POMPA: Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association

Editor, Lorie Watkins

Volume 36
2019

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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-sixth volume of the *Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association (POMPA).* Mississippi Valley State University hosted the 2019 conference March 1-2. Conference organizer Dr. Zheng arranged a lovely banquet that featured keynote speaker Dr. Kendall Dunkelberg, Professor of English and Chair of the Department of Language, Literature & Philosophy at Mississippi University for Women, where he also directs the Creative Writing low-residency MFA program and the Eudora Welty Writers' Symposium.

In addition to the wonderfully diverse panels, there was also a session on publishing presented by the University Press of Mississippi. Many thanks to Dr. Zheng and his faculty for hosting another successful MPA meeting.

2019 Program

Sutton Administration Building (Credit: John Zheng)

The 2019 Mississippi Philological Association Annual Conference

Sutton Administration Building, Mississippi Valley State University

Program
Friday, March 1, 2019

Sutton Building (2nd Fl, Sutton Administration Building)**:**
Registration: 12:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

1:00-2:10 p.m.

Sutton 230 (Writing Center Lab): Special Session (Invited): Book Publishing
Presenters: University Press of Mississippi

Sutton 202-Session 1: African American Literature
Moderator: helen crump, Jackson State University
Presenters: Shahara'Tova Dente, Mississippi Valley State University: "'This is America': Hip Hop, Activism, and Ally-ship in Angie Thomas' The Hate U Give"
Courtney Clark, Miss University for Women: "The Dual Perspective of Race in Minrose Gwin's *Promise*"
Ariel Taylor, Jackson State University: "Reversed Gender Roles and Feminist Theories in Harriet E. Wilson's 'Our Nig'"

Sutton 203-Session 2: Creative Writing
Moderator: John J. Han, Missouri Baptist University
Presenters: James Fowler, University of Central Arkansas: "The Savant" and other poems
Jared Lemus, Mississippi State University: "Ave Maria"
LaTonzia N. Evans, Mississippi Valley State University: "How Man Received His Arches"
Caleb Alexander-McKinzie, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "Obligation"

Sutton 232-Session 3: American Literature
Moderator: E. Kate Stewart, University of Arkansas at Monticello
Presenters: Lorie Watkins, William Carey University: "'For man's enlightenment he lived': Colonel Sartoris's Dream in *The Unvanquished* and *Flags in the Dust*"
Ben Fisher, University of Mississippi: "'Too many dangerous things': Herman Landon's Grey Phantom Novels"
James B. Potts, III, Mississippi College: "The Native American Place in Faulkner's Jeremiad"

2:20-3:30 p.m.

Sutton 202-Session 4: World Literature

Moderator: Lorie Watkins, William Carey University
Presenters: John J. Han, Missouri Baptist University: "Sowing the Seeds of Western Haiku: The Early Contributions of Basil Hall Chamberlain, Lafcadio Hearn, and Yone Noguchi"
Ian Pittman, William Carey University: "No Way Out: The Futility of Resistance Language in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*"
Exodus Brownlow, Mississippi University for Women: "Research Notes on Richard Wright's Native Son: For Black Writers Who Dream of Writing the Happy Endings"

Sutton 203-Session 5: Creative Writing
Moderator: James Fowler, University of Central Arkansas
Presenters: Jo A. Baldwin, Mississippi Valley State University: "The Widow Hess"
Joseph Goss, PRCMS: "A Few Introspective Poems"
Brooke Turner, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "Silence"
Grayson Treat, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "Whip-Poor-Wills Sing Late at Night and Early in the Morning."

Sutton 232-Session 6: Panel Discussion: "Up From A Cotton Patch … Revisited"
Moderator: C. Sade Turnipseed, Mississippi Valley State University
Presenters: C. Sade Turnipseed
Johnny D. Jones, Mississippi Valley State University
Mark A. Dugo, Mississippi Valley State University
vince venturini, Mississippi Valley State University

3:40-4:50 p.m.

Sutton 202-Session 7: Creative Writing
Moderator: Rusty Rogers, University of Central Arkansas
Presenters: William S. Hays, University of Mississippi: "Thor" and other selected original poems
Rusty Rogers, University of Central Arkansas: "Big Bogey"
Jeffrey Condran, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "Claire, Wading into the Danube by Night"
John J. Han, Missouri Baptist University: "Autumn in the Ozarks: Haiku and Other Poems"

Sutton 203-Session 8: African American Literature
Moderator: Mamie Osborne, Mississippi Valley State University
Presenters: RaShell R. Smith-Spears / Shanna Smith, Jackson State University: "An American Justice Story: The Power of Touch in *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *American Marriage*"
Destiney Sharkey, Mississippi Valley State University: "Redemption's Grace in *Silver Sparrow*"
Deborah Purnell, Mississippi Valley State University: "Intersection of Classism and Black Womanhood in *Silver Sparrow*"

Sutton 232-Session 9: African American Literature
Moderator: Barbara JP Washington, Mississippi Valley State University
Presenters: Tara Waltman, William Carey University: "Peace to the Sixty Million and More: Denver's Self-Ownership in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*"
helen crump, Jackson State University: "'Coming Back Like Daughters': Black Girlhoods and Ancestral & Afrofuturistic Connections"
Kimberly Allen, Mississippi Valley State University: "Dead or Alive-*ish*: An Exploration of Black Women on Screen"

5:00-5:40 p.m.
Keynote Speech
President's Board Room, Sutton 4th Fl.,

Presiding: **Professor Bettye Farmer**
MVSU Director of Writing Project

Welcome: **Dr. Elizabeth Evans**
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mississippi Valley State University

Introducing the Speaker: **Professor Bettye Farmer**
Keynote Speaker: **Kendall Dunkelberg**

Dr. Kendall Dunkelberg is Professor of English and Chair of the Department of Language, Literature & Philosophy at Mississippi University for Women, where he also directs the Creative Writing low-residency MFA program and the Eudora Welty Writers' Symposium. He is the author of the textbook: *A Writer's Craft: Multi-Genre Creative Writing*, published by Palgrave/MacMillan in 2017. His third collection of poetry, *Barrier Island Suite* was published in 2016 by Texas Review Press. His second collection, *Time Capsules*, was published by Texas Review Press in 2009, and his first collection, *Landscapes and Architectures*, was published by Florida Literary Foundation Press in 2001.

5:50-7:00 p.m.
Dinner & MPA Business
President's Board Room, Sutton 4th Fl.,
Dr. Lorie Watkins

Saturday, March 2, 2019

Sutton Building: Registration: 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.
2nd Fl, Sutton Administration Building

9:00-10:10 a.m.

Sutton 202-Session 10: British Literature
Moderator: Ben Fisher, University of Mississippi
Presenters: Tera Pate, The University of Alabama: "Effeminacy, Slavery, and the Fashion Trade in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*"
Kenneth Mitchell, Southeastern Louisiana University: "When Was the End of Romanticism?"
Christy Cannon, Mississippi State University: "Using Questions as a Technique: Defamiliarization in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*"

Sutton 203-Session 11: Creative Writing
Moderator: Thomas B. Richardson, New Hope High School /MUW
Presenters: Lois Baer Barr, Lake Forest College: "Poems of Biblical Commentary"
Allison Chestnut, William Carey University: "Queen for a Day and Other Stories"
Exodus Brownlow, Mississippi University for Women: "Stories from My Grandma's Body"
Lawrence Sledge, Jackson State University: "Coming into Realization"

Sutton 232-Session 12: British Drama
Moderator: Robert Harland, Mississippi State University
Presenters: Sara Creel, Mississippi State University: "Incontinence in *The Revenger's Tragedy*"
Jessica Sherman, Mississippi State University: "Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*: Exoticism within Humanistic Ambition"
Nancy Kerns, Blue Mountain College: "Empowering Emasculation: Shakespeare's Deconstruction of Edgar's Masculinity in *King Lear*"

10:20-11:30 a.m.

Sutton 202-Session 13: American Literature
Moderator: James B. Potts, III, Mississippi College
Presenters: Linda E. McDaniel, William Carey University: "Antebellum Slapstick and Politics in Simms's *As Good As a Comedy*"
Alan Brown, University of West Alabama: "Poe Goes to the Movies: Filming the Un-filmable"
Mikki Galliher, Blue Mountain College: "Gender and Empathy in *Hagar, A Story for Today* and *The Scarlet Letter*"
E. Kate Stewart, University of Arkansas at Monticello: "Perry Mason, Della Street, and Damsels in Distress"

Sutton 203-Session 14: World Literature
Moderator: Lois Baer Barr, Lake Forest College
Presenters: Robert Harland, Mississippi State University: "The High Priest of Wisdom in the Land of Blasphemy: How Miguel de Unamuno Misunderstood What He Knew Too Well"
Ruben Gonzalez / Delilah Dotremon, Alabama State University: "Highlighting the Work of the Irreverent Anti-Poets: Nicanor Parra, Ruben Gonzalez, and Francisco Quevedo"
Melanie R. Anderson, Delta State University: "Alien Resistance in Margaret St. Clair's Short Fiction"

Sutton 232-Session 15: Creative Writing
Moderator: Jeffrey Condran, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Presenters: Thomas B. Richardson, New Hope High School & MUW: "'Slowly Sinking to the Bottom of the Ocean' and Other Poems"
Madison Brown, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "Ambivalencia Afectiva"

KateLin Carsrud, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: “Hands Change My World”
Kathy R. Pitts, Jackson State University: “Kerosene Lanterns and Iron Deer: The Bayou Daughter”

Creative Poetic Works

“God the Poet” and Other Poems

By Lois Baer Barr

God the Poet

lures Abraham
out of Ur into Canaan
with rhyme, resonance,
metaphor and simile
your seed will be like the stars,
like the sand, count them if you can
potent stuff for an impotent man

There’s the rule of three
and the rule of seven
seven days for creation
and Moses’s ordination
twelve sons for Ishmael
twelve sons for Jacob
symmetry
forty is for extended stories
flood or desert sojourn

repetition
in Genesis confounds
which day did God make Adam?
repetition
in Exodus clarifies
Ten Commandments twice carved
Deuteronomy reprises the laws

prefiguration provides precision
God tells Abraham from the start
Egypt will be a four hundred-year trap
names rooted in illness and doom
foretell death for Mahlon and Kilion,
Naomi’s sons in the Book of Ruth

onomatopoeia resounds:
says Job, *potzpatzeni*,
God has shaken me

weekly a portion of Torah, then Haftorah
in Psalms and Proverbs acrostics remind
me of the order of the Hebrew letters
and each week I learn a word, like *gamel*
which means camel, discover the ineffable
and each week I learn a trope from God the poet

Hagar

Sarah snores. I know the smell of her coverlets and clothes.
We eat the same food, bleed on the same days,
laugh at her husband's stories. But God won't open her womb.

It's warm by Abraham. My legs are wet with the sap of his loins.
He breathes the deep breath of peaceful sleep;
my body aches from his urgent pushing.

My breasts swell, I daydream, fill my belly with lamb stew,
work when I please, sing when I work.
Sarah slaps the smirk off my face; I flee to Egypt.

An angel sends me back to bear Abraham's son. Says he'll be
savage, bold. His warrior sons will defend me when I'm old.
I shall prevail, and I, not Sarah, will give birth by the new moon.

Songs from the Threshing Floor

1. Ruth

I lie here on the threshing floor
sore from the work of gleaning wheat
I've never taken what's left for the poor
but I know a man's scent and his heat

2. Boaz

this bed's been empty just a short while
my eyes well with tears; a bride is at my side
longing aches in the marrow of my bones
my heart beats so fast, I feel I might die

3. Seeds

a barley grain is offered
gathered by Boaz

corn barley wheat
she lies at his feet
barley wheat corn
from their seed David's born
wheat corn barley
swollen grains of prophecy

In the Beginning Bialystok

Their eyes were on the future
a piano for my mother
dapper clothes for her brother
ballet lessons for baby sister.
About Bialystok,
not a word.

Mother begged,
"*Derstell mir, Bubbeh*,
Tell me war stories,
like Grandma Dodge."
The upstairs neighbor told
tales of shady verandas
corseted women in hoop skirts
men on thoroughbreds
mint juleps in silver cups.
"Tell me war stories,"
my mother asked and
alterbubby Adel relented
recounted a pogrom.
Mom had black dreams
she would never tell me.

No one talked about Bialystok
Where bubby's father
went to the ritual bath
every day before sitting down
to write Torah
and the *alterbubby* Adel sold poultry
and eggs, wrung chicken's necks,
plucked them, soaked them in salt
washed her hands, dried them
kept the books, taught Bubby to sew.
Perhaps a few blocks away
my grandfather apprenticed as a tailor
and sang as a cantor in *schul*.

Before he left Bialystok
my *zayde* went
to my grandmother's father
bought a parchment prayer scroll
he didn't need so he could ask
where the Torah scribe's
pretty daughter Itke

had gone in the *Golden Land.*
Came to Louisville to find her.

Calman Kagan, *Soyfer Torah,*
died in Bialystok and was
buried there.
Four children got away
Avram, Schajne, Rafoyel,and Itke
Who soon became Abe,
Sam, Ralph and my bubby
Edith.
Then the doors closed so
Bubbles, the baby,
went to Buenos Aires
with her older sister's kids.
Rochel died in Auschwitz.
But Bubby never talked
about Bialystok.

Bereshit, Bialystok…
Jews built clock tower and market
Bialostoker bricks
clay from the Biala river
Bialostoker synagogue with
Byzantine domes where
women and men worshipped
on the same floor
bialies big as a child's head
baked fresh each morning
and onion pretzels
Shalom Aleichem library.
Daily they read Yiddish papers.
Yiddish theatre
weavers and tailors
millers and brewers

Louisville Courier Journal
July 1941: "Nazis Shot
800 on the Square." Not a word
said about the ones
prodded into the synagogue
the great domed synagogue
Bialystoker bricks of yellow
tall arched windows
locked doors.
They set them afire

men, women, children.
Nisht tzvai toisent.
Not two thousand.
Not a word.

Glossary:
Derstell mir, Bubbeh – Tell me, Grandma.
Alterbubby – great grandmother
Schul–synagogue
Zayde– grandfather
Soyfer Torah – Torah scribe
Bereshit – In the beginning
Bialy– boiled bread like a bagel, but flatter and without a hole
Nisht tzvai toisent – not two thousand

“Living as Korean American” and Other Poems

By John J. Han

Living as a Korean American
(A senryu sequence)

self-styled redneck—
he guffaws when I say
I’m a yellowneck

the same question—
he asks me what’ll happen
to North Korea

pain in the neck—
he thinks I like his greetings
in Korean

a stranger—
he wants to know where I’m
originally from

a stranger’s praise—
with a smirk, he says,
you speak English good

Fu Manchu
he is a Chinese
well, he looks like me

Chinese restaurant
the waitress greets me
in Chinese

Chinese restaurant
another waitress asks me,
Are you Chinese?

Too Slow, Too Fast, Too Slow
(A haibun)

Already late for the lunch appointment with my colleague, I choose a back road which seems less traveled. The speed limit: 35 miles. Traffic flows well until I follow an out-of-state car that moves 30 miles per hour. Both of our cars stop where a crane digs ground on the street.

crawling traffic
stop-and-go, stop-and-go,
stop

Two minutes later, we are cleared to go, but the car ahead of me now drives 28 miles per hour. After tailgating it for a mile, I take a right turn, finally feeling free. On the next 35 mph road, I feel rushed, exceeding the speed limit by twenty miles. Seconds later, I see a police car approaching from the other direction. I slow down to 35, but the officer turns his headlights on and off for me. As we pass each other, he reaches out his hand from the car window, gesturing me to slow down. He further warns me by turning his strobe bar on and off. My heart beats faster and faster. I wonder if he will turn around to pull me over.

police—
we hire them,
they ticket us

The road is too narrow for the police officer to make a U-turn, so I am saved from the inconvenience and embarrassment of being cited. Heaving a huge sigh of relief, I slow down until my car moves 25 miles per hour. Looking frustrated, the driver behind me tailgates me. When we diverge, he expresses his anger by honking at me. What a morning!

winter sky
Canada geese honk
and fly away

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

Flight from the Floating World
(A haibun)

Celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain committed suicide in early June 2018. I did not know him personally, but the news of his passing brought memories of him as a popular TV personality. He was sixty-one. Three weeks later, a missionary to Nicaragua, whom I knew indirectly, died of stomach cancer. He was sixty-one. Like both of them, I was born in 1956.

sunrise...
searching in today's paper
obituaries

Today, I am on my way to Central Europe on a business trip, annoyed by the long lines at the airport and by the prospect of flying for nine hours.

boarding the plane…
passengers share the same fate
in the air

Our plane's take-off is successful, and the aircraft soon ascends until the ground completely disappears from our view.

flying above the clouds
thoughts from the world below
ignored for a while

Snapshots from Venice, Italy
(A haibun)

Based on its past as Europe's foremost trading post, I imagined Venice to be a mega city bustling with merchants. My recent visit to this popular tourist destination—a location made famous by Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*—has shattered my misconceptions about it. The population stands at fewer than 300,000. The presence of many tourists also makes it seem much larger than it is. No road for automobiles exists on the islands of Venice; one can either walk or take a water bus, a water taxi, or a gondola.

narrow alleys
eyes turn to the sky hidden
behind buildings

Venice attracts people from all over the world, but they come here mainly for sightseeing—perhaps to see the city's glorious past before it vanishes underwater.

unending crowds
bumping into people
in front, in the back

The San Marco Square is a main attraction. Hundreds of tourists take pictures of the historic buildings, towers, sea, and themselves. Squatting on the ground, a young man tries to capture a building's reflection in the puddle with his cell phone. With a smile, a young woman takes a selfie. A dozen awe-struck Chinese tourists stand together taking pictures of the same monument. Seeking easy food, a flock of pigeons land but, pushed by the crowds, fly away seconds later.

Piazza San Marco
a photographer attacked
by an angry pigeon

Towers and building walls feature the winged lion—a symbol of Venice. The image reminds visitors of the city's illustrious past, but few people today remember the Republic of Venice, which flourished for a millennium.

Venice alleys
human voices barely drown
out the sound of waves

A visit to a restaurant near the square can be a confusing experience. The food tastes acceptable, but the bill includes a cover charge of 2.5 euros per person; simply occupying a seat entails a fee. In the meantime, all three waiters in my restaurant watch a World Cup game, pitying me for not liking "football." Because none of them comes to pick up money, I take it to them. The bill has a notice in bold print, "The tip is not included," which makes me leave a 15% tip only because I am not sure. Amid fatigue, I forgot the fact that tipping is not required in Italy.

the way to Venice
a bus sign reads, "Beware
of pickpockets."

After staying in the city for two hours, I decide to leave it behind. Granted, Venice exemplifies the extraordinary inventiveness and creativity of Western civilization. However, the crowds suffocate me, people who smile to themselves while taking a selfie look weird, and I have enough pictures to prove that I have been to Venice—for the first and last time.

Canal Grande
Venice's floating world
at sunset

“Obit” and Other Poems

By James Fowler

Obit

—for David

You were easy to ignore,
awkward, shoe-gazing.
Even during college
you drifted at the edge,
meekness with a camera.
To those who would listen
you opened the floodgates,
talked politics, sports.
It wasn’t quite dialogue,
more in-depth newscast.
Here lay your passion,
you a born journalist
covering others’ lives,
putting papers to bed with
never a mate in sight.
The dues were compounded:
years as copy drone
obscured your finer gifts.
At last luck conceded,
with *The Stars and Stripes*
you’d pedalled as a boy
drafting you through Europe
to editing in Washington.
Swollen from frustrations,
diabetic but improving,
you stocked a candy dish
for colleagues unsure
what to make of you
who camped at the office
and knew every story.

