POMPA: Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association

(Credit bmc.edu)

Editor, Lorie Watkins
Editorial Assistant, Ian Pittman

Volume 37
2020

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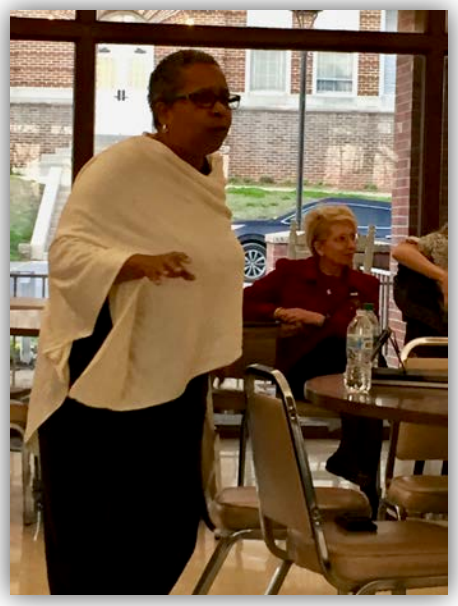
Editor's Note

By Lorie Watkins

It is with much pride that I write the editor's note for this, the thirty-seventh volume of the *Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association (POMPA).* Blue Mountain College hosted the 2020 conference February 21-22nd. Conference organizer Dr. Mikki Galliher arranged a keynote talk featuring professional storyteller Dianne Williams, who presented "Parallels of Southern Storytelling and Folktales from Around the World."



Her talk was followed by a banquet. As usual, there were diverse panels devoted to academic, creative, and pedagogical writing. BMC's choice of a meeting date in February proved very timely as we gathered just days before Covid-19 made conferencing as normal a thing of the past, at least for now. While the Mississippi Philological Association has cancelled the 2021 meeting, we hope to return to Blue Mountain in the spring of 2022.

Many thanks to Dr. Galliher, the faculty, and the graduate students for hosting another successful MPA meeting.

2020 Program

(Credit: bmc.edu)

MISSISSIPPI PHILOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2020

Registration: 12 PM – 4 PM **Registration**

(Foyer, Coward-Martin Hall)

12:45 PM –2:10 PM

Session 1: Christian Themes in Literature

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110

Moderator: Frank Thurmond, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

- "In the Shadow of Michael Wigglesworth: Pietistic Writing in Nineteenth-Century America." Kate Stewart, University of Arkansas at Monticello
- "Hog-Wash: Redemption and Sacrament in Flannery O'Connor's 'Revelation.'" Ian Pittman, University of Southern Mississippi
- "Miguel's Conversion." Rosalyn Rutland, Blue Mountain College

Session 2: Creative Writing/Poetry

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114

Moderator: Bill Hays, University of Mississippi

- "Southern-Fried Flash Fiction and Poems." James Fowler, University of Central Arkansas
- "Intergalactic Traveler and Other Poems." Kendall Dunkelburg, Mississippi University for Women
- "Five Poems." John Zheng, Mississippi Valley State University

2:15 PM – 3:40 PM

Session 3: Shakespeare and the British Renaissance

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110

Moderator: Mikki Galliher, Blue Mountain College

- "Two Views of Innocence: Representations of Eden and Pastoral in The Winter's Tale." Daniel Gillespie, Southwest Tennessee Community College

- "'Mark the Music' Musical and Poetic Harmony in the English Renaissance." Frank Thurmond, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- "'Out of Tune and Harsh': Domestic Abuse in Modern Performances of *Hamlet*." Nancy Kerns, Blue Mountain College

Session 4: Creative Writing/Fiction
Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114
Moderator: James Fowler, University of Central Arkansas

- "Breaking." Grayson Treat, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- "The Physician's Saga." Rusty Rogers, University of Central Arkansas
- "Exploring Truth and Friendship." Mark Ridge, Rust College
- "The Corral." Bryana Fern, University of Southern Mississippi

3:45 PM – 5:10 PM

Session 5: American Literature I
Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110
Moderator: Kate Stewart, University of Arkansas at Monticello

- "Are We Still Post-Southern? Four Contemporary Novels and Linearity." James Potts, Mississippi College
- "Subversive Depictions of Race in American Romanticism." Mikki Galliher, Blue Mountain College
- "Coventry Patmore on American Writers and Writing." Ben Fisher, University of Mississippi

Session 6: Creative Writing/Medieval Subjects
Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114
Moderator: Kathy Root Pitts, Jackson State University

- Allyson Hoffman, University of Southern Mississippi
- Corley Longmire, University of Southern Mississippi
- Amber Martin, University of Southern Mississippi
- Ryan Price, University of Southern Mississippi

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM **Keynote Presentation**
(Upper Level, Paschal Student Union)

WELCOME
Dr. Barbara McMillin,
President of Blue Mountain College

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
Dr. Mikki Galliher
Chair, Department of Language and Literature
Blue Mountain College

Guest Speaker: Diane Williams
Parallels of Southern Storytelling and Folktales from Around the World

6:40 PM –8 PM **Dinner and MPA Business Meeting**
Lorie Watkins-Massey, Presiding
Ray Dining Hall

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2020

8 AM – 11 AM **Registration**
(Foyer, Coward-Martin Hall)

8:00 AM-9:25 AM

Session 7: World Literature, TESOL, and Technical Communication

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110

Moderator: Nancy Kerns, Blue Mountain College

- "Trolling the Fuhrer: 'La Swastika' de Adolfo by Chano Urueta," Robert Harland, Mississippi State University
- "Task-Based Language Teaching in an ESL Class." Hanna Kim, University of Mississippi
- "The Ethical Use of Technical Communication for the Sake of the Public." Lawrence Sledge, Jackson State University

Session 8: Creative Writing/Poetry

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114

Moderator: Madison Brown, Mississippi State University

- "Seismology and Other Poems." Thomas B. Richardson, The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science
- "The View from Down Here: A Short Selection of Original Poetry." A.S. Lewis, Jackson State University
- "Conception: Aftermath and Brief Poems." Meagan Smith, William Carey University
- "Appearance and Reality and Other Poems." John Han, Missouri Baptist University,

9:30 AM – 10:55 AM

Session 9: Detective Fiction

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110

Moderator: Lorie Watkins Massey, William Carey University

- Anomie, Strain, and the Construction of Villainy in British Crime Fiction." Debbie Davis, University of West Alabama
- "'My Best Friend, Sherlock Holmes, is Dead': Watson as Survivor's Guilt Narrator in Doyle's 'The Final Problem' and Screen Adaptations / John Watson as Survivor's Guilt Narrator." Bryana Fern, University of Southern Mississippi
- "Grumpy Old Men: Justice in *And Then There Were None* and *Murder on the Orient Express*." Erin Watt, University of West Alabama

Session 10: Creative Writing/Fiction

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114

Moderator: John Han, Missouri Baptist University

- "The Poet in Residence." Bill Hayes, University of Mississippi
- "An Aristocrat Gets Fired." Kathy Root Pitts, Jackson State University
- "Nothing of God Can Die." Victoria Kinsey, Blue Mountain College
- "A Fist Full of Teeth." Mikki Galliher, Blue Mountain College

11 AM-12:25 PM

Session 11: 20th Century American Literature and Film

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110

Moderator: Ben Fisher, University of Mississippi

- "A Matter of Life and Death: An Archetypal Analysis of Hall's Harold and Maude." A.S. Lewis, Jackson State University
- *"Recognizing the Significance of Individualism in Elizabeth Gilbert's City Girls." Cassandra Hawkins, Jackson State University*
- "'Go in Fear of Abstractions': Ezra Pound and the Beginning of American Haiku." John Han, Missouri Baptist University
- "Foremothers and Feminist Community: Margaret Walker and the Phillis Wheatley Poetry Festival." Kim Whitehead, Mississippi University for Women

Session 12: Creative Writing/Fiction

Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114
Moderator: Thomas B. Richardson, The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

- "1983." Jeffrey Condran, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- "The Woman Who Was Blown into Trillions of Pieces and Reassembled." Nathaniel Darbonne, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- "Close To You." Madison Brown, Mississippi State University

12:30 PM-1:55 PM

Session 13: 19th and 20th Century American Literature
Coward-Martin Hall, Room 110
Moderator: Mikki Galliher, Blue Mountain College

- "The Sacred Fount: Henry James' Foray into Sexual Vampirism" Alan Brown, University of West Alabama
- "Making Faulkner's World Move Again." Lorie Watkins Massey, William Carey University
- "Up from the Muck: Voice and Agency as a Means to Liberation in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*." Dylan Williams, William Carey University

Session 14: Creative Writing/Creative Non-fiction and Drama
Coward-Martin Hall, Room 114
Moderator: Kendall Dunkelburg, Mississippi University for Women

- "Life." Katrina Byrd, Independent presenter
- "Good Grief." Allison Chestnut, William Carey University
- "Frosted Glass." Tracy Pitts, Mississippi University for Women

Creative Poetic Works

“Appearance and Reality” and Other Poems

By John J. Han

Appearance and Reality
—With a salute to Francis Herbert Bradley, 1846-1924
(a bussokusekika)

old men seem stiff-necked
because they have arthritis
they sound mad because
they don’t know how loud they are
they look resentful because
their weary nerves trigger pain

A Buddhist Temple in the Ozarks
(a bussokusekika)

turning his back on
a life of pleasure and gain
Siddhartha left home
where the Bald Knobbers once roamed
seekers from Asia follow
the sage’s way to true bliss

Man Up!
(a double kyoka)

ENGL 101
a cute male student sneaks a look
at a female student
when she looks at him
he looks down

a hallway
the cute guy avoids
eye contact again
she grieves, wondering why
he doesn't speak to her

What It Means to Be a Professor
(a kyoka collection)

junk email that
promotes a new book—
it ends with
Thanks for your interest
I hit Delete

my office phone blinks
as always, the message
begins with *nihao, zeli shi*
no way to call back to scream,
I am not Chinese!

snow geese migration
sans baggage
stepping into my cluttered study
I discard the books signed
by a late poet

missing books—
three times I rummage through
the same shelves in my study
although those books are
clearly not there

oops
the day after I order
replacement copies
the missing ones show up
too late to cancel the order

in-service day
a speaker tries to spice up
his talk by sounding funny
he laughs
alone

carrying my new pair
of lenses outside
the eyewear shop
it slips through my fingers,
falls on the concrete parking lot

Fifty Shades of Grey
a student in my lit class
wants to present it
with a smile I say
I don't want no trouble

Staying Young
(a haibun)

As a baby boomer, I will be eligible for Medicare in less than two years. In other words, my age is catching up to me. Yet, many people tell me that I look much younger than my age. Perhaps my vegetarian diet explains why. A more likely reason is that my professional life revolves around the late teens and early twenties. Interacting with young adults helps me enter their world—their dreams, ambitions, pleasures, and pains—and relive my early adulthood through them. As an empty nester, I consider them my unofficial adoptees. The relationship is mutually beneficial: I help them grow and mature, and they keep me young. In my younger years, I never thought getting old could be as blissful as it seems now. When my time comes, there will not be many regrets.

snow day—
cheers from both students
and professors

Is This the Last Time?
(a haibun)

In his poem "More and More," Dale Ernst writes, "When we wave goodbye, / there is the very strong feeling that / it could be the last time." He probably wrote the poem in his sixties. Well over sixty, I sometimes feel the same way; we never know how many more years remain for us, and there is no guarantee that we will meet again. The cycle of meeting and parting continues until we die or until we become mindful enough to transcend it.

daycare center
learning to say goodbye
to a friend

A Sea of Suffering: Notes from Korea
(a haibun)

Thanks in part to the influence of Christian faith, a triumphalist religion, many Koreans no longer view life as a sea of suffering. However, the grim view that human existence is nothing but suffering—the First Noble Truth of Buddhism—dies hard in East Asia. Deeply embedded in Koreans' psyche for hundreds of years is *han*—the ineffable grief and sadness.

Buddhist TV
the nun with a sad past sings
"the world's saddest song"

On this year's trip to my native county in Korea, I have encountered two elderly peasant women who are unable to fully verbalize their pain but still exude sadness with their body language. When I ask one of them how her sons are doing, she says, "My older son is not there." I do not know what she means. When I have an opportunity to speak with her again, she confides that he recently died in a construction accident as he was trying to help his co-worker in danger. She says, "I cannot sleep at night, because my stomach flutters all the time." She expresses her inner pain by describing physical discomfort. Her deeply sunken eyes reveal what she is experiencing internally.

pop radio…
a gloomy song blends
into rain

Another peasant in her eighties recently lost her husband of almost seventy years. Living without her lifelong companion terrified her so much at night that she begged her divorced son to move into her house. He has complied, and she feels better now. "It is hard to endure the reality of not having my husband anymore," she says, "but what can I do?" More outgoing than the woman who lost her son, she then smiles, gets on her small motorcycle, waves at me, and then zooms away.

Ozark hills
Dolly Parton's breakup song
among fall colors

“Why Black People Don’t Sunbathe in Mississippi” and Other Poems

By A.S. Lewis

Why Black People Don’t Sunbathe in Mississippi

I’ve seen Mississippi summers.
Bubbling, boiling, steaming Mississippi summers.
Summers where Indian sweat lodges are conducted not by a fire,
But under the Mississippi sun.

The kind of summer where the location of Cousin Joe’s daily domino game
Changes with the location of the great oak’s shadow.
A summer where Big Mama’s rocker and hand fan sway to one beat
As she conducts her sermons from the pulpit of her front porch.

A hot, sticky, thick summer,
Sticky like melted chocolate and caramel on your fingertips.
The kind of summer where all ponytails are lifted off the necks of young girls.
A summer where sweat no longer moves in slow rolls,
But sits on you like a second slippery skin.
A summer where the heat of the sun hits and rubs against your arms, legs, and neck
Like grandma’s special muscle ointment,
Stinging with its invisible heat.

Mississippi summers are the king of summers where ice cubes are entrees
And lemonade is more valuable than vintage wine.
A summer where the only thing sweatier than yourself
Are the three quarters held in the hands of all the neighborhood children
As they eagerly await the tin can tune of the ice cream man.
The man who carried cool salvation of a summer communion in a Flintstone push-up,
Its sugary consumption serving as relief
From a summer so blindingly intense
That you shut your eyes to the sun in a vain attempt to block its bitter lemon colored rays.

Only a Mississippi summer has humidity so thick
It’s like virginal waters holding on to the very last
Before delivering any taste of wet relief.

A summer where the radio blares the latest hits,
But the only dancers are the heat waves
As they parade with watery undulation
Their prayer for rain over the scorched pavement.

Mississippi summers.
Hot, hotter, hottest, Mississippi summers.
But there's more to a Mississippi summer.

Mississippi summers are summers where the local firemen are kept extra busy
Re-capping broken fire hydrants.
Summers where lawn sprinklers become flying pools
And the sole sponsor of the neighborhood Slip-n-Slide competition.
Where watermelon is all the meal you need
And everyone sits in the shade because they were born with all the tan they need.
Where the only sun block is your birthday suit
And UV protection is a sticker on your new imitation Raybans.

I have seen Mississippi summers so hot it makes your candles melt.

But these aren't just Mississippi summers.
They are our summers, our hot, sticky, watermelon seed spitting, kick the can, red light green light, Slip-n-Slide summers.
Our Mississippi summers.

Doubt

Did you see me?
I lost myself awhile ago.
I think it was a blind corner at noon
And dark alleys for a score
A handful of left turns with no path to follow
And a wallow
A hard and bitter pill to swallow.
Next thing I knew
I turned around and I was gone
Just a shadow stood
To alarm the wrong.
So the shadow moved forward ahead
Replaced and remained
To fill the space, took my stead.
Left me hungry, empty, unfed
Because my shadow had no mouth.
And so I want years in silence
Shadows have no eyes,
So blind and mute and insubstantial.
My shadow moved through my life.
'Til I was no longer a wife.
'Til my shadow's edge could cut a knife.
Dangerous.
Dangerous.
Such a fuss for a shadow.
Did you see me?
Ghosting through those halls?
A simple shade thrown on the walls?
Or did you stare to empty air
Without a wonder or a care
That this shadow had no presence there?
No search parties were ever called
But I, myself, became enthralled
With the idea of finding a body
Somebody
My body
Nobody. That's what my shadow had.
So searched I did
And at third and fifth I found a piece
Written on torn parchment,
Folded, wrinkled, yellowed with time
Marked by only the words
"I write."
I write but I didn't believe

And so I searched for more,
And more and more and more and poof!
Proof, in the reflection of a mirror
All the evidence right in front of my eyes
The moment I chose to open them.
My body,
Right there, me
A writer as I was meant to be.

Race Relations

Evil is bred in the bone
Learned in the skin
Taught at the hand of derision
Fed at the pot of contempt
Spiced by disgust and fear
A fine recipe
A fine recipe

Not born, taught
Taught at the hand and knee
Of larger, greater, deeper hate
A grandparent of the elder sin
A lineage of links and fetters
Generations chained by hate
Generations chained by hate

What meal must we feed our people?
Shall we drink the same bitter brew?
Pass the poison formula on by breast and bottle
Teach our babies to choke and chew
And swallow the rancid, sharp-edged bile
With a joke and practiced smile
With a joke and practiced smile we say
I don't see color

Janus Space

No other animal looks upon the world with two faces
Save we humans
Behold the Janus god
Gaze bifurcated and biased
Façade of saint and sinner both
And oath
A promise
Quickly broken, common sense given token
But no weight
Crooked actions built on words laid straight
Speech from one voice
A voice from two faces
In spaces where even echoes burn bright
Shining in a hero's light
But still twirling a villain's mustache
I must ask
When you speak which face do you use?
Is it a conscious decision?
Do you get to choose?
Or do you give with teeth and by your tongue we lose?

No other animal looks upon the world with two faces
Save we humans
We can fight for rights of strangers
While oppressing those who fight beside us
Belied, us, we
Don't you see? You'll never be certain which face is me
This world is a Janus space
This space holds my Janus face

We decry misogyny while legislating women's bodies
We shout down bigotry while vilifying opinions we don't share
We condemn racism while refusing aid from a hand that bears a shade not our own
The color of race
The shape of a face
This hypocritical honey
Leaves a bitter taste

No other animal looks upon the world with two faces
Save we humans
This world is a Janus space
This place holds my Janus face
This one does too.

“Don’t, but if you Do” and “Conception: Aftermath”

By Meagan Smith

To the woman whose muscles remember to smile
but whose mind forgot how to laugh

To the woman who knows she loves her baby
but can’t for the life of her feel it

To the woman who looks in the mirror and pokes at her skin
to make sure she’s still real

To the woman who knew motherhood would change her life
but never considered it would be for the worst

To the woman who now understands how someone can
leave everything
for the promise of a deep breath and an empty mind:

I am writing to recommend that you do not call to your OBGYN for help;

But if you do call,
don’t stay quiet when the nurse laughs
as you tell her you think your husband will divorce you
because you are no longer yourself;

If you don’t point out the indifference,
demand that a doctor sees you in person instead of calling in a Prozac prescription;

If you don’t walk into the office,
try not to confuse normal with numb;

If you do make that compromise,
don’t press the discontentment under your skin
and trust your blood cells to break down the infection;

If you do bury the pain,
don’t let it fester into the belief that you’re
fractured
unstable
unrestorable;

If you do believe you're counterfeit,
don't think this is the end
or that it has to be the end;

But if you do . . .
know this is my story.
I'm still here.
And, you're reading this,
so you can be here, too.

Yours truly,

Mea

Conception: Aftermath

He left a note on my toilet.
I want to pretend it doesn't exist, but I have to urinate,
so if I face him without the strain of biological necessity
he'll know I saw it.
He'll know I ignored it.

We had a bad night.
The letter is from him--
The man I swore to love forever.
The man I swore at as my body spewed out foreign anger.
The man who swore he knew I wasn't myself.
The man who swore he wasn't *that* hurt
as I cradled his head and said,
"I'm so sorry. I am. So. So. Sorry."

The world lied to me.

Lie: "Motherhood moments are precious"
Truth: Motherhood moments test your identity

Lie: "Cherish these times always"
Truth: Cherish the seconds chemicals aren't chiseling away at your sanity

Lie: "Soak it in. He's only newborn once"
Truth: I cannot treasure motherhood when I am something…Other

I should gouge out the world's eyes with my uneven fingernails,
smother it with my milk-soured shirt,
cut out its tongue with a rear-view safety mirror shard.

Because lies like these

break

souls.

Sometimes my new mind tricks me to believe I have returned to rights,
That the old me can walk through the glass-walled prison
and take her place as captain of this vessel
That she can stop wailing,
"I'm in here! That's not me!"
Then a sideways glance,

A too-careful step,
a word misheard
stokes the dormant flame to full blaze, and I'm a stranger again
to myself
to my family
the old me banging her head over and over without betterment,
like a black bird to a clean window.

I. am. strong…At least I should be…I used to know how to be…I can control my actions—my reactions…I just have to try harder…It's only been six months…He should be more kind with time…Together we choose to have a baby…But there's a note on my toilet that I can't ignore…I've checked the house…He's not at home and the baby is with him and, oh God, he's given up…I have no more reasons to try anymore…I can hardly remember what I'm supposed to fight for…who or how I'm supposed to be…

The note is folded in three even sections with two seams.
From my vantage point the words are hidden
Stored away inside on blue lines.
My words are stored, too, but my casting is not neat.
my seams are crooked and unfair.
My words ragged loops and wild-eyed doodles.
What's inside me frightens me as much as that note.

My fists punch at the fear-tainted air
And nature pleads too loud to ignore.
I don't want to touch it, but I lift the letter with two cursed fingers
then answer the physical need.
Finished, I sit on the lid and trace the angles.

My new impulse is to rip it open—
begin the pain—because
One: this new me feeds off pain and
Two: I need to know if his perseverance is capped out.
Have I finally drained him dry?
Early on, I expected this day would come,
but eight years later
I'd come to think he could hold me forever,
no matter how strange I am.

That he would like to.

My torture would be perfect if I made him let me go.

I unfold one seam.

My Love, you are my life.
If it has to be this way forever, I'm still with you.
Page two.
But I hope it won't be.
I'll chase you like the moon chases the sun.
The end.
Yours always.

I've tried to will this away
too long
alone.
I need help.
Saying that out loud feels like failure
And yet…
he still loves me.
I know
Because he left a note on my toilet.

“Road” and Other Poems

By John Zheng

Road

After Dorothea Lange’s *The Road West, U.S. 54 in Southern New Mexico*, 1938

The
road
west
so
long
and
so
far
away

goes
to
no
where
to
escape

day
after
day
they
roam
for
jobs
for
any
thing
to
keep
them
alive

they
become
the
road
trodden

by
their
hopeless
steps

Black Woman

After Eudora Welty's untitled photograph

She stands
before a shotgun shack

like an old statue
through wind and rain.

The brim of her hat
frays with faded white,

her gray sweater
is worn-out,

her wrinkles
are deep as furrows,

but her gaze
shows a defiance to suffering.

She reminds me
of my grandmother

who widowed
at the age of twenty-four and

raised four children
singlehandedly.

Sometimes I wonder
under what pressure or

feudal bondage
she didn't marry anymore,

but the answer remains
a dead silence

like her headstone
hard and stubborn.

Magnetic Moment

After Eudora Welty's *Saturday Off*

Standing barefoot
on the wooden porch,

she leans
on the column base

with her arms
crossed at ease

and her body
bent from the waist

to form a tranquil
dome dune

with the stored energy
to pull on

the photographer's
focus …

Midwife

After Eudora Welty's *Nurse at Home*

Standing in front of her house
like a welcome marker
in a white cap and gown,
she's a midwife nursing at home.

On the wooden wall is her
professional sign
with handwritten words:

Clara Humes
obstetric nurse and nursing

How I wish to hear a birth cry
in her hands and
a smile on her face
as broad as sunshine.

Road Stop

After William Ferris's *S. M. White & Son Crossroads Store*

In deep autumn
the crossroads store looks as barren
as its surroundings.

The lamp inside
is like a constant burning
of a matchstick,

on the screen door
are two Colonial Food signs
no one casts a look,

on the porch
are two rustic benches
taking a nap

since no locals
sit there chatting and smoking.
More rusty signs

on the wall,
columns and ground
add an old timey feel—

Coca Cola,
Double Cola, orange crush and
illegible ones.

A Chevron gas pump
stands alone in front of the store.
I grab a shot and

get back on the road
winding all the way up
to Vicksburg,

the road with more stops
to snap shots of moments
from fading away.

Creative Prose Works

The Corral

By Bryana Fern

When Melina asks to stop by the horses again, I don't question it. After months of this, every day on the way home from school, I'm surprised she still bothers to ask. That she doesn't just expect me to pull the truck off the shoulder at the bottom of the hill on Marston Road. Every time we near it, she takes her backpack off her lap to the floorboard, unbuckles her seatbelt even though I've told her not to. These years of middle school are turning more and more trying. Having her mother as a teacher doesn't help.

Melina jumps out the passenger door when we stop, her Converse knockoffs squelching in mud as she races through tall weeds to the barbed wire fence. Her hands find strongholds between the barbs. The string from her hoodie dangles unevenly, one side near her beltloops. Shoving the keys in my pocket, I follow her and pull my heavy cardigan closer, scowling at the dark gray sky. Februarys are always like this in Tennessee. Miserable, wet and cold.

"Mom, hurry up!"

Melina meanders farther along the fence, reaching on her toes to look. Weeds stretch past her knees and I worry about snakes until I realize it's still too cold for them to be out and about. Just like us. The horses are deep in pasture near the woods, their small figures hazel and cream among various greens. Melina sighs and while I feel for her, I'm happy they aren't closer so that we can actually go home this time. Two days ago, they were right by the fence and Melina made us stand there for over an hour while she loved on them. Her favorite is a cream Appaloosa she's named Dash. I have no idea what the thing's actual

name is, and in all our visits, we've never once seen the owners. I like to imagine these things are just living wild out here like the ones out in Assateague Island.

My daughter grumbles now and tries to climb the fence post, waves her arms above her head and whistles. I don't bother telling her to get down. My feet are growing numb and my hands are stowed under my armpits. I glance at my watch.

"Five more minutes. I don't think they're coming over today."

"We should have brought treats. Carrots or something."

"We're not feeding them, Melina. It's enough that we stop to look at them. They don't belong to us."

"I don't think anyone would mind. Horses are social creatures, you know. Did you know they have the largest eyes of any animal? They can see almost 360 degrees."

"Was that on your PBS special last night?"

"No, it's in one of my books from the library."

I return to the truck, sit in the driver's seat with the door open, my legs hanging out. I lean my head against the frame of the cab and yawn. Melina's hair catches in the wind and separates from her braid in strands. She's so proud of the patchwork French braid she's learned to do herself. She doesn't need me to do it for her anymore.

"Come on, Mel. Let's go."

No sooner have I said this than a mounted figure appears near the top of the hill and the rider begins walking the horse toward us, then loping in a gentle canter. Melina climbs down the fence and backs up. Her hands disappear into her hoodie. As the person gets closer, I can see it's a woman in maybe her early fifties. Her short hair sports spatters of gray that seem to oddly match with her deep denim jeans. Her coat is an ugly yellow, faded, with

dirty faux fur lining the hood around her shoulders. She raises a hand as she comes to a stop near us, and her horse, a dark bay, snorts at being made to slow down. Melina glances at me and I shake my head, gesturing toward the lady. I wasn't having any part of this.

"Hi. Hello." Melina's shoes squelch toward the fence again, her hands still lodged in her hoodie. She stares up at the woman, who smiles and greets her back.

"I like your horses," Melina says. "I like to see them and my mom stops on the way home from school. I hope that's okay."

Normally Melina can't get two words out around strangers, and I was hoping that would be the case here. It's just another element that shows me how much she cares about this. She'd always liked animals, particularly horses. But what little girl doesn't? And there are so many here in Tennessee. Something about the ones in this pasture got her excited, though—enough to warrant our constant return.

"Thank you," the woman says. "I've seen you and your mom here before, I think. What's your name?"

"Melina. And that's Sandy."

Great. I smile and wave from my seat, trying to be cordial when all I want is to be home wearing my slippers with a mug of hot chocolate and perhaps some coffee liquor. Pretending that I have any intention of grading my students' algebra tests. If only we had left five minutes ago.

"My name's Joan" the woman says. "Which one is your favorite, Melina?"

"That one." She points to the cream horse far out. "I call him Dash."

The woman follows her gaze and nods. She takes her hand from the tan cowhide glove and puts her thumb and forefinger to her mouth, whistling long and high. Heads pop

from the grass and a group of the horses begin trotting across the field toward us. Some stop and graze a little more, but they all eventually make their way over. Melina is pressed against the fence. She reaches and pets the cream horse on the nose when it reaches her.

"His name is Samson," Joan says. "I've only had him for about a year or so. He still gets lonely sometimes, I think."

"What about the others?"

"Most of them are Thoroughbreds that breeders in Kentucky don't want. They aren't fast enough or they're too old. I rescue them. And others."

"Wow." Melina continues stroking Samson's nose and up toward his eyes. He pushes his nose into her hand, sniffing and snorting. Melina looks like she's being handed gold.

Joan laughs and tilts her head, studying Melina, and I don't like where this is headed. This woman is too kind. I can sense it. I count backward from five in my head and sure enough, then comes the offer.

"Why don't you and your mom come up to the barn tomorrow after school if you want? You can see them up close and I can show you around."

"Do you think I could I ride one?"

"Melina," I say. I resist pinching the bridge of my nose. "Come on. We need to go now. Tell her thank you."

Joan just smiles again, like she's found a new protégé. She rests both hands across the horn of the saddle, reins draped low as she lets her horse graze. Its head disappears into the tall weeds and Melina remains at the fence, reaching over to try and pet it.

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The next day, I try to stop at our usual spot, out of habit, but Melina reminds me before the truck even slows that we have to go up to the barn this time. She presses her face against the passenger window as I pull slowly along the road. A small house takes shape above the hill, and behind it, a long, wide barn. I drive slow on the gravel, not wanting it to spit everywhere, but it's still loud and it's unavoidable now that our presence has been announced. We can't turn around anymore. I practice deep breaths to calm my stomach. I shouldn't be so concerned, but I am. It's more than concern—in fact, I don't even know if that's the right word, but it's what I've settled on. And I don't want to dwell on that right now.

I just don't know how far this infatuation is going to go. She's going to want to ride, and I can't pay for lessons. This woman might not even be interested in charging anything, which would be worse. Then Melina's going to be hooked. Then she's going to want a horse more than she already does. She doesn't understand how expensive they are, how much work goes into it. She doesn't realize how unrealistic it is. She's just going to get hurt if she can't keep it in perspective. And I—I would always much rather keep things in perspective.

Melina gets into obsessions too quickly, and I know what that's like. I know how easy it is. She finds something to love and she loves it to the extreme, foregoing everything else. When she read *Inkheart* and found that Meggie and her father spoke in Tolkien's Elvish, she took it as confirmation and began pouring into it. I had to take her to the library so she could look up the language on the computer and copy down phrases into her notebook. I sat on one of those circular step stools all afternoon in the cookbook aisle looking up recipes I would never use. For the next few weeks, all I heard was this tongue twisting dialogue around the house. When I told her to do the dishes, she mumbled

something under her breath and even though I didn't ask, she informed me that she'd told me I smelled like an orc. I grabbed her notebook off the kitchen table where she'd been studying it beside her mac-and-cheese-and-chicken-nugget-ketchup ensemble, and I butchered a random phrase from the "Insults" list. She gasped and splashed soapy water, telling me to take it back.

With the horses, ever since someone moved onto that property and she started seeing the horses in the field on the way home, something just snapped. Horse fever set in—I knew the symptoms well. Posters cut from magazines went on the bedroom walls. Stickers covered her binders. Books and movies from the library. I can't stop her when she gets like this, and I can never tell when it will phase out, transition into the next obsession. I suppose with only me in the house, no siblings, no father, she's entitled to let her imagination take over. I know I wouldn't mind if I could do the same. But maybe I've just forgotten how. I think about myself at her age and if there had been any space left on my walls under my Jim Morrison posters. My mother hadn't cared, didn't notice that I bounced around the house chanting syncopations of "fuck, fuck yeah, c'mon baby." My school books had covers I'd made from brown paper bags—not the stretchy nylon fabric my students used now—and I dried out every color Sharpie I could find in our desk drawer by doodling "shake dreams from your hair" and poems and lyrics. Lizards and feathers were easier to draw than horses.

Melina is excited, but sitting very still in the passenger seat now that we're closer, her hands inside her hoodie again. Her eyes take in everything and she hooks her top lip under her teeth. She almost hops out of the truck when we park under a tree, but she waits for me to get out first this time. Gravel cracks under our shoes. Melina's arm is slipped through mine, but she darts ahead a few steps as we near. The alley of the stable stretches far down

the middle of the barn, and shadows of horse heads peer out of the stalls. Sounds echo on the concrete. On the left, a few stalls down, Joan has a horse haltered outside the door where she's grooming it, a bucket of brushes at her feet. Of course she picked out Samson. She glances over her shoulder at us and then waves us in.

