light' to understand possessions" (96). Other critics may misunderstand Ruth because her personality has already merged with her chief possession; upon her death, she is inseparable from it. Henry gazes down at the "wintry garden" (*HE* 72) as he mourns her, thinking "Ruth knew no more of worldly wickedness and wisdom than did the flowers in her garden or the grass in her field" (71). The possessive phrases—*her* garden, *her* field—also disassociate Henry from the place (even though in the following scenes he overrules her will's penciled codicil and denies that Howards End is still Ruth's to give away to Margaret).

Margaret's intuition tells her that Ruth and Howards End are even more closely tied after Ruth's death: "I feel that you and I and Henry are only fragments of that woman's mind. She knows everything. She is everything. She is the house, and the tree that leans over it..." (248). Margaret readily admits that Ruth's knowledge has lasting power. Ruth found a way out of the modern problem of placelessness—she never felt it, actually, except when living in London. Ruth initiates Margaret into the assemblage not when she first invites her to visit Howards End, but when Margaret realizes that the house is alive.

IV. Placelessness

Before discussing the house-tree-human assemblage's attempt to find new tenants, it is important to review why the Schlegels are those perfect tenants for Howards End. To rephrase the question: why does Ruth choose Margaret as her heir rather than her children? Or, to address Forster's larger concern, what is the central problem of modernity? Alexandra Harris writes that: "The problem, really, as Forster diagnosed it, was the rootlessness of the middle classes" (55). Characters in *Howards End*, except Ruth, all suffer from this sense of placelessness; the Wilcoxes are oblivious to their state⁴, but Margaret pines keenly for a permanent home. The more she sees the effects of this rootlessness in her ongoing contact with the Wilcox lifestyle (multiple houses that are not homes, connected by motorcars) and the Bastis (who visit from "the abyss" of cheap possessions, basement apartments and illusions of self-

improvement), the more Margaret craves permanency.

While the Wilcoxes have enough money to build their own mansion, finances alone will not solve the problem. “Forster seems fascinated by the power of money to change things and people but at the same time distrustful of its superficiality, of the structures that produce it and that are required to manage it, and of the world of impermanence it ushers in” (Turner 334). Henry’s response to Margaret’s longing is to build a new house in a completely different part of the country, one large enough for entertaining on the scale demanded by his job, but this dream house never materializes nor does Forster allow us to visit the site. This hardly appeases Margaret: “Marriage had not saved her from this sense of flux. London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever borne before” (*HE* 206).

Howards End is one of the few settings in which characters interact with nature; the lawn and garden are an essential part of its sway over Ruth and the Schlegels.⁵ We must recognize the role of the wych-elm and the garden in the Howards End assemblage:

It was a comrade, bending over the house, strength and adventure in its roots, but in its utmost fingers tenderness, and the girth, that a dozen men could not have spanned, became in the end evanescent, till pale bud clusters seemed to float in the air. It was a comrade. (163)

Forster uses the word “comrade” twice (which also describes how Ruth relates to Margaret) and shows the tree in partnership with all nearby objects. Helen loves the tree immediately; she describes it as the boundary between the garden and the meadow (3), both a wild element and a carefully cultivated product. Ruth’s yeoman ancestry is literally embedded in the tree itself, not just metaphorically (“strength and adventure in its roots” references her ancestors, while she herself becomes “in the end evanescent” like the tip of a branch) but in the folkloric power of the pigs’ teeth in the bark. Margaret asks if Ruth believes in the legendary powers of the bark to cure toothache; Ruth responds by saying “It would cure anything—once” (57). If one believes in its powers, as Margaret begins to do, it can even cure the overwhelming problem of modern flux.

V. A Trajectory of Healing

In order for the house-tree-human assemblage to function as an answer to modernity’s problem, it has to solve its own problems and heal its own wounds caused by the encroachment of modern life. The assemblage cannot escape the fact that it is corporeally tied to its own environment. “And

in a very knotted world of vibrant matter, to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself” (Bennet 13). *Howards End* has to fix itself, chiefly by replacing the human element missing once Ruth perishes, but also by undoing the Wilcoxes’ “improvements,” for, as Bennet says, if we establish an object or collective as having agency, it “is also bound up with the idea of a trajectory, a directionality or movement away from somewhere even if the toward-which it moves is obscure or even absent” (32). The house does not seek the Schlegels specifically for its answer, but its general tendency is to find a suitable inhabitant that will work in partnership with it.