The late night in question
you took the last train
and rose to the street

for the lonely leg home.
A block off your route
(to buy yet more papers?)
you came to a car lot,
and there it all ended.
The neighbors heard shouting;
the cops found a body:
some fatal assailant
had battered you faceless.

We know it beforehand,
what the meek inherit.
And sweeping for culprits
if we round up ourselves,
it's just some mistake;
we're really just witnesses,
dim background witnesses.

So with the case in point:
this one who made headlines
now taxes the memory.

Sea Level

Coming down the Smokies, green and misty,
called to parts I've traveled, rivers rafted,
called beyond, long arc of sister cities,
then the final drop to coastal flatlands:
I heed my brother's call, himself called from
the Rockies to the very edge of things.
I come for him, or so I tell myself,
my duty to our father's grieving son.
He knew the man better, kept more in touch;
I meant to bridge the distance, man to man,
but sensed we mainly would have disagreed.

From the limo I note the pausing cars,
strangers paying respect, a good custom.
"Norm always hated that," his wife recalls.
I like Kathie, admire her strength to make
a newly vacant home a welcome place.

After the burial, after the luncheon,
she brings out snapshots, partly for my sake;
there's one that's great: a month or so previous,
dad and grandkid—my niece—balloons and smiles.

Later we head to Carolina Beach
to visit Ed, dad's friend for thirty years.
I never thought I'd scan the Atlantic
from a high-rise this summer. My brother
mulls his stalling career and fresh divorce
as Ed (like dad, an IBM man) paints
the way things used to be. His eulogy
is like some indirect bequest, a watch
or pocketknife transmitted through a friend.

As darkness renders up the constant waves,
Ed's wife marks the visit with her own gift,
a choice of shells to take inland with us.

We each pick a sand dollar, whole, unchipped.

To the Stars through Rhetoric

—after perusing World War II magazine ads

For a brighter, freer tomorrow simply
buy what is sold in good faith
that the receding tide of malice
may reveal the inundated X marking
the golden shovel's first strike.
Proceed open-eyed and tight-lipped
lest front-line husband or brother
be draped over the drab turret
by a stray word's chance caress.
Sugar and gas may trickle meagerly,
but receive the chastening cup:
the Unknown Martyr in final glory,
warding palms pierced by fire,
a crown of barbs for his head.
Here it coils, charmed from stretching
across property lines, market aisles,
and playgrounds. No brown shirt
for the bluejeaned blond boy.
Beneath the Xmas tree trundles
the precious batch of Formula V,
final component anxiously awaited
by bespectacled labcoats.
All industry meshes in high gear
to turn back the black Axis arrows;
each home has its front.
Closet the goose-stepping cuckoos.
Beware the infiltration of dust.
Plant flags in the window box.
They shroud only to billow the braver.
The belts must not wobble while
the light from the valley is lurid
and the hammers batter the output.
It is a matter of alignment, of time
before the good giant commands the view
and throws back his head to laugh,
clearing obstruction as he leaves
peace a wide path of least resistance.
Then tousled hair, mark of enterprise,
may fringe faces gladly turned
to the promise of quickened winds.
Displays register exponential gains
in this dreamtime postwar boom.

Behold a torso shed of gravity
in true human spirit, its flesh
a translucent vessel for galaxies.
And the nimbused eye levitates
at the apex of self-absorption.

A Night at Home Watching
A Night at the Movies 1954

Churchill turns 80 this year—hip hip!
Friend and foe salute his stubborn longevity
and see a tribute in oils unveiled;
blimey, none too flattering:
pugnacious pose, snout snuffing the air.
The old bulldog drily lifts a leg:
"a remahkable example of modern aht."

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Across the Atlantic Senator Joe sits condemned,
baited, a touch hangdog for all his
"digging out communism" in the civic backyard.
Average Joe sees red, but this Mr. Smith
won't be a Capra hero.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Across the Pacific the Red Chinese shell
some little islands, toying with Formosa.
Things are more peaceful down Cambodia-way.
There the folk race forty to a dugout
to wring out the rainy season.
Time was they chased evil spirits seaward;
the cameras won't be rolling some seasons later
when the land is cleansed of the spirit of life.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Back in the American West visions galore
all in a row, starting with an animated tale
right up Ford's canyon, although Sheriff Daffy
could use some pointers from the Duke
in bringing Nasty Canasta to justice.
Laws of the genre: a twirled revolver backfires,
a varmint plays dirty, a sidekick just plays.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Cut to bold claims for riveting new spectacles:
a Star reborn in Technicolor!
Then the horror, the catastrophe of *Them!*
Spawned on the Great American Test Range,
Geiger cradle of giganticism,
Nature's outraged progeny march against
the guilt-edged picture of Atomic Age security.
Squads of the red menace breach civil defense:
today Them in the sewers and playgrounds,
tomorrow Them scaling the Washington Monument,

Them foraging Lady Liberty,
Them chasing Average Joe up the Capitol steps!
America the bountiful luxuriates in monsters.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Tonight, though, a cosmopolitan feature:
Dial M for Machinations.
Yanks and Britons agree
tracking murder can be rather jolly.
The improvising husband is a suave knave,
but the wife's U. S. lover, a whodunit pro,
doubts a rogue can plot a perfect crime.
Another eye detects a damning detail,
another hand pens the denouement.
A latchkey can make a life-or-death difference,
at least in a world as wide as a stage,
and blokes like Hitch only wink
at the reach of the celluloid frame.

A Few Introspective Poems

By Joe Goss

Agnostic to joy

I feel the same in your
arms as in despair's

the smile I wear is molded
from wax

a caricature of the
feeling I wish I knew.

I want to believe it exists,

for I see it written all over
you; but who am I to assume

that you are not merely a
poet with a pen finer tuned

than my own?

Bisexual religion

In bed with both the
church and my own self
worship Night after night

Kissing each on the neck
with a negligent tongue

bowed prostrate before my own
holy Prostitution. I will sit
forever fixed between heaven
and hell:

dangling in emptiness forever.

Conspiracy theories in a health food
store; casual conversation for two
kindred strangers: the mafia,
misdemeanors, miscegenation remnants
of JFK buried along the Pearl

-mud and and innocent blood clogging the fuel
lines; the height of heritage's hate parked

just a few footsteps away

-the truth, history, and a few
yesterday's of my own stowed
away in the trunk like forgotten
luggage;

modernity and self-discovery tucked
between rainbow quinoa and flax seed.

I am

an Estranged evangelical,
disenchanted with the church:

a modern microcosm of "myself"

-the religion of individuality.
Blasphemer of most truths

-and untruths alike:

willed-bastard to two sets of
discarded

parents, left dangling betwixt

the disfigured hemispheres of
gray matter within my skull,

over the void of my self-worth,

I spit in the face of the
patriarchal judeo-christian
narrative

-spoon-fed to me through my
youth- whose volumes were once
riddled with my name,

now muddied with my
tongue and my blood, and
my shame,

as I continue writing my future on these
pages torn from your holy books,

dipping my pen in the
blood of your
communion cup

Forgive me father, for I know
that which I do.

starving myself,

the unforgivable dynamo of beauty,

a welfare-program take on plastic
surgery or accusational- weight-loss-
aroma-therapy, the stench of
capitalistic standards

of selling Me My own body type
burning the calories out of My nostrils
and

from My stomach lining, ulcers

take the place of proper nutrition, a
reminder to Myself of the blister I am to
this world,

or, at least that's what doctors

rodan and fields would have Me
believe as I look in the mirror and
connect the dots of unblossomed
adulthood, matching puzzle pieces
of the shards

of this reflection of the Me I'm told to
hate, trying desperately to recreate an
image of, or at least something close
to,

the peace of unrecognizable artistry,

the sacrilege of loving myself is a shame I
long to feel, the burden of self-worth: a
weight

I've dreamed since childhood to one day prayerfully bear

oh gods of american television
screens forgive Me

oh gods of celebrity news
magazines forgive Me

oh gods of commission priced
cosmetic lines and Amazon prime
two-day shipping

forgive Me

oh great feigning father of

the democratic demigods of Washington

of Wallstreet, of Walmart self-check out
lines: hear My hallowed prayers, absolve
My heretical

heart, drown Me in your bargain bin luxuries,
bathe Me in the feel of satin self-loathing, baptize

Me in the depths of corporate greed,

let Me be reborn to a new face of envy, let
Me live this life as a new creation,

the fractured-facade-smile of the American
dream silencing the heart that once beat

beneath this hollow, plastic, clearance-sticker Me

"Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of God" –Ralph Waldo Emerson

The climb and the descent,
the continuous culminating and
catapulting crescendo
of the mountain scent, heavy
with smoke in my mouth, my
nose, my thinning lungs, I tear
through the bramble bushes and
my prison cell coverings
in my attempt
at unbridled unification with
the heights ahead and valley below

I want to run wild and
naked through these
hills

I want to hang from the precipice
and howl the guttural howls of
human
nature at one with the earthy
underbrush of the fox, the wolf,
the bear,
the uninhibited mountain man

I want to claw at stone until hearth
and home are carved away under my
hands
to rest my weary head on matted pillow hair

I want to live and to run, to wake and
to sleep, to conquer to kill to die
high above the money changers
and their marketplaces, far from
the daily death of schizophrenic
societal standards

-the memories of my former self
wisped away with the morning
mist
through the trees, the apparition of
my past ambitions hanging above the
chimney tops as the smoke from the
fireplace
of my unfettered breath rises
higher and higher toward
god

…and above, and below
again: little muddy
hallelujahs
–of dirt,
of
sweat, of
blood,
of flesh.

“Big City Pretty” and Other Poems

By Bill Hayes

Big City Pretty

It was very visceral, you know,
You in my arms, both of us
Plunging through the sighing darkness,
Two or three stories underground.
The speed of it and the rhythmic motions
At once shocking and reassuring
Lulled us into the soft night, into
The silent but eloquent ecstasy
Of the ride. We never wanted to
Come up. But coming up,
Too, was like a dream.
We entered a station not yet there,
And exited under a shower of sparks
Created by welders high in the midnight girders.
It was the wrong stop, of course,
Open only at night and only for the workers,
But once lost there, wandering
In that delicate shell belonging
To the future, I felt
How right it all was.

Fixing the Hole

"It's called ASD, a vent in the upper right chamber, really."

Anthony sits upright, his fingers tight around the wheel,
his giddy smile spreads like he's just shot up with speed.
"Hold it at forty," I say, the words catching in my throat
as a fender misses some farmer's mailbox by a centimeter.

"From a surgical perspective, it's really simple, a cakewalk."

*"*Turn on the radio, find Max 99," Anthony shouts with authority.
He taps his fingers on his thigh before the first sounds rush out,
and we listen to Anglo-Saxon set to some obscure rap beat. As I
wonder how he's learned the lyrics, I notice we've reached fifty.

"We only have to stop his heart for a short time, no problem really."

We hit a gravel stretch and dust boils up like the earth's afire.
We fishtail a little and I fear we'll flip, but some invisible hand
rights us, and Anthony squeals, "This is better than a go-cart."
I want to shout, SLOW DOWN. But I'm mute as old Zacharias.

"Go home… really…come back…Wednesday…we'll operate then…"

"I'm going to get up to sixty before I quit… maybe eighty," he says.
I give my seatbelt a quick pull and watch this mini Mario speed
across the delta landscape, driving my shockless jalopy like it's a
NASCAR prototype. I squint, searching for the angel on his shoulder.

"Really, survival isn't a question here...the risk is minimal...small."

An hour later, we roll into the driveway where Endora stands, scowling.
Anthony saunters past her, proud as Oedipus after he solved the riddle.
I notice she's been reading that Jane Austen novel about matchmaking,
and I wonder if I can remember where I stashed the Jack Daniels bottle.

"No... really… only about five percent of these patients die."

Endora doesn't speak, but I've learned to listen to her eyes: "What in the
name of God are you doing, letting a twelve-year-old child drive a car?"
The silence is dagger sharp, and it penetrates deeper…deeper. Finally,
I mumble, "I'm fixing the hole…I'm fixing the hole in my heart."

“Discovery” and Other Poems

By Thomas Richardson

Discovery

In ninth grade Tech Discovery,
a new month meant a new module,
a new partner. I moved counterclockwise
among the cubicles arranged in concentric circles
and reached “Ecology.”
And Becca:
she, blue eyes and braces, and I, five feet flat,
face slick as a peeled onion.
We scanned the manual for
objectives that lined up with the equipment;
small town Mississippi tax bases can’t
always keep the litmus strips stocked or
the microscopes in focus.
But we found the VHS with the hand-scrawled
label “Water Cycle” and popped it in.
We should have known from the opening credits,
slap bass, smoky sax, names like
Nikki Jade, Randy Steele,
we would find no explanation of transpiration, evaporation.
At first, we laughed,
pushed back the nervous heat in our cheeks,
swiveled our heads to see if anyone—
maybe Mr. Poynter—caught our peeping.
But the camera zoomed in and magnified
every goosebump, brought closer
each rhythmic collision between smooth, sinewy legs.
Neither of us lifted a finger toward Stop or Eject.
Instead, we sat in silent awe of the physics,
their bodies a perpetual motion machine,
another *thwap* bringing new ripples across the skin’s surface.
And the sweat—*Dear God,* the sweat—bubbled,
spread, and pooled as breaths (ours or theirs?)
heaved in tectonic push and pull.
It wasn’t until the bell rang that we noticed
we were holding hands.

When You Find Me Writing in the Coffee Shop
(or Slowly Sinking to the Bottom of the Ocean)

I start to drown the second I nod a distracted hello
from behind my latté and laptop.
You set down *el té negro* and tell me
of your trip to Spain, kneeling to slip your
fisherman's knot around my ankles.
I already feel the saltwater slurry in my shoes,
but you tie on a rock for good measure.
At the pictures on your phone—
Sebastián, cathedral, tour guide, tapas—
the scuffed tile floor gives way to muck and current,
and the waves are over my head now.
My limbs flail toward the surface to salvage my
floating couplets, my waterlogged metaphors,
but I snag only kelp between my fingers.
Your muffled and muffling voice
documents my descent,
past starfish and sonnets,
devil rays and deadlines.
Pressure swells behind my sea-stung eyes
and stops up my ears—it's only Doppler now
as my limp body meets sandy floor.
Cause of death: poem interrupted.
But it's beautiful down here in the deep dark.
I will grow gills and call a silent shipwreck home.
I will listen to whales' laments and spend eternity
writing seductive seabed songs.

Oxygen Mask

Forgive the flight attendant when
she tells us in sleepy pantomime
that we must first secure our own
masks before assisting others. She
does not consider the hours we've
spent counting breaths from bassinets,
our midnight watchman-waiting for delicate
rise and fall, the mirrors under noses catching
vapors—puffs of assurance that disappear.
She forgets, perhaps, that air is but a
transfer from creator to created, and the
world is not yet through with our work.
Forgive her, for she does not know that
we have ripped out our own lungs and
ironed them flat every day of our new life
that we could endure a loss in cabin pressure.

A Mississippian Mingles at the Academic Conference Happy Hour
(after Harrison Scott Key)

I'm only three crostinis in when
they ask me to conjugate.
Then the applause—*See, Janet?*—
when I say y'all.
And what even is a mud pie? and
Was The Help *right about fried chicken and Crisco?*
I give a nervous tug on my lanyard
as a crowd gathers, cheese plates in hand.
Someone, emboldened by the quiche,
praises me for *making it* after what must have been
a long dirt road of a life, guiding my wagon
through stifling summers, past all the
Klan rallies and obese pregnant teens.
Tell us about Mississippi; we have to know.
Well, it all goes back to Faulkner, I say,
as I start scouting for loose drink tickets.

Creative Prose Works

The Widow Hess

By Jo A. Baldwin

The Widow Hess had a spring in her step. She was feisty and could be rude on occasion, but I liked her just the same. She was petite with a drop-dead figure and in her late sixties. She looked her age but didn't act it. By that, I mean she had tons of energy. She walked fast, talked fast, drove her car fast and had a quick response to comments, criticisms and digs disguised as jokes.

Hess was my Bible study teacher. Even though I'm an AME (African Methodist Episcopal) I attend Bible study at a Missionary Baptist church because their pastor is a progressive Southern Baptist who believes in women preachers. Hess was an evangelist and an excellent teacher because she gave background on the lessons first and acted out the scriptures. By that I mean, if she talked about Noah she would stagger like she was drunk herding the animals into the ark. If she talked about Ruth and Boaz she would pretend to be Ruth and sashay across the room giving Boaz the eye. If she talked about David and Bathsheba she would pretend to be Bathsheba standing up in the tub giving herself a bath knowing David was looking on. She spoke of animals in the Bible like fish and sheep and was particularly aware of foxes. She quoted Song of Solomon 5:15 that says, "Catch the foxes, the little foxes, before they ruin our vineyard in bloom" teaching how destructive certain creatures can be—humans included— following up with Lamentations 5:18 that says, "Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it" meaning foxes seem to be comfortable around destroyed things.

Hess always moved when she taught and was never still, that is, until she started coughing. We went out to eat on Sundays after church. She was affiliated with two part-

time churches, so she worshipped every Sunday like I did, that is, until she started coughing. We respected each other's denominations because we both understood what having a personal relationship with the Lord was like and we had similar anointings. By that I mean she and I both had the gift of teaching, but she had discernment of spirits more than I did, and I had the gift of healing more than she did.

We talked every day on the phone mainly about her life. I gathered from our conversations that she was struggling with, forgiveness. She was angry with quite a few people: her ex-husband she said was selfish, her deceased husband she said was mean and nasty at times, and her deceased daughter she said was a social dropout from drugs. I asked her why she didn't cast that demon of addiction out of her daughter. "I did several times," she said, "but she kept inviting the strongman back in and every time he came back he brought several more with him, so she was worse off whenever I intervened. I ended up just releasing her to the Lord."

Hess said her daughter died, but not before confessing that she was saved and that the Lord told her he was calling her home but that she shouldn't be scared because death was nothing but a step. I commended her for being so strong, burying a daughter without breaking down, but she did have that nagging cough.

In another conversation I told her I recognized that she had a problem with forgiveness. "What do you mean by that?" she asked.

"I mean you're still mad enough to catch on fire with both husbands. If you could kill your ex without going to jail you would, and you're glad your late husband is dead."

"No, I'm not; how can you say that to me?"

"How can you deny it based on what you've told me knowing I'm as anointed in that way you are?"

"That's why you should be careful what you say to me," she said.

"And you need to be careful what you confess to me," I said.

She said, "Let's change the subject before we both say something we'll regret."

"All right. But, I have another question. Why is it taking you so long to get over that cough? Have you seen a doctor and if you have what did he say?"

"He gave me a shot and some antibiotics to keep me from getting pneumonia."

"Okay. So, you don't have pneumonia. That's good. And, you don't have anything else, right? He gave you a clean bill of health?"

"Yes."

"Good. So, you don't need me to lay hands on you and pray again?"

"No."

I should have known something was wrong, because most people don't turn down prayer, sick or well.