"You have on closed-toe shoes?" she asks as Melina still walks ahead of me and reaches her first. She studies Melina's sneakers, her lips narrowing.

"Be careful with those. It won't feel good if Samson here steps on them."

I should have thought about the shoes. She has a pair of pull-on boots that aren't exactly riding boots, but are better than those canvas Converse. Joan smiles at me over Melina's head, as if sensing something. This is really only the second time I've experienced this woman's smile, and I can't explain the undesired comfort that washes over me. I ignore her and study a knot of wood on the wall. She hands the brush to Melina and begins demonstrating the direction to move her hand and how.

Her clothes are similar to what they were before. Thick denim and very old, worn boots. Under her yellow coat that's undone, she wears a dark gray flannel, the top two buttons left loose. It's a thick material and loose on her, like it's a man's carpenter shirt. Her hands show use, nails clipped short and unpainted, veins wiring the back. I imagine her palms feel dry. But it's her face that seems so much softer than all of this and keeps drawing me in. Maybe it's with how natural she seems here, like we are now in her sanctuary and there's nothing that happens here she isn't aware of. She is not old, but the gentle lines around her eyes and mouth connect her smile instantaneously, unadorned with makeup. The blonde and gray of her hair mix evenly in the short, layered bob, strands unevenly

pointing toward her blue eyes. She stands shorter than me. I try to imagine if I've seen someone who looks like her in a movie before, but I can't.

Joan stands in front of Melina, holding Samson's halter and observing while Melina takes the curry comb over his sides—hesitantly at first and then stronger. Joan points out areas to pay attention to, the mud trapped in his flanks where the hair changes direction, the croup at the end of his back where dust settles, the cannon and the fetlock where more mud cakes down around his hooves. Her words remind me how many equine terms I'd forgotten I knew. Joan approves.

"That's well done. Nice job. Now check the comb there and see how much dirt you've got. Bang it out here on the door—careful, not too close to his head or you'll scare him. You want to do the other side? Here, put your hand here on his back near his tail so he can feel where you are. Never walk behind a horse and risk spooking it. You can talk to him. He knows his name."

Samson ignores them, closing his large, dark eyes and sleeping in place. Melina's legs on the other side of the horse shift as she still experiments with the right angles to brush. Her Converse stand beside Joan's boots. Her braid swings back and forth under Samson's belly as she leans down to reach his legs. Over Samson's neck, Joan smiles at me and brushes his mane with a different comb.

"You want to come try, Sandy?"

I realize I am still standing in the middle of the barn alley with my purse over my shoulder. I shake my head and move to the side, sitting on a bale of hay and hugging my bag to my chest. I smell leather from the saddles in the tack room behind me, and the sweet odor of horse hair. Not for the first time, I wonder what it would all smell like together in a

Yankee candle. Unobserved, I continue to watch not my daughter, but her new teacher. It's been so long since I was smiled at like that by anyone, as if they understood something I hadn't even mentioned. I remind myself that I don't want to be here. I remind myself that I'm not in control here. That it's just like childhood all over again.

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The next few days after that, Melina grows more and more excited. Joan seems happy to have her, excited herself that Melina is so interested and is absorbing everything so quickly.

"My own daughter moved away to college a few years ago," she says. "It's been quiet here. I remember when she was your age."

Joan nods down the alley at a roan horse eating from the hay bag. There is a white stripe down his face that flares out over his nostrils and ends up somewhere in his forelock. The horse watches us and keeps its eyes on me of all people.

"That's Roger," Joan says. "He's my daughter's."

Melina and Joan keep working in the stalls, mucking into a wheelbarrow. Melina told me yesterday that she's proud she can hold the pitchfork now without it tipping her over. I don't think I said anything in response, though maybe I should have. I'd seen the short spark of disappointment in Melina's face and felt disturbed at the satisfaction it brought me. I leave the two of them and walk cautiously along the barn alley, peering into the stalls on both sides. Roger watches me, tossing his head when I'm a few feet away. Hay protrudes from his mouth. I'd even forgotten hay could sound crunchy when it was chewed.

I stand in front of Roger. He snorts warm air into my face and I smell alfalfa. The mixture of scents is like a massage to my brain that makes me want to relax. It calms me

even as I raise my hand slowly and pet his nose. The stubble of hairs on velvet is a strange sensation and I jerk my hand away. Roger doesn't seem too offended. He leans forward again and sniffs me, blowing my bangs when he snorts. Melina is right. Their eyes are huge. In the dim lighting of the barn, his pupils are hidden. Soft brown orbs study me, unconcerned, but not uninterested. I stare back, waiting for him to blink first, not remembering whether horses blinked.

"Fine, you win. How long have you been here?" I ask him.

I turn my body and speak quietly so that the others can't hear me. Roger snorts again and I stroke the side of his face. His round jaw ripples as he continues chewing, going back for more hay and dropping pieces onto the floor.

"Stop wasting it," I say. Then, "I'll tell you a secret. You remind me of someone I used to know. When I was little, my mom used to take my big sister riding at this stable outside town. I got to come along but only to watch."

In mentioning that, I must have wanted to think about those times over twenty years ago, because there I was. A similar scene, a much older barn, colder, still and lonely. Me standing underneath a giant horse head, gazing up at its grey color and the bristles under its chin that wobbled as it chewed and worked its lips. It lowered its head and sniffed my hair, and warm breath huffed over my scalp like I had food there he was tasting. And out in the corral, my older sister riding. Doing what the instructor said I was too young to do. I know now that was a lie, that she just didn't want to work with seven-year-olds or anyone younger than that perfect high school teen age that would let her mold them into miniature riding versions of herself. She didn't know she wouldn't get that from Phoebe, that I would offer to

prove my dream if only she'd let me. So I listened to trotting hooves on hard dirt, the shouted directions. The clink of bridle bits. Praise, disappointment. Rejection.

I admit I was jealous of my sister for years. She gave up lessons so quickly that when I was old enough and it became my turn, our mother refused. Would be a waste of time, she said. And now with Melina, I'd wanted to refuse. But here we are, and something hot twists at me. In so much more than this, I see Phoebe in Melina. How horrible must I be to let my childhood bitterness turn to this, that I would deny my daughter her dream simply because I never got mine. And as I hold this tightness I'm unable to push away the reminder that it's more and that every act of kindness I show Melina is more than my mother gave me. This rooted discontentment gnaws at me, and not for the first time, I wonder how different things might be, how much more freedom I might have if Melina's father had stayed to help me birth her and raise her. But these things can't matter. She thinks her father died before she was born. And to me, he did. There's nothing more to say about it.

Roger tosses his head at something behind me, but it's too late, and Joan is there with her hand on my shoulder. It's gentle. Her fingers stroke my cardigan. For some reason, I'm not as embarrassed as I thought I'd be. I try not to look at her face again, knowing that would just calm me down more. She can't see my red eyes. I want to maintain at least some of my nerve. This place keeps stripping me of my control.

"Melina and I have been polishing the saddles," Joan says. Her voice is so soft. Warm and reassuring. "She really wants to ride. Is it okay with you if we go out in the corral and I show her some basics? You're welcome to saddle up too and come along."

I stare out the back alley of the stable, toward the cattle gate leading into a large oval enclosure of upturned earth and soft mud puddles. Oak and birch trees overhang the iron

railings, and I see that much younger version of myself standing on the fence, arms hanging over the top, watching. Left out. For some reason, I don't want that to change now. I need to hold onto it.

"If you're sure it's all right with you, it's okay by me. I'll stay here, though."

Melina leads a palomino by the reins, the saddle already in place. This one is an older Quarter horse, I heard Joan tell her, one that's slow and gentle. I don't think Melina heard any of it. She grins so wide her braces are showing. She never lets her braces peek even a little. Joan walks on the other side of the horse, and I wait for them to exit the barn before I follow. Roger snorts at me as I leave, and I pull my cardigan around me so tightly the seams on the side stretch.

Joan is showing her how to mount from the left side, swing her right leg over. Melina has never done this before, but she shows no hesitation. I pause mid-step as she lifts into the saddle in one fluid movement, leg clearing the back of the saddle effortlessly. Joan tells her to stroke the side of his neck and pat his withers, talk to him so he gets to know her. Even though the sky is still gray and I hate it, it's bright enough that I have to squint as I fully leave the shadows of the barn. Wet grass stains my cheap tennis shoes, and I watch for puddles after I step in the first one. Muddy socks are perfect for the day. I stop by a thick tree and watch there from a distance, not wanting to go up to the corral.

My daughter sits straighter than I have ever seen her. I'm always telling her not to slouch. Now her shoulders are back, head up, her arms relaxed at her sides, elbows bent naturally and hands close together holding the reins. She faces forward while looking down at Joan with only her eyes, nodding slightly here and there. Her hair blows loose—a ponytail today—but she doesn't lift a finger to correct it. Joan's voice is soft and steady. I

can't hear what she's saying, but she soon begins walking alongside the horse as Melina nudges him forward with her heels. Her eyes widen and I see the smile full of braces again.

I can see what Joan meant about the palomino being older, because he seems to know the routine without Melina telling him anything. He follows the well-worn track around the outer edge of the corral, and Joan moves to the center of the ring, carefully observing and guiding. Every now and then Melina shifts her head to glance at Joan for reassurance, but she keeps her back and shoulders straight as if she's frozen.

Joan asks a little louder if she's ready, and then makes a clicking noise with her tongue. The horse picks up the pace into a trot. The gait looks bumpy, changing speed and pace until it settles. Joan counts on the beat and with every land of the front right hoof, Melina raises in the saddle as if on instinct, her hips lifting with the movement and matching the rhythm. Her ponytail swings back and forth, whacking her in the face. She's laughing. After a few minutes, she copies Joan's low voice and brings the horse down to a walk. She pats the palomino's neck over and over.

She waits for Joan to approach and take the reins, instructing her how to dismount, which she is more unsteady in doing. Her legs shake, but I imagine it's more from adrenaline than anything. Melina glances at me and grins, but is caught up in conversation with Joan as they exit and once again reenter the barn.

"She did so well!" Joan calls over her shoulder.

Her comforting expression is there again and I feel the same warmth, but there's something else fighting it now. I know if I just follow them into the barn, it will welcome me back in this strange way. Joan's hand on my shoulder, the smell of her yellow coat and the hay. Roger's velvet nose and the feel of dusty concrete under my shoes. I imagine there is no

stopping Melina now that she has begun this. I hear Phoebe in the front seat with our mother, saying she guessed her first lesson was okay. I'm in the back staring out the window, clutching a dirty rock I'd dug from the ground while I'd wandered and kicked at grass clumps. Melina stopped asking about the rock I keep in the truck cupholder. She picked it up once and laughed at it, trying to brush off the dirt and I'd told her to put it back.

Roger sees me outside and tosses his head. I back away and wander toward the corral, closer than I'd been before. I run my hand along the metal railing, the rough rust frigid and damp. Carefully, I climb on the bottom railing and lean, drape my arms over the top. I can reach much farther now than I could when I was seven. Far off to the left in the pasture, more horses graze. Samson is among the group, his cream color standing out. Tails whisk at flies and every now and then a head lifts, looks around, then returns to grazing. Somewhere the sun is setting behind the clouds, darkening the gray. The breeze blows colder and my own hair drifts across my face. I let it go where it will.

A Fist Full of Teeth

By Mikki Galliher

Dani felt an uncontrollable tremor as he heard the wooden rod across the room descend in quick motions into the soft fleshy part of another boy's knees. Struggling to hold a middle stance, Dani tightened his core, his feet firmly planted, knees slightly bent, toes facing forward. A small trickle of sweat slid across his fat cheek. "Perfect," he thought as he watched Master Park methodically proceeded through the lines of boys, "I will be perfect." He checked the height of his extended fist. Eye level. The other fist sat furled at his waist ready to spring forward in a punch that was not to yet to come. He could feel the master approach. The sounds of the rod grew closer and he could hear the quickened breath of the boy beside him.

"Toes forward!" snapped Master Park. The rod cut the air again, and a whimper quietly but forcefully erupted from the boy next to him. The master was so near to Dani that the boy could feel the vibrations of the sound waves as they resonated past his neighbor and into his own body. He stiffened and checked himself. His eyes fixed forward on a small, dead fly stuck to the mirror in front of him.

Almost before he heard the sound of the rod, he felt its sting warm the top of his left foot. He silently slid it a quarter of an inch to make it perpendicular to his leg. Casting a glance with only his eyes, Dani looked to see the red welts starting to form across the bony top of his foot. He did not move. He felt the tingling burn of a tear starting to well in his eye but determined he would not let it slip. Last practice he cried. He was stronger now,

tougher, and he knew the consequences. Instead he stared at the fly, waited, and felt the burn fade as he heard the sound of the rod grow softer.

After practice, the class circled Josue, the new kid. The kid who didn't know better. The kid who dared whimper. He held his head down to hide his eyes. They were still glassy and red from tears, he wiped his damp cheek with the back of his hand leaving a smear of dirt across his brown face. "Bebe, tu eres un bebe," hissed one of the boys. Josue continued walking.

"C'mon, baby," said another. "Where are you headed? You surely don't think we're going to let you go that soon." Another boy pulled at his hair. "Llora," he commanded, "cry some more. You know you want to, baby."

Dani watched from the outskirts of the circle. He remembered well last week's circle and touched the small bruise just above his eye—a reminder for next time one of the older boys had said. Josue's eyes were wide, showing too much of the whites, and Dani felt his insides expand as if they were too large for his chest. He wanted the boys to quit and thought about stepping forward but instead stopped himself. Turning away, he looked at the fly again and wondered how it ended up dead, stuck there on a mirror. With that thought, he exited the dojan and half-heartedly punched the concrete wall before stepping onto the dusty street.

His white gee almost seemed to glow in the fading summer sun that had already muted from yellow to orange. He looked down at his tennis shoes. The toes, as always, were worn and a sliver of his big toenail just peeked out from the small hole there. He kicked a piece of gravel as he walked making a game of the action but was startled from his game when the rock hit the foot of a dark-skinned Indio, who turned and glared at him with

obvious annoyance. The Indio was probably an itinerant worker from the country, weren't all the Inditos? He thought and then remembered the last time he saw Inditos in the colonia. He was with his best friend, Rueben. They had been playing on top of Rueben's roof with his dog, Soldado. Rueben was the first who saw them. The indios were at the neighbor's house laying concrete.

"Dani, look over there," Rueben said pointing toward the crew. "Why do they have to come to our town with their stinking Indio ways?"

"I know," said Dani. "I bet your neighbors will regret hiring them. Look how dirty they are."

"Hey, Inditos," shouted Rueben from his perch on the roof. "Why are you so dirty? I can smell you all the way up here?" The men ignored him and continued on with their work. "Don't you hear me?"

"Don't bother, Rueben. They're probably too dumb to understand plain Spanish anyway."

"I've got an idea. Let's teach those Indios where they belong. Wait here," he said disappearing down the stairs.

Dani shrugged. He continued watching the Indios and noticed that they really weren't much darker than he was. He wondered what town they had come in from. He imagined they might know his abuelo or maybe his tios who still lived in estado Hidalgo. He wondered what his primos were doing and remembered working after school picking corn in his family's fields, the feeling of the ears in his hands at harvest. Home--The smell of barbacoa coming out of the pit, so tender the meat fell from the bone. The air so clean

that it didn't turn your mocos black when you sneezed. Not like here in the colonia where dirt and smog permeated everything, especially the air.

Reuben returned to the roof with a bag full of nettles. "Look what I found growing near the driveway. I say it's time to make some water balloons."

Dani felt a tightness in his throat as he remembered the Indios under the shower of nettle infused water balloons. After the first balloon fell, an overconfident Indio shouted up to the boys, "Is that the best you Fresas can manage?" But then the nettles penetrated his skin. He began to itch and curse at them. "Ay! Ortiga! Cuidate!" he yelled to the other workers.

The boys excited by the success of the first balloon opened fire on the rest of the Indios below. They ran every which way. "And don't come back! You stinking Inditos!" yelled Rueben, and they didn't. The neighbor's carport still wasn't finished.

Dani tried to laugh and remember the exhilaration and triumph of that moment, but he was having trouble just then recapturing it. He felt like a child chasing an iridescent bubble only to have it burst just before reaching it. He then turned his attention to another pebble and kicked it down the street for a while until he reached Reuben's house. Rueben was sitting on the sidewalk in front of the house playing with his toy car. "Hey Rueben, wanna play? Maybe we can get some kids together to play futbol."

"I can't. Mama says if I rip the knees out of another pair of pants, she's going to asumbarme. Besides it's getting too late. We wouldn't be able to see the ball."

"Well, then can I play cars with you?"

"No. I only have one. Maybe tomorrow we can do something?"

"Can I just see it?"

"See," he said holding it up for Dani to see. Dani reached out and touched the smooth blue metallic paint. "Be careful. My dad just gave it to me today. It's brand new." The car was the most beautiful toy car Dani had ever seen. A Match Box car like the ones in the advertisements. The paint was pristine, not a single scratch. All its tires were still intact. The frame was sleek and "built for speed."

Dani snatched the car from his friend's hand and said, "Let's see how fast she goes. Maybe we can find something to make a track."

"Give it back," said Rueben. "I don't want to see how fast it goes. I want it to stay nice and pretty." He reached for the car, and Dani pulled it out of reach.

"I thought I was your friend. Friends share!"

"But it's new," said Rueben, "and you always mess things up. I just want to keep it nice for a while, that's all. Damelo. Give it to me." Rueben lunged at Dani and snatched the car from his hands, but in the struggle the tiny car tumbled free of both boys, hit the sidewalk, and bounced into the gutter, through the metal grate, to the dark spaces below the city.

"Now look what you have done! You always ruin everything!" said Rueben as he pushed Dani, "Go home, Dani, and leave me alone!"

"Don't push me!"

"I can do what I want! This is my house. Now go away!" responded Rueben shoving him a second time, harder.

"Don't push me! I'm warning you!"

Rueben pushed him again, "What are you gonna do about it. . . Indio?"

Dani felt a hot wave rush over his body as red flooded his brain. The sky looked red, the ground…red, his friend . . . red, everything . . . red. His body felt like it was not his own. The memory of muscles well-trained by the master steadied him in a perfect middle stance, and he punched his friend in his open mouth. Blood cascaded from the gaping hole where Rueben's two front teeth had been. His eyes filled and he ran screaming into his house.

Dani watched his friend disappear behind a large blue door which slammed behind him, and the angry red of Dani's vision gave way to the vivid orange streaked pink of sunset. Dani felt a stinging in his right hand. He looked down. The hand was covered in blood, but from his first two knuckles two tiny white stones emerged. He looked at the stones closely trying to figure out what they were, and realized with horror . . . the truth.

When Dani's mom opened the door of their house to greet her son, she shook her head. "Danielito. Dios Mio! Que hiciste? Danny, my God! What have you done?" Dani answered his mother with silence and bowed his head and lifted his fist for inspection. "Well, don't just stand there." She turned and walked to the bathroom leaving him to follow. Grabbing a plastic cup and some tweezers, she set to work on Danny's hand. The teeth were plunged deep into the soft tissues of his knuckle. Upon freeing the first tooth from its temporary bed, Mama held it in front of Dani's eyes. "And who do these belong to?"

"Rueben." He answered dully. He wanted to cry, but his eyes somehow felt dry as if someone, maybe God or Dani himself, were purposefully siphoning off every possible tear and replaced it with sand.

Mama said nothing but shook her head and dug into the knuckle to obtain the second tooth—a task she carried out with delicacy and determination. After removing the

second tooth, she inspected it. "The roots are still attached. Rueben's family may be able to get them reattached." She deposited the tooth into the translucent plastic cup and held it out to her son. "You know what you have to do."

Dani's stomach hurt. His head hurt, and the floor felt as if it were shifting under his feet. He took the cup in his hand and walked out his front door to his friend's home. He could hear the teeth bounce in the plastic cup. They accused him in a language without words, to be felt and not fully comprehended.

At the blue door of Rueben's house, Dani hesitated and then softly knocked on the door. The wood made a dull thudding sound, followed by the sound of a turning deadbolt. Reuben's mother stepped into the door. She was short and stout. Her hair was brown with a few random strands of gray. Rueben's little sister, La Guerita, peeked her green eyes out to peer from behind her mother and then hid as if from a monster. He looked at the mother's hard brown eyes. She had never liked Dani, and he knew that. Dani stretched out his quivering hand toward the disheveled woman. "I am sorry," said Dani. He could not manage anything else.

"Thank you," she responded. The sound of the bouncing teeth stilled as she took the cup and closed the door behind her. As Danny walked down the path to the main sidewalk, he noticed that the grey of night had come, and as he continued the street light flickered dimly above. In the twilight he looked at his brown hands with shame and then trudged back home through the grey.

An Aristocrat Gets Fired

From a larger collection of short stories to be titled ***A Tour of Ruins***

By Kathy Root Pitts

Part One
The Thirst for Adventure

Lemuel Kern sat in his idling El Camino and eyed the "Now Hiring. Apply TODAY!" sign outside the U-Pump at the shoulder of Highway 59. Corporate had reopened the store, but they had not invited him back. This highway of four lanes cut a straight path through pine country and was dotted with squat businesses—deer processing, fast oil changes, fashion barns, a Pentecostal church in a corrugated metal building --- and was split by a weedy sunken divider that was at times the dozing off place of exhausted truck drivers bringing cotton from Red Lick, okra from Gutman, and lumber from Lumberton and Holtzclaw to Lemuel's hometown one-hundred miles north, New Augusta, a growing mill settlement. Lemuel thought about moving to one of these places south and trying to find outdoor work, but he sunburned easily, and besides, he had lived in New Augusta for so long that he couldn't see himself living elsewhere; although he hoped to travel someday. He had been a bored child at home, but as an adult with paltry means, his spirit was tattered, and his sense of roaming adventure, subdued.

Lemuel thought about that morning half a year ago when things had taken such a discouraging turn. He had resented having to defrost the dairy freezer, and had already drunk a few "free" beers from the beverage cooler when a company agent from Arkansas showed up unexpectedly at six in the morning---the end of Lemuel's night shift--- inspected the combined gas station and grocery, and stated that U-Pump Store Number 23 was

functioning at a loss. Food sales were down due to lagging stock orders, Lemuel's fault entirely—he hated taking inventory. Worse yet, the fuel tanks were rusting through, and ground water had begun leeching into the gasoline. Since late March storms, three customers had complained to U-Pump headquarters that moisture was found in their engines, so company lawyers dispatched their regional agent, Harry Callow, to examine the store and filler-lids at Number 23.

The sun rose majestically in the east that lowly dawn, but Lemuel's station faced west, so there was no sunrise to admire. There was only a view of Harry Callow, pacing between two pumps separated by a crammed trash can. The window was mostly blocked with cigarette and malt liquor posters facing the street. On one poster, a red-haired girl draped in an American flag eyed motorists deliciously over her right shoulder. This vixen held out a frosty bottle of ale while inviting passers-by to join her in a "Daredevil Triple Z" and "Feel the Fireworks." The lurid poster was falling down in the upper corners, and the July 4th crowd was now preparing for Easter. Lemuel realized too late that he should have made a better effort, but he never truly believed that the corporate office cared enough to send anyone down. From behind the register, he had watched the agent walk back to the store. Lemuel pulled his collar closed to look more professional, yet his reflection in the ice machine, even with the stiff collar, appeared to sag.

Callow advanced and regarded with unnerving silence the rumpled chip shelf and the rotating warm cookie display that no longer turned. Too late, also, did Lemuel spot the five empty beer cans, still visible in the cabinet under the register, waiting to be bagged and thrown away at home where no upper management could deal him consequences. He had forgotten to stash them in his car. Callow came behind the counter, saw the cans and the

general mess, then scribbled a note in his legal pad.

Lemuel's mother had once admonished her son that he "*could* have a real charming personality when he tried," so he tried. He would captivate the agent with small talk while craning to see what he had written, but Lemuel couldn't get past a hoarse jab at the weather. "Sticky with a chance of mosquitoes," he quipped. Callow remained unresponsive while Lemuel giggled wretchedly into his shirtfront.

Finally, Callow straightened his shoulders, and squinting far-sightedly through Lemuel's head as if he were looking past him to distant lands where people did things right, explained the pain he experienced when inspecting a poorly maintained store: "Mr. Corn" Callow enunciated the name wrong and flatly, but then became strangely passionate, "I am from *Moosehorn,* Wisconsin." Callow said this as if there were great meaning in the statement, so Lemuel tried to force his face into an appearance of predeep interest. "I credit *myself*," Callow went on, "with having almost single-handedly elevated the bacon-cheddar spread industry to what it now is at the Cloverfield Cheese Factory." Lemuel nodded in vacant awe, and wondered as Callow boasted, why then he was now inspecting gas stations in Mississippi. "I plan to make a name for myself here in the Southeast," Callow explained, then with a grimace, "so you must understand how disappointing this shop is in its present condition." Callow suddenly looked at the ceiling. Lemuel also looked at the ceiling, and though he saw nothing noteworthy there, when he looked back at Callow, the agent was shaking his head and again making notes on his pad.

Callow only stayed an hour, then stated to Lemuel with casual foreboding that headquarters would be in contact with him. Lemuel fortified his nerve against the sinking sensation that he knew quite well and asked hopefully if they were going to offer him suggestions for how

to improve the store and become an even *more* efficient clerk. Callow dodged, "No, I don't think they're gonna be saying anything like *that. . . .*"

So here he was, Lemuel, six months later, still without work and without hope of work. He feared that word had gotten around. He didn't really care for the job at the U-Pump, but at least it gave him a little money. Now there was nothing, and Lemuel was becoming anxious. He had run up debts when he was employed, and even though he hadn't needed the new seat covers, the custom exhaust, the surround-sound speaker system, and the high-impact shocks, they had been a comfort. Upgrading his El Camino had given him a sense of purpose at a time when he felt a great need for purpose. He had labored late nights behind his parents' trailer, aiming the stoop light into the yard. The first evening his mother had spied on him through the kitchen curtains, watching him apply the last costly touches of candy-apple red metallic paint to the front fenders. A fan oscillated on the top of the refrigerator behind her, and he could see her silhouette beyond the quivering eggplant-and-tomato pattern in the curtains. Sometimes an eggplant would make her look as if she had a heavy beard; sometimes a tomato would make her appear to have one huge, bloodshot and judgmental eye. Lemuel tried not to look up and catch the tomato's gaze. Come one o'clock, she was not in the window anymore, but he knew that she would corner him the next morning with blueberry toaster waffles and light conversation, peppered with cagey questions about what he planned to do with his life.

More than a decade before, while in high school, Lemuel had imagined himself traveling the world, driving to California alone through desert and mountains, or sailing the Mediterranean under stars, or wandering the streets of Calcutta. Sadly, he discovered that there was a great void between *dreaming* the dreams and accomplishing them. In that high

school classroom, Lemuel barely heard Coach Powers murmuring on about the colonies and the Revolution. So dull. Some dead guys' adventures, not his. Out the window and past Sparks Road, Lemuel's trapped-at-school thoughts escaped north to forests of snow like he had never seen except on Currier-and-Ives Christmas cards, and to freight-yards at night smoking with crackling fires and enlivened with wandering hobos who lived on beans, coffee, and restlessness, but never in his dreams were *they* trapped or desperate. He envisioned them as a community of free and happy men. His dreams were filled with these sorts of clichés, and like his snow drifts and freight-yards, his dreams were wispy and insubstantial. Imagining delightful freedom and making that freedom real, like he pictured it, was hard, but it shouldn't have been. Wearisome parents and soulless clerks held him back, and the only promise he cherished for an adventurous life was the investment that he had made in his El Camino, a silly idea that had landed him in arrears.

On the Saturday of Lemuel's 29th birthday, his mother's probings had taken a bold turn that he wasn't expecting. It had happened over his birthday cake. Normally, he could avoid her, but she must have calculated that Lemuel would come out from behind the house for pastry. Gazing into twenty-nine burning candles, he heard "Lemmy?" instead of the Happy Birthday song.

Lemuel cringed. This was how she started every "caring-and-concerned" exchange that invariably ended as a brutal monologue. With false brightness she said, "I sure would like to see you do *something* with your life before you turn *thirty!"*

Lemuel extinguished the candles in a violent burst of air. "I guess you have something in *mind?"* he snapped.

"Oh, I don't *knoo--oww,"* she apologized, hearing the irritation in her son's voice,

"but maybe" and she brightened again as if the thought had just occurred to her, "you could sell that car and use the money to go to junior college and learn a vocation! You're pretty good at fixing stuff!" Lemuel hacked for himself a huge corner of cake, then waited for it. "Well, after all, you've spent so much money on that car, and it just seems to *me* that--at your age, you know--you ought to be, maybe, just a little more *responsible?"* She stood stiff for a moment. Something was happening behind her eyes—perhaps the recollection of a past offense. In an instant, outrage had swelled to critical mass, and her focus was suddenly *all over* Lemuel. She became loud and distinctly un-apologetic. Lemuel's lack of serious ambition, it seemed, was "Breaking-His-Father's-Heart." Usually Lemuel could squelch this stage of the fight by sounding angrier than she early in the debate, but this time she had overpowered him. Before the party was over, the cake was upside down in the yard, and Lemuel was sitting on a hickory stump out of sight of the trailer, ripping pages from *The Power of Positive Thinking*, the present that he had received from his mother. His aunt had given him three neckties for job interviews at "nice places." His allegedly inconsolable dad had grabbed his own massive piece of cake early, before anyone else, then hauled all 357 pounds of himself back to his lazy-boy to chew through the fight, tranquilly.

Summer and fall passed, but tensions between Lemuel and his mother remained. Then, in the winter, Lemuel's daddy died suddenly of a stroke, and his momma three months after decided that she would move to Pass Christian and stay with his Aunt Jennifer, a stout lady who hoarded cans and bottles in her musty pantry, rolled her own cigarettes to save cash, followed closely the personal lives--especially the illnesses and deaths--of aging television stars, and supplemented her own dead husband's insurance by

baking novelty cakes for birthdays and weddings. She had made the cake for Lemuel that ended up in the yard to be eaten by squirrels. That one had been frosted in a three-tone green camouflage and festooned along the bottom with candy bullets. Lemuel wasn't a hunter himself, but his daddy used to hunt before he became too large to climb up into a deer stand. Aunt Jennifer's specialty birthday cakes were usually shaped like fire trucks and Raggedy Anne dolls. For weddings, she would make a white cake with sprinkles, pink rose buds of frosting, and lay real babies' breath around the edges of the plate. If her customers could have seen the condition of her kitchen, they would not have eaten her cakes. Lemuel's mother and Aunt Jennifer couldn't have been more different. Lemuel's momma didn't even pretend to save money, and she resented being asked to cook. Their only point of agreement was their vocal condemnation of Lemuel's laziness and misguided interests.

Lemuel's momma had planned to have Lemuel sell the family's narrow plot of land with the trailer, but Lemuel, despite his notions of travel, discovered that he didn't really want to give up what was left of a home. The trailer and the land it was parked on were all that remained of the grandparents' massive house from when he was a child. The original building, a Victorian behemoth, had rotted through to its foundation, and only the columns and a fireplace were left. Sometimes Lemuel liked to go into the meager woods that had grown around the ruins and build a fire in the exposed fireplace. He would sit on a toppled column to drink Mad Dog 20/20 and smoke Turkish Specials. He bought these at the Westland Plaza Tobacco Emporium next to the A&P. He wouldn't roll his own and be like his nasty Aunt Jennifer. Each exotic pack had a red half moon and star on the lid of the box, and the individual cigarettes themselves had gold star-and-moon imprints and were wrapped in delicate white tissue paper that crackled freshly when he reached for a smoke. These were

among the very few indulgences that he would allow himself now that his pitiable bank account had crept below seventy-five dollars.