A trajectory is merely something that is willed or intended; the object or assemblage does not need to have animated abilities to will or intend something, Bennet argues (31). The *Howards End* assemblage has, as one of its members, one lasting human member who can provide a range of motion for it: Miss Avery. Like the tree on the wild/cultivated border, Miss Avery straddles the line between inhabitant and visitor, and she immediately mistakes Margaret for Ruth: “You had her way of walking” (160). She is the voice of the *Howards End* assemblage, and her main role as caretaker is to find a new tenant. The “mistake” she makes in unpacking the Schlegels’ crates is only a mistake to the Wilcoxes (and Margaret, at first) but is one of the major restorative maneuvers. “The house has been empty long enough,” she says to justify her actions (214). And it is the right move, of course, one that awakens the house *and* the Schlegels’ furniture too: “Now, this hasn’t the feel of a dead house. The hall seems more alive even than in the old days, when it held the Wilcoxes’ own things” (234). The mini-assemblage of Schlegel furniture and Wilcox house tips the balance in favor of the Schlegels as the rightful heirs and provides Margaret with certainty of her future.

The Wilcox family had dealt *Howards End* other wounds despite Ruth’s protective eye, and Forster describes how the house heals itself once their influence begins to diminish. These wounds are what the Wilcoxes call “improvements” and all show the creep of modern existence into this stable, peaceable realm. Charles recalls of his mother: “How she had disliked improvements, yet how loyally she had accepted them when made! He and his father—what trouble they had had to get this very garage!” (74). Henry also paves over another section of the garden for outdoor games (248). The assemblage rejects these improvements and shows its healing trajectory over time. Once the Wilcoxes decamp, nature begins to swallow up these modern advancements. Margaret takes a walk in the garden: “It had gone wild since her last visit. The gravel sweep was weedy, and grass had sprung up at the very jaws of the garage. And Evie’s rockery was only bumps” (216). Forster’s answer to the encroaching “red dust” of London (268) is the hope embodied in untamed, restorative nature. Kermode agrees that Forster uses nature to

represent his brand of spirituality: “Most impressive, perhaps, is what might be called the evocation of the earth, the spiritual geography” (167). Yet the installation of the Schlegels at Howards End—and Forster’s depiction of the assemblage—is a qualified solution to modernity’s flux. Completely wild nature is not the answer; we need both the building’s brick and mortar, and the wild meadow, and the cultivated garden, in order to endure.

The ultimate void in the assemblage is filled when the Schlegels move in, prefaced by the girls’ night in defiance of Henry’s wishes. Their discussion unites several of my key points:

“But this place has wonderful powers.”

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t know.”

“Because I probably agree with you.”

“It kills what is dreadful and makes what is beautiful live.”

“I do agree,” said Helen, as she sipped the milk. “But you said that the house was dead not half an hour ago.”

“Meaning that I was dead. I felt it.”

“Yes, the house has a surer life than we, even if it was empty, and, as it is, I can’t get over that for thirty years the sun has never shone full on our furniture. After all, Wickham Place was a grave” (*HE* 237).

The only difference from “half an hour ago” and this moment is the fact that they have decided to stay—ostensibly for one night, but it is as if the house knows that they are now permanent residents. Howards End heals (both them, and itself), their furniture comes alive and enters the assemblage, and Margaret also ends her search for a permanent home. “We know this is our house, because it feels ours. Oh, they may take the title-deeds and the door-keys, but for this one night we are at home” (238). At last, Margaret and Helen have a spiritual home; “title-deeds” and Wilcoxian wills, as human constructions, have no bearing on the life of this collective of non-human and human objects. Within this realm, apart from strictly human senses of ‘law’ and propriety, both women find peace.

Howards End can stand for the English yeoman past *and* the potential for a classless future, a suburban middle ground between agrarian and cosmopolitan societies, and an embodiment of materiality and the vitality of all things. It can be brick and mortar and still be alive. This is the ultimate solution offered by Forster: a balanced, adaptive, nurturing collective which supports

all members. As the “red rust” of London advances through the meadows, *Howards End* will continue to adapt along its trajectory of sustainability. If one looks to “only connect” with human counterparts, either by looking for characters’ connections within the novel itself or if we take Forster’s message to heart, we miss the full meaning of Forster’s proffered solution to modernity’s crippling placelessness and the spiritual succor he offers through vital materialist tendencies in his novel.