One day after church at lunch Hess was acting rather mysterious. She was quiet and wasn't smiling like she usually did after preaching. Her pastor used his evangelists on a regular basis because he was going through the fire himself. A member said her message was about Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and that she preached up a storm. He said she stepped out of the pulpit and walked the floor proclaiming the gospel and calling on the name of the Lord. But, she was quiet at lunch and I chalked it up to being tired from preaching. I know after my own sermons I feel like I've worked an eight-hour job.

Hess then told me about something that happened at her home the week before. It was a warm summer evening after the sun had gone down and the moon was shining. She had a Golden Retriever named Queenie that was barking hysterically, so she said she got up and grabbed her pistol and went out to see about her dog thinking maybe something was trying to eat her food. Not seeing anything inside the fence where Queenie was, she turned to go back in the house but then saw something that startled her. A fox was staring at her in silence while Queenie's bark diminished to a whimper. She said the fox was big and white and she shot into the air to scare it off, but it didn't run away. Instead it started barking, only the sound it made was more like a cough. Then it turned and dashed away into the night.

"Have you seen it again?" I asked.

"No."

"Had you ever experienced anything like that before?"

"No. What bothered me," she said, "was it looked at me like it knew something I didn't."

…

I called Hess one day and she said she was too busy to talk. I called another day and she said she was sick. I asked her if she would be going to the doctor. She said no, that the sick spell would pass. I waited a few days for her to call me, but she didn't, so I called her, but she didn't answer. I called her pastor, but he hadn't heard from her either. The next thing I knew the church member called and said she had passed. Cancer had spread all over her body except her brain. I went to her funeral but didn't look at her. I

wanted to remember her alive. I thought about the fox, its color and why it coughed before running away.

Kerosene Lanterns and Iron Deer: The Bayou Daughter

By Kathy Root Pitts

Today Flora's family was taking a road trip from Jackson, Mississippi, to Loranger, Louisiana, to see Zemurray's Garden. At 5:50 the whole family was awakened to Flora's tension-filled racket, spreading egg salad on white bread and filling a plastic pitcher with water for the ride. No one had yet seen Flora, but the noise they knew. Usually it was Aaron who got up early, but this April Saturday in 1962 had muddled routine.

By six o'clock the pines and the one gingko stood in spindly silhouettes outside the eastern windows, but ordinarily none of the family were awake to see the dawn. By six-thirty, there was a distinct blue glow in the east, and by seven o'clock, Aaron was done shaving and had patted Skin-Bracer on his four-year-old daughter's cheeks. This was the last touch to his usual morning's routine before silencing the radio.

Cologned father and daughter stopped short at the kitchen doorway and awaited orders. The walls were the soft yellow of scrambled eggs. Canned goods towered on a green Formica tabletop over an electric frypan crusty around the edges with lard. Beside the fryer stood an amber cup holding more hardened lard. Perched atop several potted meat cans was an opened bag of bread. Flora drew from this the heel to make her last sandwich as she agonized over her own mother's--the Lady's--warnings about keeping the sandwiches cold to avoid food poisoning. One more thing for Flora to worry about.

"Baby, do you want Frosted Flakes, Sugar Smacks, or Sugar Pops?" Flora loosely gestured to a row of individual-serving cereal boxes, grabbed one before getting an answer,

and pushed it at Aaron. Kit was passed a glittery green plastic tumbler in like fashion. "Hold still and let me pour your milk—*STIR* it, Sweetheart, so the chocolate won't clump in the bottom," then commanding, "Daddy! Help her open that box of Sugar Pops!" The child dug at the Ovaltine in the bottom of her tumbler with a spoon while her father pulled out a scout knife and sliced a large capital "I" through the picture of a cartoon prairie dog dressed as a cowboy. The prairie dog had a six-shooter drawn in each hand. From the small box Aaron pried up what his daughter called the "saloon doors" that exposed the cereal, and not a moment too soon, as Flora swept in with a can of evaporated milk, dowsing the box and the small hand that offered it.

Kit took her chocolate milk and her cereal, wandered into her brother's room, and sat at the foot of her dead Great Grandma's iron bed where her brother slept now. Junior was awake and sitting up. He was bone skinny, but he ate like a "stevedore on the docks," the Lady would say. He peered at his combination clock, flashlight, and compass, his dark brown hair parted wildly, then took up his book of Audubon prints. There were stickers in the back of the book from which he had decorated his headboard with a bluejay, a mockingbird, an ostrich, a pelican, and a pterodactyl from another book. Flora bellowed from the kitchen, "Junior, are you *eating?--*'cause I'm closing the kitchen!" Without a word, he dropped his book, jumped over his sister, and sprinted to the kitchen. A moment later he was back in bed with three fried eggs squeezed between toast and oozing mayonnaise.

Junior didn't want to go look at boring flowers. Nor did he want to ride for eight hours with his folks. He would have preferred a cave to explore or a lost-in-the-woods adventure. There was no adventure in flowers. *"Azalea gardens,"* the nine-year-old began in a prissy falsetto, then dropping his voice to grouse, was "girl stuff." While Junior pulled on

his navy shorts and thin white t-shirt, Kit turned her back to play on the phonograph the same selection that she had been playing all week, Disney's *Bambi* story.

Junior looked and grunted, "Put on the *Mikado,"* but Kit wouldn't. The horns and drums at the beginning, with the picture on the album's cover of an angry Japanese Emperor, scared her. She had, though, named her goldfish Yum Yum.

Flora finished rinsing dishes and examined her most recently revised trip list while Aaron loaded the backseat with comforts for the drive. Spring azalea season demanded color slide film in the camera, and five extra rolls besides. There was a cooler with eight egg salad sandwiches, five peanut butter-and-jelly, and a slender jar of green olives. In a large cardboard box Flora had packed Rexall mosquito repellant, Unguentine, iodine, hand towels, fat crayons, a coloring book with a picture of the Andrew Sisters, a maze bead game, a wadded map, two boxes of tissues, a small bottle of aspirin, and the huge bag of Fritos that Junior had demanded. She packed the old potty under the front seat in case the four-year-old needed it along the highway, asked Aaron to check on the fox terrier and the duck in the back yard, and the family was finally in Blue Betsy and ready to go. Few cars were out on the road early on this Saturday morning.

Flora talked on the ride. Her father knew of the Zemurray mansion when he was studying to be an architect at Tulane. "Mr. Zemurray," Flora said, "was a . . . What's that P word, Daddy, for a man who helps people?"

"He was a phil-anth-rop-ist," Aaron spoke the word slowly and carefully so the children and Flora would learn it.

Flora—more compelled by daring than charity--went on: "Well, he just started out selling bananas that would have gone bad otherwise, but he ended up with a plantation in

Honduras and even built railroads!" Flora took a big bite of her egg salad sandwich, "but," she smacked and wiped her lips on a striped towel, "he got into a fight with tax collectors." She pulled some olives out of the narrow jar with one finger for Kit--warning her not to drop them as they were expensive---then passed a handful of chips to Junior. "Anyway, it seems like he drew the attention of the government—*our* government—so they were *watching* him, I think. Daddy?" She waved a questioning crust in the air, "*Who* was it they were trying to get away from?"

Aaron nodded, "The Secret Service."

"Yyaa--as! Zemurray and his friends said that they were just going to a party." Flora fished for another olive, this time for herself.

Aaron spoke deliberately, "A 'brothel' is the *story* they told so that they would not be followed." With an uncomfortable glance at the kids, "A brothel is where men go sometimes—no *never* me—" he shook his head to the question growing across Junior's face "where men go to . . . behave *badly."*

Flora jumped in, "But that's not where they *really* went! They snuck down to Honduras---there was Zemurray, then a gentleman named Machine Gun," Flora counted these off on her fingers, "another named Easter, no. . . Christmas, and the *old* president of Honduras," she held up four fingers, "who was Zemurray's old friend." Flora bubbled at the notoriety of going to the garden of a truly adventurous man, and pictured Zemurray looking much like Errol Flynn: "They took over the government, made the old friend into the president again, and then the Secret Service left him alone. He got *rich* with his bananas and built *a mansion in New Orleans.* He bought the gardens that we're going to see!"

Kit envisioned a garden full of bananas and olives.

Finally at their destination, Aaron pulled up an embankment and onto a gravel parking lot just outside of the garden's visitors' center. A camera hung from his shoulder in a brown leather snap-cover. While Flora was making the family apply mosquito spray, Junior was already clawing at a bite on his ankle, "It's hot. Is this going to take long?" Junior had spent most of the ride with his head resting on the windowsill in the backseat, trying to cool off. Now he was resting his behind against the fender, anxious to begin moving after the four hour ride—even if only through some garden.

Through Kit's eyes, the garden was paradisiac, huge, and bespeaking a sense of wild order that was of an eternal nature. Huge oaks dangled their thick burdens of Spanish moss to the ground, and where the lake stood, moss swayed and touched the water, an invitation to wade, though no one did. Stepping stones floated on the surface with rivulets of water cascading between them in a series of shallow falls. Beyond the water were the boldest pinks, reds, and lavenders--giant bouquets alive with bees and smelling of pine straw from beneath--awed to be four-years-old and confronted with this gushing and overflowing garden, receiving the sensation that it was bigger than her, stronger than her brother's cynicism, and authoritative, even over her parents.

The two hour walk began, with much stopping for photographs. Flora loved azaleas, but even more so, she loved this springtime excuse for getting away from her near constant worries about germs. Kit was in a pink-dotted play suit because Flora wanted her dressed nice, but Flora couldn't do anything about Junior who wouldn't dress up except when he was forced to for church. First they would take a photo at the start of the path. Flora in her bright penny loafers with her black box purse and blue-roses skirt that she made herself, Kit standing in front being cute in her outfit and her matching keds, and Junior off to the side

with his arms crossed, not standing too close to the family. This hike through a garden seemed a formal affair.

While they walked, white statues of ladies, monstrous in the imagination of a child, lurked among the hedges. Beneath a magnolia, one stone lady stared coldly across Mirror Lake. Her only motion came from the rippling purple irises and yellow daffodils at her stony bare feet. Mother and father walked ahead, out of range, and Kit felt alone with this armless and draped figure who guarded the lake. Kit crept close and saw from behind the statue a Dogwood in bloom, bearing those petals--her father had told her--that nature had painted to look like the blood-spotted cross. A Flowering Judas in fuchsia loomed behind.

As Flora's family hiked the gravel paths to the opposite side of the lake, she spoke the names of azaleas. Here was Judge Solomon in a deep purple; there was Coral Bell, small and pinkly layered. Behind a stone cherub and to the left was Salmon Daphne with her single row of petals. Kit looked back across the lake, half expecting that the stone lady would have moved. The lady and the cherub met eyes from across the water. The shore on this far side of the lake held Pride of Mobile, a little lighter than the Judge, and breaking the edge of the water were cypress with their knees making isolated pools where minnows schooled. There were water turtles sunning on a ledge of ivy just in front of Snow on the Mountain, and above, where they caught the noontime glare, were the very beginnings of day lilies. Too early to tell their Christian names, but otherwise Flora was able to discourse as an expert about blooms, knowing things that others didn't, saying the words out loud to be heard. Later there would be the genealogy, but today it was flowers.

If Flora didn't know the name of a plant, she would read the tin tags, take photos, have Aaron spend weekends taking her to nurseries and digging holes to set the same

flowers proudly in her yard. Even more, though, than for the fancy plants with pedigrees, she had a rogue affection for the odd ones that she found in the wild: her pink Swamp Azalea and her simple purple Asters.

One day five years after this trip to Zemurray's, quite out of character, Flora asked Kit to dig up some buttercups from the side of the road on her walk home from school, even though up to then Flora never wanted the children to touch anything along the curbs. "That is where men spit, and people pile their trash," she would warn. When Kit arrived home with the pale pink, cup-like flowers, dangling their fragile roots, Flora made Kit take a bath while she planted the flowers in her front bed, making a point of calling them "primroses" when the Lady was around.

Near the close of the hike through this garden, Kit spotted a stump lying on its side that made her think of a headless horse. There was a fountain in the distance. Flora suggested, "Let's get a photo of Kit sitting on the stump with Junior in the background. Junior, take your hands *out* of your shirt." He had a habit of wadding his hands inside the front of his T-shirts and stretching them. Aaron was down to their last roll of film. The day had gone well, and everyone was happy. Even Junior was having a good time and asking Aaron questions about the scout camp at Kickapoo in June.

Aaron lifted Kit onto the stump the same way he lifted her on to the saddles in the basement of Sears when her mother was shopping upstairs. He backed up to take the photo when Kit began screaming. Junior ran up to see what was wrong. There were red ants coming out of the base of the stump. Junior spotted them first and hauled Kit off, scraping her legs a little on the bark, and brushed her shins while she kicked off her shoes. . . . The crisis was over.

On the ride back home, the car radio was out of range of a station, so Flora talked about South Louisiana, reminiscing about Bayou Teche where her family had moved to live with Uncle Vin thirty years before, during the Depression. It was hard to find steady work as an architect then. No one was building. The men were self-reliant, though. Grandpa fished and grew his own asparagus. He conformed to no one. Flora recalled how she, her young sister, and her cousin slept in the same bed. They lit the cabin with kerosene lanterns. Flora's father would go deep into the bayou with a lantern and sometimes be gone for the whole day, but he would come back, fishing rod propped in the corner, and the lantern left burning dimly on the pine table, its chimney coated in soot. There was a huge snapping turtle's shell over the crude fireplace mantel which seemed to move in the light from the guttering flame, a fearful beast that Flora had loved as if it were a living pet.

Flora told how she and her little sister would push their homemade toy boats at the bayou's edge. Even at age thirty-four, Flora recalled sadly that the tortoise shell was stolen, and her boat drifted away one morning, never to be found it again.

After the family left Bayou Teche, the Lady no longer allowed even two children to a bed, not anymore. What had been a comfort in the country was considered common in the city. There might have been dangerous animals in the bayou, but no society to make all of one's best efforts always a little wrong. Poverty had pained Flora's mother, so as soon as they moved to Jackson, the Lady insisted that the family settle on Capitol Street where the parades went past. From there, the Lady entered into Mississippi Society. She became self-consciously an architect's wife, climbing to the presidency of the Jackson Garden Club. There were DAR meetings and poetry groups where the Lady would pen her sanitary couplets. So many ladies smiling for so many photos and taking ribbons for being The Best.

Flora told how she, too, joined the DAR at her mother's insistence, but Flora would not join the garden club. Survival in the wild had seemed doable, but survival at the Garden Club was more menacing.

The packing of sandwiches, the naming of plants, the dangers that lurk in woods, and gardens, and garden clubs, but through all—a beacon. On the ride from Louisiana, Flora became nervous again when they were within the Jackson city limits, but Aaron reminded her that they would go to Brent's or Hutto's the next Saturday and get Mauve Beauty and Red Ruffles for the yard. She relaxed and wrote the names of the flowers in the margins of her trip list. These were the flowers that garden club ladies appreciate, but Flora would continue to cherish the mongrels too, like her Lilac Cinder that she found in the swampy area near the Wolf River. It was growing wild there, and would grow wild in the yard, dwarfing the other flowers. Lilac Cinder was rebellious. It had a perfume like no other azalea did, and glowed just at twilight like its crazy and mysterious color had slipped into the ultraviolet, hinting at colors we cannot see.

Weeks later, when Aaron brought out the slide projector and showed the pictures from Zemurray's, Kit braced to see her photo on the stump. It would be creepy to see herself, smiling, frozen on celluloid, just before getting bitten, but the projection screen shone blank silver at the end, and it turned out that the photograph did not exist. "Where's the picture where I was riding the stump?"

Aaron reasonably explained, "I didn't get a chance to snap the picture." He was carefully placing slides back in a metal box. "The ants got on you before I could." That distressing event had gone unrecorded, but then he pulled out one last slide from the end of the hike and placed it in the projector. Kit remembered and beamed.

Along the last garden path, after the warm walk, Kit had been exhausted and itching from her ant bites. Her feet were burning and her lower back ached. All that she could focus on was one-foot-in-front-of-the-other and getting back to the car for a cup of 85 degree water. While her parents planned to pick up burgers at the Frost Top, Kit saw something at the end of the path that held her in quiet excitement. There were two deer, a mother looking down with gentle attention at her seated faun who looked back up at the doe in quiet adoration. When she reached the foot of the path, Kit realized that mother and child were made of iron. With sweaty hands she touched the backs of each deer. They seemed so real from a distance. Such a loving posture, but so cold to the touch. Suddenly the Bambi story that Kit preferred to the *Mikado* seemed frightening, too. The iron doe leaning in as if to touch noses with her faun, but the two would always remain inches apart.

* * *

The Lady was on the phone to Flora, every afternoon for three decades, advising and commanding her grown and nervous baby, from 1:30 to 2 o'clock, rigid, like the doe and faun-- for learning all of the names of stylish flowers in the world couldn't change that iron-clad intimacy.

Flora died in April of 2005, twenty years after the Lady passed, and right in the middle of azalea season. Kit and her children had bought a sad little purple chrysanthemum from the Kroger to go next to the hospital bed. Uncontrolled diabetes had finally led to heart trouble. After all, Flora never felt that dinner was done without ice cream, and she usually pushed the green vegetables off to the side of the plate, unless they were asparagus. The Lady's passing hadn't caused Flora to mature much really. At seventy-seven years old, she was still a little girl.

That summer following, Katrina hit New Orleans and ravaged inland even farther north than Zemurray's. The storm toppled enormous trees in the garden, but grown-up Kit wondered if the storm could have budged the iron deer of her childhood, tipping the mother, and closing that boundless gap between the two.

From *The Lady of Grenada Lake*

By Lawrence Sledge

Chapter 1: "Coming into Realization"

I knew that I was seeing Beguantua Mae about four miles out in Grenada Lake, the largest inland body of water in the state of Mississippi with over 148 miles of shoreline. This is where for years my family and others have been having reunions, picnics, barbeques, wedding parties and adventures in fishing both good and bad; some people would fall into the water trying to hang on to a large fish and would have to be rescued or worse, and still others would disappear from the Earth's surface for reasons unknown.

My great aunt Chowky is my paternal grandmother's youngest sister. She had been a high school teacher of math and science for over 40 years. She had told me about Beguantua Mae when I was 14. That had been 8 years earlier, and that's how I knew sitting at the picnic tables up the hill from the massive water waves--Beguantua Mae was in the lake.

My aunt had given me this information, unbelieved on my part, one summer day in June while we sat on her recently-painted brown front porch. She was telling me something about Beguantua Mae, but not yet revealing this being's name or appearance. My 14-year-old logical mind amused itself with humor at the thought of the "revelation" as my aunt continued.

"You will be scared the first time you see her, but the laws of Jupanubia forbid me from telling you right now about her appearance or her name. I will tell you that later. You will know it's her when you see her, more scary than looking at the Medusa, and you would have to look from the best angle to really see her face, depending on how close she is to shore and whether or not she is looking up. But she won't turn you to stone or hurt you." Aunt Chowky said with what seemed like a loud whisper or a strained voice which made me unsure as to whether she was being serious or humorous.

"What's Jupanubia and why do you think I'm going to see this person?" I said laughing at what was clearly to me another one of Aunt Chowky's tales that I never believed.

"Laugh now, but you will find out in enough time." she said looking at me, no smile in sight.