Lemuel had checked the trailer the day that his mom left for his aunt's. A roach scrabbled up the wall by his father's empty chair, and the whole place smelled of stale snack foods. Lemuel closed the trailer and expected never to return, but eventually he had to go back. The trailer no longer had electricity, and the water had been cut off the week before. Lemuel had been living instead in the El Camino, pretending that he was camping along the road, but roughing it had lost its appeal. There was a padlock on the door of the trailer, and someone had cracked two of the windows with a root beer bottle. He would only return as he needed for baths back when the water was still running or to find insurance papers and bills to forward to his mother. Lemuel didn't like to go into the trailer after his father's stroke. Lester Kern had died in the Lazy-Boy in the middle of the small living room congested with *TV Guides* and open bags of pork rinds. He had sat suddenly in that favorite naugahyde chair in front of the television. Lemuel's momma loved the sympathy she received when telling the story, and she would tell it to everyone from the check-out at the A&P to the ladies of the church circle meetings. "Mr. Kern, my *Lester,"* she would hold out her closed fist and open it with a gasp, "dropped his pork rinds, grabbed his head, groaned, and"—now reaching out as if trying to hold her dying husband erect by the collar,--"sank into his Lazy-Boy. He had been watching that *All in the Family,"* then speaking solemnly, "the one where Archie accidentally kissed *a transvestite."* Lemuel's mother dropped her splotchy hand to her side. "He was dead," she shuttered and lowered her voice, "before the ambulance arrived"--a dramatic recitation from a lady who, before her widowhood, had reserved dramas only for her son and husband, and such dramas they were. There was her

fury over neighborhood children's catching bumblebees in her side-yard and crushing her azaleas; there was her anguish over a broken pot's splattering boiling red beans and spam all over the trailer floor, but these instances had been funny. Momma Kern had a petty streak, so in Lemuel's estimation she deserved these annoyances, but her new-found celebrity depressed him, not because of any personal grief at hearing his own father's death replayed, but because his momma's delivery sounded too much like the soap-operas that she watched. She felt grand for a change, but she had managed to make their sorrow ordinary and silly. Lemuel stopped going to the store with her to carry her pathetic groceries. She would have to get a bag-boy to help while she performed for the parking lot.

One day, Lemuel entered the trailer with the same revulsions as before, but this time, instead of stepping around the snack bags and magazines, he began picking them up and filling five liquor store boxes that his mother hadn't needed for her move. While he did, he began to envision the trailer as *his,* and his alone. Maybe it was the fact that he had begun telling his momma "No" more often. Maybe it was the fact that he was almost broke, but Lemuel changed in his mind when he entered the trailer this spring afternoon. Even though he was still in the same straights financially, he noted that the anxiety about money that had become baseline for him was missing. It was replaced by a strange floating sensation that should have been welcome. Anything was better than the fear, yet it troubled Lemuel in a passive sort of way that left him wondering if he were too much off his guard. What might happen if he let himself relax? He tried to bring the nervousness back deliberately, to see if he could trust that it were gone. It would not return. For the first time in his life, Lemuel was neither driven by parents, nor failure, nor by fears. He had made an impulsive decision—although he didn't know it yet, to claim a home for himself. Lemuel found a roll

of garbage bags to supplement the boxes, and when he was finished, he stepped onto the stoop and looked at the twilight results. Twenty-nine years of arguing, standoffs, embarrassments, and shameful capitulation had finally been subdued into this bulging pile of bags and boxes. He'd have it all to the street and carted off before his mother and aunt could return and undo it all.

Frosted Glass

By Tracy Pitts

I was standing in the doorway to my best friend's bathroom. It was three in the morning, and I was struggling to stay awake. Traci had just started having seizures not long before this sleepover. They were terrifying things involving her falling to the floor and thrashing. She was going to the hospital the next morning for a test to determine the cause, and because she had to sleep for the test, she had to stay up all night. I had volunteered to stay the night with her to keep her company and help her stay awake. Being the homeschool kid that I was, I could do this on a weeknight and sleep the rest of the next morning and afternoon away.

It would be a joke to say that I wasn't as young as I once was, but that's how I felt that night. I was around fourteen at this point, and my carefree middle school days of staying up all night were long gone. Still, I felt terrible for the forty-five minutes I had fallen asleep on the couch already. I had promised to stay up with Traci, although it didn't seem like she needed much help. She had always been better at staying up than I was, even back in our middle school prime. She was sitting at one of the house computers watching music videos and reading fanfiction as I wearily dragged my sleep heavy body to the bathroom.

I had always been afraid of this bathroom, but as I half-stumbled there now, my fears were the last thing on my mind. I reached through the doorway and flipped on the light, waiting to see if any cockroaches reacted to the change. I blinked a few times as my eyes adjusted to the light's harshness after being in the softer light of the computer room. As always, my focus immediately went to the frosted glass window that was situated awkwardly behind the toilet. I hated that window, but I had gotten used to it over the years.

This time was different though. This time, my whole body felt as though it had been dunked into cold water.

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I was twelve years old when I met Traci. I already had a best friend at the time, but he was my mom's best friend's son, and when you're a twelve-year-old girl it's hard to stand up in a room of peers and say that your best friend is an eleven-year-old boy. I knew, because by that time I had done it, and I had been laughed at.

So, at age twelve, I finally met my best *female* friend. I thought the girl who introduced us was my best friend, but I was wrong. At that age, in 2003, we called people like her "users" like it was an official title. Her name was Lauren, and there were only two good things that came out of our long and educational friendship: I learned how to stand up for myself, and I met Traci.

Traci and I had many things in common. In fact, we were more alike than she was with her real twin. For starters, we shared a name, although mine was spelled with a "y" and hers with an "i." This was one reason we took on nicknames. It seemed like the coolest thing ever to name ourselves after Sailor Moon characters, which I think says a lot about the era we were teenagers in. She was Raye. I was Ami. We were both very short. We both had the same shade of brown hair. We were both very pale. We were both outsiders. And we were both fascinated by ghosts.

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If it's true that the feeling of being frightened bonds people, then it's no wonder that Traci and I became such fast friends.

"If you stay awake and you're really quiet," Traci told me the first night I stayed over at her house, "you can hear a scratching sound on the bathroom window. My sister Brandy has heard it ever since she was a little kid. One morning she woke up and there was a dead frog stuck to the outside of the window."

Even at the age of twelve I was afraid of getting up to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. There were still times at home where I got so scared that I woke my dad up to walk back to my room with me. Naturally, I hated that bathroom window from the very first time I saw it. It was frosted so you could see nothing but light in or out, but it was positioned right behind the toilet and there was no curtain. Turning my back on it to use the toilet made the hairs on my arms stand up. As if getting up alone to pee wasn't creepy enough.

I didn't experience anything that first night though. Instead, I came away with a new best friend and the feeling of finally fitting in somewhere.

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That summer we met our other best friend, Maryanne and the three of us became inseparable. We spent every weekend together, sometimes at my house or Maryanne's, but most of the time we went to Traci's trailer. Her family lived in Terry, Mississippi. Terry is a very small town. When I was younger it didn't seem special to me. It was a little eerie at night, but what small town in Mississippi isn't, especially once the streetlights come on and the mists start to roll in and everything is silent. As the years passed, I disliked going there more and more until by adulthood I avoided it as much as I possibly could. Just setting foot in that town felt wrong somewhere deep in my gut, and the feeling didn't fade until I got

onto the interstate heading back into Jackson. I thought I was imagining the feeling until I spoke to some friends recently. They felt the exact same way.

Traci lived on a private plot of land deep in Terry. To get to it, you had to drive through the city itself and turn down a road that seemed dark even during the day. Once you crossed the train tracks, you passed two other houses where her relatives lived and continued down a dirt road until you reached the very back of the property. Her trailer was the last one on the land, and behind it was nothing but a pond and a field of young pine trees that stretched as far as I could see. Sometimes at night we would sit outside and look at the stars. We watched many a meteor shower out there. Being private land in a small, quiet town, there was very little light pollution. Standing in her yard at night staring out into that field felt like being at the beach and looking out on the dark ocean. It could go for miles and I would never know. We felt like we were the only people in the world.

***

It was at Traci's house that we created our first and only Ouija board. At this point in my life I can't say what piqued our interest in Ouija boards. Until I started hanging out with Traci and Maryanne, I don't think I even knew what one was.

We used an old gameboard that Traci found buried deep in her closet and some white fingernail polish. We painted the letters onto the back of it with painstaking care, forming the alphabet as well as "yes" and "no" with our faces close to the board and the smell of fingernail polish burning our noses. I wrote most of the letters because they claimed I had the nicest handwriting. When Traci's twin, Staci, wasn't paying attention we stole a lens from an old pair of her glasses. Staci would get furious at us when we messed with her stuff and stealing something as personal as glasses was a serious offense. We were terrified

that she would realize, but to this day I don't think she knows what we did. The lens became our planchette. The board felt very cobbled together, but Traci insisted that homemade boards are more powerful. We had each put a little of ourselves into it by creating it from scratch.

The first time we used the board was at my house, and we really set the scene. We dimmed the lights in the room and lit candles. We closed the curtains and waited until my parents were in bed before we played. We each placed a finger on the eyeglass planchette and held our breaths and watched.

"Is anyone there?"

Ever so slowly, the planchette moved to "yes." The candles flickered as we each finally released a breath. After a few more questions we relaxed enough to accuse each other of moving the planchette on purpose.

"Stop moving it!"

"I'm not!"

"Well *I'm* definitely not moving it."

"Are we doing this right? Do you like the candles?"

The planchette moved to "no."

"Is the smoke too much? Maybe it's making it hard for him to communicate."

The planchette moved to "yes." We blew out the candles and continued in almost total darkness.

My experience with the Ouija board isn't anything like what is portrayed in the overdramatic horror movies. No one was possessed, and we didn't have a malevolent spirit hunting us down. Nothing moved in the house, and we didn't have nightmares that kept us

awake night after night. Instead, we believed without a shred of doubt that the planchette was moving on its own. Or rather, that *something* was moving it for us. There was one ghost we talked to every time we used the board, and he became our secret friend. He especially liked Maryanne. I wish now, thinking back, that I could remember his name. It was something generic, like Steve, or James, which is probably why I can't remember. I texted Traci and Maryanne recently, and they can't remember either. In all the memories that have come to the surface, his name seems to have been collectively wiped from our minds.

It was a thrilling adventure for us every weekend to wait until Traci's family went to bed before pulling out the board. She knew instinctively that her family would disapprove. My parents didn't care, and Maryanne lived with only her dad, who I doubt knew what was going on with his daughter most of the time, although not for a lack of trying. Maryanne was a loose cannon at that age, purposely "forgetting" to call her father on the weekends. Playing with the board felt more taboo at Traci's house, making its intrigue all the stronger.

For a long time, we didn't encounter anything that felt sinister. The ghost became a fourth member of our little group, entertaining us when we were bored and giving a group of outsiders a secret to bond us. It was around this time that we made our biggest mistake with the Ouija board. I don't remember which one of us had the brilliant idea to paint a pentagram onto it, but after we did, we couldn't get in touch with our ghost anymore. Instead, when we tried to communicate using the board, the planchette would only repeat "666."

Since my childhood I've done a small amount of research into Ouija boards. According to Scott G. Eberle in *Psychology Today,* there is a reflex called "ideomotor action." This is a part of our subconscious that causes us to move the planchette without

even realizing it. Naturally, when we first met our "ghost," we kept contacting him over and over because he was who we expected to speak with. When we painted the pentagram, we expected a sinister result, and therefore were unable to speak to our ghost anymore. Of course, at the time we weren't looking for a logical explanation. We were fully invested in the Ouija board and were convinced that we had summoned something that kicked our ghost off the board.

After we lost our main form of communication, we started exploring other ways to take to our ghost. We began freewriting, which involved asking questions and allowing the spirits to "guide" our hands to write answers. As strongly as I believed in the Ouija board, it was skeptical of the freewriting. I felt like I was simply writing the responses I wanted to get, but Traci and Maryanne were invested in this new form of communication. However, freewriting did bring about an incident that I still can't explain. There are a few experiences from this time in my life that I can't explain away, and this was one of them.

We were hanging out at Traci's house for the afternoon and wanted to listen to one of her CDs. We couldn't find the remote to the stereo, and so we had pulled all the cushions off the couch looking for it. Feeling lazy, when it didn't turn up, we left the cushions on the floor and sat on them to do some freewriting. Traci put her CD in the stereo and adjusted the volume before sitting down.

"Prove that you're here," I said, the other two taking notice and waiting for a response. "Change the volume on the music."

I don't think any of us expected anything to happen, so we were all startled when the music suddenly got loud. We all looked toward the stereo in surprise, thinking that we must be imagining things, but Traci's dad yelled at us from the other room to turn the music

down. Maryanne got up and turned it down at the stereo. Because we were sitting on the floor, we knew that none of us could be sitting on the remote.

How was that? Appeared on my paper.

***

There were other strange things that would happen in that house late at night besides the scratching on the bathroom window, which by this point I had heard through the wall of Traci's room. We almost always stayed up late into the night on the weekends. It didn't take long for us to realize that when we stayed up that late and were very quiet, we could hear a car pull into the driveway of Traci's house and see its headlights on the closed blinds of her room. Car doors would slam, and we could hear the sound of people talking. We were always too afraid to open the blinds and look out. There was no reason for someone to be outside at that time on private property, and it was strange that it was consistently at the same time every night, and only if we stayed quiet and turned off the lights.

There were a few strange incidents that happened after we painted the pentagram onto the board, such as lights turning on and off when no one was near the switch. One time the experiences even followed Maryanne to her house, leaving her very shaken up. She was alone, as she often was when her father was at work, sitting in the computer room when suddenly a bloodcurdling scream came from the back room of the house. The room had been empty since her sister moved out years before, but the screaming was undeniably inside the house.

Naturally, Maryanne ran out of the house with the phone in hand. This was during the age of dial up internet, and she had left the computer signed in, meaning that she had to run back into the house to yank the internet cable out of the wall. She told me that she tried

calling her neighbor, her dad, Traci, and me. None of us answered and she ended up waiting outside until her father came home. None of us ever heard the sound again, but needless to say, we avoided that back room when we went to her house, and eventually we began to shy away from using the Ouija board.

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At first, I wasn't sure what I was seeing. I thought that maybe my sleep heavy brain was creating images in front of my eyes. There was so much wrong with the scene in front of me. It took me several seconds before I could make my legs move again. When the blood finally rushed back into my body I bolted, forgetting entirely about my full bladder.

"A face," I managed to stammer out to Traci, who was still sitting in front of the computer, entirely oblivious to the fact that my whole outlook on the world had just changed.

"What?" she asked, turning away from the music video she had been watching.

"There was a face at the window. The bathroom window. And the scratching. I heard it. I *saw* it."

Startled, the first thing Traci said was, "Don't tell my mom. She'll open the door and go look outside."

For the rest of the night I sat on the couch. I didn't fall back asleep. I sat curled into a tight ball, trying to make myself as small as I could. As I watched the dark windows in the computer room, I couldn't stop thinking about what I had seen. The frosted glass in the window kept any clear features hidden from me, which I am half thankful for. As curious as I am, I don't think I want to know what kind of features could exist on such a bloated, vaguely human shaped head. I don't want to know what kind of fingernails would make the

scratching sound I heard as the hand moved against the window. I don't want to know what kind of creature would be tall enough to peer into a window that I couldn't reach from outside even if I was standing on my toes.

The next morning, I left early. Traci's mom was taking her to the hospital for her test, and her dad was taking her sisters to school and then me to my house. The sun was barely rising, turning everything into a sort of flat colored haze. There was a mist hanging over the lake, and the sky over the field was just beginning to turn pink. It was a beautiful morning.

As we headed to the cars, I glanced behind me at the bathroom window. Just as I had remembered, it was too tall for any human to reach without some kind of ladder. There were no trees anywhere near it that could have scratched it or even reflected against it. I felt chilled all over again and hurried to the car. My view of the place had changed overnight. Our games were no longer games. I don't know if we had released something by meddling into things we shouldn't, or if what I had seen was something that existed here long before Traci and I were born. Was it attached to the trailer itself? I didn't know it at the time, but in another year Traci's family would buy a new trailer and place it almost in the same spot. The old trailer would sit for months, an empty shell, until it was picked up and taken away. The activity stopped at that point. We still played with the Ouija board, but I never saw the face again. As I grew older, the memory became hazier, but never left me entirely. I remembered it most vividly when I was old enough to drive and would walk to my car alone at night after a late visit at Traci's. A few years ago, when Traci moved away from Terry with her fiancé and two children, I breathed a sigh of relief that I didn't have to go back there to visit her anymore.

I can't say if I believe in the Ouija board now. My rational mind tells me that there's no way it could be true, but the memories I still can't explain linger in the back of my mind. I haven't been able to make myself get rid of the board. It is still hidden away somewhere in my childhood bedroom. I know I will run across it in cleaning out that room, and I don't know what I'll do with it when I find it. Legend has it that if you get rid of an Ouija board that it will always find its way back to you. As long as I know where it is, I can tell myself that my memories are just the product of the overactive imaginations of children. But what if I get rid of it and it comes back?

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Critical Essays

The Sacred Fount: Henry James' Foray into Sexual Vampirism

By Alan Brown

For centuries, vampires were feral-like denizens of folklore that drained their helpless victims of blood. By the 19th century, beginning with John Polidori's *The Vamypyre: A Tale (1819*), these blood-thirsty monsters had morphed into more human-like sexual predators. The motif of the vampire as seducer was incarnated in a number of other literary vampires, such as Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Henry James put his own spin on the vampire in his 1901 novel *The Sacred Fount*. This often baffling story of a unnamed narrator's weekend visit at an English manor was dismissed by many, including the author himself, as a failure, primarily because it is not a typical James' novel. To fully appreciate this experimental work, one should view it as the author's attempt to expand the concept of the literary vampire as an older man or woman who is revitalized by tapping into the "sacred fount" of his or her partner's sexual energy. However, according to R.P. Blackmur, The "sacred fount" can also be interpreted as "The power that passes among us, depleting or restoring us, in friendship, in love, even in more public relations."

The progenitor of the romantic vampire genre, John Polidori's *The Vampyre,* is responsible for the popular notion of the vampire as an aristocratic fiend. It is the story of a young Englishman named Aubrey who falls under the influence of Lord Ruthven. He is a "ladies' man" who travels abroad with Aubrey until he seduces the daughter of a mutual friend in Rome. Aubrey travels alone to Greece, where he falls in love with Ianthe, an innkeeper's daughter. Shortly after a vampire murders her, Lord Ruthven arrives in Greece

and resumes his journey with Aubrey. Shortly thereafter, the men are attacked by bandits, and Lord Ruthven is mortally wounded. As he lies dying, he makes Aubrey swear that he will not discuss his relationship with Lord Ruthven until he has been dead for a year and a day. Miraculously, Lord Ruthven reappears in London, completely healed. He then begins seducing Aubrey's sister, causing Aubrey to have a nervous breakdown because his promise prevents him from saving her from destruction. By the time a year and a day have passed, Lord Ruthven has married her and drained her blood. He is never seen again.

For the most part, Lord Ruthven is a rogue who seduces and kills his female victims by sucking their blood. The psychological basis of the literary vampire's sexual side was not fully developed toward the end of the 19th century in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Aside from being a monster, Dracula is also a sexual predator who is driven solely by his bestial side, his need for physical gratification. After Dracula prevents the three vampire women from seducing—and killing—Johnathan Harker, one of them, a fair girl, exclaims, "with a laugh of ribald coquetry You yourself never loved; you never love" (43). In this scene, Stoker is clearly referencing Sigmund Freud's three levels of consciousness, particularly the concept of the id: "It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality…. It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts…a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle (Freud, 1965, 91).

Dracula also owes a significant debt to the Bible, specifically the Old Testament. Speaking to Mina, Renfield, who has been infected to the point of madness with Dracula's thirst for blood, says, "I tried to kill him for the purpose of strengthening my vital powers by the assimilation with my own body of his life through the medicine of his blood—relying, of course, upon the Scriptural phrase, 'For the blood is the life'(18:16). Renfield is alluding to

the books of Leviticus 17; 14 "For the life of all flesh is its blood" and Deuteronomy 12:24, "Only be sure not to eat the blood, because the blood is the life." Because blood is equated with the life force, Dracula's female victims are drained of their vitality before being transformed into vampires. A good example is Lucy Westerna, who becomes a pale shadow of herself as the result of Dracula's nightly visitations: In Dr. Seward's letter to Arthur Holmwood, he writes, "I was horrified when I saw her today. She was ghastly, chalkily pale; the red seemed to have gone even from her lips and gums, and the bones of her face stood out prominently; her breathing was painful to see or hear (112). However, after she dies and is transformed into a vampire, she not only appears to be healthier, but the sensuous aspects of her physical being are accentuated as well. Dr. Seward writes in his diary that when he beheld the vampiric Lucy in her coffin, "She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there, the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth—which it made on shudder to see—the whole carnal and spiritual appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity" (190). Her sexual allure has been enhanced by the blood she has drunk to sustain her "undead" existence. Lucy brings to mind the three brides of Dracula, whose dangerous beauty has been preserved for decades by the life force of their victims.

The horror of Lucy's transformation goes beyond the physical changes. Not only does she become more corpse-like after being drained by Dracula, but her social behavior changes as well. In Chapter 16, four of the novel's most prominent male characters—Dr. Seward, Dr. Seward, Quincey Morris, and Arthur Holmwood—follow Lucy to her tomb, where they await her return. Suddenly, she appears, holding a small child to her breast. When she sees the men, "she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now

she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone" (188). She then walks toward Arthur "with outstretched arms and a wanton smile" (188). As he hides his face in his hands, Lucy tries to entice him: "Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come" (188). Van Helsing interrupts her attempted seduction of Arthur by raising his crucifix, which drives back into her coffin. Before Van Helsing opens the coffin and drives a stake through her heart, he justifies his actions: "She cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world; for those that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever-widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water" (190).

Van Helsing and his three male friends have done more than remove a monster the world; they are protecting society from "the new woman." Lucy, under Dracula's influence, has become the sexual counterpart of Mina, who transcends her socially-prescribed role as the passive, dutiful wife as the transcriber of her future husband's notes and his caregiver. The vampiric Lucy eschews her biological role of mother and nurturer and becomes a sexual aggressor, a role normally reserved for males in Victorian England. Significantly, she is subdued and ultimately destroyed by the men, who impale her with the phallic stake, a sexual symbol of the male's power over women. Dracula, therefore, is a sexual threat to women in the Victorian era because he transforms prim and proper English women into sexually voracious, uncontrollable creatures. At the end of *Dracula*, the human males have finally wrested women (i.e., Mina) from Dracula's grasp and have assumed control over them.

Henry James did have some access to early Freud (i.e., the three levels of consciousness), but that very access was indirectly by way of his brother William James (Hocks, 1990, 80). The id acts according to the pleasure principle, seeking to avoid pain aroused by increases in instinctual tension. In Freud's formulation, the id is unconscious by definition: "…and most of this is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego…." (Freud, Three Theories, 71). Sigmund Freud coined the term "psychoanalysis" in 1896, one year before *Dracula* was published and five years before *The Sacred Fount* was published.

Because most of the relationships the narrator observes in *The Sacred Fount* appear to be based solely on sexual attraction, Freud's theories seem to be a primary influence on the work, but so does vampirism in general and Stoker's *Dracula* in particular In Notebook III on 17 February 1894, James mentions two ideas that were suggested to him by Stoppford Brook: "The notion of the young man who marries an older woman and who has the effect on her of making her younger and still younger, while he himself become her age. When he reaches the age that she was (on their marriage) she has gone back to the age that *he* was" (Notebook III). The plot of *The Sacred Fount* owes a debt to all three of these sources. The narrator travels by train for a weekend party at an English country manor in Newmarch. As he awaiting the train in the station, he observes the appearance of two of his traveling companions. He immediately notices that they have changed. His friend Gilbert Long appears to be wittier, more vibrant, and more self-confident. Likewise, Mrs. Brissdale (also known by the nickname "Mrs. Briss"), who is 43 years old, appears to be much younger than her husband, who is not yet thirty. In fact, she is so young-looking that the narrator recognizes her from her voice, not from her appearance. The narrator begins to formulate

the theory that permeates the novel: that Gilbert Long and Mrs. Briss have been revitalized by the sacred fount of their partners' sexual energy. While talking to Mrs. Briss, the narrator learns that Gilbert Long has been seen in the company of Lady John. Mrs. Briss shares his theory about vampire-like sexuality: "If she hasn't made him clever, what has she made him? She has given him, steadily, more and more intellect" (4). Long's slow mind has become sharper, just as Mrs. Bliss' physical appearance has been rendered more attractive, through sexual intercourse.

After the narrator and the other guests arrive at the party, the narrator notices that another guest, Mrs. Server, is strikingly beautiful but strangely listless, "a little helpless and vague" (6), for some reason. He strikes up a conversation with an artist named Ford Orbert and asks him, "Does Mrs. Server make love?" (6). Orbert replies that "she began it on you as soon as he got hold of you" (6). The narrator confesses that he was not aware that she had been flirting with him. The notion that Mrs. Server was sexually adventurous fuels the narrator's belief that she is the one who is actually having an affair with Gilbert Long and providing him with vitality. Speaking to Gilbert Long, the narrator says that "Mrs. Brissendon's quite fabulous" (9). Long replies that "she has grown so very much less plain" (9). The narrator then tests out his theory that Mrs. Brissendon has been feeding off her husband's life force: "It isn't that Brissendon has grown less lovely; it's only that he has grown less young" (9). The narrator adds that Brissendon is "as fine, as swaddled, as a royal mummy" (9). Sensing that Long is puzzled by his remarks, the narrator takes his leave and discusses his theories with some of the other guests.

For the remainder of the novel, the narrator tries to figure out which members of the party are deriving sexual energy from whom. He also wonders if some of the guests are

confusing matters by acting as "red herrings" for the real lovers. The novel reaches its climax, of a sort, during the narrator's midnight conversation with Mrs. Brissendon., who dismisses his theories as nonsense: "Of course, you could always imagine—which is precisely what's the matter with you!" (112) Mrs. Brissendon goes on to admit that she was told by her husband that Gilbert Long really was having an affair with Lady John without actually confirming the narrator's suspicion that that sexual intercourse was making him more intelligent. Mrs. Brissenden leaves the narrator more confused than ever: "Such a last word the word that put me altogether nowhere was too unacceptable not to prescribe afresh that prompt escape to other air for which I had earlier in the evening seen so much reason. I should certainly never again, on the spot, quite hang together" (316). He goes to bed unsure as to whether or not Mrs. Brissenden's revelation is more than just idle gossip. Like Winterbourne *in Daisy Miller*, the narrator's dependence on other people's perceptions of reality have led him to question his views toward the other guests.

The wide variety of critical assessments of *The Sacred Fount* underscores the novel's problems with interpretations. In his newly revised introduction to *The Sacred Fount*, Leon Edel writes, "The themes of this under-valued novel begin to disengage themselves: the ageing process, the invulnerability of art, indeed the 'madness of art,' which insists on seeing more than the immediate 'real'…" (ndbooks.com). Indeed, the narrator *of The Sacred Fount* is, in many ways, a typical James narrator, akin to the Governess in *Turn of the Screw*. In portions of the book, the narrator imagines other people's conversations, constructing in his mind what the various characters are saying to each other. At one point, the narrator even lies when he assures Mrs. Brissenden that she is the only one he has confided in regarding the suspicious behavior and motives of the other guests.

What Mrs. Brissenden interprets as madness could be nothing more than moral outrage taken to the extreme, similar to the Governess's fears for her young charges' physical and moral welfare in *Turn of the Screw*. Although the narrator appears to be obsessed with the sexual "antics" of the other partygoers, he himself is oddly asexual. For example, he is totally unaware the Mrs. Server is flirting with him, even though her advances toward him are perfectly obvious to observers like Ford Orbert. The narrator's judgmental attitudes toward other people seem to reflect his aversion toward the primal drives that tend to destroy marriages and friendships. He is repulsed, not just by the guests' animalistic attraction toward each other, but also by the fact that they are all married to other people. The vampire motif, then, becomes a metaphor for behavior that does nothing more than satisfy our thirst for sexual satisfaction. His interest in the other guests is a combination of revulsion and titillation.

Like the males in *Dracula*, who "heroically" put themselves at risk to protect the social order from female sexual predators, the narrator of *The Sacred Fount* is obsessed with the "unlady-like" behavior of the guests. It is important to note that the "vampires" in *The Sacred Fount* are all older women who are rejuvenating themselves at the expense of their male partners. The worst offender, in the narrator's eyes, is Mrs. Server, who appears to delight in creating chaos by indulging her passions with a legion of different men, just as Lucy Westerna would have done had she not been "impaled" by Dr. Van Helsing. By taking the role of private investigator, the narrator acts as type of moral crusader, who ferrets out sexual transgressors and reports their licentious behavior to the people he shares his concerns with. One could argue that the narrator is committed to saving high society, not from bloodsuckers, but from women who do not comport themselves as refined ladies

should. Through his conversations with the other guests, the narrator is attempting to destroy the women's reputations, not their bodies, in the hope that their corruptive behavior will be curtailed by liming their opportunities for social interaction. To the Victorian mind, the shift in gender roles (i.e., women assuming the male's traditional role as sexual initiator) is just as appalling as is giving in to the control of the id.

In a sense, then, the narrator is a Van Helsing figure. The weapon he wields is not a sharpened stake but rather his powers of observation. Like Van Helsing, the narrator is a man who is armed with knowledge, not of vampire lore, but of the "secret lives" of the seemingly up-standing women at the party. The signs he pays close attention to are not pointed teeth or an aversion to sunlight but rather the physical and intellectual transformation of the women's victims. A case in point is Mrs. Brissendale's husband, who is but a fading shadow of his former self because he began having sex with this woman. Mr. Brissendale's diminished vigor mirror's Lucy's pallid skin and physical weakness. For Gilbert Long, however, intercourse with Lady John stimulates his mental capacity while causing no harm to his body. Long's positive response to having sex with Lady John contradicts the narrator's Puritanical view of sex as being the physical expression of our animal nature. One could go so far as to say that in Lady John, James has created a new type of female vampire, a seductress who, instead of taking from her victims, imbues them with renewed mental powers instead. James' depiction of sex as a sort of "double-edged sword" creates confusion in the minds of the guests and in the reader's mind as well. Is James saying that sex is something that should be feared and desired at the same time? The confusion is compounded by the fact the reader filters the behavior of the guests through the

lens of an unreliable narrator who, like the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, could possibly be the victim of an over-active imagination.

T. J. Lustig, the author of *Henry James and the Ghostly*, argues that the narrator is, in a figurative sense, the same sort of predator that he searching for among the guests: "One could argue that he ranks alongside Long and Mrs. Brissenden as a violator, and it is to some extent true that he drains meaning from others and hoards it in his consciousness" (295). Like the sexual vampires who tap into their victims' sexual energy, the narrator penetrates the guests' deepest, darkest secrets. The narrator appears to be blissfully unaware that through his questioning of the guests, he has become a form of the very thing that he is seeking to destroy.

Unlike Van Helsing, the narrator is rejected in the end by the very people he is trying to save. Lacking Van Helsing's unswerving conviction in the rightness of his beliefs, the narrator becomes an outsider, a lonely confused observer who abhors that primal quality that ultimately makes all of the guests, and himself, human. Ironically, by denigrating "the sacred fount of Life"—that is, the sexual drive—the narrator is, in a figurative sense, castrating himself, destroying his power to reform his own little circle of friends. In the conclusion, he stands as the antithesis of Van Helsing, who surrounds himself with a band of disciples, like-minded "saviors" of society, and who actually does rid the world of evil.

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Covering the Feet: Toilet Imagery in English Bible Translation

By Daniel C. Browning, Jr.

Abstract

Evangelical Christians experience occasional consternation when they encounter the words "piss" and "pisseth against the wall" in reading the King James Bible. In contrast, modern translations have generally resorted to other nouns and different idioms for the verbal expression. Why were the original English terms used and why the change? This paper explores the translation of toilet imagery in English Bibles and its development, especially from sixteenth century translations to modern versions. As English emerged from vulgar speech to the language of a nation and empire, limited vocabulary—in contrast to Hebrew—and social attitudes about bodily functions created pressure on translators to use euphemistic or veiled translations, perhaps at the expense of understanding and richness of expression.

Why this Topic?

Almost thirty years ago, I was asked to lead a multi-night Bible study at a rural Baptist church on the book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet during the Assyrian invasions of Israel and Judah in the 8th century BC, a period of great interest to me. The church did not have a pastor when they arranged for me to come, but had called one in the meantime. The day before the scheduled study, the new pastor left a message on my answering machine saying, "I want you to read only from the King James Version." I honored his request and

broke out my King James (KJV), though I had prepared with the Revised Standard Version (RSV). The study progressed well and I had moved to Isaiah chapter 36, wherein the Assyrian king Sennacherib has invaded Judah and sent his emissary, the Rabshakeh, to Jerusalem to demand surrender. The Judean king Hezekiah had ignored Isaiah's warnings not to rely on human strength and rebelled against Assyria. In the literary structure of the book, the Rabshakeh's opening speech before Jerusalem (vs. 4-10) effectively makes the same points (from a different perspective) that Isaiah had preached. At one point, Hezekiah's men on the Jerusalem city wall request of the Rabshakeh, "Pray, speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall" (Isa. 36.11). It is a dramatic scene, and I instinctively began the Rabshekeh's reply (v. 12) in character, and rather loudly. I had memorized the RSV where the retorts, "Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?" But I was reading from the King James Version. I began, "But Rabshakeh said, hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, . . ." And then I remembered the KJV translation but it was too late; my arm was cocked back and I was at full volume. So, I continued . . . "and drink their own PISS!" And that is how I yelled the word "piss" at the top of my lungs in a Baptist church. A stunned silence fell over the congregation as my last word echoed off the back wall of the sanctuary. The pastor was near apoplexy on the first pew (I don't think he had read that bit in the KJV). I kept what cool I had left and said, "now this is a bad situation;" which it was for Jerusalem in 701 BC and for me in South Mississippi in 1992.

