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Impost

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Submission Guidelines

Impost: A Journal of Critical and Creative Work, a peer-reviewed journal published by the English Association of Pennsylvania State Universities, welcomes submissions of scholarly essays in all fields of English studies. In addition, we welcome creative writing, including fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and literary journalism. Current and previous editions of the journal, which in the spring of 2016 changed its name from *EAPSU Online,* can be found on this page.

Please submit critical essays via email to timothy.ruppert@sru.edu and creative work via email to astuart@bloomu.edu, with your name and the title of the work in the subject line. Attach the submission as one file in .doc or .docx format. In the body of the message, include a brief bio: your name, address, phone number, email address, institutional affiliation (if you have one), the genre and title(s) of your work, and any other relevant information. In the attached document, please do not include any identifying information. Scholarly work should follow current MLA guidelines. Creative prose should be double-spaced, and poems should be single-spaced.

Creative work can be simultaneously submitted; however, we expect to be notified immediately when a work must be withdrawn from consideration. Scholarly work should not be simultaneously submitted.

Contributors will be notified of acceptance status via email at the completion of the review process. Usually, the review process is completed six months after submissions are received. You may contact the editors if you haven't received notification of the status of your manuscript within six months.

While our submission deadline is rolling, submissions received by August 31 will be guaranteed consideration for the upcoming issue of Impost. Submissions received after this date will be considered for the following year. By submitting your work, you agree that *Impost* acquires first serial rights. In addition, Impost may reserve non-exclusive rights to reprint a piece.

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Introdu
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Anne-Dyer Stuart & Timothy Ruppert

Co-editors

Putting out our first edition as co-editors in a world increasingly unrecognizable has been both disorienting and exhilarating. We are grateful to our incredible team of writers and readers who have made what we believe is a phenomenal issue, one that we are excited to share with you.

Our critical section for this issue features spirited and incisive contributions from Bernadette McNary-Zak, who writes on Dante's heretics; Marta Wilkinson, who examines transportation in Zola's work; and Robert McParland, who addresses politics in Orwell and Auden. We offer two pedagogical pieces as well: Jason Wirtz studies the instruction of writing in cases of aphasia; and Patricia Putleski argues for the merits of rethinking university writing centers as spaces of artistic production.

On the creative end, we have a mix of compelling work that speaks to our shared uncertainty and loss, but also to our tenacious hope: ten micro plays by Megan Murth, written in honor of Elijah McClain, a young black man who died after a police chokehold in 2019; Arno Bohlmeijer's Dutch poetry accompanied by his own English translations; six poems from Jessica Jopp, whose collection, *The History of a Voice*, is reviewed in this issue; poetry from Kim Vanderlaan; an excerpt from Anthony Todd Carlisle's novel, *The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale*; flash fiction from Peter Duval; creative nonfiction from Jocelyn Heath; and a review of Jerry Wemple's new collection, *Artemas & Ark: The Ridge and Valley Poems*.

We invite you to read, think, laugh, and cry—all at once or in no particular order. May your experiences, whatever they are, restore your faith in a better future.

Biographies

Arno Bohlmeijer
is a poet and novelist, writing in English and Dutch, published in five countries, and in *Universal Oneness*: An Anthology of Magnum Opus Poems from around the World, 2019. Arno is the winner of a PEN America Grant 2021, and the Charlotte Köhler Grant, a national Dutch oeuvre award.

Anthony Todd Carlisle
Ph.D., is married to Amy Alexander, Ph.D., and has two children, Arielle and Amya. He is an associate professor in the Department of Culture, Media, and Performance at California University of Pennsylvania. Carlisle was a reporter for 11 years. He worked for the New Pittsburgh Courier, Daily News, Pittsburgh Business Times, Beaver County Times and Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. During those years, he worked in several beat areas: city government, urban affairs, religion, education, transportation, labor and sports as a business. As a reporter, he won several awards, including Robert L. Vann Award for feature writing and investigative reporting and the Keystone State Spotlight Award for first place business story.

Carlisle is also a veteran, having served in the United States Army Reserve for 14 years, reaching the rank of captain. He worked as both a supply officer and a military journalist. In 2003, he was deployed to the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Upon his return, he was awarded California University of Pennsylvania's Presidential Medal for Patriotic Service.

Peter Duval
Peter's second story collection, *The Deposition,* won the Juniper Prize for Fiction and was published by University of Massachusetts Press in 2021. His debut collection, *Rear View,* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004) won the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Bakeless Prize for fiction and the Connecticut Book Award for fiction (besting a pool of nominees that included Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*). It was also a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. Duval's writing has appeared in a variety of national and international journals, including *Alaska Quarterly Review, The Massachusetts Review, Witness, Letters: A Journal of Literature and Spirituality,* and *Grain.* Twice honored with Connecticut Artist Grants and thrice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Duval is an associate professor of English at West Chest University and lives in Philadelphia.

Dr. Jocelyn Heath
is an Assistant Professor in English at Norfolk State University. Her poem "Orbital" won the 2014 Alison Joseph Poetry Award from *Crab Orchard Review.* Her creative writing has also appeared in *The Atlantic, Poet Lore, Sinister Wisdom, Flyway, Fourth River,* and elsewhere. Her book reviews have appeared at *Lambda Literary, Grist, Tinderbox, Southeast Review,* and *The Lit Pub.* She is an Assistant Editor for Smartish Pace.

Jessica Jopp
is the recipient of the Baxter Hathaway Prize in Poetry from Epoch. Her poetry collection, *The History of a Voice,* is available from Headmistress Press. Connecticut State Poet Laureate Margaret Gibson, in her praise for this book, calls it "a triumph of the imagination." *The History of a Voice* was a finalist in 2019 for both the *Prairie Schooner* Book Prize and the Honickman Prize from *The American Poetry Review.* Jopp's work has appeared in many journals, among them *Poetry, Seneca Review,* and *The Progressive.* She teaches in the English Department at Slippery Rock University.

Megan Murtha
is a New York City based theater maker (playwright, director, composer, curator, performer) with work performed at The Tank, Dixon Place, The Bushwick Starr, and inside a 1999 Cadillac DeVille, among other places. She is a MacDowell Fellow (2015, 2017), a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellow (2019), a Vermont Studio Center Fellow (2020), and was an Artist-in-Residence at Target Margin Theater (2019). As a Visiting Artist at Bucknell University and St. Mary's College of Maryland, she led object theatre workshops, a medium she has been working in since 2014. She teaches writing at New York University.

Kim Vanderlaan
is an Associate Professor of English at California University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches American literature, especially of the nineteenth and twentieth century, Critical Theory and composition. She lives in California, PA with her husband, Brett, son, Kai and dog, George. She enjoys hiking, walking, cooking and reading - and of course, writing poetry. Dr. Vanderlaan has published scholarly articles on Willa Cather, Henry James, Edith Wharton and Henry James in such journals as *American Literary Realism, Western American Literature, Cather Studies, Journal of American Culture, The Willa Cather Review* and others.

Bernadette McNary-Zak,
PhD is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and NEH Professor at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Marta Wilkinson
is a Professor of English at Wilmington College of Ohio, where she also serves as the director of Global Education and the First-Year Experience program. Her background and training are in Comparative Literature, primarily 19th century urban settings, feminism and the family dynamic. She has published a full-length translation of Delphine de Girardin's 1836 novella, *La Canne de M. de Balzac* as well as critical examinations of psychogeography and the streetscape in the novels of Zola and Dostoevsky and on the function of the domestic space in Zola's *La Curée* and *Nana*. Her current submission extends her examination of geography and space into the appropriation of vehicles in the urban space.

Robert McParland
is a Professor of English who teaches in New Jersey. His most recent book is *The People We Meet in Stories* (2020).

Jason Wirtz
is associate professor of English and Education at Hunter College, City University of New York. Dr. Wirtz's research focuses on writerly invention--the ways in which writers generate ideas through writing--across the fields of English Education, Rhetoric and Composition, and Creative Writing. Dr. Wirtz also focuses on writing pedagogy at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Patricia D. Pytleski
is an Assistant Professor of English/ Composition and Rhetoric at Kutztown University and Director of the Kutztown University Writing Center. She teaches courses in writing and secondary English education and supervises English student teachers in the secondary education classroom. She is the author of "Contact Zones and Contingent Faculty: An Argument for Conversion," "Writing Center Reflections: The Impact of Tutor-to-Tutor Teaching," and "Crossing the Ideological Borders of Writing: The Fundamental Nature of Personal Writing (and Academic Discourse) In the First Year Writing Classroom."

Fiction

The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale (excerpt)

Anthony Todd Carlisle

And they all started to come to see their northern cousin. It did not take long for me to become dizzy with introductions of cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends of the family. A blur of faces, kisses, hugs, and smiles danced in front of me, as people faded in and out all afternoon.

“When you get in, James?” Aunt Earlene asked. Aunt Earlene actually was my cousin, but she seemed so much older I just always called her aunt. She was Aunt Dee’s oldest daughter with quite a few years on her younger brother, Bunky. Earlene had to be at least fifty-five now. She gave me a big bear hug, a kiss, and smothered me with her fluffiness. She was round, soft, chocolate, and she had hair on her chest, still. I remember that as a kid when I first saw her. Withstanding her bearded chest, Aunt Earlene still had an attractive face. The rumor was she was fine in her youth, men chasing after her like bees to honey. Today, she was just sweaty with a do-rag on her head.

“Boy, you’ve gotten so handsome. I’m so sorry about your mama. Pudding was proud of you. J.R. was proud of you too, even if he didn’t say so.”

J.R. was my father’s nickname. I never knew what the R stood for and had never thought to ask, for that matter. Nonetheless, J.R. and Pudding are what their family and friends in Clayhatchee used when referring to them.

“Dat Uncle J.R. and Puddins’ youngen? Cousin Willie asked. “Whad up, bow?”

Seeing my hesitation, Aunt Earlene jumped in. “Willie said hi,” she giggled.

Oh yeah, I remember Cousin Willie. Earlene’s oldest child was two years older than his mother’s brother, which meant Bunky was Willie’s uncle. I never could understand Willie when I was a kid, and nothing had changed. All these relatives were country, but Willie was country! Damn.

“Hey, Willie, good to see you,” I said, dapping up my cousin.

"Look at you, big-time city reporter," Aunt Earlene continued. "So, are you on television?"

"No, Aunt Earlene. I'm a print journalist. I work for the New York Daily News. I write about politics."

"I guess that's good too," Aunt Earlene said, still smiling or maybe smirking. I couldn't tell.

Whenever someone found out I was a reporter, the first thing they asked me was what television station I was on. Couldn't a brother just write? And the next question was always, do you write about sports? Couldn't a brother write about something other than sports? I was spared from the sports question because at that moment Bunky sauntered into the house, cornrows and all, announcing his arrival.

"Bunky is in the house," he said, kissing relatives as he walked past. Then he saw me. "Is that my little cousin from Pittsburgh? Damn, boy, you ain't so little anymore. In fact, you look a little chubby. Just playing, man. Good to see you. Sorry about the circumstances, but it's damn good to see you again," he said as he pulled me into him. My southern family were huggers.

"He has gotten big," Aunt Earlene said. "James was just a squirt. He has some meat on his bones now, and he's so handsome. Bunky, your cousin was just telling us about his big-time job working for the newspapers."

Bunky stepped back and looked at me. He still had both of his hands on my arms as if to inspect me better and, by the look in his eyes, I knew what he was going to say next.

"What you cover, sports?" Bunky asked. Damn.

Really. "Have you met Michael Jordan? How about Barry Sanders?"

I tried not to roll my eyes, but it was hard.

"I don't cover sports," I said, as I took a seat on Aunt Dee's animal pattern couch that sagged in the middle. "I cover politics, city council, mayor's office, local government, state, and national elections."

"I guess you haven't met anyone famous," Bunky said with a hint of disappointment in his voice.

"No, I've met plenty of famous people—Bill Clinton, Jesse Jackson, Colin Powell, Mayor Rudy Giuliani."

Bunky didn't seem impressed, so I threw in Jamie Foxx, Tisha Campbell, and Ice-T.

"Now you talking, Cuz. Is Tisha as fine in person as she is on TV? That boy Martin Lawrence acted a fool with that girl, driving her from that show. That nigga crazy."

"Hey, hey, hey. I don't wants to hear any of that, Bunky" Aunt Dee said, leaning forward as if she was going to get up.

"Sorry, Mama. But Tisha is fine."

"Yeah, she is," I said. "In fact, she looks better in person." I missed my days covering entertainment, but politics is exciting in a whole different way.

"Politics," Auntie Earlene said, curling her lip. "I know you keep a headache. You can't trust any of them, Democrats or Republicans. Well, I'm glad to see you. I wish it was under better circumstances, but you're home and your mother's home now too."

"You met Ice-T?" Bunky interrupted. "He's on that show where he plays a cop. How is Ice-T?"

"Ice-T is cool," I said, pun fully intended.

Bunky slapped me on my shoulder.

"We got a regular celebrity in our house, Mama," Bunky said to Aunt Dee.

"Boy, leave that boy alone," Aunt Dee admonished Bunky, who was grinning widely with a gold tooth in full view.

"Naw, I'm proud of him. I want to show him to the hood," Bunky said, as he turned to me. "Hey, James, you want to take a ride with me? I have to take care of a few things. It won't take long?"

Do I really want to ride with him? Who knows where he's going to take me? I've avoided dives and drug homes since graduating from college. I wasn't being bougie, but I just couldn't think of any other places Bunky would take me. That's my man, but I hadn't forgotten his propensity for the seedy. Well, what the hell.

"Sure, let's ride."

Aunt Dee and Earlene seemed to create a fortress of flesh, flab, and determination in front of the door with matching sets of folding arms and disapproving eyes.

"Bunky, where you takin' James?" Aunt Dee speaking first. "Don't be taking him through any of those rough projects and to any of those hoe-ish girls' houses. In fact, James just got here. You should let him rest awhile before you start draggin' him all over town."

"You ain't taking him to any whore houses," Aunt Earlene chimed in.

"Would y'all just chill," a miffed Bunky said. "I got my cousin. Only respectable places."

"I'm fine, ladies." I said.

Bunky turned to his nephew.

"You want to ride, Willie?"

"Na, gawt sum bizness."

Bunky glanced my way.

"If you didn't quite catch his particular dictional flourish," Bunky deadpanned, "Willie said 'no.'"

"Maybe we could get out and see the area where my parents grew up," I said to Bunky. "Mama talked about this place all the time."

"OK, I guess it will be all right," Aunt Dee interrupted. "Y'all be careful. Take care of yo cousin, Bunky."

"Nuttin' to worry about, Mama. I won't keep him long," said Bunky as we walked out the door with his arm around my shoulders.

Bunky led me to his classic 1994 white Cadillac. I could tell it was his pride and joy by the way he approached it, majestic like. Bunky had the ride souped-up—new stereo system, shiny rims, woofers in the trunk. He put in a Ludacris CD.

"You ready to see the dirty, dirty South?" Bunky asked, as he blasted Ludacris and lit a blunt.

"I'm ready."

Anthony Todd Carlisle
The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale

Chapter 2
Dirty South

Bunky took me straight to the projects and what the aunts would call "some whorish girl's house." No matter North or South, what city you're in, what town, big or small, projects all look the same. The Martin Luther King Jr. projects in Brooklyn look like the Martin Luther King Jr. projects in Clayhatchee. Imagine that. I had been in quite a few projects myself. I grew up in the projects. I prided myself in the fact I was able to escape the project life, the crime, the drugs, the violence, the baby mama drama; it wasn't easy. You keep in your books. Play sports. Stay out of trouble. Wear a rubber. Bunky told me we were going to see his girl as we pulled up to the housing complex.

"Don't you live with your woman?" I asked.

"Yeah, but I wish I didn't live that close to Mama because Gloria is always telling my business. If I'm late getting home, she is over my mama's house asking if she saw me. That shit gits on a nigga's nerves."

"So, who are you going to see now?"

"I told you, my girl."

"Does she have a name?"

"Wanda."

We walked past a basketball court. Brothers, some looking as if they spent some time pumping iron, were running full court and talking shit to one another. Forty-ounce malt liquor bottles sat next to the fence, close enough to grab during a timeout.

We turned into the brick building with a heavy steel door. As always, in projects, there were steps to climb, narrow, dull, gray steps. Among the litter were a couple of spent condoms on the ground. At least someone's practicing safe sex. Nasty. I hadn't been in the projects for some time, but it didn't take long for it all to become familiar again. Oh, yeah, the sweet smell of piss. I don't know why people thought steps in a project building doubled as a toilet. Funky.

"Hey, how many more flights?"

"One more to go. What's the matter, Cuz? Don't y'all exercise up North? If you ain't in shape, I can't hook you up with any of these shawtees. Them Southern gals will wear your northern ass out with some of their southern love. You know Frankie Beverly made a song about them. Southern Gals!"

Why did I agree to go out with Bunky? I didn't really need to come down South to go to the hood. And Bunky, that brother had a nine to five, his souped-up ride, shacked up with his baby's Mama, and his "shawtees" on the side. He was set. The mac daddy of Clayhatchee. I don't know why brothers like Bunky thought this was all they needed in life. They had to see there was more. As we walked through the hallway, we saw two children—couldn't be more than six or seven—running toward us. They bumped into us and kept going.

There was a woman standing outside on her cell phone having a heated discussion with someone. "Beenie, where you at?" she bellowed. "I told you I needed to go to the grocery store. You said you finna be here two hours ago. Where are you? I can't stand triflin' niggas."

We walked two doors from where the woman was arguing with Beenie, and Bunky knocked hard on door five.

"Hey, baby, it's me. Open up," Bunky said, sounding all sweet and a little soft. "It's your boo. Open up."

Wanda, or who I thought was Wanda, swung the door wide open. The grin on her face was as wide as the door was open.

"I didn't know you were coming over. Why didn't you call, baby? I would have had some food ready for you and some other things."

"I want to introduce you to my cousin, James. He's a big-time newspaper reporter from New Yoke. He down here for his mama's funeral. You remember I used to tell you about my family up North, Auntie Pudding and Uncle J.R.?

"Cuz, this is Wanda. Ain't she fine? Go ahead, have a seat. You hungry? You want something to drink? Make yourself comfortable."

Bunky moved around the room as if this were his home. He was comfortable, that's for sure, opening up the refrigerator and pulling out a beer. He sat down in a Lazy-Boy, extended the chair, and promptly threw his left leg over the arm.

"Hi, Wanda. It's nice to meet you," I said, extending my hand to shake hers.

Wanda ignored my hand, bypassed the handshake, and gave me a huge hug.

"If you Bunky's cousin, then we family too," she said.

Wanda wasn't bad. She wasn't fine, but she wasn't bad. And she had back. Southern fried chicken booty. I started humming to myself, LL Cool J's song "Wanda, got a big ole butt." No, it was Brenda's got a big ole butt. Wanda, Brenda. It didn't matter. The girl had a big ole butt on her.

"What you want to drink, Cuz?"

"I'm cool. I'm all right."

"Nigga, don't try to act shy. Wanda, get him one of those cold brews out the frigidaire."

Wanda complied. No-fuss. Wanda just dripped in sweetness. There must be something to that southern girl charm. If I had told my girl, Jackie, to serve one of my relatives, she would have looked at me like I was crazy. I could hear her now: "You get it. Nothing's wrong with your feet, and while you're up, get me something."

Don't get me wrong; Jackie was down for me and would do anything for me. She just didn't want me to think so. Northern women were just like that—hard. Their mamas were hard and didn't take any shit from a man, and that's the way their mothers instructed them to be. "Don't let no man push you around. If he's not acting right, you can do bad all by your damn self."

Or you had those sisters who overcompensated because their mothers had been used, abused, and dogged by a man. That would be Jackie. When she was nine, her father left her mother for another woman. He married this other woman, but he kept coming back to Jackie's mother. Every time, he would leave again. Jackie couldn't stand her father for that. She couldn't stand most men for that.

Anthony Todd Carlisle
The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale

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I thought I had broken through her "all-men-ain't-shit" shell. It had been hard as hell to penetrate. Before Jackie, I had been the guy screaming at the walls and trying to screw every woman I met. But Jackie was smart, funny, cool, sexy, and damn sexy. And I chased her, full sprint. I was in love. I found the one.

She was still looking for the one. But after seven months, she softened, becoming a bit more vulnerable. She told me she loved me. I almost had her convinced that I was her one.

Unfortunately, I hadn't actually turned in my player's card. Not long after Jackie told me she loved me I was out of town covering a story. I finished the story early, went to a bar and met a woman, who was fine by the way. And yes, I found myself extremely attracted to her. And she was throwing everything at me, but unlike the dog of old, I stopped myself. I deflected everything but her phone number, and I felt good about myself. I had no intention of ever calling the woman. Hell, I was proud of myself. I had an opportunity to be a dog, and I decided to be a man. I also realized how deep my feelings were for Jackie. Yeah, she was the one.