Aunt Chowky had taught long before the schools in Grenada County were integrated and all the way into the late 70s. She had a gift for computation and the proper way of speaking as well as a knack for raising "attention-getting hell" when she saw things not being "proper and fair." She had always been this way even when doing so placed her in danger during the 40s, 50s and early 60s.

During her heyday she had been one of the most respected educators in her field after being the first female in math and science to graduate at the top of her class from Jackson College later known as Jackson State College before it became a university. She had at one time been the math teacher of me in the 70s and my parents during the late 50s and 60s.

"They gave us these out-of-date textbooks knowing these students need better to be their best and have a decent life," she would often say with anger that she could barely contain at family meals, school board meetings, church gatherings and the privacy of her home, no smile on her face.

A tall, thin, dark brown-skinned woman of 6 feet 2 inches who often wore a black beret during the week but more lively colored hats of red, pink, lavender and navy blue to church, Aunt Chowky often claimed to have run out of all the abundant patience with which she had faced poverty and other problems. This depletion culminated with the second of her two failed marriages, one to a Baptist preacher and the other to an African Methodist Episcopal man of the cloth.

"There's not enough patience in the world to deal with the smoke that John and then Jack tried to blow in my face to cover up their cheating when we have Rosa telling us to come from the back of the bus and Medgar, Emmett, battered women, poor people and others are crying for help." Aunt Chowky said on more than one occasion with enough conviction to fill a large room.

I looked at her with all eyes, puzzled by what she was saying about Beguantua Mae, "Why would looking at her scare me Aunt Chowky"?

"You have to see for yourself one day son. Everybody that has seen her was usually alone. I was fishing late one Thursday evening on Grenada Lake not long before dusk with no one else around when she appeared. I was so afraid that I threw the fishing pole into the water and ran to hide in one of the outdoor bathrooms near some pine trees; I left both of my shoes." She went on, "That was one day that I wished I had left with the others instead of trying to catch another buffalo fish to go with my fried corn and creamed potatoes."

"You told me the other day that I would probably see her too. Why do you think so?" I asked, almost smiling.

"Probably for the same reason that I did. She knows what I have been doing for years and the type of person I am. The kind of person is what matters." She sounded the most serious yet.

"What have you been doing? I don't understand." I said with a beseeching tone.

"Hear me out a minute and focus on what I am about to tell you. You might think I'm crazy, but you need to hear this." She seemed to go into a trance and I suspected that this would take much more than a minute.

"Thousands of years ago before the pyramids of Egypt were built, beings from the planet Jupanubia, a sister planet to Jupiter in the Garganbia Galaxy 6 million light years away from our Milky Way, were sent to look after the first people on Earth. The people were placed and then reproduced in the Earth's southern hemisphere near the Equator before the great island divided into different parts scattering people to other parts of the Earth."

She went on, "These people born near the equator were devolved genetically from Jupanubian inhabitants and were microscopic, well not quite that small, in comparison to their ancestors on Jupanubia and these new Earthlings once had the genetically benign gift of levitation." Aunt Chowky said as if talking to a history class.

"What?!!" My mouth opened to say something, but I held back.

"Now listen to me carefully," she warned, serious and determined to continue. "There was a flaw in the transport process. It wasn't discovered until too many years later. This flaw is what became known as human nature." A profound sadness seemed to take over her face, a look more serious than I had ever known her to have.

"What?!!" I thought that Aunt Chowky was either joking or really crazy after all.

"The native Jupanubians are a super powerful and technologically advanced race of beings. But their nature is primarily benign and peace-loving; they only use force when it is necessary to maintain peace and to right wrongs." She said this with pride.

"Stop it Aunt Chowky!" I said unconvinced.

Undeterred by my response, she went on, "They have helped maintain peace and stability throughout six different Galaxies including the Milky Way with a special interest in Earth. This planet has been the most challenging." She maintained a stern face.

She continued, "Jupanubia is 40 percent larger and more dense than Jupiter and is medium brown with 10 concentric light blue circles. The molecules on Jupanubia are different from those on Earth, much larger and the inhabitants are proportional in size to their planet as we are to Earth. Jupanubia's suns do not contain the same type of hydrogen that our planet's sun does; their suns are made up of hydrogen isotopes ."

"Suns--they have more than one?" I was impressed with her wild imagination.

She kept speaking as if giving a lecture and seeming not to hear my question, "The Jupanubians are a dark-skinned race of beings like the black people on Earth. They have a genetically based evolutional connection to equatorial and northern parts of Africa, and also to all of the other people on Earth. They have been focusing on and fascinated by the way beings of Earth and other planets treat each other, and they have not been pleased with the beings on Earth." "Although the molecules on Jupanubia are larger than those of Earth, the climate is similar to ours but warmer since they have more than one sun."

"You expect me to believe that?" I was stunned and amused with the interesting information, and did not buy any of it. "You said that you saw Beguantua Mae because of what you have been doing. Doing what?"

"Serving others"

"How?"

"Working for poor and vulnerable people regardless of who they are here in Grenada and other places," She raised her voice for emphasis. "I was in the movement to give women and minorities equal rights, and I marched with the freedom riders in the 60s when they came through Jackson and Grenada County after those three justice workers were killed down in Neshoba County. That's the type of person that I am.

"What does all of this have to do with me?" I said with less and less patience

"If my instinct and calculations are on point, you will get a huge answer to this question." Aunt Chowky said, a tone of admonishment in her voice.

An uneasiness came upon me and I kept listening not knowing what strange information she would give me next. "I'm still listening Aunt Chowky."

"You are a certain type of person" she said. "I have watched you since you were a small boy on playgrounds and saw how you took up for other kids who were bullied. You were kind of hard headed in junior high school, but you changed. I watched you throughout high school protesting with other students when high school secretary Mary Johnson lost her job for refusing to sleep with Dr. Blakely, the principal. She got her job back and Dr. Blakely was fired by the superintendent."

I remembered how I had really not liked Dr. Blakely ever since he had called me "a weird looking kid." I had gone to his office to wait to be picked up by my mother for a doctor's appointment about my tonsils. I had just entered the hall outside the office, and he did not yet know that I was there.

"Ms Davis, be sure to fill out the form so that funny looking kid, Lancy can leave with his mother.

I had been really ready for my mother to hurry to get me.

Aunt Chowky kept talking and emphasizing how I "fit within a certain mold in many ways" and I kept listening. I sat there outwardly attentive and receptive, but duplicitious in thought and heart—wearing the secret garment of an infidel.

Note: This submission is the first chapter of a larger work in progress.

Critical Essays

"So, Are You . . . *Black*?" Second Language Motivation and African-American University Students

By Tomaz Cunningham

The study of foreign languages and other cultures has always fascinated me, and I have always enjoyed the university environment. Therefore, the choice to pursue a career in foreign language teaching was an easy one to make. Despite my satisfaction of career choice, the journey to the doctorate was as long and difficult as any other field would have required. At various points and for various periods of time, I have been the only American graduate student, the only African American graduate student, or the only male African American student in my departments as a pursued my master's and doctoral degrees. I had noticed the lack of minority students among my classmates, of course; but the lack of African American foreign language professionals and the impact this has on students did not really strike me until I found full-time employment as a foreign language professor. One of my most gifted students asked me, quite pointedly, "So, are you . . . *black*?" Noticing my bemused smile and the tilt of my head as I said "Yes," she clarified her question, "I mean, are you black . . . like *us*?" I assured her that I was born in the United States to an English-speaking family, started studying French in high school and continued in college simply because I enjoyed foreign languages. To my amusement and great interest, I discovered that she was not the only student who had questions about my ethnicity. To add another level of interest to this situation, I work at a history black college (HBCU).

My student's surprise at having an African American foreign language professor, combined with my experience as one of the very few African American graduate students preparing for my career path, led me to do more reading on this subject. What could possibly explain the scarcity of

African American students, both undergraduate and graduate, who study foreign languages? Other researchers and writers have explored this same question. In her article "African-American Students' Opinions About the Foreign Language Study: An Exploratory Study of Low Enrollments at the College Level," Zena Moore noticed "persistent low enrollments of African-American students in foreign language programs" at the University of Texas at Austin (191). In her essay, "Foreign Language Study and the Black Student," Louise Hubbard cites several advantages to studying a foreign language for the African American student population; Edna Sims, in her essay "Why Blacks Should Study Foreign Language," states: "Foreign languages . . . are a rung of maximum utilitarian value in the struggle of blacks up the economic ladder" (291). Foreign language competence, similar to competence with technology, may very well become a crucial factor to employment and economic advancement; simultaneously offering distinct advantages to students exposed to these fields and marginalizing students who were not. When educators consider the increasingly global economy and the need for multi-lingual professionals in all fields, the small number of African American students who seriously study foreign languages becomes a considerable problem. I argue that research in the field of second language motivation may provide some useful insight into this situation. The scarcity of African American students who choose to study foreign languages seems to be connected to three major factors: certain socioeconomic realities of the African American population, an overall philosophy of education among African American college students and those who advise them and, most importantly in relation to recent research in the area of second language acquisition, the lack of guidance in negotiating an "L2 self." In this essay, I use the groundbreaking research on second language research by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, combined with current research on L2 motivation[1], to explore possible reasons why so few African American students choose to pursue foreign language study beyond general education requirements. I conclude this essay by discussing possible steps which, over time, may begin to address this problem.

Motivation in second language acquisition, like the study of motivation itself, is a complicated and nuanced subject. Social psychologists Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert laid the framework for research in L2 motivation with the hypothesis that persons are more likely to acquire competence in a foreign language if there are instrumental and / or integrative motivations or orientations present to learn that language. In the most fundamental terms, instrumental motivation refers to the desire to use the foreign language to achieve a tangible goal, such as employment, acceptance to an institution of higher education, or a promotion. Integrative motivation refers to the desire to use the language as a vehicle for acceptance in, or identification with, a group of people who use that language. L2 motivation exerts such a considerable influence on the foreign language learner that Gardner and Lambert were convinced that L2 motivation can actually override any limitations of language aptitude. During the 1990's, renewed interest in the field of L2 motivation has demonstrated that there are many more variables at work in a student's orientation and attitude towards language study, among them "interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction" according to Graham Crookes and Richard Schmidt (469) and Zoltán Dörnyei's findings of "teacher-specific and group specific components" to student motivation (Jacques 186). The question becomes, therefore, to what extent L2 motivation is considered in planning and executing the undergraduate curriculum. The foreign language undergraduate curriculum aims, among other goals, to develop the foreign language student in the four basic language competencies (speaking, reading, writing and comprehension). Furthermore, the student should ideally achieve a level of L2 knowledge and skill sufficient to allow the student to maintain and build upon each of these language competencies in order to use the language in the future. Clearly, this goal requires a significant amount of time, effort resources on the part of any foreign langue student. Would the factors contributing to levels of L2 motivation be the same, regardless of racial identity?[2]

In thinking and writing through these questions, I have found Dr. Marilyn Frye's conception of "The Birdcage Metaphor" to be particularly helpful.[3] According to Dr. Frye's metaphor, an observer's perspective of a bird inside of a birdcage depends on the position of the observer. From a

very close perspective, observing only one wire of the cage at a time, the observer would fail to understand why the bird doesn't simply fly around what seem to be very manageable obstacles. However, if the observer were to take a couple of steps back and get a "macroscopic" view of the cage, they would see that the birdcage has a roof, a bottom, and a series of interconnected wires, each reinforcing the limits of the cage. I suggest this powerful imagery is very suitable to the subject of this essay. All foreign language students are motivated by a series of factors that constitute instrumental or integrative motivation; however, the lack of those same factors would logically result in a lower level of motivation, regardless of a student's potential or even their enjoyment of foreign language study. In the case of instrumental motivation, for example; does the African American student have solid reason to believe that competency in a foreign language will result in more employment, greater chances of promotion, or access to an institution of higher education? The presence of a role model, especially one who shares the same racial identity and who uses foreign languages on a regular basis, would conceivably have a significant impact on a minority student's perception that L2 competence is indeed useful. Such a role model would be able to effectively communicate the utility of advanced L2 proficiency, and demonstrate that such skills are well worth the investment of time and economic resources. Might there be reason to believe that contact with professionals who use foreign languages on a daily basis might differ among the African American community than other communities? The use of foreign languages would be clearly useful to individuals who study in other countries. International travel and studying abroad, however, assumes a significant amount of disposable income within a family. Might there be reason to believe that access to such economic resources might differ between an African American family and other families?

Integrative motivation or orientation may also be different among the African American community as compared to other communities. In the article cited above in this essay, Dr. Moore observes that "African-American parental influence has a greater impact on career choice than any other factor" (192). The lack of African American professionals in the field of foreign language, or

even in fields that require the regular use of foreign languages, make the choice of foreign languages study to prepare for a career path potentially more dubious. Integrative motivation also encompasses the desire for an L2 user to identity with a group of other L2 users, the underlying assumption being that the L2 user has a positive experience with the group and the language that will integrate him into that group. As noticed in this and other essays, there are very few African Americans who present professional images of highly-skilled foreign language users. The number of African American students who undertake serious study in foreign languages, then, can be examined as the result of a self-perpetuating, vicious circle starting with the need for African American professional role-models who regularly travel internationally, use the language in their professions, and advocate for foreign language study in individual families. This need, however, results from the lack of African American students who prepare for such a future in their undergraduate and graduate careers.

The most insightful aspect of L2 motivation and how it may differ within the African American community is the concept of the "L2 self." The entire question of encouraging students to study foreign languages might seem as simple as prioritizing foreign languages earlier in the process of academic advising; however, the path towards L2 proficiency is not as simple as it might seem and should not be considered as another "skill set." Language is always connected to various constructions of individual and group identity; therefore, L2 users must accept and negotiate an identity that was not necessary prior to developing L2 competence. Linguists have long understood the relationship between language use and individual identity; however, recent research has defined this concept in more concrete terms. In 2005, Zoltán Dörnyei presented his theory of the "L2 Motivational Self System," which connects psychological theories of the self with previous research in L2 motivation and second language acquisition. Central to his hypothesis are the concepts of the "ideal self" (an individual's aspirations, ambitions and goals) and the "ought-to self" (an individual's conception of the attributes, skills and abilities they should have, as well as the responsibilities they should be able to fulfill). According to Dörnyei's model, L2 motivation would be greatly increased if

language proficiency were part of an individual's "ideal" or "ought-to" selves, due to "psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible future selves" (Ushoida and Dörnyei 4). As we have discussed in this essay, decreased instrumental and / or integrative motivation would make the construction of an "L2 self" problematic in the African American community. The concept of the L2 self also presents potential complications *within* a minority community itself. As individuals develop L2 competence, their relation to their first language, and those who only speak their first language, changes. In the introduction to her edited volume of essays entitled *Portraits of the L2 User*, Vivian Cook notes research showing that L2 users seem to display an increased grammatical awareness of both their first and second languages, read more rapidly in their first language, and possess better communication skills in their first language than those who are monolingual (Cook 7). The development of another language, then, potentially makes minorities such as African-Americans a "minority within a minority," adding to the myriad of identities that educated minorities and professionals already negotiate in the personal and professional areas of their lives.

Having examined possible reasons for the lack of African American students who choose to study foreign languages, we should now turn our attention to possible remedies to this situation. First, it would be helpful to carefully consider the practicality of the foreign language curriculum. Traditional foreign language teaching places great emphasis on grammar instruction paired with the study of literature, history and civilization. These fields of study are essential to a student's education; however, it may be in the best interest of foreign language departments to include courses with a more practical focus,[4] such as Elementary and Advanced Business Spanish, French for the Health Professions, Business Correspondence in German or Translation Techniques. Regardless of race or ethnicity, students who can conceive a practical use for foreign language skills are more likely to engage in serious pursuit of them.

Secondly, prioritize the recruitment and retention of African-American graduate students into foreign-language programs as graduate and teaching assistants. As any graduate teaching assistant will readily affirm, the best way to master any subject is to teach it. Graduate students, who are often only a few years older than the students in their classes, gain valuable professional experience while supporting themselves in their graduate studies. African-American graduate students would provide undergraduate university students an opportunity to identify with others of their same race at a time when further foreign language study is the most feasible.

Finally, more longitudinal study in the field of L2 motivation among African American students needs to take place.[5] A wealth of excellent research exists on the college experiences of African American students as undergraduate and graduate students. I suggest that this research could be joined with qualitative studies that explore the experiences of these students inside and outside of the foreign language classrooms in an attempt to determine if what appears to be lack of interest among African American students is actually the result of demotivating factors that are present even among students that enjoy foreign language study. Do African American students perceive themselves as welcome in student activities that promote and encourage the use of a foreign language? Do classroom activities and pedagogical practices facilitate classroom learning without marginalizing students who may not have had the opportunity to study abroad and may not experience any type of racial or cultural affinity with classmates or instructors?

As a foreign language professor and a member of the African American community, I continue to be fascinated by the number of talented African American students who begin foreign language study and, for various reasons, decide to stop before attaining the level of L2 competence that would truly serve them well in the future. Having taught at both an HBCU and two different universities that are not primarily minority-serving institutions, I have noticed that the number of students who choose to take more language classes, travel abroad, and actively pursue a level of L2 proficiency by either majoring in a foreign language, doubling a major in a foreign language with another field of study, or completing a minor is much lower at HBCU's. This essay (based on an

area of research that I will continue to explore) seeks to contribute to the discussion of L2 motivation as a whole and L2 motivation among African American students in particular, seeking to find possible solutions to a question that may become a socioeconomic and educational dilemma if not effectively addressed.

Notes

[1] The motivation of individuals to undertake the study of foreign languages will, from this point forward in the essay, be referred to as "L2 motivation."

[2] "Studies of foreign language continuation or discontinuation have focused mainly on White middle class students." (Moore 192)

[3] Dr. Frye's imagery is a part of her essay on "Oppression," which examines the problem of the oppression of women. I do not in any way intend to minimize the impact of Dr. Frye's work on such an important subject by applying it to the question in this article; I simply wish to use her insightful imagery in a way that, I believe, helps explain the question of L2 motivation among African-American students in a more impactful way.

[4] The autumn edition of *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (no. 45) states that "business is the most popular major for African-American college students nationwide" (p 41).

[5] In 1989, James Davis compiled an annotated bibliography on the research conducted on foreign language study and the African-American population. These excellent articles, dissertations and research projects, however, precede the resurgence of research in L2 motivation, which took place in the 1990's.

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Gender and Empathy in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Hagar, A Story of Today*

By Mikki Galliher

Multiple scholars, including Judith Fetterley, Nina Baym, and Phillip Gura, have noted the similarity between Alice Cary's 19th century novel *Hagar, A Story of Today* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Wendy Ripley even goes so far as to label *Hagar* a "gothic *Scarlet Letter*" (87). While *Hagar's* plot is notably more complicated than Hawthorne's tightly focused novel, the central plot of *Hagar* certainly echoes Hawthorne's text. Gertie, a young girl, is seduced, impregnated, and then betrayed by her minister, just as Hester Prynne is by Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*. Further, both Gertie and Hester afterward live lives of penitence and service as social outsiders. Hester is physically marked by her community with the scarlet letter "A" on her chest, and Gertie symbolically marks herself by changing her name to Hagar, a problematic biblical figure who is a concubine of Abraham and bears his first son, Ishmael. However, while Hawthorne's novel is considered one of the America's greatest novels, Cary's novel has been critically derided since its publication. I believe that this discrepancy of treatment lies, at least partially, in the way each novel presents its central characters and the thematic implications created by those presentations. Hawthorne's text places Dimmesdale centrally in the narrative so that his suffering is viewed concurrently with that of Hester and even overshadows Hester's suffering. In contrast, Nathan Warburton, the minister who betrays Gertie, is an amoral murderer whose monstrosity highlights Gertie's virtuous life. Although both novels question the infallibility of religious patriarchal authorities, Hawthorne paints

them as being flawed, but well-intentioned, while Cary's novel upends the traditional patriarchal structures and calls for a new religious paradigm centered in feminine sensibility and service.