Notes

1. Turner would likely resist the idea of ever being outside of an economic system since he claims that Forster’s handling of material objects is his “recognition of capital’s indispensability and his profound desire to be rid of it” (334).
2. Turner traces the umbrella’s destructive path in detail: “the appearance of the umbrella always implies a certain fragility and darker chaotic underside” (336). “When a move becomes imminent, furniture becomes ridiculous, and Margaret now lay awake at nights wondering where, where on earth they and all their belongings would be deposited in September next. Chairs, tables, pictures, books, that had rumbled down to them through the generations, must rumble forward again like a slide of rubbish to which she longed to give the final push and send toppling into the sea” (*HE* 118).
3. This is also one of Forster’s humorous moments, not due simply to Aunt Juley’s gossipy tendencies, but in the irony of place-names. Wickham Place, the Schlegel home to which Margaret is so attached, is merely named as a *place*; the new development across the road is ironically called Wickham Mansions, comically at odds with the actual size of the living quarters.
4. When Henry sells Oniton, the narrator declares: “But the Wilcoxes have no part in the place, nor in any place” (*HE* 197).
5. The only other examples of natural settings are Oniton Grange, nestled into the serpentine curve of the river, and Aunt Juley’s home, where the girls spend most of their time walking outdoors. But the latter two are experienced as vacations—again, placeless places.

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VI | Thesis Abstracts

“Fear in the Time of Bloom: How Stephen and Leopold Cope with Anxieties and Apprehensions in *Ulysses*”

Robert Cutrera

Fear is an elemental impetus that has impacted the human condition for time eternal. The modern era, birthing major technological innovations in society, introduced new fears for humanity, minimizing Man in their wake. Modernist literature responded to these new anxieties and at the forefront of this aesthetic movement was *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Inimitable in style, presentation, and depth, *Ulysses* presents readers with the frenzied landscape of Dublin near the beginning of the twentieth century and follows Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom as they attempt to make sense of their trepidations. Initially, Stephen and Leopold approach their conditions differently: young Dedalus attempts to intellectualize the world around him, hoisting himself above Dublin’s standards, while Bloom distracts himself with simple pleasures, wishing to escape his terrors by indulging his physical senses. The two characters flounder, unable to escape their personal predicaments until they find each other; but once Bloom lifts Stephen from the pavement (literally), they join forces to combat the overwhelming power of fear and rectify their lives. My thesis explores the wanderings of Stephen and Bloom on [June 16th, 1904](#), showcasing their individual characteristics against the backdrop of Dublin, in order to bring to light a fresh understanding of how fear impacts the human condition in Joyce’s seminal modernist novel.

“A Dystopian Eden: Bioengineering, Transgenic Organisms, and Evolution in Margaret Atwood’s MaddAddam Trilogy”

Gabriela Rojas

Within the last half-century, there has been a boom in the interest of the sciences, specifically biology and genetics, within pop-culture genres. My thesis explores the ways in which literature and the biological and social sciences interact with, and react to, one another in Margaret Atwood’s MaddAddam Trilogy. In particular, I focus on such topics as the circumvention of the evolutionary process through genetic manipulation of flora and fauna, eugenics and the extent to which it can go awry, social and cultural reactions to moments of change, and the role of for-profit privatization of the sciences. Atwood ultimately illustrates a correlation among the advancement of bioengineering, capitalism, and the self-destruction of humankind. In addition, I examine the way in which Atwood’s trilogy is a product of the evolutionary process via changes including: shifts in narrative point of view within a single work, the non-linear sequence in which the story unfolds, and inventive word play describing new social and biological hybrids.

“Natural, Industrial, and Virtual Milieus: Understanding the Relationship Between Art and Environment”

Steve Wagner

We live in an unprecedented environment. Screens and their digital interfaces are an inevitable part of the human experience. Our most important artifacts, from great works of art to a government's most decisive texts, exist in abstract, digital forms we take for granted. And we spend what would have previously been seen as an inordinate amount of time navigating worlds of digital simulation, “walking” amongst their corridors, “talking” with their inhabitants, even “eating,” “sleeping,” and “living” within these environments. A change of environment this drastic will inevitably have a transformative effect on the inner-minds of those who undergo it, especially at this particular point in time, when a generation that has never experienced a world unlike this one is coming into adulthood. With this adulthood comes sophisticated artistic expression, and a new wave of artists, who have made the internet their home and inspiration, are expressing the various experiences, psychological dissonances, and complicated emotions of existing in such a new, digital milieu. But this is not the first time that humanity has rushed into a new environment, and writers such as Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Franz Kafka, and J.G. Ballard have explored the malleable psyche of *homo sapiens* when confronted with the unnatural constructions of modern human society. Using these writers in conjunction with critics and theorists such as Viktor Schlovsky and Gilles Deleuze, I explore and redefine the relationship between art and environment. I then apply this model to an analysis of the visual art and music of internet culture, focusing on ideas such as the reappropriation of environmental material and sensation, and the reconciliation of discontent and alienation that the digital world can produce.