I took the number. Big mistake. I kept the number. Bigger mistake. I let Jackie find the number. Biggest mistake.

"Who, the hell is Ce Ce, and what are you doing with her phone number?"

"Well, she...you know when I covered that story. I had to go to New Jersey."

"Why do you have her number, James?"

I really didn't have a good answer. She didn't want to hear how valiant I had been in the face of the booty. Nope. All she wanted to hear now was me dropping my key—her key—on the table. Just like that, we were done. All over my stupidity.

That was about six weeks ago. I hurt so bad I couldn't even summon the dogs. My boys tried to get me out of the house, to the clubs, to play ball. I just wanted to stay home. I didn't even want Ce Ce's number.

When I thought things couldn't get any worse, Mama passed. To her credit, Jackie supported me. Helped me with arrangements. She was a shoulder to cry on. And all that did was confirm what I had thought, she was a damn good woman. She was the one. But it was too late. It was over. The two women who I loved the most were gone from my life. And here I was now, in the projects, drinking a beer with my crazy cousin and Wanda's big ass consuming the room.

"Hey Cuz, do you need another brew? If you need anything, feel free to get it," said Bunky as he walked behind Wanda into her bedroom. Wanda yelled back to ask if I could keep an eye on Little Man, the three-year-old kid who had been preoccupied with the TV. There were four white men on the television dancing and singing, and they all sounded like they were from Crocodile Dundee's neck of the woods. It wasn't James Brown, nor Chuck D, and it wasn't my cup of tea, but the kid seemed to like it. And that was cool with me. Kids and I didn't go. It's not that I didn't like them. I just didn't understand them, and I didn't understand people who wanted to have them. I watched Little Man as he watched TV, and we both drifted—Little Man in song and me in thought.

I again wondered why Mama wanted to come back here, dead or alive. I just didn't see it. And granted, I hadn't made the grand tour, but from the little I saw, Clayhatchee wasn't much. I was with Daddy on this one. Give me the North over the South any day, although I guarantee my daddy wouldn't have gone that far. He always thought southern Black men were a lot smarter, had more know-how, gumption, than any northerner. He pitied me for not growing up on southern soil. I was a Yankee—spoiled by all the convenience and luxuries off the backs of real brave men and women from the South. My father was not a peaceful man, but he praised the courage of the Civil Rights workers who marched in the face of violence and got clubbed as they sat at lunch counters.

"That took bravery," Daddy would say, "bravery you northern Negroes will never know."

"Daddy, you know northerners did go down South to help with the movement?"

"Not enough."

Yep, that was about the stint of our conversation on that matter. Northern brothers had nothing on southern brothers. They could have all of that turn-the-other-cheek mess. Later for that. If someone was throwing, I was throwing too. I had practiced martial arts since I twelve, earning a fourth-degree black belt, so I always felt pretty good with my hands and feet. What I was never too good about was turning the other cheek after being slapped. It just wasn't me. Heck, it wasn't my father, so I'm still not sure why he talked about the virtues of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. civil disobedience tactics. In an era when Black men hanged freely from trees, justice was a cruel mirage for Negroes, and Jim Crow wouldn't stop crowing, smirking, and snarling. I could never picture my father kowtowing to any white man. John Kingsman saying, "yesump, boss." No, I couldn't see it. My dad was one of those "bad niggers" white people like to call folks who couldn't quite conform to the southern way. In the South, those "bad niggers" didn't last long; dead or jail, most likely dead.

That's probably why my dad left Clayhatchee. That town wasn't big enough for a "bad nigger" like him. His mama, Coco, probably got him out of there before a mob of white people lynched him. He told me how his mother bailed him out of jail when he was a teenager after some racial incident. He was in an ice cream parlor, and a white guy spit in his hair. My dad went to whooping on him, as well as the white boy's four friends. The incident had Daddy in front of some judge.

"You don't have the $130 for the fine," the judge said. "You can spend some time in jail until you get it." According to Daddy's recollection, the judge was smiling.

Daddy said his mama and a friend brought him the money, which he promptly slapped on the judge's bench and walked out of the courtroom. Yeah, I'm sure Daddy had to leave Clayhatchee.

Bunky came out of the room smiling. "You ready to git on out of here?"

"I'm ready."

"Bunky, you and your cousin don't want to stay for dinner? It won't take long for me to fix something," said Wanda, looking and sounding frazzled.

"Naw, baby, we have some things to do. I'll call you later," Bunky said, leaning over to give Wanda a kiss; all tongue, lips, and spit. Yuck.

Anthony Todd Carlisle
The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale

"Wanda, it was nice meeting you."

"You too, baby. Make sure you come back."

"Well, thank you. Thanks, Little Man, for keeping me company, you take it easy," I said to the boy, who was now watching Dora the Explorer and still not paying me any attention.

Bunky hurried me out the door, as if he had been waiting on me the entire time. As we made it outside of the projects, I asked him, "what's the rush?"

"Gloria called me three times. I got to get home to the wife and kids. She'll be thrilled to see my big-time New Yoke reporter cousin. First, I need to make one more stop."

Gloria and Bunky hadn't officially married, but they had been living together for three years; it seemed legal enough for them. Gloria's three children by three different men was a source of heartburn for Aunt Dee. But Bunky thought of those other children as his, and Aunt Dee treated them well even if she didn't care for their mama.

As we rode around my parents' old stomping ground, Bunky blasted some Outkast. Occasionally, Bunky would pull the car over to speak to someone he knew. When we were solidly in the hood, Bunky pulled up next to a group of about four or five hardened brothers, who were just hanging out and gritting their teeth. One looked like a black Arnold Schwarzenegger; dark-skinned, muscular, and frowning. Another had no business having his shirt off, but he did. Thin, light-skinned, and wearing a red do-rag.

"Y'all seen Bootnanny?" Bunky asked.

None of them said a word. One, however, pointed to a dilapidated house on the corner. Bunky nodded and drove toward the house.

"Chill out here for a second, Cuz. I'll be back in a few minutes."

"You need me to come in with you?"

"No, it's cool. I got some business to handle."

With that, Bunky turned around and walked toward the house. Old discarded wooded stairs with half a banister greeted him, along with a screen door without the screen. A woman came to the door. Frail looking, sickly almost. When she smiled at Bunky, the bareness of her mouth was prominent. She let Bunky in, and he disappeared into the dull gray house.

And I waited.

And I thought.

So on top of being a player, Bunky was a drug dealer too. Oh, if Aunt Dee knew what her baby boy was up to now. I try not to judge anyone, but I often wondered why Black men, women as well, would demoralize their community with drugs? They would sell drugs to people in their own neighborhoods, have folks they grew up with all cracked out. We contributed to the destruction of our neighborhoods without a thought. Black folks are always talking about the white man, but hell, we do a better job at killing us than the white man has ever done. I wish he would hurry up. I was a bit tired with Bunky's slum tour. Clayhatchee wasn't much. Again, I wondered why Mama was so determined to come back. Come back to what? Projects, hoes, drug dealers, country-as-all-hell-wannabe gang bangers? Mama, I love you. I'm going to do what you asked of me, and then I'm going to hurry my black ass back to New York. Three days. That's it. That's all the time I'm giving. I have to get back.

The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale is published by Hidden Shelf Publishing House, and can be purchased through Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Indiebound, Kobo, Bookshop. and the author's website, Anthonytoddcarlisle.com.

Anthony Todd Carlisle
The Souls of Clayhatchee: A Southern Tale

Desert Places

Peter Duval

We tried to shoo him away, another of the unclean, but this one was insistent. This one had come stumbling out into the road just ahead of us, all disorder and muffled cries, like he'd been waiting in ambush, and as we rushed forward to keep him from the master, I knew this one would not be taking no for an answer. His eyes bothered me most, that there could be such eyes in a face like his, and they were zeroed in so intently, so absolutely on the master, wet with rheum and limned with yellow dust, and we did everything but lay hands on him, because he was unclean, and though he had covered himself in filthy rags--they always do unless they're begging--in the places where he hadn't covered himself, we could see the lesions, roseate and multiform, like the multiform excrescences at the elbow of a cottonwood branch, eager it seemed to bubble forth from the ragged well of his neckline and, closer up, you could see one of his eyes had been crowded shut by the boils, but the one he could see out of was shining and never left the master, and it embarrassed us--or it did me. And when he tried to smile--it was awful--you could barely tell, so lost in the bulbs and growths were his lips. So what could we do, but apologize to the master.

"Let him come to me," the master said, not looking at any one of us but back at the man, just as intently, who had now gone down with difficulty on one knee in the yellow dust. It was hard to look at. The whole spectacle. And all was silent but the mourning doves. And nothing moved for a moment but the wind in the robes of the master and a little whirlwind of chalk and dust and the swaying of the tips of the cedars. In silence we'd been walking along under the blinding sun, having disturbed the master in his solitary prayer. Or what he called prayer. To me, it just looked like he'd been sitting there staring into his shadow.

"If you want to," the leper said--though it was almost impossible to understand him, because of his lips and the wet sound his throat made--"you can make me clean."

He didn't say "again," but I heard it anyway. Had he ever been clean?

And we just stood back along a low crumbling wall, about as far as we could get without making it too obvious, not only because of the leper and because we were afraid, but because we knew the master was displeased with us. Even more now than he'd been with me for disturbing him earlier. We--I--had become expert at reading his face, every line of it. It hadn't taken long. Though it was difficult to read him now because he wasn't looking at us, his eyes were for the leper, whose age was impossible to tell. Kneeling there on the stones, his robes still wet in spots that spoke of something unmentionable beneath.

I looked up along the road ahead for just a second, distracted by the flight of a raven, first its shadow, then--just a glimpse--the bird itself. When I looked back, I'd missed it.

"What?" I said.

But the others ignored me. And the man was already walking away, at least it looked like the same man from behind--the same filthy robes with damp dust prints on the erstwhile haunches where the furls of cloth swung loose and grimy with his steps along the rocky path. The way we'd come.

And it wasn't until later, on our way back from yet another desert place the master had found in which to sit and stare into his own shadow, the light orange and long and burnt now with the evening sun, that the others told me what the master had said to the man. What I'd missed.

Plays for Elijah

Megan Murtha

Introduction
The following collection of short dramatic pieces, Plays for Elijah, were written in response to a call from playwright, Erik Ehn, who invited 100 playwrights to write 10 plays each, 25 words max, in honor of the life of Elijah McClain, a young black man who died after being held in a chokehold and sedated by the police in Aurora, Colorado in 2019.

Elijah
He sleeps

A woman enters; wakes him with food and drink

She leaves

He eats

Still, small voice: What now, Elijah?

He plays violin.

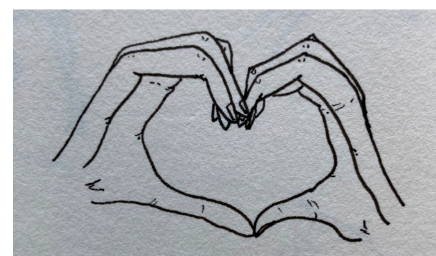
Purity
Man pets a cat.

Purity is a tall order
when dealt a shit hand

I've been blessed
with something greater
makes me glow

Brightness/whiteout.

My Heart
Two hands shape + pulse:



Voice: My heart beat
with the beat
of all who came before me
of all I come before

Mood Gemini
Hands flash like a magic show:

I am a mood Gemini

Fast in flight
deep in heart

roll the wrists

roll the wrists

Massage
Darkness.

Voice: Close your eyes
it is already dark

My fingers work
your tensest places
the cries you hold

r e l e a s e

languishing limp
dormant dreams

Iced Tea
Three lights circle around a bottle of iced tea.

Voice: Iced tea?

I'll get you one

one for me
too

No problem

Blackout.

Gratitude
A young Black man in red hoodie, hands in pockets, bows DS.

He turns SR.
Bows.

He turns SL.
Bows.

He turns US.

Blackout.

Aurora
Young Black Man walks SR to SL; red ribbon extending behind.

He: Aurora
my home

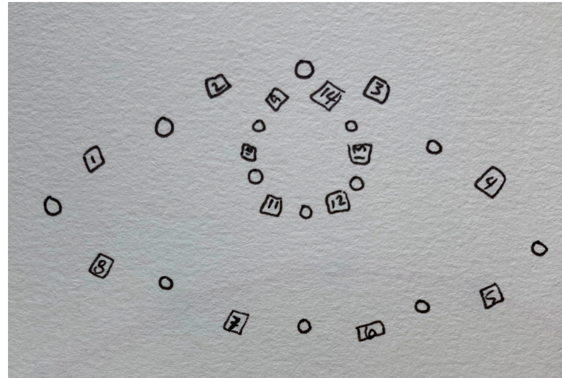
in light
mind
arms legs

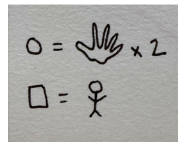
motivational motion

Ribbon remains.

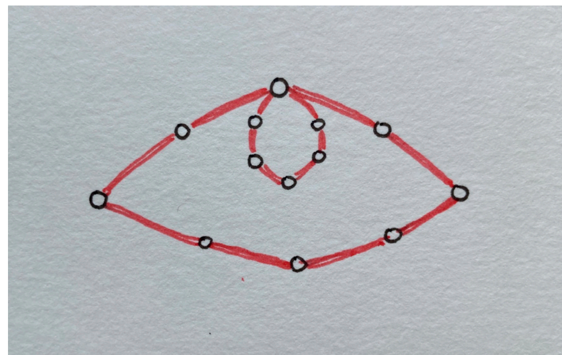
Connect the Dots

Fourteen performers, black clothes, black ski-masks, stand in formation:

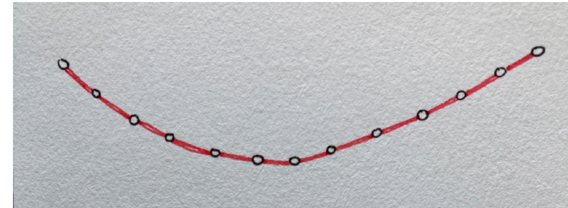




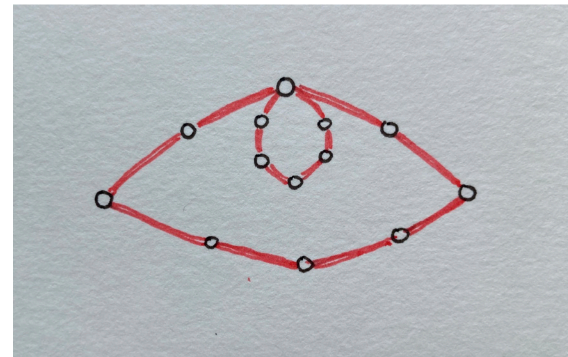
Each hand receives to hold part of a red ribbon:



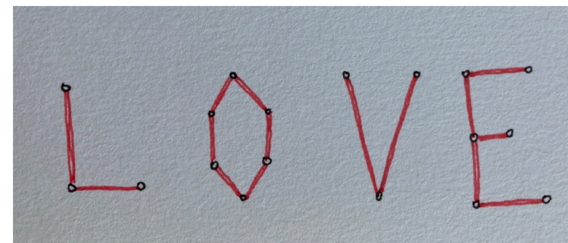
Blinks:



Opens:



Then:



Megan Murtha
Plays for Elijah

To Breathe

Twenty-three performers file out and enclose the audience while singing twenty-three times:

To breathe
I breathe
the breath
of the predeceased

Pause.

23 breaths.

Megan Murtha
Plays for Elijah

Poetry

Transgressions

I pass under a battered arch and admire
fanciful characters carved into the church's voussoirs.

I lift my eyes heavenward (it's blinding) --
toward the dome, reflecting slivers
of sharp light from the Venetian
glass and the spherical walls of the tholos.
For now we see in a mirror dimly

Singing, chanting, maybe only mouthing the words,
the priest rises from his sedilia.

His robes ripple, like water.
He glides – his body transparent -to a stone basin on
the altar.
Sun glints off the oriel and dances
along the north wall of the chancel.
He dips and rinses, dips and rinses.
Our prophesy is imperfect

I see where pristine white stucco has been cut away,
to expose a dark, ugly underside.

A perfect sacrifice: sgraffito--
I imagine a fantastical flight around the boundaries
of the chapel,
cut short by allegorical assaults.
Delicate shell vaulting cannot support
this immense sphere.
I deliver my body to be burned

Am I alone or surrounded by angry crowds?
I cannot tell: the din is too extraordinary.

Turning away from grotesque gargoyles,
leaping from their perches, mounted on an
embattled facade,
my soul rises above the cornices and
soft, scalloped curves, held momentarily outside
of time.
I divide at the intersection of ribs and ceiling
before vaulting to my terminus at the apse.
I am a noisy gong

Kim Vanderlaan

Lying in a Hammock with Anna, 9, at Harts' Farm in Ithaca, New York

- thinking of James Wright

While we read aloud and July,
saving its deepest green for the pines,
grafts light onto everything, even
onto our floating words, with all that's left,
in Minnesota in my niece's room,
gathered by her studious magnetic eye
confer wayward moth wings, shaves of shadowed bark,
egg chip of sky, a couple of acorn boats
suspended in the stream
of her backyard dreaming, all chosen
with far more deliberation
than her hair-clips or her clothes.
I want to tell her
that in the orchard across the field,
a scent from us, last fall's apples,
ripe ginger on the ground,
would reveal, if we split them open,
a year's worth of light, fire-green
of every minute seeded
at the center, radiant -- what we hold --
but she probably already knows

Jessica Jopp

Throwing a Ring with Ian, 11, at Harts' Farm in Ithaca, New York

Jessica Jopp

It's July, and as we fling the fire-
red SuperNatural Flying Ring
with the hollow center from one of us
up, up, to the height of the locust trees
at the border of the many-acred yard
past the orchard off to our side, and above
from this hill-top angle visible, the distant lake,
before it glides back to the other running
for position under it, neck back,
then catching for the next enormous sail,
I remember being asked, at my nephew's age,
by a philosophical adult,
"What shape is a year?"
And I blurted out,
"It's elliptical." If anyone
asks him, he could say the same
running hard, long hair flying off his shoulders,
slender arm quick, hand ready for the snap,
as the wide ring floats up to what seems
the top of blue, and settles again
into our waiting reaching hand,
taking the same path back.
Or he could say
sometimes a current catches it just so
and the orb, as we watch, necks straining to see,
stays on a column of air, stays atop
the column built by purple lupine spires,
then lily bed, then yarrow, then the apples
branching at the edge, then the locust up to pine,
sits above the tops of trees and then a monarch
wings through as we're watching, but it stays
unbroken, above the part of the yard where once
from the kitchen window we saw
an indigo bunting in the grass
and we were the startled ones, before
the rest of the seamless glide
back across the shades of green.
He could say
he angles up, throws high to me, and after
the drop back to my hand, I throw low
enough to make it skate across the grass
and his dip to grab completes--
streaked white with heat and speed
like a blueprint in the air--
a perfect trapezoid.
And later,
any time he hears a glum adult
sigh, telling him his youth is short, or that
"it" all goes so fast, or that each year
will seem shorter than the previous, Ian can recall
in that summer yard what came to us
and conjure the proportions of design.
Sometimes a longer throw comes after
a shorter loop, and not only will it ride
indefinitely when we're mesmerized
by the shimmering apex of the arc,
he can say he's seen the many shapes
his catching and his yearning know to make.

Jessica Jopp

Aging

Jessica Jopp

Coming around again, refracted light,
to sweep over rooftops, cornfields and empty roads,
having dazzled some distant other night
for the past one hundred years,
or perhaps it was one thousand,
now the comet strings out, paused,
between two enormous evergreens
in a wedge of sky visible from the yard.

Even closer, or the illusion of closer,
through my imperfect binoculars
impossible to hold still,
I cannot see its brightness all at once
or absorb enough even a part of it
or detect, in all that luminous spill,
the incredible speed I've read about.

Perhaps it is the comet's showing
coinciding with my invisible step
across the great divide of thirty-five
that reminds me looking up:

Turning sixty my mother said,
"I don't feel any older inside.
The center never seems to change.
I'm more and more like a redwood tree."

When I bring the binoculars down
into the neighborhood, the quiet yard,
with every darkened watching tree, changed
by all of that above my head,
I cannot see where the changes are.
But I tell myself it will be there tomorrow night,
as I turn back toward the house,
as the rings widen around her, and around me.

Crow's Feet

Jessica Jopp

What lovely compliment we give ourselves
to call the marks that deepen as we age
"crow's feet"—as if this peripheral skin crease
had been granted us by avian intention,
a landing and marking, before the lifting off.