One particularly colorful review of *Hagar* by an anonymous author in *The Una* (a nineteenth century magazine usually favorable to women's writing) stated that the novel appeared to have "no aim or purpose but to give utterance to sickly, morbid fancies," and the reviewer sarcastically wondered whether Cary "had been down into one of Dante's hells to get her inspiration." Subsequently, the novel has never really been accepted as a worthwhile text for literary scholars. Even during the recent decades of feminist recovery efforts, the novel has been derided and ignored. Despite Alice Cary's well-known and respected literary career during her lifetime and the meager attention given to her short fiction by feminist critics, *Hagar* and Cary's other novels have been left in obscurity. Judith Fetterley claims that Cary's novels "suffer from incoherence in both plot and character" (XX), while Baym has gone so far to claim that Cary's novels are "so badly written as to read like parody" (262). However, these commentaries are unfair to *Hagar*. While there are notable flaws in the novel, including a significant character who disappears from the plot, these faults are no greater than many other nineteenth century novels that were later reclaimed by feminist scholars who defended them from the savage commentary of earlier male critics. Works such as *The Wide, Wide, World, The Lamplighter,* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* all have been recast not as merely propaganda or sentimental drivel but rather as subversive texts that empower women and critique patriarchy. Cary's text unfortunately has been fundamentally misrepresented and misunderstood both by her initial reading public and by critics of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although flawed, the novel is ambitious

in its attempts and offers a vision for healing that encourages women to be wary of authorities and find healing with one another—a message that is certainly at least as worthwhile as that of the *Scarlet Letter*, the novel to which it has so often been compared.

The most striking parallel in the novels comes in the characters of the female protagonist of each novel. Both women begin as impressionable girls who are lured into relationships with men in positions of authority. Hester is first lured into a marriage with an older man, Chillingworth. In chapter four, Chillingworth notes that Hester's infidelity is not entirely her fault:

> It was my folly, and thy weakness. I,—a man of thought,—the bookworm of great libraries,—a man already in decay, having given my best years to feed the hungry dream of knowledge,—what had I to do with youth and beauty like thine own! Misshapen from my birth-hour, how could I delude myself with the idea that intellectual gifts might veil physical deformity in a young girl's fantasy! Men call me wise. If sages were ever wise in their own behoof, I might have foreseen all this. (58)

Here Chillingworth notes Hester's youth and beauty contrasts sharply with his own age and deformity. While she admits that she warned him that she never felt love toward him, the reader can assume that she was lured away, as many young women during that time, with the promise of financial security and perhaps even adventure. Nevertheless, these assurances are ripped from Hester; Chillingworth abandons his young bride when he sends her to Boston unaccompanied. Moreover, during his long absence, not only is she left alone, she is also left without the aid of family to fend for herself financially. Later, she falls in love with the young minster Arthur Dimmesdale, who also abandons her with his silence after she becomes pregnant with his child. She has discovered that the commitments made

by men, whether they be legal and financial commitments or words of love, cannot be depended upon. These entanglements have left her even further isolated in that her community has barred her from full participation because of her "sins." Hester is left vulnerable, with only herself for aid.

Elsie of *Hagar, a Story of Today* learns a similar lesson. Elsie is a young woman from rural New York state. Her lover Warburton is a composite figure, embodying traits of both Chillingworth and Dimmesdale. Like Chillingworth, Warburton is older than Elsie, so he is able to manipulate the inexperienced girl. His manipulation is even more total because, like Dimmesdale, Warburton is the preacher at Gertie's church. Warburton woos Gertie, stealing both her love and her virginity only to abandon her for a position ministering at a prosperous church in the city. The enamored girl surprises her lover by showing up literally on his doorstep:

> Mr. Warburton had given me but a cold recognition, without an intimation as to the claims I had upon his affection and justice, and I saw the angry spot burning in his cheek as he gracefully made his adieus, and as hastily as possible drew me away . . . I was dumb before him, went wheresoever he led, and to all his harsh reproaches answered not a word. (257)

When she arrives at his home, he is both angry and embarrassed by her presence. He quickly takes her to a filthy boarding house which she refers to as "her prison" where she is forced to remain between his infrequent visits (260). Like Hester she is left to fend for herself for long periods among strangers. Initially, Warburton's attitude toward her appears to change when she bears his child. He tells her he loves her, calls her "wife," and says they will be married in the morning, but when she wakes, she experiences quite a different

reality: both her lover and her child are gone (277-78). She is once again left alone and vulnerable.

In contrast to the relationship between Gertie and Warburton, the characters in *The Scarlet Letter* is not as clearly coded as good and evil. Although Chillingworth, whose face and body grow physically more twisted as his character becomes tainted by vengeance, is clearly evil, his evil is not directed toward his wife or her child. In fact, after he dies, he leaves his fortune to Pearl and ensures her future economic stability and introduction to the community (184). Dimmesdale is an even more problematic character. Hawthorne repeatedly emphasizes the suffering of both Dimmesdale and Hester. Both suffer, however, the novel indicates that Dimmesdale's suffering is far greater than that of his former lover. From the beginning chapters of the novel, Dimmesdale's health is in decline. He appears pale (53) and is already engaging in an iconic gesture of the novel, the placement of his hand over his heart (54). While Hester certainly suffers ostracization from the community, her suffering is minimized even in these early scenes in which she is publicly humiliated. Hawthorne describes her in this initial appearance as a "figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale" with "abundant" and "glossy" hair (43). She moves with "dignity" and, according the narrator, has "never been so ladylike... than as she issued from the prison." Thus, Hawthorne introduces these characters by employing a clearly contrast between Dimmesdale's suffering and diminished state with Hester's magnified beauty and spirt.

The dialog in this initial encounter also emphasizes Dimmesdale's internal struggle and places partial blame for his suffering upon Hester for her determination to hide his identity. During her interrogation, Dimmesdale states,

> I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so than to hide a guilty heart through life. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him--yea, compel him, as it were--to add hypocrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest to him--who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself--the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips! (53)

Here Hester is presented as the stronger of the two characters and therefore responsible for both her lover's spiritual continued degradation and suffering. She is told that unless she reveals her co-conspirator, she will become an agent of evil. Her silence is enabling his continued sin of hypocrisy from which she could easily rescue him.

As the novel continues, Dimmesdale's suffering is clearly portrayed as the more severe. First, first Hester has the blessing of her daughter Pearl. In Chapter 8, Dimmesdale defends Hester's continued custody to the other religious leaders who desire to pull the child away from her mother:

> She recognizes, believe me, the solemn miracle which God hath wrought, in the existence of that child. . . Therefore it is good for this poor, sinful woman that she hath an infant immortality, a being capable of eternal joy or sorrow, confided to her care,—to be trained up by her to righteousness,—to remind her, at every moment, of her fall,—but yet to teach her, as it were by the Creator's sacred pledge, that, if she

> bring the child to heaven, the child also will bring its parent thither! Herein is the sinful mother happier than the sinful father. (85)

In addition to providing her human companionship, the child provides Hester with redemption, restoring her to God. Although Hester's suffering is discussed (as it is continually throughout the novel), the "A" she bears is also a painted blessing for it is embodied in her child who is always with her and who gives Hester both a sense of purpose and true emotional connection.

Hester is "happier" than her co-conspirator, who must suffer alone. Dimmesdale's declining physical health and mental anguish drive him further from human companionship and mar his spiritual health. His only regular companion, Chillingworth, is, unbeknownst to the young minister, an agent of torture whose sole purpose is fixated on vengeance against him. Even in this point, Hester can be viewed as partially culpable for Dimmesdale's suffering because she has acquiesced to her husband's commanded to conceal his identity, and this aquiescnece has left her former lover ignorant of and vulnerable to the machinations of her husband. Dimmesdale's suffering is so great that he even resorts to physically harming himself:

> His inward trouble drove him to practices more in accordance with the old, corrupted faith of Rome, than with the better light of the church in which he had been born and bred. In Mr. Dimmesdale's secret closet, under lock and key, there was a bloody scourge. ,,,. It was his custom, too, as it has been that of many other pious Puritans, to fast,—not, however, like them, in order to purify the body and render it the fitter medium of celestial illumination, but rigorously, and until his

knees trembled beneath him, as an act of penance. He kept vigils, likewise, night after night, sometimes in utter darkness… but could not purify, himself. (106)

Although the community sees him as a saint, he continually feels weight of his sin and experiences spiritual alienation—an alienation that causes him to slide backward into the "corrupted" practices of the older Roman Catholic faith. Further, the novel describes his torture in that when he attempts to confess his sin, he is revered more by the community. With such emphasis placed on Dimmesdale's suffering, it is no wonder that Leslie Fiedler in his famous work *Love and Death in the American Novel* interprets the novel as not about Hester at all. Instead, for Fiedler, "Hawthorne's book deals with a man of God led by the desire for a woman to betray his religious commitment, and finally almost . . . to sell his soul to the Devil" (433). Fiedler's description, which most current readers would find bizarre, is merely a logical response to much of the text, a text which even paints uncomfortable parallels between Dimmesdale and Christ as Dimmesdale dies: "Then, down he sank upon the scaffold! Hester partly raised him, and supported his head against her bosom. Old Roger Chillingworth knelt down beside him, with a blank, dull countenance, out of which the life seemed to have departed" (180).

Dimmesdale's reclining on Hester's shoulder is reminiscent of images of the Pieta, a reoccurring image that appears in art, particularly that of the Renaissance. The image depicts the Virgin Mary holding the body of Christ after his crucifixion. In some of his final words, Dimmesdale speaks to Chillingworth, whom the preacher now recognizes as his enemy and tormentor, and echoes Christ's forgiveness of his torturers exclaiming, "May God forgive thee!" and indicating that his suffering has brought him back to God's grace. Finally, Dimmesdale, with his last breath, reiterates Christ's Gethsemane prayer stating

"His will be done! Farewell!" (181). The immediate effect of the minister's confession and death also seem to lead the witnesses of the event to a communal experience that unites them in an almost religious experience: "That final word came forth with the minister's expiring breath. The multitude, silent till then, broke out in a strange, deep voice of awe and wonder, which could not as yet find utterance" (181). The nature of his sin is even questioned by those witnesses who see the young minister as a person among the "saints and angels," who has died to express a "parable" for the spiritual good of the community (182-83). While these similarites to Christ can be read as an expression of Hawthorne's own ambivalence toward traditional Christian faith, the presence of these parallels coupled with the novel's repeated emphasis on Dimmesdale's suffering clearly cast him as a sympathetic and ultimately good character who simply struggles with human desires and fears rather than nefarious intentions.

In contrast to Hawthorne's sympathetic portrayal of the Dimmesdale, Cary portrays the minister Warburton as cold and ambitious. He is more demonically rendered than either Chillingworth or Dimmesdale. In addition to seducing a young woman and keeping her as a concubine, he steals and murders their child and abandons Gertie, leaving her without means in a city entirely unfamiliar to her (278-79, 290). The novel's depiction of Warburton also reflects a strong distrust of traditional religious authority. While early gothic texts, with their villainous monks and religious figures, tend to criticize the Catholic church (Stephens 21-22), Cary is critiquing the Protestant evangelicals. Cary presents the strict religious authority embodied in Warburton as the subject of horror. She places on Warburton, and by extension all strict evangelicals, what many would consider the ultimate sin. He is not a mere murderer; he is a murderer of his own child. Further, after killing his

child, he becomes an idolater by keeping the infant's tiny corpse with him and viewing it daily in a pagan-like ritual (285-90). Thus, Cary rejects the religious patriarchal authority represented by Warburton. By the close of the novel, Elsie moves to the frontier and reenters the Christian community there, a community that models Christian service and community over fiery sermons of damnation, the hallmarks of Warburton's ministry.

However, Gertie does not find this reunification immediately. After being abandoned by Warburton, she assumes the name "Hagar" and finds employment as the nanny of a girl who is neglected by her father and step-mother. At this new home, Elsie finds both purpose and community. This feminine community becomes particularly important to Elsie's development. Elsie arrives at the Wurth house a cold, unfeeling woman, injured both by her upbringing and her former lover. As a child in her parents' home, Elsie has experienced loneliness and solitude. She describes these experiences:

> It is many years ago that I was a little innocent child, gentle and loving; but my parents were poor, and the toils of their hard and rough journey made them negligent of me. I do not remember of ever being kissed in childhood, even by my mother. I do not think I ever was. I remember seeing her always at work, and the patient and weary look that she wore. My father, I felt always, was not a good man. He often spoke harshly to my mother, when at home, but he was not much there, and I know that I was gladdest when he was gone . . . It was a sad pastime, my solitary playing, for I, had no sisters, and never but one brother, and he many years younger than I. (227-28)

Elsie grows up never experiencing the affection and companionship of a family. At one point in her youth, her parents even give her to her aunt and uncle, an act that leaves Elsie

vulnerable to the attentions of Warburton. Elsie's first experience with romantic love is even more destructive. Upon surrendering herself physically and emotionally, she is treated as a prostitute and left abandoned and alone, robbed even of her own infant child, but Mrs. Goodell, the housekeeper, helps Elsie to find love within the little community of women in her charge. Upon first meeting Elsie, she shows the new nurse compassion. Mrs. Goodell's looks after Gertie's physical and financial future at a time when Gertie is not able to attend to these issues, and the house-keeper's happiness and contentment serves as an inspiration to the melancholy nanny who "should like to study" the older woman's secret, namely the ability to be happy. Mrs. Goodell also helps Elsie recognize her charge's love for her, telling her that the little girl loved Elsie better than any other person in the world and that should bring joy to her life (168-69). In truth, according to Elsie, Catherine's love, as well as Mrs. Goodell's affectionate instruction, help open Elsie's heart and strengthen her character (283). She not only learns to love and serve others, but she also develops a sense of self-worth and self-reliance. Her self-worth arises from her empathetic connection to those women in her community. Elsie's recognition that she is loved and capable of love gives her the strength to reject Warburton's final temptation, a rejection that leads her to overcome him. When he reenters her life claiming that she is his true "wife," she quite rightly labels him the murderer that he is (293-97). At this point, Gertie's charge is an adult woman, so Gertie leaves the city to live a life a service as a fully healed adult.

While *Hagar* certainly has its flaws, the message for female readers is more hopeful and inspiring readers than that of many works of that time. Instead of emphasizing male suffering and authority, it emphasizes women's abilities to find healing among themselves.

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Sowing the Seeds of English-Language Haiku: The Early Contributions of Basil Hall Chamberlain and Lafcadio Hearn

By John J. Han

Introduction

Japanese haiku[1] first came to Western Europe and the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Poets such as Julien Vocance (1878-1954), Paul-Louis Couchoud (1897-1959), Michel Revon (1867-1947), and Maurice Betz (1898-1946) pioneered French-language haiku.[2] In the English-speaking world, haiku came through the efforts of cultural ambassadors, such as Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) and Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904).[3] Chamberlain and Hearn were Europeans who stayed in Japan, writing about haiku for their Western readers. In *The Haiku Handbook* (2013), William J. Higginson and Penny Harter briefly give credit to Chamberlain and Hearn:

> […] Basil Hall Chamberlain's second edition of *Japanese Poetry*, including his new essay "Bashō[4] and the Japanese Poetic Epigram", was published in London and Japan at the end of 1910. (An earlier edition, without mention of haiku, had come out in 1880.) And Lafcadio Hearn's translations of hokku and tanka scattered through his many books on Japan were collected and published as *Japanese Lyrics* (Boston, 1915). Considering the distance between almost all of Western poetry and these traditional Japanese modes, Revon,

> Chamberlain, and Hearn acquitted themselves well. These, and a few other books, less well executed, provided French, Spanish, and English-language poets with a first look at Japanese haiku, which most of the British and North American poets called hokku, after Chamberlain. (51)

Higginson and Harter mention Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (1913) as perhaps "the first published hokku in English" (51).

This paper aims to discuss how Chamberlain and Hearn exerted crucial influence on the initial development of English-language haiku. Some scholars and poets have recognized the significant contributions the two men made in the early development of English-language haiku,[5] but their study is somewhat limited. Sources for this study include some of the new research on the two figures and their own texts that escaped existing scholarship.

Basil Hall Chamberlain

A native of Southsea, England, Basil Hall Chamberlain was a Japanologist who arrived in Japan in 1873. He taught at the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy in Tokyo (1874-1882) and then at Tokyo Imperial University (1886-1911).[6] In 1911, he moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where he lived for the rest his life. During his stay in Japan, he authored a number of books on Japanese literature, including *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (1880),

Things Japanese (1897), *A Practical Guide to the Study of Japanese Writing* (1905), and *Japanese Poetry* (1905).

Things Japanese (full title: *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan for the Use of Travellers and Others*) encyclopedically introduces everything that is conceivably Japanese from "Abacus" to "Zoology," including literature (by which he meant prose) and poetry. Compared with its Western counterpart, he finds Japanese prose shallow: "[W]hat Japanese literature most lacks is genius. It lacks thought, logical grasp, depth, breadth, and many-sidedness. It is too timorous, too narrow to compass great things" (295). In contrast, he appreciates Japanese poetry for its originality: "Japanese prosody […] is one of the few indisputably original productions of the Japanese mind" (374). He rightly identifies the common subjects of Japanese poetry: "the flowers, the birds, the snow, the moon, the falling leaves in autumn, the mist of the mountains, —in fact, the outward aspect of nature, —love, of course, and the shortness of life" (175). After introducing the Japanese poetic form of *renga* (collaborative linked poetry), Chamberlain introduces the 5-7-5 poetic form of *haiku*, which was then called *hokku*: "Out of this [aristocratic *renga*], at a later date, […] grew the *Haikai* or *Hokku*, an ultra-Lilliputian class of poem having but seventeen syllables (5, 7, 5)" (377).[7] Chamberlain shows two haiku as examples:

Rakkawa eda ni

Kaeru to mireba

Kochō kana!

"What I saw as a fallen blossom

returning to the branch, lo! it was a

butterfly."

Yūdachi ya

Chie sama-zama no

Kaburi-mono

"A shower, and head-gear variously

ingenuous" (377; italics in the original)

Chamberlain explains that the tanka (31 syllables) and the haiku are comparable to the European epigram (317). Indeed, they are somewhat akin to Greco-Roman and English epigrams in their brevity, wit, and occasional elements of surprise.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain devoted Part 4—approximately 1/3—of his book *Japanese Poetry* to the study of Japanese "epigrams," by which he meant *haiku*. Entitled "Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram," he translates hundreds of *hokku* along with annotations. He opens Part 4 with the following explanation:

> All Japanese poems are short, as measured by European standards. But there exists an ultra-short variety consisting of only seventeen syllables all told. The poets of Japan have produced thousands of these microscopic compositions, which enjoy a great popularity, have been printed, reprinted, commentated, quoted, copied, in face have had a remarkable literary success. Their native name is *Hokku* (also *Haiku* and *Haikai*), which in default of a better equivalent,

> I venture to translate by "Epigram," using that term, not in the modern sense of a pointed saying, […] but in its earliest acceptation, as denoting as little piece of verse, that expresses a delicate or ingenuous thought. (147)

Overall, Chamberlain's understanding of Japanese haiku is accurate. Interestingly, he uses the term *haiku* alongside *hokku* and *haikai*, whereas his contemporaries, such as Lafcadio Hearn and Yone Noguchi, do not. In the 1890s, Masaoka Shiki established the modern, standalone form of *haiku* out of *hokku*, so Chamberlain may have learned the new term.