VII News and Notes

In this column, we feature news from our recent graduate students: honors, achievements, publications, conference papers, progress in Ph.D. programs, and other news.

News:

William Boyle earned his MFA in Fiction at the University of Mississippi in 2011 and is currently teaching freshman composition and creative writing there. His first novel, *Gravesend*, was published in [November 2013](#) by Broken River Books. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Mississippi Noir* (Akashic Books), *L.A. Review of Books*, *Salon*, *The Rumpus*, *Hobart*, *Needle: A Magazine of Noir*, and other magazines and journals. He recently gave a keynote address, “Seeking With Groans: Revival and Redemption in Walter Mosley’s *RL’s Dream*,” at the University of Arkansas’s Annual GSE Conference.

Nicole Camastra, who completed her PhD at University of Georgia in 2012, has recently published articles in *The Hemingway Review*, *American Literary Realism*, and *The Mississippi Quarterly*. She will present a paper on “Music, Modernism, and the Art of Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories” at the upcoming American Literature Association conference.

Steven Florczyk, former TA and MA (New Paltz) earned his PhD at the University of Georgia (2011) and is now an Assistant Professor at LSU. His book, *Hemingway, The Red Cross, and the Great War*, was just published by Kent State University Press (2014).

Lee Connell is currently enrolled in Vanderbilt University’s MFA program in fiction writing. Her fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Glimmer Train*, *Lilith*, and other publications.

Tom Doran is now ABD at UC Santa Barbara, where he is the 2013-2014 Graduate Research Fellow for UCSB’s Early Modern Center. He

is also the Chair of organizing committee for a conference: *Transatlantic Ecologies: Utopia to Zoonomia*.

Tim Gilmore, who recently finished his PhD at UC Santa Barbara, has published “Not Too Cheery: Dicken’s Critique of Capital in *Nicholas Nickleby*,” *Dickens Studies Annual*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (July 2013): 85-109.

Jennifer Gutman will be presenting a paper, “Maintaining a Capacity for Wonder: *The Great Gatsby* as Post-Postmodern Prototype,” at the upcoming American Literature Association conference in Washington DC from [May 22-25](#). She is currently an adjunct at SUNY New Paltz and writes grants for a local firm, Choice Words.

Sarah Hurd was recently hired as “Development Coordinator” at Historic Huguenot Street here in New Paltz.

Mary Ellen Iatropoulos is Director of Education at the Children’s Media Project in Poughkeepsie. She recently presented the following papers: “Learning From The Streets: Critical Media Literacy and the Common Core” Teaching the Hudson Valley Conference. FDR Home and Presidential Park. Hyde Park, New York (August 2013). “Media Magic: A Case Study of Media Arts Education and Civic Engagement.” Equity and Social Justice Conference, SUNY New Paltz, NY. (March 2013). She also completed her MPS degree at NP and was selected as the Fall 2013 Outstanding Graduate for the SUNY New Paltz Department of Education in the Humanistic/Multicultural MPS graduate degree program.

Jennifer Lee has served as Interim Director of the Writing Center at University of Rhode Island for 2013-2014 and has presented papers at the following conferences this year: Writing Research Across Borders (Paris, February), Northeast Writing Center Association (Smithfield, RI, March), and CCCC (Indianapolis, March). She will begin a new job as assistant professor and developmental writing specialist at California State University at Northridge this August.

Matthew Nickel, former TA and MA (New Paltz) earned his PhD at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette (2011) and is now an Assistant Professor at Misericordia University. His book, *Hemingway’s Dark Night: Catholic Influences and Intertextualities* was recently published by New Street (2013).

Amy Washburn, who completed her PhD in Women's Studies at the University of Maryland in 2010, is now an assistant professor in the English Department at CUNY Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn.

Jenna Guitar and **Dan Libertz** have both received acceptances into PhD programs and are making their decisions as we go to press.