Or perhaps the likeness is more a yearning we
carry as we wonder through a day,
and squint, ever-more straining to see
what the other surely does—the whole
softened field of early April
turning green, sloped down-valley to a stream
where ribbons blue and grey and rippling
cover the glinted skin of rainbow trout
become diaphanous
as far, as deep, as a crow can see.

To a Young Woman at Whole Foods Market, East Liberty

Jessica Jopp

The employee, shepherded aside by friends,
who had circled round and found an almost private
space by the entrance plant stands, kept repeating
"But I *need* my mother!" And the friends—
no other words as I passed—stepped in closer.

On the way back out to my car I saw
the two men who had brought the friends
to bear the news: they were ashen,
hands shaking as they smoked, leaning
against their car, barely able to keep an eye
on the plaintive group by the door.

My first impulse: to rush to her the display
of wildflowers, green banded, sunflowers
poking above the cluster, whose tall spines
say *hold onto this take courage*,
tell her my own loss,
staunch the public anguish
with a measured, universal, gesture.

Then, thinking of a friend's question
regarding the instinct of barking—
given the number of dogs in the world—
"Why aren't ALL dogs barking all the time?"

How do any of us manage shopping,
the weighing of produce, consideration
of price and color? By what remarkable decorum
were we so politely held
who among us heard
the shattering of a stranger's grief?

The enigma of it then—that we
were not all barking too, all throats
letting loose their strain of years
and howling beyond the beautiful
avocado arranged, eggplant, apple,
the perfect rows hand-placed to show
varied shades and gleam and gloss—

Any one collective wail
could have taken down in thunderous
scales of overwhelming loss
the delicate fruit, the fishes, baskets
of flowers, fine lotions, blends and mixes,
the shelving and meticulous displays,
and in that one great rush
of public primal sorrow
we could have reached the young woman distressed
and gathered her, apron and all, into the mess with us.

Jessica Jopp

At the Gym, Thinking of Whitman

Jessica Jopp

Two young men, sporting work-out clothes designed
as much for each other's compliment
as for ease of movement on their mat,
lunge and wrestle with the expertise
of technique-driven form. And after every move
of thoughtful motion and a practiced measure
deliberate the hold and counter-hold,
what happens when a grip lands here,
one moves this way, the other, that.

If analysis is needed, then experts all.
If they are really athletes, so be it.
But if not, may they find the pleasure
of not being, and transform
the gym into their vacant sandy lot,
abandon all precision and instead
grapple as apprentice-boys whose caps
and coats they've thrown entangled in the dust.
Be *quite-grown, lusty, good-natured.*

And a group of us, at sundown after work,
encircling while there is yet a trace
of sunlight on the nearby warehouse brick,
see just how fully their joy is physical,
hear taunts of "Sailor!" "Forward, mate!"
"Throw me if you dare!" ring the streets.

May their joy remain so insular
they hardly notice our common admiration.
But instead behold each other's hip,
the shoulder blade, strength of collarbone
when one of them bends and turns his head
into the other's abdomen, countering the grip
around his waist. Behold the drops of sweat
formed on their lips. May they have the next decade
or any working day they want
to revel in this spontaneity,
and may each hear as unexpected song
whatever word the other finds for him.

"The Near Impossible": The Secret of Translating Poetry

Arno Bohlmeijer

When poems are in motion of their own accord, it's
a rewarding interchange. While the shapes and
contents blend independently, as a dazzling combination of inspiration and intention, the author
"follows or steers" in agreeable concentration.

Translations or bilingual writing may work that
way too: when the original poems connect the soul
and mind, their words will find the new language
with equal rhyme or rhythm and meaning.

Poems can be butter-soft in the translator's hands;
the words will blend into the new language eagerly.
Others look nearly impossible to translate, when the
contents or culture or shapes are language-bound.
They would need to be transformed, and what
liberties can be afforded then?

When the re-creation is equal on all fronts, what
'differences' are allowed?

This bunch of examples contain blends of "translating and converting."

As their shapes play a part beside rhyme, rhythm
and contents, they offer a delightful extra challenge
– allowing special liberties?

Doting

Doting

While the stone floats
like an island of *lazuli*

(a reference book says,
“The word means *blue*”,
and wise people know it
as a token of friendship),

I am standing in the ocean,
carrying the value in my hands.

Arno Bohlmeijer

Note
The crux of this little poem is a Dutch verbal phrase, op handen dragen for “worship, adore, dote, hold in the highest esteem....” The strength of it, “carried by hands” beside “standing in water,” would be lost, so I’ve chosen “Doting” and moved it to the top, gratefully rhyming to “floats,” while leaving the image in the last line.

Edel

edel

en de steen drijft
als een eiland van lazuli

(Van Dale zegt ‘blauw’
en een wijze vrouw:
‘blijk van vriendschap’)

waar ik in het water sta
om het gewicht ervan
op handen te dragen

Arno Bohlmeijer

When signs remain unexplained

Arno Bohlmeijer

When signs
remain un-
explained

In passing,
a word may
catch the eye;
right now *mandor,*
or was it *random?*
on the cover of *Time.*

I try to find meaning,
but today I'm afraid
a strength disappears,
or the magic me breaks.
Who is aching for what?

How long can I wait?

Until the craving
subsides and will resurface
to be recognized in the flesh, as a person.

Note
Ironic Dutch word play with 'time' and more, forced me to surrender or be extra inventive, and I ran into the little gift of "random," which makes the English text justifiably different?

Als tekens ongeduid blijven

Als tekens
ongeduid blijven

Soms raakt een woord
aan het voorbij-
gaan;
zojuist 'mandora' of
het was 'voortaan'
op een tijd-
schrift.

Dan zoek ik wat het betekent,
maar vandaag wacht ik,
bang dat de kracht afneemt,
de betovering breekt van mij,
die behoefte heeft – waaraan?

Hoelang draal ik met zoeken?

Tot het dringend vermoeden
vergeten is en zelf bekend wordt
of in levende lijve herkend – als mens.

Arno Bohlmeijer

Critici
sm

Heretically Entombed: Female Representation in the Sixth Circle of Dante's Inferno

Bernadette McNary -Zak

Following a troubling encounter with the souls of the wrathful and sullen in the fifth circle of hell, Dante betrays his growing concern about proceeding further; his concern mirrors the mounting anxiety of his guide, Virgil.[1] Continued descent requires assistance from a heavenly Messenger. When this figure appears, Dante and Virgil rightly acknowledge it with solemnity. Virgil signals Dante to "keep...silence and bow down" (*Inferno* IX. 84). By opening the entrance gate to the city of Dis, the Messenger provides passage to the sixth circle and the lower hell. Here, Dante gazes on an expansive cemetery housing the heretics. Simultaneously existing and extinguishing, the bodies of the heretics are partially exposed in their distorted and fiery tombs where they rise and sink in perpetuity, moaning interminably. The heretics suffer as a synchronous unit, adhering individually and collectively to their religious fallacy.

1 The version of the *Inferno* used here is Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by John Ciardi (New York: New American Library, 2003). An earlier version of this essay was presented at the Third Biennial Teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition Conference at Samford University (2018). I am grateful for exchanges with those conference colleagues and with readers of earlier drafts.

Despite knowing of women heretics (Burr 118), Dante identifies none by name in the heresy cantos; this is telling because female figures *are* given enhanced status in the sixth circle. The Furies and Medusa (Canto IX), Proserpina and Beatrice (Canto X), and Nature (Canto XI) affect the poets' pursuit. How might readers interpret Dante's inclusion of these particular female figures for this particular religious category? Scholars continue to mine the heresy cantos for their historical relevance, for their literary significance, and for their theological value. This brief exploratory essay contributes to their symbolic purchase by offering a small contribution to the significant ongoing – and expanding – study of women and gender in the *Divine Comedy*. Victoria Kirkham's observation holds: "From Dante's demographics of the second sex we can infer a medieval esthetic of order, wrought through inventory and hierarchy, that shapes his epic's epistemological space" (16). With female representation in the heresy cantos Dante engages antithetical assumptions about women by establishing a Christian narrative context of eschatological importance. Here, Dante poses a timely opportunity for self-reflection.

Representative Females

The Furies and the "inherently diachronic" Medusa, a figure "stressing historicity and change," introduce Canto IX, the opening of the heresy cantos (Freccero 127). Their entrance startles and shocks; they are "bloodstained and wild. Their limbs and gestures hinted they were women" (*Inferno* IX. 33-36). When the ghastly and grotesque Furies call upon Medusa, "the Queen of Woe" (*Inferno* IX. 41), to appear and turn the visitors to stone, Virgil firmly shields Dante's closed eyes (*Inferno* IX. 57). The ensuing tumult concludes only when the heavenly Messenger arrives and enables the pair to move forward by opening the entrance gate (Barolini, *Undivine Comedy*, 70-71). Virgil identifies the presenting spirits as "the arch-heretics of all cults, with all their followers" (*Inferno* IX. 124). Dante's encounter with the Furies and Medusa suspends judgment and frames the focus on heresy rather than on specific heretics.

The Furies and Medusa introduce the operative definition of heresy in these cantos. Marianne Shapiro explains that "the apparition of the Furies (*Inf.* 9), who implacably persecute the guilty in the underworld with cruel remorse, embodies the terrible characteristics of the evil mother as a deity of vengeance (*Inf.* 9:34)" (129). Florence Russo argues that the individual sins represented by the Furies are collectively contained in Medusa who "represents all of them as a general sinful attachment to earthly concerns" (453). Medusa's capacity to turn the viewer to stone signals and terrifies concurrently (Shapiro 130; Freccero 128, Barber 112-113). Heresy reflects an unyielding misdirected attachment to the material realm at the expense of the spiritual realm (Burr 109; Durling 24; Russo 449-450, 456; Scott 404; Williams 207).

This definition applies to the souls presented in Canto X. As the two move across the sepulcher, Dante wonders whether he can see into the tombs. Virgil replies that the tombs will remain open until the final judgment and points out the tomb of "Epicurus and his followers, who make the soul share in the body's death" (*Inferno* X. 14-15). An ideal representative of a life bound solely to this earth, Epicurus' emphasis on the temporal realm will characterize his infernal successors (Mazzeo 116). While Virgil and Dante continue, their conversation is halted by the voice of Farinata degli Uberti, a Florentine, who engages Dante until another soul, Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, interrupts. Farinata and Cavalcante are cast as fellow epicureans; the pair are "a perfect embodiment of the sin of heresy, understood as a negation of all those sentiments that relate to the life after death, and as an overwhelming attachment to those earthly passions that are an end to themselves" (Russo 446), an alignment with Medusa (Russo 453, 456). Dante's reflection on this "overwhelming attachment" marks a moment of transition fraught with female representation. Farinata predicts the poet's future exile by appealing to Proserpina, the "Queen of Hades" and embodiment of "fallen humanity forever in search of its original condition" (Shapiro 173). Dante's fear that Proserpina will fulfill his predicted demise is countered by Virgil's claim that assistance will come from Beatrice, "that Sweet Lady whose bright eye sees all" (*Inferno* X. 131). Virgil's words incite hope; his appeal to Beatrice's "bright eye" reinforces her function "to turn the mind of the pilgrim toward the vision that awaits him" (Shapiro 157).

Approaching the edge of the sixth circle and gradually succumbing to the growing stench around them, in Canto XI Dante detects "ghastlier gangs" (*Inferno* XI. 3) including the tomb of two heretics from late antiquity, Pope Anastasius and Photinus (Martinez 15-16; McNair 27-31). Their names and the inscription on their tomb signal their Christological heterodoxy

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(Martinez 21; McNair 31). Given that "from Dante's perspective, the absence of life beyond the death of the body would imply the denial both of justice and of the very purpose of human existence" (Williams 207), heresy causes disruption and disorder of an eschatological nature that achieves resolution only by a savior who is fully human and fully divine, who undergoes incarnation and death, descent and resurrection of the body (Da Silvio 240; Williams 206-210; Martinez 21; McNair 31; Durling 30-31). Delaying to give time for their senses to adjust to the changing conditions, Virgil describes the sins in the circles of lower hell and their impact on Nature; acts of violence rebuke "her beauty and her bounty" (*Inferno* XI. 48), and those of fraud "deny the bond of love" (*Inferno* XI. 55-56) she supplies. Violence and fraud are oriented conversely to philosophical and biblical instruction (*Inferno* XI. 99-100). Nature, as the embodiment of loving participation in the spiritual realm, is thus the antithesis of the Medusa, the embodiment of obstinate attachment to the material realm. Such juxtaposition supports Anne Paolucci's observation that "women are the source of misdirected action and the means of redemption (140)" in the *Divine Comedy.* When Virgil recalls the purpose of the biblical figure of Adam at the close of the canto, he frames this figural juxtaposition in a biblical context that elicits the role of Eve. Such recollection calls attention to the cost of privileging the material over the spiritual realm.

Symbolic Eschatology

There is much at stake for Dante in the heresy cantos because they command introspection at a critical juncture in his journey. At their center is a pregnant moment of vulnerability. At the beginning of Canto IX Dante's encounter with the Furies, "a traditional representation of guilt and remorse, urge him to confront what is, in effect, his own past as poet" (Freccero 128). While Dante moves through the sixth circle in Canto IX, his reflections on the bodies of the shades provoke considerations of the present. Dante's conversations with Farinata and Cavalcante in Canto X reveal contemporary political concerns that culminate in an expression of regret—the very thing the Furies represent—triggered by Farinata's appeal to Proserpina. Dante's construction of regret affords an opportunity for correction.

In Dante's initial conversation with Farinata in Canto X, the pair are interrupted by Cavalcante who asks Dante about the location of his son, Guido. When Cavalcante presses Dante, asking if Guido has died, Dante remains silent (*Inferno* X. 67-72). It is only later, following Farinata's prophetic appeal to Proserpina, that Dante returns to this exchange. When Dante does, he corrects his previous silence. His regret recalls his prior gesture of humble submission before the divine Messenger, and functions as an admission of accountability for his actions. When Dante instructs Farinata to tell Cavalcante that Guido is alive and to explain the source of his silence (*Inferno* X. 109-114), his response marks a shift in his emotional state by breaking the consistent fear presented in Cantos IX and X (Hollander 303). Dante's response indicates that he "makes further inquiries and gains a correct understanding of the event" (Durling 24). Significantly, this break is self-initiated (Durling 24). Dante's response to Cavalcante opens space for consideration. As Lino Pertile explains, in the *Inferno* Dante demonstrates that "if good people can lose their way forever, the 'bad' can have positive characteristics that, while not saving them, nevertheless render their identity more rich and complex" (75). Indeed, Farinata's "magnanimity and his love for his native city confer a dignity upon him that in part redeems him," and Cavalcante's "desperation seizes in a flash the anguish of any father at the thought that the door of the future is closed forever for his son" (Pertile 75). When Dante asks Farinata to communicate to Cavalcante the reason for his delayed response, he treats the shade respectfully; although Dante's inceptive ignorance dissolves with Farinata's subsequent explanation, anxiety over his fate lingers. As Dante fulfills Virgil's earlier instruction to "Mind how you speak to him" (*Inferno* X. 39), his guide closes the canto by inviting him to learn from Beatrice.

Acting on his own agency, Dante's expression of self-correction thereby transitions the reader's attention from the fallen state of Proserpina to the redemptive potential embodied by Beatrice. Virgil's recollection of Beatrice, the "anomalous hybrid" (Barolini, *Dante*, 368), reorients Dante's encounters with the heretics in a context of charity as Virgil explains that "from her you will learn the turnings of your way" (*Inferno* X. 132). For Dante, as Giuliani Carugati explains, "Beatrice is born out of an idea of the world, out of a way of thinking about 'being' that takes its origin from a reflection on the nature of eros" (217). Like the summons of the Messenger in Canto IX, the recollection of Beatrice commences another period of instruction; just as the Messenger dispels and replaces false thinking with "holy words" (*Inferno* IX. 102) at the opening of the heresy cantos, so too will Virgil overturn and reframe Dante's understanding of Nature at the close of the heresy cantos. With Beatrice recalled, the subsequent process of instruction in the principles of Nature is rightly directed toward the future. Drawing from what Dante had learned previously in Canto IX, and based on what he had seen recently in Canto X, instruction in Canto XI prepares him to depart the sixth circle.

It is not surprising that the heresy cantos propose, in microcosm, the overall process whereby Dante descends into the *Inferno,* rests in the *Purgatorio,* and ascends in the *Paradiso.* By employing the female figures of Medusa, Proserpina, Beatrice, and Nature in the heresy cantos, Dante situates the discord of heresy in the context of a Christian eschatological narrative of fall and redemption. Foregrounding these female figures as "secondary guides," Dante reminds his audience that heresy creates a divisiveness antithetical to love because it is founded and maintained in pride. The representations of these female figures certainly function as markers for materialist attachments and redemptive human potential in these cantos. And yet they appear to challenge and nuance these markers as well (Barolini, "Beyond"). By juxtaposing the Furies and Medusa in Canto IX with Nature in Canto XI, Dante wrestles with his own moral choice through the appeals to Proserpina and Beatrice in Canto X. The result is an "epistemological space" (Kirkham 16) in which to define and situate a position of hope.

Conclusion

Dante's summons in the heresy cantos was both timely and astute. Nearly a century ago, Alfonse Da Silvio argued that the *Divine Comedy* betrays Dante's opposition to steadily increasing ecclesiastical overreach in doctrines and practice whereby the church functioned as "the divine authority not merely in the guidance of men's consciences, but also in the whole political life" (261). Such misplaced authority and misinterpreted power on the part of the church contributed to its own sinful state. Unwilling and increasingly unable to avoid temptation, the abuse of power and corruption by materialism among the ecclesiastical hierarchy of all ranks was a situation Dante found unacceptable, and openly opposed in word and in action (Da Silvio 257; Burr 108-109). Dante knowingly faced the consequences that followed his critique (Mazzeo 119; Burr 116-118).

Banned from his beloved Florence where, as George Dameron describes, "the political and the ecclesias-

tical world...was in a state of agitation and transformation" (84), it is important to remember that Dante's legally imposed peregrinations shape the personal context from which he wrote the *Divine Comedy*. Exiled with no hope for return, to some extent Dante's own migrant state, marked as it was by physical dislocation, mirrors that of the heretics themselves. When Farinata beckons the attention of the "Tuscan" (*Inferno* X.22), he identifies Dante in terms that amplify not only homeland but displacement and marginalization. Following "Supreme Virtue" (*Inferno* X.4), the heresy cantos indicate that it is a state from which Dante sought his own redemption.

Unlike previous cantos of the *Inferno,* Dante appeals to female figures in the heresy cantos to facilitate his instruction in the eschatological context of heresy as a Christian category. Like his reader, Dante is invited to evaluate the contours and consequences of heresy. Dante's decision models one possible response; only by advancing accountability as a virtue do Dante, and Virgil, move beyond the sixth circle and the lower hell of the *Inferno*.

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The Portable Private Space: Coaches, Cars, & Trains in Zola

Marta Wilkinson

Zola's *The Kill* (1871) opens with a panoramic tableau describing a stream of coaches and buggies in an endless queue exiting the Bois de Boulogne at sunset on a gray October afternoon. From the elevated seat of her barouche, Renée Saccard takes advantage of the gridlock to observe the passengers in the neighboring carriages through her lorgnette. She is accompanied by her stepson and eventual lover, Maxime, as the two enjoy an afternoon out that, due to the confines of the barouche, is really yet another afternoon *in*. For despite being in an open carriage, the two engage in a lengthy conversation disparaging everyone around them with just as much confidence and comfort as if they were alone at home. This instance in and between carriages is one that I would like to add to Masha Belenky's listing of liminal spaces in the novel, "each located on the cusp of the private and the public, the interior and the exterior" and capturing "the ambiguities and the complexities of nineteenth-century urban culture" (Belenky 29). Just as the *cabinet privé* of a public restaurant is appropriated as a private space by the lovers later in the novel, the vehicles too facilitate such an inversion of the use of spaces.**1** In the case of vehicle circulation in the city, each car is a private space in microcosm, allowing mobility, isolation, privacy, and, when necessary, anonymity.

Sarah Gilead argues in her work on the Victorian novel that the "liminal state" is a "symbiotic counterpart part of social structure" (183). She relies upon Victor Turner's definition of such spaces as one of "communitas" wherein the liminal is not separate but an extension of space or spaces, thereby infused with all the characteristics of the spaces it adjoins. "Connective" or "transitional" is not devoid of definition but rather a spatial condition that benefits from a multiplicity of definitions without the absolutism, essentialism, or limitations of those more easily quantified as one type or other. This fluidity extends to many of the permanent physical structures of the nineteenth century, as houses and even whole neighborhoods practiced dual identities with the multiplicity of applications to which they were put. Hotels were either used or built as spaces to accommodate store fronts, passageways, and domestic rental units, their ill-defined nature within a strictly public/private matrix standing as a "safe space" for practicing values and behaviors (Gilead 184). If the idea of "communitas" can be applied, so too must be the practice of communities that, according to Rachel Fuchs, "self-regulate their members' behavior" (163). The liminality of the spaces I explore are not to be considered marginal but rather extensions of the spaces they border, allowing further expression of behaviors, desires, and intentions of the users or occupants. Liminality of space also varies with each user or occupant in vehicles of transport as temporary possession is a defining characteristic.

