"I could continue indefinitely": Of Friezes, Romans, and the Pleasures of Parody

Making one's way through the mountain of secondary criticism on F. Scott Fitzgerald's corpus, his "story" of 1920, "Porcelain and Pink," is nearly impossible to locate. One of the earliest critical references to it is in Ruth Prigozy's 1969 dissertation, *The Stories and Essays of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Study*, where she notes that—like a good deal of Fitzgerald's other early work—it shows a "lamentable" tendency of the novelist to engage in "frequent attempt[s] at archness, cuteness, smartness, a self-consciously literary predilection which becomes less apparent in the later works" (Prigozy 229). Matthew J. Bruccoli's well-known biography of Fitzgerald—*An Epic Sort of Grandeur*—mentions it on six different pages, but does not engage it in any critical or analytical way (Bruccoli). Alice Petry Hall's quite groundbreaking study of many of these early stories—*Fitzgerald's Craft of Short Fiction: The Collected Stories, 1920-1935*—notes its existence, but does not read it, being content to discuss it in terms of the contemporary responses it received when it originally appeared in *The Smart Set* (Petry 60–62). John Kuehl's *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Study of the Short Fiction*, published a couple of years after Petry's volume, continues the trend of neglect, not even registering its existence at all (Kuehl, *F. Scott Fitzgerald*). Even after the appearance of Jackson R. Bryer's *New Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Neglected Stories* in 1996, the story was still overlooked; no essay reads it and the piece is not even listed in the index. The same is to be said of *F. Scott Fitzgerald: New Perspectives* (Bryer et al.). Mangum's 2001 solo essay in *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald* continues the pattern—it refers to the story by name, but, again, does not subject it to critical scrutiny; the story then seems to return back into obscurity yet again in 2013 as the collection of articles—*F. Scott Fitzgerald in Context*—a very rich set of essays, to be sure—has no one reading it (Mangum, *F. Scott Fitzgerald in Context*). Pushing forward even more towards

the present moment, *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* seems to not yet have any treatment of this story recorded in its archive.[1] It strikes us that an argument needs to be made that such neglect is far from warranted—and many of the earlier scholarly conclusions (what little there are) that the story can be easily read off as merely an example of a "potboiler" or just "gimmicky" manages to hide a great deal of this story's untapped richness.[2] Mangum, we think, was very much on the right track back in 2001; if he is correct to write there (and we think he is) that many of these early stories Fitzgerald placed with *The Saturday Evening Post*—"Bernice Bobs Her Hair," "The Offshore Pirate," and "Head and Shoulders"—are indeed "ingenious flapper stories, and at least the first is worthy of the serious critical scrutiny it has, in fact, begun to receive …", then the same should be said of "Porcelain and Pink" ("The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald" 65). In fact, Mangum's essay provides a wonderful clarion call for precisely the kind of reading we would like to provide here. He says that in 2001 many of these "stories have entered the era of post-structuralist analysis and gender studies, revealing further evidence of their timeless value in documenting the degree to which they address, sometimes with surprisingly post-modernist vision, enduring aspects of the human condition" ("The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald" 60). Keeping these advances in mind, Mangum lays out some further ideas for thinking about the early works:

> Any examination of Fitzgerald's short story canon must, of course, take into account those issues referred to above, many of them prompted as they have been by careful analysis undertaken in light of late twentieth-century critical theory; it must acknowledge the richness of Fitzgerald's very best

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[1] Sarah Churchwell's "'The Scandal Detectives': *Town Topics* and F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1916-23," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*, Volume 18 (2020): 1-47 lists the story's title, but only to note that it was one of a couple other stories accepted by *The Smart Set* in 1920 (3). Sharon Hamilton's "Mencken and Nathan's *Smart Set* and the Story behind Fitzgerald's Early Success," also in the *Review*, devotes some space to it, but only to summarize it (27–29).

[2] These adjectives were the ones Mangum says—on pages 58 and 65—often accompanied many contemporary responses to these early pieces (of which "Porcelain and Pink" is very much included).

> stories; it must search for undiscovered strengths in the neglected stories; it must find connections in those stories not ordinarily connected in an effort to examine tropes that wind through the body of Fitzgerald's fiction, short and long; and it must examine the degree to which Fitzgerald's short fiction, often through subtext, both deconstructs post-World War I values and also speaks to issues that transcend the modern. ("The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald" 60)

We would like to try our hand at making good on a couple of these suggestions (at least the first two): we want to provide a "careful analysis" of the story using a small group of twentieth-century philosophers that, as far as we can tell, have yet to be brought into conversation with Fitzgerald's *oeuvre* (Pierre Klossowski, Michel Foucault, Maurice Blanchot, and Gilles Deleuze); we also hope to showcase some of the "undiscovered strengths" in this perhaps most-neglected of "neglected stories." If this short story—Petry claims "Porcelain and Pink," along with the contemporaneous "Mr. Icky," "are not stories at all, but rather short plays" (Petry 3)—is to be rescued from Margaret Culkin Banning's 1922 verdict that it was little more than a "bathroom stupidity," it will need to be read in a way that takes seriously the philosophical and literary concerns of the text. We hope to do just that (Banning 148).

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Given the dearth of secondary criticism on this story, a rather quick summary is perhaps in order—not a very tall order since the entirety of the script takes up a mere nine-pages, in two columns, when it appeared in the January edition of *The Smart Set* ("Porcelain and Pink" 77–85). The one-act play concerns three characters within "[a] room in the down-stairs of a summer cottage" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903): a pair of sisters (Julie and Lois Marvis) and Lois's beau, Mr. Calkins (described in the stage directions as "The Young Man"). Lois is scheduled to go on date with the young Calkins, but her sister is in the tub and not at all interested in bathing quickly. After we see quite a bit of sibling back-and-forth between Julie and Lois in the bathroom, Mr. Calkins comes, not to the door of the cottage, but, instead, ascends to a window towards the ceiling of the room (it is not quite clear *how* Calkins gets to such a height). Calkins is

unable—due to the architectural layout—to see the bathtub and therefore cannot even see what kind of room he is peering into; he can, however, hear the room's occupant. Calkins, thinking that he is speaking to Lois, has a conversation with Julie, who "poses" as her sister. Lois, of course, towards the end of the drama, comes in and discovers this, and proceeds to faint. Just as Julie is about to raise herself up out of the tub, the curtain falls and the "story" is complete.

As previously noted, in terms of critical treatments of this piece, we have very few giants upon whose shoulders we can stand here, but we will start with what we have at our disposal. Petry's already cited remark that "Porcelain and Pink" cannot really be called "a story" at all does strike us as somewhat correct (hopefully by the end of our intervention here we will make clear how we need to tweak her description). The work has the appearance of a play—the title page of Volume 61, No. 1 (January 1920) of *The Smart Set* lists it as a "(one-act play)" and its first page says the same—furthermore, stage directions are the first thing we see, in italics, on page 77. Those initial stage directions do set the stage, but things are set in a highly peculiar manner: "High around the wall runs an art friese of a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean, a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean—and so on. In one place on the frieze there is an overlap—here we have half a fisherman with half a pile of nets at his foot, crowded damply against half a ship on half a crimson ocean" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 77). Perhaps quite fitting for a magazine with a subtitle of "A Magazine of Cleverness," the opening here strikes one immediately as admittedly quite clever: we start with a *mise-en-scène* that could be read as a *mise-en-abyme*. It is not exactly clear if what we looking at is patterned wallpaper (the fact that there is a part of it that has an "overlapping" that cuts the scene in half makes this conclusion plausible) or if the frieze (often associated by many of us to suggest some kind of aesthetic ornamentation done "by hand" in a

way that the mass-produced nature of wallpaper might cut against) is perhaps made not of paper but of ceramic tiling. If it is wallpaper, then one might be less confident in saying that we are dealing with a *mise-en-abyme*. Regardless, it seems to us that there is a very generous ambiguity here—the wallpaper reading leads one to think it's unlikely that we are looking at something akin to some kind of surrealist painting where one image is placed, nested, within a larger one that could potentially go on to infinity; if it is tiling we are seeing, then this language of "nesting" might not be so appropriate. Either way one tries to resolve this indeterminacy, what is most significant for us here is the fact that in both cases we are dealing with a thing that is shot through with ideas of repetition, doubling, duplicating, and so on.

After these directions where we are informed about what wraps around the walls of the room, we are told the following: "The frieze is not in the plot, but frankly it fascinates me. I could continue indefinitely, but I am distracted by one of the two objects in the room—a blue porcelain bath-tub" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 77). Once more again—still within the stage directions—we notice another rich little ambiguity in the word "plot," here—friezes often possess incredibly strong narrative elements (perhaps in a way that wallpaper usually does not)—the fisherman, presumably, and his work at sea is not in the "plot" of the rest of the play, but if the frieze is one without narrative elements, one could read the line as pointing up yet another oddity: a part of the frieze that's not a part of the plot of the frieze itself. These ambiguities continue to proliferate as we now have a set of "stage directions" that are themselves given to us by a narrator—we have a "me" and an "I" who becomes "distracted" from the frieze and onto a couple of objects within the room that the frieze surrounds (we will return in due time to this "I" and "me" and other intriguing pronouns in "Porcelain").

This first object is granted a great deal of vivacity as the "narrator" notes that "[i]t has character, this bath-tub. It is not one of the new racing bodies, but is small with a huge tonneau and looks as if it were going to jump …" ("Porcelain and Pink" 77). The speaker personifies this object further, noting that it is "discouraged, however, by the shortness of its legs" and "has submitted to its environment and to its coat of sky-blue paint. But it grumpily refuses to allow any patron completely to stretch his legs …" ("Porcelain and Pink" 77) The narrative voice then moves on to the next object of fascination: "It is a girl—clearly an appendage to the bath-tub, only her head and throat—beautiful girls have throats instead of necks—and a suggestion of shoulder appearing above the side" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903). Once we have the two objects in the scene now—although the word "appendage" could also make the reader curious—we have one more rather scintillating little detail: "For the first ten minutes of the play the audience is engrossed in wondering if she really is playing the game fairly and hasn't any clothes on or whether it is being cheated and she is dressed" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903).

This girl is the aforementioned "Julie," a character the narrator goes on to supply with novelistic detail: "When she smiles, her upper lip rolls a little and reminds you of an Easter Bunny. She is within whispering distance of twenty years old" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 903). Having given us the scene, the objects in the room, and a number of key characteristic details of those two objects, the narration demonstrates yet another moment of apparent distractedness. Immediately following our acquisition of Julie's age, we get, almost as a kind of strange afterthought: "One thing more—above and to the right of the bath-tub is a window. It is narrow and has a wide sill; it lets in much sunshine, but effectively prevents any one who looks in from seeing the bath-tub. You begin to suspect the plot?" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 903). One would be quite right to notice the repeated use of the word "plot" here—and it would

be justifiable to wonder if this second "plot" (does it refer to the same "plot" when this is used earlier or a different one?) is also, like the "frieze," somehow not "in the plot?" We would like to avoid the possibility of being called "overly dense" here—naked (or maybe not?) girl in a bathtub, what's so hard to grasp?