Some questions arose in my mind as a result of this experience: "Should I ever speak in a church again?" "Have I sinned by uttering in church a word now considered vulgar?" "Should one be embarrassed by the wording of the Bible?" But also, "why did the King James translators use that word, and how did they choose other words for similar passages?"

Number 1

The "P" Word as a Noun

First, an examination the KJV's use of the "p-word" in the just recited passage, Isaiah 36, is in order. It is generally assumed and oft-repeated that the word simply was not considered offensive in the 17th century. But was "piss" offensive in the early 17th century? What about the word used in the ancient Hebrew text? A related, but important, question is whether the *substance* itself was considered impure to ancient Jews.

The Hebrew Bible does not hold forth on the impurity status of urine. But, there is commentary in Rabbinical literature, starting roughly at the end of the New Testament period. To summarize, bodily waste itself did not render a person unclean, but there was some nervousness about reading the scripture in its presence (Magness 130-44). This may be more important than it first seems.

Was the Hebrew word used in the Rabshakeh's speech considered offensive? Our cultural orientation causes us to assume it was; that is, he used a vulgar term for effect as is done in literature and current movies. To explore this, we must turn to the Hebrew text. And there, at first glance, it *appears* that the word was problematic.

The Ketiv-Qere

The text of the Hebrew Bible used by synagogues, scholars, and translators is the product of medieval Jewish scribes called Masoretes. They standardized the text

wonderfully and also standardized marginal notes called *Masora*, from a word for "tradition." Some of these notes are instructions for readers, including a category called *ketiv-qere*, meaning "written-read." When a reader sees a *qere*, he knows not to read what is actually written in the text, but to substitute the words of the *qere*, often included in the margin. The most famous of these is the permanent substitution of *Adonai* (the *qere*) for the written name of the LORD (the *ketiv* יהוה).

On Isaiah 36.12 (and the parallel passage 2 Ki. 18.27), there is a *ketiv-qere*. When the reader gets to the written word שיניהם (which the KJV translates "their piss"), they are to read מימי רגליהם, "water of their feet." This amounts to a double euphemism as רגלים, "feet," is used throughout the Hebrew Bible as a veiled reference to the male genitals (e.g., Ruth 3.8, Isa. 7.20).

The Hebrew noun שין appears only in this passage (Isa. 36.12, and the parallel 2 Ki. 18.27) and the *ketiv-qere* seems to imply that the word is offensive. I do not think such is the case, as the verbal form of the word ("שׁין"), used in the next passage we will cover, is not subject to *ketiv-qere*. It is more likely that the *substance* referenced was deemed inappropriate for synagogue reading of the text. The origin of the *ketiv-qere* is not known, but a reasonable rabbinic logic would go like this: one does not read God's word in the presence of urine (established elsewhere), therefore, one should not read "urine" (by whatever specific name) in the presence of God.

The English Word

Returning to sixteenth and seventeenth century England, the KJV translators' choice of the "p-word" in these passages presents a puzzle. The first piece of a solution requires a brief review of the history of translating Isaiah 36.12 and 2 Kings 18.27 in English Bibles, before and after the KJV.

The earliest English Bible was produced by John Wycliffe and his assistants in the late 14th century. In Wycliffe, we encounter for Isaiah 36.12b the awkward, "drynke the pisse of her feet" (*Holy Bible* 3:287). This seemingly incomprehensible wording can be explained! Wycliffe's Bible was translated directly from the Latin Vulgate, which obviously used the Hebrew *qere* reading as its basis, hence the reference to the "feet." However, the Vulgate did not retain the "water" of the *qere* but reverted instead to the meaning of the *ketiv* in the Hebrew, so the Latin reads *et bibant urinam pedum suorum*, "and drink the urine of their feet." Wycliffe uses "pisse" despite the obvious ease of rendering the Latin *urinam* with the English "urine."[1] Why? I briefly outline a couple of suggestions in the next paragraphs.

First, it may be that the word "urine" was not "English enough." That is, to use it would be *not* to provide "translation." Indeed, Wycliffe uses the phrases "I Englishe it thus," and "shulde be Englisshid," in the prologue to his translation (*Holy Bible* 1:57).[2] By the mid to late sixteenth century, a desire to distance vernacular English from Latin was furthered by a theological desire to distance English Bibles from the Latin Bible, the Vulgate (Norton 4). This is demonstrated by the Rheims-Douay Bible, translated from the Vulgate by English Catholics in 1609, where Isaiah 36.12b reads "drinke the vrine of their feete." Here "vrine" is directly from the Vulgate "*urinam*," a residual "Latinism."[3] In contrast, none of the Protestant-produced sixteenth-century English Bibles used the word "urine."

To be sure, the word "urine" is found in Middle and early modern English. But, examples of its use are predominantly from medical contexts, where Latinisms were the norm ("urine, n. 1"). If "urine" is eliminated, truly English options were rather limited beyond the "p-word."

For reasons that are unclear, subsequent English translations use the word "stale" in Isaiah 36.12. Such is the case in the Coverdale Bible, which appeared in 1535. Coverdale did not know Hebrew, and thus used Latin, English, and German sources for his work. He is remembered for his picturesque contributions to the wording of the English Bible, like "lovingkindness" and "by the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Sion" (Ps. 137.1). But "stale" is not one of Coverdale's more eloquent (or fresher!) offerings. The word is now used exclusively of horses and cattle.[4]

Knowledgeable folks may be wondering about the contribution of William Tyndale in this matter. Tyndale was the pivotal figure and catalyst in the revival of English Bible translations in the sixteenth century. His New Testament, translated from Greek and published in 1526, was the foundation on which most other English New Testaments were built. But Tyndale also learned Hebrew and published translations of the Pentateuch (1530) and Jonah (1534). He completed a translation of the historical books, Joshua to 2 Chronicles, but was arrested and martyred before they were published. It is generally agreed that the historical books of Matthew's Bible, compiled and edited by John Rogers in 1537, are Tyndale's. For the portions of the Old Testament not translated by Tyndale, Rogers used Coverdale's work. The passage we have been considering, Isaiah 36.12, would have been taken from Coverdale, but there is a parallel, nearly identical in Hebrew, in 2 Kings 18.27. Coverdale used his word "stale" in both passages, and so it appears in Isaiah 36.12 of Matthew's Bible. But 2 Kings 18.27 of Matthew's has "piss." This, we can assume, is the translation of Tyndale. The Matthew's (1537), Great (1539), and Bishops (1568) Bibles all follow Coverdale in rendering the Hebrew שין of Isaiah 36.12 as "stale" and follow Tyndale in using "piss" for the same expression in 2 Kings 18.27. Aside from revealing

Tyndale, these passages demonstrate that Bibles of this period were assembled quickly and copied liberally from prior work.

The Geneva Bible of 1560 published the first English Old Testament translated entirely from Hebrew. The Geneva renders the Hebrew שין with the "p-word" in both passages. The KJV, which was to be primarily a revision of the Bishops Bible, which was a revision of the Great, which was a revision of Coverdale, is the first in that sequence to standardize the readings of Isaiah 36.12 and 2 Kings 18.27, using "piss." Whether this was a standardizing and choice of Tyndale's word or the influence of Geneva is difficult to say.

I suggest another reason for the choice of the "p-word" in Tyndale and the KJV: it simply sounds better! The KJV was clearly produced for reading, and one of the KJV's enduring wonders is its cadence and poetic feel—even in prose passages—and much of that brilliance, including the repetition of short vowels and monosyllable words, goes back to Tyndale (Daniell 251).

Concession to the smooth flow of "piss," however, does not answer the question of the word's suitability. In the period of early English versions, appropriateness of particular words was less a factor of the words themselves and more a function of the social status of the speaker and audience. "Vulgar" language meant common language. In the period of the early English Bible translations, English was vulgar or common by definition and still lacked vocabulary suitable for literary and theological expression (Norton 1-5). But English did have terms for bodily functions. It seems that as English gained ground with upper class, it developed a "high vocabulary," and the original common "low" speech became vulgar in the sense that we use the word today. "Piss" thus became vulgar or impolite and embarrassing in public reading of the Bible; especially in America (Lewis 158), as I

personally discovered. The change of attitudes about language use was especially pronounced during the Victorian Era (Marsh 206).

Consequently, the Revised Version (1885) in England and the American Standard Version (1901) have the Rabshakeh say, "*Hath he* not *sent me* to the men that sit on the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own **water** with you?" (2 Ki. 18.27, Isa. 36.12). This translation removes the embarrassment, but also removes the force of the passage. Ironically, the RV and ASV are considered the most literal English versions and a favorite of Hebrew-learning students for comparison; but on these verses they are decidedly non-literal.

Subsequent English translations have almost universally used "urine," with the notable exception of *The Message*, which uses "pee" for 2 Kings 18.27.

The "P-word" as a Verb

Finding a modern, less-embarrassing English word is more difficult where the Hebrew Bible uses the verbal form of שין. A primary example is 1 Samuel 25.22. There David, having been dissed by Nabal, declares (in the KJV), "So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall." The Hebrew expression is מַשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר, literally, "a 'pee-er' against a wall."[5]

At first blush, it seems David is simply using a brusque expression to describe Nabal's men, which David intends to kill. The same expression is used in verse 34 and in several other passages, always of men that are slated for destruction.

Wycliffe translates the term literally, but there seems to be more nervousness in the early modern translations for the act of micturition than for the product. Again, Coverdale avoids the "p-word" with the euphemistic, "one that maketh water agaynst ye wall." Matthew's Bible goes with "piss" in all passages but adds an interesting marginal note on

1 Samuel 25.22 suggesting dogs as the objects of the expression. Clearly there is some unease about the image, as a similar marginal note also appears in the Geneva for 1 Kings 14.10. But a different explanation is found in the Geneva margin on 1 Samuel 25.22, where we read, "Meaning by this prouerbe, that he wolde destroye bothe smale & great."[6]

While using the "p-word" in both verses in the David story (1 Sam. 25.22, 34), the Bishop's Bible "makes water" in the four other occurrences of מַשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר. A letter about the translation work from Archbishop Matthew Parker to Queen Elizabeth's Secretary, William Cecil, may provide the reason. Therein, Parker includes some "observations respected" in the work, including "that all such wordes as soundeth in the Olde Translacion to any offence of Lightnes or obscenitie be expressed with more convenient termes and phrases" (Pollard 298). There is no other indication of editorial control or censorship, but the "observations" suggest a concern over "low" words in increasingly official (and royal) English Bibles. Be that as it may, the KJV does not "make water," but uses the "p-word" throughout.

But times changed and "piss" in its verb form, as with the noun, passed from polite use. However, there is another "English problem." Apparently "urinateth" was not available ("urinate, v. 1") and, even until the present, English lacks a biblically good word for micturition. So, beginning with the Revised Version (1885) and American Standard Version (1901), the phrase מַשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר is rendered by all mainline translations with some form of "male," eliminating all reference to elimination.

While modern non-literal translations avoid obvious problems in these passages, they do create others. Some have used them to dismiss modern translations on the grounds of inaccuracy. An extreme example appeared on YouTube,[7] where a fundamentalist preacher

uses the missing "pisseth against the wall" to rail against modern translations and to expound the notion that real biblical men (over against "males") must stand for urination. There is no need to respond to his drivel, but one wonders if the preacher would have concocted it without modern translations' over euphemistic choice of "male."

The construct מַשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר is an important part of the literary structure of the David-Nabal episode in 1 Samuel 25. The story is full of parallels, far more obvious in Hebrew, in which play into the phrase "pee-er against a wall" (Leithart 59):

- Nabal's men say of David's protection, "they were a *wall* to us" (25.16)
- Nabal (Hebrew for "fool;" 25.25) is of the descendants of Caleb (Hebrew for "dog;" 25.3) and dogs urinate against walls
- Nabal also makes a pun with the word for "wineskin," usually made from sheep bladders
- Nabal drank heavily (25.36) and in the morning, "when the wine had gone out" (25.37) his wife Abigail told him of David's threat
- "When the wine had gone out" is more literally, "As the wine was going out," identifying Nabal as the main "pee-er" against the "wall;" that is, against David's good will

Obviously, a full appreciation of the structure is only possible with Hebrew facility, but an explanation of it to English readers is made more difficult in the modern translations where "male" renders the colorful expression. For 1 Samuel 25, the KJV "translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light" (*The Translators to the Reader*, 12, 34) for deeper study.

So much for number one; now we move on to number 2.

Number 2

Dung

Returning to the Rabshakeh's speech (Isa. 36.12), we note that he also referred to human excrement. Here the KJV is less embarrassing, rendering "dung," as do almost all modern translations (the New International Version uses "filth"). The Hebrew has חֹרָאיהֶם, meaning something along the lines of "their poop" ("חרא"). But there is also a *ketiv-qere* for חרא, where the reader here and in other passages is to substitute צֵאָה, usually translated "filth," but used specifically of "human excrement" ("צוא"). From the English translation side both words appear to give the same effect, but clearly something is considered repugnant about חרא, at least for reading in synagogues. Even the combined form meaning "dove's dung" (2 Ki. 6.25)—probably naming a certain edible herb (Oppenheim 175-76)—is amended in reading to "dove's discharge" ("דִּבְיוֹנִים"). Here I think knowledge of the *ketiv-qere*, review of the oldest English translation, and examination of another passage can provide a more accurate meaning and reveal a difficulty for later English translations. I suggest that the problem with חרא is that it describes a specific form of human excrement, as opposed to צֵאָה, which generally describes the substance.

Wycliffe's translation of Isaiah 36.12 reads, "that thei ete her toordis, and drynke the pisse of her feet with ȝou." Here Wycliffe used the "t-word" which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "a lump or piece of excrement," noting it is "not now in polite use" ("turd, n."). One can also infer from the OED quotations that "turd" transitioned from a normal (if "low") English word to one of impolite reference by the mid-sixteenth century. Here's the problem: there is not really any other English word that designates a "lump or piece" of excrement. Consequently, subsequent translations generally employed "dung,"

which conventionally meant manure, in the sense of fertilizer, or animal excrement ("dung, n. 1"). Indeed, English employed "dung" early as a verb, as in "dung a field."

Hebrew does not have this problem, where there are several words that describe excrement and its forms. Ezekiel 4.12-15 demonstrates as much and the problems of rendering this stuff into English. In this passage Ezekiel is instructed by God to lie on the ground on one side for hundreds of days and, for food in verse 12, "And you shall eat it as a barley cake, baking it in their sight on human dung" (RSV). The Hebrew translated "human dung" is more complicated, with the three-word phrase בְּגֻלְלֵי צֵאת הָאָדָם. The Hebrew words are in construct, meaning the first noun is modified by the other two to create a single idea. The first is from a root meaning "to roll," and implies a *form*; something like "balls [of excrement]." Here the "t-word," used by Wycliffe, is entirely correct but also somewhat inappropriate for later translations. The second is the general word צֵאָה, designating the *substance* and usually translated "filth" or "dung." The third is "man," so that a literal translation in current popular parlance would be something like, "patties of poop of a person" (I rather think Tyndale would approve of the rhythm, at least). My point here is that apart from "turd," English translators *did not and still do not* have a word that accurately and delicately renders the first Hebrew word. They thus produce "dung." Having used it there, the second word, normally translated "dung," would be superfluous ("dungs of dung of a man?"). Because the second word, צֵאָה, can be taken as a form of the verb יצא, "to go out," many translations (including the KJV) have "dung that cometh out of man."[8] Modern translations have cast out any attempt to translate all three words and generally have "human dung."

"Covering the Feet"

Finally, a word about the main title of this piece. "Covering the Feet" translates a Hebrew Bible euphemism for having a bowel movement. For example, in 1 Samuel 24.3 (v. 4 in Hebrew) Saul, who is pursuing David, enters a cave לְהָסֵךְ אֶת־רַגְלָיו, that is, "to cover his feet." Hebrew scholars have long assumed that the idiom comes from the posture of defecation, in which the feet are covered by a long garment. But the word for feet is רגלים, the same mentioned above as a euphemism for the genitalia, so other explanations are possible. At any rate, the expression gives another glimpse of the challenges of biblical translation.

Early translators of 1 Samuel 24.3—to me, oddly—chose to dispense with or explain the Hebrew euphemism. Thus, Wycliffe has the charming "and a spelunk was there, the which Saul wente yn, that he purge the wombe." Coverdale, who tended towards euphemism elsewhere, has "couer his fete," with the marginal note, "that is, to do his necessary easement," all of which also appears in Matthew's Bible. The Geneva Bible moves "doe his easement" to the main text with a marginal note: "Ebr. to couer his feete." Bishop's Bible follows this exactly, another bit of evidence for Geneva's influence on the Bishop's. The KJV follows the Great Bible with a simple, literal approach: "to couer his feete," without marginal note. More recent English translations have tended to swap euphemisms, saying Saul went in the cave "to relieve himself," sometimes with a footnote reading simply "cover his feet." There the mystery is removed, but I think at the expense of richness of expression.

What shall we say then? I should like to conclude briefly by suggesting that of all English translation, the KJV does the best job of handling the realities of scripture in which divine words are interwoven with descriptions of the human condition and human

necessity. In rendering them frankly where needed, and with an air of mystery where details are uncalled for, the King James Bible truly "covers the feet."

Notes

[1] In the "early version" (dated "ca. 1385") the reading is, "ther vryne of their feet;" see *Holy Bible*, 3:287.

[2] Until the early modern period, "to English" meant "to translate;" see Tadmor 17, "English, v."

[3] The Rheims-Douay and its theological Latinisms were castigated by contemporary Puritans; see, for example, the works of William Fulke ("A Defence" and "Text of the New Testament").

[4] Even in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, the primary recorded uses are for non-human products. It is worth noting that Coverdale used numerous horse illustrations in his devotional writings; see "*Writings and Translations,"* 133, 131, 133, 142.

[5] The phrase includes a participial form of שין which is universally coupled in the Hebrew Bible with בְּקִיר ("שׁין," 2:1479).

[6] Beyond its somewhat lame attempt to explain the colorful language, this note throws some light on the Bishop's Bible, which has a very similar explanation on the same verse. The Bishop's Bible was ostensibly a revision of the Great Bible, intending to replace the more radical Geneva. But this and other notes provide evidence of the Geneva's influence on the Bishop's Bible, and again illustrates the copying of material in the Bibles of the period (Daniell 342-44).

[7] As of early 2021, the video (Anderson) was reclassified as "private" and not available for the general public (probably a good thing).

[8] This is apparently the understanding of the Vulgate also, which explains Wycliffe's translation of Ezekiel 4.12: "with a toord that goith out of a man."

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Poe's "Hop-Frog": A Fairy Tale of "Average Racism

By Mikki Galliher

While early critics of Edgar Allan Poe tended to view the writer as a sort of apolitical esthete, a writer who set himself above the fray in which other more politically visible writers of his day such as Thoreau, Douglass, and Longfellow engaged, Toni Morrison's 1982 book *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* introduced a particularly pejorative criticism of the author. Accoding to Morrison, Poe was far from disconnected and removed from the political turmoil of his day. He was actually a chief orchestrator of one of the most dangerous racist ideologies in American culture. Morrison states, "No early American writer is more important to the concept of American Africanism than Poe" (Morrison 32). American Africanism as described by Morrison is a trait fostered among many white American writers by which white writers might "define American identity" in opposition to an "Africanist other" (Morrison 47). After Morrison's bold accusation numerous critics chimed in to attest to Poe's unmistakable racism, and Poe came to be viewed as "a typical antebellum Southerner, possessing aristocratic pretensions, racist opinions, and an overwhelming—though perhaps subconscious – fear of slaves and their potential for uprising" (Jones, Paul 239). For example, Bernard Rosenthal characterizes Poe as "certainly the most blatant racist among the American Romantics" (3), and according to John Carlos Rowe,"Poe was a proslavery Southerner and should be reassessed as such in whatever approach we take to his life and writings" (117). Such criticisms of Poe are now commonplace and have have depended largely upon a handful of Poe's literary

reviews, the problematic Paulding-Drayton review, and Poe's stoies that specifically include overt references to black people or animals: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, "A Predicament," "Murders on the Rue Morgue," "The Black Cat," and "The Gold Bug." Analyses of these stories have generally concluded that the works demonstrate Poe's beliefs that blacks are beastial in nature, will strike out to topple society, and threaten the white authority figures. However, very few writers have engaged with Poe's tale "Hop-Frog" even thought this tale more overtly wrestles with the issues of slavery, the threat of slave insurrections, and the effect of this institution on society. While Poe's works, including "Hop-Frog" certainly display racist tropes and generalizations, painting these works as some of the most racist writings in American literature mischaracterizes the complexities of the texts and Poe's own complicated views on the subject of slavery and racial identity.

Although many late twentieth and twenty-first century critics have viewed Poe as embracing the most extreme versions of pro-slavery racism, most of these beliefs appear to be founded in two wrong assumptions that color interpretation of his works. First, James A. Harrison's erroneoous inclusion of the the anonymous Paulding-Drayton review in the 1902 collection of Poe's works has caused many critics to attibute the review's aggressive pro-slavery stance to Poe. In addition, some critics have overestimated the effects of regional loyalties and sentiments and underestimated the financial realities that faced a working author such as Poe. For these critics, Poe as a white Southerner, particularly one who did not openly embrace the abolitionist movement, would naturally embrace the "dominant" ideologies of his home state, especially given the particularly strong sectionalist sentiments of his time (Whalen 4). However, Terance Whalen questions how such "a planter ideology was assimilated by the child of itinerant actors and foster son of a Scottish-born tobacco

merchant" and notes that Poe's affiliation with the South was a "transplanted and temporary" tie he largely abandoned for the literary marketplaces of the North in his adult life. Whalen claims that Poe engaged in "average racism." According to Whalen, "For Poe and other antebellum writers, average racism was not a sociological measurement of actual beliefs but rather a strategic construction designed to overcome political dissension in the emerging mass audience" (4). In other words, the mediation of a sort-of-middle-of-the-road ideology that worked both within and against the political extremes was a necessity for Poe's continued success as a national rather than merely regionalist writer. While several of Poe's stories utilize this sort of "average racism," "Hop-Frog" is the tale that best reflects this ideology.

The story is a revenge tale set in a distant time and place. The protagonist Hop-Frog and his friend Tripetta have been taken from their far away homeland to serve as slaves in the court of a European king. Hop-Frog serves as the court jester while Tripetta is a graceful dancer who must be ever ready to entertain. When the king decides to have a masquerade ball, he and his councilors have difficulty deciding what kind of costumes to wear, so the king orders Hop-Frog and Tripetta to attend them. The king—knowing that Hop-Frog has a low tolerance for alcohol and experiences personality changes when he drinks—forces Hop-Frog repeatedly to drink wine. When Tripetta tries to intervene the King pushes her down to the ground and throws wine in her face. Hop-Frog then proposes that the king and his advisors dress as orangutangs to play a joke on the women of the court and scare them. Hop-Frog then convinces the king and advisors to cover themeselves in tar and fur in order to create their costumes, but as the pretend orangutangs enter the court, Hop-Frog traps

them in a chandelier which he rides with them up to the ceilng before setting them on fire, charring them to death, while he escapes with Tripetta.

The tale clearly has racial overtones. While Hop-Frog and Tripetta are not described as dark skinned, their small stature clearly establishes them as Other and code this trait as a surrogate for Blackness. Further, both characters are slaves, who have been stolen, taken as spoils of war, from their homeland which is described as follows: "It was from some barbarous region, however, that no person ever heard of -- a vast distance from the court of our king" (Poe). The parallels here between the Hop-Frog and Tripetta's origins and the trans-Atlantic slave trade are obvious. However, the description of Hop-Frog betrays inherent racism as the narrative instills in him bestial characteristics: he moves like a monkey and has "fanglike teeth." Despite these obvious racial undertones, critics have had vastly different interpretations of the tale.

In fact, critics of "Hop-Frog" have contradicted one another concerning even the base meaning of the tale. For example, three of the most well-known interpretations of the story contradict one another outright. Paul Christian Jones holds that "Poe uses 'Hop-Frog' to illustrate the dangers of the abolitionist rhetoric about slavery, a rhetoric that used pathetic appeals to create sympathy for the slaves and, in Poe's view, misled its readers about the truly dangerous consequences of white readers aligning themselves with black slaves over white masters" (241). Hence, the character Hop-Frog and his actions become a metaphor for the horrors of slave uprisings (245). Conversely, Leland S. Person claims that the tale uncovers "complicated patterns of racism and antiracist sympathy, a recognition on Poe's part that racial signifiers are inherently unstable, while racism and racist efforts to ascribe fixed racial identities lead inevitably to revenge" (Person 220). Finally, Bruce K.

Martin interprets the story not as a story about racial disparity and slavery but rather as "an allegorization of Poe's relationship to his reader, but it is as well his darkest comedic self-portrait" (44). Martin maintains that the story is a "resentful farewell to literary critics." In Martin's view, the madness of Hop-Frog which is brought on by heavy consumption of alcohol mirrors Poe's own struggles with alcohol; Tripetta represents the various women he courted and his imagination; the king and his councilors symbolize Poe's critics, and the jest in which Hop-Frog defeats his enemies represents Poe's own earlier attempts at satire (45). While all of the interpretations have noted the diction and structure and have paid particular attention to the horrific outcome of the king and his advisors, none have actually examined how Poe casts the story using the form and language of fairy tales and the effects of this form upon the reader's sentiments.

Unlike most of his other stories, Poe crafts "Hop-Frog" as a fairy tale. In the early nineteenth century, fairy tales had begun to grow in popularity as the Brothers Grimm published their collection of folklore and writers such Hans Christian Anderson released numerous literary fairy tales such as "The Snow Queen" and "The Little Mermaid." While modern readers typically think of princess tales such as "Snow White," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Cinderella" when the term fairy tale is mentioned a number of traditional fairy tales have significant male protagonists including Hansel of "Hansel and Gretel," Jack of "Jack and the Beanstalk" as well as numerous other Jack tales, and the boy from "The Juniper Tree." "Hop-Frog" bears a number of striking similarities to these works. The story is set in a far away land during a time long since past. This setting is clearly evident in the absolute authority which the king weilds and the structure of the court which includes a jester and slave dancers. The story also introduces aspects of wonder akin to magic in the

descriptions of Hop-Frog and his friend Tripetta. Not only are both characters dwarves, Hop-Frog has "prodigious strength" and "great dexterity" while Tripetta is described as having such " grace and exquisite beauty" that she is "universally admired and petted." These descriptions of Hop-Frog and Tripetta parallel descriptions of the young princesses and their supernatural protectors who so often populate traditional fairy tales. These superficial aspects as well as other features would have been instantly recognizable to Poe's audience and would guide the audience in the tale's reception and interpretation.

Beyond the superficial elements of the story the characterization of Hop-Frog, the King, and Tripetta also function similarly to fairy tales. The king is depicted as unambiguously evil villain who unfairly wields his power to control and degrade the protagonist. The narrator uses the words "tyrant" and "monster" to describe the king. The king and his councilors are repeatedly described as "fat," a term that implies both the excess of their consumption as well as their laziness. The king and his councilors are even too lazy to choose their own costumes for a masquerade, even though the entire event down to the decorations has been planned and executed by Tripetta. Instead of preparing for the ball, the king chooses to torment both Hop-Frog and Tripetta simply to entertain himself by forcing Hop-Frog to consume alcohol despite the dwarf's intolerance of the substance. To further heighten the dichotomy between the goodness of the dwarves and villainy of the king and his councilors, the narrator includes numerous descriptions of Hop-Frog to elicit sympathy from the reader and emphasize the king's callousness:

> When the two little friends obeyed the summons of the king they found him sitting at his wine with the seven members of his cabinet council; but the monarch appeared to be in a very ill humor. He knew that Hop-Frog was not fond of wine, for it excited

the poor cripple almost to madness; and madness is no comfortable feeling. But the king loved his practical jokes, and took pleasure in forcing Hop-Frog to drink and (as the king called it) 'to be merry.'

"Come here, Hop-Frog," said he, as the jester and his friend entered the room; "swallow this bumper to the health of your absent friends, [here Hop-Frog sighed,] and then let us have the benefit of your invention. . . Come, drink! the wine will brighten your wits."

. . . It happened to be the poor dwarf's birthday, and the command to drink to his 'absent friends' forced the tears to his eyes. Many large, bitter drops fell into the goblet as he took it, humbly, from the hand of the tyrant.

"Ah! ha! ha!" roared the latter, as the dwarf reluctantly drained the beaker. -- "See what a glass of good wine can do! Why, your eyes are shining already!"

While the "tyrant" king "roars" like a predator, Hop-Frog and Tripetta are described as "little" "obedient," and acting with humility. As the passage progresses, Hop-Frog's eyes melodramatically fill with tears as the king presses on without mercy, and Tripetta is forced to the ground when she tries to intercede. To make matters worse, this all happens on the dwarf's birthday. In contrast, the whole company of the king is "amused" by the "joke" the king has perpetuated.

The one element that all commentators have found agreement on is that the tale's ending evokes horror in the reader. However, in viewing the ending of the story within the context of the fairy tale genre, this interpretation of horror is problematic. According to Christine A. Jones, fairy tales "follow the triumph of sympathy and the punishment of cruelty" (15). Often this punishment takes extreme forms: Cinderella's step-sisters end up

lame and blinded by doves; the villain of "The Goose Girl" is placed in barrell with knives and dragged around the town to her death; the witch of "Hansel and Gretle" is pushed into an oven and cooked; the evil queen of "Snow White" dances herself to death in red-hot iron shoes. While modern readers unfamiliar with these traditional versions might become shocked and horrified by the fate of the king and his counsilors, for a reader familiar with the genre, this ending or one akin to it would be expected as a natural carriage of justice.

The fairy tale form, complete with its dispatchment of justice helps the reader make sense of the tale thematically. When the ending is viewed as a just rather than horrific, the tale then becomes a tale which emphasizes the problem of slavery as an institution that dehumanizes both the slave master and the slave. While the racist tropes of Hop-Frog's beastiality are apparent early in the tale and become more evident as Hop-Frog enacts his revenge, the most serious of these occurs after Hop-Frog has been forced to consume alcohol:

> A dead silence, of about a minute's duration, ensued. It was broken by just such a low, harsh, grating sound, as had before attracted the attention of the king and his councillors when the former threw the wine in the face of Trippetta. But, on the present occasion, there could be no question as to whence the sound issued. It came from the fang-like teeth of the dwarf, who ground them and gnashed them as he foamed at the mouth, and glared, with an expression of maniacal rage, into the upturned countenances of the king and his seven companions. (Poe)

Hop-Frog has fangs and is literally foaming at the mouth, but he is not to be construed as being culpable for his barbarity. The narrator has already established that the king is responsible for the outcome of his dangerous joking with Hop-Frog because Hop-Frog as a

slave has no power to resist the king who knowingly forces him to drink despite the mania and "instantaneous" conversion the substance would cause. In the end, Hop-Frog's final bestialization of his master and the councilors when he turns them into orangutan's is nothing more than the conferral of an outward appearance to match their already bestial personas which are devoid of human sympathy. The ending of the tale reminiscent of the traditional fairy tale ending states, "It is supposed that . . . they effected their escape to their own country: for neither was seen again" (Poe). This ending further displaces the apparent horror of the Hop-Frog's actions or his culpability. In true fairy tale fashion, Hop-Frog kills only the guilty and makes his escape to find his own happy ever after.

Truly, this casting of two slaves as the heroes in a fairy tale complicates the understanding of Poe's views on race. While he racism certainly asserts itself in his physical descriptions of the two characters, he depicts the master in this system as far more monstrous and far less deserving of sympathy. Thus, the tale works both to reinforce racist tropes while simultaneously undermining those very same tropes.

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"Go in Fear of Abstractions": Ezra Pound and the Beginning of American Haiku

By John J. Han

Scholars and haiku poets have debated whether American haiku began in the early twentieth century or after World War II. In his Introduction to *American Haiku: New Readings*, for instance, Toru Kiuchi contends that the 1950s were "the real beginning of what may be called the haiku movement in America" (xii). However, strong evidence suggests that English-language haiku appeared as early as the 1910s, when H.D., Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, E. E. Cummings, and other Imagist poets penned the first Anglophone haiku.

Critics generally agree that Pound played a crucial role in the development of American haiku, and even those who hesitate to call him a haiku poet seem to acknowledge that he wrote at least quasi-haiku. A thorny issue that has yet to be resolved is whether some of Pound's succinct poems can be classified as haiku. A related issue concerns how much Pound knew about the form of haiku. Addressing these questions will help us understand whether Pound can be called the founder of American haiku. Specifically, this essay examines Pound's encounters with Japanese haiku, the contrasting views on Pound's haiku, and "In a Station of the Metro" as a haiku poem.