The ambiguities and complexities that Belenky generalizes in her study of Zola's topographies can be more specifically defined by considering David Harvey's *The Urban Experience*. In that text, Harvey presents a theory of "residential differentiation" and its role in the fragmentation of social structure. Harvey's theory facilitates a reading that I have applied elsewhere as "domestic differentiation" extending to these portable private spaces. The appropriation of coaches, cars, and compartments reproduces the same four hypotheses that Harvey uses to describe residential space; those hypotheses demonstrate how the use of space is determined by human will rather than design, and, while confining, also provide avenues for opportunity in modern urban life. These ambulatory spaces repeat economic, class, and gender divisions but subvert them as liminal spaces within many nineteenth-century works.

Harvey argues that residential differentiation reproduces social relations by isolating classes even further along economic lines (Harvey *Urban* 117); vehicles similarly create "distinctive milieus," as their isolation is either selective, in the case of private ownership, or varied, in the case of public transport. Public transit vehicles, whether the omnibus, mail coach, or train, attempt to fragment class consciousness and equalize the urban populations but in practice mirror the intense and classist contradictions of nineteenth-century life, or, as per Harvey's hypothesis, reproduce "social relations within capitalist society" (*Urban* 118). Following Harvey's theory, methods of public transport "provide distinctive milieus for social interaction" in which the dissemination of "values, expectations" and "consumption habits" take place (117). The very existence of public transport created a mixing of classes, dispersing not only the rich but the perceived "dangerous classes" and their associated behaviors and influence. Masha Belenky isolates the Parisian omnibus in her examination of *The Kill*, yet the omnibus itself was largely unregulated in its youth and could describe any array of vehicles (Belenky 33). With the progress of time and renovations to the city, the omnibus too came to be regulated and controlled. Belenky describes books that "prescribed proper behavior on an omnibus," even though in practice the associations were of "illicit sexuality" stemming from a fact as simple as that men and women shared a relatively confined space and developed "a reputation for being an ideal place for prostitutes to solicit clients" (Belenky 34).

The assumption that women in public transportation vehicles invite sexual attention ignores the omnibus as an ideal place for harassment and assault. Anna Destopolous's work, *Women and the Railway, 1850-1915*, recounts a full history of women's victimization on vehicles of transport, their demonization for being "mobile" classically misinterpreted as seeking sexual provocation, and the widespread practice of blaming the victim. Daumier's "In the Omnibus" **2** (1864) satirizes the experience by illustrating two women, one scrunched into a corner with a child on her lap next to a gargantuan male passenger (who is also carelessly manspreading) and another woman

1 See my article on private space in Zola

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caught between that same man and another who has fallen asleep by leaning into her. Maurice Delondre's "On the Omnibus" (1880) **3** places three women in the foreground, all trying very much to be invisible: one overly occupied with the object she holds in her hands before her, closing off her gaze and her body language; one defensively clutching her basket of vegetables and staring blankly across the car; and her neighbor creating a barrier between herself and a third female passenger with her arm and umbrella. Just beyond this barrier, however, the male passenger sits with a sideways, fixed, and lecherous stare directly at her that she clearly tries to ignore.

The advantages of mobility and enclosed space are intensified for male characters in many literary works as well, whether such advantages create opportunities for sexual affairs and crime, as I will discuss in *La Bête humaine,* or are put to less criminal use. Even in a private setting, Mr. Elton in Austen's *Emma* takes advantage of his carriage ride with her to take the title character by surprise when she finds "her hand seized—her attention demanded, and Mr. Elton actually making violent love to her [...] Without scruple—without apology—without much apparent diffidence," and, in accordance with his self-important character, "She tried to stop him; but vainly; he would go on and on and say it all" (128). Mr. Elton seizes not only Emma's hand but the opportunity of the enclosed carriage. The rapidity with which he returns with another wife after Emma's rejection confirms that his lovemaking is not driven by emotional reasons but rather by social and economic ones. While awkward and exploitative, this interlude is more opportunistic than dangerous.

Charles Dickens, in contrast, describes the suspicion with which travelers approached a journey by coach travel in *A Tale of Two Cities*; the passengers remain anonymous not only to passersby but even to other riders who hold their fellow passengers in suspicion as the narrative toys masterfully with the human fear of the unknown. The descriptions of the Dover mail reads: "[a]ll three were wrapped to the cheekbones and over the ears, and wore jack-boots. Not one of the three could have said, from anything he saw, what either of the two was like; and each was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from the eyes of the body, of his two companions" and "the guard suspected the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but the horses" (Dickens 4). The two episodes demonstrate the privilege of economics and the desire for anonymity; Emma has use of her father's coach, yet Mr. Elton would never have dared a profession or proposal in company of others. The Dover coach carries those who cannot afford either the time or expense of a private journey, yet their costumes evince the desire for privacy through the anonymity of disguise.

The previous examples also demonstrate that the car is an extension of the will of its owner or of its passengers, but not of its driver. The style, size, materials, and personalization of the nineteenth-century vehicle are methods by which wealth and power can be advertised throughout the city and flaunted before not only friends and acquaintances but the general public. Studies of nineteenth-century domestic space argue the home as a showcase for the wealth and status of its owner; location, materials, and aesthetic choices were simultaneously the patronizing "space" of the female through which to display her tastes. But those tastes and the ability not only either to inherit or to purchase furnishings, fabrics, and *objets d'art* were wholly reliant upon the man's economic ability. These domestic spaces serve as extensions of self and claims of wealth visible only to passersby; owners can only flaunt the interiors by hosting dinners, salons, or dances, thus exhibiting themselves to a select audience. The circulation of coaches and carriages extends the display of individual possession to a wider, more varied, and public audience.

Brian Ladd stresses that nineteenth-century aesthetics in Paris were dominated by a discourse of light and air, as the newly hewn boulevards provided opportunities for escape and circulation not only on foot but "especially on horses and in wheeled vehicles" (60). In a reproduction of capitalist society, the Saccard barouche with its highly polished panels that reflect "patches of the surrounding landscape" and glimmering gold trim accented by coach and footmen "in their dark-blue liveries, drab breeches, and black and yellow striped waistcoats" are an integral part of the décor as they ride through the landscape (Zola *The Kill* 5). The private vehicle also allows for an exploitation of privilege and power because a vehicle, whether open or closed, allows its passenger to be *on* the street, but not *in* it. So while people circulate through the city with more ease, the classes are actually even more isolated from one another due to their positions on the streets. The force, weight, and literal power of the vehicle is an object of abuse such as Dickens describes in *A Tale of Two Cities* as the Marquis in the country runs over a small child without either slowing down or being hampered by the impact of carriage against flesh; he merely throws coins out to recompense the child's father while actively voicing concern only for the potential injury to his horse. This response encapsulates not only his own heartlessness, but that of his class.

In a self-contained cell hovering a few feet above the ground, one can ride in comfort without actually mixing or coming into direct contact with pedestrian traffic. Those who are already metaphorically above pedestrian traffic place themselves in an elevated position that reflects the class practice of looking down upon others, as shown with Renée and Maxime in the opening passage of *The Kill*. The vehicles fulfill the aesthetic of Haussmann's time, valuing, as Ladd describes, "the view from a distance, and from a carriage, or an upstairs window" (61). This positioning perpetuates divisions, with the vehicle satisfying the wants and whims of its owner or passengers, as the driver is just another nameless domestic. The fragmentation of class-consciousness that Harvey posits is the result of dividing the city and its persons into communities, accomplished through the blurred class lines that the capitalism of Zola's Second Empire flaunts (Harvey 118). Renée and Maxine sit in a traffic jam of similar cars, a privilege limited to those of similar station, or of similar income. Renée notes the presence of the courtesan, Laure d'Aurigny, in her own extravagant coach, highlighting the modern mark of privilege in finance rather than birth. Renée also feels envy for women like Laure who "live quite independent lives," noting Laure's respective autonomy rather than profession (12). Both carriages exit a park specifically designed to regulate both nature and the leisure time of the population as it throws together persons of different backgrounds, habits, and economies. Distinct divisions of class are more difficult to identify by those who are temporary neighbors occupying the same space on the streets but who separate themselves from contact and communication. The vehicles provide for parallel, but not shared, experience. Exposure without consciousness is part of Zola's general indictment of the city in which passengers are out to see and be seen, giving up individuality to participate in the aesthetic. Social capital relies upon being on display, flaunting one's ability to circulate the city in comfort while also upholding barriers that maintain illusions of class that in reality are blurred by the economic purchasing power and moral superiority assumed therein.

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Applying Harvey's later assertion in *Paris: Capital of Modernity* that boundaries struggle to "limit access and to protect interiors from the penetration (the sexual connotations of that word are apt) by unwanted others into interior spaces" to spaces such as the private car, one sees the relative success of keeping others out and retaining one's social and economic position even while exercising mobility not only within the city, but beyond (44). Wealth and status are both portable and demonstrable. Personal assets facilitate constant public presence, resulting in exhibition and exploitation of private endeavors. As people circulate more frequently and regularly, they can also be observed more frequently and regularly; public and private space, as well as public and private lives, lose their binary distinctions.

Zola unites two spaces in *The Kill*: the static *cabinet particulier* of the restaurant and the mobile omnibus, illicit extensions of one another. When Renée looks out onto the street from the window of the *cabinet* where she has just consummated her relationship with Maxime, it is the "clatter of the Batignolles omnibus" that wakes her out of her reverie (Zola 132). The new lovers then hire a cab in which to return to the mansion at Parc Monceau. While Belenky argues that these spaces are liminal, I read them as independent mobile spaces exploited within the novel. The novel wars with definitions of space while continuing an age-old argument about the danger of women's mobility. Renée's transgression can, at least in part, be attributed to the opportunities presented by both transport and, at certain points of the novel, anonymity.

Renée and Maxime frequently employ costumes in their affair. Their violation of the taboo of incest becomes secondary in their inversion of gender, gender roles, identities, and their need to explore all of those transgressions both publicly and privately. Not satisfied with dressing up Maxime, who has a "girlish air" and "'ought to have been born a girl,'" for her own enjoyment, Renée must do so in the company of her friends (Zola *Kill* 91). Before meeting Maxime to attend a party camouflaged in a long, dark domino, she insists that he wait for her in a cab on the Boulevard Malesherbes and only recognizes the cab by its twin yellow lights. At the party she is not recognized by her own current lover as she is both masked by the costume and out of her traditional context (Zola *Kill* 122). Renée feels a thrill at the freedom of such anonymity, a freedom explored further in the more simple practice of concealing herself under a hat and veil and hiring a public cab that is not identifiable to passersby. Mobility is opportunity and anonymity which together serve as catalysts to the exploration of desires. The temporary possession of vehicles by female characters inverts the control of man over machine by replacing the dominant masculine figures with female desires that seek exploration rather than control.

When Renée and Maxime leave the restaurant in a cab, this method of transport is both literally and figuratively transitional; a cab is an intermediary space of temporary occupation that takes them from the restaurant to their home at Parc Monceau. When used to intentionally maintain anonymity, however, it is no longer liminal but, at least temporarily, a cathected part of the character necessary to identity—in this case, as a *demi-mondaine*. When Emma Bovary and Leon take their six-hour excursion through Rouen, that carriage is, because of the use of its passengers, a redefined space. The cab *is* the *demi-monde*, until they get out and it is hired by the next fare. As per the theories of Elizabeth Grosz, spaces are designed with intention, but are redesigned by human needs, or in these cases, usage (243). In Zola's examination of transportation, possession and multiple forms of desire are a central impetus to *Le Bête humaine*.

The mobility, power, and escape facilitated by vehicles within the city are intensified in the rail system, amplified between 1850 and 1870 from 1,931 kilometers to over 17,400 (Harvey *Paris* 109). Hailed as both a celebration of power and a cause of the decivilization of France, the rails continue to be understood as an element central to social change (Starostina 143). Starostina presents the rails as a demonstration of violence and power necessary to the legitimization of Napoléon III, stating that "[t]he glorification of the railways in fact became the project of aggrandizing the emperor and for compromising the republicans, who dared to doubt the civilizing impact of the Empire on France" (144). Walker's analysis of Haussmann's Paris describes the growth and development of the rails as closer to an infiltration than a connection, including not only the rails themselves in the consideration, but also the platforms, arcades, and accesses embedded into the city to service them (20, 29). The adaptations required for increased transportation within the city are part of the massacre that Saccard describes in the plan for new boulevards and avenues: "[w]ith his outstretched hand, open and sharp as a sabre [...] Paris slashed with sabre cuts, its veins opened" (Zola *Kill* 69). This violence extends beyond the city in *La Bête humaine*, in which Zola vividly describes the rails cutting their way through the countryside; the garden at La Croix de Maufras is cut in half by the railway, bringing technology, violence, and the new modern pace of urban life into the surrounding rural areas and throughout France.

The train's ability to connect and reach distances previously unheard of was a true achievement in engineering. Its presence throughout the countryside, however, also calls to mind Harvey's theory as trains "reflect and incorporate many of the contradictions in capitalist society; the processes creating and sustaining them are consequently the locus of instability and contradiction" (*Urban* 118). Because of the expansion of the rail system, more people could access nature and surrounding provincial towns, but at the cost of that nature. For with communication the train also brought destruction, pollution, and boundless littering as passengers tossed items out of windows. The irony that Zola presents regarding communication appears throughout *La Bête humaine* as the train speeds along, giving those on the ground only quick glimpses of anonymous and disembodied heads through the windows: "The whole world went by like that, the madding crowd of humanity transported past them at full steam, and all they ever knew of it was the occasional face glimpsed in a flash, [...] but who to them remained forever nameless" (197-98). When a snowstorm halts the train, the two groups—rail families and train passengers—are forced together to contemplate one another in an awkward, two-way, human-zoo exhibit. Flore brings the stranded passengers into Aunt Phasie's kitchen, where she

> Just stood there, gazing at all these people with her large, greenish eyes and the valiant air of a tall, blonde savage. She recognized only two of the faces, [...] and she examined them as one might inspect a buzzing insect [...] As for the others, they struck her as belonging to a different race, inhabitants of an unknown planet who had dropped from the sky [...]. (200)

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This disconnection stresses the ironic distancing of persons who are in regular close proximity yet alien to one another, creating a distinct experience of "otherness."

The constant motion of the trains and their passengers juxtaposed to the static condition of

the working-class rail employees is compounded by the real sensory experience of high-speed travel. Not only did rail travel intensify exposure without connection between persons, but "[v]isual perception is diminished by velocity," or, as Victor Hugo describes, all sights become impressionistic (Schivelbusch 55). Schivelbusch explains, "The motion of the train shrank space, and thus displayed in immediate succession objects and pieces of scenery that in their original spatiality belonged to separate realms" (60). Such a confusion of input creates not only stress on the visual organs but, according to an 1862 edition of the *Lancet*, fatigue. In such a state, it is difficult if not impossible for the viewer to distinguish and sort out the passing images. New ways of processing need to develop. George Simmel writes of "urban perception" characterized by "the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli" and the "lasting impressions" that result in which nothing is distinct or clear, but rather conceptual and thus subjective" (Schivelbusch 57). Spalding's analysis of mobility in Zola's work posits that it is the author's intention to stress class diversity, the privileges of mobility, and the "vision it confers" (186). The position of looking down upon others—a part of the carriage experience—becomes one of looking past others from the train car.

When Flore gazes upon the travelers inside the kitchen she sees many familiar faces, yet the experience is one of the *unheimlich*, for she also sees them for the first time. Transportation has created a situation in which lives exist in parallel, yet not in shared experience or genuine familiarity. Rail worker and passenger each relies upon the other but cannot recognize one another when the dynamic of their relationship alters. Flore has seen people pass her by every day on the train, but, aside from a few defining qualities about their hats, beards, or features, she has not really seen any of them as individuals. If any of the regular commuters have even noticed her, doubtless she is simply the girl at the crossing. The lack of human individuality is an intentional part of a narrative in which trains are the significant agents. The fear that the uncanny generates is compounded by the threat of the inanimate described as alive, marking and changing the city and country that it was intended to unite, or at least to provide communication between.

The rail system is inherently a violation of the traditional city/country divide as the rails bring the city and industry, in the form of machine and foreign persons, into the countryside. As a result of transportation, the city is everywhere. The train can be described as liminal but, as a moving space, subdivides into freight, passenger, and separate class cars, manifesting a range of values. It is always literally in transition between cities, towns, and the various countrysides it passes through. Consequently, it defies discrete definition yet leaves an indelible mark with the permanence of the rails. The train in itself is also transient because the rails are useless without an engine and cars. As Zola describes it:

> It was like some huge body, a giant creature laid out on the ground with its head in Paris, its vertebrae the length of the track, its limbs stretching out with every branch-line, and its hands and feet in Le Havre and other destinations. And past it went, mechanical, triumphant, hurtling towards the future with mathematical rigor, determinedly oblivious to the rest of human life on either side, life unseen and yet perennial, with its eternal passions and its eternal crimes. (Zola Bête 44)

The rail system is a monster of mythic proportions, a living yet non-human body hybridizing man and machine, a manifestation of "l'impossible et l'interdit" ["the impossible and the forbidden"] (Foucault 51). It is a living system in its growth yet inanimate in its composition and function. It is described as simultaneously expressing ignorance of its defeat and destruction of nature and mankind while feeling passion and committing crime. It is ambivalent in nature and feeling yet invested in its own survival. It is the perfect double of its creator and a threat to him.

Several pairs of lovers use trains throughout the text as the intermediary to their affairs. Pecqueux has a woman at either end of the train line, each one concerned about the other one's opinion of how she takes care of "their" man; Jacques and Severine arrange their trysts almost exclusively through the schedule and distance of the train journeys. More interestingly, Zola's identifies the train itself, Jacques's engine La Lison in particular, as not only a facilitator but as a third party in the affair. Initially, La Lison is described in detail as Jacques's mistress who "like many a beautiful woman [. . .] was always slapping on the grease" (Zola *Bête* 147). Early in the novel, his relationship with La Lison manifests the repression of both sexual and violent urges. Schivelbusch's study on nineteenth-century railways incorporates the connection "between mechanical agitation and sexual arousal," described by Freud and Karl Abraham as well its counterpart in repression: fear (77). Fear in and of the rails takes several forms: fear of derailment has been interpreted as a fear of one's own sexuality, but also a fear of mortality that is threatened by the violence and speed of the machine and by the constant contact with the alien and dangerous "other," strangers from other places and, more importantly, other classes.

The fear of other classes contributed to the development of passenger travel on European trains. Despite having the American passenger rail car with its open design as an example, Schivelbusch points out that class divisions were an inherent component of car design in its European counterparts (71). Due to the class and compartment systems, the mixing of persons and classes traveling on the same train was uncommon, if not impossible. The division of country and city, man and machine, intensifies: "The railroad disrupted the travelers' relationships to each other as it disrupted their relationship to the traversed landscape" (Schivelbusch 67). Zola seizes upon this idea of fragmentation throughout his descriptions of the passing trains, for, when passengers are stranded by the snowstorm, not only do they not talk to Flore, but the regular travelers do not even know each other.

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The existence of the private train compartment is a direct result of social conflict and class consciousness dominating what was intended to be an equalizing method of public transportation and a distinct indicator that "the European rail passenger actually *wished* to be left alone while traveling" (Schivelbusch 85). The nature of the private train compartment is complex when one seeks to define it as either public or private space; the cars are public yet objects of temporary possession distinguishable only by economic power. This car goes beyond the distinctions of the class-specific cars, which by the mid-nineteenth century were also only distinctions of money, as many a merchant or courtesan by that point could purchase a first-class ticket.

Zola stresses the stark contradiction between economic class and morality with the character of President Grandmorin. As a retired court justice and member of the rail company's executive council, he represents the upper, bourgeois class. To all outward appearances he isolates himself from the threat and bother of the lower- and working-class passengers by using his purchasing power and personal connection to have a private car added to the train at the last minute. What

he hides is that he is actually the darkest character in the novel, surpassing even Jacques. Grandmorin is guilty of the rape and continued sexual abuse of Sévèrine and is the true culprit in the rape, abuse, and eventual death of Lousiette. Ironically, Grandmorin reserves a private train compartment when summoned by Sévèrine, no doubt to separate himself from whatever riff-raff might be traveling that evening as well to keep his trip a secret. The rail workers do not even know for whom the extra private car is attached.