At a first glance, things seem clear enough, one supposes, but there is already a great deal here that needs unpacking. If the fisherman frieze (or wallpaper) places us in a somewhat ambiguous position, the insertion of a narrative voice (an "I" that addresses quite directly a "you") strikes us as worthy of note. Even the direct address to a "you" is knotty: does this "you" refer to the "audience [that] is engrossed in wondering" if Julie is naked or not or does it refer to us, the readers, who can pass our eyes across the italicized font of all these "stage directions"? Given that we so often assume the drama to be a genre that is "non-narrative" by nature, conventional readers might be expected to perk up their ears when first reading this opening of "Porcelain and Pink." If we take up the argument put forward by Brian Richardson a number of years ago—in his "Point of View in Drama: Diegetic Monologue, Unreliable Narrators, and the Author's Voice on Stage"—that it is indeed possible to talk about something like "point of view" in the drama, we perhaps need not find the presence of this "I" and "you" here as strange as it might be on a first examination (193).[3] However, even if one tries to reduce the opening's peculiarity by citing the historical precedent of narrative perspective in the lifespan of the stage, such an argument would seem to only partially lessen the oddity. The appearance of this "I" has

[3] Richardson's essay does a wonderful job of showing the long history of narrative components within the drama, reaching all the way back through the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson to those of Aristophanes and Euripides; he notes the presence of these elements in the drama of Ibsen and Strindberg and follows their use through to Brecht, Beckett, O'Neill, Pinter, and others. We would submit that Fitzgerald's little "playlet" could itself fit quite snugly into Richardson's genealogies (193).

the effect of quite effortlessly fashioning a kind of nesting structure[4] such that we have, at the very least, a stage set with a bathtub and a girl, both seen by the "audience," and another narrative level where we as readers can possibly "see" all of the nested levels (at a couple of points in the play the narrator does indeed "register the reaction" of the audience members to the "plot" transpiring on stage—which is another component we will return to later on in this essay).

It does seem necessary for one to try to get all of these different narrative frame elements on a proper footing, at least for the moment. Are these levels properly "nested" within one another like, say, the way in which the rather well-known "infinite mirrors" scene in Christopher Nolan's *Inception* manages to create a never-ending series of Dom Cobbs and Ariadnes or are the levels not quite "nested," but, instead, merely "repeated" in the same way that our "wallpaper" parsing of the fisherman in the frieze is (possibly) just the same thing iterated over again and again without any "nesting" required? Or is the nesting perhaps not at all "infinite," but something more like Magritte's 1937 *Not To Be Reproduced* where the man in the figure views the back of his own head in a mirror—or is it another painting?—directly in front of him? If one continues through the playlet, one might wish to slide to one of these readings rather than another—but it would still be the case that the piece seems to enjoy piling one ambiguity on top of another, seemingly ad infinitum. The last stage direction before any dialogue occurs notes that "[w]e open, conventionally enough, with a song, but, as the startled gasp of the audience quite drowns out the first half, we will give only the last half of it …" and what follows is Julie, singing, a perhaps all-too-typical "Jazz Age" ditty:

> When Caesar did the Chicago
> He was a graceful child,

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[4] See Figure 1 of Richardson's essay for a helpful diagram of the potential nesting structure created by the presence of narrative voices in the drama (210).

> Those sacred chickens
> Just raised the dickens
> The Vestal Virgins went wild.
> Whenever the Nervii got nervy
> He gave them an awful razz
> They shook in their shoes
> With the Consular blues
> The Imperial Roman Jazz (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 904)

One could easily argue that these details lend further support for claiming that Fitzgerald would seem to be quite intentionally pulling our attention to this "nesting structure" we mentioned earlier. We begin the play in conventional fashion, but are quickly interrupted by the inclusion of the audience's "gasp" (no doubt elicited by the suspense created by the question of Julie's potential nakedness), which "drowns out the first half" of the song, leaving us with the dangling end of Caesar doing the Chicago. This inclusion of the audience continues on after her song, where we once again get a somewhat lengthy description of Julie in the tub:

> *During the wild applause that follows* JULIE *modestly moves her arms and makes waves on the surface of the water—at least we suppose she does. Then the door on the left opens and* LOIS MARVIS *enters, dressed but carrying garments and towels.* LOIS *is a year older than* JULIE *and is nearly her double in face and voice, but in her clothes and expression are the marks of the conservative. Yes, you've guessed it. Mistaken identity is the old, rusty pivot upon which the plot turns.* (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 904)

In addition to the maintenance of audience (and reader) tension regarding Julie's nakedness and her (supposedly) "mak[ing] waves on the surface of the water," we also have the continuance of certain formal elements here: perhaps most significant here—in addition to the use of that word, "plot," yet again—is the great similarity between Julie and Lois: they are "nearly" doubles of each other "in face and voice" ("Porcelain and Pink" 904). The narrator's remark to the "you" would seem to continue this indeterminacy of address: is it the audience that clearly "guesses the plot" (good casting could obviously help us here, we suppose) or is it we the readers, who are perhaps more or less aware of this comedic trope of twins and mistaken identity in the drama—either in Plautus's *Menaechmi* or Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* or (slight anachronism) the

well-known "mirror scene" in *Duck Soup*?[5] Of course, we have already registered the theme of repetition and doubling within the frieze contained in the setting itself. This aspect of doubling is also present in the actual "dialogue" of the play too: there is a moment when Julie, in conversation with her sister, speaks of herself in the third person in her dialogue with her sister: "Oh, Godliness, do you remember a day in the chill of last January when one Julie (famous for her Easter-rabbit smile) …" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 905) and one can even notice a little further on—while discussing Lois's future date with Mr. Calkins—that Julie uses and echoes this word "plot" herself:

> LOIS: Oh, for Heaven's sake, yes! I have a date here at the house—in a way.
> JULIE: In a way?
> LOIS: He isn't coming in. He's calling for me and we're walking.
> JULIE: (*Raising her eyebrows*) Oh, the plot clears. It's that literary Mr. Calkins. I thought you promised mother you wouldn't invite him in. (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 905)

Clearly, Fitzgerald does not utilize these techniques simply to render the "outside" of the play within its "inside" through the presence of formal elements alone. Julie's singing provides an opportunity for us to read this early work as quite legibly displaying certain concerns that could easily be traced all throughout his corpus, the strongest being this obsession with "theater" and "theatricality" as such.[6] Julie Marvis is very much a "performer" in every sense of the word: the play opens with her song and when Lois enters the room to interrupt the song, Julie says she was simply in the middle of "giving a little concert" and loses no time mentioning to her sister how wonderful the acoustics are in the bathroom: "Can I render you a selection," Julie queries (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 904). Taking all of these details into account, there is little

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[5] Fittingly, this whole scene is no doubt strongly preceded by a very similar routine in Max Linder's 1921 film, *Seven Years Bad Luck*, where one character apes and mimes the other while shaving—for more on this see Gerald Mast's survey (38).

[6] One of the best and fullest treatments of this is in John T. Irwin's *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction: "An Almost Theatrical Innocence."*

doubt that this one-act play from 1920 will give many of us today an all-too-"meta" feeling: the odd frieze, the nesting of the audience within our experience as readers, the resonances and echoes of stage direction language within a character's dialogue, and much more, might get one thinking that it hardly seems correct to speak of this thing as a mere "bathroom stupidity." There is a self-reflexivity and self-awareness in the thing itself that does seem to elicit our attending to it more deeply and critically than has been the case so far in the scholarly record. Admittedly, one might still want to subscribe to the way Prigozy describes this piece; it does perhaps seem to be aptly described as an "attempt at archness, cuteness, smartness, a self-consciously literary predilection …" (Prigozy 229). But rather than utilize these qualities to dismiss it outright, we think one should read it—and read it in a way that might lend further credence to Petry's wonderful insight about another contemporaneous little "playlet" of Fitzgerald's, "Mr. Icky," which she says "anticipates the theater of the absurd, and in particular Ionesco …" (Petry 55–56).[7]

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We should note here at this point that Prigozy does not explicitly enumerate exactly what we are to see as the author's "attempt[s] at archness, cuteness, smartness …," etc. It is possible that many of these strange "meta-fictional" elements are precisely what Prigozy had in mind. Moreover, we can easily imagine our readers saying that it is completely warranted to claim that all of these metadramatic elements make it quite easy to suggest that this "playlet" is really not at all about a scintillatingly seductive and crude depiction of a naked girl in a bathtub. Questions

[7] We think that this early piece can be put into fine dialogue with Linda Patterson Miller's treatment of Fitzgerald's relation to certain "Avant-garde" movements of the early twentieth century. Many of the "cubist techniques" of narrative that she highlights in Gatsby also seem to have some facet of their origin here in the early fiction (201).

about perspective, vision, and much more are all no doubt on display here—but what seems most necessary about our close attention to this thing's form is that it makes things easy for us to incorporate Mr. Calkins and the whole courtship thread running throughout this one-act piece. Most of the last third of this story concerns Julie's impersonation of Lois while she engages in conversation with the latter's boyfriend as he stands at the window—artfully placed, as already noted, such that Julie (mistaken for Lois) is, as the young man says, "merely a voice": "I'm rather glad I can't see you," he quips (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 909). Mr. Calkins not only loves being able only to attend to "Lois's" voice, he also draws our attention to the beautiful way it "echoes" in this acoustically pristine room (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 910). Although it seems perfectly understandable to read much of this piece as veering towards the gimmicky, what we find here, instead, is actually a quite rich tapestry of intertextual allusions and echoes of a distinctly "Roman" cast—and this is not simply due to Caesar's appearance in Julie's lyrics, the theme of the sister-doubles, and so forth.[8] We think that Julie's penchant for Roman song material—along with another tossed-off remark to her sister that she really does think that she "ought to have been a pagan" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 907)—already gives one enough hints to try seeing if there are other resonances to find. Moreover, it hardly seems contentious to say that there are threads here that come down to us not simply from Rome in general, but also from Ovid in particular: all of the references to voices and echoing will easily call to mind the story of Narcissus and Echo in the Third Book of the *Metamorphoses*—and the fact that the main suspense of the story surrounds a naked woman in a bathtub also seems to

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[8] If one wants further substantiation for this, "Porcelain" seems to leave us rather spoiled for choice. One could also submit the fact that the name "Julie Marvis" itself gives us even further Roman/Latin resonances: possibly named after Julius Caesar, the fact that her last name is also a combination of the Latin words "maris," meaning "sea" (a detail that, once noticed, might explain her very placement within a "body of water," so to speak) and "mavis," a word to describe the song thrush—a bird that Fitzgerald's favorite poet, John Keats (Kuehl, "Scott Fitzgerald's Reading" 61), composed a famous poem about, as we are sure everyone knows quite well (228).

quite obviously push the reader to invoke another infamous story from that same third book: that of Actaeon and Diana.