Lafcadio Hearn

Lafcadio Hearn (Japanese name: 小泉 八雲, Koizumi Yakumo; literally "Small Fountain Eight Clouds"), arrived in Japan in 1890—approximately two decades after Chamberlain, who was born in the same year. Born of a Greek mother and an Anglo-Irish father in Greece, Hearn lived in England and then in the United States before he moved to Japan in 1890. He settled in Matsue, a port city along the Sea of Japan, where he married Koizumi Setsuko, a samurai's daughter, through arrangement. Through his personal connection with Basil Hall Chamberlain,[8] Hearn obtained teaching positions in Matsue and then in Kumamoto before working briefly for the *Kobe Chronicle*, an English newspaper in Kobe. In 1896, he and his wife moved to Tokyo, where he taught in the College of Literature at Tokyo Imperial University until 1903. He died at the age of fifty-four, a year after his contract with the university had expired.

Despite his relatively short life, Hearn was a prolific author who wrote many books on Japan, including *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), *Out of the East: Reveries and Studies in New Japan* (1895), *Exotics and Retrospectives* (1898), *In Ghostly Japan* (1899), *Shadowings* (1900), *Japanese Lyrics* (1900), and *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904). Unlike Chamberlain, who adopted a condescendingly Orientalist view of Japan, Hearn romanticized Japan, pursuing Old Japan, which was disappearing amidst a rapid Westernization of the country. Whereas Chamberlain dismissed native Japanese religions as inferior to Christianity and looked forward to the day of a Christianized Japan, Hearn saw the Catholic Church's efforts to Christianize Japan, which resulted in the executions of almost 40,000 native converts in the seventeenth century, as "a crime against humanity [and] a labour of devastation" (*Japan* 328). It is not surprising that Roy Starrs calls Hearn a "Japanese nationalist" (181).

In *Kwaidan*, Hearn introduces twenty-two Japanese haiku on butterflies with transliterations, translations, and endnotes, but without the original texts. Before presenting the poems, he offers the following explanation and assessment of haiku as a poetic genre:

> Some are pictures only,—tiny color-sketches made with seventeen syllables; some are nothing more than pretty fancies, or graceful suggestions;—but the reader will find variety. Probably he will not care much for the verses in themselves. The taste for Japanese poetry of the epigrammatic sort is a taste that must be slowly acquired; and it is only by degrees, after patient study, that the possibilities of such composition can be fairly estimated. Hasty criticism has declared that to put forward any serious

> claim on behalf of seventeen-syllable poems "would be absurd." But what, then, of [Richard] Crashaw's famous line upon the miracle at the marriage feast in Cana?
>
> —Nympha pudica Deum vidit, et erubuit.
> [The modest Nymph saw the god, and blushed]
>
> Only fourteen syllables—and immortality. Now with seventeen Japanese syllables things quite as wonderful—indeed, much more wonderful—have been done, not once or twice, but probably a thousand times... However, there is nothing wonderful in the following hokku, which have been selected for more than literary reasons [.]

Similar to Chamberlain, Hearn views haiku as epigrammatic poetry. His understanding of haiku is also correct: they are vivid sketches from life,[9] some are fanciful, and others offer graceful suggestions. Hearn recognizes that, despite its simple structure, haiku can be an extraordinary poetic form. Below are five haiku from *Kwaidan*:

> Nugi-kakuru
> Haori sugata no
> Kocho kana!
> [Like a haori being taken off—that is the shape of a butterfly!]

Torisashi no

Sao no jama suru

Kocho kana!

[Ah, the butterfly keeps getting in the way of the bird-catcher's pole!]

Tsurigane ni

Tomarite nemuru

Kocho kana!

[Perched upon the temple-bell, the butterfly sleeps:]

Neru-uchi mo

Asobu-yume wo ya—

Kusa no cho!

[Even while sleeping, its dream is of play—ah, the butterfly of the grass!]

Oki, oki yo!

Waga tomo ni sen,

Neru-kocho!

[Wake up! wake up!—I will make thee my comrade, thou sleeping butterfly.]

Hearn does not hold a high view of these and other haiku in the books, which—despite his love for Japan—may reflect his Western bias. In East Asian culture, poetry does not have to convey something philosophically profound—good poetry can merely portray the natural

world and express one's emotions without using intricate figures of speech, such as the metaphysical conceit. All the poems above reflect a desire to be one with nature and a keen ability to accept the natural world without objectifying it.

Conclusion

Chamberlain and Hearn were prolific authors equipped with intellectual curiosity and an incisive appreciation of Japanese poetry. Despite being foreigners, they gained sufficient knowledge of haiku, and their understanding of haiku was generally accurate. It is remarkable that the two men were capable of understanding the Japanese poetic form, not to mention their ability to comprehend written Japanese that is entirely different from its Western counterparts in its lexicon and structure.

In his article "Lafcadio Hearn and Haiku" (2002), Cor van den Heuvel praises Hearn for his respect for haiku but criticizes Chamberlain for his "insensitive characterization" of the form as epigrammatic poetry. Despite his generally conceited attitude toward Japan and Japanese culture, however, Chamberlain does not necessarily slight haiku. He uses the term *epigram* for lack of a proper word in his comparison of the form with Western poetry: "Naturally brevity needed to put *any* statement into so narrow a compass soon led to an elliptical and enigmatic style, which continually crosses the border-line of obscurity" (377-79). Lafcadio also views haiku as epigrammatic poetry, but not in a disparaging way. The word *epigram* exudes light-heartedness, but epigrams originally began as inscriptions on tombstones. By definition, an epigram is "a short poem ending in a witty turn of thought;

hence a pointed or antithetical saying" ("epigram"), a poetic form that is somewhat akin to the haiku. Therefore, calling haiku epigrammatic poetry is not necessarily a negative statement.

Finally, Chamberlain and Hearn mistakenly defined haiku as a seventeen-syllable poetic form without understanding (or informing the reader) that Japanese poetry goes by sound unit (mora), not by syllable. Explaining that a haiku consists of 5-7-5 English syllables resulted in the proliferation of 5-7-5 English-language haiku, which typically include unnecessary words. Even today, the 5-7-5 myth persists among amateur poets, whereas professional haikuists write in free style typically using eleven to twelve syllables rather than the "traditional" seventeen.[10] However, Chamberlain and Hearn were not the only ones that equated English syllables with Japanese morae. [11]

Notes

[1] Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) invented the term *haiku* as a replacement for the *hokku*, which refers to the starting verse of both *renga* (collaborative linked poetry) and *renku* (comic collaborative linked poetry; *haikai no renga*). By adopting a new name, Shiki wanted to reinvent the *hokku* as an independent poetic form in line with Western individualism.

[2] Julien Vocance, Paul-Louis Couchoud, and other poets published a book of their French haiku in 1905, and Michel Revon published an anthology of Japanese literature, including Matsuo Basho's haiku, in French translation in 1910 (Higginson and Harter 49). Haiku became "an indigenous Western phenomenon" by World War I as exemplified by the French haiku of Maurice Betz, René Maublanc, and Jean Baucomont that appeared in the *Nouvelle revue française* in 1920 (Higginson and Harter 49-50).

[3] In addition to these two forerunners, William George Aston (1841-1911) and Yone Noguchi (1875-1947) were also instrumental in introducing haiku to the Western world. Aston was a British diplomat who had expertise in the languages and history of Japan and Korea. In *A History of Japanese Literature* (1899), he discusses three seventeenth-century poetic forms in Japan: haikai (haiku), haibun, and kiōka (kyoka). Chapter 4 ("Haikai") of the book begins with the following statement:

> It might naturally be supposed that in the Tanka of thirty-one syllables poetry had reached its extreme limit of brevity and conciseness. But a still further step remained to be taken in this direction. In the sixteenth century a kind of poem known as

> Haikai, which consists of seventeen syllables only, made its appearance. The Haikai is a Tanka minus the concluding fourteen syllables, and is made up of three phrases of five, seven, and five syllables respectively[.] (289)

Aston follows this explanation by quoting Basho's famous haiku on the frog jumping into an old pond:

> *"Furu ike ya!*
> *Kawadzu tobi-komu,*
> *Midzu no oto."* (289; italics in the original)

Noguchi was a Japanese-born transnational writer and poet who not only introduced Japanese haiku in America and England but also composed English-language free verse and haiku. A prolific writer and poet, he authored dozens of books, including *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl* (1902), *The Pilgrimage* (1909, 1912), *Seen and Unseen, or Monologues of a Homeless Snail* (1920), and *Japan and America*, *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry*, and *The Story of Yone Noguchi Told by Himself*. Noguchi's poetry book *The Pilgrimage* includes six "Hokku" he composed. In a footnote, Noguchi writes,

> "Hokku" (seventeen-syllable poem) in Japanese mind might be compared with a tiny star, I dare say, carrying the whole sky at its back. It is like a slightly-open door, where you may steal into the realm of poesy. It is simply a guiding lamp. Its value depends on how much it suggests. The Hokku

> poet's chief aim is to impress the reader with the high atmosphere in which he is living. Herewith I present you some of my English adaptations of this peculiar form of Japanese poetry. (137)

[4] In English, Matsuo Basho is sometimes spelled *Matsuo Bashō*. The macron atop the letter *o* indicates that the last vowel has two morae (oo).

[5] In the article "Chamberlain's 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram,'" Julian Leonard praises Chamberlain's 1902 work as "the first major treatment of haiku in English, or indeed any European language. This work, a paper presented to the ASJ [*Journal of Asian Studies*], consisted of a long introductory essay, more than sixty pages in length, describing the historical origins and characteristics of haiku […]" (70). Cor van den Heuvel correctly notes, "Hearn must have been an influence on the great British translator of haiku, R. H. Blyth, whose four-volume [*Haiku*], published from 1949 to 1952, was a seminal work in starting the American haiku movement." It should be noted that, prior to the publication of Blyth's books, Asataro Miyamori (宮森麻太郎, 1869-1952) published *An Anthology of Haiku, Ancient and Modern* (Tokyo: Maruzen Company Ltd., 1930, 1932), a massive volume in which he translates Japanese haiku into English and annotates them. Miyamori's book has largely escaped the attention of haiku scholars. Thanks are due to Bryan Rickert, a haiku and tanka poet in St. Louis, Missouri, for informing me of this important English-language volume.

[6] The University of Tokyo (東京大學) was founded in 1877. The name was changed to the Imperial University (帝國大學) in 1886 and then to Tokyo Imperial University (東京帝國大學) in 1897. In 1947, the institution re-assumed its original name.

[7] *Haikai* (俳諧 comic, unorthodox) means both *haikai no renga* (*renku*) and other haikai-style poems, including haiku, senryu, and haiga.

[8] Chamberlain served as Hearn's friend, mentor, and university colleague, but their relationship became estranged later on. Hearn and his Japanese wife had three sons and a daughter. Kazuo, their first son, compiled two books, *Letters from Basil Hall Chamberlain to Lafcadio Hearn* (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1936) and *More Letters from Basil Hall Chamberlain to Lafcadio Hearn* (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1937). Kazuo also wrote a memoir of his father, *Father and I: Memories of Lafcadio Hearn* (Houghton Mifflin, 1935).

[9] As a haiku critic, Masaoka Shiki preferred Yosa Buson (1716-84) to Matsuo Basho (1644-94). According to Shiki, Buson's haiku are *shasei* (sketches from life) and are thus more realistic than Basho's. For more information on Shiki's theory of *shasei*, see Charles Trumbull's essay "Masaoka Shiki and the Origins of Shasei" in *Juxtapositions: The Journal of Haiku Research and Scholarship*, vol. 2, no. 1, https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/juxta/juxta-2-1/masaoka-shiki-and-the-origins-of-shasei/.

[10] Haiku essayist Keiko Imaoka states, "Many bilingual poets and translators in the mainstream North American haiku scene agree that something in the vicinity of 11 English syllables is a suitable approximation of 17 Japanese syllables, in order to convey about the same amount of information as well as the brevity and the fragmented quality found in Japanese haiku" (qtd. in Wartel). According to the Haiku Society of America, "Some translators of Japanese poetry have noted that about twelve syllables in English approximates the duration of seventeen Japanese *on* [morae]" ("Official"). In extreme cases, some haikuists—such as Cor van den Heuvel and John Stevenson—use only one word for an entire poem, which makes one wonder if a haiku can consist of a single word.

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Empowering Emasculation: Shakespeare's Deconstruction of Edgar's Masculinity in *King Lear*

By Nancy K. Kerns

In *King Lear*, Edgar is one of the few characters left on his feet as the curtain falls, and arguably the only character who has gained power at the play's end. In the final scene, he has not only defeated the brother who had falsely accused him, he has also been offered the kingdoms vacated by Lear's daughters. In order to reach that position of power, however, he first had to endure the complete loss of everything that made him a man. Over the course of the play, Shakespeare deconstructs Edgar's manhood and forces him to recognize the illusory nature of masculine identity before allowing him to reclaim it.

Early modern markers of manhood included dressing appropriately, speaking eloquently, and behaving decorously (Smith 201); in other words, manhood involved demonstrating status and self-control. As Elizabeth A. Foyster establishes in *Manhood in Early Modern England*, self-control was central to the Early Modern concept of masculinity, and it placed a man in direct opposition to the stereotype of the animalistic woman, unable to control herself. Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman*, first published in 1622, exemplifies attitudes of the day. His sartorial advice: adopt "moderate and middle garbe"; ostentatious clothing "carryeth away mens minds to a womanish vanitie" (191-92). The connection between mental deficiency and femininity which Peacham injects into a conversation about clothing emphasize the layers of gendered judgment placed upon dress. In another part of the text, Peacham's advice on speaking follows a predictable bent,

encouraging men to argue logically and intelligently. However, in addition to concerns about content, Peacham urges cultivation of a "comely moderation of the voice, countenance, and gesture" not simply because of practical concerns, but because speech illustrates "the character of a man" (42). In terms of manners, Peacham advises men must focus on "moderation of the mind and affections" and reflect such moderation in their actions (221).

Society's construction of masculinity valued such external signs as proofs of manhood, and deemed them a necessity for the most important concern of all: maintaining one's honor and reputation; maintaining "a good name." As Charles Gibbons puts it in his 1594 work *The Praise of a Good Name, The Reproach of an Ill Name,* while inner virtue is essential, one cannot achieve a good name unless one's "gifts glitter like gold" (21). Edgar surrenders all such displays as he desperately runs for his life. His good name becomes as besmirched as his beggar's body. Bereft of clothing, rational speech, and any semblance of decorum, he destroys all the societal markers of masculine identity. In doing so, he begins the journey to becoming the man standing tall at the end.

When readers first hear of Edgar, he is simply the inoffensive elder brother of villainous Edmund. Edmund bitterly refers to him in a monologue as "legitimate Edgar" before falsely accusing him of plotting to kill their father Gloucester (I.ii.17). Gloucester believes the lie all too easily. When Edgar enters the scene, his playful question as to why his brother is in "serious contemplation" is cut short by the revelation from Edmund that his father now seeks his life (I.ii.145). When Edgar protests that he had spoken to Gloucester for a full two hours the night prior, we get one of the few insights into Edgar's life before the fall. He is a man who had believed himself to be firmly ensconced in his father's love,

although Gloucester's attachment to Edmund appears to at least rival his love for Edgar, if not surpass it. Certainly, Edgar had been confident in his position as the heir. Also, when urged to arm himself, Edgar reacts with horror at the idea that he would have to defend himself from his own father.

At this point, his sense of self comes from his identity as Edgar, Legitimate Son of the Duke of Gloucester and His Heir. His manhood is tied to that identity so tightly that he finds it impossible to let go of his birthright without abandoning his masculinity as well; hence, when it is time for him to go into disguise, he hatches the radical plan of "Poor Tom," the mad beggar. As he describes it in Act 2, Scene 3:

> Whiles I may 'scape,
> I will preserve myself: and am bethought
> To take the basest and most poorest shape
> That ever penury, in contempt of man,
> Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
> Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots;
> And with presented nakedness out-face
> The winds and persecutions of the sky.
> The country gives me proof and precedent
> Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
> Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
> Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
> And with this horrible object, from low farms,
> Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,

Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,

Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!

That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. (II.iii.1-21)

The dress so valued by *The Compleat Gentleman* will now be nothing more than a shabby, ripped loincloth; the rest nakedness. The reasoned speech will now be "roaring voices" making "lunatic bans" and crazed prayers. The decorum will now be debasement. At this point, he feels he has no sense of self without his markers of manhood. The most essential line ends it: "Edgar, I nothing am."

It is important to note that Edgar is making a choice here; he is choosing to take on this emasculated persona and, in Robert Henke's words, "perform for his life" (74). He knows that he will be safe from those who are hunting him; he resigns himself to the accompanying humiliation and degradation "Poor Tom" will experience, as well as the physical suffering Shakespeare highlights throughout the coming storm as "Tom" continues to shiver while the rain pours. He always has a degree of control, even as he is victimized by his brother's machinations.

Right away, Shakespeare shades Edgar's emasculation with empowerment. The first time Edgar interacts with King Lear is in his guise as "Poor Tom." While it is possible that Edgar may have interacted with Lear on occasion in the past, he certainly could not have done so with as much freedom as he does in the midst of that terrible storm. Although only one of them is truly losing his sanity, both are drenched, dispossessed, and despairing. Immediately, Edgar has a kinship with the king. Lear sees himself in Edgar, asking him if "his daughters brought him to this pass" (III.iv.68), and then seeing them both – and all humanity – as the same in terms of being a "poor, bare forked animal" (III.iv.115). As

Kermode puts it, this kinship helps Lear "come to terms with his mortal body" (1251). Eventually, Lear is so loath to leave his new friend that when Gloucester comes to get him and bring him back to the house in defiance of Regan's orders, Lear would rather stand outside and talk to the "philosopher" Edgar than take shelter. Even though when King Lear first sees Edgar, he perceives him as what Levin calls "the personification of abject poverty and misery" (93), by the end of the scene Edgar has changed his state with that of the king in a sadly ironic way. Indeed, Edgar at this point has become more powerful than Lear, because Edgar is only feigning his madness. As Julián Jiménez Heffernan states, he is "socio-rational" and only "impersonates the primitive" (154). Edgar has cast off his markers of masculinity, but he has the power to reclaim them. This is not the case for Lear; that "powerful man deprived of male power" (McLuskie 105) will never regain either.

The shift in the power dynamic is poignantly portrayed when Edgar becomes overwhelmed with pity as he watches the fallen monarch acting out his sad hallucinations. After observing Lear conduct an imaginary trial of his daughters in the hovel, Edgar is so moved with compassion that he almost cannot keep up his charade. Anguished, he states: "My tears begin to take his part so much, / They mar my counterfeiting" (III.vi.63-64). It is a momentary reclamation of manhood that, ironically, takes place through tears. However, he quickly returns to his role; it is not time for him to emerge from his degradation yet. Still, his time with Lear does lead to a turning point in his attitude: "When we our betters see bearing our woes, / We scarcely think our miseries our foes. / […] How light and portable my pain seems now, / When that which makes me bend makes the king bow" (III.vii.111-112,118-119). Edgar recognizes that he is stronger than the king: he bends, but the king bows, and a sense of his own power begins to return to him.