The private train car hired to cover his illicit habits is the site of his own murder, a murder that ironically would have been impossible in a public car. Sévèrine and her husband, Roubaud, are able to board and disembark from the train car unseen due to Roubaud's job and knowledge of the train timetables and protocols. The reader too is aware of the homicidal plot while the narrative chooses to describe the murder from the point of view of Jacques watching the train zip through the countryside as it emerges from the darkness of a tunnel: "And in that split second Jacques very distinctly saw, [...] a man pinning another man down on the seat and planting a knife in his throat" (Zola *Bête* 57). The perpetrators fail to time the murder just a few moments earlier while the train is in full obscurity. Zola takes advantage of both the sexual metaphor of the train emerging from the tunnel, as the rich and powerful man is defeated, and of the fear of travel generated by rail technology. During the 1860s, committees in France, Great Britain, and Germany worked to resolve the isolation of the train cars due to the "nightmarish vision of the compartment as such being a provocation to murder" (Schivelbusch 82-83). According to Schivelbusch, there were only two reports of actual murders—in two different countries—prior to this frenzy but that was enough to trigger a "collective psychosis" rooted in underlying fears (83). Grandmorin's murder is certainly one of opportunity, for, had he been in a shared compartment or even in one of a series of adjoining cars, the Roubauds would have had to devise another plan. The train car design, Grandmorin's investment in class distinction, and his desire for secrecy are all complicit in the murder.

In the novel, this masterpiece of human engineering is perverted into the site of mankind's most despicable behavior. Jacques's murder of Sévèrine later in the novel also has its genesis in that first murder; Jacques had successfully suppressed his violent "blood," recognizing that, because women and drink sparked violent passions within him, he had intentionally abstained from both. His witnessing of Grandmorin's murder creates doubt in him, not about whether he should take a life but whether he can—and get away with it. Transportation is opportunity, and the "communitas" that regulates habits and behavior evolves quite literally before Jacques's eyes. The murder he finally commits is also facilitated by the trains, their schedule, and the indifference and desensitization resulting from a life of disconnect with others.

The most horrific event of the novel employs the train in yet another capacity, as not only opportunity but weapon. Described in the novel as both a Diana, the virgin warrior, and as having the strength and features of a man, Flore exploits the train's sheer force in a failed act of revenge. A cart and its horses serve as the catalyst by which the train, an object of public transport, becomes a weapon of personal vengeance as Flore holds the team of horses over the tracks, "restraining it with a superhuman effort that made her limbs crack," causing the derailment that Zola details in nearly thirteen pages of gore (286). The mass carnage of the derailment is the most dramatic example of the inversion of the public and private as well as an inversion of the other binaries of the novel: man/woman, creation/destruction, mankind/machine.

The female virgin with her unique strength destroys the missile of weight, speed, and machinery that has facilitated the affair between Jacques and Sévèrine: "By derailing the train, she attempts to bring a literal halt to their intercourse" (Spalding 187). This marvel of progress and technology, however, accounts for the greatest number of deaths in the novel and, even worse, the maiming, dismemberment, and destruction of innocents and families as evidenced by "another little girl, this one covered in blood, her poor tiny little hands crushed [...] so overcome that she could not utter a word, with only her face convulsing in an expression of unspeakable terror" (Zola Bête *293*). The anonymous public that Flore was willing to sacrifice to destroy the two lovers is never even considered until after she realizes that her plan has failed, for the lovers survive unscathed. Only after she sees them does the panorama of death that she has created even come into her visual focus. Once the train is no longer an object of urban perception and is static, Flore sees what her manipulation of the train has really done. It is this act of seeing that triggers the only act of conscience in the novel: her suicide. For this, too, she once again uses the train as her tool (Zola *Bête* 286).

Belenky correctly asserts that the liminal spaces capture the ambiguities of nineteenth-century life while also manifesting the struggle of the individual within various conflicting paradigms of gender, class, and behavior. The portability of vehicles creates more temporary and fluid outlets for expression that is otherwise constrained by daily life. The differentiation described by Harvey, while rigid in its limitations, provides a structure within which women explore desires and test boundaries. An understanding of limits is necessary before one can venture to break or go beyond them. I have mentioned that in her discussion of bodies and cities Elizabeth Grosz notes that "the city develops according to human needs and design" and have extended this theorized to other human constructions and technologies (245). Desire and the ability to appropriate space results in enterprising revisions of spatial intent and objectification of portable private spaces. While Schivelbusch posits that being on a train "is really being nowhere," I posit that it is the potential to be everywhere, or everything (53). This is both literal, in terms of mobility, and figurative, as an exploration of the range of human desires, actions, and possibilities. The vehicles, much like the books that describe them, are neither moral nor immoral per se but put either to good or bad use.

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2 **Honoré Daumier.** *The Omnibus*. 1864
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3 **Maurice Delondre. On** *The Omnibus*. 1880
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George Orwell's "Into the Whale": Critiquing the Convenient Communism of the Auden Generation through Orwell

Robert McParland

Among the British writers of the interwar period, there is a striking difference between the Auden Group and George Orwell. Auden and his cohorts were radicalized during their university years. Once disillusioned in their communism, they became political moderates. Orwell, exposed to Burma, war in Spain, French slums, and Wigan Pier, became radicalized and remained so. For poets like W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender, aesthetic concerns were ever as important as political ones. Indeed, often they were more important. However, political engagement was central to Orwell's writing and he took an independent stance: defiant, committed to opposing bureaucracy, state control, and all forms of dehumanization. To keep the conscience of civilization alive, Orwell would seek truth and humaneness in the face of any emphasis upon power. In the 1930s, Orwell's prophetic and satirical wit focused close to home in a sharp critique of the Auden circle in "Into the Whale." In December 1938, he critiqued Auden in an essay in *Adelphi*. In 1940, Orwell contended that Auden aided totalitarianism. He wrote: "Mr. Auden's brand of amoralism is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled" (qtd. in Davenport-Hines 167).

Recalling those essays, this investigation peers into the marked difference between Orwell and his contemporaries. However, it is essential to observe that Orwell was not only a solitary writer outside community but that he can also be situated with acquaintances and dissenters like Stevie Smith, Mulk Raj Anan, and Inez Holden, as Kristin Bluemel points out (5).

The circle that gathered around W.H. Auden was no organized group. In the thirties these poets wrote no manifestos. They never held a single meeting. They each wrote different kinds of poetry (Spender 8). In this post-war time of anomie and alienation the young poets associated with Auden and Spender claimed that they needed something to believe in: they needed to create a new myth. Beginning as aesthetic schoolboys who thumbed their noses at an older generation's tradition, while benefitting from it, they turned toward a politics they called "communism." Wystan Auden, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, and the "New Signature" poets flirted briefly with communism. Those of them who were homosexuals were already, in a sense, social outsiders, whereas as Oxford-Cambridge men they were consummate insiders. The writers that are called "intermodern" by Bluemel—writers like Orwell and Smith—were working class or colonial writers who do not fit into the Oxbridge mold and its "values that shaped the dominant English literary culture of their time" (15).

As Samuel Hynes recognized, the poets of what he calls the Auden generation "record a generation's state of mind, as young people confronting a troubled world in which that would have to act, but which had not provided them with values in terms of which to determine right action, or with clear direction" (70). Together they banded in groups of mutual admiration and support. C. Day Lewis considered them to be bonded by a "joint communist outlook via the concept of comradeship." Hynes calls this "a daydream of belonging, an escape from fear and loneliness in a hostile world" (122). Like George Orwell, these poets sensed a tension in the air as the 1930s began. Following his trip to Berlin in 1929, Auden remarks that he "ceased to see the world in terms of verse" (87). Writers of the thirties, like Orwell, Smith, Holden, or Anan, had already known the harshness in the world that challenged them to find a voice and a means to articulate a perspective.

In *The Strings Are False*, Louis MacNeice pointed out that in 1928, as Oxford undergraduates, "[n]either Auden or Spender had yet shown the slightest interest in politics" (14). As what Hynes calls "the most isolated and least political" of the generation's Oxford-Cambridge educated poets, MacNeice himself remained outside the political literary cohorts of the period (333). However, MacNeice was enough of an insider to observe what was going on among the poets who began to band around the work of Auden enter and to take on themes of communism. He watched them enter in public life as poets in a manner that C. Day Lewis likened to a natural poetic process (Hynes 157-58).

In the 1930s, these poets never let go of the sensibilities of English class structure or joined the working class in the factories. Their 'communism' may be best summed up by the apolitical MacNeice, who wrote: "My sympathies are left. On paper and in the soul. But not in my heart or guts... With my heart and guts, I lament the passing of class" (qtd. in Hynes 333). Orwell and Anan, in contrast, knew the colonial experience. Orwell knew the factories, the poor of London, and the argument against the fascism of Oswald Mosely as well as the argument against the alternative of any communism without commitment to the working class.

The poetry of Auden and Spender was heralded by the Bloomsbury group and much of their recognition came from the Bloomsbury establishment (Hynes 82). For them, 'communism' was a word, not a commitment to egalitarianism. It provided them with a way to be non-conformists while they implicitly conformed to a society which gave them a secure and privileged place. We may ask if their communism was a youthful indiscretion, or if it was compelled by the social and economic times that they lived in. Was there a psychological need in them for community? Was this need propelled by the zeitgeist or by the economic conditions which limited their stock options and gave them an injured sense of privilege? Indeed, were they communists because it was a convenient ideology and because they needed some rallying point? Without any direct encounter with the key event of their times, the First World War, were they not constantly feeling that they had to prove themselves, to catch up with their elder brothers?

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In his preface to his collection on 'the thirties poets,' Michael Roberts calls this cohort of poets "the men who were too young to serve in the war" who "found themselves in a world which possessed no traditions by which they would regulate their lives" (Hynes 108). While they had never known war firsthand, they were filled with an uneasy sense of its aftermath: a sense of the modern world that Auden would call "the age of anxiety." They were a generation affected by the stark vision of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Spender, in 1935, said that the poets whose work he was compiling were artists who experienced the dilemma of Hamlet: "they find their lives fixed in a world in which there are no external symbols for their inner sense of values" (qtd. in Hynes 163). They had begun to seek a heroic model of action, "climbing" and "fighting," as Hynes says, although against what it was not always certain (67-68).

Wystan Auden was clearly the group's leader. If Spender is to be believed, Auden was heir doctor and teacher who led because they were acknowledged neurotics and Auden knew psychoanalysis. Spender writes that "Auden had ascendancy over his friends which was due to his being versed in psychoanalysis and therefore in a position to diagnose their complexes" (Spender 9). In his essay "Psychology and Art Today," Auden compared Marxism and Freudianism and found them complementary but not fully adequate therapies for a sick society (Hynes 168). Auden "records that stage in Auden's and England's history when the course was uncertain and the leaders absent, and only the sickness and the need for health were clear" (Hynes 94). In "Address for a Prize Day," in Book One, Auden's speaker is a leader at a public school who diagnoses the nation's sickness as "failures of love in Purgatorio" (Hynes 90).

Within "the sick society" a poem was a possible response. "If you cannot act directly, you can perform a symbolic action," observes Hynes (70). However, these poets also sought the right relation between art and action. The poet was like a transmitting station, wrote Day Lewis. "It is as meaningless for a revolutionary to call poetry unimportant in the hour of revolution as it is to call revolution unimportant in the hour of poetry" (qtd. in Hynes 96). What then was the right relation between art and action? Spender, who was the first of these poets to approach these questions in detail, held a romantic view of the poet, much like that of Percy Bysshe Shelley, for whom poets were "the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (20).

MacNeice describes Spender as "a towering angel not quite sure if he was fallen, who thought himself as the poet always, moving in his own height" (113) and adding that "his great, beaming messianic face was an antidote to our conventional Oxford nonchalance" (128). Spender wrote in "Twenty Poems" in 1930:

> I suffer like history in Dark Ages, where
>
> Truth lies in dungeons, too deep for whisper. ("Without" 4-5)

For Spender, the word "political" meant "a fatality which I felt to be overtaking civilization" (The Thirties and After 18). This sense he brought to his poetry:

> Shapes of death haunt life
>
> What each most wills, projects his place beyond
>
> The greed for property
>
> Heaps a skyscraper over the breaking ribs…
>
> From afar, we watch the best of us
>
> Whose adorned desire was to die into all Time. (CP 38)

Spender's poem is saturated with images of death. It speaks of the "death-wills industry" which "mass produces tombs" (CP 38). The poem proceeds to the image of small birds in flight. The society of yesterday has taken flight with the "autumnal instinct of the swallows" (CP 38). The deadness of winter approaches:

> There, above timeless pyramids, they perch
>
> Simply for delight, their one compulsion. (CP 38)

The speaker of the poem, in a world of change, is deeply affected by the perpetual seasonal migration of the swallows to the timeless pyramids. He remarks that they are "Not saving me from death yet loosening me for speech" (CP 38). From the wasteland fly the swallows over the shifting sands of change, and young poets in this uneasy world feel a need to speak. With "New Signatures," a new generation was becoming conscious of itself (Hynes 81). Many of them felt that a "shadow war" loomed across their immediate future. In 1930, Spender wrote:

> Who live under the shadow of war
>
> What can I do that matters?
>
> My pen stops, and my laughter dancing stop
>
> Or ride to a gap. (CP 36-37)

Was the gap these poets felt between contemplation and action representative of a sense experienced by others of their generation? In Britain, at this time, a general apathy appears to have been more predominant than the leanings of the young poets toward communism. There was a growing sense among the citizenry that they were living between wars: that another war was on the horizon. This was especially true after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in 1933. These young men became involved in international movements. In 1936-37, several of these young men sought to test their heroism and manhood in the Spanish Civil War: "The war in Spain was an enactment in physical terms of the revolutionary struggle that so much of their writing had been about" (Hynes 244).

At home in England, there had been a pervasive tone of pacifism throughout this time: "By 1936, war was a part of ordinary consciousness; it thrust itself into the major literary works of the year" (Hynes 193). Meanwhile, working class sentiment remained opposed to war. The English working class was never clearly activist or revolutionary in any Marxist sense of the word. It was just generally opposed to war and to any call to participation in it. A political compromise by Ramsey MacDonald had moved the nation into a period of Conservative Party control throughout the 1930s. Regionally, there was economic disparity, with high unemployment in the north. As the old industries of the first industrial revolution began to deplete, a new industrial revolution of synthetics and electronics had begun in the south. However, there was never anything approximating a social revolution. There was a structural recession in which employment increased in northern cities.[1] By this Oxford graduates were not affected. In many ways, "communism" to them was a word, something to energize them in a

1 A structural recession occurred in Britain during Ramsey Macdonald's term as prime minister in the 1930s. The Second Labour Government fell in 1929 and was replaced in 1931 by a 'National' government comprising opposition parties. The Labour Party regarded this as a desertion on Macdonald's part.

political direction. They do not appear to have desired to mix with workers or to take on an egalitarian viewpoint. Rather, they tended to be an artistic class apart, maintaining a sense of entitlement.

Spender points to a sense of urgency during this time to raise a call against pacifism and apathy. The poet says that a new society must be forged:

> Oh, young men, oh, young comrades
>
> It is too late now to stay in those houses
>
> Your fathers built...
>
> Count rather those fabulous possessions
>
> Which begin with your body and your fiery soul. (SP 12: 3, 6-7)

Spender continued to struggle with the conflict between the Communist Party and solitary individualism in his artistic pursuits. MacNeice observes that the comrades "could not help noticing that Spender, who consented to be at home with Stalin was much more at ease with J.S. Mill" (MacNeice 167). Spender wrote: "Artists always have and always will be individualists." He asserted that "The poet escapes from the problems of social reconstruction into a world of his own making" (Spender, *Thirties and After* 52). Such sentiments hardly expressed a Stalinist-Communist Party attitude and Spender recalled being criticized for his views: "The essay was not well received by the comrades," he says (19). Hynes comments: "He felt early in the decade the urgency of political circumstances, and he responded vigorously, but he also felt a deep and steady commitment to his vocation as a poet. Because he was naïve, he believed, longer than most, that he could reconcile these two loyalties" (Hynes 359).

Later in life, in a journal entry of February 10, 1953, concerning an interview for a student newspaper *The Recorder* in Cincinnati, Spender recalled his youthful interest in communism to a different generation: "I joined the CP because the Secretary of the British Party had told me that in exchange for my signing a membership card, he would publish an article by me giving my views on the Spanish Civil War" (117).

By 1940, Spender had begun to change his tune. Two years earlier, in 1938, W.H. Auden left England and headed for America. Before seeing the United States, Auden journeyed through Brussels, and his trip inspired a memorable poem. In "Musee Des Beaux Arts," Auden pointed to a painting by Breughel that vividly recalls the cataclysmic fall of the world's first aviator, Icarus, and the surrounding world's apathy. Auden's poem is a call to awareness, a reflection on the simultaneity of happenings in our world. The fall of Icarus occurs while prosaic business proceeds as usual, unaware of or unconcerned by astonishing miracles that are happening nearby. The tragedy of a boy falling from the sky happens as a boat that "had somewhere to get to" sails calmly on its way (Auden, "Musee des Beaux Arts" 21).

Social commentators, observing public apathy and the shadow of an approaching war, suggested that the next war would be fought in the air with great machines.[2] For George Orwell, the real war would be unlike the intellectual battles of modernism. It required more plainspoken language than poetry, for it would be fought by modern states wielding powerful machines far more capable of destruction than an explosive verb. In Chapter One of *Keep the Apidistra Flying* he wrote:

> Our civilization is dying. It must be dying. Presently the aeroplanes are coming.
>
> Zoom- whiz-crash! (Orwell, *Apidistra* 12)

"On the whole," Orwell wrote in "Into the Whale," "the literary history of the species seems to justify the opinion that a writer does well to keep out of politics" (508). As Hynes points out: "This is an odd conclusion to get from the author of *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia*, but it became a commonplace of the thirties myth; young writers were seduced into a politics they didn't understand" (387). These myths are arguable propositions, he says. They are myths "by which a complex, confused, and contradictory time has been simplified in order that it might be comprehended" (393).

Orwell, a mythmaker who made a myth of himself, was indeed a highly political writer. While his own politics were of the socialist variety, he was a critic on the left of the political left. He stood apart from the Auden circle. Eric Blair transformed into George Orwell: the ordinary man, the journalistic prophet. Opposed to any totalizing group, he rejected the closed bohemia and self-styled avant-garde of Bloomsbury. He learned to distrust Fabian authoritarianism. He opposed the brand of English revolution advanced by Cromwell and by the French Revolution which had brought on the Reign of Terror, and he was particularly aware of the totalitarian thrust of his time, which he so sharply depicts in *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

In a manuscript penned at Eton, Eric Blair wrote "A Peep into the Future," a manuscript that Jonathan Rose suggests is "a send up of H.G. Wells" and a precursor to Orwell's later work (88). This writing suggests that Orwell, like Wells, was always concerned with a vision of society. For example, in his essay "Into the Whale," Orwell maps out the consciousness of the 1920s post-war generation, whose principal voice was T.S. Eliot. He begins with a positive assessment of the work of novelist Henry Miller and proceeds to critique both the social zeitgeist of the 1920s and that of the 1930s generation of Auden and Spender. Orwell claims: "the keynote of the post-war writers would be a tragic sense of life." Of Eliot's generation, he says: "All of them are temperamentally hostile to the notion of progress; it is felt that progress not only doesn't happen but ought not to happen" (505). The 1920s were a time in which the "official beliefs were dissolving like castles," a time "the slump in religious belief, for instance, was spectacular" (Orwell 505).

Orwell called the 1920s "a period of responsibility such as the world had never seen before" (509). In "Into the Whale" he pointed out that the emphasis of the writers of the 1920s was on literary technique, while important elements of the 1920s, including the impact of the Russian Revolution, "escaped the notice of the English intelligentsia" (508). "Literature was supposed to consist solely in the manipulation of words," says Orwell of this period of modernism (508). There was among these writers a focus on purpose along moral-religious-cultural lines. Their tendency, he concludes, was conservative (509). Communism combined with a "reactionary outlook," adds Orwell (509). He believes that these writers were pessimistic because they were writing during a relatively comfortable period. They could address "cosmic despair" because they were not beset by personal despair. Orwell writes: "People with empty bellies never despair of the universe, nor ever think of the universe for that matter" (509).