We can easily imagine a number of different paths one could take after noticing some of these clear classical allusions that we have extracted here so far. One path would be to add this early text to some of the other major texts that possess strongly Ovidian influences—most of which have now been traced in Tessa Roynon's excellent chapter on Fitzgerald in *The Classical Tradition in Modern American Fiction*, which draws out Ovidian echoes in *This Side of Paradise*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Tender is the Night* (Roynon 47–78). Although we take quite seriously Roynon's caveat that "Fitzgerald did not formally study Ovid in any of his Latin courses," it seems clear to us that Ovid's presence is very much in play in "Porcelain."[9] Mr. Calkins can be identified with Actaeon as he too could be said to "accidentally stumble upon" Diana in the bath (the only details we are given to explain why he goes to the window is that Mr. Calkins has recently "just got a divorce" and their mother is slightly concerned about what the neighbors might think) just as Ovid's character does, but his positioning and role within "Porcelain" itself would seem to suggest some very clear differences and divergences from the Ovidian original. If the young man is an Actaeon, then he is a strange one, given that what he might stumble across and see, Diana, cannot be seen at all due to the scenic situation's constraints. As we already know, Mr. Calkins cannot see the room's occupants at all, but can only hear them. This in itself is perhaps a key inversion of the original: Ovid's Actaeon sees

[9] Although Roynon does not mention it, the very opening of Fitzgerald's 1922 "Head and Shoulders" begins with the Latin reading list of Horace Tarbox: "In 1915 Horace Tarbox was thirteen years old. In that year he took the examinations for entrance to Princeton University and received the Grade A—excellent—in Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, Xenophon, Homer …" (310). Ovid's name is also here in this catalog conspicuously absent—especially given the cogency of Roynon's argument that this is hardly damning evidence that Fitzgerald probably never read any Ovid.

what he should not and just before Diana transforms him into a deer, she quite wonderfully enjoins him to tell his friends what it was he saw: "Now make thy vaunt among thy mates, thou saw'st Diana bare. / Tell if thou can; I give thee leave. Tell hardly; do not spare" (Ovid 99). As countless readers have noted, Ovid's Latin is deliciously unclear here in its use of the conditional clause—as Mary-Kay Gamel Orlandi puts it: : "… the conditional clause is ambiguous. Perhaps Actaeon did not see anything he could tell about even if he retained his power of speech" (61). Golding's translation would seem to maintain this ambiguity by leaning on the use of the adverb "hardly" here to fashion a contradiction: this word has a rich history of meanings going way back before Golding in the sense of doing something "with rigor" or "strongly" while simultaneously meaning something that is "scarcely" or "barely"—pun intended—done (Oxford English Dictionary). If Actaeon cannot exactly say what he sees after his transformation, Mr. Calkins would seem to be in a rather similar structurally and formally inverted position: absolutely unable to see anything while vociferously and voluminously telling us how fantastic it is not to be able to see (and only hear) Lois but to speak to/of her. If these Ovidian echoes are plausible (and, once again, we want to step cautiously because Roynon seems to us correct when she argues that "Fitzgerald's allusiveness" to classical texts is so often of a "comparatively unobtrusive or indirect nature" [52]), then such a reading of "Porcelain" would, once more, give scholars another data point with which to think about Fitzgerald's early text as illustrating a career-long tendency to "[deploy] the classical tradition to irreverent, ironic, and comic effect," something that gives his work "much in common with both Eliot and Joyce" (Roynon 55). On their own, all these connections really might not provoke all that much thinking or scream for further investigation. However, things become incredibly unclear and murky when we try to incorporate the entire Diana-Actaeon story into a context where repetition, doubling, and copies

are so vividly present from the very opening lines, which give us the image of the fisherman and his nets. We would like to try to interweave and interlace all these elements together by taking a slight detour through the work of Pierre Klossowski, who intimately ties the Diana and Actaeon story directly to concerns about copies, repetition, dissimulation, and (one of his most well-known watchwords), simulacra.

Klossowski's (1905-2001) work as a painter, novelist, translator, and much more had an enormous impact on a great many canonical 20th-Century French philosophical thinkers. Foucault writes about him, Blanchot devotes quite a bit of space to his work, Lacan's well-known engagement with Sade in *Seminar VII* is deeply indebted to him, and his treatment of simulacra would be enormously influential on the early thought of Gilles Deleuze. Back in 2016, Darin S. McGinnis noted that "given the scope of his influence on many of the most relevant contemporary French theorists, such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean-François Lyotard, little attention has been paid to Klossowski's own themes and passions, except as footnotes to the previously mentioned thinkers' projects" (1). Conor Husbands, in 2020, notes that "scant scholarly attention" still seems to be the norm (1). Although Klossowski's novels display a strong predilection for talk of doubles, reflections, etc., we would like to marshall his admittedly strange and bizarre text on the Diana-Actaeon story: *Diana at Her Bath*. This 1956 work is incredibly difficult to describe and classify: it is at once a brilliant tweaking of Ovid's text, a profound philosophical meditation on Greek and Roman mythological thinking, an almost surrealist prose piece offering strange new origin stories for things left unsaid in the original text of the *Metamorphoses*, while also seeming to look a bit like a microscopically close reading of St. Augustine's distaste for the Roman shows and spectacles concerning the gods, who must be read as not gods at all, but demons. This characteristic has been noted in some of the existing

scholarship, which Patrick Amstutz rehearses quite well, and it seems as if responses to it right from the very start have been understandably puzzled: "A quarter of a century earlier [before Foucault composed a famous essay on it], a commentary in the new *Nouvelle revue française* had already underlined the 'disconcerting' character of Klossowski's book, by accentuating not only the strangeness of its thematic, but also the difficulties posed by the uncertainty of its generic belonging" (136–37). We would like to try to move carefully through such entangled brush here and really zero-in on the key aspects of this text for us; that key element is how Klossowski's text lays out the connection between Diana—goddess of chastity and also the patron saint of the vicious huntress—and the simulacrum or double very early on when he imagines the following thoughts that Actaeon must have had:

> Actaeon so greatly dreaded the *threat* of Diana's hand only because he doubted the chastity of her fingers. This characteristic of the goddess was for him but a *pose*: she had somewhat reassured the little people, who saw in her an exceptional example of severity amidst a context of Olympian frivolity, and envisioned in her the grace of divine mercy, descended from an implacably serene sky: a tutelary deity of animal and vegetable life, favorable to betrothal as well as to the fecundity of wives, she formed healthy girls in her own image and was nonetheless "*a lioness for women*"; she loosed ravaging monsters across the countrysides of kingdoms hostile or indifferent to her altars, as the hunt became more and more a *game* than an economic necessity, as if to remind men that, being a sign of both the dark and serene aspects of the universe, she presided over her wholeness. (*Diana at Her Bath* 11)

Klossowski's main thesis about Diana is quite clear in this excerpt above: she is the one that not only withholds herself from all of the "frivolity" of the other Olympians, but, due also to her connection with chastity and virginity, she claims an exclusivity in herself that is not quite exactly shared by the other gods:

> Why did she renounce the emotions that animate the universe? Was she hiding, from the gods as well as the mortals, her other face eternally? Actaeon did not rightly understand that the wholeness of the universe could rest on a *single* deity, not that a feminine deity, exclusive of any male deity, might express herself in the singleness of a *closed* nature, sufficient unto herself, finding in chastity the fullness of her essence. Goddess beyond destiny, with whom no mortal, even at destiny's behest, could presume to join in union. (*Diana at Her Bath* 11–12)

Whereas Ovid gives us story after story of other divinities altering themselves, donning masks, presenting themselves as other than what they are, etc., Diana, prior to the Actaeon encounter,

would prefer to be seen as cut from different cloth. At first glance, if one wants to talk of simulacra, copies, masks, and doubles, Diana might not be the first deity to call to mind—although perhaps she should be: according to Ovid, she is the first divinity bearing a proper name to be doubled and repeated, "counterfeited," as Golding's translation has it (Mercury sheds his wings and hat in Book 1 to take on the form of a shepherd in order to fool Argus so that Jupiter can spirit Io away from his sister and wife's wrath, but his taking Diana's form in Book 2 would seem to be the very first dissimulation of this kind [Ovid *Metamorphoses* 55, ll. 833-842; 75, ll. 530-535]; even more curious is that Klossowski's reading does not draw one's attention to this). If *Diana at Her Bath* is correct to see a kind of fierce isolation in Diana, how then does she come to be seen at all by Actaeon in the first place? Klossowski's explanation is quite ingenious: Diana in the hunt has a strange and peculiar "desire to see herself" and this is due to the simple fact that if a hunter hunts well, then "[y]ou do not allow the prey time to see you …" (*Diana at Her Bath* 32) and thus there should be no chance of the boars and bears and deers catching sight of you *as a goddess*. Thus is born Diana's "wish to see her own body" such that one day Klossowski finds her "[w]ishing to rest from her chase, she wishes to see herself resting" (Klossowski, *Diana at Her Bath* 32).

Imaginatively innovative as this reading is, the real theoretical thrust of Klossowski's reading lies in the way in which Diana must make "a pact with a daemon who intercedes between the gods and humanity, in order to appear to Actaeon. Through his airy body, the daemon *simulates* Diana in her theophany and inspires in Actaeon the desire and mad hope to possess the goddess. He becomes Actaeon's imagination and Diana's mirror" (Klossowski, *Diana at Her Bath* 35). Klossowski's exegesis sees a clearly contradictory desire here: she is pulled toward her "closed nature" while also suffering a "change of mood that comes over her"

and that is registered in this desire to be seen (Klossowski, *Diana at Her Bath* 31). Her use of the "intermediary daemon" (which we want to parse as strongly synonymous with the simulacrum) would appear to be a solution that would maintain this tension without fully falling into the trap of the other gods' dissimulations. Actaeon will thus "see Diana" and yet she is precisely what he will not see, only the daemon that looks exactly like Diana will be given to his sight; in a peculiar twist, the only one that will actually see Diana is Diana herself, simulated and doubled in the body of this "intermediary daemon" that takes on her form, feels her emotions and moods, and so forth.

We would like to avoid the rejoinder here that simply transferring Klossowski's Diana over onto Julie ends up with a frightening mismatch in terms of the respective tones of the two works. Earlier, when discussing Klossowski's influence on a great many other French philosophers, we mentioned Blanchot, whose essay, "The Laughter of the Gods," is a rich exegesis of Klossowski's thought generally. In his treatment there, he notes this "tragic" strain in Klossowski's thought, but argues that what is singular about the poet and painter's thought is how it engages with what Blanchot calls "the hilarity of the serious, a humor that goes much further than promises of this word, a force that is not only parodic or a force of derision, but calls forth a burst of laughter and points to laughter as the goal or ultimate meaning of a theology" ("The Laughter of the Gods" 170). Blanchot further notes there that Klossowski offers us "[a] laughter without sadness and without sarcasm …" and "in order to understand the the most important moments in Klossowski's work well, one must know how to laugh about them, laugh with this laughter they give us …" ("The Laughter of the Gods" 170). We think that these remarks are quite key for hopefully ameliorating a reading of *Diana at Her Bath* that would see

our application of it as importing this tragic pathos alone; one must bear carefully in mind Blanchot's assertions about the importance of laughter in Klossowski too.[10]

This is pertinent largely because there is little doubt that the Diana-Actaeon story has so often been read in terms of a tragically inadvertent transgression on the the part of Aristaeus and Autonoe's son (he sees not simply something he shouldn't see but he sees *Diana*, goddess of chastity, in a naked state); but in our Fitzgeraldian context here, Julie would seem to hardly be bothered by such a similar concern. Earlier on in the dialogue between Lois and Julie, when the former learns that Julie is in the tub without having brought a towel or covering of any sort with her into the bathroom, Julie "thinks aloud," saying "I wish people didn't wear any clothes" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 907). Of course, these characteristics of Julie clearly point up her difference from Lois's "conservatism"—but it also further distinguishes her from the goddess of the hunt, whose nakedness is covered up and hidden by her nymphs when Actaeon's presence is registered. Somehow seeing a naked Julie would seem not to bother her in the slightest. As Lois is completely shocked by Julie's lack of decorum, she says, "I hope you get caught. I hope there's a dozen ministers in the living-room when you come out—and their wives and their daughters" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 907). Julie's reply is priceless and so quintessentially her as she does not even bother to address the possibility of scandal, but merely to say that the living room would never have enough room for all those people. So, one can wonder: how much sense would it make to speak of a Diana who had no desire to shield her

[10] Blanchot's essay indirectly suggests a possible reading of Klossowski's focus on the "self-enclosedness" of Diana combined with his treatment of a passage from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, such that one can read Diana's presumptuousness of self-sufficiency as resulting precisely in provoking the other gods' laughter: "And thus it appears that the doctrine of eternal return is conceived yet again as a *simulacrum of doctrine* whose very parodic character gives account of *hilarity* as an attribute of existence sufficient unto itself, when laughter rings out from the depths of truth itself, either because truth bursts forth in the laughter of the gods, or because the gods themselves die laughing uncontrollably: when a god wanted to be the only God, all of the other gods were seized with uncontrollable laughter, until they laughed to *death*" ("Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody" 115; qtd. in "The Laughter of the Gods" 171).

nudity and nakedness when Actaeon's eyes roam into and across a space they shouldn't? When Mr. Calkins asks through the window what colors Lois's clothes are, Julie quite humorously replies that they are "a sort of pinkish white" and are very "old" ("Porcelain and Pink" 909). "I thought you hated old clothes," Mr. Calkins says. "I do," responds Julie, "but this was a birthday present and I sort of have to wear it." For Julie, clearly, nakedness and nudity can themselves be read as if they were precisely their opposite, i.e. as a set of "old clothes" that are just something one has to wear—and, furthermore, when the young man asks if these old clothes might still be "in style," she tells him they're not much to write home about: "[They're a] very simple, standard model" ("Porcelain and Pink" 910). Although there are some mismatches here, we think that what is key are the structural/philosophical underpinnings that themselves can be seen as generating not only Klossowski's tragic pathos but also Julie's jovial frivolity—and those undergirdings have everything to do with simulacra, doubling, the play of concealment/unconcealment, Fitzgerald's parodic wit, and much more.