Pound's Encounters with Haiku

Biographical data concerning Pound reveal that he had a grasp of Japanese haiku. Prior to his voyage to Europe in March 1908, Pound learned Japanese aesthetics from Yone Noguchi (1875-1947), a Japanese poet and scholar, and from Sadakichi Hartmann (1867-1944), a German-Japanese immigrant to the United States. Jim Kacian thinks that Hartmann was "almost certainly an influence on him" ("Overview" 311); indeed, Hartmann and Pound were close friends. Although it is unclear exactly when the two became friends, the following haiku by Sadakichi seems to find an echo in Pound's famous two-liner "In a Station of the Metro" (1913):

> White petals afloat
> On a winding woodland stream—
> What else is life's dream! (qtd. in Kacian, "Overview" 311)

Pound's poem reads:

> **In a Station of the Metro**
>
> The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
> Petals on a wet, black bough.

Sadakichi uses an image of petals to portray the fleeting nature of human life, and Pound uses an image of petals to portray the eerie nature of urban life.

Pound's introduction to Japanese aesthetics began in earnest in London, where he stayed from 1908 to 1920 before he permanently moved to the European Continent. In 1909, Pound met Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), an Oriental art expert who was to become Keeper of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. By attending Binyon's lectures on East Asian art, Pound was introduced to Japanese poetry, including haiku. Pound also found Binyon's 1911 book *The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan* informative in understanding East Asian aesthetics. Although Binyon focuses mostly on visual art, he also includes comments on Chinese and Japanese art in general. For example, he explains, "The Chinese and the Japanese, both in their literature and in their art, make of evocation or suggestion as an aesthetic principle" (18). Pound likely learned from this book that haiku avoid verbosity, instead relying on hints and suggestions.

Indeed, Pound acknowledged the influence of Japanese haiku on his own poetry. In his article "How I Began" (1913), Pound recalled how "In a Station of the Metro" owed to the haiku form:

> For well over a year I have been trying to make a poem of a very beautiful thing that befell me in the Paris Underground. I got out of a train at, I think, La Concorde and in the jostle I saw a beautiful face, and then, turning suddenly, another and another, and then a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful face. All that day I tried to find words for what this made

> me feel. That night as I went home along the rue Raynouard I was still trying. I could get nothing but spots of colour. I remember thinking that if I had been a painter I might have started a wholly new school of painting. I tried to write the poem weeks afterwards in Italy, but found it useless. Then, only the other night, wondering how I should tell the adventure, it struck me that in Japan, where a work of art is not estimated by its acreage and where sixteen [*sic*] syllables are counted enough for a poem if you arrange and punctuate them properly, one might make a very little poem which would be translated as follows:
>
> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> Petals on a wet, black bough.
>
> And there, or in some other very old, very quiet civilization, some one else might understand the significance. (Pound "How" 707)

This passage clearly reveals that Pound had the form of Japanese haiku in mind when he was formulating his "Metro" poem.

Pound's theory of Imagist poetry also has its connection with haiku. "A Retrospect" (1918), his essay that declares the principles of Imagism, promotes the use of clear and vivid imagery and concise language, as well as the avoidance of abstractions. At the beginning of the essay, Pound lists three key principles of Imagist poetry he and two other poets established in 1912:

> In the spring or early summer of 1912, "H.D.," Richard Aldington and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:
>
> 1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
> 2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
> 3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome. (3)

Later in the essay, Pound reiterates the first two principles with his well-known maxim "Go in fear of abstractions" (5), which is in line with the haiku principle of concreteness. As Ian Codrescu rightly notes, "Hidden behind the simplicity and strictness of haiku is an entire aesthetics of expression that avoids repetition, aphorism and abstraction."

Conflicting Views of Pound as a Haiku Poet

Those who see the 1950s as the beginning of American haiku tend to think that American poets who knew about Japanese haiku and wrote haiku in the early twentieth century, such as Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, had a limited understanding of the form of haiku. For instance, George Swede maintains that none of the Imagist poems "quite managed to ever write a true [haiku]." As one of several examples of failed haiku from the Imagist era, he uses Pound's "In a Station of the Metro." Claiming that Pound's poem can be accepted as a haiku by "persons with only a tenuous knowledge of the form," Swede comments,

> Successful as a short poem, it fails as a haiku because only the first line deals with an immediate experience while the second line involves the memory of an image that the poet uses overtly as a metaphor. A haiku is a haiku because all the images it conveys occur simultaneously in a person's present perceptions of the world. To become a haiku, Pound's poem would have to indicate that he saw the faces at the same time as he saw the actual petals, in the flesh, not in memory.

Swede is kinder to Pound's "Ts'ai Chi'h," a twenty-two syllable poem that reads,

> The petals fall in the fountain,
> the orange-coloured rose-leaves,
> Their ochre clings to the stone.

According to Swede, Pound "comes much closer to the spirit of a true haiku" thanks to its relative brevity.

Meanwhile, Kenneth Yasuda calls Pound's "Metro Station" poem a haiku with limited success. Disagreeing to John Gould Fletcher's view that Pound's poem "compares favorably" with the traditional Japanese haiku "Fallen flower returning to the branch, / Behold! It is a butterfly," Yasuda comments: "The comparison between the two poems seems most unfortunate, since the Japanese poem succeeds where Pound's fails. [… Pound's] poem is lacking in unity, in that forceful intensity of poetic vision and insight which alone can weld the objects named into a meaningful whole" (xxi).

On the other hand, some poets appreciate Pound's significant contributions to the development of North American haiku, calling him a haiku poet. In *The Haiku Handbook*, William J. Higginson differentiates the 1913 version of the "Metro Station" poem, which appeared in *Poetry* magazine, from the 1914 and 1916 revisions of the poem. The 1913 version reads:

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :

Petals on a wet, black bough .

Pound modified his poem as follows for a 1914 issue of *Fortnightly Review*:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :

Petals, on a wet, black bough.

Pound further tweaked his poem for Lustra in 1916:

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

In the final version, Higginson notes the disappearance of extra spaces between words, the replacement of the colon at the end of the first line by a semicolon, and the omission of the comma after "Petals." According to Higginson, these changes are significant enough to make the poem a haiku. Instead of using "faces" and "petals" as metaphors, Pound renders them as "real, physical objects, each a core image that stands out against its own background" (136). Higginson continues his appreciation of Pound's poem as a real haiku:

> By revising the poem Pound turned an otherwise sentimental metaphor into a genuine haiku. Our sense of the Paris commuters as delicate, vulnerable life builds, now that we see them come up out of the dark underground into a world of falling petals and spring mist. This is a haiku that Shiki would have been proud to write, and it foreshadows the brilliant juxtapositions of Pound's *Cantos*. (136)

Similar to Higginson, Jim Kacian, Philip Rowland, and Allan Burns see Pound as the earliest Anglophone experimenter of haiku. In *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years* (2013), a collection of more than 800 English-language haiku poems by more than 200 poets, the editors list Pound ahead of anyone else, choosing to include Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," "Ts'ai Chi'h," and "Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord"[1] in the volume. In addition to Pound, the editors classify Wallace Stevens, John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell, Charles Reznikoff, Tvor Winters, Langston Hughes, Paul Reps, and E. E. Cummings as pre-1950 haiku poets, thereby illustrating their charitable view of what constitutes English-language haiku. In his overview of haiku in English, Kacian notes that

the Imagists, who "favored precision of imagery and clear, sharp language" ("Overview" 311), turned to haiku for inspiration. Among those Imagists, Kacian notes, "[n]one was more a collector (and disperser) of influences than Ezra Pound" ("Overview" 312). While acknowledging that Pound's "Metro" as a supposed haiku poem is open to debate, Kacian nevertheless recognizes some haiku elements in the poem:

> In addition to the most basic haiku techniques of juxtaposition and seasonality, some technical features of Pound's poem[2] are quite farsighted as well. The two-line approach emphasizes the division between the two images. The unusual spacing of the lines slows the reader down. Even the punctuation is separated from the text, thus creating more space around the words, and a feeling not of a moment (the usual haiku time sense) but of some duration. The rhyme, if there can be said to be one, is simple vowel repetition, not a true masculine rhyme. These aspects all contribute to the ensemble effect—the integration of haiku sensibility into Western poetics, content, and techniques. It is, in fact, the first fully realized haiku in English. ("Overview" 312-313)

It is no wonder Kacian and his fellow editors placed the "Metro" haiku ahead of any other English-language haiku in *Haiku in English*.

Pound's "Metro" Haiku Re-Examined

Those who refuse to acknowledge Pound's "Metro" poem as a haiku present a variety of objections. Below we will examine the three main objections and discuss their validity. One of the most common criticisms concerns the poem's supposed lack of immediacy. For instance, George Swede claims that a haiku should always be set in the present and therefore the "Metro" poem does not qualify as a haiku. Admittedly, most haiku—whether they are in Japanese or in English—record what is called "a haiku moment"—a moment of wakening amidst ordinary life. Yet, some of the classic Japanese haiku depend on memories. As Haruo Shirane, a professor of Japanese literature at Columbia University, explains in a *Modern Haiku* article, "Beyond the Haiku Moment," classical Japanese poets set some of their haiku in the past:

> One of the widespread beliefs in North America is that haiku should be based upon one's own direct experience, that it must derive from one's own observations, particularly of nature. But it is important to remember that this is basically a modern view of haiku, the result, in part, of nineteenth century European realism, which had an impact on modern Japanese haiku and then was re-imported back to the West as something very Japanese. Basho, who wrote in the seventeenth century, would have not made such a distinction between direct personal experience and the imaginary, nor would he have placed higher value on fact over fiction.

Indeed, many of Basho's haiku embedded in his travelogue *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* are the poet's recollections, not a recording of what is "here and now." Two examples will suffice:

> It was with awe
> That I beheld
> Fresh leaves, green leaves,
> Bright in the sun. (Basho 100)

> Silent a while in a cave,
> I watched a waterfall,
> For the first of
> The summer observances. (Basho 101)

In addition, many haiku poets today set their poems in the present although they are recordings of bygone experiences for the sake of immediacy. As Shirane notes, the idea that a haiku should be set in the present is a myth. The myth likely comes from the misconception that haiku is Zen poetry—the idea popularized by R. H. Blyth (1898-1964), who wrote books on Zen and Japanese aesthetics for Western readers. Certainly, there are elements of Zen Buddhism in some of classical haiku, but haiku contains much more than Zen. Having originated in *haikai no renga* ("comic linked verse"), haiku retains elements of comedy and bawdiness. As a form that depends on images from nature and seasons, haiku

can also portray the beauty and wonders of the physical world without adding any philosophical thought.

Next, the contention that a haiku should avoid using a metaphor is largely misguided. Shirane states,

> If I remember correctly, the reason for disqualification was that [Pound's] metro poem was not about nature as we know it and that the poem was fictional or imaginary. Pound's poem may also have been ruled out since it uses an obvious metaphor: the petals are a metaphor for the apparition of the faces, or vice versa. This view of the metro poem was based on the three key definitions of haiku—haiku is about direct observation, haiku eschews metaphor, and haiku is about nature—which poets such as Basho and Buson would have seriously disputed.

Indeed, metaphor is one of the traditional devices in haiku writing used by Japanese masters. Below are two poems by Kobayashi Issa:

> mountain cuckoo—
> the cherry blossoms of Shinano
> have bloomed! (Lanoue)

> geese at my gate—
> another seductive rain

falls today (Lanoue)

In the first poem, "mountain cuckoo" is a metaphor for "nothing-doing, laid-back places/times" (Lanoue). The original text for the second poem reads,

門の雁袖引雨がけふも降

kado no kari sode hiku ame ga kyô mo furu (qtd. in Lanoue)

Here the character used for "seductive" is 引, which literally means "to pull." As David G. Lanoue explains, "The expression, *sode hiku*, literally denotes dragging one by the sleeve; metaphorically, it refers to seduction. The migrating geese enjoy the rain enough to linger another day" (Issa, *Haiku*).

As Jane Reichhold rightly notes in her *Writing and Enjoying Haiku* (2002), metaphor is "a valid technique and one that can bring you many lovely and interesting haiku" (59). In *Haiku: A Poet's Guide* (2003), Lee Gurga also acknowledges that metaphor can be "used effectively" in haiku (84). His only caution is against the overreliance on metaphor: "[T]here is a significant danger that [metaphor] will become the point of the poem. When the poetic device becomes the master rather than the servant of perception, the haiku fails" (84). Because haiku is an imagistic type of poetry, it generally avoids metaphor and simile, but these two devices have always been part of haiku poetics.

Finally, regarding Swede's contention that the "Metro" poem lacks brevity as a haiku, it is worth noting that length is not a crucial factor in composing a haiku. Pound does use more than seventeen syllables in each of the three poems collected in *Haiku in*

English. However, many Japanese haiku poets have broken the 5-7-5 syllabic structure in their poems. Ogiwara Seisensui (1884-1976), a Japanese haiku poet, uses as many as twenty-six syllables in his poem about an Italian novel:

Kuore o yomi, nami no oto, naomo yome to iu no o yomiowari

Read *Cuore*, the sound of waves, read even more he said but
I finish reading it (qtd. in Sato 68)

Another poet, Takayanagi Shigenobu (1923-83), uses four lines in his Japanese haiku:

Embō no
omoki
akebono
ononoki hajimu

In a distant view
a heavy
daybreak
begins to tremble (qtd. in Sato 69)

Here the poet follows the syllabic pattern of 5-3-4-7, thereby using nineteen syllable altogether. Kamiyama Himeyo's (b. 1963) seventeen-syllable haiku is even more unorthodox in its structure:

shi
kyū
kara
hajimaru
enkei
no ketsu raku

beginning
with
the
womb
a circu-
lar defi ciency (qtd. in Sato 69)

Regardless of their unconventional nature, all of these three poems are accepted as legitimate among haiku poets.

On the other extreme, some of the contemporary English-language poets have written one-word haiku. Below is a poem by Cor van den Heuvel:

tundra (Van den Heuvel 31)

Originally published in 1963, the poem has generated debate. Some consider it as a legitimate haiku, arguing that "tundra" printed on an otherwise blank page captures its concept vividly. Others dismiss it as a non-haiku; indeed, following van den Heuvel's practice, one could write a noun word and claim it to be a haiku:

ocean

desert

prairie

steppe

nucleus

crux

root

kernel

Are these words haiku? If they were presented, alongside "tundra," anonymously to haiku experts, would they say that only "tundra" qualifies as a haiku? Answers will likely vary. Van den Heuvel is highly esteemed among English-language haiku poets today, many of whom legitimize his one-word poem. However, other poets feel that "tundra" is too minimalistic to be deemed a haiku.

Conclusion: Pound as the First Anglophone Haiku Poet

Ezra Pound did not simply write "haiku-like" succinct poems, as some critics and contemporary haiku poets maintain. Instead, he was sufficiently knowledgeable about Japanese haiku aesthetics and experimented with English-language haiku ahead of any other Anglophone poet. Indeed, Pound's three poems included in *Haiku in English* make him the first English-language haiku poet. In structure, his haiku are closer to traditional Japanese haiku; in content, they manage to reflect the haiku aesthetics of *mono no aware* (the pathos of things), *wabi* (subdued, austere beauty), *sabi* (rustic patina), and *yūgen* (mysterious profundity). In form, style, mood, and tone, Pound's poems have more affinities with Japanese haiku than with traditional Western poetry. Despite the reservations some haiku theorists have about the poems, Pound's haiku have all the ingredients for a haiku.

Regarding the tradition and individuality within the haiku movement, Edith Shiffert comments: "Haiku poets, as all poets, should feel free to use the haiku in whatever way seems appropriate to their creativity. There never were any rules, just fashions and preferences" (qtd. in Higginson 9). In reality, there were rules—or slightly different rules—

in the history of Japanese haiku, but it is also true that dozens of different techniques of haiku writing exist, and English-language haiku aesthetics are still evolving. Premodern Japanese haiku poets may find Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" looks and sounds more like their own works, almost all of which consist of seventeen syllables, than the poem "tundra." Pound's work may not be of superior quality by today's standards, but it is still a haiku and therefore he deserves the title of the founder of American haiku.[3]

Notes

[1] This nineteen-syllable poem reads,

> O Fan of white silk,
> clear as frost on the grass-blade,
> You also are laid aside.

[2] It refers to the final (1916) version of the "Metro" poem.

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Trolling the Fuhrer: The Crude Satire of La *"swástica" de Adolfo* by Chano Urueta

By Robert Harland

La "swastika" de Adolfo is one of the oddest and most eccentric books ever written. And as we shall see, by turns good and bad in its attacking, satiric intent. Its author, Chano Urueta, was a child of privilege: son of the deputy foreign minister and ambassador to Argentina, Jesús Urueta who had died young in 1920 (García Barragán 18). But before then don Jesús had ensured that his children received a well-rounded education in arts, letters and ethics. Three of the Uruetas became writers: Chano of scripts, Margarita of plays and biography, Eduardo of plays and poetry; Cordelia became a supremely successful painter (Villaseñor de Camarena xiv-xv). After a degree in engineering and some time in the US—he made a silent film in Kansas, and met Chaplin (Riano 5)—Chano went on to a near lifelong career as professional film director, scriptwriter and character actor, though one cursed with an increasing reputation as a hack, something which his arguments with and open contempt for producers (as well as the intermittent quality of his films and scripts). He was to die wheelchair bound and in relative poverty, looked after by his daughter Lucía and surviving on a weekly 1000 peso cheque from the directors' union (Riano; Cruz).

Yet in April 1941 he was at the height of his success. It was the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, where Mexico dominated the Spanish-speaking world's movie industry. Back then Chano Urueta was getting good budgets, and he managed to work with seemingly every big name in Mexican cinema bar María Félix and Dolores del Río (*IMDB*[1]). He was also capable of writing good scripts such as *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1942) and a

co-credit for the excellent ghost story of *Una aventura en la Noche* (1948). He was a hard worker, capable of cranking out multiple films a year. The unintentionally hilarious, deadpan, B-movie, grotesque science fiction monsters of *Monster / Monstruo Resucitado* (1953) *The Brainiac / El Barón del Terror* (1962) or his lucha libre wrestling movies were still in the future. This satire is grotesque in altogether different and purposeful way. Not restrained by the limits the producers he despised and their low budgets (Contreras Torres 217), this book is thoroughly Urueta's and for good or ill he owns all its excesses.

It should not surprise that someone as cultured as Chano Urueta, already an experienced screenwriter in addition to his directorial credits was capable of at least writing a readable work of satire. What DOES astonish is that *La "swástica" de Adolfo* is such a scabrous attack on Adolf Hitler, one of the foulest contemporary ones you are likely to read in any language. Clearly swearing or sexual references existed elsewhere, but just as a Mexican black and white film can surprise with a frankness supressed in the US by the Hayes code, this book is an eye-opener for those familiar with the censorship suffered in the English-speaking world by Henry Miller, James Joyce or D.H. Lawrence. It is also often overblown, pompous and repetitious, but still holds the attention thanks to its audacity. It does not aspire to the standard of consistency and restrained good taste of his sister Margarita's dramas (Leal Cortés x). There are few books like *La "swástica" de Adolfo.* It is also very much a book of its times; how it reflects them in satire is the subject of this essay.

It is all very well to take the basic definition of satire as adopting a moral stance in order to attack individuals or societal trends one deems abhorrent. Given his target is Adolf Hitler, the moral lines should be relatively clear. A satirist is one who:

> Indignant,[…] must speak out against the decadence and corruption he sees all about him. Thus satirists write in winters of discontent. And they write not merely out of personal indignation, but with a sense of moral vocation and with a concern for the public interest (Quintero 1).

And who furthermore seeks to change the societal aspects they see as abhorrent (Quintero 3).

However, in savagery if not in style, this often stands alongside the foulest passages of Martial or Juvenal, or for a scatological Spanish-language example, the Golden Age author Francisco de Quevedo. Yet here Urueta writes over 160 pages in a form which is thoroughly contemporary, dealing with a world very much of the time of publication – April 1941. 2 or 3 months later and this book would have dated very badly. Hitler invaded Russia on June 22nd 1941, and it would have likely upended the book's passages on Stalin. It has more in common with the verbal abuse of a political comedian than George Orwell's satirical science fiction of *1984* (1949) or the horrifying realism of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940). The latter have pretensions to high art; Chano Urueta here is often about as subtle as a kick to the groin.

This was around the high point of Hitler's conquests of or allying with most of Europe West of the Soviet Union, and when Rommel was chasing the British across Libya to Egypt. Hitler and Stalin were seeming allies, having divided Poland between them while gobbling up neighbouring smaller countries. Japan had yet to attack Pearl Harbor or the British Empire. In the USA Charles Lindbergh was a relatively respectable non-interventionist, pro-Nazis operated openly right up until Pearl Harbor (even holding a large

rally in Washington – Cooke 258) and the German declaration of war while FDR restricted the role of the US to being the friendly "Arsenal of Democracy" under Lend-Lease and a limited effort to protect its convoys. Germany had conquered Czechoslovakia, half of Poland, France, the Low Countries, Norway, Denmark, absorbed Austria and had European allies in Italy (not as weak as it later appeared), Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Vichy France (still with the rump of its empire) and Finland in addition to Japan in Asia. Ironically, Chiang Kai Shek of China was also arguably Fascistic. His son Chiang Wei-Kuo had been an officer in the German army; he followed up this with training in tank warfare for a year at Fort Knox (Taylor 186-187). Salazar of Portugal was Fascistic. So was the Greek government Italy and Germany were in the process of toppling while Urueta was publishing his book. Turkey was the neutral authoritarian state built by Atatürk. Fascism was fashionable. Hitler had yet to finish his blitzkrieg attacks on Britain and for all Chano Urueta might have known could have been ready to invade – Hitler's cancellation of the planned invasion of Britain and desire to strike at the Soviet Union was not common knowledge at the time (even Stalin was fooled by that). The US only came into the war (bringing much of Latin America with it) thanks to Pearl Harbor. Hitler and Mussolini declared war on the US themselves (Britannica)[2].

Mexico was also not immune to the appeal of Fascism and Nazism. It had looked like a way to overcome the worst of the Depression, and (let us again remember the time of publication) everyone loves a winner. Luckily for Mexico this did not apply to its rulers. The Left-wing government of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40) who had supported Republican Spain against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini had given way to the conciliatory centrism of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-46), who was broadly favourable to the United States and its

increasingly bellicose attitude towards the Axis, and the Ávila Camacho government criticised both Nazi and Russian Communist excesses. Both Ávila Camacho and Lázaro Cárdenas, for all the authoritarianism which dogged the presidencies of what became the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) allowed broad free speech (Krauze *Mexico* 438-480, 491-525).

But Mexico certainly had authoritarian tendencies. By now it was, thanks to Cárdenas, the beginning of what Mario Vargas Llosa famously dubbed (in 1990) the "perfect dictatorship" (Krauze "La dictadura perfecta"). Presidential terms were fixed to a "sexenio", six years where the President ruled relatively unquestioned, to be replaced by another candidate from the ruling PRI. Mexico was on its way to becoming a stable, one-party state with a constant change of presidents. Rigged elections and sops thrown to opposition parties lent a veneer of democracy: there were a senate and congress with seats for the opposition, plus the relative freedom of speech.

Yet the system was in its infancy. Lázaro Cárdenas had toppled the very authoritarian Plutarco Elías Calles, who after a four-year presidency 1924-28 had dominated the country as a virtual dictator with puppet presidents until Cárdenas saw him off in 1936. Calles was exiled to the US after Cárdenas had cut off his support bases (Shorris 306). Calles took a copy of *Mein Kampf* with him which he didn't bother hiding from American journalists (Bamford Parkes 410). Lázaro Cárdenas had subsequently had to deal with 1938's rebellion led by Saturnino Cedillo – General Cedillo, ex-Minister of Agriculture, rose up against the Cárdenas government in the name of private property over Cárdenas's collectivisation. Cedillo died under mysterious circumstances in 1939. Cedillo had counted on the support of foreign oil (nationalised by Cárdenas) and the US (Cedillo 103-105).

There were still the diplomats of Nazi Germany, and Mexico's own golden-shirted Unión Nacional Sinarquista Fascist party, whose membership ran into the 10s to the 100s of 1000s during the war (Cedillo 114) – it still exists and was never made illegal. Nazi Germany's encouragement and embassy-based spy network plus Falangist propaganda (and victory) from Spain ensured a sizeable growth in Mexican Fascism (Bamford Parkes 409). Mexico had seen off one dictator, Calles in 1936 and suffered a failed uprising in 1938. There was José Vasconcelos, Mexico's leading public intellectual, who had led the rebuilding and modernization of Mexico's education after its ruinous Revolution, a presidential candidate in 1929 and at the time of Urueta's novel, director of the prestigious Biblioteca National / National Library. Vasconcelos was openly pro-Nazi, praising *Mein Kampf* despite a personal history of anti-racism (or at least pro-racial mixing). In 1940 Vasconcelos had, briefly, published an openly pro-Axis magazine *Timón*, with financing from the German embassy (Shorris 287; Bar Lewaw; Cedillo 115).

We should also consider the major countries of Latin America given that Urueta calls on them to form an alliance against the Axis: Chile and Argentina were pointedly neutral with large German and Italian minorities, maintaining diplomatic relations with the Axis for much of the War – Chile had even seen a failed, local Nazi coup attempt in 1938; Argentina's elections were corrupt; Brazil had been under the Fascistic dictatorship of Getúlio Dornelles Vargas since 1930, which only turned pro-Allied in 1942 out of pragmatism (Williamson 416-420, 463-466, 489-492). Urueta doesn't criticise their regimes either. As we shall see, he rather tries to encourage them to unite against Fascism without attacking their own Fascistic tendencies.

So while Germany was far away and Japan lacked influence in the Eastern Pacific, in April 1941 Urueta was braver than he might have seemed at first in writing this satire. Fascism had its admirers both sides of the Rio Bravo (or Grande) all the way down to Cape Horn, and was an active force in Mexican politics. Indeed, it is one of the oddest absences in the book: Urueta makes no attack on homegrown Mexican Fascism (he does attack Lindbergh's visit in the 1920s, and the by then irrelevant fascistic dictator Calles 140-142). Not the local 1941 vintage Caudillos of the Revolution or homegrown Fascist Goldshirts. Not the notorious assassination of Trotsky in 1937 under orders from Stalin. Not the Cedillista coup nor, however well-intentioned, the blatant rigging of elections in 1940 in favour of the centrist moderate Manuel Ávila Camacho. By Mexican standards Ávila Camacho was conciliatory and he eventually made peace with the various old rival factions which had dominated and destabilized Mexican politics. But in 1940 the loser, ex-minister Juan Andreu Almazán endured laughably rigged ballot results (Krauze *Mexico* 479-80). According to Juan Alberto Cedillo, 150 of Andreu Almazán's potential voters were shot dead with Thompson machine guns (109). Their ballot boxes were looted (Krauze *Mexico* 513-514).

In 1940 the same General Juan Andreu Almazán, who in 1939 had been head of one of the most powerful units of the Mexican army in Nuevo León was still smarting from this defeat and made plans for a coup backed by a US oil consortium (including John Paul Getty) and Nazi agents, but Andreu Almazán lost his nerve in the face of what he saw (correctly) as a natural alliance between Cárdenistas and Roosevelt (Cedillo 111-114).

Urueta is brave within limits: *La "swástica" de Adolfo* is at once a ferocious attack on a world leader who had a very active embassy and conspiratorial secret service in Mexico, yet

one which, however understandably, doesn't dare criticize any politically authoritarian or violent tendencies in Mexico itself. If the reader is generous this could be put down to the nature of the satiric propaganda: he wants Mexico on side. Not criticizing local Fascism and political extremism does expose a flaw which contemporaries such as Bertrand Russell or George Orwell did not suffer from. But those two enjoyed the far greater latitude of British freedom of speech and political stability. Urueta was living under the first President of the century, Ávila Camacho, who did not endure a coup attempt (Andreu Almazán's had died in the planning stages). One year into Ávila Camacho's sexenio term with five to go, Chano Urueta couldn't have known that yet.

Urueta starts off dedicating the book to "the current exanonymous assassin of Europe, Adolfo-the-ignorant, who has come to repeat the cycle of savagery at the height of the science age and to provoke the most inhumane and bitter of quarrels" / "Al exanónimo asesino de actual de Europa, que ha venido a repetir los salvajismos en plena edad de la Ciencia y a provocar la más inhumana y amarga de las querellas"; Mussolini is a "hot-headed amateur actor Benito-la-hembra (old lady) ... who has converted artistic Italy into a camp of idiocy" / "testarudo amateur teatral, Benito-el-hembra … que ha convertido a la Italia del arte en un campo de idiotismo" while Stalin is the "Jesuitical tyrant of Moscow, Don-José-the-Bandit, undoer of a workers' revolution and false apostle of a socialism turned narcotic…" / "jesuítico tirano de Moscú, don-José-el-pillo, detentador de una revolución de trabajadores y falso apostól de un socialism hecho narcótico…"(2). This sets the tone. It is as low as Quevedo could get, and is far removed from the more analytical and economical prose of a journalist such as George Orwell.

As Spain's Miguel de Unamuno had indicated some years before in Spain's *El Sol* in

1932, "la svástica es emblema anticristiano y anticatólico. Y zoológico, no antropológico. Animal y no humano." / "The Swastika is an antiChristian and antiCatholic emblem. And zoological, not anthropological. Animal and not human." As well as racist. In his turn Urueta takes a swipe at the Swastika's (he spells it swástica) decidedly inappropriately non-Aryan origins and etymology. However, unlike the Rector of Salamanca University, Urueta's tone and even font are more playful and extravagant than those of the Spanish philologist, with liberal use of bold, capitals and suspension points. While he has a tendency to ascribe ignorant, cynical or frankly silly actions and thoughts to the Fuhrer, Urueta does lead us through the origins of the symbol, all the way back to Buddha Shakyamuni, and how claiming it as an Aryan symbol is ultimately ridiculous, contrary to the teachings of Buddha, a real Aryan who preached loving your fellow man in contrast to Hitler's false prophethood and deluded German followers (8). Urueta correctly notes that the Swastika is a common sun-worshipping symbol from India and Persia to Europe and even among Native Americans (16), and tries to explain Hitler's apparent love of Asgardian gods by analogy to their Greco-Roman counterparts, with Odin a sort of murderous cross between Mercury, Apollo and Mars. Yet his scatology begins to assert itself:

> Even if a single drop of semen were to spill from the Olympian penis [it is unclear from which god], Adolfo would anxiously want for it to be sculpted into the image and likeness of Odin, knowing it to be the counterpart of the god of battles, son of the god of death and of the dead… [suspension points in original] (19)

> Aunque solo una gota de semen se desprendiera del pene olímpico, Adolfo ansiaba por ella formarse a imagen y semejanza de Odin, saberse congénere del dios de las batallas, hijo del dio de la muerte y de los muertos…

This before Adolfo decides to dump the idea of Odin's aspect as messenger for being effectively a go-between or pimp (alcahuete – 21-23). Urueta has a disconcerting slide back and forth between the erudite and the crude throughout.

The implications get worse: Adolfo dreams he is a flower, like the Greek hero Hyacinth or Jacinto, Apollo's gay lover, with poetic, (and at this point) subtle erotic bodily imagery after Hitler has dreamt of being presented to the Pythoness, the Delphic oracle… just after noting that the town of Pytho or Pito is nothing to do with the recent Mexican Picaresque novel *La vida inútil de Pito Pérez* of 1938. Urueta has great fun with Freudian meditations on Hitler's sexuality as the book progresses. It truly gets bizarre when Hitler goes on pilgrimage to Rome and hooks up with Mussolini – literally. After both prostrating themselves before a statue of Mars they hear a lucky, seemingly prophetic Florentine song. So they get drunk and sleep together:

> And they say that that very night Benito –overcome by beer– compensated the former unknown with the favours that Apollo denied him and Adolfo awoke with the new day, satisfied, his perverted vile frustrations soothed…
>
> The two friends stretched out their hands. Adolfo did it with the air of a protective stud lover (macho); Benito, lowering his eyes like a deflowered maiden. And they said goodbye…
>
> In the bowels of Benito the embryo of vigor was gestating…

In the eyes of Hitler, the light of Mars was guiding him… (37)

Y cuentan que esa misma noche Benito —vencido por la cerveza—compensó al ex-anónimo de los favores de Apolo le negara y que Adolfo despertó al nuevo día, satisfecho, calmadas sus viles ansias de invertido…

Los dos amigos estrecharon sus manos. Adolfo lo hizo con una actitud de macho protector; Benito, bajando los ojos como una doncella desvirgada. Y se dijeron adiós…

En las entrañas de Benito nacía el embrión de la energía…

En los ojos de Adolfo, la luz de Marte lo guiaba…

Perhaps realizing that he couldn't top this scene, Urueta reverts to erudition, and the influence of the Zodiac and the lucky number 7, whose occult significance is revealed to Hitler by the astrologer Otto Milz, or rather, Rudolph [sic] Hess (47 – in real life Rudolf Hess had less than a month to go before his Quixotic peace flight to Scotland). The Italian night of dictatorial gay lust is probably the humorous highlight of the book: Urueta never quite manages to marry the lightness of touch with eye-popping transgression as he does here, suggesting and mocking the language of romantic love while implying a sick, even procreative act. Instead of a baby, these two foulest of homosexual lovers are now gestating cruel ambition.