Shakespeare adds another layer to the disguise when Lear questions "Poor Tom" about his life, and Edgar quickly invents a backstory. When Lear asks him "What hast thou been?" he replies:

> A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled
> my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of
> my mistress' heart, and did the act of darkness with
> her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and
> broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one that
> slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it:
> wine loved I deeply, dice dearly: and in woman
> out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of
> ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth,
> wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.
> Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of
> silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy foot
> out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen
> from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend. (III.iv.91-104)

What at first glance may appear to be a prattling list of sins actually aligns with the kind of vices that were gendered as "unmanly" due to their association with a lack of self-control. Lustfulness was effeminate because it showed a surrender to passion. Similarly, drunkenness was a direct result of the inability to control one's desires, and thus "feminine." A man who was unable to "hold his drink" disgraced himself (Foyster 40). Both of these sins also interfere with rational thought, further gendering them feminine. The addition of a

scenario where Poor Tom admits to letting his sexuality be controlled by a woman's "rustling of silks" in this "past life" renders him even more of an effeminate caricature. The temptations of gambling and profligacy also demonstrate an inability to resist one's desires. Essentially, Poor Tom's backstory is that he went crazy because he was not manly enough to resist the evils that brought him down. Through the story, Edgar echoes his own loss of masculine identity even as he invents a character far-flung from his true self.

Once Lear has left, however, Edgar must face his most difficult period as "Poor Tom." This period has nothing to do with physical suffering; it occurs after the "oak-cleaving thunderbolts" (III.ii.6) have quieted and the rains have stilled. The greatest emotional torment he endures occurs when he meets his newly blinded father on the heath being led by an elderly tenant, after Gloucester's eyes have been gouged out by the vicious Regan and Cornwall in order to punish him for his loyalty to Lear. Gloucester's wounds are so fresh that his eye sockets are still bleeding. The sight devastates Edgar, and his anguish truly begins. He immediately feels pity for his father and scoffs at himself for naively thinking, earlier, that he had hit rock bottom. He now knows "the worst is not / So long as we can say 'This is the worst'" (IV.i.30-31).

He continues to act out the part of "Poor Tom" with Gloucester, even though Gloucester knows at this point that Edmund was lying and that Edgar was innocent; indeed, Regan had revealed Edmund was the one responsible for reporting Gloucester's "treachery." Even as Edgar's natural instinct is to reveal himself, he suppresses the urge and maintains his façade. "I cannot daub it further" (IV.i.60) he says in an aside as his father calls him, struggling to keep from breaking down, but then he gathers himself and goes on to

say, "And yet I must." (IV.i.62) In a moment, he goes from agonized son to antic stranger, addressing Gloucester as if he has never seen him before.

This has troubled many audiences and critics alike. Why *must* he? Why cannot Edgar simply tell his father that he is alive and well when he overhears his father say "O dear son Edgar, / The food of thy abused father's wrath! / Might I but live to see thee in my touch, / I'd say I had eyes again!" (IV.i.22-25)? Why continue the pretense of "Poor Tom" and agree to lead Gloucester to Dover, where he plans to cast himself off of a cliff? Northrop Frye famously found Edgar to be a cypher, and he is not alone. Many speculate that Edgar is hiding resentments and punishing his father. Maynard Mack in *King Lear in Our Time* reads him as an allegorical figure similar to that of a medieval morality play whose role is to simply to act out an idea, abandoning notions of character analysis altogether. Certainly, Edgar's actions at this moment do not seem readily explainable in terms of naturalistic behavior. I suggest that he does not confess his identity and reclaim his masculinity here because he does not want to give up the special kind of power he is experiencing as Poor Tom, and that he believes he can accomplish more in disguise than he can as Edgar.

It is true he would still be in control of the situation if he revealed himself, but the dynamic would be quite different. As it stands, Gloucester wishes Poor Tom to lead him to the cliffs of Dover in order to enable his suicide. While the audience does not realize it here, we learn in Scene 5 that Edgar has concocted an elaborate ploy that he can only carry out in the guise of Poor Tom. This trick will fool his father into thinking that he has been miraculously saved from a suicidal jump, as Poor Tom will lead him to a "cliff" that is actually nothing more than a bit of a slope. Edgar believes this will, in his words, "cure" him of his "despair" (IV.vi.42,43). As Edgar, he could not get through to his father the last

time they spoke. In contrast, as an emasculated beggar, Edgar paradoxically is able to lead his father to salvation by practicing upon him what David N. Beauregard calls a "benevolent fraud" (206). Indeed, later on, Edgar characterizes the experience as a kind of salvation to Edmund, saying he "saved him from despair" (V.iii.227). He believes that, as Poor Tom, he found a way to make his father value his life again.

When Gloucester revives after the "jump," Edgar successfully convinces his father that he has survived a leap rather than simply fainted. Edgar does so by taking on a new persona; he becomes a peasant now, a passerby who supposedly just so happened to see a man jump off of the cliffs of Dover and arise unhurt. "Thy life's a miracle" (IV.vi.69), he assures Gloucester when his father, still despairing, insists the he wants to be left alone to die.

In the next moment, Edgar takes a step forward in his own journey as well. While he still does not reveal himself to his father, he abandons the guise of the mad beggar for good. While it gave him the means to bring his father to the cliffs, it has served its purpose. Despite the power and safety it afforded him, he recognizes its repugnance. In the voice of the peasant, he tells Gloucester that the person he knew as "Poor Tom" was actually a demon, describing him thusly: "As I stood here below, methought his eyes / Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses, / Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea" (IV.vi.86-88). He goes on to say that "It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father, / Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours / Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee" (IV.vi.89-91). It works. Gloucester swears he will nevermore attempt suicide and Edgar will never again be Poor Tom. The picture Edgar paints of Poor Tom vividly reflects his loathing of his emasculated state. While the loss of masculinity was empowering

in its way, it was still appalling to him. Like demons from Hell, his experience was an unnatural horror.

While the loss of Edgar's identity and his masculinity occurred in one fell swoop when he adopted the guise of Poor Tom, he begins to reclaim his masculine markers before reclaiming his identity as Edgar. While he is perhaps not up to the standards of *The Compleat Gentleman*, he is still within the realm of appropriate dress, rational speech, and decorous behavior that would place him back into Early Modern conceptualizations of masculinity. Still, he does not step all the way into his natural role at first. Right after Gloucester's suicide attempt, they are interrupted by Lear, who is in an ecstasy of madness. Then, they are attacked by Goneril's obnoxious servant Oswald, who recognizes Gloucester as a fugitive and wants to kill him. Interestingly, Edgar once again takes on a new part as he drops into one of Shakespeare's few instances of dialect (West Country, to be specific): "Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk / pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life, / 'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. / Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor / ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be / the harder: ch'ill be plain with you" (IV.vi.266-271). Oswald, a servant who is infamous for giving himself airs, would be especially affronted by a challenger who spoke in a lowly West Country dialect. His accent and way of speaking say as much about his socioeconomic status as they do about where he was born.

Edgar is now playing with being a new kind of man. He is recognizing that the masculinity that he had tied to his identity as the well-spoken, well-dressed Heir of the Duke of Gloucester is actually larger than that; he can be a man without being Gloucester. In this rural guise, he kills Oswald in the act of defending his father. While the association between

violent duels and manly behavior would eventually lessen in Early Modern England (Fletcher 147-148), at this point, it still serves to further Edgar on an empowering path. He has been able to save his father twice under different names, patterns of speech, and dress. Having reached the understanding that he does not need all of the trappings of Early Modern manhood in order to truly be a man, Edgar is now ready to return for those trappings. At this end of the scene, Edgar says, "Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend" (IV.vii.316). At that point, Gloucester believes Edgar is simply using "father" as a general term for an elder, but not so; Edgar has finally decided to reclaim his own, and he is starting with his family.

Still, he is not done hiding himself from the world. In Act 5, Edgar approaches Albany on the battlefield in Scene 1 disguised as a commoner in order to both deliver the message that tells of Edmund's treason, and to set up an occasion where he might challenge Edmund. This sets up his glorious return in Act 5 Scene 3 where he re-enters, armed, for a mano-a-mano confrontation. He has transitioned from emasculated to hypermasculine, and will restore himself through the strength of his arm, physically defeating the brother who had usurped him. He literally becomes a knight in shining armor, but he is saving himself rather than any damsel in distress. He is full of assertiveness and confidence when he confronts Edmund. When Albany asks his name, his reply carries a weapon's edge: "Know, my name is lost; / By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit: / Yet am I noble as the adversary / I come to cope" (V.iii.145-148).

He pretends he does not recognize Edmund, but when he makes his challenge, he excoriates him:

Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,

Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,

Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor;

False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;

Conspirant 'gainst this high-illustrious prince;

And, from the extremest upward of thy head

To the descent and dust below thy foot,

A most toad-spotted traitor. (V.iii.159-166)

He dispatches Edmund quickly despite the fact that Edmund is a professional soldier, and a nobleman like Edgar typically would have had much less practice at arms. His only dealings with weaponry in the play had been in Act 1, where he had expressed repugnance at fighting Gloucester and refused to injure Edmund. This final fight is not about displaying a skill set, though; it is about proving a point. Edgar has come to realize that the masculine identity he associated so strongly with his identity as Edgar: Heir to the Duke of Gloucester, is actually quite independent of the title. Likewise, the external markers associated with that identity do not truly establish his manhood. Thus, he needs to fight Edmund without revealing his identity in order to demonstrate once and for all that he has masculine honor even without a "good name."

Only at the very last, as Edmund is dying, does Edgar tell him his name. He does not do so maliciously or to exult over him. Rather, he does it in the spirit of connecting with him one last time. Edmund admits his fault and forgives whomever has killed him, not knowing it is Edgar. To this, Edgar replies: "Let's exchange charity. / I am no less in blood

than thou art, Edmund; / If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me. / My name is Edgar, and thy father's son" (V.iii.200-203).

It is an unexpected moment, as up until this point Edmund had shown no remorse for his actions, but it does not end there. Their connection also gives Edgar the opportunity to explain his experiences in a way that gives more insight into what he was thinking as he underwent his transformations. We see just how keenly he felt the sufferings of Poor Tom when he states, "O, our lives' sweetness! / That we the pain of death would hourly die / Rather than die at once!" (V.iii.220-222), and he calls what he became "a semblance / That very dogs disdain'd" (V.iii.224). We also discover that he finally revealed himself to his father until just before the fight, only to inadvertently kill him, the one act he regrets. He describes Gloucester as essentially dying due to the extremity of his emotions: "his flaw'd heart, / Alack, too weak the conflict to support! / 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, / Burst smilingly" (V.iii.229-235).

Edmund is so moved that he tries to take back his earlier order to have Cordelia and Lear killed, but it is too late, and the play's tragic ending unfolds. Despite the futility of Edmund's change of heart, it is a transformational moment for both Edmund and Edgar. Edgar may have caused the deaths of his father and brother, but he also saved them spiritually: he stopped one from ending his life in suicide, and he inspired the other to repent at death's door. Edgar's death is a bittersweet moment in a play filled with bleak ones. As the play ends, Edgar, now the Duke of Gloucester himself, is offered the kingdom upon Lear's death and Kent's exit. Kent, the other man who was offered rule, is determined to follow his master Lear into death by committing suicide. Thus, Edgar is left in charge. Edgar has not only reclaimed his portion; he has been raised up.

Several scholars have noted that with this act, Shakespeare might have had in mind the historical Anglo-Saxon king Edgar, who united England in ancient times (Skura 142). If so, then Edgar becomes an even more important figure in the play – not only raised high in the fictional realm of the play, but raised to the heights of one of old England's most respected kings. "Every inch a king" (IV.vi.126) as Lear would say, and "Every inch a man" now. However, unlike Lear who was brought low and learned a lesson only to die, Edgar's emasculation led to an empowerment that he can carry forward. While some may argue that Edgar's experiences only leave him broken (Kott 376), I post that the man had to be unmade before he could be created anew. Ironically, only when Edgar recognizes just how illusory and ephemeral his masculine identity is can he not only reclaim it, but also reshape it. Once he has done this, he can become the king England needs.

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Effeminacy, Commercial Slavery, and the Fashion Trade in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*

By Tera Pate

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* has long been cited by scholars for its intriguing catalogue of issues relating to race, gender, sexuality, and seventeenth-century politics[1] Of late, the story of the Coramantien prince duped into slavery has been of interest to scholars largely due to Behn's continuing references to the state of Europe in the text.[2] At one point, she writes that Oroonoko could only discuss Britain while simultaneously with "abhorrence of the injustice imaginable" (Behn 2317). The abhorrence Behn references here is the opposition faced by Stuart King James II, son of the beheaded Charles I, who would be exiled from Britain within a year of *Oroonoko's* publication.

Behn, as shown in the statement above, clearly aligns her hero with her own royalist political views, and, I argue she does this in other places as well, crafting *Oroonoko* into a political allegory. In particular, she has her main character reject an English model of masculinity that values the fashion trade and, by extension, the commercial slave trade that funds the toppling of monarchs and what Visconsci calls English Barbarism, or the rule of the masses (1). I argue that she sets up a value model opposed to that of the English commercial traders in the Surinam natives. The Surinamese value model is based on native, inborn honor, instead of commercialism and the feminized male interest in fashions. This clear opposition between European and native and Oroonoko's unequivocal siding with the Surinam chiefs paints a scathing picture of the effeminate state of the Europe that rejected the martial James II.

Many scholars have noted the possibility that *Oroonoko* represents Behn's attempt at a political allegory. Two of the main proponents of this line of argument are Laura Brown and Lee Morrissey. Brown argues that both Charles I and Oroonoko were victims of "antiabsolutist mercantile imperialism" (59). However, this line of reasoning fails to recognize the contemporaneity of the political issues Behn addresses in her text as Ferguson focuses on how the text allegorically portrays the events surrounding the execution of Charles I in 1649. I find this timeline slightly implausible because at the time of the beheading of Charles I, Behn was only nine years old, making it unlikely that her story commented on this particular political coup. At the time *Oroonoko* was written in 1688, however, the political climate in England had again become tumultuous. James II was facing condemnation from the English masses over his appointment of bishops that were pro-Catholicism (Callow 73). The once warrior prince, perhaps in fear of facing the same fate as Charles I, was soon forced to flee the country in the face of the approaching forces of the popular William of Orange (Callow 73, 76). He was, in short, an example of inborn honor driven to exile.

Considering these political developments, I think the more likely scenario is that Behn was expressing her fears about the current European political state. I agree with Morrissey when he writes, "Brown reverses the true chronology of *Oroonoko*. Rather than a "novella" set in the New World to describe the events of 1649, *Oroonoko* invokes references to the execution of Charles the First to express a deep contemporary concern that another Stuart will meet the same fate in 1688" (13). In other words, Behn was interpreting the English political climate as she saw it in 1688 when she was finishing and publishing *Oroonoko.*

To promote her royalist agenda of support for the reign of James II, I argue Behn depicts an English population that, by contrast with a more martial honor-based, and proper state, was effeminate and dishonorable. To highlight these contrasts, I will consider a few details in the text that, when read together, contrast the Europeans and the Surinamese natives and paint the Europeans, and particularly those traders active in the toppling of James II's monarchy, in a negative light.

The first depiction of the Surinamese highlights the qualities that Behn appreciates in James II's monarchy, namely in-born honor, bravery and martial prowess. This description begins early in the text when Behn describes what Gautier correctly calls the natives' "Edenic state of nature" (163). We are told that they "are all thus naked…like our first parents before the Fall" or else only wearing an apron (Behn 2314). As far as their value system goes, "they have a native justice that knows no fraud" (Behn 2314, 2315). Moreover, these individuals are led by "a war captain" who "has led them on to battle with conduct and success" (2315). Later, Behn describes these captains again in a much darker, though still honorable tone. We are told the narrator and Oroonoko go to visit a native village where the war chiefs practice self-mutilation to prove their bravery. To destroy one's own body parts is to show oneself to be dismissive of the strength of the other individuals one is competing with for the position of war chief. Behn relates that "some wanted their noses, some their lips, some both noses and lips, some their ears, and others cut through the cheek with long slashes" (2346). In short, what the natives value are personal honesty, warrior ethic, and the ways to prove both.

Contrarily, the Europeans in *Oroonoko* appear in a much more fashion-crazed and dishonest light, lacking the bravery and in-born honor of the natives. In that first scene

describing the natives, Behn also relates what the Europeans like most about them. She writes that the Europeans' trade with the natives for "a thousand little knacks and rarities in nature" and "beads of all colors" (2314). These are all trade goods with monetary value, commercial entities that fund a growing trader class in England. They support what Ferguson calls "plantocratic ideology," that very ideology that was opposed to a divine right monarchy (356). It is worth mentioning a brilliant point made by Laura Brown on these trade items. She writes, "dressed in the products of imperialist accumulation, women are by metonymy identified not only with those products, but ultimately with the whole fascinating enterprise of trade itself" (52). To further Brown's point, women drive the fashion trade, effeminizing all aspects of it, including those men who must possess the ability to accurately assess what will or will not be pleasing to the female eye. Coincidentally, as slavery was becoming increasingly popular or fashionable, that ability to assess beauty extended to humans as well.

Thus, the fashions of these Europeans seem more effeminate than those of the natives, but how do they differ in terms of behavior and values? As noted above, the natives indulge in pastimes ranging from self-mutilation to war in the hopes of proving their bravery and honor. The English, on the other hand, simply tell stories about these feats, which we never seen them actually perform. They entertain Oroonoko with simple "tales of the Romans, and great men" instead of performing actual actions leading to greatness (Behn 2339). They, in the same vein as this storytelling, excel in telling falsehoods to the royal slave in particular. In one instance, the narrator tells us that, when Oroonoko starts to pine for his freedom, that the English overseers "fed him from day to day with promises" (2339) However, the reader conversant with the early part of the text knows what the result of these

promises will be. Behn earlier stated that all vice and cunning is taught by white men (2315). In short, Behn intimates that the Europeans are known for their fictions and effeminate fashions, not their valor.

If these contradistinctions were not enough to ascertain that Behn is attempting to deliver a political message in this text, one that defames the effeminate Europeans while boasting the inborn honor of the natives, then Oroonoko's behavior towards these two groups and his portrayal as a character must seal his identification with the politics of James II. This is because, after his enslavement, other more important, more clearly contemporary European discourses come under his attack.

These attacks begin once an English slave captain that Oroonoko perceived to be "better bred and more engaging than most of that sort of men are" tricks him into slavery (2331). The captain soon notes that his unwilling cargo are refusing to eat, including Oroonoko himself. He sends to the prince to ask him to convince his fellow captives to partake. Oroonoko replies that he must first have his chains removed, to which the captain responds, in a religious moment, that he could not "trust a heathen" (2333). This sentiment breaks any regard Oroonoko had for English religion. He tells the captain that to swear by the English God, whom the captain has already broken faith with, is nothing to swearing by "honor," that very trait so beloved by the Surinam natives (2333). Later in the text, Behn tells us that he "would never be reconciled to our notions of the Trinity, of which he ever made a jest" (2339). Clearly, the prince rejects English religion, a move reminiscent of James II's endorsement of Catholicism over the more popular Protestantism. Shortly, hereafter, he denounces the very reason why the Europeans are in the New World in the

first place. He denounces that slavery and fashion trade after a participant in it unwittingly objectifies him into an object of that very trade that robs him of his royalty.