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We hope that readers will forgive us for what is a perhaps a far too long-winded way to end up with a conclusion that will strike most as all too simple: Julie, possessing the disposition of the stereotypical flapper girl, says and does nothing that will not bring her joy–she has *fun*. Our first undertaking, then, is to explore exactly *why* Julie is having fun. After all, there is something curious and particular about her personality, especially when contrasted with her sister and Mr. Calkins. Julie is mischievous: she finds supreme pleasure in orchestrating, manipulating, constructing, fabricating, counterfeiting, and imitating. Her mischief is not one of destruction–she is not the type to steal a vicar's collar or spoil her sister's favorite hat. Her mischief is of a creative type: a mischief that generates more mischief. And what is mischief if

not a variety of concealment? Concealment of order, concealment of intention, concealment of peace, concealment of itself, mischief is a thing of concealment. Julie's mischief, being self-reproducing, is of a type that reveals only through further concealment. This play of concealment, unconcealment, and re-concealment necessitates, of course, a desiring other who seeks total unconcealment—Lois appears to serve this function quite well. That is, in the very use of the word "*un*concealment", a negative ontology is posited. To *un*conceal is to expel the state of concealment enjoyed by an entity, bringing its secrets into the light. But, without an agent wishing for this unconcealment, the negative ontology collapses into a purely positive one– concealment and unconcealment cease to be dialectically opposed poles and become two predications of the same positive substance of existence. Now, in Julie's case, if such an other was denied her, she would have nothing to do. Without mischief, she does not exist and without an other to be undermined or opposed, there is no mischief. Such an ontology, though not necessarily dead, does not allow for the production of anything new. Without opposing forces, as in a negative ontology, "new" is translated into "variation", which does not possess the same power of generation. Julie needs an other to play against; one might say that she needs Lois. But Julie's peculiar mischief is profoundly generative in terms of its capacity to proliferate others that might fit into this "against" slot. When Lois leaves the bathroom in a huff of exasperation, though, Julie is left alone, which might, for a lesser imp, signal the end of mischief. Julie, though, will hear of no such thing. In her solitude, she begins to manufacture others, seemingly out of thin air. Immediately after her sister leaves the room, a malfunction in the bath's plumbing provides a prime opportunity to fill the Lois-shaped-hole in the room:

> (*She changes to a whistle and leans forward to turn on the taps, but is startled by three loud banging noises in the pipes. Silence for a moment—then she puts her mouth down near the spigot as if it were a telephone*)
> JULIE: Hello! (*No answer*) Are you a plumber? (*No answer*) Are you the water department? (*One loud, hollow bang*) What do you want? (*No answer*) I believe you're a ghost. Are you? (*No answer*)

> Well, then, stop banging. (*She reaches out and turns on the warm tap. No water flows. Again she puts her mouth down close to the spigot*) If you're the plumber that's a mean trick. Turn it on for a fellow. (*Two loud, hollow bangs*) Don't argue! I want water—water! Water! ("Porcelain and Pink" 908)

For Lois, these errors in the room's water works might constitute a source of worry and alarm. For Julie, they constitute the production of a very present entity. An indeterminate entity, certainly, but an entity nonetheless, and a speaking entity at that, no less. Whether, in fact, the water department or a plumber or a ghost, or anything at all, for that matter, is at the other end of the pipe is very much beside the point. Even if there is nothing there at all, it makes no difference to Julie–she can speak with the bangs. This manufactured other responds to and opposes Julie just as well as Lois, and therefore allows Julie to carry on her mischief in exactly the same way. Of course, this consideration reflects somewhat cruelly on Lois; with respect to Julie's mischief, Lois is only recognized as that thing which allows the antics to go on. This is seen again at the end of the play:

> (*After one despairing stare* LOIS *shrieks, throws up her hands in surrender, and sinks to the floor.*)
> THE YOUNG MAN: (*In great alarm*) Good Lord! She's fainted! I'll be right in.
> (*Julie's eyes light on the towel which has slipped from* LOIS'S *inert hand.*)
> JULIE: In that case I'll be right out. ("Porcelain and Pink" 912)

Jokes still, even while Lois lies in a heap on the floor–and all for mischief and fun. Of course, Julie's manufacturing of others does not always take on this inhuman tone–often, it is quite innocently and playfully devilish. We learn, in the course of the sisters' conversation, that Julie has run from her bedroom to the bathroom in the nude, as briefly recounted earlier, and might have run back the same way:

> LOIS: … Do you mean to tell me that if I hadn't come you'd have run back to your room–un–unclothed?
> JULIE: *Au naturel* is so much nicer.
> LOIS: Suppose there had been someone in the living room.
> JULIE: There never has been yet.
> LOIS: Yet! Good grief! How long——
> JULIE: Besides, I usually have a towel.
> LOIS: (*Completely overcome*) Golly! You ought to be spanked. I hope you get caught. I hope there's a dozen ministers in the living-room when you come out–and their wives and their daughters.

> JULIE: There wouldn't be room for them in the living-room, answered Clean Kate of the Laundry District. ("Porcelain and Pink" 907)

Now, we must ask: what would be the point of this exhibition of Julie's if she were quite sure that the house was entirely empty, save her sister? It might be fun for some, but one hardly supposes Julie would find any pleasure in it—what's fun about an empty house? To preserve her fun, then, Julie—it does not seem far-fetched to suppose—, creates a species of ghostly guests to occupy the house, thereby creating the possibility that she might be seen. The same process occurs with Calkins–could Julie not, quite easily, make it known to Calkins that she was *not* Lois, and that she was indecently-arrayed at the moment? She does not, of course, and allows their conversation, and therefore the possibility of her nude body being seen, to continue. The fact that she engages Calkins at all, indeed, is itself an act of mischief. This is the power Julie conducts: a negative power that is constructive rather than destructive. Her activity does not lie in domination over her sister or over Mister Calkins, but rather holds sway in the space of the undetermined, where variation is always new and unconcealment only reconceals.

But what is the shape of this mischief in the story? That is, in what particular way and to what particular end does Julie marshal her mischief? What is it that her capers are producing? They are certainly, as we have noted, resisting any possibilities of unconcealment (for Lois or for Calkins), and are therefore productive, but what are they productive of? For an answer, we need to turn to examine the structure of Julie's extended conversation with Mr. Calkins, which we have already noted, takes up a good deal of "Porcelain." Calkins, being a sort of innocent and inadvertent peeping-Tom, takes Julie's voice to be the voice of her sister—this is made plausible and even expected by the stage direction, "nearly double in both face and voice." Instead of identifying herself and sending Calkins away, Julie takes up the role of "Lois" without skipping a beat. By allowing Calkins' mistake to continue, expand, and deepen, Julie engages in the process

of concealment through supposed unconcealment as we have discussed. The content of their conversation is almost entirely concerned with questions of fact: which books has "Lois" read, whether or not someone fainted, the question of authorship of certain literary works, etc. These are all attempts at unconcealment. Julie, in her mischief, plays along with this charade, while repeatedly concealing with every sentence: concealment through the medium or rhetoric of unconcealment. But there is another element at work, which we will locate in Calkins' reception of Julie's constructions. The question is this: why does he believe her? In order that their conversation continue, Calkins must feel that he is involved in a genuine conversation. That is, he must feel that he is, indeed, speaking to Lois and that she is, indeed, speaking back to him. In short, he must find the ear to be a suitable substitute for the eye. If this assumption is ruined, the conversation will cease and Julie will be left to sing to the taps and the pipes.

So, by what action does Julie forestall the end of her mischief? As we've already argued, Lois would seem to be the strongest opponent here, especially as, with regard to mischief, she seeks total unconcealment. One might even say that Lois does have a position that is legitimately described as "conversative," she seeks the removal of ambiguity, the closing of indeterminate spaces, and the establishment of absolute coherence (moral, conventional, personal). She attempts to exercise this desire, unsurprisingly, on Julie, who will, of course, have none of it. We must consider, then, the mechanism by which Julie may combat this end to her fun. This combat must be an indefinite one, given that the essential quality of Julie's mischief is that it resists determination and revelation. Such resistance stands in the face of God, the great discloser; by its nature, Julie's mischief affirms attempts at disclosure, incorporates them, and shows them to be insufficient. But again, the mischief in question is constructive rather than destructive–this must hold even while undermining the Ultimate. The proper technique seems, then, not to be a

demolition of the Ultimate, but rather the parody of the Ultimate. For what is the Ultimate if it is not unrepeatable and unalterable? The Ultimate cannot be the subject of a joke if it is to hold its position. The Ultimate presents itself in a rhetoric of absolute gravity and seriousness–if it may be parodied, it loses its power and its weight. Thus, it may be said quite reasonably that Julie's defining action is the action of parody. Indeed, Julie's fashioning of others *to* parody is a prerequisite *for* that very same act. What is a parody without a subject? The parodic necessitates the existence of an opposing or sanctified other in order to exist. So, then, does Julie. One need only listen to the words she speaks to validate this hypothesis.

Consider, once more, Julie's rendition of "The Imperial Roman Jazz". What tune could be more parodic? Caesar, a man as near to a deity as any man may ever hope to be, is described as "[doing] the Chicago''—that is, visiting in an uproarious and rambunctious manner one of the "hottest towns" in the United States, the country of parties (at least in the '20s). And on this journey, he provokes desire in "[t]hose sacred chickens," the Vestal Virgins of Rome, goddesses of Rome's hallowed hearth. Finally, Cæsar's legendary battles with the Nervii during the Gallic wars, a truly bloody affair, are made to "sh[ake] in the their shoes with the Consular blues," these being the blues obviously inflicted by the greatest Consul to ever hold office. It is difficult to imagine anyone making a virtual satire out of a more hallowed and canonical topic–and Julie does it with ease. And yet, as we have noted, Julie is not acting destructively. She is not tarnishing the reputation of the great Cæsar, nor does she make light of the conquest of the Nervii, nor does she hold any malice, it seems, toward the Vestal Virgins. She is simply making a parody from sacred cloth, and a very entertaining one at that. This making of jokes from sacred material does, as we have noted, unseat the sacred from its position as Ultimate, while still maintaining that these acts are not destructive. What is more, these parodies take on a particular

shape: in order to dilute the Ultimate, they double (or nearly double) the Ultimate. This, too, is an essential facet of parody. If a parody is found to be too distant from that which it parodies, it loses its title and becomes slander, libel, or even farce. For the act to maintain the prestige of "parody", it must come close, very close, almost too close to tell, to that which it imitates. What else is there to call parody, then, but something that shares the essence of the simulacrum?[11]

Parody, simulacrum, and concealment (all roughly equivalent) permeate the entirety of the work, but are never tied to any one object or person. That said, we hope our point here is clear: Fitzgerald's text (just like Ovid's—or Golding's) possesses a rich multiplicity across multiple registers—given that her nudity and nakedness hardly concern Julie at all (hardly concern her simply because one's skin can be described in just the same way one describes one's clothing), the readers' attention slides away from what is no doubt for the audience the very "spicy topos" (this is Orlandi's description of the entire Diana-Actaeon story [60]) of the naked woman encountered while in the bath. There are many different kinds of concealment in this little piece—and the readers' shift in attention does indeed follow a slight change in the story itself. Much of the first half concerns Julie's nudity, which is indeed concealed, but in the latter half of the play, what precisely needs to be hidden slips: we move from Julie's nudity to the fact that through the game of impersonation Julie performs she seeks to keep concealed the fact that *she is not Lois*. It would thus not be anything having to do with her body that needs to remain concealed, but, perhaps, only this fiction of doubling that needs to keep itself far from revelation.