Bakhtin wrote on Rabelais:

Grotesque debasement always had in mind the material bodily lower stratum, the zone of the genital organs. Therefore debasement did not besmirch with mud but

> with excrement and urine. This is a very ancient gesture. The modern euphemism "mudslinging" is derived from it. (Bakhtin 147)

To which Urueta daringly adds the perversely creative power of semen to endow them with their martial ambitions, the act of gay sex working not as cheaply as Urueta employs it later – the real Hitler and Mussolini were such ridiculously hyper-masculine posturers (as well as noted persecutors of gays) that it reads as a truly wounding caricature of their alliance by turning their own weapons against them. Or at least having the Führer sheath his weapon inside Il Duce.

There is this constant mixing of legendary metaphor or history and the misdeeds of Hitler, as well as the dragging in of Einstein, the periodic table and Seneca alongside Greek gods (49-62). In addition to the French philosopher priest Malebranche (63), the fable-writer Lafontaine (66), and perhaps more directly applicable to Adolf, Machiavelli in a chapter on the Fifth Column ALWAYS WRITTEN IN CAPITALS, a propaganda phrase originating in the Spanish Civil War concerning and imagined threat from behind the lines, all the while putting words in the mouth of an increasingly ecstatic Hitler and Hitler and Otto Milz (Hess), though Urueta's prose really goes to the extreme in describing Spain, home of "the immortal Cervantes" (73), "the genius of Quevedo" (74) – who in reality was such a Jew-hating, ultramontaine bigot he would probably would have made Generalísimo Franco and Hitler good company (Stuczynski).

After a few more lines extolling "the magic of an [El] Greco, the spirituality of a Murillo, the force of a Goya and the life incarnated on golden canvases of a Velázquez…" complete with suspension points and at times Urueta's own writing in service of:

Noble Spain and gallant Spain…

Self-sacrificing Spain and virtuous Spain…

Worthy Spain and saintly Spain…

Tired of giving so much good to the world… (75)

España noble y España gallarda…

España esforzada y España virtuosa…

España Digna y España santa…

Cansada de dar tanto bien al mundo…

he veers into parodying himself more than his Teutonic target. Freed from the constraints of having to write film scripts for the like of Jorge Negrete, Chano Urueta really lets his purple prose off the leash in an erudite stream of mysticism, history and syntactic fireworks that would make his father's political oratory look pedestrian. This is not always a good thing, though it still exerts a fascination on the reader.

Stalin also gets a righteous kicking from Urueta as "don José", something the pseudo-proletarian dictator would hardly have enjoyed. Chano Urueta might not go into Stalin's embarrassing Pyrrhic victory, that is, a near defeat at the hands of tiny Finland, but his assessment of him as a "hypocritical Georgian [priest school] seminarian from the time of [Tsar] Alexander III" (79) who is in it for ego, greed and power shaped by his priestly training is a welcome relief from the bombast worthy of an HP Lovecraft. If Lovecraft were an anti-Nazi writing in Spanish and had an education in the greats of Spanish, Classical and universal Western literature. Urueta's take on Marxism, Kaiser Wilhelm, the German

defeat in World War I and how Hitler wrote it up in *Mein Kampf* is an insightful lead in to the alliance with Stalin (81-83), though it is no exaggeration to say that Urueta then destroys this impression with the return of his suspension points and all caps FIFTH COLUMN / QUINTA COLUMNA and FIFTHCOLUMNISM / QUINTACOLUMNISMO, which Adolf deploys to undermine his enemies with tons [sic] of alcohol, drugs and prostitution because he preferred to fight against "armies of idiots, the disaffected and syphilitic" / "ejércitos de idiotas, alienados y sifilíticos…" (90).

The use of the phrase "fifth column" is quite contemporary: the Spanish Fascist and rebel General Mola had used it in one of his speeches in a war where Mexico was allied with the governing leftist Republic, as a propaganda threat of spies and saboteurs which would rise from behind the lines to defeat the Republicans while four other columns were approaching from the cardinal points of the compass (Laguna Reyes, Vargas Márquez; Beevor Ch. 7). It subsequently became a staple of Allied vocabulary for organised groups of behind-the-lines traitors as opposed to e.g. Quisling for individuals. The radio speeches of Mola and fellow-rebel General Queipo de Llano in the Spanish Civil War of the late 1930s are an interesting example of Fascist propaganda rhetoric which at times could surpass Urueta in their ferocity and use of rape imagery. Unlike Chano Urueta, these were straight threats (Thomas 271-2; Beevor Ch. 6). Urueta was dealing back to the Axis in the language of the gutter it was already occupying.

At the time Mexico was also awash with Spanish Republican refugees – it seems surprising that he does not explore more attacks on Spanish dictator Francisco Franco whom he does not even dignify with a surname, although: "[Spain] Aborted a pitiful foetus and treacherous murderer, who came to continue in the land of goodness and art the

abominable tradition of Cain!..." "Abortó un engendro abyecto y un asesino traidor, que vino a perpetuar en la tierra del bien y del arte la abominable tradición de Caín!..." (75) doesn't let Franco off the hook either. Mexico got lucky with the Spanish refugees from its fallen ally: they revitalised the nation's intellectual class and they were joined by many returning Mexican anti-Fascists who had gone to Europe to forge their ideals in the fight and brought them back renewed (Krauze *Mexico* 476, 520; Shorris 417-418). Urueta, a friend of the great Spanish surrealist director Luis Buñuel (Riano 5) could hardly have failed to notice their presence or be left unmoved by them.

In real life Hitler was quite skilled at dividing and fooling his enemies in the form of British and French appeasers or even a Stalin who didn't see his own Nazi invasion coming till it was upon him. But this clownish syntax often undermines parts of Urueta's works. Good, brutal, political satire of the low sort is like an inversion of classical art: a sculptor would flatter his subjects with a head and physique between what was recognizably the person and the ideal as represented by Apollo or Aphrodite; a good, cruel satirist doesn't merely insult, but leaves enough recognizable to sting and wound. The scatology of Hitler's tryst with an effeminate Mussolini was certainly a striking image. Nevertheless, occasionally Urueta's own prose gets in the way of his gleefully poisonous image-making as he stretches symbols and language to past their breaking point.

Chano Urueta's portrayal of France is almost as baroque in its cultural name-dropping as it was for Spain, although at least Urueta has been reading the papers enough to anoint the gallant / gallardo de Gaulle as the future saviour of France, something which wasn't certain at the time – de Gaulle was a junior General, albeit a driven one, and he had yet to fully outmanoeuvre his rivals as leader of France. Still, only Urueta could marry the

image of a Wagnerian Odin Hitler to the Greek three Fates (Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos) *and* throw in what would otherwise have been an old joke even then of Hitler's resemblance to a moustachioed Charlie Chaplin, something Urueta's old acquaintance Chaplin himself had played up in his own anti-Nazi satire movie, *The Great Dictator* of just a year before (1940).

Things get head to the opposite, and utterly scabrous extreme, when after a Nietzschean diversion, to which Hitler has applied the ravings of a "Hellish marijuana trip" (112) Urueta goes for scatology once more, explicitly heading his chapter "los jotos" or the faggots, the puftas, and launches into the extremes of vulgar Freudianism. Adolf is a sadist, his fanatical partisans passive masochists:

> All the darling faggot poets of the world spend hours composing loving and begging little verses to the cacophonous bombardier of Europe (120).
>
> No es por otra cosa que los poetitos jotos de todo el mundo se pasan las horas componiendo amorosos y suplicantes versitos al estruendoso bombardeador de Europa.

And

> The Adolfism of Adolf is an escape valve for his faggotry. The Adolfismo of his followers is a manifestation of love for the Great Faggot… (121).
>
> El adolfismo de Adolfo es una válvula a su jotería. El adolfismo de sus partidarios es una manifestación de amor hacia el Gran Joto…

It is truly odd reading this in Spanish. English has a capacity for low vocabulary leaning heavily on the Anglo-Saxon words, but "joto" itself aside, Urueta is able to maintain the odd balance of mostly high vocabulary with the implications of low invective. But it is low indeed, and dubbing the German Jewish Socialist Kurt Eisner, assassinated by a nationalist in 1919 as a masochist alongside this anti-Hitlerian screed is unworthy (Editors). Adolf is a perverse masturbator who inspires his masturbating followers, though labelling Adolf as having "IT" i.e. being the "it" boy is an interesting example of an English loan word (124), and a long way from someone like silent actress Clara Bow (Barber) to whom it was first applied:

> the masochistic and degenerate homosexuals of the whole world vibrate with emotion faced with the pleasure that such punishment (124 – the bombing and destruction of England).
> los homosexuales masoquistas degenerados de todo el mundo vibran de emoción ante el placer que les permite imaginar tanto castigo.

This seems particularly unfair given how, just two years earlier, Urueta had directed *El Signo de la Muerte*, the starring début of the great comedian Cantinflas. The production and script were by Salvador Novo, the most famous homosexual man of letters of his generation (Pilcher 58-63). Cantinflas even dragged up on-screen as the Empress. It would seem impossible that Urueta could have ignored the homosexuality of his collaborator. And while scatology is a valid artistic choice –particularly given the target– here it seems done with ill grace when the earlier encounter with Mussolini actually had traces of wit thanks to the

high-flown language, relative restraint, and the surreal incongruity of gay sex between the two most publicly masculine politicians of their generation. In this section it is all tied in the nature of the blitzkrieg, Spengler, Nietzsche and (with all caps again) Hitler being a THEOMEGALOMANIAC / TEOMEGALOMANO, a blonde beast (125) suffering from a god complex. But here the brutality and excessive language veers into self-parody rather than effective satire.

Fortunately Urueta moves on to Churchill, contrasted as a better man, wordsmith and painter than Adolf, while England surviving the Blitz receives (in English) a "Thumbs up!" Apparently all the thumbs of the Empire lifted up, "the millions of thumbs of that race of "happy men"" / "los millones de pulgares de esa raza "de hombres felices"" (132), a rather odd metaphor mixed in with what seems to be a reference to the Saint Crispin's day speech from Henry V – Shakespeare was mentioned on the previous page, but at least we do not get a run-down of the Great Men of the Empire complete with Romantic, boiler plate epithets. There is also no mention of the unhappy men or women who differed from the Empire, most prominently the Indian nationalists. That last point is a bit more understandable given Urueta's propaganda posture, but it paints particularly the darker-skinned imperial subjects with a very broad brush.

Urueta's longest chapter (133-155) is "La palabra de América / The Word of America", a length justified by a very Latino definition of the word: the Americas as a whole, not merely the USA. The same year of publication, in September (*IMDb*), Urueta was to direct and co-write the slight but successful musical *La Liga de las Canciones*, a lighthearted anti-Axis propaganda musical for serious times and an obvious pun on the League of Nations, where the Mexican, Cuban and Argentine artistes symbolically unite

against some grotesque 5th columnists with a minor romantic subplot thrown in. It was clearly something on his mind that year (García Riera 205-207)

And Urueta had reason to worry. Imitating the models of the seemingly successful, especially when it flatters the egos and interests of the powerful can be a strong motivator, and then as for many decades to come Latin America was cursed with authoritarian and outright dictatorial parties and governments. Mexico was no exception. Chano Urueta pulls out all the stops in response.

While this penultimate chapter is blighted with some of Urueta's worst sins FITHCOLUMNISM and calling France the people of "Hugo and Verlaine" (135), as well as listing names with shiny epithets, speaking of the "cries of the far-sighted hidalgo, of the serene Washington, great-hearted Morelos, brilliant Bolivar etc." he does make an impassioned appeal to unity and with a warning of how Adolfo is planning his conquest of America North and South. At least the generals of the wars of independence against the British and Spanish are appropriate. Verlaine was a brilliant but decadent bisexual poet who for a while abandoned his wife and family for the love and tempestuous intellectual intimacy of Arthur Rimbaud. Still, the Allies were famously to use Verlaine´s ambiguous poetry as codewords for the 1944 Normandy invasion (*The Longest Day*), so Urueta was in good company despite his homophobic hypocrisy.

This chapter is a call to arms, and a warning that the Americas are not so far away they can ignore the ambitions of Adolf. The continent "has the unavoidable duty to attack" (139). He indicates world-famous aviator Charles Lindbergh as a potential danger, and frankly goes conspiratorial. Urueta harks back to Dwight Morrow, US Ambassador to Mexico 1927-30, and future father-in-law to Lindbergh, who brought the celebrity American

aviator to Mexico on a spectacular and well-attended goodwill tour during the highly authoritarian Calles administration (see also Krauze *Mexico* 419; Berg 172-174). Lindbergh thus (according to Urueta) became one of the richest landowners in Morelos and started up his career in international espionage – again, however deserving Lindbergh was of criticism, this is almost certainly an exaggeration (I will admit to not having been able to independently verify the last two accusations, though Lindbergh was notoriously one of the strongest appeasers prior to US entry into World War II. He did stay a while in Mexico while courting Anne Morrow, his future wife).

However, Urueta finally calls on all to rally against the superiority complex and racism of the Axis, an admirable sentiment in a still-imperial world where racism was often a commonplace. A noble stand after Urueta's unfortunate gay-bashing.

Urueta finishes by returning to the Swastika and its Indo-European origins. Indicating, after much etymology that Hitler got his Swastika the wrong way around, an observation both right and wrong: the Swastika of Nazis is the mirror image to the religious Swastika of Hindus and Buddhists, thus in Hitler's ignorant hands becoming a symbol of destruction. In reality it sometimes does appear the "wrong" way around in Europe, notably in the Basque country and Brittany, as Unamuno noted in the title of his essay on the subject, using no words, just a Swastika symbol.

Still Urueta deserves praise for this intermittently entertaining oddity. And what an oddity. The neighbouring US of the time had the Hayes code in the cinemas and intellectual authors censored while pornography was driven underground. Yet here we have Chano Urueta veering from the gods of Olympus and Asgard to Adolf the sadistic, dominant homosexual and his passive, masochistic dupes. In a few months' time the moment of this

book would be gone. The Soviet Union would be invaded. By the year's end the US would be fully mobilised for war against the Axis in Europe and Asia.

Eventually Mexico only sent a token fighter squadron with American planes, but had the luck to gain economically from selling America food, manufactured goods and labour while barely participating aside from the aviators (Williamson 400). But before then Chano Urueta, the slight playboy tinkerer did at least lend his pen to the service of the Allied cause. And for all his bombast and prejudices, Mexico was not as safe or certain as it might seem from a contemporary distance. Urueta deserves credit for unleashing his lurid imagery and bombastic, ill-disciplined and by turns crude and educated prose on a Hitler who seemed at the height of his powers.

The French philosopher Henri Bergson (Ch. II) wrote that laughter at a fellow human derives from *mechanical inelasticity*: the human being becomes a figure of fun whether by design or accident by being reduced to the level of puppetry, by having the mechanics of their behaviour laid bare to the point of ridiculousness. And in satire this is allied to the moral imperative. Some of the best examples about Hitler are to be found in the cinema, a good generic comparison and contrast given Urueta's career as a director and scriptwriter: Mel Brooks in *The Producers* (1967) or more contemporarily to Chano Urueta by his acquaintance Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* (1940) and *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) by the Berliner Ernst Lubitsch, itself remade by Brooks in 1983. More recently we have Taika Waititi's *Jojo Rabbit* (2019. But even while allowing that a book length satire and a movie are very different media, the above-mentioned films have strong narratives, coherence and, however unlikely the vision of bumbling idiots was or is compared to the horrific efficiency of the real thing, it is hard to take goose-stepping Nazis seriously after watching them. As

Orwell observed in 1941 just months before Urueta published his own book, the goose step march of the Nazis says "Yes I am ugly, and you daren't laugh at me" (62). The filmmakers listed above turn Hitler into a clown so that you do dare laugh at him. Urueta's success was more mixed.

> Imposture is the ethical key to Nazi-mocking, a way of revealing the vanity and stupidity of people who insist above all on their own deadly seriousness. Bullies beg to be humiliated, and comedians are uniquely equipped for the task. In "To Be or Not to Be," members of a Warsaw theater troupe pretend to be high-ranking Gestapo officers and Nazi operatives, and even Hitler himself. This ability to play, to pretend, to parody isn't just a matter of professional training. The artistry of the actors — their ability to improvise and crack wise in potentially lethal circumstances — is what separates them from their foes. If the Germans were to win, all the fun would go out of the world (Scott).

It is this skill as artists which lets them treat the Nazis with a light hand. They knew the reality was deadly serious. Chaplin's homeland was already at war with Nazi Germany and he had many Jewish friends. Lubitsch was a Jew from Berlin; Mel Brooks is an American Jew who fought in World War II. Taika Waititi is also Jewish. All had or have good reason to take Hitler seriously, yet in their art they don't. He is a slapstick clown whose hate speech is turned into comic monologues. But their works all enjoy narrative consistency, for all that Chaplin regretted having made *The Great Dictator* when he found out the true horrors of Nazism (Chaplin 392). And *a degree* of seriousness and underlying threat is there: the beating

of civilians, the prospect of death for Jews in disguise or hiding. Hardly *Schindler's List* (1993), but at least a touch of menace is left in.

Urueta the writer has the luxury of more space than in his regular job as a film director and special effects which need no budget. He employs them to the full, veering from putting words and actions into Hitler's mouth without any actor as intermediary and making him a sadistic gay masturbator, to panegyrics for Hitler's brave and cultured enemies. But lacking the focus of a strong narrative or even consistent current of invective, and with no brakes to his odd mix of profanity or purple prose, Urueta switches from mocking Hitler's life to vulgar Freudianism, anthropological musings on the nature of the Swastika, overstretched metaphors on the Asgardian and Olympian gods and flat out insults whose homophobia has dated very badly. Hitler is a Teutonic god one moment, a dominant gay lover "on top", Onanist or flat out Philistine and murderer the next. You are never sure whether you are supposed to laugh at this Hitler, psychoanalyse him or just let him horrify you.

For examples from the new millennium, it compares poorly to e.g. Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* (2001) or *Dude, Where's My Country* (2003) or the printed word of the *Daily Show*'s Jon Stewart, Steven Colbert and Trevor Noah et al., who are able to combine the funny popular satire of their relatively ephemeral books with the funny popular and equally of the moment satire of their television or (in Moore's case) film with a similarity in tone. If you like their TV shows or movies, you are already primed to find their books funny as the humour in both is similar. An advantage Urueta the filmmaker never had, unless you count the lightweight *La Liga de las Canciones* (1941), a propaganda musical which is just plain silly.

There is nothing wrong with writing political satire on current events as opposed to for the ages. Urueta gives us this uneven, fascinating mess of a novel-length satire which is never quite a novel, work of history, anthropology, parody of events, call to arms or character assassination, but an odd mix of all of them which doesn't quite gel. It does not appear to be an accident that no editor is mentioned. Urueta could seriously have used a collaborator who knew how to wield the scissors. It is even more scattershot than the bestselling, nostalgic Fascist satirist Fernando Vizcaíno Casas – Spain's apologist for Urueta's contemporary Francisco Franco in the 70s and 80s. Vizcaíno Casas had his own of-the-moment satires of Spain's Transition to democracy such as *…Y al tercer año, resucitó* / … *And in the Third Year, He Was Resurrected* of 1978 (which also saw a film adaptation in 1980 – *IMDb*). When a Fascist's jokes about democrats are more consistent, you have a problem. However much fun it can be or however deserving its targets, Urueta's *La "swástica" de Adolfo* was not destined to be a bestseller and it is not hard to see why.

Nevertheless, for all the metaphoric overuse of pagan gods, homophobia, the frequently pretentious prose, Urueta can raise a smile or an eyebrow for the reader with his intermittently funny screed against one of the worst men on earth, whose words compel you to read on even when they are terrible. In many ways it is like his films: whether good or bad, you stick with them because they are fun. As with his grotesque science fiction monsters, you cannot believe the extremes of what you are seeing, and so you turn the page.

Notes

[1] Details of his cast lists are obtainable from the *Internet Movie Database / IMDb.*

[2] These details are readily identifiable in a work of world history, general history of World War II or encyclopaedia, the Second World War being the most written-about conflict of all time. The online, alphabetical *Encyclopaedia Britannica* will corroborate almost all of those facts. Where not, I have added other references.

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“Out of Tune and Harsh”: Domestic Violence in Modern Performances of *Hamlet*

By Nancy Kerns

In 2017, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention published a survey which had asked respondents whether or not they had been victims of domestic violence, defined as "sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner." The results: one in four women said yes. (*National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* 2). While the number is smaller in the land of Shakespeare, it is still significant: 8% of women in England and Wales as of 2020 (*Domestic Abuse in England and Wales*). Of course, domestic violence is not a new problem. What has been changing, though, are popular attitudes towards it. By and large, in both of these countries, domestic violence is no longer considered socially acceptable, and stricter laws have been put into place to punish offenders. Thus, it might at first seem surprising that in modern performances of *Hamlet*, depictions of the protagonist lashing out violently against his former beloved Ophelia in the famous "nunnery scene" (Act 3 Scene 1) have not lessened. If anything, Hamlet's violence is often now being taken further than it has been in the past.

The violence is certainly not explicit in the text. There is no stage direction like "He stifles her" in *Othello.* Whether or not Hamlet touches Ophelia and how he touches her are entirely creative choices individual to each production. The dialogue also offers no indication that violence occurs. Hamlet's words are emotional and angry, but Ophelia's

reactions are simply pitying. As he rants and raves at her, her response is to pray for him: "O, help him, you sweet heavens!" (III.i.134) and then "O heavenly powers, restore him!" (III.i.141). After he leaves, she grieves about how his "noble mind" has been "o'erthrown" and how painful it is to have once heard the "honey of his music vows" (III.i.156) only now to be subjected to ramblings that are "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh" (III.i.158). While she mentions that his "form and feature" are "blasted with ecstasy" (III.i.159-160), that is a commentary on his facial expression and physical demeanor rather than his actions. She makes no note of any violent manifestation of that loss of "sovereign reason" (III.i.157), nor does she express any fear that he would harm her.

Additionally, nowhere in the text is there an explicit impetus for him to lash out at her violently. We, the audience, know that Ophelia's father Polonius and Claudius are hiding and eavesdropping on the conversation. We know it is a set-up, and that the entire meeting has been orchestrated by Polonius to see if Hamlet's madness is caused by the fact that Ophelia rejected him. We know Ophelia is lying when she tells Hamlet that her father is at home. However, it is not certain that *Hamlet* actually knows this. He does not indicate that he does, and he does not enter until after Polonius and Claudius are safety hidden away. Many productions "solve" this problem by simply changing the staging so that he does see them or hear them at some point during the scene. If Hamlet is aware that Ophelia is lying to him, it certainly would be one explanation as to why he would become terribly enraged.

The theory that his words to Ophelia are driven by rage at his discovery of her betrayal certainly is not the only explanation for them, though. He may simply be using her to spread the word about his madness; it would not be the first time that he has approached

Ophelia in his efforts to fake his madness as he tries to look for an opportunity to kill Claudius. The sexually-charged moment Ophelia describes to her father in Act 2 Scene 1 does just that. Hamlet comes to Ophelia with "doublet all unbrac'd" (II.i.1035) and otherwise inappropriately mussed in what essentially amounts to a state of partial undress. It is disturbing, yet intimate, just as the rest of his actions: the grabbing her wrist, the way he holds her tight even though he keeps her apart from him, the way he stares at her intensely. All of these behaviors are the irrational actions of someone who is quite literally "mad for [her] love" (II.i.1043). One can debate how much of this is genuine passion and how much of this is calculated, but Hamlet's express intent has been to "put on an antic disposition" (I.v.925) and it is reasonable to take him at his word. Roy Walker's assessment that Hamlet's "distress is wholly genuine and his behaviour unpremeditated" (43) is hard to justify when we do not see Hamlet behave in such a way at any other point in the play, despite the fact that he feels quite a bit of distress throughout. It is far more likely that he was simply doing exactly what he said he would do… acting visibly unbalanced. Thus, if his invective at Ophelia in the nunnery scene is designed to reinforce his antic act, it would certainly fit his established trend of mimicking the irrational behavior of a man literally maddened by frustrated love.

Additionally, Hamlet also needed to put a decisive end to any hopes Ophelia may have for a reconciliation with him if he were going to go through with regicide. The most effective way to achieve his goals would be to drive Ophelia away with a heated frenzy of harsh words: hence the disappearance of the gentler version of the mad lover seen earlier who shows a vulnerability that might seem attractive to her, the one yearning for her whom everyone believes will be restored by her reciprocation of his feelings; he has been replaced

by the mad misogynist designed to repel her. These alternate explanations for Hamlet's dialogue show that even though the vast majority of productions show that Hamlet discovers Ophelia's betrayal early in the scene before he delivers his lines, the lack of its actual presentation in the text means that it cannot be assumed that he knows, despite Dover Wilson being so sure of Shakespeare's intent that he presumed to insert a stage direction in the edition he published in 1930. It is still a subjective choice.

Some might argue Hamlet committing domestic violence is perfectly in character. It is true that Hamlet has always been a complicated anti-hero, capable of darkness. After all, he spends most of the play contemplating murder in order to take revenge against his stepfather / uncle Claudius for the murder of his father, and by the end he has not only achieved that, but also knowingly arranged for the executions of his false friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. One might see violence against Ophelia as a perfectly natural inclusion alongside such acts. However, the timeline of these scenes is important to keep in mind when assessing Hamlet's behavior. The nunnery scene is before the accidental killing of Polonius where he finally unleashes the beast that he had kept reigned for so long, before the validation of the king's guilty reaction to the play-within-a-play frees him from all restraint, before his soliloquies start featuring lines like "now could I drink hot blood" (III.ii.382). Plus, when laying hands on people, Hamlet does not target people who are simply traitors. He targets traitors who are also killers or would-be killers: Claudius who killed his father, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who were taking Hamlet to his death, Laertes only after his lethal treachery was revealed. Polonius was a tragic mistake; Hamlet believed him to be Claudius, telling the corpse of the "intruding fool" (III.ii.2421) in an

apology that tastes a bit like an accusation, "I took thee for thy better" (III.ii.2422). Ophelia, a mere pawn, could hardly receive the same degree of outrage.

As a result of Ophelia's distinction from the type of people Hamlet has struck out against violently, we must look beyond the explanation that a physically abusive Hamlet would be "natural" to his character; rather, abuse is unnatural. Likewise, the more brutal the abuse is, the more unnatural it is. As such, its escalation demonstrates a trend: the escalation of Hamlet's brutality is aligned with modern production's emphasis on a more unnatural Hamlet. Early productions show Hamlet losing control, but later productions show him losing his mind. However, this is not a linear trend. There are exceptions, especially when modern productions seek to render their Hamlets as more sympathetic; in such cases, where Hamlet is more controlled, we see the level of domestic violence towards Ophelia lessened. It is now used as a barometer of Hamlet's mental state. Domestic violence has become the modern way to illustrate the degree to which Hamlet has lost control.

I have picked several representative productions to use in this analysis; while some are movies, some are television, and some are filmed stage productions, they have all been produced by well-known directors, actors, or production companies such as the BBC or Royal Shakespeare Company.

The earliest production analyzed is Laurence Olivier's 1948 film of *Hamlet*. It represents the first reason many of the productions incorporate domestic violence: they are using it to indicate that Hamlet's actions are no longer as calculated as they have been; the genuine emotions he has revealed only to the audience and Horatio are now finding bursts of release amongst the play-acting. As Jameson puts it, "In his distraction he overacts the painful part to which he had tasked himself" (141-142). Olivier chooses to stage the nunnery

scene so that Hamlet overhears Polonius and Claudius laying out their plot to place Ophelia in Hamlet's path, then eavesdrop on her conversation with him. He knows from the outset that she is lying when she denies knowledge of her father's whereabouts, but he remains relatively calm. He only puts his hands on her when she tries to touch him. At that point, he shoves her away. In an interesting dialogue change, Ophelia (Jean Simmons) cries, "Oh, help ME, sweet heavens" rather than "Oh, help him" (III.i.1826). A second time, she tries to touch him; a second time, he shoves her way. These are the only times he is violent with her. It is almost portrayed as self-defense - not in the sense that he is protecting himself from physical harm, but from emotional connection. This violence will be mild compared to some of our later entries. Yet, it shows the trend mentioned earlier about the acceleration of depictions of violence because at the time, it received criticism; one commentator writing for *The Hudson Review* in 1949 used that scene as an example that the camera was "amplifying" Hamlet's violence in a way that did a disservice to the play (Barbarow 101). However, immediately after shoving her down, Hamlet says breathlessly, "It hath made me mad," his head moving from side to side, in a way that indicates a real loss of control.

Sir John Gielgud's 1964 production starring Richard Burton, a filmed Broadway play, is quite similar in many ways. Like Olivier, Burton's Hamlet knows from the outset that they are being watched, and his violence towards Ophelia (Linda Marsh) is also minimal and a kind of defense. He grabs her wrist when she tries to touch him and then he shoves her away as he cries "It hath made me mad!" Interestingly, Burton and director John Gielgud have said that while Hamlet was upset about Ophelia's deception, the speech was still intended to ensure that Ophelia realized their relationship was truly over. In their production, Hamlet sought Ophelia out to break with her definitively before he knew of her

betrayal (qtd. in Sterne 290-291, 296). However, Gielgud adds that the nunnery scene is one of the moments where Hamlet goes "a bit over the edge" (qtd. in Sterne 296). While Gielgud and Burton do not believe Hamlet ever becomes truly mad, they did believe that moment represents a significant loss of control.

In 1980, the BBC released its version of *Hamlet* as part of its lauded Shakespeare series, a project designed to produce a relatively faithful version of every play in Shakespeare's canon. Directed by Rodney Bennett and starring Derek Jacobi dressed in period-appropriate attire, this production took pains to present a traditional Hamlet that used a "theatrical reality" (Bennett qtd. in Willis 100). However, in the portrayal of Hamlet's aggression towards Ophelia (Lalla Ward), the BBC decided to go further than any televised production had before with its level of violence and sexualization. As with the Olivier and Burton Hamlets, Jacobi's Hamlet knows Ophelia is tricking him very early; while he at first greets her with a kiss, he then realizes the meeting is a set-up and turns on her. Unlike the first two portrayals, he is aggressive with her physically, often tying his violence to sexual intimidation. He takes a scarf and looks like he might choke her, then instead pulls her close enough to kiss. He grabs her and throws her down when she is standing there inoffensively as he screams about women making monsters of men; his anger starts to accelerate with "you jig, you amble, and you lisp" (III.i.1835); he starts striking her, shaking her, thrusting his pelvis at her, as he continues his frantic recitation of the sins of women. Finally, after he cries "I'll no more on it!"(III.i.1837), he stops and hugs her as she sobs against him. He pauses, then says "It *hath* made me mad" (III.i.1838) as if it is a revelation, as if he has had an epiphany; he realizes that he truly has gone insane. Taking him further in terms of his violent offenses allows the BBC to show that their Hamlet has broken down mentally in a

way that the Olivier and Burton Hamlets had not; the unnatural Hamlet is not just losing control. He has lost his mind.

Kirk Browning and Kevin Kline's 1990 production takes a route not unlike that of the BBC: more violent, more sexualized. Kline's Hamlet approaches Ophelia (Diane Venora) for a kiss, and is unhappy when he is rebuffed. A key difference, though, occurs in the staging of the betrayal and violence. Unlike the previous productions, the Kline version has the discovery that the meeting with Ophelia is a set-up occur about halfway through, right before he asks here "Where is your father?" (III.i.1821) As a result of the discovery happening mid-scene, there are several minutes in the beginning of the scene where Hamlet talks to Ophelia honestly, simply as a scorned lover. During this part, he is violent with her once: when he is condemning himself and all mankind as "errant knaves" (III.i.1820) - she responds by kissing him passionately. It is after that moment that he discern she has betrayed him. She tries to hug him, and he becomes increasingly abusive: he first shakes her, then throws objects at her, then smacks her face, and finally straddles her. Similar to Jacobi's Hamlet, after he cries "I'll no more on it!", he softens to a self-revelatory "It hath made me mad" and hugs her. Again, the worse the treatment of Ophelia, the worse the unnatural mental state of Hamlet; the more uncontrolled the physical desire, the more severe the physical abuse. Modern productions are using the victimization of Ophelia to illustrate the degree of Hamlet's loss of control, although they often add in a hug and a somewhat abashed moment of self-awareness at the end of the scene so he can remain the sympathetic hero and so Ophelia's ready forgiveness of his behavior is rendered more understandable.