Upon Oroonoko's arrival in Surinam, he is ushered from the boat into the hands of the overseer who galvanizes Oroonoko's rejection of European commercialism. We are told that this overseer, Trefry, knew that Oroonoko was royal upon, not beholding his features, but on "beholding his vest" (Behn 2334). Naturally, a person stationed in a land known for its fashionable goods would first notice an object of beauty. Naturally, that love of beauty so connected with commerce would soon also lead him to an admiration of Oroonoko's Europeanized features, an assessment of his status as a sellable good. However, that very cultural value is foreign and repulsive to Oroonoko. Prior to this, when our protagonist is still in Coramantien, there have been no, or if most, only passing mentions of male clothing. Oroonoko, the narrator lets us know quickly, is not insensible to or comfortable with Trefry's gaze. We are told that "[w]hen he found his habit made him liable, as he thought, to be gazed at the more, he begged Trefry to give him something more befitting a slave, which he did, and took off his robes" (2335).

Now, considering the rest of the story, this passage can easily be written off as a sort of passive obedience to fate exercised by Oroonoko, as Harol has noted (447). Indeed, Pacheco has summarized this moment as "an attempt to gain anonymity" (Pacheco 494). However, I argue that very early in the text, moments like these concerning fashion are encoded as effeminate. Therefore, Oroonoko, when shucking the vest, identified through gaze as fashionable, is rejecting a commercial system that threatens his masculinity, honor, and royalty. Oroonoko, being forcibly transplanted to the New World becomes an object of beauty against his will, an object of fancy to to all the women who drive the commodity

trade. Moreover, Behn makes us explicitly aware that *he* is also aware of the fact of his objectification. In his speech persuading his fellows to rebel, he says, "we are bought and sold like apes, to be the sport of women" (2348). Like the macaws mentioned earlier and the apes mentioned here, Oroonoko feels that he has been made, through the demands of the self-pleasuring gaze, into an effeminized object. To be recognized as beautiful in the New World is to be recognized as pleasing to women, a place that is antithetical, as Oroonoko makes clear in the same speech, to the correctly masculine place of a warrior. Trade in objects is labelled as feminizing in the text, and Oroonoko, when seeing Trefry, a purveyor of objects, evaluating his features, feels feminized by that gaze.

If Oroonoko rejects these effeminized European cultural values, then, it can only be the case that he identifies more strongly with the cultural model of the Surinam natives. Fortunately, Behn does not leave us to simply assume this is the case: she makes Oroonoko's preference clear through his characterization and actions. The first link between the natives and Oroonoko comes in a passage often forgotten by scholars. Behn writes, "I had forgot to tell you that those who are nobly born of that country are so delicately cut and rased all over the forepart of the trunk of their bodies, that it looks as if it were japanned" (2339). In other words, Oroonoko has carvings like that of the Surinam war chiefs before he ever enters the New World. His approval of their mode of valor is evident when Behn writes that "he expressed his esteem of 'em" (2347).

If the textual similarities between the portrayal of Oroonoko and these chiefs is not enough, further evidence for Behn's parallelism between him and them is evident in his actions upon realizing that he will be whipped for the second time in the text. Just as the

natives prove themselves through "passive valor," Oroonoko, when approached by the narrator and her European companions, "cut a piece of his flesh from his own throat" to prove his ability to fight (2357). However, he does not stop there. Next, he "ripped up his own belly, and took his bowels and pulled 'em out," going one step beyond even the bravest of the native chiefs to once again prove his bravery and contempt of those who would take him prisoner.

Going against scholars like Andrade who argue that Oroonoko's European features are a sign of Behn's love of her own culture, I argue that his features, when he realizes they are perceived as English, become his method of rejecting the overarching culture that Behn sees as flawed. I am referring to Oroonoko's passive acceptance of his own mutilation in the dismemberment scene. Here, we see Oroonoko's final attempts to escape a commercial system that he feels threatens his masculinity and his royalty. In doing so, he makes a conscious choice between the feminized commercial slavery society and the more traditionalist and hyper-masculine society of the Surinam native chiefs. In doing so, he asserts his right to be a war chief, his right to be a prince, and rejects his possession as a beautiful object.

In a scene that so explicitly mirrors that of the native chiefs and their self-mutilation game earlier in the text, we are told that his torturers, those very Europeans who once promised him his freedom, "cut his ears, and his nose, and burned them" and yet Oroonoko smoked a pipe calmly (2358). This moment is royalty's last rejection of the European mode, the last stand of that system of honor that he favored over any other model, commercial, religious, or literary.

Now, it may be argued that Behn-as-narrator is horrified by the natives and would never explicitly endorse this model for members of royalty. Admittedly, she does write that the natives present "so dreadful a spectacle…I took them for hobgoblins" (2346). However, she also does not write that at the moment of his dismemberment Oroonoko looks like such. Indeed, her last words on Oroonoko are "[t]hus died a great man, worthy of a better fate" as if she is saying, "the fate of the natives is horrible, repugnant, but it is still better than the behavior of the Europeans. Look what straits they reduce true royalty, true valor, to."

In conclusion, Behn was a royalist who rejected those commercial upstarts who she saw as threatening the true Catholic Stuart king, James II. It cannot be coincidence that at the time when James was in the most trouble politically in England, she wrote a story about a prince who is wrongfully removed from his kingdom by those with commercial interests and a profound interest in the very modes of thought she effeminizes. As I have argued, Behn purposefully painted a picture of the English that was unflattering and a picture of the natives that was honorable in order to show that native born honor is much preferable to the decayed state of her increasingly mercantile nation.

Notes

[1] The story of the Coramantien prince duped into slavery was no less fascinating to readers during Behn's time, going through reprint after reprint after reprint (Noggle and Lipking 2309).

[2] This debate has been ongoing since 1987 with Laura Brown's publication of "The Romance of Empire: Oroonoko and the Trade in Slaves," but the past few years have seen a resurgence in the debate. See bibliography.

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No Way Out: The Futility of Resistance Language in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*

By Ian A. Pittman

Notions of personhood and identity (as they exist through the lens of Atwood's tale) have existed from the foundation of time, from the biblical debate on the realities of the Trinity to modern conversations regarding gender identification. The cultural determination of identity is not the heart of this debate, but rather, the extant struggle for identical determination – the ability to define oneself without the opinion of others. This struggle underlies many social movements including feminism in both its earliest forms and in its most present commercialized forms. Though Atwood's text embodies commercialized feminism, that idea does not operate as the central concern of the text. Rather, she seeks to obliterate the notions of traditional patriarchy by establishing a society so controlled by the elitist patriarchy that it becomes almost unbearable to those outside this categorical dominance hierarchy. Atwood explores this idea in *The Handmaid's Tale* by making use of Biblical language to create hierarchies which ultimately control everything. Ironically, however, the institutions and their values control the hierarchies, not their individual participants. Through the exploration of Biblical language in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood exposes the futility of a "resistance language" as employed by Offred in her quest to establish personal identity and agency through a sort of muted feminism ultimately controlled by the established hierarchies.

Patriarchy is the most prevalently established hierarchy within this society, though, it is not a very stable hierarchy. This society produces children in keeping with the Jacob/Rachel narrative in Genesis as its chief goal. This predicates the entirety of the hierarchy on the fertility of women, and the ability to find such women to use in procreation. While women are demeaned in this society, valued only for their ability to have children, they are the power brokers of the patriarchal hierarchy. No male children means no continuation of this hierarchy. Peter Stillman and S. Anne Johnson in their work, "Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale"* address this paradox head on:

> Many commentators on *The Handmaid's Tale* have characterized the narrator as a heroine, a developing consciousness, or an emerging woman… But these interpretations are unseated by a close reading of the text and attention to its dystopian context, which demonstrate the need for sustained political, feminist consciousness and activity among women by exploring what may happen in their absence. (70)

Here the scholars note the need for women to perpetuate the social dominance of men in control. The brokerage of power established by the Biblical context builds the foundation for this society. However, the reader must understand, that even a Biblical context requires the presence of women in order to progress.

The question becomes: What does this hidden hierarchy of women do, and where does it come from? Perhaps the most clear example can be found in the relationship between the Handmaids and the Commanders' Wives. If the Wives cannot produce an heir for their husbands, then it becomes clear that another woman must enter the household to produce this heir. However, the entrance of this new, stranger woman, also diminishes the self-esteem of the Commanders' Wife. Now, during the act of sex, the Wife can no longer enjoy the experience, but

must feign enjoyment while another woman sits in her stead. Offred is quick to note that there is no enjoyment in this for the Handmaid:

> I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it: nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't a lot of choice but there was some, and this is what I chose. (94)

Dualism infuses her words here - not only did she choose to call it "fucking" rather than any other of the terms for sex, but she also stresses that she chose to become a Handmaid: "nothing going on here that I haven't signed up for." By becoming a Handmaid, then in effect, she becomes for the Commanders what their wives cannot. Thusly, a crack forms in the hierarchy. Though the Wives oversee the everyday lives of the Handmaids, the Handmaids are put in place to do the one thing that the Wives cannot. The Handmaids essentially control the identity of the wives and of the Commanders.

Perhaps the most domineering aspect of this whole setup, however, is the illegitimate relationship between Offred and the Commander. Many scholars such as Elisabeth Hansot believe this relationship represents a particular work of Offred's resistance – that by indulging the Commander she systematically breaks down the system. She notes: "This seduction for Offred is not sexual. The temptation is to invent a humanity for the Commander: of candor, or boyishness, or sadness. Such humanity, once constructed, brings with it the further temptation (and perhaps necessity) to forgive" (62). This notion of identity controls *The Handmaid's Tale*. Where does it come from, and who controls it? This act, according to Hansot, is an attempt to establish an identity for the Commander. Throughout the novel the reader can see Offred attempting to establish selves, not only for herself, but for others as well. The identities she

creates define those that surround her, rooted in the past as she defines Serena Joy or in the imagination as she experiences her relationship with the Commander. Indeed, they come to define Offred herself.

In any given place in the text, it is possible to find Offred's use of language as a form of resistance. Stillman and Johnson note, "Offred delights with words… But her critical play with language leads to no action – indeed, the play may seduce her into depoliticizing the implicit issue and into inaction" (75). Words validate Offred as a viable character. Early in the novel the reader observes her interaction with a pillow, simply embroidered with the word "faith." "I can spend minutes, tens of minutes, running my eyes over the print: faith. It's the only thing they've given me to read" (Atwood 57). She then acknowledges the illegality of reading anything in this society, yet she finds it worth the risk. Words, however, are more than just illegal, they are definitive objects that quite literally give life meaning. Society bars her right to speech, yet she occupies herself with words. Words lead to creation – creation of selves, of identities, of anything that will give her a little agency in this world of utter subjugation. Naturally, then, words are illegal in order that the agency of anyone outside of the controlling force of the societal "will" is diminished.

Deborah Cameron has done extensive work on the idea of feminist linguistics. She has proposed a difference between sociolinguistic and semiological studies. She identifies the differences accordingly:

> First, they capture the fundamental difference between the two currents: one regards language primarily as a form of social action while the other regards it primarily as a system of signification. One produces accounts of behavior while the other generates readings of texts. (224)

The sociolinguistical approach must be observed in *The Handmaid's Tale* is this. How do Offred's words work to give her agency, and how do they work as a resistance language? Words have become one of the few tools that the society cannot take from her. They can prevent her from reading or talking, but they cannot prevent her from thinking. In thought she finds her agency—in thought she loses her agency as well.

Offred aims to create for herself and others a very distinct identity revealed only to herself. This private identity cannot be controlled by society at large, but can only be controlled by Offred as Creator. She gives more value to those identities created for the Commander and Serena Joy than to the identities they have as functional members of Gileadan society. They are, after all, based on his actions and her history. The creation of these selves, then, exists as a backlash against the public option. Hansot notes, "Without some resistance in the name of humanity the dystopia is fast bent on eliminating, survival lacks meaning" (56). Offred establishes these identities not only as a backlash, but as a form of survival. Survival in itself is backlash unless it is survival within the system. Hansot further notes:

> In both their making and their maintenance, the selves that Offred laboriously constructs are potential acts of hidden resistance. Her efforts to see exactly and to feel intensely are the opposite of nostalgia. They are attempts to weld together thought and feeling with such an exactitude that the selves so crafted acquire stability and are not subject to erasure or dimming. But if resistance requires shared understandings and collective behaviors, Offred's solitary rememberings fall short, at best a necessary preparation for this more public behavior. (59)

In short, she argues that Offred's attempts at resistance, her self-created selves, lack the backing of others to promote their legitimacy. She can create and harbor all of the personas she desires,

but the only persona that really matters is the persona that she shows to the public – the Handmaid. Offred intends to survive somehow, however impossible.

Offred must understand that her victory does not and cannot include resistance – particularly not a resistance within herself. A grand coup d'etat overthrew the U.S. government to establish Gilead. If that kind of force were necessary then, imagine what it would take to overthrow Gilead. Yet she believes that her little universe within her mind, with all of its newly created selves, can outlast the theocracy. As Hansot notes, "In *The Handmaid's Tale* their power over the public transcript is used to script personae so thinly constructed that they flatten the humanity of their subjects" (67). Though they flatten the humanity of their subjects, Offred's created selves seek to balloon her humanity back into its fullness. She wants to become the person she was before the establishment of this regime. She also wants to become the arbiter of a new humanity: "Because I tell you this story I will your existence. I tell, therefore you are" (Atwood 268). Here she gives herself the most agency imaginable – an agency that goes beyond all conventional norms, but finds itself reaching for the very pinnacle of power – power that Offred can never have. Despite the hope in the narrative, despite Offred's best efforts, and despite the eventual downfall of Gilead, Offred can never arbit power; she can never arbit a new humanity, but rather she must exist as an inconsequential fraction of a person, lost to the history of Gilead in all but a tape recording.

In *Power*, Michel Foucault discusses the subject and power. Most particularly he says, "I have sought to study – it is my current work – the way a human being turns him or herself into a subject" (326). When examining Offred's relationship to her society and her efforts toward resistance, one thing becomes abundantly clear: Offred has indeed made herself into a subject. Yet, she is not the only self-imposed subject in this society. Everyone in this society is a self-

imposed subject. Even the very text that this society is based on is a subject. Dorota Filipczak argues, “The Bible is a trapped text turned into a lethal instrument because the regime makes it generate oppressive laws” (41). So then, why are there so many subjects, and is it actually possible to break free from this self-inflicted Hell? In short, the answer is no.

Foucault will go on to discuss the idea of pastoral power. He lists four main points that are key to pastoral power, all of which are characteristic of the society of Gilead. However, the last point in particular is most telling: “Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it” (Foucault 333). This idea is entirely characteristic of a theocratic government. Gilead not only forces a twisted version of Christianity upon society, but it turns the whole notion of denominationalism on its head where now Catholics and Methodists fight on the same side against the Baptists, and where society advocates religious persecution for the benefit of itself. It twists everything from the Church to the interpretation of Scripture, and somewhere along the way, people accept it as normal. The Bible functions as a trap itself entrapped.. To use the words of Filipczak:

> The Bible that is used to perpetuate the male garden is never allowed to subvert it. The fact that the biblical texts talk to each other and sometimes deconstruct each other is not really noticeable in *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Consequently, the struggle against interpretative closure enforces the stereotype of a monolithic text destroying its victims. (46)

If the governing document is functionally entrapped, and yet the people are trapped by it, this can only mean that there is no way to break down the system. The system exists, not because of its

effectiveness, not because of its infallibility in governance, but because this series of traps constantly entraps itself and those around it so that the only escape is total obliteration of the system and everything in it.

The system ensnares Offred as a character, though she further implicates herself. Her resistance efforts, those to subvert societal norms by creating her own selves, and her willingness to go against the rules occasionally, unify her with the system. Stillman and Johnson address this as follows, "While Offred does not transgress many rules... those transgressions directly enmesh her into the system of sex, power, and corruption that characterizes the actual workings of Gilead and powerfully construct her as a being who defines herself by her body" (76). Offred gains agency by allowing herself to commodify her own body; she has become exactly what the system needs. Her interactions with Nick further this notion:

> Whatever from her feelings for Nick take towards the narrative's end – whether desire, sexual passion, or love – they seem particularly incapable of leading to resistance or identity: for Nick, Offred reduces herself to body, ignores Ofglen's requests for information on the Commander and her urgings at the Particicution, recognizes that 'the fact is that I no longer want to leave, escape, cross the border to freedom,' and eventually hands her body, her self, and her destiny over to Nick. (Stillman and Johnson 76)

This commodification of herself arose directly from the selves that she created. Throughout the narrative the introspection of Offred can be applied only one way – she desires any return to normalcy she can find. Normalcy elimates the need for these facades and ultimately frees her from this bondage. She loses her agency. She loses her resistance: "Atwood does let Professor Pieixoto note that Gilead become more puritanical and disciplined after the times of the tapes –

so Offred's transgression of telling did not undercut Gilead and may even have helped usher in further expression" (77). Her resistance was indeed futile.

Now to consider the country of Gilead. The inexorable, illegitimate, misappropriation of the Biblical message provides the country's foundation. This is a country whose name comes from the prophet Jeremiah and his cries "Is there a balm in Gilead?" Filipczak states that "Jeremiah deplores the corruption of Jewish state which seems past the chance of being healed" (42). Yet, here the government is almost entirely corrupt, entrapping itself and its people within its own trap, all the while claiming to "possess some supreme moral value that is a remedy for the corruption of the former permissive culture" (42). This state worries most readily with the advancement of society through childbirth. Filipczak notes, "In the Book of Hosea, childlessness is framed in the description of the universal annilhilation" (43). Ecological and health related concerns in this culture reflect the recent nuclear war and the number of sterile women (not men) it produced. This could be a sign, especially given its biblical proximity to the Jeremiad concerning Gilead, that there is no balm in Gilead, especially for Gilead itself.

Atwood does not paint a picture of the near future or even of the past. Rather, its symbolism lies in the danger of complicity in ignorance – the complicity of silence. Atwood argues all members of society must be thinking people. Their ignorance and lack of voice forever entraps this society in the willful unknown. But then, they require an awareness to understand that. Offred nears this awareness, but fails to embrace it. By the end of the novel, her own set of self-fashioned circumstances entangle her. A once powerful heroine who "chose" to become a Handmaid, she also "chose" to become a major part of the system. As some scholars have pointed out, "Offred exemplifies what not to do before Gilead consolidated its power. Offred

ignored, romanticized, and accommodated. She was complacent about her own status and rights. Her small resistances were ineffective or counter-productive"
(Stillman and Johnson 81). While this novel is a feminist exploration of the self, feminism requires an identity which this society does not allow. Atwood's work, much like Edgar Allen Poe's work, reflects a certain lack of individualism. They show that a person and a person's agenda can only be what their contextual frame allows. Oftentimes it is an overwhelming behemoth of a frame, but it is a frame that must be allowed to exist. Without it, there is nothing. Offred's contextual frame does not allow for escape because the whole of society is trapped within a trap that is all part of a larger trap. Trapped – there is no way out.

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