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[11] Roynon's chapter here is again exceedingly helpful for us as she makes the case strongly and persuasively that during this piece's composition, there was still something mythical about Rome for many Americans: "In [Fitzgerald's] perception of ancient Rome's analogousness, the author is of course very much in line with his times: in the United States in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth century, different aspects of Romanness were invoked to bolster conceptions of virtue, republicanism, heroism, war, imperialism, capitalist wealth, and consumerist luxury; decades; decline, and ruin. Roman antiquity informed the highly contested politics of gender, race, and class, as well as nostalgia for a lost Golden Age" (48).

Julie is very much cut from the same cloth as many other female characters in Fitzgerald's early works—Marcia from "Head and Shoulders" and Marjorie and Bernice of "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" all come readily to mind—in that she possesses not only a deeply creative but also profoundly theatrical soul, such souls needing to be quite comfortable with the affordances of masks and masking, hiding and concealing. This is thus evident not simply in the impersonation game she plays with Mr. Calkins and her willingness to "render Lois a selection" of music and song, but also in the fact that she will "play" even when there is no audience to be seen. After Lois says she won't bother "humor[ing] such a creature" that heads for a bath without a towel and Julie has sent "a parabolic stream [of water] at Lois, forcing her out in a huff," Julie "turns off the water," and we then get the following wonderful little scene that begins, not surprisingly, with another song:

> JULIE: (*Singing*)
> When the Arrow-collar man
> Meets the D'jer-kiss girl
> On the smokeless Santa Fé
> Her Pebeco smile
> Her Lucile style
> De dum da-de-dum one day—— ("Porcelain and Pink" 908)

What comes after this song seems to be quite vintage Julie and directly after her little scene with the pipes, the very next line of the playlet gives us the appearance of Mr. Calkins's head in the window. Given the fundamental split between the ear (and mouth) and the eye, the young man's first line (itself a response to Julie's cry of "Water!") is humorously appropriate as he wonders if "[s]ome one fainted?" The succeeding stage direction for Julie also strikes the reader as spot on: "JULIE: (*Starting up, all ears immediately*) Jumping cats!" ("Porcelain and Pink" 908). An exorbitantly affirmative reading of Julie—and this is something we would very much like to put forward here in this essay—would take all of this (as we have already argued)—including the whole "pipe" bit—as illustrating her ability to quite literally create something out

of nothing. The "Arrow-collar man" would likewise fit this mold; as far as we have been able to discover, Julie's songs (the "Caesar'' song and this collaged-together ditty using what Patrick O'Donnell says are"[r]eferences to contemporary advertising slogans such as the modern, 'smokeless' Santa Fé Railroad, Arrow shirt collars, and toothpaste" [*Curious Case* 423, note 2]) are all her own—we have been unable to find them in any other pieces for screen or stage.[12]

This should not be surprising: Julie is a performer, creator, in all senses of these words. One of the authors of this essay loves the possibility that the pipe conversation is not simply a way to showcase Julie's wonderfully exuberant joy and vivacity as a fashioner of intrigue and interest, but that the pipes themselves fulfill a functional role of providing a conduit to allow for the entire conversation with Mr. Calkins. As one of the two of us would have our readers note, we do not know if the window in the bathroom is open (nor do we get any hint whatsoever that Mr. Calkins might himself open it when he sticks his head up there)—all we know about the window is the already cited lines that "[i]t is narrow and has a wide sill; it lets in much sunshine,

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[12] This result would seem to be first confirmed by Anthony Berrett (78–79) and also by Jane Broughton Adams's research as well—she writes that these lyrics are purely of Fitzgerald's invention (115). For more on the influence of stage and screen on Fitzgerald more generally see (Raubicheck and Goldleaf). While we are on the topic of this song, we would like to note that there is more to be said here. Julie's choice of participants here—the "Arrow-collar man" and the "Djer-kiss girl"—is significant for us as it gives us more ammunition to motivate the whole entire connection with Diana. James L. W. West III has glossed the second figure, noting that "[s]he appeared in magazine advertisements for Djer-Kiss, a line of perfume and women's toiletries from Kerkoff of Paris. The Djer-Kiss Girl, as drawn by the artist Malaga Grenet, was epicene and nymphlike; often she was pictured applying cosmetics before a mirror. She was typical of one feminine ideal of the twenties …" (89). Adams has argued that this entire song, with all its "references … taken from the world of advertising … show how Julie is immersed not just in the bath but in the world of consumerist pleasures" (116). This is all no doubt quite plausible, but we think that West's remark about the Grenet drawings showing the D-jer-Kiss girl as "nymphlike" is very much on the right track. That said, we would simply like to mention that the sample image in West's article might not best show these epicene and nymphlike qualities. In fact, a number of the ads depict fairy-like figures often bathing in pools of water and in many of them there is no bathroom at all, but the landscapes and settings, heavily forested and pastoral, cannot help but get one thinking immediately of Diana in her very own pool ("The History of Djer-Kiss"). Regardless of whether or not these female figures in the Djer-Kiss ads are supposed to be Diana (we think probably not—a couple of the images have peacocks in the background, which would thus send one's mind running to Juno rather than Diana), we do find it quite feasible that Fitzgerald's choice of this particular perfume lends further credence to all of the Roman echoes running throughout this entire little story. Furthermore, would not this strange melange of a perfume advertisement paired with Ovid be a perfect illustration of how correct Adams is to say that this is a kind of Fitzgeraldian signature: the irreverent combination of classical antiquity with ads for cosmetics?

but effectually prevents any one who looks in from seeing the bath-tub" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903). It thus seems plausible to try to read the entire conversation between the two of them as occurring through the pipes as conduits—a reading that one could then bolster perhaps with yet even more Ovid: how about reading the pipes as akin to the infamous "wall" between the two houses that Pyramus and Thisbe in Book IV of his *Metamorphoses* use not only to speak to one another "through" but also as that which receives the kisses each of the pair place on that same wall each night? Roynon notes that one of the ways Fitzgerald could have "encountered the Roman poet" was through—amongst a couple of others—Shakespeare (57). Perhaps "Porcelain" is a mash-up of Ovid via Bottom and all his fellow "mechanicals." Maybe this is just the kind of sardonic and comedic take on the classical tradition that is so visible in so many other Fitzgerald works. Admittedly, there is little direct textual evidence for such a reading—but it still strikes one of us as quite alluring; after all, we are informed by the stage directions that Julie's chat begins with Mr. Calkins right after she has turned off the water to the bathtub pipes. One of the two of us would love to see a performance of this piece where the staging had Julie talking into the pipes "as if it were a telephone" for the entirety of the rest of the playlet (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 908). Regardless of whether or not one takes this possible staging as far too silly to even countenance, our point is hopefully not obscured; Fitzgerald's text allows us to read Julie as a consummate creator, quite playfully piquing audience interest here: the fundamental divergence between the eye and ear here strikes as us anything but overly simple, naive, or just so downright silly that one cannot say anything other than that it is marshaled for purely gimmicky ends.

We find that if Fitzgerald's own tendency was indeed to engage "the tradition" through parody and comedy, Julie seems eerily similar to her author—there is no doubt that "Porcelain"

is full of typical comedic elements and motifs (first and foremost being the "rusty old pivot" of "mistaken identity")—doubles and doubling, hilarious misunderstandings, the rambunctious sister who won't kowtow to conventional mores, the wonderful way one speaker "punctuates" another's sentences through interruption, treating pipes as if they were telephones, etc.—but these motifs always seem to be repeated by Julie "with a difference." The "Caesar" song sounds uncannily like an actual 1920s tune, only with made-up lyrics; Julie can produce a simulacrum of her sister (with whom she appears to have nothing in common) with enough dexterity and overlap to get Mr. Calkins thinking he's talking to Lois; she is constantly utilizing all kinds of multiple "conventions" while giving them these wonderfully little, tiny twists. When Julie asks Lois about all of the "weighty books" that the "literary man" Mr. Calkins has lent to her to read, she notes: "Well, you've got to play his game. When in Rome do as the Romans would like to do" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 906)—we expect to get a formulation close to that attributed to St. Ambrose, but what we hear is the slight tweak. In another quite strangely humorous thread of dialogue with Mr. Calkins, Lois asks him if he knows "if there are any bath-tubs in history" as she says she "think[s] they've been frightfully neglected." Mr. Calkins gives her the two most famous bathtubs he can think of: Agamemnon and Marat both stabbed in tubs; Julie's response is so typical: "Way back there! Nothing new besides the sun, is there?" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 911). Once again, we know what we expect to get and we precisely do not get it. Even better—the very thing that from Plato on never changes and is never new is precisely what Julie alters and tweaks. Numerous more examples could be easily adduced; one of the best is Julie's hilarious goofing with Mr. Calkins over the previously mentioned authorship problem:

> THE YOUNG MAN: Of course I've read enormously. You told me last night that you were very fond of Walter Scott.

> JULIE: (*Considering*) Scott? Let's see. Yes, I've read "Ivanhoe" and "The Last of the Mohicans."
> THE YOUNG MAN: That's by Cooper.
> JULIE: (*Angrily*) "Ivanhoe" is? You're crazy! I guess I know. I read it.
> THE YOUNG MAN: "The Last of the Mohicans" is by Cooper.
> JULIE: What do I care! I like O. Henry. I don't see how he ever wrote those stories. Most of them he wrote in prison. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" he made up in prison.
> THE YOUNG MAN: (*Biting his lip*) Literature—literature! How much it has meant to me!
> JULIE: Well, as Gaby Deslys said to Mr. Bergson, with my looks and your brains there's nothing we couldn't do. (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 910–11)

Just as one might expect from an expert improviser, everything is grist for Julie's mill of simulation, dissimulation, repetition, and humor. After Mr. Calkins says at one point that he finds Lois "most mysterious," Julie says there are "only two mysterious people in history": "The Man with the Iron Mask and the fella who says 'ug uh-glug uh-glug uh-glug' when the line is busy," which the audience and readers will link back up with her earlier pipe gag; of course, the function of this for Mr. Calkins is simply to increase his opinion of her great mysteriousness. But for us, the quickness and ease with which Julie takes what are mere sounds, mere noises, and works them up instantaneously into something that looks like language is amusingly beautiful. (Just as another short interruptive aside here, once more, one of the authors would have readers notice that Julie's playfulness in the just cited lines explicitly keep open the possibility of reading the pipes as a medium of communication—one cannot speak when glug-glugging, indeed, all the throat can do is make this sound—that needs to not be performing the "uh-glug" so that the sounds of language can pass along those same lines of communication.)