In 2016, the Royal Shakespeare Company's adaptation of *Hamlet* starring Paapa Essiedu and directed by Simon Godwin decided to remove the hug and make their Hamlet more violent, without any semblance of softness towards Ophelia (Natalie Simpson) in the nunnery scene. Like Kline's Hamlet, he does not guess that anyone is listening until the midway point; unlike Kline, he is never loving towards her. He is mocking throughout, his anger evident. The discovery that she is lying to him simply makes that anger explode physically. He picks her up, throws her down, smears paint on her face, puts his hand on her neck, and even gets on top of her and simulates sex for several seconds. His vicious parody of intimacy, accompanied by Ophelia's screams, goes further than the straddling of Kline's Hamlet and the quick thrusting of Jacobi's Hamlet. When Essiedu's Hamlet finally gets off of her and yells "It has made me mad!" Ophelia is off to the side, shaken; he is still in his rage. Simpson's Ophelia tries to shove him away when he comes near her again. Such a choice is unusual in productions of *Hamlet*; Ophelia typically reaches for Hamlet in a conciliatory fashion at this point. His grossly unnatural behavior has caused her to cast him off completely.

Many of the productions from 1990 onwards follow the pattern which establishes Hamlet's discovery of Ophelia's betrayal halfway through the nunnery scene, then escalate his behavior into domestic violence as a direct result of that discovery. Branagh's 1996 production is a typical illustration of this. Hamlet at first welcomes Ophelia (Kate Winslet) with a kiss and only becomes upset when she gives back his gifts. At first, he appears to be emotionally honest with her. "I did love you once" (III.i.1808) is delivered emotionally, almost tearfully. The following recantation "I loved you not!" (III.i.1811), delivered hastily and angrily after Ophelia replies, is an obviously insincere salvo of spite. Despite the

heightened emotions, it is not until he hears a noise about halfway through, leading to the "Where is your father" segment, where he becomes physical. Branagh stages the scene in a grand hall whose walls are lined with two-way mirrors, many of which lead to hidden rooms and passageways. After Ophelia lies to Hamlet and tells him that Polonius is at home, Hamlet drags her roughly through the hall to search the hidden rooms behind the two-way mirrors, finally smashing her face up against one of them. Like some of his predecessors, Branagh's Hamlet mixes in what appears to be a moment of introspection with his "It hath made me mad"; he releases Ophelia and turns her around, giving her few kisses. However, his tone is ominous, and when he remembers his murderous intent, he turns her around and smashes her face against the mirror again: "All but one shall live" (III.i.1839). It is not really Ophelia he is thinking of punishing now, but his mother and Claudius. Still, he is doing violence to her body as he fantasizes about killing, all while Claudius stands on the other side of the mirror and watches. Hamlet perhaps is not so much losing control here as he is focusing on hate instead of love, which is its own kind of madness; critic Patrick Cook calls it the moment when he "reach[es] a murderous point of no return" (130). The domestic violence here illustrates his shift.

Lyndsey Turner and Robin Lough make some similar choices in their 2015 production of *Hamlet* for the National Theatre starring Benedict Cumberbatch. Cumberbatch's Hamlet also discerns the betrayal of Ophelia (Kamilla Baar) midway through the nunnery scene. The first part of the scene is played as an attempt to have an honest talk with her. Once he ascertains that she is lying to him, however, he drags her around the stage roughly, looking for where her father might be hiding himself. It seems he may escalate to further violence as he grabs her by the neck. It is at this point in this scene

when the key difference between Cumberbatch's and Branagh's portrayals manifests itself: Cumberbatch's Hamlet is able to restrain himself with Ophelia. He releases her and backs off. His "It hath made me mad" is furious and frustrated, but not frantic. He may be on the verge of insanity, but he is not there yet.

Cumberbatch is indicative of a series of modern Hamlets who, while still violent, are comparatively controlled. Ophelia is still the barometer of the degree of their madness, but the needle hasn't reached the red zone yet. Another of these is Franco Zeffirelli's famous 1990 production starring Mel Gibson. Gibson's 1990 portrayal is much closer to those that preceded him rather than those that would follow him in terms of the level of violence: he discovers the betrayal of Ophelia (Helena Bonham Carter) early on, before he speaks to her, and his violence is limited to grabbing her face and shoving her. While any such physical aggression is unacceptable and as such it is understandable that Xianfeng Mao considers Hamlet's violence towards Ophelia in the scene "excessive" (4), it is comparatively tame in terms of modern productions of *Hamlet*. As such, it is far easier to see Hamlet as still in control of himself. Zeffirelli also makes the unusual choice to move the first lines of the nunnery speech to the Mousetrap scene which Hamlet delivers to Ophelia in a low tone before the beginning of the play-within-a-play, almost in a whisper, seated in a chair which is literally an arm's length away.[1] It strips the speech of the frantic heat which is a prelude to violence in so many productions.

David Tennant's portrayal for the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2009 production of *Hamlet* directed by Gregory Doran also falls into this category. Throughout the scene, he has been trying to keep Ophelia (Mariah Gale) from touching him; she has been reaching out to him, but he has been putting his hands out protectively to block her. After he

discovers midway through the scene that Ophelia is lying, he grabs her wrist, spins her around, and throws her down. However, at this point, she reaches out to him again and he once again goes into a defense posture of moving away so she can't touch him. Here, Hamlet's need to protect himself emotionally is much stronger than his anger at Ophelia, and he never loses control enough to forget that, either in terms of his temper or his rationality. In an interview about this scene, Tennant said, "when she appears [I thought Hamlet would] want to curl up in a ball and have his head stroked [but] Hamlet can't be intimate with Ophelia, [...] he mustn't be because he is working quite hard at maintaining a certain way of being and keeping up the act that he is putting on and if someone gets inside that then it will fall apart" (qtd. in Rokison 181). In this production, Hamlet does not mean it when he says "it hath made me mad."

The most controlled and reasonable Hamlet of filmed productions is from the modernized movie released in 2000, directed by Michael Almereyda and starring Ethan Hawke. He commits no acts of domestic violence. He is quite loving with Ophelia (Julia Stiles), and after he finds out about her betrayal due to the discovery of a wire on her body while they are kissing, he simply looks hurt and leaves. The entire latter half of the scene along with its angry invectives is omitted. Hawke's Hamlet bucks the trend in many ways, but like the others, it illustrates how the treatment of Ophelia in the nunnery scene serves as the barometer of Hamlet's mental state. Hawke's Hamlet does not lay a hand on Ophelia, despite his victimization by her. He is the completely rational Hamlet.

In conclusion, the rising use of domestic violence in performances of Hamlet in the past few decades aligns, ironically, with its decrease in social acceptability. As domestic violence becomes more and more of aberrant in terms of human behavior, it becomes more

and more effective as an indicator of irrationality. Thus, it is now used as a shortcut to indicate to audiences whether or not Hamlet is still in control, whether or not he is still sane. Still, directors must take care. In all of Shakespeare's plays, Hamlet arguably relies most heavily on the ability of the title character to carry the audience along with him in order for the play to succeed. Much depends on the audience's ability to relate to, and care about, the man with all those soliloquies who keeps wondering if his life is worth living. He can be an anti-hero with shading, but he cannot be repulsive. If he is, while the play will maintain the beauty of its language, it will lose its beating heart. Without heart, this piece of work really is no more than a "quintessence of dust."

Notes

[1] More specifically, Hamlet says the following lines to Ophelia while everyone is seated and waiting for the play-within-a-play to start, in a tone low enough so that only she can hear them: "Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst though be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and Heaven? […] Believe none of us" (III.i.1814-1821)

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An Archetypal Critical Examination of Ashby Hall's *Harold and Maude*

By A.S. Lewis

One of the most repetitive archetypal symbol patterns in *Harold and Maude* is that of life and death framed within the setting of the system. The archetypal symbol of order, the system that frames the film's story, as its setting guides and motivates character behavior including Harold's inversions and Maude's dismissiveness. More archetypal symbols follow as both title characters become powerful contradictory yet complementary archetypes. Harold's infatuation with death serves to mask his role as the representation of life. Maude's exuberance, in deliberate contrast, masks her representation as death.

Archetypes are studied and applied in disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, marketing, theatre, and literature to name a few. In fact, it is the ubiquity inherent in archetypes that makes them at once simple and multi-layered. The concept of archetypes was first created by psychoanalyst and Freudian student, Carl Jung. In his essay, *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art*, Jung defines an archetype as:

> The primordial image or archetype is a figure, whether it be daemon, man, or process, that repeats itself in the course of history whatever creative fantasy is fully manifested. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. If we subject these images to a closer investigation, we discover them to be formulated resultants of countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They

> are, as it were, the psychic residua of numberless experiencing the same type (Jung).

Because of the omnipresence of the archetype, many first representations emerged from the stories early humans told and the rituals and myths that evolved around them. All of the predictable natural aspects that affected human life received this reverence from the phases of the moon and the solstices to the cycle of birth and death (Frye 103). Considered the preeminent voice in archetypes and archetypal criticism, Northrop Frye expounds on Jung's foundational definition of archetypes (Lane 195). Frye states that, "The myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual…" (Frye 103). From those rituals came myth, religion, folklore, dreams and fantasies, literature, drama, and film and other cultural expressions that reflect the truth and universality of archetypes (*Archetypal Criticism*).

By their nature, archetypes must be enduring, omnipresent, and indelibly intertwined with the basic experiences of humanity. Born from human experience, archetypes are shared through human cultural expression. Thus, the identification of archetypes within the arts and literature is a natural extension of any academic scrutiny despite its origin in psychological sciences. The same psychoanalytic analysis applied to a person can be applied to a character (Frye 98). However, archetypes are not limited to characters alone. Within a literary context, archetypes can be symbols, images, characters, settings, plot structures, and more (Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 96). As long as the concept represented demonstrates "a recurrent, universal pattern that evokes a deep, emotional response in virtually all readers as it strikes a chad in their unconscious memory" (*Archetypal Criticism*).

Referencing to the essay *The Enchanted Flood*, Frye notes that "an important symbol like the sea cannot remain within the poetry of Shelley or Keats or Coleridge: it is bound to expand over many poets into an archetypal symbol of literature" (Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 99). So too are the symbols of life, death, and the system in which they exist that calls civilization to order. In the film, *Harold and Maude*, the universal symbols that sustain the plot and motivate the characters can be identified and analyzed under an archetypal critical lens (Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 131).

The System as an Archetypal Setting

As archetypes represent humanity's attempt to bring order to a chaotic world, the system itself stands as a symbol. All archetypal material "…is a part of the most basic patterns of human awareness, patterns which may have existed in the human mind from the very beginning of time" (Lane 231). There is no more basic archetypal symbol than that of the pattern of system itself. The system represents the order of society, the orientation and purpose of each person, place, and action. It guides and motivates the conduct of every character save for Harold and Maude. It is Harold's inversion of the system and Maude's disregard for the system that elevates it to an archetypal symbol in the film.

Harold's actions do not oppose to the system, they are an inversion of it. He is a healthy young man. He should be embracing life not celebrating death. In this, he does not oppose the system; if he did he would not have waited until his mother and Fern walked a fair distance away before making a vulgar gesture. For this reason too, Harold limits his staged suicides to his home, his mother the chief audience. At funerals, he acts appropriately. His only indiscretion is his presence. His choice to attend without a

connection to the dead stands in mimicry of the rituals of death, but he does not oppose the rituals --- he inverts them. A more literal demonstration of Harold's actions toward system inversion is seen when Harold is speaking with his psychoanalyst. In that scene, Harold is supine on the couch with his head at the edge and his feet where his head should be. He is participating in the system but, as always, it is from a position (physically in this instance) of contrariness that seeks to invert not oppose. It is notable, however, that because of his interactions with Maude, Harold stops his attempts at inversion by the close of the film. It is unclear whether his new role will ultimately be within or without the system.

Maude, on the other hand, does not invert the system; she ignores it. She ignores laws, authorities, and social norms. In the past, Maude has opposed the system in the form of social protest, but that ended when she was placed in the worst representation of the system in recent history. As a survivor of the Holocaust, Maude no longer seeks to oppose the system around her. Instead, she chooses, repeatedly, to act as if she is ignorant of it. She steals cars. When caught, she does not lie. In her words she admits capability freely, but in her actions, she ignores the consequences of her actions and anyone's authority to impose them. And she does it without a single oppositional word.

The film presents a myriad of instances where she openly and flagrantly defies the system. Maude engages in a sexual relationship with Harold despite the social stigma attached to such a coupling. She, like Harold, attends the funerals of people she does not know. However, unlike Harold, Maude does not conform to even the outward trappings of proper conduct. She wears bright colors in both her clothing and in her choice of umbrella. She smiles openly and often. She brings licorice and oranges which she eats during services. On the road she is no better. Maude drives with no serious regard for traffic laws or safety.

According to one priest, she is a vandal. In just the brief timeframe of the film, the 79-year-old Maude commits several felonies as she seeks, not to disrupt the system, but to deny its presence.

In *Harold and Maude*, the archetypes of life and death are represented in the titular characters. Harold represents life while Maude represents death. Surprisingly, their roles have little to do with their respective ages. It is also not seen in their seemingly aberrant behaviors. Instead, their archetypal symbology is seen throughout the film in character actions, dialogues, and visual representations.

Maude, the audience learns at the end of the film, is planning to die, and yet her behavior speaks of living life to the fullest. She is mercurial to the point of near chaos, but it is not that that speaks through her. It is death. For example, when Harold and Maude leave the funeral and go to her home, Harold states that her behavior is upsetting to people. Maude's response is that she is "a gentle reminder… here today, gone tomorrow… don't get attached to things." It is a statement to the impermanent nature of all things, an impermanence caused by mortality. It is death that gives life meaning. Maude gives Harold's life meaning as he is the life to her death.

Harold is obsessed with death. He stages mock suicides and crashes funerals. He has no connection with death and so he seeks one. He is withdrawn and seeks isolation even while wishing for acceptance and inclusion. In a scene where the two sit in a field of white flowers, the following exchange takes place.

MAUDE: What flower would you like to be?

HAROLD: I don't know. One of those maybe?

MAUDE: Why do you say that?

HAROLD: Because they're all alike (Hall).

Harold *wants* to fit in. He wants to live, but the system churns out death as evidenced by the flowers, once individual imperfect, and unique, are now tombstones of soldiers. The soldiers are the ultimate representation of the system as they are GIs, government issue. As such, the archetypal setting of the system as a backdrop feeds into the character archetypes of life and death seen in both Harold and Maude.

Furthermore, Maude, has a great love for life and the living. As a representative of death itself, she understands the reciprocal relationship between the two facets. Inside a greenhouse, she states, "I like to watch things grow. They grow and bloom and fade and die and change into something else" (*Harold and Maude* 36:59). Life is transient. It is fleeting, but it is also change. Harold is young and alive, but he has thus far been willing to change and so he is no longer "living." Maude who will die, is death, and is living. It is Harold who will live, is life, but is dying.

The sculpture scene where Maude shows Harold her artwork is also quite telling even in its provocation (*Harold and Maude* 34:14). The art, which resembles female genitalia, belongs to Maude but it is not she who interacts with it. Instead, it is Harold who touches it, strokes it, and then puts his head inside it. Given the clearly yonic nature of the piece, Harold is quite literally sticking his head into the ultimate vessel of life. Maude is shaping the growing thing that is Harold by reintroducing him to life. Through Maude, Harold is being reborn, something that is only possible because, as Harold states, he has died "a few times before" (*Harold and Maude* 55:40).

Even their clothing switches from before and after Harold's "rebirth." When he first visits Maude, it is he (life) who is dressed in black and she (death) who is dressed in white.

Later, after the sculpture scene and when Harold and Maude are staging a scene of Maude's death for Harold's uncle to help him stay out of the army, Maude wears black while Harold wears white.

Harold's insistence on inverting the system stems directly from his passive opposition of this archetypal symbol of order. In contrast, Maude's total disregard for the system manifests in different behavior but results in the same outside the non-normal social interactions as Harold. The contrasting yet complementary behavior of both Harold and Maude is mimicked in the archetypes they each represent. Harold's death obsessed representation of life and Maude's life celebrating representation of death sustains and drives the film forward making *Harold and Maude* an intriguing play of archetypal binaries into a coherent whole.

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Up From the Muck: Voice and Agency as a Means to Liberation in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

By Dylan Williams

Oppression and objectification are realities that many experience and fight daily. The marginalization of minority groups is an unfortunate reality society presently and historically has struggled with addressing. People being born into a class that does not allow them the same opportunities as the privileged class are going to harbor resentment; this resentment manifests itself in action. The action takes a variety of forms whether violent or peaceful, but regardless of the form, movements are born from oppression and will grow along with the anger. Inevitably, the oppressive force comes in contact with the movement it has created. There are two outcomes of this clash: the oppressive force maintains position and the movement becomes more resentful and angry or the movement gains recognition and validation. With both outcomes, the movement that fights for equality is not eliminated. Equality movements cannot be done away with for good, as there is always someone that is facing oppression who is willing to fight for what they see others receiving freely. At their core, equality movements cannot be entirely destroyed since they represent the ideals of equality and justice, and these will transfer to marginalized groups of all kinds and evolve with society.

Zora Neal Hurston in her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* creates the character Janie, who belongs to the most oppressed group of people in the society in which she lives:

black women. Janie finds herself dehumanized and objectified by a white patriarchal society. Having Janie exist as a marginal person in an already marginalized society gives Hurston the opportunity to show the evolution of individualism and agency in an oppressed individual. The growth witnessed in Janie can be parallelled with the black community and women holistically. There are setbacks in Janie's progression, but there is never defeat. Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is representative of personal evolution and liberation and the development and unstoppable nature of the early equality movements seen in America.

Oppression and objectification are the stimuli that lead to the development of equality movements. In American history, African Americans and women are representative of some of the most openly marginalized groups by those in positions of authority. These groups have their identities stolen from them by having their value and purpose defined by the controlling class. One of the means to move from the fringes of this society is to become visible to the surrounding world by obtaining agency and having a voice. Deborah Clarke states, "The racist power of visibility thus seems daunting, but Hurston not only takes on the challenge of reclaiming the visual as racially affirmative, she does so in response to a masculinist tradition in which visual power so often objectifies women" (602). Janie embodies the ability to gain individuality and independence through forcing her husbands to recognize her in the same ways as the equality movements of the early to mid-twentieth century.

Over the course of the novel, Janie marries three times. Early in her romantic relationships, she has very little presence. Logan Killicks and Joe Stark oppress and objectify Janie by thinking of her only in terms of the value she brings to them; the two do not

actually see Janie as a person. Julie Haurykiewicz states, "They [Nanny and Janie] are constrained in the double bind of being both black and female. Thus, according to Nanny, they are in the lowest position in the social hierarchy—they are dehumanized and made into mules who must carry double the weight of both the white man's and the black man's burdens" (52-53). Logan thinks of Janie as a field hand who has been spoiled: "'Mah fust wife never bothered me 'bout choppin' no wood nohow. She'd grab dat ax and sling chips lak uh man. You done been spoilt rotten'" (Hurston 26). Logan's view of value parallels a patriarchal society: masculinity equals value. Janie does not display masculinity therefore she has little to no worth in his eyes.

Joe Starks oppresses and objectifies Janie by treating her as nothing more than a decoration. Jenifer Jordan states, "through its delineation of Janie's marriage to Jody Starks, the devaluation and aloneness of the middle-class woman whose sole purpose is to serve as an ornament and symbol of her husband's social status" (Jordan 108). Joe is an ambitious man who cares deeply about his public perception, and having a beautiful young wife such as Janie adds to the image he has created. P.T Reid is quotated stating that society views women as intellectually inferior, lacking in ambition and drive, emotional, dependent, and childlike (Morrison 40). The way Reid states that society views women fits Joe's perception and treatment of Janie. Joe believes that she is entirely dependent on him, not due to the lack of opportunity she is allowed due to race and ethnicity, but due to her innate inferiority to him as a woman. Unlike Logan who defines female value only in relation to masculine qualities, Joe gauges female value by submissiveness: "'Mah [Janie] own mind had tuh be squeezed and crowded out tuh make room for yours in me'" (Hurston 86). In her marriage to Joe, Janie had to put all of herself aside to make room for his desires. This valuation is

the result of Joe's sexism; in his mind, Janie's life only has value in relation to how she adds to him, and how he can use her to display his own perceived greatness.

Tea Cake is Janie's third and final husband. Tea Cake, by comparison, does make Janie happier than Logan and Joe. However, he still oppresses and objectifies Janie in how he views and treats her. Tea Cake views Janie with strong reverence: "'Befo' us got married Ah made up mah mind not tuh let you see no commonness in me. When Ah get mad habits on, Ah'd go off and keep it out yo' sight. 'Tain't mah notion tuh drag *you* down wid me'" (Hurston 124). Tea Cake does not fully allow Janie to join in on certain aspects of his life because he is afraid she will be corrupted. However, his treatment of her is that of a prized item; he values her as a possession, but not for her humanity.

This reverence is one means of objectification. Both men provided for Janie in different ways: Joe provided monetarily and Tea Cake provides love and sex. However, just because a person is treated gently and taken care of does mean she is not being objectified. According to Jenifer Jordan, "As a possession she is denied any self-defined goals and even the expression of her own opinions" (Jordan 109). With all three of her husbands Janie's thoughts and desires are not taken into consideration. Although Tea Cake is the most positive relationship, he still makes all of the decisions for her, and he is either indifferent or belittles her when she does express herself. This treatment is seen when he diminishes her concerns when he steals the two hundred dollars she brings as safe money: "'Miss Woods got herself uh new lil boy rooster, but he has been off somewhere and won't tell her'" (Hurston 120). Tea Cake flips the situation by treating her anger and worry as though it is unimportant. He attempts to make it seem as though her feelings are ridiculous. Tea Cake's selfishness becomes apparent in his demanding behavior. Janie attempts to find voice, but

when she does, Tea Cake does not take her seriously. He treats her as though her entire existence is wrapped around his desires and whims, and allows her input as long as it aligns with his own.

Janie's marriages are limiting in the same ways that society was limiting for a black woman. American society did not allow African Americans much opportunity, and African American women were allotted even less. The white patriarchy achieves this through manipulating how black society is perceived. According to Clarke, "Hurston's insistence on the importance of visual expression, of course, stems largely from racism's disregard for African American individuality" (601). White society created the racist image of African Americans through limiting access to work and education. Black men and women would not likely find job opportunities outside of manual labor or service industries due to racist hiring practices and not having educational requirements, so this allowed for white America to narrowly define African Americans as inferior to themselves, thus feeding into white supremacy. This forced defintion strips black men and women of their identity and forces them to be defined by their race rather than their individuality.

Where black men had little opportunity or access to the means to rise in status, black women were completely dependent on their husbands and rose or fell as they did. This dependence led to a complete removal of identity where black women were defined entirely by their husbands. In Eatonville, Janie is defined strictly by the relationships she has with Joe and Tea Cake. The citizens of Eatonville look at Janie simply as Mrs. Mayor Starks, and when her relationship begins with Tea Cake, his poverty and low public image redefine her to the people. Who Janie is as an individual is of no concern to them. So, the black citizens of Eatonville are guilty of narrowly defining black women in the same way white

people narrowly define African Americans. Crystal Feimster states, "For decades, women of color in various disciplines and women's historians working in the fields of African American, southern, and labor history had been quietly insisting on the significance of examining race and gender together" (822). There is a connection between racism and sexism within the black community which leads to defining an individual by the group they belong to or the relationships they have. You have an entire race of people who have been marginalized by the society in which they live, and the dominant group within that society is mimicking the behavior of their oppressors in their further marginalization of black women.

Janie slowly rises out of oppression and objectification in her marriages by defining herself, which allows her to take control of her own identity. Janie spends the majority of her life being defined by whom she is married to; however, she is first seen without a name following her return to Eatonville after Tea Cake's death: "As Janie develops in the novel, she experiences the oppressive power of those who name her, the growing potential of being named, and finally, the freeing experience of being unnamed" (King 685). Robbing someone of their individuality is a means to dehumanize. According to Kwame Appiah, "one's individuality is itself a part of well-being, something good in itself. This freedom is not a means to an end but part of the end, for individuality means, among other things, choosing for myself instead of shaping myself under the constraint of government sanction or social pressure" (312). In each of Janie's marriages, there is a moment of liberation: running away from Logan, publicly emasculating Joe, and killing Tea Cake. These liberating moments lead to Janie taking her name back, even if momentarily.

Janie takes back her name and forms her own identity through developing voice and agency. The development of these elements are seen as being two of the major factors that led to change in the civil and women's rights movements. The time period Hurston wrote the novel in was drenched in racism and sexism. Jim Crow laws were very much a part of life in the southern United States. African Americans were growing increasingly more distressed with the role they were given by mainstream society, and the evolution of equality movements resulted. In these movements, black women played a vital role: "Black women served as major leaders, organizers, and strategists, creating the movement to address their personal and community needs" (Nance 547). Not a single group of people could better understand what it felt to be stripped of identity and dehumanized as black women, so it is only logical that when the opportunity arose to fight for change, many were black women. Nance continues to state, "They were… the kind of activist who served as the catalyst for the civil rights movement throughout the county" (548). These women activists took action due to their low status in society and fought for the identities of their communities and themselves. Similar to activist, Janie seeks and initiates change when confronted with situations that threaten her emotionally or physically.

Janie finds her voice for the first time with the introduction of Joe Starks; who serves as the catalyst for her growth. According to Nancy Chinn, "Despite his restrictions on her, Joe has shown Janie how to reach for the horizon" (Chinn 84). Joe provides Janie with a means out of her loveless marriage and gives her an opportunity to find her voice. Hurston writes, "'S'posin' Ah wuz to run off and leave yuh sometime.' There! Janie had put words in his held-in fears. She might run off sure enough. The thought put a terrible ache in Logan's body, but thought it best to put on scorn" (30). Janie is yet to act, but just by

voicing her desires in opposition to Logan's causes him to become physically sick and respond with the intention to stop her. Logan's reaction parallels white male society's reaction to women's rights movements and civil rights movements. The response is an instinctive response bred from privilege: diminish and prevent.

Although Janie's relationship with Joe begins with her finding her voice, she quickly loses it as a result of Joe's dominance. Joe is symbolic of patriarchy within the black community with his treatment of Janie. Where he initially uses her beauty and youth as a decoration to boost his appearance among the other men, as she ages, her role changes in his life. Toward the end of their twenty-year marriage, Joe verbally and publicly abuses Janie. Joe does this to boost his own ego and galvanize his position of authority in the relationship and Eatonville as he too ages. Janie for the second time uses her voice when Joe insults her appearance in response to her cutting tobacco improperly. Hurston writes,

> Naw, Ah ain't no young gal no mo' but den Ah ain't no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah'm uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat's uh whole lot more'n *you* kin say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but 'taint nothin' to it but yo' big voice. Humph! Talkin' 'bout *me* lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life. (79)

Janie emasculates Joe in front of the town, so through her finding voice, she has removed his authority over her and diminished his position in Eatonville. This scene highlights the fragility of patriarchy, and asserts the view that speaking against oppression and objectification is the beginning needed to dismantle an oppressive society. Janie standing up for herself publicly eventually led to Joe's death, which results in her liberation.

With Tea Cake, Janie has no identity apart from him. She is much happier than she has ever been in her life, but she has no existence of her own: "They [the African Americans on the muck] define Janie purely on the basis of her relationship to Tea Cake" (Jordan 113). The loss of identity came through a loss of voice. Janie attempts to use her voice but Tea Cake is able to manipulate situations to make Janie appear as though her fears are invalid. Janie attempts this when she catches Tea Cake alone with Nunkie: "Ah b'lieve you been messin' round her" she panted furiously" (Hurston 137). Tea Cake dismisses her concern by claiming, "Don't keer how big uh lie get told, somebody kin b'lieve it" (137). Tea Cake knows that he has the authority in the relationship, so he does not admit to any wrongdoing. As a part of the patriarchy, he knows that Janie is completely dependent on him while on the muck. Janie would find it difficult to leave him with the position she holds in society. Voice in this instance is ineffective. Despite the ambiguity surrounding Tea Cake and Nunkie's behavior, Tea Cake is able to manipulate a narrative that is more favorable to him, and allows him to escape unblemished in Janie's eyes.

Finding voice and making oneself heard is essential to the fight for equality. Being heard can be effective, but it is not always enough. When voice fails, movements have to be willing to display their agency. In the novel, Janie had success with voice leading to liberation from Joe, but it was ineffective with Tea Cake. According to Clarke, "Clearly, Janie's achievement of a voice is critical to her journey to self-awareness, but the highly ambivalent presentation of voice in the novel indicates that voice alone is not enough" (Clarke 599). Janie finds her voice, but she must use her voice alongside agency to acquire lasting liberation. The ability to act is essential in the fight for social change and equality.

Janie first displays agency when she is still married to Logan. Up to this point in the novel, Janie has done what was expected of her by the other characters. However, in this instance, she sees the potential for happiness, and she acts on it: "A feeling of sudden newness and change came over her. Janie hurried out of the front gate and turned south. Even if Joe was not there waiting for her, the change was bound to do her good" (Hurston 32). Janie's self-advocacy itself regardless of the outcomes provides a positive change in her life. The power that comes from agency is being able to control the direction one's life takes. Janie's place in society —like many black men and women under Jim Crow— had been decided for her by others, and by simply acting she is taking charge of herself.

The tragic conclusion of Janie's marriage to Tea Cake provides her ultimate liberation. In her marriage to Tea Cake, voice does not affect Tea Cake as it did Logan and Joe. Also, Tea Cake has shown that he becomes violent when he fears that he is losing control of Janie: "When Mrs. Turner's brother came and she brought him over to be introduced, Tea Cake had a brainstorm. Before the week was over he had whipped Janie. Not because her behavior justified his jealousy, but it relieved that awful fear inside him. Being able to whip her reassured him in possession" (Hurston 147). The thought of losing his control and authority over Janie is reflective of the white patriarchies fear of losing privilege. This highly sexist behavior also exhibits patriarchal views of how to display love and passion in relationships. Donald Marks states, "Hurston further rationalizes Tea Cake's behavior by having other characters, both men and women, enviously view the beating as something erotice as a sign of passion and strength they themselves do not have" (156). This toxic view of love and affection serves to highlight how essential it is for one to liberate themselves from dependence on an individual that seeks to own them. To break away from

such possessiveness, one must exert agency, so Janie is forced to act when the time comes in order to secure her independence and take final control of her life.

As with the civil and women's rights movements in the United States, Janie's moment of liberation comes with much pain and suffering. Tea Cake contracts rabies and attempts to kill Janie as a result. The danger that Tea Cake displays in his final moments is reflective of the violence the white patriarchy inflicts on black men and women as the call for social change became more prominent. Those that adhere to the ideology of white male supremacy become rabid as they feel their authority and control slipping away. As Tea Cake tries to kill Janie in his rabid state, many African Americans were victims of lynchings due to white America's desire to maintain a privileged place in society. The final moments of Tea Cake's life takes place due to his fear of losing a privileged place in Janie's life. Hurston writes,

> "How come you ruther sleep on uh pallet than tuh sleep in de bed wid me?" Janie saw then that he had the gun in his hand that was hangin to his side. "Answer me when Ah speak." "Tea Cake, Tea Cake, honey! Go lay down! Ah'll be too glad tuh be in dere wid yuh de minute de doctor say so. Go Lay back down. He'll be heah wid some new medicine right away." "Janie, Ah done went through everything tuh be good tuh you and it hurt me tuh mah heart tuh be ill treated lak Ah is" The gun came up unsteadily but quickly and leveled at Janie's breast. (183)

Tea Cake (like the patriarchy) believes that losing authority is a form of oppression. So, both Tea Cake and white male society view themselves as victims of changes outside their control. Both respond violently in a final effort to maintain position. The need for agency is essential to appropriately and effectively respond for Janie and the equality movements.

Janie acts decisively, and this action is her liberation from the constraints of the dependence nurtured through a racist society and patriarchal relationships. According to Jordan, "She is able to choose self when forced to save her life by killing Tea Cake" (112). The fact that Janie has to kill Tea Cake reveals that personal and social change cannot exist in submission, and it will not be stopped no matter the obstacle. Janie claims her individuality and begins to form her identity as a liberated woman. Jordan continues by stating, "She [Janie] is able to choose self when forced to save her life by killing Tea Cake" (112). Janie has lived a life moving from one dependent relationship to another; however, she acts when the time calls for it. She cannot survive if she continues to allow herself to be submissive to the rabid Tea Cake. So, she kills Tea Cake when she is about to lose herself, and gains her own individual identity.