Note: The Editors would remind students of the Russell S. Cleverley Memorial Fellowship, established by Luella and Donald Cleverley in memory of their son Russell S. Cleverley, who earned his MA in English from SUNY New Paltz in December 1995. The Cleverley Fellowship is open to students matriculated in the MA English program with a 3.5 GPA who register for ENG 590, Thesis in English, in the award semester. The amount of the fellowship is \$500. Please submit a letter of application with transcript, the thesis proposal signed by the thesis director, and two letters of recommendation (one from the thesis director) to the English Graduate Director. Applications for the next award (fall 2014) are due May 15, 2014.

VIII Guidelines for Submissions

The *Shawangunk Review* is the journal of the English Graduate Program and publishes the proceedings of the annual English Graduate Symposium. In addition, the Editors welcome submissions from English graduate students in any area of literary studies: essays (criticism; theory; historical, cultural, biographical studies), book reviews, scholarly notes, and poetry. English faculty are invited to submit poetry, translations of poetry, and book reviews.

Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with MLA style and should be submitted as an electronic file accompanied by a hard copy. Essays should not exceed 5000 words (15 pages), book reviews 1250 words, poems five pages, and MA thesis abstracts 250 words. With your submission include a brief biographical statement.

Please submit material to the Graduate Director, Department of English, SUNY New Paltz; the deadline for Volume XXVI of the *Review* is December 15, 2014.

IX Contributors

Laurence Carr is a lecturer in the English Department at SUNY New Paltz. He is the author and editor of numerous books and chapbooks, including most recently co-editor (with Jan Z. Schmidt) of the award-winning anthology *A Slant of Light: Contemporary Women Writers of the Hudson Valley* (Codhill Press, 2013).

Marc Cioffi is a student in the English MA program and a Teaching Assistant for the Composition Program at SUNY New Paltz.

Bridget Corso graduated from the MA program last semester and plans to spend some time traveling before settling down to teach and write.

Robert Cutrera is currently in his final semester as an MA student and a Teaching Assistant in the English department. He has been a New Paltz resident since 2008 and considers the town a second home. His time at SUNY New Paltz has been an invaluable collegiate experience.

Joann K. Deudicibus is the Staff Assistant for the Composition Program and an Adjunct Instructor at SUNY New Paltz, where she earned her MA in English (2003). She is the Associate Editor (poetry) for *WaterWrites: A Hudson River Anthology* (Codhill Press). Her poems have been published in *A Slant of Light* (Codhill Press), and in *Fortunate Fall*, *The Orange Review*, *Chronogram*. Her “Ax-ing the Frozen Sea: Female Inscriptions of Madness” is forthcoming in *Affective (Dis)order and the Writing Life: The Melancholic Muse* (Palgrave).

J. Dewey will complete the Master of Arts in English program at SUNY New Paltz in [May 2014](#). He is currently the Director of Public Relations for Hudson Valley Community Services, a large health-related non-profit, and would like to teach English and creative writing as a second career. He would like to thank Vicki Tromanhauser for her encouragement and assistance in editing the essay that appears in this volume.

Dennis Doherty is a lecturer at SUNY New Paltz teaching creative writing and literature. He is author of three volumes of poetry: *The Bad Man* (Ye Olde Font Shoppe Press, 2004), *Fugitive* (Codhill Press, 2007), and *Crush Test* (Codhill Press, 2010). He authored the critical/personal study *Why Read The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New Street Communications) in [January 2014](#).

Heinz Insu Fenkl, born in 1960 in Bupyeong, Korea, is a novelist, translator, and editor. He is currently Associate Professor of English at SUNY New Paltz.

His autobiographical novel, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, was named a Barnes & Noble “Discover Great New Writers” selection in 1996 and a PEN/Hemingway Award finalist in 1997. He began translating Master Cho’s Zen poetry after receiving a koan in May of 2010. His most recent prose translation, Yi Mun-yol’s short story, “An Anonymous Island,” was published in the September 12, 2011 issue of *The New Yorker*.

Brian Garritano is a student in the English MA program and is a Teaching Assistant for the Composition Program here at SUNY New Paltz.

Andrew Higgins is Associate Professor and Deputy Chair of the English Department at SUNY New Paltz. His work examines the way American literature in the mid-1800s developed in response to changing cultural, economic, and technological forces associated with the rise of industrial capitalism. He has written on Walt Whitman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Sarah Piatt, Robert Frost, and Civil War memoirs. He is interested in cognitive approaches to literature, particularly the way mental activity is represented in texts.

Evan Hulick is a student in the English MA program and a Teaching Assistant in the Composition Program at SUNY New Paltz.

Danimarie Jones graduated from the MA program last semester.