Finally, it is clear that Julie is not only a creature of parody and the comic, but manifests them in the form of the double. Not the perfect double, but rather a *nearly* perfect double (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 904). Julie, in constructing her mischief, produces parodies that are so close to the thing they imitate that it is nearly impossible to tell the difference. Consider again "The Imperial Roman Jazz." The historical period in which the story is set produced an abundance of music; the radio was not yet a common household fixture, being preceded by the

piano for which these songs were written. For those with some musical bones in their bodies (or just some nice knowledge of music history), it will be somewhat common knowledge that many tunes written during the time of the story hold a similar musical structure (rhythmic and lyrical) to "The Imperial Roman Jazz." And yet, the scholarly record is quite confident that Julie's tune was never published by any music publisher, nor does it exist outside of Fitzgerald's work. It is merely a near-perfect double of the type of song that was written during the early twentieth century; all our musical readers would be quite happy to be able to notice the extreme similarity and verisimilitude of Julie's tune to real songs that were published. It is a *superb* recreation—nearly too good. Julie has, in her charming selection, fashioned an incredible simulacrum.

Retracing briefly the steps we have taken so far, we have argued for the necessity of parsing Julie's playfulness as very often taking the form of simulacra, choosing sanctified material to play on and play with. Recall again Julie's comment to Mr. Calkins, "Nothing new besides the sun, is there?" This, of course, being a variation on Ecclesiastes 1:9, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."[13] Though only one word of the quotation from a sacred text has been changed, Julie's variation creates an entirely different statement. She repeats this skill in another comment to Lois: "When in Rome do as the Romans would like to do." As we have noted, this phrase likewise contains a minimal change which precipitates a tremendous effect. In both these phrases, Julie constructs aphorisms that seem, at a glance, trivial variations on canonical maxims–the maxim itself, the passerby supposes, is relatively unchanged. On a closer (though perhaps dry) inspection of the phrases, one finds that Julie has created two entirely new

[13] John Kuehl already noted, a long time ago, how fond Fitzgerald was of this particular Biblical text ("Scott Fitzgerald's Reading" 59).

phrases that only bear an ever-so-slight resemblance to those from which they were derived by a kind of linguistic externality. That is, though the words in the phrases have barely been changed at all, the content of both phrases has completely shifted. Here again is Julie's genius of the simulacrum.

This genius extends as we have noted, to tremendous extremes. So far, in fact, that Julie is able to bring that which is glaringly false so near to that which is glaringly true that the young man can hardly tell the difference. And what is it that the young man finds to be sacredly true? As we learn both from Lois and from Calkins himself, he is a great student of literature–he exclaims to Lois (Julie), "Literature—literature! How much it has meant to me!" Literature, being a profoundly generative thing, sparks in-depth conversation and debate like nothing else. The content of a piece of literature is rich, fruitful, and virtually inexhaustible in its capacity to generate new ideas. There are, indeed, few aspects of literature that are *not* up for debate or the subject of opinion, one of these being the question of authorship. There may be occasional scholarly squabbles over the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, but on the whole the authorship of great works is a settled matter. Great authors ascend to a position of tremendously high status, and are not often removed from those positions. What could one expect Julie to do, when speaking to this student of great literature, except to question and parody this most unquestionable and unpariodable truth? She argues with young Calkins:

> JULIE: (*Considering*) Scott? Let's see. Yes, I've read "Ivanhoe" and the "The Last of the Mohicans."
> THE YOUNG MAN: That's by Cooper.
> JULIE: (*Angrily*) "Ivanhoe" is? You're crazy! I guess I know. I read it.
> THE YOUNG MAN: "The Last of the Mohicans" is by Cooper.
> JULIE: What do I care! I like O. Henry. I don't see how he ever wrote those stories. Most of them he wrote in prison. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" he made up in prison. ("Porcelain and Pink" 910–11)

ending with another incorrect statement, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* of course being written by O. Wilde, not O. Henry. Her parody knows few boundaries. In engaging Mr. Calkins in the first

place, she parodies her sister's relationship with him. She plays the role of "Lois" so well that Calkins, the one who ought to be able to distinguish Julie from her sister, is fooled.

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Now, lest we be accused of too Julie-esque of a joke here when noting that there's a mix-up between two authors with names that start with O (one could claim that Julie's sentence is not entirely "incorrect," given that O. Henry started his own short story writing career while in prison), we should make clear that such little gems are to be read as pointing up a very key facet of the theorization of the simulacra as we mobilize it here: in fashioning simulacra, Julie is not a destructive force. That is, doubling (or near doubling) is not necessarily destructive. The double and the simulacrum are certainly forces of contestation and rejection, but not of destruction. It is, more directly, an undermining or subversion of a relationship that would escape a logic of model and copy—something that Deleuze's own use of Klossowski's work on the simulacrum utilizes at numerous points: "The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*" (262). Julie's altering of these biblical maxims is therefore not necessarily malicious or ruinous. Her alterations simply deny the primacy of the original statements and promote themselves to the same level (or, equally, demote the original sayings to a common level). This is not to disparage or demolish the original sayings, but only to remove them from their pretension of the position of the ultimate.

Julie's talents with the simulacrum do not stop at pithy variations on canonical aphorisms, of course–they extend much further, into the purely creative. The whole "pipes gag" that we have already cited is a wonderful case in point. By the end of the interaction, one feels as though a first lesson in pipe-enese or pipe-ican has been completed. This interaction, we find, is more creative than we first supposed: Julie not only manufactures an Other to perform her

mischief for, but deterritorializes the issue in plumbing to a space where the bang in the pipes is nearly indistinguishable from a voice. That is, she manufactures an Other so convincing that it approaches the domain of the real. This simulacrum, though, seems to differ from her previous plays on words in its profound creativity. When altering canonical sayings, Julie's rhetoric manipulates something preexistent and defined. When speaking to the pipes, that preexistent something seems to be absent, or has at least greatly withdrawn itself. We may choose either position and our view of Julie will remain: Julie's interaction with the pipes is an act of the simulacrum. For what is the relationship of the simulacrum to the model it imitates other than one of ambiguous and unidentifiable difference? The simulacrum, though necessarily similar to the model it contests, must differ from it in some respect to allow the claim to be laid to the position of the model in the first place. Deleuze writes,

> … *simulacra* are like false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or deviation … only differences can resemble each other … defines the world of simulacra; it posits the world itself as phantasm. (256–61)

It is the minimization of the difference between difference and similarity, then, that defines the simulacrum. The simulacrum is that which removes nearly all space between that which is similar and that which is different, thereby raising not only itself but every forgery and fakery to the stature of the model. Julie is, of course, in love with forgery, and even (perhaps) approaches something approximating affection or fondness for Calkins when he says, "I am not a mundane man but I am a forger——"; the last word there sparks Julie's interest, but is killed when Calkins clarifies: "—a forger ahead" ("Porcelain and Pink" 912), ruining her expectation of "forger" in the sense of the one that fakes with its use as a phrasal verb—"forger" in the sense of a pioneer, the one that finds. Julie's simulacra manipulate the border of the similar and the different, bringing the two so close together that even she has difficulty in distinguishing them: the banging in the pipes is not, before she speaks, a voice. It shares several characteristics with a

voice, certainly: an articulated, punctuated, auditory emission from a material source may describe both. The difference between the two, of course, is the larger concern for the reader. The difference between that which is different from a voice (a noise in a pipe) and that which is the same as a voice (the voice itself, broadly speaking), is, before Julie speaks, a large one. After Julie speaks—that is, after she exercises her simulacral powers of rhetoric–this difference shrinks to an infinitesimal. The pipes are, post-Julie, as similar to a voice as anything could be—including a voice.

Note, though, that Julie's simulacral rhetoric is, in this instance, purely one of language. That is, her conversation with the pipes may be said to be purely metonymic, in that the meaning of the bangs moves from meaninglessness into meaningfulness—this would be a purely linguistic phenomenon. The simulacra is not, however, a purely linguistic entity. Or, more accurately, it does not reside purely in the space of language—it asserts itself even on the border of language and material, making a language a simulacrum of material. More broadly, rhetoric must be said to be a linguistic manipulator instead of a material manipulator–there is a difference between the rhetorician and the sculptor. The rhetorician, though, must be the more powerful artist; rhetoric undermines or exposes the lack of the constancy and solidity of material, fact, and truth. Though the simulacrum may not create material *ex nihilo*, it does perform a rhetorical task that makes the distinction between the existent and the nonexistent virtually nonexistent. What, after all, is a lie that no one could prove false? Deleuze writes: "By rising to the surface, the simulacrum makes the Same and the Similar, the model and the copy, fall under the power of the false (phantasm). It renders the order of participation, the fixity of distribution, the determination of the hierarchy impossible" (263).

This exposition of the undermining power of the simulacrum is precisely the artistry Julie wields. Again, to parody or to double is to dilute the Ultimate. Foucault's essay on Klossowski's *Diana* text, takes up this very same concern:

> But what if, on the contrary, the Devil, the Other, were the Same? And what if temptation were not one of the episodes of the great antagonism but the subtle insinuation of the Double?. . .the perilous games of extreme similitude are multiplied: God who so closely resembles Satan who imitates God so well … The Evil Genius of the Third Meditation is not the slightly enhanced epitome of the deceitful powers residing in man but what most resembles God, what can imitate all His powers, pronounce eternal truths like Him, and if he wishes, arrange it that 2+2=5. (124)

For Foucault, what is most key here is not so much that one thing can simulate another (although that is a significant component of his reading of Klossowski), but that each moment of simulation continues to further deepen the play of concealment and unconcealment: "Each reversal seems to point to an epiphany; but in reality each discovery deepens the enigma, increases the uncertainty, and unveils one element only to veil the relations between all the others" (128). This is the power of the simulacrum. Julie, of course, performs this ability with a sly grin. Recall Lois's indignation at Julie's scandalous journey from bedroom to bathroom when Julie says there has yet to be a morning when she hopped out of the bath only to find the living room full of people. The indeterminacy of the living-room is essential—it is entirely possible that, when Julie went whisking by in her natural state, it might have been filled with ministers, wives, and daughters all. "There never has been *yet*" leaves open the possibility that there may be someone there in the future. There would be no fun in it, indeed, if Julie were certain that there were no ministers in the living-room. Nor would there be any risk if she knew that those ministers were visiting. In the first instance, Julie causes herself unnecessary inconvenience—why should she leave her towel and kimono if there was no possibility of anyone seeing her? In the second instance, Julie becomes a kind of exhibitionist, again a riskless task—what risk can an exhibitionist experience? The indeterminacy of the contents of the living-room is, then,

absolutely crucial to Julie's mischief. If the contents of the room are known, either as full or as empty, this particular act of mischief dies. It dies, yes, because its own content contradicts entirely the materiality in question. In order for Julie's mischief, being the mischief of the simulacrum, to function, there must be a profound but incomplete similarity between the object to be rhetoricized and the object after rhetorization. The rhetoric producing the simulacrum, that is, must be subtle and must confront the model gently. To flatly contradict the object in question is to kill the act of rhetoric. The tension of similarity and difference between the simulcram and the thing it imitates is defining. In order that the simulacral object be simulacral, then, it must be a possible object–if an impossible object is suggested to replace the model, the model may throw it out on its ear without a qualm or pang of worry. The simulacrum must aspire to the heights of Richard III—the villain and fraud that no one is able to identify.