With her liberation, a swift response comes from the patriarchy on the muck. In one final attempt to restrict Janie from independence, there is a trial held to determine whether she should be free. The people Janie had come to know on the muck turn on her when she is completely liberated and independent of any man: "They [the African American community] were all against her, she could see. So many were there against her that a light slap from each one of them would have beat her to death" (Hurston 185). Since Janie's entire identity on the muck is defined by Tea Cake, now that she stands alone as an individual, the community she belongs to does not know how to view her. So, they judge her based on what they do know about her: she is a woman. According to Chinn, "the people transform themselves into godlike judges, missing in the process, the narrator suggests, the intermediary stage—humanity. These judges imply that God too is a severe judge who causes death and destruction. This view of God produces the traditional view of

women by which they judge Janie harshly" (78). Janie has killed a man and they view this, entially, as being unforgivable. They determine that they have the godlike authority to judge her due to the privilege maleness has given them.

Janie makes her way through the trial for Tea Cake's death, and her being physically freed from jail is symbolic of the liberation she is experiencing as a woman who possesses her own identity. Janie even recieves validation from many in the society who previously wanted her to be imprisoned for killing Tea Cake. Hurston states, "Because they really loved Janie just a little less than they had loved Tea Cake, and because they wanted to think well of themselves they wanted their hostile attitude forgotten" (190). The black community recognizes that their treatment of Janie was wrong; however, even in their acknowledgment of wrongdoing, the community still behaves somewhat selfishly. The progress forward from sexist societal structures takes time. Like the black community of the Everglades, America itself is healing from racism and sexism. During this healing, many who belong to the privileged group acknowledge the existence of a problem, and they recognize the need for a remedy. However, they also feel the need to disassociate themselves from the oppressive structures. This cognitive dissonance allows for vestiges of racism and sexism to linger in a society. So, Janie as a completely independent woman for the first time in her life must leave to develop her own identity, and she makes the decision to leave and return to Eatonville.

Janie's return to Eatonville is a means of her displaying the empowerment she has gained through independence. She does not return in shame from a failed marriage (as expected) but because her identity is her own, and she is exerting dominance not just over her future, but her past, too. Wendy McCredie states, "As Janie tells her story to Pheoby,

she establishes a past that belongs to her, is her possession. But Janie's past is nothing but herself, so that her voice articulates herself—the self that now belongs to itself. And this new self-possession grants Janie authority in her own right, in her past's right" (28). Janie does not run from the past that is fraught with oppression and objectification; she exists within it, and uses what she has learned through her surviving it to move into the future that she decides.

Zora Neale Hurston uses *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to express her views on racism, sexism, and independence. Hurston was a cultural anthropologist whose work focused primarily on the lives of black Americans. Irma McClaurin writes, "The corpus of that life's work was an ongoing commitment to the preservation and analysis of rural, Southen, and Diaspora Negro/Black folk culture" (54). Hurston cared about her culture and wanted to make sure that it was shared appropriately. Hurston, through her work, did not feel as though white people had any real interest in the internal lives or emotions of black people (McClaurin 54). This lack of interest explains the limited role that white people physically have in the novel. Racism exist in the text as an oppressive force that limits in opportunity and segregates black and white society, but the only instance any characters experiences racism directly from a white man is following the hurricane when Tea Cake is forced to dig graves. This reflects Hurston's view that white people due to their privileged position in society do not have an interest in black life unless they feel they have to. This reflects the need for voice and agency to develop independence and form identity found in the novel. The privileged class will not take notice and act unless something forces them to.

Hurston also reflects the independence and nonconformity found in the novel within equality movements. Hurston was often seen displaying behavior that would have been

unacceptable for women of this time, much like Janie upon her return to Eatonville as a liberated woman. According to McClaurin, "This image of Zora represents open resistance to such hegemonic notions. Hurston publicly displays hidden transcript that resists attempts to limit her" (52). Hurston directly resists the patriarchy with her existence. She was an educated black woman during a time period where little to no opportunity was available. She was openly defiant toward the race and gender stereotypes that were placed on her by a patriarchal white society. Jordan states, "The novel is seen as a vehicle of feminist protest through its condemnation of the restrictiveness of bourgeois marriage and through it exploration of intraracial sexism and male violence (108). Hurston used the text as a means of protest against the white patriarchy. Like Janie, Hurston found liberation through individuality and personal identity.

Janie's use of empowerment through voice, agency, and identity is seen in the civil and women's rights movements in America. As freedoms are won and progress is made in the struggle for equality, more groups and individuals seek to define their existence apart from societal norms. Much like Janie upon her return to Eatonville, equal rights movements serve to change societal expectations. Janie is an empowered, middle-aged black woman in a time period where such a thing was unheard of. According to Eileen Botting, "Attention to the idea of women's human rights allows us to see how human rights gradually became an international and intercultural, as well as philosophically universalistic, political concept" (29). The attention that is brought to successes associated with equality movements is what makes these movements unstoppable. As long as there are people being marginalized by a privileged class, there will be those who are oppressed that rise through

and above limitations. When these successes are witnessed, there will be people who mimic and achieve similar results.

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Ezra Pound's Translation: A Gateway for Literary Modernism and Cultural Exchanges

By John Zheng

Literature, in its essence, is translation because good translation is a gateway to the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and literatures. In his introduction to *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, T. S. Eliot, praises Pound for doing a great job—here he means translation—for English-speaking readers: "Pound's contribution, by calling our attention to the merits of poetry of remote or alien societies—Anglo-Saxon, Provençal, early Italian, Chinese and Japanese...is immense" (xiii). Eliot believes that "when we want to try to understand what a foreign literature means, or meant, to the people to whom it belongs, when we want to acquaint ourselves with the spirit of a whole civilisation through the whole of its literature, we must go elsewhere" (xiii-xiv). Pound, a genius in foreign languages, literatures, and translations, always had the desire to go elsewhere, because he knew that understanding a foreign literature would certainly enrich our own and that the acquisition of this understanding would be largely through translation.

In the early stage of his writing career, Pound read Chinese and Japanese poetry in translation in order to acquaint himself with the merits of oriental poetry and find a language ideal for modern poetic expressions. For instance, he learned about haiku through the introduction of T. E. Hulme, F. S. Flint,[1] and Yoni Noguchi[2] and adopted the haiku form to adapt Herbert Giles's translation of classical Chinese poetry in search of new modes of poetic expression. Here's an example of Giles's translation:

O fair white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom,

Clear as the frost, bright as the winter snow—

See! friendship fashions out of thee a fan,

Round as the round moon shines in heaven above,

At home, abroad, a close companion thou,

Stirring at every move the grateful gale.

And yet I fear, ah me! that autumn chills,

Cooling the dying summer's torrid rage,

Will see thee laid neglected on the shelf,

All thought of bygone days, like them bygone. (101)

with the original Chinese poem titled "Song of the Round Fan" (《团扇歌》)written by Ban Jieyu: "新制齐纨素，皎洁如霜雪。裁为合欢扇，团团似明月。出入君怀袖，动摇微风发。常恐秋节至，凉飙夺炎热。弃捐箧笥中，恩情中道绝。"

To Pound, Giles's translation may not sound modern and show the awareness of modern language. Its archaic use of "thee" and "thou," sentimental utterance of "O" and "ah," and redundant expressions will not satisfy a modern poet. Though ignorant of the Chinese language by then, Pound showed his skills in his adaptation practice. He weeded out from Giles's version what sounded non-modern, especially the redundancy of language, and reformatted it in spirit to the Japanese haiku, as shown in "Fan-Piece, for Her Imperial Lord":

O fan of white silk,

clear as frost on the grass-blade,

You also are laid aside. (*Personae* 108)

Pound condensed the ten lines of iambic pentameter into a three-line haiku. He paid less attention to the requirement of seventeen syllables in traditional Japanese haiku than to the seventeen words used in this poem. Therefore, it is interesting to notice that "Fan-Piece" has a 5-7-5 word pattern even though its 5-7-7 syllabic pattern is technically different from the traditional Japanese 5-7-5 haiku pattern. The minimal form challenged him to juxtapose the two images "fan" and "frost" for an internal comparison to intensify the concubine's feelings of being neglected. Pound's poem "contains two comparisons. The first one, an external comparison, suggests the transience: the brief use of the beautiful fan is like the quick melting of the frost on the grass, but the more interesting one is an implicit comparison encoded in the word 'also' to suggest that the concubine, like the fan, is put aside. This piece suffices to show Pound's poetic talent in blowing fresh air into something stale" (Zheng 20).

This kind of adaptation practice surely helped Pound develop his poetic principles because he found that "[a] classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness" (*ABC of Reading* 13-14). We can assume from Pound's statement that translation of classical literature, especially foreign literature, is more than handling stylistic, semantic or syntactic complexities. More importantly, it is, as Eliot points out, about "calling our attention to the merits of poetry of remote or alien societies." It is also about gaining the marrow of another culture and its complexities, and this gaining challenges a poet to search for an "irrepressible freshness" that is both eternal in literature worldwide and modern with poetic expressions.

It must be Pound's effort in adaptation or translation that made him known by and led to his meeting with Mary Fenollosa, widow of Ernest Fenollosa, in autumn 1913 in London. After this meeting, Mrs. Fenollosa sent Pound her deceased husband's manuscripts including the ones on Chinese characters and rough translations of classical Chinese poetry, because she found in Pound a poet who could continue Fenollosa's unfinished job, about which Pound himself felt confident, saying "Fenollosa's work was given me in manuscript when I was ready for it. It saved me a great deal of time" (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* 77). It was fortunate, therefore, that "the opportunity to invent Chinese poetry for our time fell not to some random modernist but to a master" (Kenner, *The Pound Era* 198). As soon as he received Fenollosa's manuscripts Pound was immediately fascinated with them because he found, as he said in his essay "Chinese Poetry," "a directness and realism such as we find only in early Saxon verse and in the Poema de Cid, and in Homer, or rather in what Homer would be if he wrote without epithet..." (Nadel 299). Pound believed that classical Chinese poets were excellent in expressing their emotions through nature. His recognition of the merits of classical Chinese poetry urged him to be engaged soon in translation. Hugh Kenner provides his explanation of this urge in his essay "The Poetics of Error": "Western languages had grown so tired, we may say, that Western sensibilities needed to experience of the poem's authoritative wholeness in an Eastern language, even at the price of certain linguistic illusions" (743). To Pound, this experience was necessary at the time, and the discovery of classical Chinese poetry through him was invaluable because "[a] Chinese poem was like a fresh start for all poetry" ("The Poetics of Error" 743). Such a discovery was invaluable also because Pound could "pass on the benefit of his discoveries to others" and "insist upon their being received" (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* xii). Pound realized he

could confirm his principles of making poetry new through his translation of Li Po and other classical Chinese poets from compiling Fenollosa's manuscripts.

In December 1914, a year after receiving Fenollosa's manuscripts, Pound completed his translation of selected classical Chinese poetry, which was published under the title of *Cathay* by Elkin Mathews in April 1915. Although it was a collection of Pound's reworkings on Fenollosa's notes taken from the decipherings of the two Japanese sinologists Kainen Mori and Nagao Ariga, *Cathay*, as Kenner comments, surely "encouraged subsequent translators of Chinese to abandon rhyme and fixed stress counts. It also inaugurated the long tradition of Pound the inspired but unreliable translator" (*The Pound Era* 199). Although Kenner claims that Pound's translation was unreliable, there is an undeniable fact that no subsequent translators of his time proved more influential than Pound. Kenner's claim may also indicate his slight dissatisfaction with Pound's translation; however, *Cathay* did show striking characteristics that called attention to the merits of Chinese poetry and inspired poets writing in English to be original in their own creation.

In addition to his claim, Kenner's comment on Pound's "opportunity to invent Chinese poetry" repeats Eliot's statement that "Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time." This statement, quoted numerous times in criticism, may have misled readers or scholars to believe that Pound was an unreliable translator. However, to better understand Eliot's statement, one needs to read Eliot's long passage concerning translation in his introduction to *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*:

> As for *Cathay*, it must be pointed out that Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time. I suspect that every age has had, and will have, the same illusion concerning translations, an illusion which is not altogether an illusion either. When a

foreign poet is successfully done into the idiom of our own language and our own time, we believe that he has been 'translated'; we believe that through this translation we really at last get the original. The Elizabethans must have thought that they *got* Homer through Chapman, Plutarch through North. Not being Elizabethans, we have not that illusion; we see that Chapman is more Chapman than Homer, and North more North than Plutarch, both localized three hundred years ago.... If a modern Chapman, or North or Florio appeared, we should believe that he was the real translator; we should, in other words, do him the compliment of believing that his translation was translucence. For contemporaries, no doubt the Tudor translations were translucencies; for us they are 'magnificent specimens of Tudor prose'. The same fate impends upon Pound. His translations seem to be—and that is the test of excellence—translucencies: we *think* we are closer to the Chinese than when we read, for instance, Legge. I doubt this: I predict that in three hundred years Pound's *Cathay* will be a 'Windsor Translation' as Chapman and North are now 'Tudor Translations': it will be called (and justly) a 'magnificent specimen of XXth Century poetry' rather than a 'translation'. Each generation must translate for itself.

This is as much as to say that Chinese poetry, as we know it to-day, is something invented by Ezra Pound. It is not to say that there is a Chinese poetry-in-itself, waiting for some ideal translator who shall be only translator; but that Pound has enriched modern English poetry as Fitzgerald enriched it. But whereas Fitzgerald produced only the one great poem, Pound's translation is interesting also because it is a phase in the development of Pound's poetry. (xvi-xvii)

At the beginning of this passage Eliot defines that "Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time." Then he tries to say that his illusion concerning translations will not be an illusion for the next age, elaborating that the illusion that the Elizabethans had about Chapman's translation of Homer is not an illusion for contemporaries, because contemporaries see that "Chapman is more Chapman than Homer." In other words, when Li Po is "successfully done into the idiom" of modern English, we believe we get the original through Pound's translation, but such an illusion concerning Pound's translation will not be an illusion for future generations, because they may see that Pound is more Pound than Li Po in translation. Eliot admits that, unlike Fitzgerald who was a translator only, Pound was both a translator and a poet, and his translations were surely crucial to his poetic development. In fact, Eliot reiterates what Pound already said as early as the 1910s in certain essays. For instance, in "Hugues Salel," an essay published in *The Egoist* in August 1918, Pound pointed out the weakness in Chapman's translation: "Chapman remains the best English 'Homer', marred though he may be by excess of added ornament, and rather more marred by parentheses and inversions, to the point of being hard to read in many places." However, he also admitted that "no one will excel him in the plainer passages of narrative…" (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* 249).

Moreover, Eliot expounds cautiously and persuasively in this passage that each age must have its own poetry and language style and that "each generation must translate for itself." Pound was an inventor of Chinese poetry because his translations were translucent and acceptable to English readers of his age, and translating for his age should also be his focus. Therefore, he was never interested in following the steps of Herbert Giles or James Legge. His translations must be different and unique, must avoid archaic syntax, and, as Eliot says,

must "represent a rebellion against the romantic tradition which insists that a poet should be continuously inspired, which allows the poet to present bad verse as poetry, but denies him the right to make good verse…" (*Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* xx). They must also be beneficial to modern English poetry. *Cathay* became a magnificent product of the twentieth-century poetry because Pound found the language of his own time to translate it. In other words, classical Chinese poetry would not have impressed Western readers so much if Pound had not translated them successfully into modern English. Therefore, Eliot's argument that each generation must translate for itself should be convincing and understandable. Furthermore, Pound's translation must sound natural in English of his own time, not in an archaic tone of the earlier time. That is why Eliot says Pound's translations seem to be translucencies. *Cathay* proves that whether a translation is good or bad depends upon the translator's writing skills, poetic talent, and mastery of the target language. It also depends upon his keen sense to the urgent need of modern poetry. In other words, Pound found through his translations something permanent in human nature, the desire for fresh expressions, and he became modern for that. The success of *Cathay* is that Pound made it more readable and accessible because he kept the flavor of the original that presents fresh images different and unusual to poets writing in English. He entered into the marrow of Chinese poetry out of his love and willingness to be influenced by it. This success shows Pound's distinctive poetic vision because "no one can work intelligently with a foreign matter without being affected by it…" (Eliot, *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* xvii).

The importance of *Cathay* also lies in that it reflects what Pound proposed in Imagism, as evidenced in his letter of June 24, 1916 to Wyndham Lewis after he heard that Lewis's colonel had wanted to know about Imagism, "If you like I will send you a copy of *Cathay* so

that the colonel may be able to understand what is imagisme" (Moody 272, Paige 83). In an essay on translation, poet and critic Sam Hamill offers his comments on the importance of *Cathay*, "There probably is not a significant poet publishing in the U.S. today who has not, at one time or another, 'gone to school' on Pound's *Cathay*" (309). He goes on to talk about the loss and gain in translations of Chinese poetry:

> The best translations of classical Chinese poetry are those in which the translator has remained aware of making a *poem* in English. Most often, the "Englishing" has transformed a very formal object into an apparently casually-constructed verse form. Rhymed five and seven syllable lines have been transformed into irregular unrhymed lines cast in informal, colloquial diction. Whatever the original Chinese has lost in sound and formality, it has gained—in good translation—in clarity of feeling; what it has lost in density—indeed, often almost an impenetrability of compression—it has regained in accessibility and limpidity. (311)

Hamill's explication of translation should serve as an endnote to help readers understand Eliot's remark on Pound as "the inventor of Chinese poetry."

In fact, in the process of translation, Pound must attempt to create or invent because at certain points there may be no accurate presentations of the original in the target language. It has been commonly understood that translation is always a loss or a treason because inevitability always exists in translation. Idioms, sounds, grammar and rhythms in the original may have to be lost. The Japanese scholar Okakura Kukuzo says, "Translation is always a treason, and as a Ming author observes, can at its best be only the reverse side of a brocade,—all the threads are there, but not the subtlety of colour or design" (48). The Chinese analogy of translation to brocade is echoed in one used by famed scholar Maynard

Mack in his essay, "A Note on Translation": "The best analogy is to imagine a Van Gogh painting reproduced in the medium of tempera, etching, or engraving: the 'picture' remains, but the intricate interanimation of volumes with colorings with brushstrokes has disappeared" (A4). Because of the inevitability of loss in translating classical Chinese poetry that "lacks distinctions of gender, of singular and plural, of *a* and *the*, and … also of tenses," Mack points out that "the pressure of the English translator to rearrange, straighten out, and fill in to 'make sense' for his or her readers remains strong" (A9). So, whether a translation is the reverse side of a brocade or the reproduction of a Van Gogh painting, Mack, in view of a respect that in Chinese there are the "highly charged images generating something very like a magnetic field of potential meanings that cannot be got at in English without bleeding away much of the voltage" (A11), believes that "the best practical advice for those of us who must read these marvelous poems in English translations is to focus intently on these images and ask ourselves what there is in them or in their effect on each other that produces the electricity" (A11). Mack also advises, "To that extent, we can compensate for a part of our losses, learn something positive about the immense explosive powers of imagery, and rest easy in the secure knowledge that translation even in the mode of the short poem brings us (despite losses) closer to the work itself than not reading it at all" (A11).

Mack's practical advice indicates that translations, which have some losses, also have gains through learning something positive. Therefore, there should be a common ground that a translator can never transform the poetic format, rhymes, and linguistic distinctions into English. He has to find other ways to get the real sense or the spirit of the original poem to compensate for the loss, and his effort is to help a non-native reader experience in the target language what a native reader does in the source language.

It is certain that when translations are successfully transformed into the target language of our own time, poets will be receptive to the influence of foreign literature and culture, about which Eliot elaborates emphatically:

> [T]he influence of oriental literature upon poets is usually through translations. That there has been some influence of poetry of the East in the last century and a half is undeniable: to instance only English poetry, and in our own time, the poetical translations from the Chinese made by Ezra Pound, and those made by Arthur Waley, have probably been read by every poet writing in English. It is obvious that through individual interpreters, specifically gifted for appreciating a remote culture, every literature may influence every other; and I emphasise this. (*Notes towards the Definition of Culture* 117)

Eliot's emphasis on the influence of translation is an important key for us to understand criticism of Pound's translation of classical Chinese poetry, for Pound was not only a translator gifted in appreciating classical Chinese poetry but also a poet gifted in gaining from translation something useful to enrich modern English poetry. It is undeniable that his translation of classical Chinese poetry has exerted its influence on modern English poetry, and his rendition of Li Po's "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" surely exemplifies the best translation Hamill talks about. It is also a good example for discussion of loss and gain in translation. For instance, the original poem has a compressed pattern of five monosyllabic characters in each line, but Pound could not transplant this pattern because the English language has a different phonetic system. Also, as a modern poet, Pound must discard in translation the rhymes that might make Li Po's poem sound like one in dated Romantic or Victorian style. To make classical Chinese poetry welcome by modern English

readers, he had to render Li Po into English that met his need and the need of modern readers who wanted to learn something fresh or positive from a foreign culture and literature. He had to break down the fence of linguistic characteristics and focus instead on the essence of the original, the meaning conveyed by or hidden in images, and the subtlety of words. He also had to experiment it in the free verse style that would reflect his individuality in using the English language and his effort in making poetry new.

In a way, Pound was a poet who was influenced by his translation of classical Chinese poetry and, in turn, exerted his influence onto classical Chinese poetry or invented it for modern English poetry. Since an interaction exists in Pound's poetry and translation, it would be a mistake to consider them separately. To sum up, the translation of classical Chinese poetry challenged Pound to rethink the nature of modern English poetry and showed his talent in tackling cultural complexities and his desire in making poetry and translation new for his own time. In fact, Pound's desire to "make it new" was to remake the old or foreign to bring forth the new for modern poetry. Without the influence of this modernist master's translation, modern English poetry would have had to take a longer time to break away with its didactic expressions and graceful trivialities in the early twentieth century. In 1927 Ford expressed again his fondness of Pound's *Cathay* in his review of Pound's *Collected Poems*, published in *New York Herald Tribune Books*: "For me the most beautiful volume of poems in the world is Ezra's *Cathay*—poems supposedly from the Chinese, but does it matter whether they are from the Chinese any more than it matters whether Fitzgerald's Omar or Baudelaire's Poe are from the East or the West respectively?" (Homberger 221). With Ford's remarks in consideration, we can say for sure that Pound's

translation has served as a meeting point of East and West not only in translational but, more significantly, in transnational and cultural exchanges.

Notes

[1] In "Pound, *Haiku*, and the Image," Earl Miner states, "There is no reason for thinking that Pound knew anything about Japanese poetry before he joined the Poet's Club of T. E. Hulme and F. S. Flint just before the First World War. But once Hulme and Flint had shown Pound the way, once they had shown him the value of the contemporary French poets and introduced him to *haiku*, Pound was soon a more eager student than they, and he announced his 'discovery' to the readers of poetry on both sides of the Atlantic" (117).

[2] Yoshinobu Hakutani asserts that "Pound's most likely source of information [about haiku] was Noguchi. He first corresponded with Pound and then met Pound, along with Yeats, when he gave a series of lectures on Japanese poetry in England in early 1914. The relationship between Pound and Noguchi began in 1911, when Noguchi sent his fifth collection of English poems, *The Pilgrimage* (1908 and 1909) in two volumes, to Pound…" (51-52).

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Pedagogy

Task-Based Language Teaching in an ESL Class

By Hanna Kim

Introduction

Since the era of globalization, English has been a global language, and the number of learners of a second language (L2) has increased worldwide, especially in the United States. According to the American community survey report by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 42 million people speak English as a Second Language (ESL). In this paper, I define L2 as not only a second language used in a host country but also as a language learned in addition to a first language (L1). As a language teacher in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field, I seek methods for how I can effectively teach non-native speakers in various ways in an ESL class. One of the most authentic and natural approaches that I have found to help learners improve communicative skills is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

Many SLA scholars have demonstrated that the pivotal aim of TBLT is to improve communicative competence. Following this aim, TBLT appeared as an alternative to conventional methods such as Grammar Translation, the Audiolingual Method, or Present–Practice–Produce (PPP) (Ellis and Shintani 134). As TBLT was introduced to the SLA field, it was supported by many respected authors and educators, such as Rod Ellis and David Nunan. In one study, Paul Leeming conducted his research with Japanese university students to show emergent leadership in TBLT lessons on group communication and improvement in Target Language (TL) language learning. However, there are also criticisms

of the TBLT in terms of feasibility in classroom contexts. According to William Littlewood, it is hard to implement the TBLT approach in class since teachers and learners usually consider language as an "object" to be learned, instead of a "tool" for communicating with others. Other educators, such as Martin East, argue that grammatical concepts are not wholly covered in class.

Nevertheless, TBLT has a variety of benefits and in this paper, I will examine the feasibility and efficiency of TBLT approach in an ESL class by introducing an example of a lesson plan based on TBLT. I also suggest pedagogical implications as the essential strength of TBLT for ESL learners.

Strength of Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT helps learners focus on more meaningful communication by giving them tasks in order to improve their communicative ability. There are many types of tasks such as jigsaw tasks, problem-solving tasks, opinion-exchanges, information-gaps, and decision-making tasks. Some examples of tasks include preparing a meal, ordering food in a café, finding the differences in two pictures, and problem solving.

This style of instruction can provide learners with the following benefits (Ellis and Shintani 134-159). First, TBLT instruction gives students opportunities to perform real-life meaningful tasks in authentic situations. Second, TBLT instruction can develop students' communicative competence when they actively communicate in a TL to complete the task. In this sense, this approach is communication-based and learner-driven rather than teacher-centered. Third, the process of learning focuses not only on meaning but also pays attention to form by teaching grammar. The difference from traditional grammar teaching is that

TBLT focuses on the communication that tasks include which is defined as 'focus on form' (Ellis and Natsuko Shintani). Last, TBLT instruction gives students both input (through teaching grammar with a model example) and out-processing (through encouraging them to complete the tasks). Overall, TBLT highlights more holistic learning.

An example of a Task-Teach-Task TBLT lesson plan

This study specifically focuses on the Task-Teach-Task framework, which is one of the approaches of TBLT. I introduce here a useful example of a TBLT lesson plan. I chose for the lesson the topic of preparing a Christmas dinner party because Christmas Day is related to a real-life context. I targeted young adult and adult learners because many immigrants have increasingly come to the U.S. and ESL adult learners may have more interest in learning a TL in a real-situation setting.

The procedure of the lesson follows the sequence: Pre-task, Task 1, Teach (grammar), Task 2, and Post-task. In the pre-task stage, learners are required to discuss the topic, and brainstorm relevant vocabulary in order to move into the task. The instructor elicits the day's topic by asking further questions. In Task 1, students are given a problem-solving instruction sheet with a task sheet to complete the task of planning a Christmas party with a limited budget, including generating the lists of ingredients and foods. The reading passage includes sentences containing examples of the future tense so that students can inductively identify the future tense through meaningful context examples. They are allowed to work in groups to perform tasks. To ensure TL use, the teacher walks around the class while students are working, writes repeated grammatical structure errors from students, and gives them feedback at the end of class. This task develops implicit knowledge by using the future tense when students talk about their party events and share their decision with the

whole class. Before moving into Task 2, the teacher also gives a form-focused activity, such as the future tense practice in this lesson. The teacher gives students a model to become familiar with forms and help them use formulaic expressions (such as I am going to do) included in the grammar of the next stage. This input encourages students' autonomy to identify the future tense themselves and gives them meaningful and memorable knowledge.

Linking back to Task 1 where students decide to choose foods for a party, Task 2 continues with preparing for a Christmas party. Learners are asked to complete a topic-related task in pairs or groups. While Task 1 focuses on speaking, Task 2 focuses on writing by including a section about writing an informal invitation email in an authentic situation. As the instructor gives a model example first, the language learning in this part of the class includes extensive L2 input. The sample email can help students develop an understanding of email content for a party invitation by focusing on meaning. Through the model email, Task 2 focuses on email formulaic expressions and helps the learners identify these expressions. Students also develop their understanding of rules (referred to as grammatical competence) while writing their invitation letters by applying future tense grammatical rules that they learned in the previous grammar lesson. Task 2 will help learners improve implicit knowledge by writing the future tense and informal email formulaic expressions for the task.

For the lesson, I prepared two tasks: a problem-solving task (making a shopping list) and a writing task (writing an invitation letter). These two meaning-focused tasks can help learners develop communicative interaction and collaborate with focal language features (the future tense). The tasks provided in class also center on a variety of language features, such as reading problem-solving instructions and a model email, a communicative speaking activity, giving a presentation, writing an invitation email, and learning vocabulary related

to parties and formulaic email expressions. In the post-task activity, learners perform and present their tasks, such as invitation email, in a class. As an option, task presentations may be evaluated by either individuals or pairs or groups.

Conclusion

This pedagogical approach of TBLT is feasible and applicable for ESL learners through the example of a lesson plan introduced in this paper. Grammatical concepts are explained through teaching in the Task-Teach-Task approach. I summarize four main strengths of TBLT: chances to do authentic meaningful tasks in class, students' communicative competence in a TL, focus on meaning and form by embracing them in the tasks, and improvement of both input and out-processing. The role of the instructor with this method is more of an assistant than a lecturer, and the tasks are not strictly teacher-controlled, but guided by learners. One of the achievable benefits of TBLT is that it can be successfully implemented in a mixed ethnicity ESL classroom. Learners can actively participate in classroom activities, learning various cultural contents with semi-guided tasks through pair and group work, role-plays, and performances. ESL learners can develop positive attitudes and behaviors toward language learning through TBLT.

Finally, I would suggest further discussion on how to apply TBLT in large-scale classrooms with a large number of students since it is challenging to monitor and assist learners' tasks. Teachers need to expect cultural conflicts between non-native speakers and address applying the TBLT theory into meaningful practice more clearly and directly. Despite these limitations, TBLT is useful not only to use the TL in authentic settings for communicative competence, but also to help learners' linguistic proficiency. Therefore, teachers should consider applying TBLT in their ESL classes.

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Appendix A

Task 1: Making a shopping list for a Christmas dinner party

Group Work: "Let us prepare for a Christmas party!"

You are party planners!

Work with three other students.

You **are going to** have a Christmas party next week and you are going to prepare a meal to share with people.

The number of people who **are coming** to the party is around 10-15.

our friends **will** bring the turkey, desserts, and drinks so you **are not going to** prepare them.

You **will** prepare at least 3 dishes, and you can only spend $50 for buying the food that you will cook. Decide which of the following ingredients and items you **will** take.

(Remember, you cannot take more than $50 with you.)

Shopping Lists:	**Possible options for the foods:**
Mixed greens (one pack): $3	Sweet pumpkin soup
Tomatoes (5): $3	Potato soup
Pumpkin (1): $2	Mixed green salads
Bread, 22 slices (20 oz): $2	Mixed bean salads
Eggs (12): $3	Omelet
Carrots (5): $1	Mashed potatoes
Canned beans (1 can): $1	Grilled shrimps
Potatoes (1 bag): $3,5	Garlic and olive oil spaghetti (Aglio e olio)
Garlic (1head): $1	Cream spaghetti (Carbonara)
Pasta (1pack): $2	Tomato Pasta
Shrimps (1 lb / around 0.5 kg, around 8 shrimps): $ 8	Your own creation:
Butter (8 oz): $2.5	_____
Olive oil (1 bottle/ 16 oz): $8	

Balsamic salad dressing (1 bottle/ 12 oz): $4 Milk (1/2 gal): $2 Cream (1 pack): $3 Salt (4 oz): $ 1 Black pepper (2 oz): $ 3	Your own creation: _____
Your decisions:	**Your decisions:**
I am going to buy ~ I am going to buy ~ I am going to buy ~ I am going to buy ~	**I am going to cook**~ I am going to cook ~ I am going to cook ~ I am going to cook ~

Appendix B

Guided practice: Future tense

Change the verbs to will/be going to/ be ~ing

How to form the future tense?

Subject + **will + (not) + present simple tense**

("I will bake a pie, but I will not bake a cake.")

Subject + **is (not) going to + present simple tense**

("She is going to fry potatoes but she is not going to fry eggs.")

Subject + **is + present simple tense + ~ing**

(We are tasting the beans, but we are not tasting the pumpkin.")

Appendix C

Task 2: Sample Party Invitation Letter

Invitation to a Christmas dinner party!

1711, Anderson Rd, 16th December 2019.

Oxford.

Hi Friends!

As most of you know next week **it is going to be Christmas Day.**

I would like to invite you to join us for a Christmas dinner party on Wednesday, December 25th at 6 pm.

I hope you **will** come and have a good time.

The party **will** be at our house and it **will** be informal.

We'll have a big meal, some games, and Christmas cheer.

Friends are welcome to come as well.

If you're able to bring a snack to share, please do.

If it's a busy week for you, just bring yourself.

I hope you will be able to come.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you can make it.

Looking forward to seeing you,

Best wishes,

Hanna

Special thanks to the faculty, administration, and staff of Blue Mountain College for hosting the 2020 Conference