As a shrewd observer of society, Orwell looks back to

2 See H.G. Wells, The War in the Air (Pall Mall Magazine, 1908), Penguin, 1967.

the democratic hopes of the age of Walt Whitman, as he writes: "our own age, at any rate in Western Europe, is less healthy and less hopeful than the one in which Whitman was writing. Unlike Whitman we live in a shrinking world" (500). Our "democratic vistas," according to Orwell, have "ended in barbed wire" (500). By 1930, according to Orwell, "the debunking of western civilization had reached its climax and disillusionment was immensely widespread" (514). Orwell wrote, "There is less feeling of creation and growth, less and less emphasis on the cradle endlessly rocking, more and more emphasis on the teapot endlessly stewing" (500). To Orwell the worst stewing pots included the young poets of the thirties. Orwell contends that communism for them is no commitment to the working class. Rather, it is like a dash of sugar in the Earl Grey tea, seething and bubbling in the kitchen. They are, notes Orwell, of a "soft-boiled emancipated middle class" and have "the need for something to believe in" (515).

Clearly, among the British writers and intellectuals of the interwar period, there is a striking difference between George Orwell and the Auden Generation. Engagement was central to Orwell's writing, as much as he called for "a sharp distinction between our political and literary loyalties" (CEIS 4:412). To keep the conscience of civilization alive, Orwell would seek truth and humaneness in the face of any totalitarian power: "When a writer engages in politics, he should do so as a citizen, as a human being, but not as a writer" (508). Auden and his cohorts, in contrast, were radicalized during their university years, and, once disillusioned in their communism, they become political moderates. Orwell, a man with a markedly different experience of life, was radicalized by his exposure to Burma, Spain, slums, and Wigan Pier. Orwell was never part of the Auden generation. As Stuart Samuels observes, Orwell belonged to "a generation he was in but never part of," within "a movement he toyed with but never joined" (297). While educated at Eton, with his experience in the Burmese police service, his plainspoken idealism, and his unique interests, Orwell was "middlebrow."

Writing of the poets of the 1930s, he says that "Auden, Spender & Company… easily fit into the public school-Bloomsbury pattern" (297). He is sharply critical of this. There is a rather "priggish" quality, he says, that "is common to most of these writers." Auden is "pure scoutmaster" and this group is comfortably and trendily political: "Suddenly we have got out of the twilight of the gods and into a sort of Boy Scout atmosphere of bare knees and community singing" (51). The communism of the English intellectual, Orwell says, is "the patriotism of the deracinated" (515). It is something for "an eager minded schoolboy" (510). He clearly objects to this state of affairs. Yet he recognizes that Auden, Spender, and Company are now the movement, just as Joyce, Eliot, and Company were for the 1920s. He sees that this movement is now in the direction of some ill-defined thing called communism. Orwell appears to have considered this nothing more than a sundry pastime. In turn, Spender commented on "London Letter" published on January 3, 1941, in the *Partisan Review*: "Orwell writes as though England were a pendulum swinging between extremes: what he calls a revolutionary situation… and a backwash of reaction the following summer" (*Collected Essays* 16). Spender saw himself in Orwell's comments in this piece. However, for years his communism dwelled in a naivete that was not present in the clear-eyed Orwell, and Spender, for years, did not see himself simply as taken up with a political zeitgeist. Later, whatever his earlier leanings toward communism, Spender made it clear that he would not and could not have accepted Stalinist totalitarianism. His writings show that he could not even accept conformity in the boy's school he attended: "you felt that they were compelling you to be like them, and never get away from their system and their standards, you bit and you scratched" (Spender, *Journals* 71). Spender all along was asserting things contrary to the spirit of communism, such as "The poet escapes problems of social reconstruction into a world of his own making" (Spender, *Journals* 71). He eventually came to see the problems of communism. However, it was only after 1940, with the new crisis of the Second World War, that he began to turn his attention away from the dream of communism toward other concerns.

On July 5, 1956, Spender fiercely defended Orwell in response to Michael Ayrton. In his journal he wrote:

> The thing that really annoyed me was his saying that the Spanish war was a perfectly simple affair despite the reporting by 'gloomy George.' I retorted that George Orwell judged matters by the standards of his own life, which in politics were as exacting as those of a saint, and I did not see that Michael showed, in his life, any standards of a kind that would justify his criticisms of Orwell. (Spender, *Journals* 172)

Orwell's uniquely different experience partly explains his commitment in mind, body, and spirit to the Spanish Civil War and his subsequent writings against totalitarianism. Unlike his contemporaries in the Auden circle, Orwell never developed an attachment to Marxism. Instead, he judged Stalinism negatively and sharply opposed it as early as 1931 (Rodden 208). Orwell correctly pointed out in *Into the Whale* that the "something to believe in" that Auden's group sought was an aesthetic doctrine, not a political one (1:515).

Slightly older than Auden and of working-class origins, Orwell's difference emerged as he served in Burma. He developed his political consciousness while overseas. Orwell appears to have identified more strongly with the generation of soldiers from the Great War who preceded him. As John Rodden observes, this generational discontinuity nurtured Orwell's differences (208-09). When the poets of Auden's circle began to emerge in 1928, Orwell was returning from difficult years in Burma, years overseas that gave him a detachment from activities in Britain, or what Rodden has called "a valuable psychological distance" (216). While Auden and Spender were pondering Joyce and Eliot, Orwell continued in his fondness for Charles Dickens, Samuel Butler, and H.G. Wells. Arriving in Paris, he saw the world from the gutter. His perspective was bound to be distinctive and different.

The London left of the 1930s was a new phenomenon in British intellectual history. Although London had sported radicals back as far as the eighteenth century there was no clear left-wing intelligentsia in Britain until the 1930s. English gatherings at coffeehouses led to the Reform Bill of 1832 but not to any form of revolution. The utilitarian nineteenth century reformers were all close to the political powers that be and Chartist efforts for labor reform failed. The Fabian socialists, like H.G. Wells, Beatrice and Sidney Webb or Bernard Shaw, focused upon gradualism, social planning, and administration. They formed, in Noel Annon's phrase, "an intellectual aristocracy" which conformed rather than rebelled (241-42). As young poets, Auden and Spender and their friends were as aesthetically inclined as the Bloomsbury Group of Woolf, Lytton Strachey, Quentin Bell, and E.M. Forster in the 1920s. Their left-leaning political commitments to communism were rather short lived.

Orwell, in contrast, engaged directly with poverty, socialism, fascism, and Western imperialism. On the scene in Burma, he saw imperialism firsthand. With

Robert McParland

a rifle cradled in his arms, he witnessed fascism in Franco's Spain. "To learn what the world looked like to a British intellectual one can go to George Orwell," wrote Orwell's colleague T.R. Fyvel in *Intellectuals Today* (1968) (qtd. in Rodden 303). One can truly see, he wrote, "how the issues of the time were reflected in his own career" (qtd. in Rodden 303).

Thus, Orwell stands as the characteristic literary figure of the thirties in Britain with respect to the political strains of the time. Orwell, more than Auden or Spender, was a writer of conscience, an ethical model of the relation of the writer to public issues. His clear and relentless opposition to totalitarianism in all its guises continues to serve as a guide for us in our changing situation in the twenty-first century. Orwell is also a striking test-case in the political sociology of British left-wing intellectuals, as Rodden has observed (207-08). He was markedly different in temperament, style, and experience from his literary contemporaries in the Auden generation. Orwell stood both inside the political left and outside it as one of its keenest critics. In some respects, Orwell is 'conservative' in defending and honoring the past. Orwell wishes to preserve the English language. He emerges from a Tory radical tradition which is "by intellect usually left wing but by temperament often right wing" (*RWP* 211). Orwell cherishes a past time, "an older and simpler time," as Lionel Trilling puts it (xi). For the past gives meaning and connects one to a history. Yet Orwell does not seek the utopian path of Eliot's Christian land or Williams Morris's *News from Nowhere*. In considering the future in his dystopian novel, Orwell looked at the past. *The Last Man in Europe*—his original title—finds its precursors in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). Written nearly a decade after *Frankenstein*, the novel describes human extinction by plague. While Shelley's books do not directly resemble those by Orwell, they do present interesting parallels. Both may be read as cautionary appeals to humanity. Meanwhile, contemporary works like Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* (1930) and *Darkness and Light* (1942) are futuristic stories much like *1984*. The work of Alfred Noyes and C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (1945), a book which Orwell reviewed, may also be considered by those curious about intertextual sources for Orwell's novel:

> A company of mad scientists- or perhaps they are not mad, but merely have destroyed in themselves all human feeling, all notion of good and evil- are plotting to conquer Britain, then the whole planet, and then other planets, until they have brought the universe under their control [...]
> (Orwell, *Collected Essays* 515)

`"It was simply something to believe in," wrote Orwell (515). "Here was a church, an army, an orthodoxy, a discipline. Here was a Fatherland and, at any rate since 1935 or thereabouts, a Fuhrer" (515). He added: "So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot" (515).

Orwell knew the fire personally. Therein lives his difference and the value of his voice for us. The naivete that Orwell points to is borne out by subsequent history and the renunciation of communism by Auden, Spender, and their associates. Orwell's observation about the communism of these poets appears to ring true: "They were all so ingloriously incapable of understanding what it all meant" (515). With *Animal Farm* and *1984*, Orwell gave us a glimpse which provided a path to understanding. We are left to ponder, along with Stephen Spender: "One wonders what Orwell would have said had he lived to see the fifties" (75). One wonders what he would say if he were alive now.

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Necessary Death

Jocelyn Heath

In December 2013, while home from grad school for the holidays, I went on a deer count with my wife, her colleague, and an intern. She was working for DC Department of the Environment at the time, and while her job mostly involved educational programs, she often jumped in to help one of the wildlife biologists with species surveys in order to indulge her passion for field ecology proper. On this evening, we were going to count deer in Rock Creek Park.

If you've spent much time in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, you likely know how prevalent and problematic whitetail deer are. At best, they irritate home gardeners like my father by eating "everything" (not that much of an exaggeration). At worst, they cause car accidents, carry ticks, spread Chronic Wastings disease, and decimate the ecosystem. In excessive numbers, they may starve to death from running their food supply down to nothing. "Natural" fates, maybe, but awfully cruel ones. Given the lack of natural predators in the Maryland suburbs, numbers often become excessive, thus requiring population control.

The deer count we conducted was a regular event aimed at gauging the size and change of the population. Had the population gotten larger? Might it be straining resources and need to be culled? We would travel to different spots within and around the park, shine a spotlight into the darkness, and count the number of pairs of eyes shining back at us. Lindsay drove, and Michelle worked the spotlight. I helped the intern count and record. We popped in and out of neighborhoods. Most of the time, a few pairs of shining gold eyes flashed back at us amid the bare trees. I jotted the number on a chart, then we moved on. I didn't see as many deer as I would've expected.

Naturally, people become suspicious of a truck cruising around and shining bright lights. A few heads popped out of doors, and curtains got pulled back. Lindsay told me that they'd been stopped and grilled a few times before. Most suburbanites are aghast at the thought of killing innocent animals. To some, it seems "unnatural" for humans to take their lives prematurely. We're taught to think of deliberately inflicted death as cruel, unless in the case of euthanasia for a suffering pet. But as awful as it seems to kill an animal in its prime, sometimes death is necessary.

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Humans don't like to think of ourselves as such, but we are creatures of this Earth, just as the deer and squirrels and beetles are. We consume resources, we

take up spaces, and we leave an indelible impact on the Earth. We are biological entities above all else, though we think our higher consciousness mitigates some of that biology. That's part of why Charles Darwin's theories met with such a frosty reception; divine right is much more appealing than descent from the apes. Admitting biology also means admitting our own mortality, which we also try to avoid.

At points in history, we have lived in sync with the natural world. Some communities still aim to. But once man figured out how to transform resources and materials to do things bigger, faster, in greater numbers, we separated ourselves from the environment and its cycles. We burned, chopped, and polluted, and around the 1970s, it started to catch up to us. Smog thickened urban air. Rivers ran to sludge. To shorten a long story, the Environmental Protection Agency was born and with it came the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other such legislation.

What comes after is a complicated story. We've moved forward, then backward—especially under the Trump administration. Limits on emissions and resource use were set and removed. But even with careful usage, the fact remains that there are too damn many humans for the planet to support. We went from 2 billion people less than 100 years ago to roughly 7.8 billion now. The physical space hasn't become larger, though we've claimed more and more of it to make space for ourselves and our feeding. If you went to school in the 80s and 90s, you learned about deforestation in the Amazon (and probably donated spare change to counteract it with tree planting). A fair amount of the loss went to creating farmland and ranches for food production. We've had to resort to genetically modifying organisms to yield hardier crops and thus prevent famine. It's a game of stretch-to-fit with significant consequences. And yet, we keep on reproducing.

***

Population control didn't apply just to deer in D.C. The region suffers from a high number of non-native Canada geese, big obnoxious birds who consume resources and splatter them all around their habitat. To help keep this population in check, some jurisdictions rely on dogs to chase off the geese, or potentially on sharpshooters to cull the groups. At DDOE, the method of choice involved nipping the issue in the bud: oiling eggs. As I learned, taking laid eggs from the nest is useless, because a mother goose will simply lay replacements. Oiling them, however, smothers the embryo while leaving the mother goose unaware of its demise. In other words, she'll continue to incubate dead eggs until (hopefully) it's too late to lay more.

I never had the fun of helping with this particular venture, but Michelle and Lindsay told me some wild stories about enraged mama geese, useless papa geese, and the sticky marshes of the Anacostia watershed. They had to kayak in to the nesting sites, draw the mother off the nest, fend off her attacks on whoever did the oiling (often using the kayak paddle in a move known as "goose baseball"), and try to escape without being bitten or winged. It didn't always happen.

Though I'm no fan of geese, I had a small amount of (anthropomorphized) sympathy for the mother goose. What would happen when she finally figured out her eggs were dead?

***

I didn't really consider my own prospects of loss until transfer day during our IVF cycle, when the InvoCell device came out and we got to see how many embryos we had (if any), and how good the quality was (if any). As we waited in the dim-lit exam room, time dilated and we had moments to voice what we hoped wasn't true. The eggs might not have done anything. There might only be one or two embryos, and they might be low in cell count—meaning, underdeveloped and poor quality, unlikely to progress into a fetus. We might have nothing to transfer. We might have to transfer two (the choice made if viability is poor) and have both fail. We left the question hanging: well, what would we do?
It turned out we were lucky. Five embryos were of good quality. The andrologist carried one into the room cradled in the rubber curve of a catheter, and we watched its little fluid ghost flit across the ultrasound screen. Our doctor smiled. "I have a very good feeling about this," she said, before she left the room.

***

The thing about the deer count is that in a way, we were marking other living creatures for death, and I had to reconcile myself to that. No, I did not arm the bow or rifle and pull the trigger. That would be done by the USDA sharpshooters. But by indicating an overlarge population, we inevitably marked some of them for death by population control.

The philosophy of population control is simple: keep numbers manageable so the group can live comfortably. No starving to death. A curated impact on the environment. And when possible, a human benefit: any healthy deer taken in the cull would be butchered and distributed to the area's homeless shelters and soup kitchens. It's a bit different from what Disney showed us, but in some sense, this is the circle of life.

***

Fear of loss didn't end on transfer day. IVF patients have to wait around two weeks before a pregnancy test can give a reliable answer. The "two-week wait" is a mindfuck, plain and simple. Some women swear they know immediately whether it worked or not, but I felt unsure bordering on skeptical. Much of this came from the fact that two days post-transfer, I passed red blood and a tissue clot. *That's it*, I thought. *I lost it*. My logical wife insisted we call the clinic to ask about it. I was advised to get off my feet, and not to give up hope—it could be implantation bleeding or some other benign blood loss. I did one and tried the other, though I still never felt hopeful until the period that should have started, didn't.

First, we had a positive blood test. Then, ultrasound confirmation. We'd heard of a "chemical pregnancy"—traces of HCG but no actual embryo—and went in wary. Again in a dim exam room, watching a black and white screen, my uterus emerging. "There's the gestational sac," commented the midwife. "And that little speck is your embryo." We watched it flicker lightly in the dark. The heartbeat, she told us. Scientifically, it's fetal cardiac pole activity; the heart as we know it hasn't formed this early. But that feels too clinical a description for what will become a child.

The perk of IVF is the weekly ultrasounds (through 10 weeks at our clinic, before we transferred to a regular OB/GYN). A good bit of early pregnancy involves long waits between doctor's visits, and thus, hoping that everything is ok because you don't get reassurance until the kicking begins. We, however, got to watch our little speck grow into a stick figure, then a small humanoid blob, and finally something resembling an actual baby (with a touch of Skeletor).

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Like many parents-to-be, we were focused on our own child. In retrospect, I realize that the same day, even the same hour we were talking about names or listening to the heartbeat at an OB appointment, thousands of other parents were having similar experiences across the world— whether further or earlier in the pregnancy than we were. We may be individuals who build unique family groups, but we are part of one of the largest species groups on the planet.

***

A statistic: 1 in 5 pregnancies ends in miscarriage, often mistaken for a period if an early loss.

Another statistic: miscarriage risk is highest during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Perversely, feeling like death during the first trimester is good evidence that your fetus has NOT died. When you barely drag out of bed in the morning, snooze at your desk during the day, and pass out again right after dinner, it means your body is doing its job to help the fetus survive.

When you throw up daily, or hourly, or in my case, experience nausea as a 9-5 job, it is the only communication your body can offer of everything's cool. For many pregnancies, suffering is the alternative to death, and it's the one circumstance in which we consider it acceptable.

A hopeful statistic: the odds of having a successful pregnancy increase each week, with the risk in the single digits after about 9 weeks.

***

Back to the question of killing Bambi: population control feels unsavory to most of us. Lindsay and Michelle told me of the objections raised in DC and its suburbs. Even ecologists who understand the necessity of curtailing populations don't enjoy the act of taking a life. But they understand that the decision is much greater than any individual creature.

The resistance similarly illustrates the limits of science literacy in our communities. Thinning the herd by human intervention is not ideal, but we have altered the function of our ecosystems so that nature itself can't carry out the task as it used to. Without apex predators, the food web does not function properly to keep balance among animal populations. Too many prey animals result; overpopulation follows. While people sympathize with the individual animals, they overlook the ways in which that individual's health connects to the collective well-being. To minimize individual animals' suffering from illness or starvation, we have to help restore balance. And that means, for some otherwise healthy animals, death.

The lesser thought-of goal is restoration. We've knocked the world out of whack; how can we put it right? It might mean thinning deer herds. It might also mean physical changes to the environment to compensate for what we've altered. During Michelle's college years in Des Moines, she learned of an initiative to restore the native tallgrass prairie—an ecosystem largely destroyed in the creation of farmland and cities. Union Slough, Iowa, had suppressed any kind of fire—including natural wildfires that burn and restore the land—for decades, and the prairie ecosystem had disappeared. The project involved planting and growing, but also burns and cutting down quite a number of trees, which caused uproar. Because grade-school ecology stresses that trees=precious and valuable and worth protecting, of course this seemed to the public like a terrible move by those running the restoration project. Protests resulted.

Again, much of this had to do with the larger picture: bring the land back to what it originally, naturally was, and you're doing what's best for the Earth. It might involve destruction or relocation or, potentially, death. Sometimes loving nature doesn't look loving at all.

***

Zero population growth: when people replace themselves, only. It doesn't mean zero birth, just that you don't make more descendants than yourself and your partner. That's really the ideal at this point—or perhaps a bit of shrinkage—but we're headed in the opposite direction, quickly.

World population estimates doubled between 1930 and 1974, then doubled again by 2020. We could double our numbers yet again by 2100. How much can the planet take?

Population control in the human species is an ethical sticking point. The planet must have a breaking point, but what do we do about staying below it? Or is this even a "we" discussion? Before industrialization and modern healthcare, nature kept human numbers in check with illnesses, disasters, and other "natural" causes; these days, more of us survive and live longer. Manmade efforts so far range from acceptable (incentives, education, access to birth control) to truly sinister (legislated limits and eugenics). We don't explicitly "cull" ourselves for population purposes, but we do commit homicides and genocides. Nothing save for a voluntary solution is ethically acceptable, of course, but getting human beings to put aside their individual needs and wants to think about the larger planetary picture seems impossible—to say nothing of those in the world who don't always have the agency to make such decisions.

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Even now, I've skirted the hardest part. Loss is inescapable for any of us. For one thing, I can easily count six women I know personally who lost a first pregnancy (but carried a second to term). I can think of more that had a loss and are still trying to conceive. We might console ourselves and our bereaved with the idea of what was or wasn't meant to be; we might remind ourselves that there's always hope. Either way, the loss of any wanted, prospective life is rightly grieved.

There's no guarantee, either, of a child surviving childhood. Accidents, school shootings, crimes—threats every parent fights to keep in the back corners of their mind, but that never truly go disappear. We hold our breath when we let them out of our sight, at least a little.

At the rate we're going environmentally, the world could burn itself into an uninhabitable crisp or devolve into mass conflict over limited resources. We might all be swept away together.