And yet, the simulacrum is not purely fraudulent. That is, it is certainly fraudulent with respect to the model, but without reference to the model, it must instead be called creative or constructive. When a model is held in the primary position, simulacra imitate and pretend. As Deleuze argues:

> [Resemblance] … goes less from one thing to another than from one thing to an Idea, constitutive of the internal essence. … The copy truly resembles something only to the degree that it resembles the Idea of that thing. The pretender conforms to the object only insofar as he is modeled … on the Idea. … In short, it is the superior identity of the Idea which founds the good pretension of the copies, as it bases it on an internal or derived resemblance. (257)

To speak of simulacra as copies, or indeed to speak in terms of similarity or difference with the model, then, is already to privilege the model or Idea: "The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, simulacrum is an image without resemblance" (257). When the model is already in question, however, the simulacrum becomes the production of a contender for the throne of the most high: "That to which [simulacra] pretend … they pretend to underhandedly, under cover of

an aggression, an insinuation, a subversion,"against the father", and without passing through the Idea. Theirs is an unfounded pretension, concealing a dissimilarity which is an internal unbalance" (257).

One can even further enumerate Deleuze's point by taking the case of Julie's nymphish scurry from bedroom to bathroom. By playing this indecent game, Julie has filled the entire summer cottage, not only the living-room, with a crowd of ghostly guests, halfway between existence and nonexistence. She does this precisely by being ignorant of who may be standing around the next corner, as we previously discussed. The performance of her risqué dash in ignorance of the presence or absence of potential observers makes the presence of such observers equally as possible as their absence. Their existence is simulacral with their nonexistence. Julie, through playful ignorance, is able to undermine the very distinction between existence and nonexistence. Julie's actions, though, can only be said to be fraudulent if she correctly (or incorrectly) posits the status of the living-room–then, any claim of ignorance or negation would be false. Given her ignorance, Julie's game is a purely and infinitely productive game; at every moment of her whisking through the house, another ghostly visitor is created, occupying an indeterminate existential position. They do not exist, nor do they cease to exist. They are the simulacral phantasma of which Deleuze speaks, and the condemned of which Foucault discourses:

> Actually, neither God nor Satan ever appear in this space. A strict absence that is also their entanglement. But neither one is named, perhaps because they are "invokers" and not invoked. It is a narrow, numinous area in which the figures are all on some Index of the condemned. There one crosses the paradoxical space of real presence–a presence that is real only insofar as God has absented himself from the world, leaving behind only a trace and a void … (126)

This waltzes nicely with Deleuze's claim that, in the space of the simulacrum, hierarchies fail. Foucault simply uses the language of God and Satan, two extremes rather than Deleuze's

continuous field of simulacra. In either case, the dissimilar objects that imitate and reproduce each other through the simulacrum remain in undetermined space, never actualizing in any determinate position. The simulacrum, as we see through Julie's use of it, is able to toy with existence itself. The only limit to Julie's powers of the simulacra seems to be the spatial capacity of the living-room.

But can it really be said that Julie herself is the sole source of simulacral confusion? That is, are there not many elements of "Porcelain" that allow Julie to play her games with relative impunity? Take, for example, the bathtub Julie sits in. We have noted that the question of Julie's nudity—though not particularly questionable—is not free from scrutiny. There is a possibility, strange though it may be, that Julie is not playing the game fairly and really is not nude in the bathtub. Whether she is or not, we must note the bathtub's role as one which serves to allow this simulacral game of nudity to go on. Indeed, it would be consistent for us to say that with the inclusion of the bathtub, Julie is both clothed, unclothed, neither, and both. The bathtub as a limiting force is itself a generator of the simulacrum. The bathtub is even personified in the stage directions *as* a limiting, constraining, but not as a destroying, object: "it grumpily refuses to allow any patron completely to stretch his legs." ("Porcelain and Pink" 903) It is also referred to as not being "one of the new racing bodies," this being an allusion, we think, to the latest crop of automobiles emerging in the period–the "new racing bodies" that were no longer constrained by the limitations of past models. The bathtub's being *not* one of these further highlights the importance of this language of limitation and constraint.

Too, can the window that looks into the room truly be ignored? It is, after all, quite a particular window with the curious property that it views only the room's frieze:

> *[The window] effectually prevents any one who looks in from seeing the bath-tub … A young man's head appears in the window–a head decorated with a slim mustache and sympathetic eyes. These last stare, and though they can see nothing but the many fisherman with nets and much crimson ocean …* ("Porcelain and Pink" 903, 908)

A disconnect is created here between the eye and ear of an observer by the very structure of the room's window and Julie, of course, takes full advantage of this division between sight and sound. This disconnect is necessary for Julie's games to continue. Recall again the forgeries she tells to Calkins:

> THE YOUNG MAN: What color are you wearing?
> JULIE: (*After a critical survey of her shoulders*) Why, I guess it's a sort of pinkish white.
> THE YOUNG MAN: Is it becoming to you?
> JULIE: It's–it's old. I've had it for a long while.
> . . .
> THE YOUNG MAN: (*Puzzled*) What on earth was that?
> JULIE: (*Ingeniously*) I heard something, too.
> THE YOUNG MAN: Sounded like running water.
> JULIE: Didn't it? Strange like it. As a matter of fact I was filling the gold-fish bowl.
> THE YOUNG MAN: (*Still puzzled*) What was that banging noise?
> JULIE: One of the fish snapping his jaws. ("Porcelain and Pink" 909, 912)

Could these forgeries (simulacra) function if the disconnect between ear and eye was not present? We think not.

But more than providing a basis for Julie's antics, this disconnect between eye and ear may be said to be, in itself, simulacral. Let us turn back once more to Blanchot:

> The shortest path from one point to another is in literature the diagonal or the asymptote. He who speaks directly does not speak or speaks deceptively, thus consequently, without any direction save the loss of all straightforwardness. The correct relation to the world is the detour, and this detour is right only if it maintains itself, in the deviation and the distance, as the pure movement of its turning away. (Blanchot, "The Laughter of the Gods" 171)

And again, elsewhere: "Interrupting for the sake of understanding, understanding in order to speak … Interruption is necessary to any succession of words; intermittence makes their becoming possible, discontinuity ensures the continuity of understanding" (*The Infinite Conversation* 76). In both of these passages, Blanchot posits ideas that all but remove the distinction between the direct and the indirect, the continuous and discontinuous. If the world

must, indeed, be approached through the detour and if, indeed, understanding must be communicated through interruption, of what use are the direct path and the uninterrupted speech? With respect to their functions, interruption and the detour become simulacra for their opposites. The path of the ear, which we might call the indirect path, is therefore the path that moves things forward—in our case, it allows simulacra to continue to flow from Julie to Calkins. Can one not, indeed, view the bathroom's architecture not as a limiting of vision, but as a continuous interruption of vision, especially with Calkins in the window, seeking a resolution to this interruption?

What is perhaps significant to pay attention here is that it is not simply the room's architecture that constrains these interruptions, the frieze itself also seems to play a material or formal role in the pervasiveness of interruption. We have already cited the passage where the stage directions inform us that the frieze's repeating pattern is interrupted, perhaps as a consequence of an interior designer's poor grasp of mathematics, and consequently undermines itself as a repeating pattern. If the interior designer had calculated properly, the pattern would have no beginning and no end, but would traverse the walls of the room endlessly in a wild homogeneity, equivalent to the "affirmation of a unitary truth where coherent discourse will no longer cease and, no longer ceasing, will merge with its other, silent side" (*The Infinite Conversation* 76). The inclusion of the half-pane of tile (or wallpaper), though, breaks this potentially circular pattern, establishing an end, if not a beginning, to the frieze. This is precisely Blanchot's point: that interruption, which stops conversation, is that which gives conversation definition. Conversation is always already, and necessarily, interrupted. To venture slightly into the surreal, then, one might suggest that the frieze is a work of conversation. Whether it is itself participating in conversing or whether it simply functions as a focus point of interruption in the

story is a question we will not attempt to resolve, being content to note its importance and prevalence in the work. What, after all, would one expect to happen in a room with a frieze of this kind on its walls?

And what can be said of the simulacrum other than that it is an interruption? The coherent, unitary, timeless model is jarred by the introduction of the simulacrum. The simulacrum interrupts the model's continuous and unchallenged conversation with itself–it punctuates being. Blanchot discusses this at length in his "Interruption (as on Riemann surface)" chapter of *The Infinite Conversation*, in which he argues that relations between a self and an other may be characterized in three ways. On the first characterization, the self relates to the other as it might to an object—that is to say, *not* as an other self. The second does consider the other as an other self, but dispenses with the otherness of the other through an assumption of the Same; if the other and I are essentially the same, no otherness need be contended with. Blanchot's last characterization does, apparently, attempt to take account of the other, but again denies its otherness, in this case by seeking a fusion of Self and Other into the one. In each of these modes of relation, the Other collapses into the One or the Same—either the Other is the same as me, or the Other *is* myself. Blanchot finds these modes to be insufficient—if the other is always and already infinitely other to the self, denial or reduction of otherness is fraudulent. Blanchot aims to develop a theory of a relation that affirms otherness, in which interruption, a gap, a separation, a "foreignness" between the two becomes the foundation of the relation—it is no longer what is positively shared between the pair, but, rather, it is the paradoxical sharing of this very foreignness and strangeness itself that emerges as the heart of the relation:

> What is in play now is the foreignness between us … What is now in play, and demands relation, is everything that separates me from the other, that is to say the other insofar as I am infinitely separated from him–a separation, fissure, or interval that leaves him infinitely outside me, but also requires that I found my relation with him upon this very interruption that is an *interruption of being.* (*The Infinite Conversation* 76–77)

The three modes of communication that Blanchot says tend towards unity are the modes of the model. In the model, there is no distance between terms and there is no call to found the model's identity on anything but itself, certainly not on the infinite distance of its copies from itself. The remaining modality is the modality of the simulacrum–that which, though infinitely other to the model, imitates the model, thereby interrupting the model's self-grounding identity. The simulacrum reveals the infinite yet unignorable distances between terms, thereby immanentizing all terms, including the model. The simulacrum interrupts being, just as Blanchot writes.

It is difficult, even for the passive reader, to ignore the presence of interruption in this work: Julie constantly interrupts her sister and Mr. Calkins, both by explicitly speaking over them and by interrupting the natural conceptual flow of their conversation. When Lois chastises Julie with imaginary ministers, Julie, instead of responding to her sister's indignation, instead takes up the fiction her sister has posited, interrupting the current of the conversation completely. Her argument (simulacrum) with Calkins is an interruption of the conversation he attempts to have, as well as an interruption of his field of study. Again, what is more settled in literature than authorship? Authorship occupies the position of the Idea in Deleuze–it is a thing to be infinitely repeated without variation. Julie interrupts this repetition. Indeed, we may say without straining our pens that every simulacrum that Julie creates is an interruption of some sort. "The Imperial Roman Jazz" is an interruption akin to the authorship argument with Calkins. Her whisking through the house in her natural state is an interruption, not only of social norms and etiquette, but of the emptiness of the house, as we have discussed. We could go on indefinitely, but we are distracted by one final key element of the story.

Is Julie herself not a simulacrum of her sister? The story makes quite clear that Julie "… *is nearly* [Lois's] *double in face and voice*," that is, a near-reproduction, with the significant

difference that in Lois' "clothes and expression are the marks of the conservative," this being sharply opposed by Julie's supposed nudity and playful demeanor. Of course, this difference is both what is hidden and what allows this simulacrum to exist. But let us make the juvenile point that Julie is perhaps not *causa sui*, and therefore has not produced the simulacral pair of Lois and she. These inanimate objects and facts are not created, as Julie's simulacra are, within the play. They are, so to speak, set by the director and do not originate from within the stage. Where, then, do they originate from?