Frank Lemke is a student in the English MA program and a Teaching Assistant for the Composition Program at SUNY New Paltz.

Daniel Libertz moved to the Washington, D.C. area following his graduation from the MA program at New Paltz. In the fall of 2014, he will begin doctoral study in rhetoric and composition.

Ryan James McGuckin earned his MEd at Long Island University. Most recently, he was the Graduate Assistant for the Department of English where he earned his MA. He lives in the area where he pursues positions in writing and education, currently running English education workshops for O/U BOCES.

Master **Cho Oh-hyun**, who writes under the pen name “Musan,” was born in 1932 in Miryang in South Gyeongsang Province of Korea. He has lived in the mountains since he became a novice monk at the age of seven. Over the years he has written over a hundred poems, including many in sijo form. In 2007 he received the Cheong Chi-yong Literary Award for his book *Distant Holy Man*. The lineage holder of the Mt. Gaji school of Korean Nine Mountains Zen, he is currently in retreat at Baekdamsa Temple at Mt. Seoraksan. Translations of his poetry have appeared in *Asymptote*, the *Buddhist Poetry Review*, *Asia Literary Review*, and *World Literature Today*.

Daniel J. Pizappi is an English MA candidate and teaches Composition I and II classes. He completed his BA at SUNY New Paltz with a dual major in English/Creative Writing and History with a minor in Philosophy. His poetry and fiction have previously appeared in *Burningword Literary Journal*, *Cellar Door*, and *The Stonesthrow Review*.

Carrie Rohman is Assistant Professor of English at Lafayette College. Her research and teaching interests include animal studies, modernism, posthumanism, ecocriticism, and performance. Her book, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (Columbia UP, 2009), examines the discourse of animality in modernist literature. In addition to authoring numerous journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews, she has co-edited *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World: Selected Papers of the Twentieth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson Digital Press, 2011).

Gabriela Rojas is an MA student in English who will graduate in Spring 2014. After graduating, she plans to peruse a career in teaching in the United States or abroad.

Malorie Seeley-Sherwood is a former English MA and MAT student at SUNY New Paltz. She now teaches English Composition as a member of the Adjunct faculty there.

Jeanne Stauffer-Merle's poetry has appeared in several literary journals including most recently, *The Colorado Review*, *The Notre Dame Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *Sentence*, *Caketrain*, *The Mad Hatter Review*, and the anthologies: *The Cento* (Red Hen Press, 2012), and *A Slant of Light* (Codhill Press, 2013). She is the author of one poetry chapbook, *Here in the Ice House* (Finishing Line Press, 2013); a second poetry chapbook, *Inside This Split of Wind*, is forthcoming by Plumberrys Press. She teaches writing and literature at Baruch College (CUNY) and SUNY New Paltz.

H.R. Stoneback is Distinguished Professor of English at SUNY New Paltz. He is a leading Hemingway scholar and poet of international reputation, author/editor of 35 books (roughly half literary criticism, half poetry) and more than 200 essays on a wide range of American and British authors. Recent critical studies include co-edited volumes on Aldington, Pound, and Imagism—e.g., in 2013 *Imagism* (U. of New Orleans Press) and *Ghosts in the Background Moving* (Florida English Press)—and *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Prospect and Retrospect* (2012). He has published four volumes of poetry since 2011, including *Voices of Women Singing* (Codhill 2011). In 2013 he served as Vice-President of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association and he was elected President of the Hemingway Foundation and Society (2014-2017). He is the founding editor of the *Shawangunk Review*.

Damien Tavis Toman was born in Tulsa, OK, the son of a woodcarver and occasional evangelical minister. He has resided in the Hudson Valley since childhood and currently teaches English Composition at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

Vicki Tromanhauser is Assistant Professor of English at SUNY New Paltz. Her research interests include human-animal studies, posthumanism, and food studies. Her articles have appeared in *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *Woolf Studies Annual*, *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, and elsewhere. In 2012, she was awarded the

Andrew J. Kappel Prize in Literary Criticism.

Steven Wagner will graduate with his English MA from the SUNY New Paltz in May 2014. He's currently working on a master's thesis on the relationship between new forms of art and the digital environment. From there, he looks forward to working full-time and continuing to write and make music in his free time.

Sarah Wheeler received her English MA degree from SUNY New Paltz in 2013. Her interests include composition pedagogy, literary theory, and aesthetics. She is currently enjoying teaching Great Books Western as an adjunct member of the faculty.

Sean Winchell is currently pursuing his MA in English at SUNY New Paltz.