And even in the very, very best of circumstances, I won't ever get see all that he's become.

But this is the course of nature: the old, the sick, the dying cycle out to make way for the new.

Jocelyn Heath
Necessary Death

Pedagogy & the Profession

The Autonomy of Writing: Cases of Aphasia and Interviews with Teacher-Writers

Jason Wirtz

Researchers on writing have long considered the possibility of writing being an independent mode of cognition, separate from such closely related faculties as speaking, listening, and reading. Janet Emig's 1977 "Writing as a Mode of Learning" delineates the ways that writing is "a unique languaging process" (122). More recently, David Galbraith (1998) makes the case in "Writing as a Knowledge-Constituting Process" for a distinction between explicit and implicit processes; whereas explicit processes are characterized by problem-solving and purposeful rhetorical planning (140), implicit processes are constitutive discoveries and insights surfaced exclusively through writing (156). With evidence from cognitive studies, in particular, studies on aphasia, I offer further support to this argument that writing is a unique mode of language processing. To my knowledge, this pool of research remains surprisingly unexamined within writing studies, and yet it properly supports and even extends decades-old positions and arguments within writing studies about the independence of writing in the brain. Interviews conducted with teacher-writers offer further corroboration to the autonomy-of-writing thesis by surfacing the unknowns associated with writing, places where the writing process becomes unexplainable from the vantage of verbal reflection. If writing is indeed an autonomous mode of cognition, then implications follow for both research on writing and the teaching of writing.

Writing and Aphasia

An illuminating place to start is with the case study of Neil (Vargha-Khadem et al), an adolescent boy who tragically suffered a brain tumor when he was thirteen years old. Although Neil retained his verbal intelligence after the onset of this tumor, he experienced three devastating conditions as a result: anterograde amnesia (an inability to form new memories), visual agnosia (difficulty recognizing visually presented objects), and alexia (a loss of reading ability). It is puzzling, then, when researchers discover that Neil received passing grades in his school courses. The school had provided him with recorded lectures, including questions posed by his teachers, and Neil responded to these questions in writing: "Based on these written responses, his teachers rated his progress in all of his studies as satisfactory" (Vargha-Khadem et al. 692). To resolve this contradiction, a researcher sat down with Neil to ask him questions about a book from his English course. Neil could not answer any of the questions posed, being unable to even recite the title of the book. The researcher eventually asked Neil to write out his responses to the questions. Neil wrote several lines and handed the paper to the researcher, asking, "What have I written?" Although Neil could not communicate his responses

through speaking, he could write out responses even though he himself could not read what he had written. An example of this remarkable ability is shared within this case-study of Neil:

> The surprising finding that Neil could retrieve memories in response to questions through writing was discussed with Neil's parents, who up to that time had been frustrated by his inability to recount any event or activity that occurred during his daily life. Later that same evening, his mother urged him to write down the names of children and staff in his new school. He proceeded to produce a long list of these names, all of which were later verified. The next afternoon, in answer to his mother's request to write about what had happened at school that day, he wrote, 'Mum I saw tulips on the way home'. This was the first time in over 2 years that his mother had gained any information by directly questioning Neil about his experiences when he was away from her. (Vargha-Khadem et al. 693)

This study of Neil demonstrates his ability to retrieve memories solely through writing. The case provides evidence for the autonomy of writing in Neil's brain, as his writing operates purely independently of both speech and reading.

PW (Rapp et al) offers another such case. PW suffered a stroke at the age of fifty-one following oral surgery. Similar to Neil, PW is able to utilize writing to answer questions that he cannot answer through speaking. Researchers share an illustrative example of PW's condition:

> Examiner: Can you write the name?
> PW: (writes) P-E-A-R
> Examiner: Can you say it?
> PW: Fruit . . . damn that's wrong. Piece of fruit that I love . . . uh, uh, uh . . . damn it . . .
> Examiner: Can you come up with the name?
> PW: I can sit here and spell it for you all day long.
> (Rapp et al. 72)

The authors of this study use the data collected from PW to argue against the notion that "writing is entirely parasitic upon spoken language" in favor of the argument that "knowledge of the written and spoken forms of the language can be accessed independently" (Rapp et al. 72-73).

Another stroke victim case-study discussed in the literature on aphasia (Rupareliya et al), is a seventy-two-year old male discovered to suffer pure alexia. Alexia refers to a loss of reading ability and in the case of "pure" alexia, other forms of communication, such as writing ability, remain intact. While this subject was unable to read even his own handwriting, his writing ability was left unaffected by the stroke. There exists several of these case studies within the literature on aphasia suggesting writing as an autonomous process, operating successfully and independently from both speaking and reading.

Offering further theoretical support for the autonomy of writing are findings of double disassociation in cases of aphasia. Double disassociation involves cases where writing remains intact while speech and reading suffer and, vice-versa, cases where speech and reading remain intact while writing suffers. Such double disassociation is further evidence of the autonomy of writing. Based on findings concerning double disassociation, researchers offer a novel perspective on writing in the brain: "The findings reveal a brain that can neurally instantiate novel cognitive functions, such as written language, with considerable independence from the evolutionarily older functions and substrates from which they are likely to have originated" (Rapp et al. 893).

A particularly informative example of double disassociation comes from two stroke victims, H.W. and S.J.D (Caramazza and Hillis). Whereas H.W. showed deficits in speaking but not in writing, S.J.D. showed deficits in writing but not in speaking. What's more, H.W. performed worse in naming verbs than nouns, while S.J.D. performed worse in writing verbs than nouns. They were both unimpaired at naming/writing nouns and verbs in their unaffected modality of communication. This paints a picture of grammatical knowledge being independently represented at the level of writing and speaking. As the authors of this study note: "This conclusion implies the seemingly counterintuitive possibility that semantic errors can arise from damage to processes at the level of phonological and orthographic output representations" (Caramazza and Hillis 789). In other words, grammatical class knowledge is redundantly represented in the brain in both speech and writing, further bolstering the claim for the autonomy of writing.

Teacher-Writers on the Autonomy of Writing

In my own research on the writing process I have spent time interviewing successful teacher-writers (i.e., published writers who teach writing). Three such teacher-writers include Peter Elbow, Patrick Bizzaro, and Deborah Brandt. One of my areas of research involves the unknowns associated with writing, the areas where our conscious resources seem unable to reach. Whereas aphasics demonstrate the autonomy of writing on a neurologically impaired scale, these teacher-writers demonstrate the autonomy of writing on a neurotypical scale (i.e., no evidence of brain damage). In fact, I argue these teacher-writers are neurologically advanced when it comes to writing and talking about writing, given that each of these scholars has several decades of writing and teaching experience.

Peter Elbow, who has perhaps done more to champion the use of free-writing in composition classrooms than anyone else, shares:

> The thought knows where it wants to go. I mean, I have to stand out of the way and let that thought, free write and let that thought go where it wants to go. Let it go where it wants to go. It'll go somewhere. It knows where it wants to go. It has the DNA seed in it. (Elbow)

This notion of letting the writing lead, of following the writing where it wants to go, coordinates with the experiences of aphasia subjects who can communicate through writing what they are unable to communicate in speech. Deborah Brandt echoes a similar perspective:

> When I'm writing that's almost a different experience because then I feel like something is guiding me. It's magic. Just as you discover something and then how you're going to render that. I'll get an idea, I'll get a title, but then you start to put it in language and that's when language I feel as a method—language is a method for me—that leads me on and generates more meaning, more understanding, more possibilities when I'm actually putting things into language. (Brandt)

Brandt speaks here to the mysterious aspects of writing, the idea that writing is magical in its ability to guide the writer toward new understandings. This idea is clarified in light of the aphasia research wherein writing is literally the only way some subjects can make sense of the world and, as in the case of Neil, formulate new memories.

Patrick Bizzaro speaks to how writing paradoxically becomes a means to know more than the writer knows:

> I think writing gives me understanding. But

> there's more. It gives me a kind of understanding that leads me away from myself and into other realms of knowing. In that sense, writing expands my identity. (Bizzaro)

These teacher-writers offer a clear thesis: there is much they are unable to verbalize about the writing process. Thus, even in neurotypical cases, there is evidence of the autonomy of writing—aspects of the writing process that are quite removed from our abilities to talk about it. This is, in fact, one of the greatest affordances of writing as noted by another teacher-writer, Donald Murray: "Writers must remain, to some degree, not only ignorant of what they are going to do but what they are doing" (80). Murray explores and explains this affordance of writing further:

> We have to appreciate the fact that writers much of the time don't know what they are going to write or even possibly what they have written. Writers use language as a tool of exploration to see beyond what they know. Most texts and most of our research literature have not accepted this concept or dealt with its implications. (Murray 76-77)

The way these teacher-writers speak to writing as a distinctive mode of thought, separate from conscious plodding and understanding, echoes the sentiments and experiences of the aphasia subjects. As researchers on aphasia posit: "In addition, the performance of neurologically intact individuals provides converging evidence" (Rapp et al. 893). The manner in which these teacher-writers speak to the nonconscious, magical, expansive, and ignorant moments of writing provides such converging evidence with research on aphasia. Writing becomes an embodied, autonomous mode of thought quite separate from our abilities to produce and understand language through speaking, listening, or reading.

Implications

If writing is indeed an autonomous faculty of mind, then what does this mean for the teaching of writing and for research on writing?

In relation to the teaching of writing I agree with James Strickland, who argues: "the only way to get better at writing is by writing" (59). Research on aphasia and interviews with teacher-writers demonstrate writing to be a more independent faculty of thought from speaking and reading than is typically considered. This autonomy of writing means that it is essential to provide students with time for thinking through writing. As Strickland notes, "One of the best ways to practice writing every day is by keeping a journal, sometimes called a writer's notebook. Journals are thinking tools and ways to relive memories and preserve thoughts" (59). The more we recognize the autonomous nature of writing, the more confidence we can have in the value and effectiveness of daily writing activities in our classrooms. Students should be maximizing their written output, especially in ways that position writing as a mode of thinking and learning. Writing teachers should also encourage students to value the unique affordances of writing. Unlike speech, writing provides a history that can be reviewed and edited, and, as a result, writing encourages a different kind of thinking in which what has been written serves to guide what will be written. The greater metacognitive awareness around writing, the greater our chances of taking advantage of the unique affordances of writing.

Within composition research, the autonomy-of-writing thesis posits that there are significant nonconscious properties associated with writing. To study the writing process holistically, we must identify research methods that can potentially capture these nonconscious properties. One possibility offered herein is to surface the attributes of nonconscious cognition by looking across interviews with writers to reveal common themes. The concept of incubation provides one such example. Incubation—productive time away from writing—is discussed by successful writers across numerous interviews. Incubation is a nonconscious process that is clearly part of a successful writer's toolkit and we know of incubation effects primarily via interviews with writers.

Another possibility is to look at medical case studies in which writing is affected. Integrating cases of aphasia into our growing understanding of the writing process offers a way to highlight the autonomy of writing and to differentiate writing from other communicative functions. Cases of aphasia can help pinpoint how the brain executes nonconscious creative processes associated with writing.

To get a richer, fuller picture of the writing process, we must also coordinate qualitative, self-referential data, such as interview and protocol analysis, with research methods that capture a more complete spectrum of the cognitive complexities within the writing process. Eye tracking, EEG, fMRI, and key-stroke logging are examples of methods that can measure data beyond what can be accounted for via verbal reflection. There is a scarcity of studies utilizing these novel ways of viewing writing. Several factors account for this gap in the literature from cost and access to a current "social turn" within writing studies that views cognitivist approaches skeptically (Anson and Schwegler 162). Ultimately, a pivot towards coordinating social and cognitive research methods and approaches will have to be made if we are to better understand the writing process and account for the autonomous nature of writing.

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Jason Wirtz

From Walls to Whiteboards to Webpages to Tutoring: The Writing Center as an Artistic, Student-Centered Campus Hub

Without question, writing centers are responsible for providing student-centered one-on-one tutoring sessions concerning content from disciplines across campus. We all agree on that, as does the scholarship on writing center best practices. Yet we are accountable for more than that. We should also encourage student writers to think about their writing improvement as practicing an art, to see our tutoring practices as an artistic endeavor, and to view our physical writing centers and related websites as places to perfect and display students' art. When we acknowledge that writing is an art, remarkably similar to visual or musical art in its repeated practice, revision, and focus on the instruction of a guide or a teacher, we can begin to think about it differently, as visible thinking.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, art is "the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power" ("art"). To define art, one needs to look at these various media and modalities and examine what they have in common. Leslie Elizabeth Kreiner states that art is a "human activity in which one, through the conscious use of skill and imagination, represents a particular action or experience with the intention of illuminating the universal quality of that action, producing delight through instruction" (7). She also notes the significance of "an invisible factor, an x-factor if you will, that incites emotions within us when we view great art [...]. This is the missing element in the definition, the undefinable, the element that will sustain arguments over the definition of art long after this essay has passed into dust" (Kreiner 11). Art incites emotion in its audience, produces delight and appreciation, and employs creative skill and imagination.

These descriptions of what constitutes art align directly with the purpose, process, and reception of writing. In "Creative Invention: Art of Research and Writing," Caroline Fuchs and Patricia Medved write that:

> Art, in its essence, is the exploration, expression, and application of creativity.

Patricia Pytleski

> It implies a unique conception of the world, tied to one's individual experience and perspective. It is an end product, but it is also a process. And that process can be messy. Art can take on many forms: painting, sculpture, dance, music, literature, theater. But art can also be seen as a craft, as in "the art of conversation." As such, we would like to expand the definition of art to include student research and writing. (102)

The writing we ask of our students encourages them to practice and improve with a process-based approach to expressing themselves and their experiences; to be creative; and to make something new that educates and inspires. Writing instruction is a step-by-step process of practice and revision taught by an instructor who encourages student writers to explore and express themselves, and its product is written art.

In Kutztown University's Writing Center, we foster art in its many forms, especially in our students' writing and in our tutoring practices. As the various visual, printed, painted, and sketched artworks adorning our UWC walls, whiteboards, and webpages attest, we train our tutor artisans to help student writers on their journeys while also acknowledging the best parts of students' work as these learners create written art.

There is also an art to successful tutoring sessions, a balance of student/tutor interaction, and the desired invested hope for a well-received creation. In "Portrait of the Tutor as an Artist: Lessons No One Can Teach," Steve Sherwood considers writing center tutors as artists, saying, "a tutor who performs as an artist would view each tutorial as a potentially unique event, a chance to experience instances of creativity, engage completely in the moment, and effect change in the writer and herself" (55). We may justifiably view tutoring as an art form, just as we see the compositions discussed within sessions as the result of deliberate craft.

The writing center also values other forms of art in addition to students' writing and tutoring; the walls, whiteboards, and webpages of our UWC are adorned with KU student art, including drawings, sketches, and paintings, all presented in gallery style; we hold poetry contests and share the winner's artistic work on our website, on our social media, and in the campus yearly literary collection; and we also sponsor an art contest to which students submit their best artistic recreations of a favorite book to be shared on our walls.

This multifaceted work of the UWC aligns itself with the teaching of an art; writing instruction in a writing center is taught more like the other arts than the writing taught in the classroom. In the UWC, we focus on writing practice and revision (as in musical and visual arts) and working one-on-one (as with most artistic instruction), approaches not always replicable in a classroom of twenty-plus students.

The work of Jackie Grutsch McKinney, in "Leaving Home Sweet Home: Towards Critical Readings of Writing Center Spaces," and Elizabeth Bouquet, in "Tutoring as (Hard) Labor: The Writing Clinic, The Writing Laboratory, the Writing Center," demonstrates the importance of establishing an environment and community within the UWC space. Francis Fennel's "Writing as Art" and David Burton's "Exhibiting Student Art" also examine the art of writing and the importance of displaying student work. By applying these ideas and strategies, our writing center became an inviting, student-centered hub of artistic expression at Kutztown University.

Little has been written about incorporating other means of artistic expressions into writing centers (excluding students' prose), yet much has been said about the connection between physical spaces and the work done within them. According to McKinney, "The physical centers we inhabit and the ways in which we discourse or narrate them" (20) matter. A writing center should be a place where students feel pride in their work and comfortable sharing their writing. The student-friendly room in which the center is housed should reflect the importance of the practice of writing and other means of expression. Incorporating student art on the walls and whiteboards, in the form of writing, paintings, pictures, and poems, creates a warm environment showing that student work and expression is valued. According to Bouquet, the location is the "physical identity for the center that welcome[s] students and comfort[s] them" (51). When designing writing centers, "Professionals in the field created friendly centers, or what they imagined were friendly centers, for conscious reasons; they did not want to be that other scary institutionalized lab for remedial students; they wanted students to feel welcome" (McKinney 24). In these friendly and welcoming spaces, writing centers work to help all students with writing from any discipline to value students' expression and to aid them in sharing it with their audiences. Visual art, especially that of its students, can only add to the warm, supportive environment of a university writing center and enhance the written art already created and revised within its walls.

Writing follows the instruction-and-practice model of various other arts, such as in the learning of a musical instrument. According to Fennell:

> We observe that the teaching of other arts is almost always based on two simple principles. The first of these is that learning is incremental. The student of piano begins with middle C, then moves on to the rest of the octave, the use of the left hand, sharps and flats. The mastery here is concurrent. He may begin with middle C, but in another sense, he always remains with it, because he continues to practice it and keep it as part of his skills. The second principle is that learning means repetition and revision. The student is conducted again and again through a few familiar pieces of music. [...] The same twofold process occurs in the other arts as well. Painting, poetry, sculpture, even such bodily arts as gymnastics or dance-each is acquired step by step, one skill complementing another, the technique constantly refined by practice. (177)

Thus, when we acknowledge that writing is an art, incredibly similar to visual or musical art in its repeated practice, revision, and focus on the instruction of a guide or a teacher, we can begin to think about it differently, namely, as visible thinking.

Many steps of the writing process fostered by the UWC help students to make their writing visible, from the brainstorming of abstract ideas and thoughts to the physical construction of sentences and paragraphs, thus helping students to create and visualize their ideas concretely. In "Making Thinking Visible: Writing in the Center," Mary B. Nicolini argues:

> Every day [...] students visit the writing center, where they use writing and technology to make their thinking visible [...]. Instead of just telling what they made, students demonstrated their thinking about thinking, which showed that many decisions had gone into their creative act [...]. Ultimately, we want to know why our

> students make the choices they do in the composing process, whether it be visual art, music or writing. (67-8)

By making students' thinking visible through their writing, we can also help them to see the artistry behind their words, analyze their writing choices, and potentially share their art.

When discussing art in its many forms, the final goal is to share it, whether in a class, publication, or conference; at a gallery opening; or in a concert. We are fortunate that this sharing occurs within our wonderful campus library. Rohrbach Library at Kutztown University fosters numerous art exhibits by artists and by KU students, faculty, and staff. Some examples include A Beautiful World by Robert Radin, which "features 89 portraits by photographer Robert Radin [. . .] document[ing] Radin's journey across the world" (Berry) and The Clothesline Project, "a visual display of violence statistics that often go ignored. Each shirt is made by a survivor of violence or by someone who has lost a loved one to violence. The color of each shirt represents a different type of violence" (The Clothesline Project). The Writing's Center display of art was inspired by the library's showcasing of photos, paintings, clothing, and other art.

The inclusion of art within a campus library and its writing center model the importance of displaying student and faculty work when creating an engaging and supportive environment for learning. According to Jennifer Benedetto Beal in "Student Art in the Library Juried Exhibition Program," "Relatively little recent literature exists discussing exhibitions of student art in academic libraries (56). All libraries and academic spaces should showcase work to their respective communities and to artists outside those communities, and, by doing so in our campus writing center, we remain a student-focused center nurturing the creativity of our students.

Displaying writing and art on our walls and webpages also reflects our mission at the Kutztown University Writing Center, which is dedicated to supporting scholarship, creativity, and composition on campus. Sharing student art in the form of paintings, drawings, essays, and poetry on our walls, whiteboards, and webpages demonstrates that we value all forms of artistic expression and want to share our pride in student creations of sketches, drawings, posters, and poems.

We share our pride in students' artistic endeavors by providing an in-person and online audience to appreciate it and make it visible to the public. According to David Burton in "Exhibiting Student Art," "Art is visual, but it must also be made visible. Exhibitions of art 'sell' the art program. People who enter a school where art is prominently displayed immediately understand that art and the art program are important there. [...] Exhibitions of student art convey a continuous message that the quality of ideas, the depth of issues, and the magnitude of expression are displayed along with and through art" (46). In sharing our students' artistry in its many forms, we demonstrate that art is important to our community, as are the student creators.

Some of the artistic expressions are more profound than others, but all of the visual displays show that we value our students. On the window of the UWC, we share comic avatars of all of our graduate and undergraduate tutors (Fig.1).