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Before drawing to a conclusion while addressing the question posed in our previous sentence, we would like to return to where we started—namely, with Fitzgerald's creation of this thing's strange literary structure. We choose the word "creation" here very carefully and intentionally, as we think that "play", "story", "playlet" and other synonyms should be used only with a healthy dose of caution and intentionality. Fitzgerald has created a work whose structure defies all standard descriptions. It certainly *looks* as if it were a play, but it cannot be called so, not only because of the incredibly specific descriptions of the characters' attitudes (so many lines are to be delivered "*Severely*," "*Wisely*," "*Gratefully*", etc.), but more importantly because of the audience of the play. A play must have an audience, of course, but what variety of play describes the reactions of its own audience in real time? There may, in usual productions, be certain expectations of when the audience will laugh or cry or fall silent, but no play with which the authors of this paper are familiar *describes* its audience from the position of the first person in the stage directions of the play itself. The stage directions often, as we have noted, use language that feels very much at home in novelistic forms, like when we are informed that "*For the first ten minutes of the play the audience is engrossed in wondering if she really is playing the game

fairly and hasn't any clothes on or whether it is being cheated and she is dressed …" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903)

These descriptions are not made from the position of a playwright; they are made from the standpoint of a first person narrator who, perhaps, stands in the balcony of the theater, observing both audience and stage, and relays the events of both to us, the second person readers. Fitzgerald has fashioned, therefore, not a play or a story, but a play embedded within a story. An odd thing this, to be sure. The stage directions, spoken by the first person, describe the audience as the third person (who are, within the fiction, in the position of the first person with respect to the actors on stage) to readers who occupy the position of the second person. Furthermore, the narrator of this story is quite aware that it is a narrator. It does not fulfill the position of an impartial or invisible narrator, on the contrary they choose to involve themselves profoundly in the structure of the work. Not only does it communicate the actions of audience and stage to us, the readers, but also addresses us *as* readers: "*You begin to suspect the plot? ... Yes, you've guessed it ...*" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 903).[14] Even still further, it refers to itself in the first person, thereby identifying itself not only as an entity outside the theater (which incidentally necessitates the fictionality of the entire construction) but as a withdrawn one that recognizes itself as a narrator of a play.[15] Again, the stage directions indicate this: "*The frieze has nothing to do with the plot, but frankly it fascinates me. I could continue indefinitely, but I am distracted by one of the two characters in the room ...*" (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 903).

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[14] Kuehl nicely dug-up a number of references where Fitzgerald speaks of the potential significance of *Vanity Fair*—a good deal of "Porcelain" often gives us the feel that we have been transported back to the start of that brilliant novel's odd narrative peregrinations about Becky Sharp ("Scott Fitzgerald's Reading" 64, 72, 87).

[15] At work here is clearly one of the "artistic strategies" that Kuehl has highlighted—Fitzgerald's "'double vision,' or what Dos Passos called the 'intimacy and detachment' permitting him simultaneously to participate and to observe …" (Kuehl, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* 88).

Not only does the narrator refer to themselves in the first person here, but the voice interacts with elements of the fictional play from this position. The narrator, therefore, is able to simultaneously narrate the staging of a fictional play, direct that fictional play, and recognize themselves as both narrator and director, in the process taking account of audience and reader. The layers of this structure, though clearly defined and very powerful, do not seem to stay contained in themselves, however. In the beginning of the play, the narrator tells us, as already noted, that: "*We open, conventionally enough, with a song, but, as the startled gasp of the audience drowns out the first half, we will give only the last of it …*" ("Porcelain and Pink" 903–04), continuing with the lyrics to what is said to be the last chorus of "The Imperial Roman Jazz." This is tremendously peculiar; this mysterious narrator, who has presumably constructed this multilayered world for our enjoyment and contemplation, constructs the fictional audience (third person) in such a way that it interferes with us, the readers (second person). We as readers are not, presumably, fictions, and yet our perception of a fictional creation is being hindered by the fictional creation itself. The fictional audience is found to take on a profound and material reality that comes level with ours, even if for just a moment. Too, is it not significant that the same curtain that obscures the view of the audience at the end of the play obscures our own view as readers?

Now, to be fair, the strangeness of all this has not gone completely and totally unnoticed by existing scholarship. Adams does mention how Fitzgerald "conspires with the reader in 'Porcelain and Pink', cheekily explaining, in a stage direction, 'Yes, you've guessed it. Mistaken identity is the old, rusty pivot upon which the plot turns'" (111). One could no doubt justifiably say that a somewhat obvious reading of "Porcelain" would follow Adams's remarks quite closely: there is indeed a narrator and, for Adams, it is Fitzgerald. Now we do not wish to

quibble too strongly with this claim; we think that she is, in the main, somewhat right—but might not know exactly how right she is, ultimately. A little later on from the previously quoted remark, Adams summarizes "Porcelain" as follows:

> In the one-act play, "Porcelain and Pink", collected in *Tales of the Jazz Age*, we meet two sisters, one of whom, Julia [*sic*], is in the bath, while her sister Lois is waiting to get into the bathroom. Lois's beau, calling up to her through a high window, mistakes the bathing Julie for his beloved. Julie sings while she is in the bathtub, imagining "wild applause" after her rendition of 'The Imperial Roman Jazz' …" (Adams 115)

If Fitzgerald is the narrator, would it not be more accurate to say he is the one that "imagines applause," not Julie? We also think it important that Adams's description of Mr. Calkins as "calling up to her through a high window" omits the incredibly key split between the ear and the eye—it is of great importance for our reading that one recall Mr. Calkins's view is into the room—partially—, but that all he can see is the frieze (Adams's "calling up to" might suggest he cannot see any part of the room at all or, at the very least, his angle of vision might him to see, say, just the bare ceiling). The fact that all he can see is itself the doubled figure of the fisherman and his nets is of tantamount significance for our reading. Adams's study is brilliantly attentive to all kinds of metafictional elements in so many of Fitzgerald's short stories and her earlier cited description of the narrator's "cheekily explaining" the plot is a perfect example of this.[16] However, one major reason for wanting to slightly tweak Adams's treatment is to show even more the power of her interpretations: could one not provide a bit more grist for Adams's mill by granting that Fitzgerald does indeed "[manage] a surprising amount of experimentalism for such a genre," but that the real experimentalism does not reside in Fitzgerald filling the slot of the "I" in this story, but, rather, that the "I" points to Julie instead. There is a lot of "cheekiness" here, of course, but, for us, it is not Fitzgerald's—it's Julie's. Wanting to deeply imbibe those qualities of

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[16] The entirety of Adams's opening chapter clearly demonstrates her keen eye for these kinds of elements in the early work, see pages 5, 9, 17, and 24 especially.

"archness, cuteness, smartness, [and] a self-consciously literary predilection" that Petry faults these early stories for, we would like here in our treatment to propose that the "mistaken identity" topos is not simply a description of the plot, it is also there to describe readers that would want to mistake Fitzgerald-as-narrator for Julie-as-narrator. Julie's predilection for herself constantly generating doubles and simulacra work best if this can be made to apply to every level of this "play" that's not really a play at all. What a fantastic kind of "arch-cuteness" would it be to say that Julie's consummate improvisational skills could manage to make it such that she could be mistaken for Fitzgerald himself? This would be quite fantastic: in this interpretation Julie thus might be, in some sense, not only perhaps *causa sui* but *causa mundi*.

Of course, following Occam's razor, one could question if Adams's position is truly insufficient. Why not simply accept that the interjections are Fitzgerald and are of a piece with other similar examples in the early stories? After all, Adams's book catalogs the rather diverse range of metafictive techniques in more than one story—from "The Smilers" and "Myra Meets His Family" to "Two Wrongs" and "Winter Dreams." In most of these cases, Adams's description is accurate: "Fitzgerald … enjoys using omniscient narrators, who interject, comment on the action and break the fourth wall on occasion. … Rather than trying to cloak his authorial presence, Fitzgerald chooses to make it a feature of it in his work, especially enjoying metafictive asides in his early work" (Adams 24). But the uniqueness of "Porcelain" is that it is not at all certain that the narrative voice is omniscient, as we have hopefully shown convincingly already; in fact, there are no details within the play itself where one could infer such a narrative position—Fitzgerald quite cagily does not give one enough to make the claim that the "I" here is that of an omniscient narrator. On a couple of occasions that we have already highlighted, Julie speaks of herself within the space of the play in the third person and in ways that echo and

resonate with how she is described in the stage directions; although it would be simple to account for this through the omniscient third-person narrator as Adams does, we find it much more enjoyable to explain such resonances and echoes as due to Julie's own status as narrator. Parsing Julie as the narrator and creator of this whole scenario thus allows one to maintain consistency with the part of Adams's argument that sees the whole performance of "Porcelain" as often containing "obfuscation [that] fits in with the theme of concealment of both identity and the female body" (117); it also allows one to fruitfully apply Klossowski's Diana to this story while simultaneously giving one some kind explanation for why Julie is bothering to tell this whole thing at all in the first place.

If the "I" of the story is Julie, then we have an artifact here that is situated at the very height of irony—the trope that countless Fitzgerald scholars have claimed is so central to his craft and genius and that would accompany him all from the earliest pieces all the way through to the latter masterpieces (Kuehl, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* 46; Adams 1–29; Harding): a "play" that continuously plays this game of revelation and concealment, culminating in the curtain's fall to the stage just at the moment when Julie is to be revealed, is perhaps "irony" at its pinnacle. The choice of the Diana story could thus not be so simply subsumed under the "mere sophisticated prurience" charge, as a review in the *Springfield Sunday Republican* put it in 1922 ("Tales of the Jazz Age" 152). If one stays solely at the level of the drama on stage, we would have a Diana and Actaeon riff where Diana herself is never revealed, she remains enshrouded by curtains, veils, and the walls of a bathtub, amongst many other things. Just as Diana's "self-enclosed" nature *qua* her chastity in Klossowski seeks always to conceal itself, Julie does similarly. In Diana's case, this generates a desire to be seen once she becomes aware of Actaeon's own desire to see her. This is already an ironic twist on the original myth, but in terms of "Porcelain and Pink," the

true irony would be at the highest level of this play constructed like a "Chinese box" that would have been worthy of something out of Borges. All of this play with concealment, all this detail concerning what can and cannot be seen (and by whom) would be need to be quite paradoxically re-doubled when one legitimately asked Julie: why this whole charade of telling a story about a play about herself and her impersonations and doublings while in the bathtub? Would that not perhaps betray—in some slight sense— a very deep similarly with Klossowski's Diana who also possesses a desire *for revelation*, a slight desire *to be seen*, even if that seeing and revelation came while being further encircled within a deeper hiding and concealment?

In this interpretation, Julie would be giving us performances within performances within performances—just as she tells us right at the beginning how the image of the fisherman and his nets and the fisherman and his nets "fascinates [her]." Even better is the fact that throughout the dialogue of the play she recounts to us, there are tiny traces of this desire, especially as they come through particular simulacra and doublings fashioned through Julie's own dialogue. Earlier we cited Julie's reply about Lois's hope that when she's done in the tub she will exit the room only to find a group of ministers, wives, and daughters waiting in the living room. Julie does not deny that this is a possibility, but she does not affirm it either: she slightly tweaks it such that the focus is not on her potential nakedness and ensuing scandal, but the fact that the room would hardly be able to hold them; her answer moreover demonstrates her wonderful doubling and masking: she does not give this reply at all, "Clean Kate of the Laundry District" does (Fitzgerald, "Porcelain and Pink" 907).

The text is humorously ambiguous: is Julie giving Kate's reply or hers? Thus, the question can remain: does Julie's performance imply a desire to reveal herself? Does this allow us to infer that such a moment of exhibitionism would indeed hardly faze Julie? Perhaps—the

text always wants to keep open this possibility; this might be precisely what Julie would want too, namely, a profound revelation rather than concealment and veiling. Instead of attempting to close off such paths and avenues, we would like to leave them open and forever in play, in just the way that Julie's own performance is always in play, always in the process of being constructed and deconstructed, always in the process of being revealed and concealed.

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