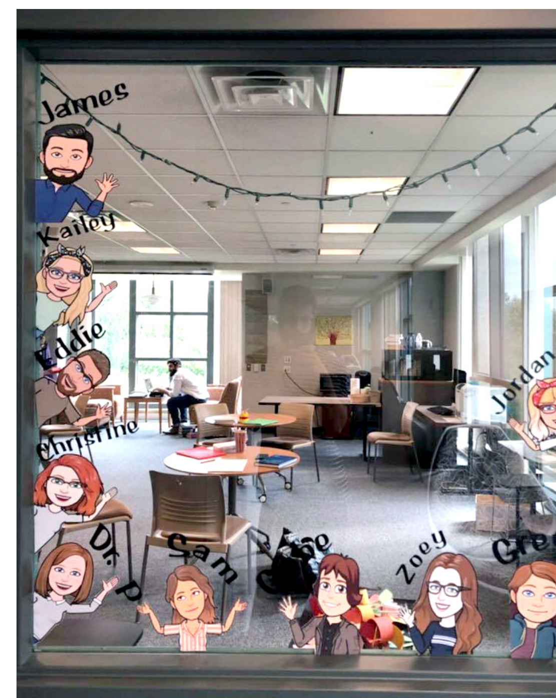

Fig. 1. Writing center tutors

These bitmojis represent the UWC community in a visual and welcoming way. Within the center, we share art from our own tutors and from art majors chosen by the Art Department, as evidenced in the picture of our former writing center location (Fig 2). When we were housed in our original writing center, various students showcased their work on our walls (from photographs to pastels and sketches).

Fig. 2. Former writing center space

Additionally, we share motivational or emotionally supportive art on our whiteboards; the following, drawn by a former graduate assistant tutor, Kathleen Dempsey, were updated regularly, and became a huge favorite and discussion piece among our tutors and student writers (Fig. 3a-d).

Patricia Pytleski

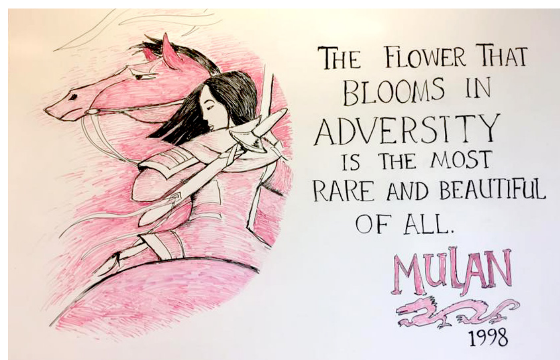

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

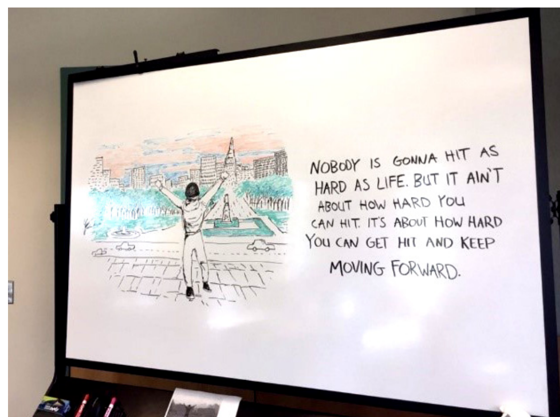

Fig. 3c

Fig. 3d. Dempsey images

Similar creative artistic pieces were also shared on our blackboards. In addition to the art on the walls and boards of the UWC and library (right outside our door), we also host contests and award student winners with publication on our website, in Kutztown University's literary magazine, *Shoofly*, and with gift cards. Our most recent contest asked students to recreate their favorite book jackets. Among the entries were creative book jackets for *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Anna and the French Kiss*, and *Alice in Wonderland*; valuing the creative expression of our students, we displayed these efforts on our walls. To the right is the contest flyer created by an undergraduate tutor, Zoey Adam (Fig. 4).

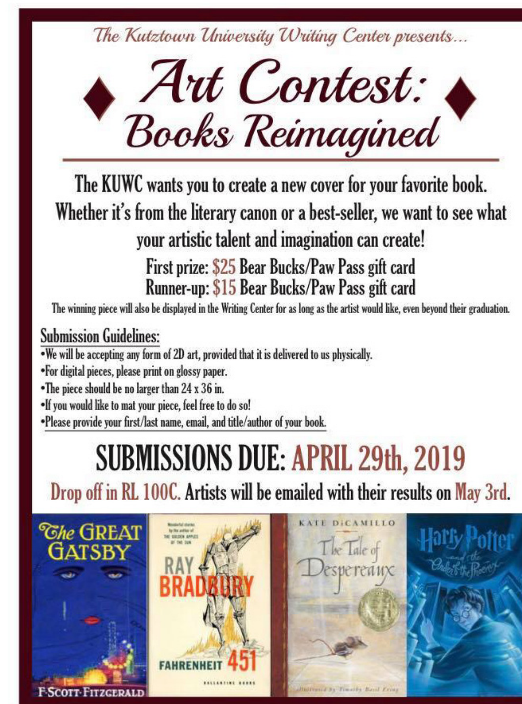

Fig. 4. Contest poster

Another contest we've held yearly to support the arts is a poetry contest to accompany October's National Day of Writing. Students across disciplines anonymously submit their poems, and winners are chosen by the tutors via a secret ballot. Student winners and their work of both contests are displayed in the center, published on the English Department's website as well as our own, on our Facebook page, and in *Shoofly*. Adding the online component helps to promulgate the winners' artwork and poems to an even greater population than those within the physical writing center. As David Burton observes:

> Exhibition is an important part of the artistic process for students as well as professional artists but finding enough good places to exhibit can be [...] difficult. Venues that are accessible, display art attractively, and provide adequate space for many artists are usually in short supply. [But t]he internet offers significant advantages for exhibiting student art; it literally has the potential to project students' art to the entire world. It is a forum that emphasizes the value of their ideas and reveals the beauty of their expression through its immediacy and accessibility. Unlike the space in traditional galleries that may restrict the amount of art that can be shown, a Web-based gallery is virtually limitless, affording many more students an opportunity to display their art. (47)

Whereas the space in the center is limited, online galleries can archive multiple years of UWC contest winners and artwork. Craig Roland points out that "art teachers have long used the recognition that comes from displaying students' work in public as a way to motivate students. [...] Knowing that people everywhere will see their work online inspires students to work hard at creating polished and professional looking presentations" (qtd. in Burton 212). By using the writing center itself and our online site, we have more space on which to share; consider that digital "art galleries greatly extend artworks' visibility to a worldwide scope, maximizing the constraints of any physical space. In addition, this contemporary gallery format also creates venues for critique and discussion that would not be possible otherwise" (Burton 50). Thankfully, we can expand our sharing of students' art beyond our walls onto our webpages.

In Kutztown University's Writing Center's future, I see years of student artwork in its many forms on

display, supporting and praising the artistic and creative work of our students. Currently, we are excitedly working on plans to have a student artist paint a mural of a floor-to-ceiling tree on our wall; eventually, the book jackets of famous texts will adorn its branches, demonstrating the interconnectivity of art and writing in a literal manner. Writing, as an art form, shares the features of all art: creating an emotional engagement or reaction in its audience, the instruction and practicing of a skill to be shared, and personal expression.

Through its display of physical and web-based student writing, paintings, poetry, sketches, and drawings, the Kutztown University Writing Center demonstrates that it values the creative and artistic expression of our students and praises the writing our students do as an art as well. We encourage student writers to practice perfecting this art as they would with a musical instrument or paintbrush. From our walls to our whiteboards to our webpages, the Kutztown University Writing Center represents an inviting, artistic, student-centered campus hub of which I am very proud. I encourage all writing centers to do the same and to visually showcase their pride in their students and their art.

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Book Reviews

Artemas & Ark: The Ridge and Valley Poems

By Jerry Wemple
Finishing Line Press. 2020. 84 pp. $29.99 (hardcover) $19.99 (paperback)

Anne Dyer Stuart

Jerry Wemple is the author of three full-length poetry collections, including *You Can See it from Here*, which was chosen by Yusef Komunyakaa as the winner of the Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Award, and two poetry chapbooks. He is also co-editor with Marjorie Maddox of *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania*, an anthology published by Penn State University Press. His poetry and creative nonfiction appear in numerous journals and anthologies and have been published internationally. Wemple teaches in the Creative Writing program at Bloomsburg University. Among his awards are a Fellowship in Literature from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Word Journal Chapbook Prize, and the Jack and Helen Evans Endowed Faculty Fellowship.

In both prose and poetry, Wemple has that magic combination of beautiful lyricism and compelling narrative. He knows how to tell a story. His lines are musical, his images interesting and precise, and the narrative unfolds in all of its complexity and surprise. His new book, *Artemas & Ark: The Ridge and Valley Poems*, showcases his gifts of both language and story beautifully. Earlier this year he was interviewed by Ericka Funke for her show *ArtScene* on WVIA and she highlighted the allusions to Greek mythology in his new collection. "Yes," she said, "we are in the Susquehanna River valley, but we're in mythical space as well."

The poet Julia Spicher Kasdorf also highlights the blending of myth and realism in her blurb on the back of *Artemas & Ark*. She writes, "Sentence by sentence, Wemple's eloquent couplets reveal a multigenerational tale of memory, paternity, and faith, through the eyes of outsiders whose lives are anything but simple. *Artemas & Ark* transforms a 'plain place' into a mythic location with poems that will haunt readers long after they lay down the book." In Wemple's press release for the book, she describes the work as "gothic landscape writing."

I had the good fortune of sitting down with Wemple over Zoom to discuss his haunting new collection, and two themes he explores in all of his writing are issues of memory and identity. The origin of his new collection stemmed from an obituary he read in his hometown paper, a story about a man he remembered from his childhood:

> It was clear that he had some kind of mental health issue, whether it was from a brain injury or something, but it was clear that he had a problem,

1 ArtScene with Erika Funke, 1 Feb. 2021. https://www.wvia.org/radio/artscene/.

> and kids would do stupid things like kids do, yell out the window and get him all agitated. But when I read that obituary that day I was like, there was this whole story about how he had relatives and how he never liked that nickname that people called him and his real name was X. He had this whole story that people just don't even know about, that we didn't even care about when we were kids. And so, I started thinking about him and thinking about other people like him to some degree in the community. And almost like an apology I started writing that book. But at the same time, I didn't want to make it this person's story because that's not my story, and I don't know his character fully, so I just had to kind of create this different character who suffers a loss and goes through various things.

The book is structured in two parts: one focuses on Artemas's story, and the second section explores Ark, whom we discover is Artemas's son. Wemple has structured this narrative to capture wonderful, earned surprises throughout, which add tension to the story and engage the reader on a deeper level. The language is also full of surprises. All of the lines are ten syllables, not iambic pentameter, but a strict ten syllables, which have the effect of mimicking Artemas's walks about town. From the opening we meet him roaming: "Happy as the day is long, Artemas/begins his stroll each a.m., *a'nine 'xact,"* and the italicized language captures his voice much like free indirect discourse in a novel ("Happy as the day," p. 5). Wemple's lens here is huge: we have the aerial view of the town, and Artemas's journeys within in it. We slip inside his head, and we view the townspeople's interactions with him. Artemas is an outcast, gaining our sympathy but not our pity, because Artemas has strength and joy within him, a spirit rollicking through Wemple's rhythmic lines. Artemas has brio.

Yet, it does surprise us when we find out that he has married Daisy, a schoolteacher. The way Wemple structures his story is almost dreamlike, which captures how Artemas experiences the world. Up until we learn about Daisy, we've seen Artemas live on the fringes of the community and practically sing for his supper by picking up odd jobs around town. Though the poem "Artemas goes to school" tells us the teacher, Daisy, whose classroom he has disrupted by tapping on the window and trying to hand her a daisy he just plucked, is his new wife, we think this relationship is merely a figment of his imagination. Why? Because Artemas is an outsider and we have viewed him through the lens of the townspeople, which is not fair. *"Spring has come,"* he says, and beckons the rain, because he's in love and impervious to it. We haven't been listening to him! He's actually married and in love! But, Wemple is an incredible storyteller, and when we turn the page the title of the next poem shocks us, "Artemas kills his woman." Now we have to piece together the story. What has happened and what happens now?

When we talked about the surprises in his book, Wemple compared them to real life:

> I mean, in real life there's a lot of surprises, and I think I wanted to sort of do that through these folks. We can't predict what's down the road. I mean, look at us now, all of us are talking on Zoom. We can't even be in the same room.

In addition to surprise is the intriguing non-linear arrangement of the poems, which is something I also asked Wemple about. How did he decide upon the arrangement of the book?

> I had to jump around a bit, because I think that's the way memory works. Or at least the way my brain works. It's not linear—you remember this part and then you remember this part, and then you jump back to that part, and then you see how it connects to this part way up here. So, that's what I wanted to do. I mean, it's not like I wanted the readers to work hard, but I wanted them to figure out little connections here and there and go, oh yeah, now I see what's going on.

That participation from the reader is truly one of the treats of reading this book, because those connections continue into Book II. It's the kind of book you sit with after you've read it, playing it back like a movie in your mind, anticipating the new experience you'll have once you pick it back up again.

In Book II we discover that Daisy, unbeknownst to Artemas, has survived the car accident he thought had killed her, and she's been left by her lover, a priest, carrying Artemas's child, Ark. Daisy's story is off the page and she's another intriguing character—a schoolteacher at one point, and now, barely getting up in the morning, resentful of and completely neglecting her child. We only know as much about Daisy as Ark does, which keeps her mysterious. Throughout the book, characterization is so precise you know these people though you may know little about them. Wemple's voice is warm and matter-of-fact, yet the musicality of his lines contrasts compellingly with Ark's bleak homelife:

> After school, the return trip home and sometimes
> there deposited on the couch in front of
> a blurred television his mother
> like a monument to a forgotten
> whatever. Sometimes she would cook supper and
> sometimes not. And sometimes the old neighbor
> woman would stop by to say *mind if I*
> *borra ya boy for a while* and then sit
> him at her kitchen table and stuff him full
> on potatoes and greasy hamburger
> and sometimes apple pie that was not too bad.
> (II: "A Flower Rests." 35.)

There are wonderful parallels to Artemas and Ark, who both wander about town, are taken care of by the community, though mostly ignored, and love but are abandoned by Daisy, left to figure out how to make their own ways in the world. Yet they do interact, and Artemas even gives Ark a token from the old toll bridge, which plays a wonderful role throughout both sections. But neither has full access to the other's origins, which leaves them both, ultimately, alone.

When Ark finds out in an oblique way his true connection to Artemas, it's appropriately unspoken though understood. His story stays silent within him, a secret source of his strength. This strength is part of his inheritance from his father, which also consists of a wad of bills Artemas had saved for his son, enough cash for Ark to finally buy the motorcycle he has coveted for years. It is part of the ethos in the community to keep silent, so when the owner of the motorcycle wonders to himself about the origin of Ark's sudden cash, he doesn't say anything because "[h]e had learned/that most times it's best that a person's/business is his business" (II: "Triumph." 45).

Another aspect of Ark's identity that is unspoken though understood is his race, an issue that has complicated both his father's and his own outsider status from the start. When Ark falls in love with a schoolfriend he's known nearly all of his life, her father slaps her and kicks her out.

> Though he did not know him, just knew of him,

> The girl's father hated Ark, hated all
>
> like him. The man reckoned he'd worked
> hard enough to make his distance between
>
> them and him, his family. When he found
> out—and there is always a founding out—
>
> he waited for the girl to come home from school,
> cornered her in the entryway, slapped
>
> her powerful hard across the mouth. By
> instinct, the mother too slight recoiled,
>
> but did not enter the mix....
> (II: "Though he did not know." 49)

Lilith moves out of her house into an apartment, and she and Ark continue to see each other, but miles outside of town, "sneaking as/though they were the ones who needed to feel/shame" (II: "I Would Rather Go Blind." 51).

Yet, just like Daisy betrays Artemas, Lilith eventually betrays Ark, and the reader's heart continues to break. Near the end of the book, the full story of Artemas is told to Ark, in a poem aptly titled "Purgatory," because it doesn't free Ark from anything, really, or if it does, it's temporary. A bartender, who is a stand-in for the town's unspoken knowledge, delivers this story. It is the voice of the town, too, that tells us about the end of Ark's story, which, in the telling, is instantly becoming yore.

In addition to issues of identity and memory, there is always the question of who gets to tell the story, and once told, whose story it is. It is Artemas's story, it is Ark's story, and it is the town's story, but as with all storytelling, it is only a version of the truth, one shaped by telling itself. *Artemas & Ark* captures this complexity so beautifully that you may need to sit in silence after you've turned the last page.

Anne Dyer Stuart

The History of a Voice

By Jessica Jopp
Headmistress Press. 2021. 106 pp. $15 (paperback)

The History of a Voice, a book-length poem by Jessica Jopp, is a mesmerizing meditation on love and loss. The first section, "My Mother and I in a Field," opens with a memory of mother and daughter parking their car on the side of the road to walk and then lounge in a field "in the dry weeds and the heat," then moves back into an earlier memory of the speaker with her mother at age five (I. i. 2). Now we stand "in the sun-washed kitchen" in the middle of a conversation between mother and daughter, which deftly arrives at its subject matter, death, aslant:

> "We won't hear anything?" "No," she said.
>
> "Nobody will see?" I closed my eyes.
> "And we won't smell a thing?" (I. i. 2)

The book respects the reader to such a degree that knowledge accumulates as one continues reading. Sometimes one poem's situation will pick back up in a subsequent poem in a later section, characters will reappear, and each time we get more access to what has happened and what *happens,* for the speaker seems to almost live in the liminal space between the dead and the living. This liminal space is shared by all of us, as we discover in the book's opening section, which introduces the speaker's friend, who has recently died:

> As if we came, all voices musical, and all at ease,
> knowing our transit and our brightness
> beyond uncertainties, from one center moving
>
> toward another. Knowing
> we'd be dazzled by a world,
> and this one. (I. iii. 5)

"[D]azzled by a world" could serve as an alternative title for this book, as it captures so beautifully nature's magic and the speaker's sense of wonder, which never diminishes in spite of all that she has lost. Underneath her enthrallment is the understanding that we can never fully *know* the world or each other and in some sense that feeds into and perpetuates our state of wonder. People are frequently linked with the natural world:

> As if we came like fish
> through oceans of space,
> past clouds as tall as ships
>
> leaning angular and orange,
> past galaxies scattered like columbine,
> hung for our passing. (I. ii. 4)

In the second section, "My Father's Stone," we learn

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that the father was a painter, yet it is Jopp's descriptions which do artistic work, paint on the page with texture, depth, color, and line, capture what the light captures and what it does not. In the opening poem from that section, the speaker looks so closely at the world around her that the street appears as if it is underwater:

> the pink last rays heal together shadows
>
> and make the whole street slow, underwater.
> But underwater near the surface, where sun splinters
> into fluid, and all weeds, all orange-spotted fish,
>
> move as part of one large water body" (II. i. 9).

This attention to the light continues throughout the book. For example, in the fourth section, "What the Moon Is," the speaker is again with her father and notices "[a]s we talk, brick storefronts glow/salmon in the eight o'clock August sun" (IV. iii. 21). And here is the speaker in a childhood memory with the friend who has died: "That was when it began, as if/with our bare legs grounded in the water like stems,/a June breeze moving between us fused/heat with the light in our honeycombed cells" (IV. iv. 22).

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In this book, love, though unspoken ("I knew nothing then of the silent/ways we love…"), blooms between the speaker and her sisters, her mother, her father, her friend, and her lover, and stays blossoming even after death, a force comforting the speaker in the liminal space between the world of the living and the world of the dead (V. ii. 25). Nature, too, is just as important as the people in the speaker's life, and her connection with nature is intrinsic to her connection to her mother, who is frequently working with plants and brush throughout the book. At one point the mother is recovering from an operation or lengthy illness and when she can finally go outside with her daughter, magic returns to the world again for both of them:

> Her dusky towers of lavender guard jagged basil
> and globes of chive rest in dark October soil.
> The cold-slow roots of cherry trees
>
> startled again by March will stir
> each branch to hang red planets by July.
> From ragged alfalfa waves across the road
>
> white birds snap up like a new-world sail.
> We hold our breath a moment watching them,
> forget we came outside to get the mail. (VII. v. 42)

There is that sense of wonder, captured by the dazzlement of nature, an experience heightened by sharing it with another, both ultimately unknowable, but loved just the same.

The History of a Voice is lush, musical, heartbreaking, and enchanting. You will be enraptured by Jopp's voice and upon reaching the end of the book, turn furiously back to the beginning to stay inside her world.

Impost